

## SHEY FESTIVAL - 30 Days

**FESTIVAL STARTING DATE: 1ST OF SEPTEMBER 2024 TO 4TH OF SEPTEMBER 2024**

The Shey Festival is a significant event that occurs every 12 years according to the Tibetan Lunar calendar, usually in the month of Dragon. Celebrated at an altitude of 4200m, it features various rituals, activities, and cultural programs. The highlight of the festival is the pilgrimage to Crystal Mountain, where participants circumambulate the mountain through its three phases: inner, middle, and outer Kora. Crystal Mountain is revered as the younger brother of Kalash Mountain in Tibet.

When the Shey Festival coincides with a Dragon Year, it holds special significance. In Tibetan astrology, the Dragon Year is considered auspicious, symbolizing power, wisdom, and good fortune. This alignment often attracts more participants and intensifies the spiritual fervor of the festival. Locals engage in elaborate rituals, dances, and ceremonies with enthusiasm, believing that the auspicious energies of the Dragon Year enhance the spiritual merit of their actions. Specific observances or rituals associated with the Dragon Year, such as offerings to dragon deities or prayers for prosperity and protection, may also be included.

The festival's historical roots trace back to a legend from 1000 years ago when the Buddhist ascetic Drikung Kyobpa Jigten Gonpo dispatched his disciple, Druptop Shinge Yeshe, to Shey. Yeshe conquered a fierce mountain spirit and transformed it into the pure Crystal Mountain. Annual kora pilgrimages around Crystal Mountain remain a central aspect of the festival. Shey is home to three ancient monasteries—Shel Sumdho, Gommoche, and Tsakhang—each holding its own significance. Gommoche is particularly revered as the site where Druptop Shinge Yeshe meditated and attained enlightenment, with his relics preserved in a cave there.

The most recent Shey Festival was held from September 1 to September 4, 2024. Trekkers, photographers, and spiritual seekers from all over the world made the journey to witness this rare celebration. Because the festival follows the Tibetan lunar calendar, it takes place only in the Year of the Dragon. This means the next **Shey Festival will be in 2036 at late August or early September.**

For many, attending the festival is a once-in-a-lifetime journey. It is not only a chance to experience the raw beauty of Dolpo but also an opportunity to connect with living traditions that have been passed down for centuries.

### INTRODUCTION TO SHEY FESTIVAL

The Shey Festival, also called **Shey Mela** or the **Crystal Mountain Festival**, is one of the most special spiritual gatherings in the Himalayas of [Dolpo Nepal](#). It is celebrated only once every twelve years at the sacred Shey Gompa Monastery, which lies beneath the mystical Crystal Mountain in [Upper Dolpo](#).

This festival holds a deep place in Tibetan Buddhist tradition. During the celebration, thousands of monks, lamas, pilgrims, and villagers travel to Shey to take part in rituals and prayers. The highlight is the kora, or the walking circle,

around Crystal Mountain. People believe that completing this journey cleanses past sins and brings blessings for health, peace, and prosperity.

Alongside the spiritual side, the festival is also a cultural reunion. Locals gather in colorful dress, perform dances with masked on, and enjoy singing traditional songs. Butter lamps are set, horns sound plays across the mountains, and lamas chant ancient verses. The atmosphere is both spiritual and festive, carrying a sense of unity that can only be found in a place as remote as Dolpo.

## WHY DOLPO SHEY FESTIVAL TREK?

The **Dolpo Shey Festival Trek** is a journey into the heart of Nepal's spiritual and cultural heritage. Unlike other treks, this adventure offers an unparalleled blend of natural beauty, spiritual immersion, and cultural exploration. Held every 12 years, the **Shey Festival** is a sacred gathering where monks, pilgrims, and locals converge at [Shey Gompa](#), the "Crystal Monastery," to celebrate ancient Buddhist traditions. Witnessing vibrant mask dances, prayer ceremonies, and the spiritual devotion of pilgrims circling the sacred Crystal Mountain is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Beyond the festival, the trek takes you through the untouched landscapes of Upper Dolpo, home to turquoise lakes, dramatic cliffs, and serene high-altitude passes. The journey isn't just about reaching a destination; it is about connecting with the resilient **Dolpo-pa people**, exploring their Tibetan-influenced culture, and experiencing life in one of the world's most remote corners.

