Muktinath Yartung Festival

Trip information · Nord Extreme Himalaya Pvt. Ltd. · delightful-orange-chimpanzee.tarevirjungleresort.com · Updated 22 November 2026

DURATION	**11 Days**
DIFFICULTY	**Moderate**
MAX ALTITUDE	**3710m**
GROUP SIZE	**17 People**
BEST SEASON	**September–November and March–May**
START / END	**Kathmandu / Kathmandu**
PRICE FROM	**USD 1,825 per person**

Trip overview

The Muktinath Yartung Festival Trek is a unique cultural and spiritual journey in the Mustang region of Nepal, combining scenic trekking with one of the most vibrant traditional festivals celebrated by the Thakali and Tibetan-influenced communities. This trek offers a rare opportunity to witness horse racing, cultural performances, and religious rituals set against the dramatic backdrop of the trans-Himalayan landscape.

The journey leads travelers through the Kali Gandaki Valley to the sacred site of Muktinath Temple, one of the most important pilgrimage destinations for both Hindus and Buddhists. The highlight of the trip is the Yartung Festival, celebrated in villages such as Jomsom and surrounding Mustang settlements, where locals gather for traditional horse races, dances, and communal celebrations marking the end of the summer season.

Along the route, trekkers are rewarded with stunning views of Himalayan peaks including Dhaulagiri, Annapurna I, and Nilgiri ranges. This trek is ideal for cultural explorers, photographers, and adventure travelers seeking a deeper understanding of Mustang’s unique heritage.

Geography and Landscape

The Muktinath Yartung Festival Trek takes place in the Mustang region within Annapurna Conservation Area. The route follows the dramatic Kali Gandaki Valley, one of the deepest river gorges in the world, surrounded by towering Himalayan peaks.

The landscape is a striking blend of lush lower valleys and arid trans-Himalayan terrain. As the trek ascends, the environment becomes increasingly dry and desert-like, with wind-carved cliffs, colorful rock formations, and vast open valleys influenced by the Tibetan plateau.

Key locations along the route include Jomsom, Kagbeni, and Ranipauwa. Kagbeni is a historic village with strong Tibetan cultural influences and serves as a gateway to Upper Mustang. Jomsom acts as the main hub of the region and becomes the center of activity during the Yartung Festival.

The festival itself is a major cultural highlight, featuring traditional horse racing competitions, local dances, music, and community gatherings that celebrate the end of the farming season and honor ancestral traditions.

Climate and Best Time to Trek

The best time for the Muktinath Yartung Festival Trek is during autumn (September to November), when the Yartung Festival is typically celebrated. This season offers stable weather, clear skies, and excellent visibility of the Himalayan peaks.

Spring (March to May) is also a good trekking season with pleasant temperatures and blooming landscapes in lower elevations. Winter (December to February) is cold and can be challenging due to snow and strong winds, especially in the upper Mustang region. The monsoon season (June to August) is less suitable due to rainfall, flight delays, and reduced visibility in lower valleys.

Overall, autumn is the most recommended season as it combines ideal trekking conditions with the vibrant cultural atmosphere of the Yartung Festival.

People and Culture

The Mustang region is home to a rich mix of Thakali, Tibetan-influenced, and Himalayan communities, each contributing to the cultural diversity of the area. The Yartung Festival is one of the most important celebrations in the region, traditionally marking the end of the monsoon season and the beginning of harvest-related activities.

During the festival, locals participate in horse racing events, traditional dances, music performances, and communal gatherings that reflect the deep-rooted customs of Mustang society. The atmosphere is lively and colorful, offering visitors an authentic cultural experience rarely seen elsewhere in Nepal.

Religious life in the region is strongly influenced by both Hindu and Buddhist traditions, especially around Muktinath Temple, where pilgrims perform rituals for purification and spiritual liberation.

Villages such as Jomsom and Kagbeni showcase traditional stone architecture, prayer flags, monasteries, and ancient trade routes that once connected Nepal and Tibet. The combination of festival energy, spiritual significance, and dramatic Himalayan scenery makes the Muktinath Yartung Festival Trek a truly unique and unforgettable experience.

