

Dolpo to Mugu Trek via GHT (Great Himalayan Trail) - 30 Days

The **Dolpo to Mugu trek via the Great Himalayan Trail (GHT)** is one of the most remote and demanding high-altitude routes in Nepal. Crossing five major passes above 5,000 meters, this trek connects the restricted regions of Dolpo and Mugu through a fully wilderness route along Nepal's northern border with Tibet.

The journey begins at Juphal Airport in Dolpa District and ends at Talcha Airport in Mugu District. Along the way, trekkers pass through Phoksundo Lake, Shey Gumpa, the isolated villages of Bhijer and Pho, the Mugu Karnali Valley, and Rara Lake (Nepal's largest lake). The entire route is 100% camping; there are no teahouses or lodges on the high section.

This trek is designed for experienced, physically prepared trekkers seeking genuine wilderness immersion in far-western Nepal. The Dolpo to Mugu trek is ideal for trekkers looking for a remote Himalayan expedition far from Nepal's crowded trekking trails.

TREK OVERVIEW

The Dolpo to Mugu trek via the Great Himalayan Trail traverses one of the most remote trekking corridors in the Himalayan range, connecting two restricted districts of far-western Nepal in a continuous wilderness crossing. Starting at Juphal Airport in Dolpa and ending at Talcha Airport in Mugu, the route follows the Tibetan border through its northern section and ranks among the most demanding segments of the Great Himalayan Trail Nepal network.

From Juphal, the trail passes through Dunai to [Phoksundo Lake](#), crosses Kang La (5,350m) into Upper Dolpo, and continues north through Shey Gumpa and the villages of Bhijer and Pho. The route circumnavigates the Kanjiroba massif via four further high passes, Yambur La (4,813m), Nyingma Gyanzen La (5,563m), Yala La (5,414m), and Chyargo La (5,150m), before descending the Mugu Karnali Valley to finish at Rara Lake and Talcha Airport.

Fully camping-supported with no lodge infrastructure between Phoksundo Lake and Gamgadhi, the trek requires a licensed guide and six restricted area permits. It suits experienced high-altitude trekkers with strong fitness and prior expedition camping experience.

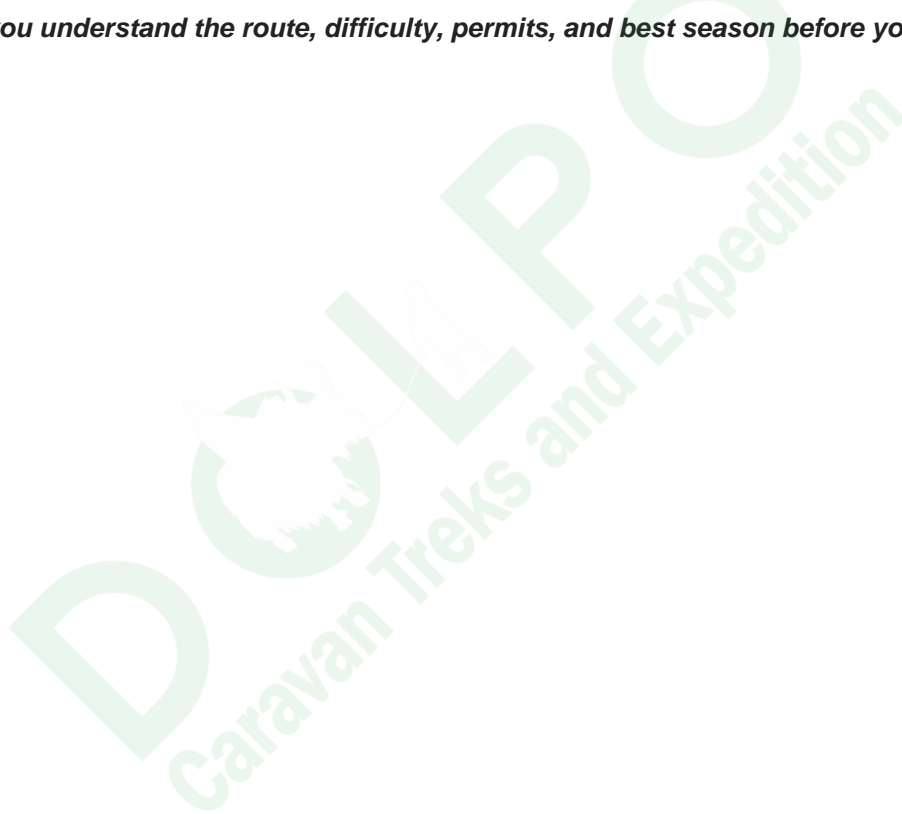
WHY CHOOSE THE DOLPO TO MUGU GHT TREK?