## BEST TIME TO TREK DOLPO SHEY GOMPA TREK

The **best time to trek the Dolpo Shey Gompa Trek** is during the **spring (May-June)** and **autumn (September-October) seasons**. These periods offer stable weather, clear skies, and comfortable temperatures, making it ideal for traversing high-altitude trails and enjoying breathtaking views of the Himalayas. In spring, the landscapes come alive with blooming rhododendrons and vibrant wildflowers, while autumn boasts crisp air and excellent visibility. If you would like to see the Shey Festival, plan your trek according to the 12-year cycle so that you may catch the once-a-generation cultural and spiritual events of the people (next in 2036). While summer (monsoon season) makes trails challenging due to rain, it can also be a quieter time to explore the region's pristine beauty. However, winter treks are not recommended due to extreme cold and heavy snowfall at higher altitudes.

## PRICE INCLUDES

- 4-night hotel in Kathmandu on a bed and breakfast basis
- 1 night hotel in Nepalganj with breakfast
- Domestic flights from Kathmandu - Nepalganj - Juphal and return airfare
- One expert trek leader or Hire Norbu along with a local with a local assistant
- All meals ( the best and healthiest food in the local tea houses) And accommodations
- Trekking permit and national park fees
- Trekking equipment -Mattresses, Member tents, and Kitchen utensils.
- Three-time meals during a trek along with Tea/coffee and snacks.
- Staff's salary, food, insurance, and clothing.
- Farewell dinner in Kathmandu.

## PRICE EXCLUDES

- Nepal Visa
- International flights
- Personal expenses and meals in Kathmandu.
- Travel insurance (It's mandatory to have for Rescue and evacuation ).
- Tips and gratitude for staff and guide.
- Donation and local entrance fee.
- Extra baggage weight on domestic flight
- Personal expenses like Alcohol, Local fabric, and Local monuments.

## FAQ

### 1. What is the Shey Festival?

Shey festival is one of the greatest festivals that comes after every 12 years according to the Tibetan Lunar calendar in the month of Dragon. At the sea level of 4200m, the festival is going to be celebrated with different rituals activities, and cultural programs. The Crystal Mountain is the main pilgrimage during this festival, circumvallating( Kora) its three phases kora the inner Kora, middle Kora, and outer Kora. Crystal Mountain is believed to be the younger brother of Kalash Mountain in Tibet and is marked by various religious ceremonies, cultural performances, masked dances, and rituals.

### 2. When is the Shey Festival in 2024?

The Shey Festival in Dolpo typically falls in late July or early August, according to the Tibetan lunar calendar. For the year 2024, the festival dates are from the 1st of September to the 4th of September, subject to confirmation by the local authorities.

### 3. Where does the Shey Festival take place?

The Shey Festival is celebrated primarily at Shey Monastery, also known as Shey Gompa at an elevation of 4200m from sea level. located in the remote Dolpo region of Nepal. The monastery is nestled amidst the breathtaking landscapes of the Himalayas.

### 4. How can I get to Dolpo for the Shey Festival?

Dolpo is a remote region in Nepal, accessible primarily by air and trekking. The nearest airport to Dolpo is in Juphal, and from there, travelers usually embark on a trek to reach Shey Monastery. It's advisable to consult with local travel agencies like Dolpo Caravan for transportation arrangements and trekking permits.

### 5. What can I expect to see at the Shey Festival?

During the Shey Festival, visitors can witness vibrant cultural performances including traditional Tibetan dances, Cham dances, and mask dances performed by monks adorned in elaborate costumes. There are also religious rituals, chanting, Circumvallation, Medical Camp in high altitude, Local Foods And Drinks, and ceremonies conducted throughout the festival.

### 6. Is accommodation available in the Shey festival?

Accommodation options at Shey Festival are limited due to its remote location. Visitors are advised to make accommodation arrangements well in advance. It's essential to be prepared for basic amenities and to carry the necessary supplies for the duration of your stay or the best way to manage is by going through a reliable and local trekking company.

### 7. What should I wear to the Shey Festival?

Visitors are encouraged to dress modestly and respectfully during the Shey Festival. Additionally, due to the high altitude and unpredictable weather conditions in Dolpo, it's recommended to wear layered clothing, and sturdy footwear, and to carry rain gear.

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### **8. Are there any cultural etiquettes I should be aware of?**

Respect for the local culture and traditions is paramount during the Shey Festival. Visitors should refrain from disturbing religious ceremonies, taking photographs without permission, or behaving disrespectfully. It's advisable to seek guidance from local residents or authorities regarding appropriate conduct.

### **9. Can I participate in the Shey Festival activities?**

While visitors are welcome to observe and enjoy the festivities, active participation in religious rituals and ceremonies is typically reserved for ordained monks and practitioners. However, everyone is encouraged to immerse themselves in the cultural experience and show appreciation for this unique celebration.

### **10. Is there an entrance fee for the Shey Festival?**

As of our last update, there was no specific entrance fee for attending the Shey Festival. However, donations to support the monastery and its ongoing activities are greatly appreciated. Visitors are encouraged to contribute according to their means to help preserve this sacred tradition.