Highlights

- Muktinath Yartung Festival Trek – unique blend of pilgrimage and cultural celebration Yartung Festival
- Sacred Muktinath Temple visit – major Hindu-Buddhist pilgrimage site Muktinath Temple
- Horse racing festival vibe – traditional races, music, and local festivities
- Mustang landscapes – dramatic Himalayan desert scenery
- Kali Gandaki Valley trek – historic trans-Himalayan route
- Tibetan-influenced culture – ancient monasteries and heritage villages
- Jomsom region exploration – gateway town of the Mustang trek Jomsom
- Cultural immersion – experience local rituals, dances, and celebrations

Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 : Arrival in Kathmandu (1400m)

Altitude: 1400m

Stay: Hotel · Visit: Nepal · Meals: Dinner

Upon arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport, you will be warmly welcomed and transferred to your hotel in Kathmandu. The day is reserved for rest after your journey, along with preparation for the trek.

Day 2 : Trek & Permit Preparation in Kathmandu (1,400m)

Altitude: 1400m

Walk: Optional short walks (1–2 hours, Kathmandu exploration) · Stay: Hotel · Visit: Nepal · Meals: Breakfast

Today is dedicated to trek preparation and permit processing before flying to the Mustang region. You will meet your guide for a full briefing covering the itinerary, altitude awareness, cultural highlights of the Yartung Festival, and safety guidelines. This is also the time to organize your trekking gear and make any last-minute purchases if needed.

Day 3 : Flight Kathmandu to Pokhara, Overnight in Pokhara (820m)

Altitude: 1400m - 820m

Stay: Hotel · Visit: Annapurna Region · Meals: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Travel Duration - 25-minute flight or 6–7 hours drive

A scenic flight takes you from Kathmandu to Pokhara, offering breathtaking views of the Himalayas. Upon arrival, enjoy the peaceful lakeside atmosphere and relax beside Phewa Lake while preparing for the journey toward the Mustang region.

Day 4 : Drive or Fly Pokhara to Jomsom, Trek to Kagbeni (2,800m)

Altitude: 820m - 2720m - 2800m

Walk: 4–5 hours · Stay: Tea House · Visit: Annapurna Region · Meals: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Fly or drive to Jomsom and begin your trek through the dramatic Kali Gandaki Valley. The trail passes through dry, windy landscapes and traditional Mustang villages before reaching Kagbeni, a medieval settlement rich in Tibetan culture and history.

Day 5 : Trek to Muktinath (3,700m) via Marpha

Altitude: 2800m - 3700m

Walk: 5–6 hours · Stay: Tea House · Visit: Annapurna Region · Meals: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Today's trek gradually ascends through the Kali Gandaki Valley, passing Marpha, famous for its apple orchards and whitewashed houses. Continue onward toward the sacred pilgrimage site of Muktinath, a spiritual center for both Hindus and Buddhists, surrounded by stunning Himalayan views.

Day 6 : Yartung Festival – Horse Racing & Cultural Events

Altitude: 3700m

Stay: Tea House · Visit: Annapurna Region · Meals: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Festival Duration - Full Day Activities

Experience the vibrant Yartung Festival, featuring traditional horse racing, masked dances, cultural performances, and local prayer ceremonies. The atmosphere is lively as locals from across the region gather to celebrate this important Himalayan festival with music, rituals, and community gatherings.

Day 7 : Yartung Festival – Final Rituals, Prayers & Community Celebration

Altitude: 3700m

Stay: Tea House · Visit: Annapurna Region · Meals: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Festival Duration - Full Day Activities

Continue experiencing the Yartung Festival with final religious ceremonies, monastery prayers, and community celebrations. This day offers deeper cultural immersion, allowing you to interact with locals and observe traditional Mustang customs in a sacred mountain setting.

Day 8 : Rest Day & Exploration of Muktinath (3,700m)

Altitude: 3700m

Walk: Optional short hikes (2–3 hours) · Stay: Tea House · Visit: Annapurna Region · Meals: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Spend the day exploring the sacred Muktinath Temple complex and surrounding villages. Visit monasteries, prayer wheels, and local settlements while enjoying panoramic views of the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri ranges. This day also helps with relaxation and altitude acclimatization.

Day 9 : Trek Back to Kagbeni or Jomsom

Altitude: 3700m - 2800m / 2720m

Walk: 4–6 hours · Stay: Tea House · Visit: Annapurna Region · Meals: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Begin your descent through the Kali Gandaki Valley, retracing scenic trails through dry mountain landscapes and traditional Mustang villages. Depending on pace and preference, overnight will be in Kagbeni or Jomsom.