The Dolpo to Mugu GHT trek is the only route in Nepal that connects two major restricted-area regions in a single continuous wilderness crossing. It combines two iconic high-altitude lakes, Phoksundo Lake and Rara Lake, with five passes above 5,000 meters, ancient Bon-Buddhist heritage, and landscapes that see fewer than 150 trekkers per year.

No other route in Nepal offers this combination of geographic scope, cultural depth, and true remoteness in one itinerary. This is a true [off-the-beaten-path trekking Nepal](#) experience through isolated valleys, ancient villages, and untouched Himalayan landscapes.

For trekkers seeking a step beyond the standard Nepal circuit, this route delivers conditions and experiences that established trails cannot replicate. The remoteness of the high route demands full self-sufficiency and professional logistical support, both of which Dolpo Caravan Treks specializes in. The quality and exclusivity of the experience directly reflect the investment in permits, logistics, and a qualified team.

Need help choosing the right itinerary for this remote Himalayan route? [Our trekking specialists](#) can help you understand the route, difficulty, permits, and best season before you book.



PRICE INCLUDES

- Airport transfers (international and domestic, arrival and departure)
- All domestic flights: Kathmandu-Nepalgunj-Juphal and Talcha-Nepalgunj-Kathmandu
- All required trekking permits and national park entry fees
- Hotel accommodation in Kathmandu (2 nights, bed and breakfast, 3-star)
- Hotel accommodation in Nepalgunj as required for flight connections
- Full expedition camping setup: sleeping tents, dining tent, kitchen tent, toilet tent
- All meals during the trek (breakfast, lunch, dinner) and hot beverages
- Government-licensed senior trekking guide
- One expert trek leader with a local assistant
- Experienced high-altitude cook and kitchen staff
- Porters and/or mule transport for all group equipment
- First aid kit with basic altitude medication
- Farewell dinner in Kathmandu.

PRICE EXCLUDES

- Nepal Visa
- International flights
- Personal expenses and meals in Kathmandu.
- Travel insurance (it's mandatory for rescue and evacuation).
- Tips and gratitude for staff and guides.
- Donation and local entrance fee.
- Extra baggage weight on domestic flight
- Personal expenses like alcohol, local fabric, and local monuments.

ITINERARY IN DETAIL

Day 1: Day 1: Arrive Kathmandu (1,400m / 4,593ft)

Arrive at Tribhuvan International Airport and transfer to your hotel. Your guide will conduct a pre-trek briefing covering the route, permits, gear, and logistics. Rest and rehydrate.

- **Travel distance:** Tribhuvan International Airport to hotel ~6-8 km
- **Travel type:** Private Vehicle
- **Meals:** Dinner (Depending upon arrival time)
- **Accommodation:** Hotel in Kathmandu

Day 2: Day 2: Fly Kathmandu to Nepalgunj | Fly Nepalgunj to Juphal (2,475m / 8,120ft)

Early flight to Nepalgunj, then onward by Twin Otter to Juphal Airport. The mountain approach is dramatic, threading through narrow ridgelines before landing. The trek crew meets you at the airstrip. Flights operate mornings only, weather permitting.

- **Travel Distance:** Kathmandu to Nepalgunj ~365 km (by air) | nepalgunj to Juphal ~145 km
- **Travel Type:** Domestic Flight + Private Transfer
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Hotel

Day 3: Day 3: Juphal to Dunai (2,140m / 7,021ft) | 4 - 5 hrs

Descend toward the Bheri River valley, cross the Thulo Bheri suspension bridge, and follow the riverbank to Dunai, Dolpa's district headquarters. A straightforward warm-up day.

