



Nicaragua

San Juan Kayaking Adventure

PIONEER EXPEDITIONS



DO SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY...

ITINERARY

Nepal • The Hidden Nepal Himalaya

16 DAYS • 15 NIGHTS

Kathmandu – Buddhanath Stupa – Dolpo – Thuli Bheri River – Suli Gad River – Rechi – Meduwa Kholi Valley – Lake Phoksundo – Ringmo – Rechi – Suli Gad River – Julphal – Kathmandu

HIGHLIGHTS

- Discover the spiritual hearts of Kathmandu at the UNESCO protected Patan Durbar Square and Palace
- Trek, explore and camp in the remote valleys of the High Himalaya.
- Escape, as you trek up to the beautiful Ringmo where you will get the chance to visit the Tshowa bon Monastery
- Explore the third city of Kathmandu valley; Bhaktapur

TOUR ESSENTIALS

Tour Style	Trekking Adventure
Tour Start	Kathmandu
Tour End	Kathmandu
Accommodation	Hotel, Guesthouses Camping
Included Meals	12 Breakfasts, 12 Lunches, 13 Dinners
Difficulty Level	Difficult
Group Size	8-10 pax

THE HIDDEN NEPAL HIMALAYA



This Dolpo trek is more than just an exploration of a stunning mountain landscapes, it is an exploration of the fascinating ancient mountain culture of the Dolpo-pa. People who are Tibetan by language and culture, practice the ancient Bon-Buddhist religion and are subsistence farmers, yak herders and yak caravan traders. The trek leaders will guide you from the vibrant streets, temples and holy sites of Kathmandu, onto two spectacular domestic flights to Dolpo, through the lower Hindu valleys and up to villages and high mountains of the Dolpo-pa. This journey provides a depth of insight into a remote mountain culture and landscapes unlike any other on offer in Nepal.

Pioneer Expeditions have teamed up with local and international partners to offer an expert guided trek that provides a unique insight into the landscapes and cultures of Dolpo. The trek is organised in collaboration with Dolpo-pa mountain communities who have often been marginalised from mainstream trekking in Nepal. The trek is led by an international development expert, Gavin Anderson, and local development and cultural expert, Jigme Lama. They have been working with mountain communities in Dolpo to develop new, more inclusive and more beneficial forms of trekking and support to understanding and preserving the culture of the area. This has resulted in a totally unique tour where local Amchis (Tibetan herbalists), local lamas (religious teachers), community elders and local villagers within the Dolpo communities will be part of the trek providing guiding and interpretation of their culture. The use of indigenous plants in local medicine, the festivals and beliefs of Bon religion, local culture and legends and the modern development challenges in a changing and remote location will be explored during this trek. We are likely to be offered exclusive access to view the ritual, masked dancing rituals of the spectacular Lakeside monastery.

DOLPO, NEPAL *an overview*

A unique opportunity to explore the landscapes and mountain cultures of the high Himalaya of Nepal well away from established tourist and trekking trails. Dolpo, is known as the hidden Himalaya, an area deep within the high Himalaya of remote NW Nepal. A land of stunning natural beauty where musk deer, bharal (blue sheep), and langur monkeys roam wild and where the elusive snow leopards remains common. A landscape within Nepal's largest, but less visited, National Park that includes high mountain forest, Nepal's highest waterfall and the ethereal and fabled turquoise glacial waters of Lake Phoksundo.

WHY PIONEER EXPEDITIONS?