Day 10 : Flight or Drive Back to Pokhara, then Kathmandu

Altitude: 2720m - 820m - 1400m

Stay: Hotel · Visit: Nepal · Meals: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Travel Duration - 20–25 min flight + 25 min flight / 6–7 hours drive

Take a scenic flight or drive back to Pokhara, followed by a return to Kathmandu. Enjoy one last aerial view of the Himalayas and reflect on your cultural and trekking experience in the Mustang region.

Day 11 : Departure or Onward Travel (1,400m)

Altitude: 1400m

Visit: Nepal · Meals: Breakfast

Depending on your flight schedule, transfer to Tribhuvan International Airport for your onward journey. This marks the end of your Himalayan adventure filled with cultural experiences, festivals, and mountain exploration.

Altitude & temperature

Typical daytime / night temperature at each overnight stop in the best travel months. Temperatures can change with the weather.

- Day 1 · Arrival in Kathmandu · 1,400 m · day 30°C / night 20°C
- Day 2 · Trek & Permit Preparation in Kathmandu · 1,400 m · day 30°C / night 20°C
- Day 3 · Flight Kathmandu to Pokhara, Overnight in Pokhara · 1,400 m · day 30°C / night 20°C
- Day 4 · Drive or Fly Pokhara to Jomsom, Trek to Kagbeni · 820 m · day 33°C / night 24°C
- Day 5 · Trek to Muktinath via Marpha · 2,800 m · day 23°C / night 11°C
- Day 6 · Yartung Festival – Horse Racing & Cultural Events · 3,700 m · day 18°C / night 5°C
- Day 7 · Yartung Festival – Final Rituals, Prayers & Community Celebration · 3,700 m · day 18°C / night 5°C

- Day 8 · Rest Day & Exploration of Muktinath · 3,700 m · day 18°C / night 5°C
- Day 9 · Trek Back to Kagbeni or Jomsom · 3,700 m · day 18°C / night 5°C
- Day 10 · Flight or Drive Back to Pokhara, then Kathmandu · 2,720 m · day 23°C / night 12°C
- Day 11 · Departure or Onward Travel · 1,400 m · day 30°C / night 20°C

What’s included

1. Transportations

- Private/tourist vehicles for airport pickup and drop-off in Kathmandu.
- Private/tourist vehicles transfer as per itinerary to access the trailheads.
- Domestic flight included for access to the trekking starting & ending point.

2. Accommodation & Meals

- 3 Nights 3 star hotel in Kathmandu with bed & breakfast basis.
- 1 Night 3 star hotel in Pokhara with bed & breakfast basis.
- All Meals (breakfast, lunch & dinner with tea & coffee) during the trekking Period.

3. Permits

- Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) permits.
- Trekkers' Information Management System (TIMS) permits.

4. Guide & Staff

- Professional and experience License holder trekking guide salary & insurance.
- Porter salary, equipments & insurance.
- First aid medical kit for emergency support.

Not included

1. International Flights

- Airfare from your home country to Nepal (Tribhuvan International Airport, Kathmandu).
- Return airfare from Nepal (Tribhuvan International Airport, Kathmandu) to your home country.

2. Visa Fees

- Nepal entry visa fee for entering Nepal (available on arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport, Kathmandu, or through a Nepalese embassy).

3. Travel Insurance (Mandatory)

- Comprehensive travel insurance covering high-altitude trekking, emergency medical treatment, helicopter evacuation, trip cancellation, and other unforeseen circumstances.

4. Personal Expenses

- Tips, gifts, and souvenirs for trekking guides and porters.
- Personal trekking equipment and gear.
- Charges for lodge Wi-Fi, hot showers, battery charging, and laundry services.

5. Meals & Beverages

- Lunch and dinner in Kathmandu, Pokhara, and other locations where accommodation is provided in 3-star category hotels.
- Soft drinks, bottled water, alcoholic beverages, and snacks consumed during meals

Dates & prices

- 02 Mar 2027 – 12 Mar 2027 · USD 1,825 · Available
- 16 Mar 2027 – 26 Mar 2027 · USD 1,825 · Available
- 06 Apr 2027 – 16 Apr 2027 · USD 1,825 · Available
- 20 Apr 2027 – 30 Apr 2027 · USD 1,825 · Available
- 04 May 2027 – 14 May 2027 · USD 1,825 · Available

Best time to visit

Best months: May–June and September–October. Mustang and Dolpo lie in the rain-shadow of the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri ranges, so they are one of the few regions you can trek during the summer monsoon. May–June and September–October are ideal; winters are harsh and many lodges close.