- **Travel distance:** 10 km - 12 km
- **Travel type:** Trek
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 4: Day 4: Dunai to Chhepka (2,840m / 9,318ft) | 6 - 7 hrs

After completing Shey Phoksundo National Park permit formalities, the trail crosses the Suli Gad River and ascends the Suli Gad Valley through pine and juniper forest, crossing several suspension bridges as the river narrows. Chhepka is a small settlement above the gorge, marking the real beginning of the Phoksundo approach.

- **Travel distance:** 16 km - 18 km
- **Travel type:** Trek
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 5: Day 5: Chhepka to Phoksundo Lake (3,611m / 11,847ft) | 6 - 7 hrs

The trail climbs higher into the Suli Gad gorge, passing a large waterfall that drops directly across the path. Above the falls, the valley opens and the landscape shifts from dense forest to open rock. Phoksundo Lake appears abruptly, a

vast expanse of deep turquoise water enclosed by sheer limestone cliffs. The small Bon village of Ringmo sits at the lake's southern edge. Camp near Ringmo.

- **Travel distance:** 13 km - 15 km
- **Travel type:** Trek
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 6: Day 6: Acclimatization Day at Phoksundo Lake (3,611m / 11,847ft)

Rest day at Nepal's second deepest lake (145m). Visit the Bon monastery Tshering Choling Gompa in Ringmo and hike above the village for elevated lake views. Monitor altitude symptoms carefully, passes ahead exceed 5,000 m.

- **Travel distance:** 4-6 km (round-trip hike)
- **Travel type:** Hike
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 7: Day 7: Phoksundo Lake to Phoksundo Khola Camp (4,100m / 13,451ft) | 5 - 6 hrs

Departing Ringmo, the trail cuts along the western shoreline of Phoksundo Lake on a narrow path carved into the cliff face. At the northern end of the lake, the path enters the Phoksundo Khola valley and begins climbing along the river headwaters. Camp is set on a flat riverside site below the approach to Kang La. This is the last reliable water source before the pass. The night will be cold.

- **Travel distance:** 10 km - 12 km
- **Travel type:** Trek
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 8: Day 8: Cross Kang La (5,350m / 17,552ft) | Trek to Shey Gompa (4,160m / 13,648ft) | 7 - 8 hrs

An early alpine start. The ascent to Kang La is steep and sustained on loose scree and rock. At the summit, the full sweep of the Kanjiroba Himal comes into view, a chain of peaks above 6,000 m virtually unknown outside Nepal. The descent drops through a dry rocky gorge into the open plateau of Upper Dolpo. The whitewashed walls and gilded rooftop of Shey Gompa appear beneath the unmistakable pyramid of Crystal Mountain. Camp near the monastery.

- **Travel distance:** 14 km - 16 km
- **Travel type:** Trek
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 9: Day 9: Rest and Explore Shey Gompa (4,160m / 13,648ft)

[Shey Gompa](#) is one of the oldest and most venerated monasteries in Dolpo, believed to have been founded in the 10th century. Visit the main gompa and the Tsakang cliff hermitage. Walk the sacred [Crystal Mountain](#) circumambulation trail, one of the most important pilgrimage routes in Upper Dolpo. This rest day also allows for

further acclimatization before the remote northern section begins.

- **Travel distance:** 4 - 5 km local walk
- **Travel type:** Short hike
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 10: Day 10: Shey Gompa to Tora (4,200m / 13,780ft) | 5-6 hrs

The trail leaves Shey heading north and west across open plateau country. The trail is less defined on this section; your guide navigates by terrain features rather than a clear path. Blue sheep (bharal) are commonly spotted on the surrounding hillsides. Tora is a seasonal grazing area used by herders from surrounding villages in the summer months. Camp on the plateau.

- **Travel distance:** 12 km - 14 km
- **Travel type:** Trek
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 11: Day 11: Tora to Samling / Bon Gompa (4,400m / 14,436ft) | 5 - 6 hrs

The terrain becomes increasingly arid as the landscape pushes toward Tibetan Plateau characteristics. The trail passes through barren valleys and over minor ridges before reaching Samling. The Samling Gompa is one of the most important centers of [Bon culture in Dolpo](#), estimated to be around 900 years old, with ancient murals and a resident lama community.