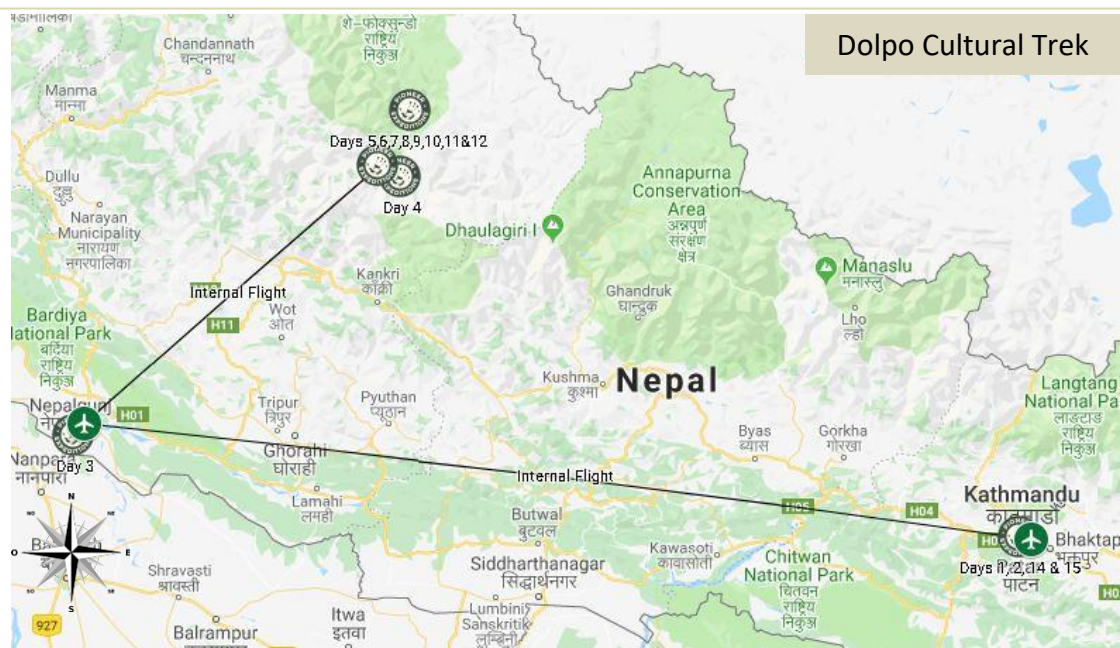
Pioneer Expeditions are one of the few specialists that really *do* off the beaten track and unique adventures. The team have a real passion for wildlife and adventure travel which we love to share with our clients. We delight in searching the world for new destinations, new experiences and creating the most incredible adventures.

We like to introduce our clients to the unique, the different, and the incredible. Whether it is through wildlife tracking, sea kayaking, snorkelling, trekking, rafting, cycling or observing wildlife in its natural environment, we want to give you the real Pioneer experience.

From the moment you choose to travel with Pioneer Expeditions until you return back home, you are supported by our dedicated team. We listen to what you want and can create an itinerary around your specific needs, working with your budget and with a commitment to responsible travel.



ITINERARY



DAY 1: Arrival in KATHMANDU

After arriving in Kathmandu you will be met at the airport and transferred to your luxury boutique hotel- a renovated historic building in a quiet square deep within Thamel, the liveliest part of Nepal.

Kathmandu is the ancient capital of Nepal and renowned for its vibrant streets with great restaurants, bars and shops. It is also the spiritual capital of the ancient Himalayan kingdom with world renowned temples and religious centres which provide oasis of peace and tranquility in the bustling city.

Overnight: Thamel Heritage Villa, Kathmandu



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
D



Distance:
30min- 1hr transfer



Activities:
Exploring

DAY 2: An exploration of the spiritual hearts of KATHMANDU

While trekking permits are being organized by our partners, you will be taken on an expert led exploration of the UNESCO protected Patan Durbar square and palace and iconic concentration of ancient temples and royal dwellings that form one of the spiritual hearts of the Kathmandu Valley.

In the afternoon we will ascend to Swayambhunath- the iconic mountaintop Buddhist Stupa also known as the Monkey Temple. It is a stunning location to watch the sun descend over the Kathmandu city and as the city light emerges, the temple is reclaimed by the hordes of resident monkeys while small intimate rituals and chanting echo from the candle lit shrines.