What to bring — packing checklist

Clothing

- [ ] Moisture-wicking base layers (top and bottom)
- [ ] Fleece or light insulated mid-layer
- [ ] Down jacket (–10 °C rated for high trails)
- [ ] Waterproof, breathable shell jacket and trousers
- [ ] 2–3 trekking shirts and 2 pairs of trekking trousers
- [ ] Warm hat, sun hat or cap and buff
- [ ] Light liner gloves and warm insulated gloves
- [ ] Underwear and sports bras

Footwear

- [ ] Broken-in waterproof trekking boots with ankle support
- [ ] Camp shoes or sandals for teahouse evenings
- [ ] Hiking socks (4–5 pairs) and warm wool socks for nights

Equipment

- [ ] Daypack 30–35 L with rain cover
- [ ] Sleeping bag rated to –10 °C (we can provide one)
- [ ] Trekking poles
- [ ] Sunglasses with UV protection
- [ ] Duffel bag for the porter (provided by Nord Extreme)

Health & personal

- [ ] Personal medication and a small first-aid kit
- [ ] Altitude medicine (Diamox) after consulting your doctor
- [ ] Water bottles or a 2–3 L hydration bladder, purification tablets or filter
- [ ] Sunscreen SPF 50, lip balm with SPF
- [ ] Hand sanitiser, wet wipes, quick-dry towel

- [ ] Headlamp with spare batteries, power bank

Documents & money

- [ ] Passport valid for 6+ months, plus copies
- [ ] Travel insurance policy (covering helicopter evacuation)
- [ ] 4 passport photos for permits
- [ ] Cash in USD / Nepali rupees for tips, snacks and extras
- [ ] Credit or debit card

Down jackets and sleeping bags can also be rented in Kathmandu.

Essential information

Accommodation

Accommodation is provided in teahouses, lodges, and small guesthouses along the Kali Gandaki Valley and Mustang route.

In lower sections such as Tatopani and Jomsom, facilities are relatively comfortable with better services. As the trek approaches Muktinath Temple, accommodation becomes more basic due to dry Himalayan conditions and remoteness.

Rooms are generally twin-sharing with simple bedding and shared bathroom facilities.

Meals

A full-board meal system (Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner) is provided throughout the trek. Meals are freshly prepared and reflect a mix of Nepali, Thakali, and Tibetan-influenced cuisine.

Typical menu options include:

- Traditional Thakali set meals (Dal Bhat)
- Noodles, fried rice, and pasta
- Soups, potatoes, and vegetables
- Tibetan bread, pancakes, and eggs
- Tea, coffee, and butter tea

Food variety becomes simpler at higher altitudes but remains sufficient for trekking needs.

Difficulty & Physical Requirements

The Muktinath Yartung Festival Trek is classified as moderate, suitable for trekkers with average fitness levels.

Daily walking duration ranges from 4 to 7 hours, with gradual altitude gain and some high-altitude trekking conditions. No technical climbing is required.

Permits

Required permits include:

- Annapurna Conservation Area Permit (ACAP)
- TIMS Card (Trekkers' Information Management System)

If traveling via restricted Upper Mustang sections, additional permits may be required depending on the route.

Best Season

The Yartung Festival is celebrated during the monsoon/post-monsoon transition period (July–August), making it a unique seasonal cultural experience.

Season highlights:

- Horse racing and traditional competitions
- Cultural dances and local celebrations
- Green valley scenery in lower Mustang
- Spiritual pilgrimage atmosphere at Muktinath

Note: Weather may be unpredictable due to monsoon influence.

Transportation & Access

Common access routes include:

- Drive from Pokhara to Jomsom via Beni and Kali Gandaki Valley
- Flight: Pokhara -> Jomsom (weather dependent)
- Trekking route from Jomsom through Kagbeni to Muktinath Temple

Some itineraries also connect via Annapurna Circuit or Lower Mustang trails.

Safety & Acclimatization

Although the trek reaches around 3,800 meters, proper pacing and hydration are recommended.

The route is generally safe, but travelers should be prepared for:

- Strong winds in Mustang valley
- Sudden weather changes
- Moderate altitude effects

Experienced guides ensure safe navigation and festival coordination.