- **Travel distance:** 10 km - 12 km
- **Travel type:** Trek
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 12: Day 12: Samling to Bhijer (3,850m / 12,631ft) | 5 - 6 hrs

The trail descends through ridges and open valleys toward Bhijer, one of the lowest and most fertile villages in Dolpo. Wheat and apricot trees grow here, a rarity at this elevation. The village has a small monastery and a traditional Amchi (Tibetan medicine) clinic. Bhijer is the last settlement with any infrastructure before the route's most remote section. Rest and eat well, as the next few days will demand it.

- **Travel distance:** 11 km - 13 km
- **Travel type:** Trek
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 13: Day 13: Rest and Preparation Day in Bhijer (3,850m / 12,631ft)

Mandatory logistics day. Loads reorganized, food supplies verified, equipment checked. Guide briefs the team on passes, campsites, and emergency protocols. No resupply points exist between here and the Mugu Karnali Valley.

- **Travel distance:** 2 - 3 km local walk
- **Travel type:** Short hike
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 14: Day 14: Bhijer to Pho Village (4,150m / 13,615ft) | 7 - 8 hrs

The trek enters its most remote phase. The trail climbs out of Bhijer into a long uninhabited valley running parallel to the Tibetan border. Pho Village, also known as Phowara, is one of Nepal's most isolated inhabited places, where a small number of families maintain traditional dress, customs, and a Tibetan dialect largely unchanged by outside contact.

- **Travel distance:** 15 km - 17 km
- **Travel type:** Trek
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 15: Day 15: Pho Village to Yambur La Base Camp (4,600m / 15,092ft) | 5-6 hrs

The valley narrows as the trail climbs toward Yambur La, following a river upstream through a steep-walled gorge with multiple crossings. Some sections are carved directly into the rock face, narrow and exposed, requiring care. Camp on a high-altitude flat below the pass with wide views back down the valley.

- **Travel distance:** 9 km - 11 km
- **Travel type:** Trek
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 16: Day 16: Cross Yambur La (4,813m / 15,790ft) | Trek to Camp (4,200m / 13,780ft) | 7 - 8 hrs

Early start for the second major pass. The ascent is steep but shorter than Kang La. From the summit, the glaciated northern face of the Kanjiroba massif stretches across the horizon. The descent drops steeply into a narrow gorge before opening into a wider valley. The route now arcs around the Kanjiroba's northern flank through terrain almost no trekker visits.

- **Travel distance:** 12 km - 14 km
- **Travel type:** Trek
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 17: Day 17: Trek to Nyingma Gyanzen La Base Camp (4,800m / 15,748ft) | 5-6 hrs

A sustained ascent through high-altitude pastureland past seasonal yak herder shelters, known as "kharkas." The surrounding landscape is vast and without reference points, with ridgeline after ridgeline above 5,000 m. Camp early at the highest overnight site on the route. Temperature drops sharply after sunset.

- **Travel distance:** 10 km - 12 km

- **Travel type:** Trek
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 18: Day 18: Cross Nyingma Gyanzen La (5,563m / 18,252ft) | Trek to Camp (4,400m / 14,436ft) | 7-8 hrs

The summit of the entire trek. Depart before dawn on a mixed terrain of scree, rock, and spring snow. At 5,563 meters, this peak is the highest point on the Dolpo to Mugu Great Himalaya Trail route and one of the highest regularly crossed passes in western Nepal. The summit panorama spans an enormous arc of the Trans-Himalayan range, north into Tibet and the Kanjiroba south. The descent is long on steep, loose ground, and careful footwork is required. Camp in the valley below.

- **Travel distance:** 13 km - 15 km
- **Travel type:** Trek
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 19: Day 19: Rest and Recovery Day (4,400m / 14,436ft)

Mandatory full rest after the highest crossing. Hydrate, eat well, and limit exertion. The guide monitors oxygen saturation. Two passes remain, and adequate recovery here directly affects performance on both.