Overnight: Thamel Heritage Villa Kathmandu



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t 01202 798922 • e info@pioneerexpeditions.com

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Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
N/A



Activities:
Exploring

DAY 3: Domestic flight from KATHMANDU to DOLPO

After packing luggage, we will visit the huge and famous Buddhanath Stupa, an area of deep religious significance in Buddhist religion and an area with vibrant shops and restaurants. After a leisurely lunch and absorbing the atmosphere we will head to the domestic airport to catch our first flight to the town of Nepalgunj on the Indian border.

Overnight: *Cygnets Inn Krishna, Nepalgunj*



Overnight:
Inn



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
Short flight



Activities:
Travel

DAY 4: A spectacular mountain flight to the start of our trek in DOLPO



We will make an early start to take a morning plane to Dolpo. This spectacular flight on a small 20-seater Twin Otter Plane will take us across the Terai (flat, low lying area of Nepal), over the hill areas and into the high Himalaya where we will follow the deep valleys to our landing strip at Juphal. We will be met by our local support staff who will accompany us on our journey. After

introductions, packing of our luggage onto our pack mules (which have been brought down from our partner mountain villages), we will explore Juphal town and trek down to the Thuli Bheri River (around 3 hour) where we will make our first camp.

Overnight: *Camping at the Thuli Bheri River*



Overnight:
Camp



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
15min transfer



Activities:
Trekking

DAY 5: Ascend up the SULI GAD RIVER VALLEY



Our first full day trek takes us from the more populated Thuli Bheri Valley into Shey Phoksundo National Park and along the crashing emerald waters of the Suli Gad River. We will pass through small Hindu villages and the winter villages of the Dolpo-pa (dwellings that are only inhabited in winter by those who seasonally migrate from Upper Dolpo). We enter the forest zone where there are many Langur Monkeys and will arrive in the afternoon at the small village of Chhepka deep within the forested Suli Gad Valley (a 5-6 hour walk in total).

Overnight: *Camp in Chhepka Village*



Overnight:
Camp



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
N/A



Activities:
Trekking



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DAY 6: A trek up the spectacular SULI GAD RIVER VALLEY to RECHI

We continue our ascent up the Suli Gad River through beautiful Himalayan forest crossing numerous bridges over the emerald Suli Gad. The valley is now sparsely populated but we are likely to meet many traders and pilgrims on their way to and from Upper Dolpo and even Tibet. After a forest lunch we will continue to ascend and will reach the beautiful village of Rechi, the first of our partner village. We have now crossed the threshold from purely Hindu into more Buddhist areas. We will have the chance to meet and spend time with locals who will explain about the founding of this unique village and the way of life for locals (a 5-6 hour trek in total).



Overnight: Camp at Rechi Village



Overnight:
Camp



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
No driving



Activities:
Trekking

DAY 7: Into the Land of the DOLPO-PA and the spectacular MEDUWA KHOLI VALLEY

Our journey continues for a short walk to the head of the Suli Gad Valley where we enter the spectacular high and open Meduwa Khola Valley. We pass the Taprizia School in area which is supported with Swiss and French funding. We follow a spectacular path with views to the huge Phoksundo waterfall and peaks above Lake Phoksundo passing with Bon-Buddhist prayer flags and shrines. We will begin to see the carved 'mani stones' (stones carved with Tibetan, Buddhist and bon mantras and prayers) which are common in the spiritual hearts of Dolpo. We gain our first sight of this stunning village. Expect to be asked to share tea and conversation within various households (facilitated by our local guides). We will camp outside the village but our local friends will be our evening hosts, explaining their culture, legends and history and often sharing song and dance. Snow leopards are common around this village and we will find out from the locals about recent sightings. At this altitude the night skies are clear and dry with stunning views into the Milky Way and constellations.