Travel Insurance

Recommended travel insurance should include:

- High-altitude trekking coverage (up to 4,000m+)
- Emergency medical treatment
- Helicopter evacuation coverage
- Trip cancellation and interruption protection

Additional information

Guide & Cultural Interpretation

Professional local guides provide insight into both trekking logistics and cultural heritage, including:

- Significance of the Yartung Festival in Mustang culture
- Horse racing traditions and community competitions
- Spiritual importance of Muktinath Temple
- Thakali and Tibetan-influenced cultural practices

- Local rituals, dances, and festival ceremonies

Festival Highlights

The Yartung Festival is one of the most dynamic cultural events in the Mustang region, featuring:

- Traditional horse racing competitions
- Archery and local sports events
- Cultural dances and music performances
- Community feasts and gatherings
- Religious rituals and offerings at Muktinath
- Celebration of harvest, prosperity, and unity

Essential Equipment

Recommended trekking gear includes:

- Comfortable trekking boots
- Light and warm layered clothing system
- Windproof jacket (Mustang is windy and dry)
- Sunscreen, sunglasses, and hat (strong UV exposure)
- Light gloves and buff
- Daypack (20–30L)
- Basic first aid kit and personal medications

Communication & Connectivity

Mobile network coverage is available in Jomsom and lower Mustang regions but becomes weaker toward higher villages.

Wi-Fi is available in some lodges for an additional cost, but connectivity may be limited during festival activities.

Why Choose the Muktinath Yartung Festival Trek?

This trek is ideal for travelers seeking a rare blend of culture, spirituality, and Himalayan adventure:

- Witness the vibrant Yartung Festival in Mustang
- Visit the sacred pilgrimage site of Muktinath Temple
- Experience unique horse racing and traditional celebrations
- Explore the dramatic Kali Gandaki Valley landscape
- Moderate trekking suitable for most travelers
- Combine culture, festival, and pilgrimage in one journey
- Insight into Thakali and Tibetan-influenced heritage
- One of the most unique cultural treks in Nepal

Frequently asked questions

How difficult is the Muktinath Yartung Festival?

The Muktinath Yartung Festival is graded Moderate — suitable for most active travellers. Expect 5–7 hours of walking on most days on mountain trails with plenty of ascents and descents. Regular cardio training —

hiking, running, cycling or stair climbing — for 6–8 weeks before departure makes the trip far more enjoyable.

What is the best time for the Muktinath Yartung Festival?

For the Mustang & Dolpo (rain-shadow) region the best months are May–June and September–October. Mustang and Dolpo lie in the rain-shadow of the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri ranges, so they are one of the few regions you can trek during the summer monsoon. May–June and September–October are ideal; winters are harsh and many lodges close.

What permits do I need for the Muktinath Yartung Festival?

You need the Annapurna Conservation Area Permit and, for Upper Mustang or Dolpo, the restricted area permit. Nord Extreme arranges every permit for you before the trip starts — check the "Includes" section above for exactly what is covered in the price. Just bring your passport and a few passport-size photos.

What is the accommodation like on the Muktinath Yartung Festival?

In Kathmandu you stay in a comfortable hotel; on the trail we use the best available family-run teahouses and lodges with twin-share rooms, shared or attached bathrooms and a warm dining room. Upgrades to luxury lodges are possible on popular routes such as Everest and Annapurna.

Can I book the Muktinath Yartung Festival as a private trip or join a group?

Both. You can join one of the fixed departures listed under "Dates & Prices", or book a private trip for just you, your family or friends on any date. Solo travellers are welcome — you will always have your own licensed guide.

Do I need travel insurance for the Muktinath Yartung Festival?

Yes, travel insurance is compulsory. It must cover medical treatment and emergency helicopter evacuation up to the trip’s highest altitude, plus trip cancellation. Please send us your policy details before departure.

What should I pack for the Muktinath Yartung Festival?

See the "What to bring" checklist on this page for the full list. The essentials are broken-in boots, warm layers, a down jacket, a waterproof shell, sun protection and a daypack. Down jackets and sleeping bags can be rented cheaply in Kathmandu, and a porter carries your main bag (up to 10–12 kg).

Ready to book or have a question?

Trip page:
https://delightful-orange-chimpanzee.tarevirjungleresort.com/holiday/package/muktinath-yartung-festival/

Contact our team in Kathmandu: sonam@nordextreme.com · +977 9851078748 · delightful-orange-chimpanzee.tarevirjungleresort.com