- **Travel distance:** 2 km - 3 km
- **Travel type:** Short hike
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 20: Day 20: Trek to Yala La Base Camp (4,900m / 16,076ft) | 5-6 hrs

The route continues westward along the high valley system on the northern face of the Kanjiroba range, an open tundra interrupted by steep lateral ridges. As the valley trends west, slightly more vegetation appears on south-facing slopes. Camp at the base of Yala La, with the pass clearly visible above.

- **Travel distance:** 11 km - 13 km
- **Travel type:** Trek
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 21: Day 21: Cross Yala La (5,414m / 17,762ft) | Trek to Camp (4,200m / 13,780ft) | 7-8 hrs

The fourth major pass was approached on a moderately graded slope compared to previous crossings, though altitude demands continued respect. From the summit, the route begins its long arc south and west toward Mugu District. The descent leads into the upper Mugu Karnali drainage, with slightly greener terrain as altitude drops.

- **Travel distance:** 14 km - 16 km

- **Travel type:** Trek
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 22: Day 22: Trek to Chyargo La Base Camp (4,700m / 15,420ft) | 5 - 6 hrs

The fifth and final pass is within reach. The trail climbs steadily through open high-altitude terrain, crossing seasonal streams and boulder fields. The stark northern landscape gradually gives way to broader, less severe terrain. Camp below Chyargo La with clear views of the pass above.

- **Travel distance:** 10 km - 12 km
- **Travel type:** Trek
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 23: Day 23: Cross Chyargo La (5,150m / 16,896ft) | Trek to Mugu Karnali Valley (3,900m / 12,795ft) | 8 - 9 hrs

The final major pass of the GHT high route. The ascent is sustained and demanding, but the team is now well conditioned. From the summit the route bends decisively south and west. The descent covers over 1,000 vertical meters, from alpine rock through high scrub to the broad Mugu Karnali River valley below. Reaching the valley floor marks the end of the most remote section of the trek.

- **Travel distance:** 15 km - 17 km
- **Travel type:** Trek
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 24: Day 24: Trek Down Mugu Karnali Valley to Mugu Village Area (3,500m / 11,483ft) | 6 - 7 hrs

Following the Mugu Karnali River downstream, the valley gradually widens and vegetation increases. Juniper, wild roses, and patches of forest appear along the riverbanks. Mugu Village, also known as Khatyar, is the first significant community since Bhijer. Permanent houses, cultivated fields, and domestic animals mark a clear psychological shift after the extended wilderness.

- **Travel distance:** 12 km - 14 km
- **Travel type:** Trek
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 25: Day 25: Mugu Village to Gamgadhi (2,250m / 7,382ft) | 7 - 8 hrs

A long descent of over 1,200 vertical meters through increasingly lush terrain and small farming settlements to Gamgadhi, Mugu's remote district headquarters. The town has a small bazaar, a government hospital, and a police checkpoint for restricted area permit review. The warmth at this altitude is a noticeable contrast to the high-route camps.

- **Travel distance:** 18 km - 20 km
- **Travel type:** Trek
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 26: Day 26: Gamgadhi to Rara Lake (2,990m / 9,810ft) | 5 - 6 hrs

Ascend through rhododendron forests, pine stands, and open meadows into Rara National Park. The park boundary brings a distinct change: dense forest, birdsong, and no grazing pressure. Rara Lake appears from the final ridge. Nepal's largest lake, at 10.8 square kilometers, is a deep cobalt blue set in a bowl of forested hills at 2,990 meters. Camp at the lakeshore.

- **Travel distance:** 12 km - 14 km
- **Travel type:** Trek
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 27: Day 27: Rest and Explore Rara Lake (2,990m / 9,810ft)

A full day in Rara National Park (106 sq km). The lake circuit takes 4-5 hours through rhododendron and pine forest with consistent lake views. Wildlife includes musk deer, Himalayan black bears, leopards, red foxes, and migratory birds on the Central Asian flyway. After weeks of high-altitude wilderness, the warmth, color, and biodiversity of Rara make for a memorable final destination.

- **Travel distance:** 4 km - 5 km (Exploring Rara Lake)
- **Travel type:** Short hike
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Camping

Day 28: Day 28: Trek to Talcha Airport (2,900m / 9,514ft) | Fly to Nepalgunj | 3 - 4 hrs

A short morning trek through the national park to Talcha's grass airstrip. Morning-only flights, weather permitting. The Twin Otter to Nepalgunj takes approximately 50 minutes, descending from the high lake basin to the Terai plains. Transfer to the hotel on arrival.