Overnight: Camp in Rike Valley



Overnight:
Camp



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
N/A



Activities:
Trekking

DAY 8: Ascent to the iconic village of RINGMO and the fabled LAKE PHOKSUNDO



Our walk today is a short but sharp ascent to the Phoksundo Lake valley with spectacular views of the snow-capped and glaciated peaks of the Kanjirowa Himals and Dhaulagiri. We can visit the viewpoint over the Phoksundo waterfall- Nepal's highest waterfall and we gain our first sight of Lake Phoksundo, fabled and cherished for its vibrant turquoise waters. This is Nepal's deepest and most iconic lake with mountains soaring from its waters and with the Trasung Choeling Gompa (monastery) superbly situated on its shores. As we enter



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Ringmo, our third partner village, we are welcomed by numerous chortens (Bon and Buddhist shrines and places of reflection and prayer, many of which are reputed to contain holy relics). The village of Ringmo itself is a beautiful traditional Tibetan stone village with a vibrant Bon culture. Ringmo will be our base for 3 nights. The afternoon will be spent exploring the village and the nearby monastery as the sun drops the lake colour changes and the spectacular night skies take over (around 3-4hrs walk in total)

Overnight: Chortens in Ringmo



Overnight:
Camp



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
No driving



Activities:
Trekking

DAYS 9 & 10: An exploration of the culture, landscapes and natural habitat of RINGMO



Our itinerary now provides various options from guided trips varying from the more adventurous and energetic to more cultural experiences in and around Ringmo or more restful days for those who prefer time for self-reflection and contemplation within the stunning landscape and culture.

A must is a full exploration of the stunning and serene Trasung Choeling Gompa (monastery). We will organise for the local religious leaders to explain their religion and provide us with a guided tour of the monastery. We are also likely to be invited to have exclusive access to view the festivals and rituals of the monastery. The local Amchis (traditional herbalists) will also offer a guided tour in the nearby forest and to the hill sides above

Ringmo to explain the use of plants in traditional Tibetan medicine and the practices of traditional medicine in Dolpo.

A half day guided trip will be offered along the spectacular 'Devils Path', which is carved from the steep rock face on the western side of Lake Phoksundo. The path ascends to a spectacular viewpoint and is a trading route to Tibet. The path provides stunning views across the lake and to the glacier and glacial cave on Kanjirowa Himal.

An even more energetic trip is a guided trek to the high Yak pastures of Palangathan high above Ringmo. This provides panoramic views across the layered Himalayan mountains and explores the rock pastures where Bharal (blue sheep) and snow leopards are frequently seen by locals.



Our time in Ringmo will also include evening offer to taste Tibetan food and hospitality within the traditional houses of the village and potentially being invited by our friends and contacts to view, or even participate in, the Pujas (ceremonies) that are common in the village and Bon society.



Overnight:
Camp



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
2hr drive



Activities:
Trekking



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DAY 11: Descend from RINGMO above the PHOKSUNDO WATERFALL to the village of RECHI

We will descend from Ringmo via a different route from our ascent taking us above the Phoksundo waterfall and through the highest winter village down to the Meduwa Khola Valley. We then descend the upper Suli Gad River to return to the village of Rechi (a 4-5hr walk in total)



Overnight: Camp in Rechi Village



Overnight:
Camp



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
N/A



Activities:
Trekking

DAY 12: Descend through the Forested Valley of the SULI GAD RIVER

We retrace our footsteps down the Suli Gad River but we will find that we have renewed energy having come from higher altitudes. The views down the Suli Gad are particularly fine and we will spend time in the forest and for those brave (or foolish) enough, a dip into the clear and icy waters of the Suli Gad will reinvigorate. We descend to the Hindu Village of Kagni with its functioning water driven grain mills and warm hospitality (a 6-7hr walk in total).

Overnight: Camp in Kagni Village



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
N/A



Activities:
Trekking

DAY 13: Through HINDU VILLAGES to the town and airstrip of JUPHAL



Our final trekking day takes us out of the Shey Phoksundo National Park and back into the Thuli Bheri River valley. We will ascend to Juphal town through various Hindu Villages. After Dolpo, Juphal will now appear a metropolis to us with its small shops and few small tea houses. We will camp within Juphal town ready for our flight to Kathmandu the following day.