- **Travel distance:** 6 km - 8 km
- **Travel type:** Trek + domestic flight
- **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- **Accommodation:** Hotel in Nepalgunj

Day 29: Day 29: Fly Nepalgunj to Kathmandu (1,400m / 4,593ft)

Morning flight to Kathmandu. Transfer to hotel. The remainder of the day is free for rest, shopping in Thamel, or a final meal with your guide and team.

- **Travel distance:** Nepalgunj to Kathmandu ~365 km (by air)
- **Travel type:** Domestic Flights + Private Transfer

- **Meals:** Breakfast & Lunch
- **Accommodation:** Hotel in Kathmandu

Day 30: Day 30: Buffer Day in Kathmandu (1,400 m / 4,593 ft)

Reserved in case of flight delays due to mountain weather. If not needed, you can relax, shop, or explore heritage sites.

- **Travel Distance:** Local city travel as required
- **Travel Type:** Private Vehicle
- **Meals:** Breakfast
- **Accommodation:** Hotel in Kathmandu

Day 31: Day 31: Departure from Kathmandu

Transfer to Tribhuvan International Airport for your international departure, marking the end of your Dolpo to Mugu trek via GHT.

- **Travel Distance:** Hotel to Airport ~6-8 km
- **Travel Type:** Private Vehicle
- **Meals:** Breakfast (depending on flight time)

FAQ

1. How long is the Dolpo to Mugu GHT trek?

The standard itinerary is 27-30 days, including flights, acclimatization days, and rest days. The trekking section from Juphal to Talcha takes approximately 24-26 days depending on conditions and group pace.

2. What is the highest pass on this route?

Nyingma Gyanzen La, at 5,563 m / 18,252 ft, is the highest point on the route and the most technically demanding crossing on the itinerary.

3. Can I see Rara Lake on this trek?

Yes. Rara Lake is the final destination before the Talcha Airport exit. At least one full rest day at Rara Lake is included in the itinerary, giving trekkers time to explore the lake and surrounding national park.

4. Is the route fully on the Great Himalayan Trail?

Most of this trek follows the remote High Route of the Great Himalayan Trail (GHT) through Upper Dolpo and Mugu. However, the initial section from Juphal to Phoksundo Lake is a classic access trail used to connect trekkers to the main GHT high route.

5. Where does the trek end: Talcha or Gamgadhi?

The trek finishes at Talcha Airport, following the final approach via Rara Lake. Gamgadhi is a staging point approximately one to two trekking days before Talcha.

6. Can I spot snow leopards on this trek?

Snow leopards inhabit the terrain around Shey Gumpa and the northern high valleys. Sightings are rare and cannot be guaranteed. Blue sheep, Himalayan tahr, Tibetan gazelle, and numerous high-altitude bird species are more regularly observed.

7. What accommodation is available in Mugu?

Basic guesthouses are available in Gamgadhi. The remainder of the Mugu section is fully tented camping. No lodges, teahouses, or hotel facilities exist between the upper Karnali valley and Talcha Airport.

8. How many trekkers do this route each year?

Fewer than 10,015 trekkers complete the full Dolpo to Mugu GHT high route in a typical year, making it one of the least-trekking routes in Nepal. Encountering other groups on the remote high section is uncommon.

9. What happens if flights from Talcha are delayed?

Delays of one to three days are not uncommon. Buffer days are built into the itinerary. Trekkers should plan international departures with a minimum three-day buffer after their scheduled Kathmandu return date.

10. Do I need a guide for this trek?

Yes. A licensed guide is mandatory under Nepal government regulations for both the Dolpo and Mugu restricted areas. Solo permits are available; no minimum group size is required, but independent trekking without a licensed guide is not permitted.

11. Is camping required on this route?

Yes. From Phoksundo Lake through to Gamgadhi, the entire route is tented camping. Dolpo Caravan Treks provides full expedition camping infrastructure, including sleeping tents, dining tents, kitchen tents, and toilet tents at every camp.