Overnight: Camp in Jupha Town



Overnight:
Camp



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:



Activities:
Trekking



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DAY 14: Flight to KATHMANDU and a well-deserved rest in our GUESTHOUSE

We wake up early to strike camp to be ready for the morning flight to Nepalgunja and connecting onto a flight to Kathmandu. We will be back in Kathmandu by the afternoon – a relatively short day's journey, but a world away from Dolpo. The hustle of Kathmandu might be a shock, but the welcome soft beds and warm showers of our boutique hotel will be most welcome.

Overnight at Thamel Heritage Villa, Kathmandu



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
Short flights



Activities:
Travel

DAY 15: Exploration of ANCIENT BHAKTAPUR

Not too early a start, but a day when people will have the option to visit Bhaktapur- the third city of the Kathmandu valley and an ancient seat of kings with it's fabulous ancient Durbar Square and Palace and artisanal sector. A last evening in Nepal with sundowners on the rooftop bars of Bhaktapur and a final farewell and celebratory group dinner.

Overnight at Thamel Heritage Villa, Kathmandu



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, D



Distance:

Activities:
Exploring

DAY 16: Depart from NEPAL

Transfer to airport for return home. End of Expedition!



Overnight:
N/A



Meals:
B



Distance:
30min-1hr transfer



Activities:
Travel



ACCOMMODATION *at a glance*

Subject to availability

Thamel Heritage Villa

Kathmandu

<https://www.thamelvilla.com/>



Cygnett Inn Krishna

Nepalgunj

<https://www.cygnetthotels.com/cygnett-inn-krishna-nepalgunj-nepal.php>



Camping

Various villages in Dolpo



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

INCLUDED

- All meals as described (B= Breakfast, L= Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Accommodation as described
- Activities and excursions as described
- All airport transfers in Nepal
- Internal flights
- 10 night fully equipped camp
- Trekking fees and National Park fees
- International expedition leader
- Local expedition leader, additional trained guide and cook while in Dolpo
- Luggage portage in Dolpo

NOT INCLUDED

- International flights
- Tourist visa fee (US\$40/ £32)
- Lunches (x4) in Kathmandu
- Alcohol and carbonated drinks
- Tips for local guide and porters
- Personal travel insurance
- Sleeping bags

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACTIVITY DURATION	5-7 hours
SEASON	Sep- June
BEST TIME TO GO	Feb-mid-Jun, mid-Sep-Nov
GROUP SIZE	4-10 pax
EXPEDITION SCHEDULE	Scheduled Group Departure or Tailor made to suit your dates. Check out our website to find expedition dates
DIFFICULTY LEVEL	Our grades have been designated based on our perception of the degree of physical activity you are likely to require to enjoy the adventure. These are only a guideline. This itinerary has a 'Difficult' level (5-7 hours per day). This means that you will need more than a basic level of fitness and some specific training may be required.



THE PIONEER BOOKING PROCESS

Where do you go from here? Well, you can feel free to email us at info@pioneerexpeditions.com if you're interested in this trip, or any of our other expeditions from around the world. Visit our website www.pioneerexpeditions.com to unearth all of our other equally amazing trips and destinations.

1. Contact us -

We will be happy to answer any questions or enquiries you may have. From here we will begin to plan and put together your dream adventure holiday! Alternatively, on our website you will find our booking and enquiry forms; once filled in, we will be notified of your enquiry and will get back to you ASAP.

2. Leave everything to us -

Everything will be arranged and booked by us, but we will make sure to keep you updated every step of the way. In addition, we can arrange your international flights if needed, as we have access to competitive airfares. We can also arrange any additional tours or additional night's accommodation.

3. Wait for your adventure to begin -

Sit back and count down the days until your trip of a lifetime with Pioneer Expeditions. We'll handle all of the last minute preparations and provide you with everything you need. All practical information will be sent out to you, prior to your trip.

If you feel like altering this itinerary to suit your personal preferences, we can arrange all of that and more – just get in contact with us and let us know your requirements and wishes. From here, we can simply tailor-make your dream holiday.

