Mustang Yartung Festival

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

DURATION	**15 Days**
DIFFICULTY	**Moderate**
MAX ALTITUDE	**3810m**
GROUP SIZE	**13 People**
BEST SEASON	**August**
START / END	**Kathmandu / Kathmandu**
PRICE FROM	**USD 3,090 per person**

Trip overview

The Mustang Yartung Festival Trek is a culturally immersive Himalayan journey that combines the dramatic landscapes of the Mustang region with one of its most vibrant traditional celebrations. The Yartung Festival, celebrated in the Lower Mustang area—especially around Jomsom, Kagbeni, and nearby villages—is a centuries-old event marked by horse racing, archery, traditional dances, and communal gatherings.

This trek is ideal for travelers who want to experience the cultural heartbeat of the Mustang region while exploring its unique trans-Himalayan desert scenery. The journey offers spectacular views of the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri ranges, including peaks such as Dhaulagiri and Nilgiri, set against a backdrop of wind-sculpted cliffs and deep river valleys.

Unlike standard trekking routes, this experience is timed around the festival, making it a rare opportunity to witness authentic Himalayan traditions in a festive atmosphere.

Geography and Landscape

The Mustang Yartung Festival Trek takes place in the Lower Mustang region of north-central Nepal within Annapurna Conservation Area. The journey typically begins with a flight or drive to Jomsom, followed by trekking through the Kali Gandaki Valley, one of the deepest river gorges in the world.

The landscape is strikingly different from the green hills of Nepal. It is a high-altitude desert characterized by dry winds, barren hills, and colorful rock formations in shades of red, brown, and ochre. The Kali Gandaki River cuts through steep cliffs, creating dramatic scenery throughout the route.

Key villages along the trail include Kagbeni, Jomsom, Marpha, and surrounding settlements where the festival is actively celebrated. These villages feature traditional stone and mud-brick houses, apple orchards, monasteries, and prayer flags fluttering in the strong Himalayan wind.

During the Yartung Festival, open fields near villages transform into lively cultural grounds where horse racing competitions, archery contests, and traditional performances take place against the backdrop of snow-capped peaks.

Climate and Best Time to Trek

The best time to undertake the Mustang Yartung Festival Trek is late summer to early autumn

(August–September), when the Yartung Festival is traditionally celebrated in the Mustang region.

Unlike most trekking areas in Nepal, Mustang lies in a rain-shadow zone, meaning it receives very little monsoon rainfall. This makes it one of the few regions in Nepal suitable for trekking even during the monsoon period.

Summer and early autumn offer warm daytime temperatures, clear mountain views, and dry trails. The skies are often dramatic, with shifting clouds over the Himalayan peaks creating excellent photography conditions.

Winter (December–February) is extremely cold and windy, while spring (March–May) is also a good alternative season for trekking, though it may not coincide with the festival.

Overall, the festival timing is the main attraction, so planning the trek around August–September is essential for the full cultural experience.

People and Culture

The Mustang region is home to the Thakali and Tibetan-influenced communities, whose culture is deeply rooted in Buddhism and ancient Himalayan traditions. The Yartung Festival is one of the most important cultural events in the region, symbolizing community unity, harvest celebration, and traditional sportsmanship.

During the festival, locals gather in large numbers to participate in horse racing, archery competitions, singing, and dancing. Men and women wear traditional attire, and monasteries play a central role in organizing religious rituals and blessings.

Villages such as Jomsom, Marpha, and Kagbeni reflect a rich cultural blend of Tibetan Buddhist heritage and traditional Himalayan lifestyles. Monasteries, chortens, and prayer wheels are common throughout the region, highlighting its spiritual importance.

The Mustang Yartung Festival Trek offers a rare opportunity to witness living Himalayan culture in a spectacular natural setting, making it one of the most vibrant and memorable trekking experiences in Nepal.

Highlights

- Experience the vibrant Yartung Festival, a traditional horse-racing celebration.
- Discover the authentic culture and heritage of remote Mustang.
- Trek through dramatic desert landscapes beneath Himalayan peaks.
- Visit ancient monasteries and immerse yourself in Tibetan Buddhist traditions.
- Enjoy a unique blend of cultural exploration, adventure, and breathtaking scenery.

Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 : Arrival In Kathmandu (1400m)

Altitude: 1,400m

Stay: Hotel · Visit: Nepal · Meals: Dinner

Welcome to Nepal! Upon arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport, our representative will greet you and transfer you to your hotel. After check-in, meet your guide for a trek briefing, permit verification, gear inspection, and final preparations for your Upper Mustang adventure.

You may also explore the vibrant streets of Thamel for any last-minute shopping.

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

Altitude: 1,400m – 1,400m

Stay: Hotel · Visit: Nepal · Meals: Breakfast

Activity Duration: 4–6 hours

Today is reserved for obtaining the necessary permits for the Upper Mustang Restricted Area and Annapurna Conservation Area. Your guide will provide detailed information about the trek, local customs, weather conditions, and the Yartung Festival

Day 3 : Flight to Jomsom and Trek to Kagbeni (2,800m)

Altitude: 1,400m – 2,720m – 2,800m

Walk: 3–4 hours · Stay: Tea House · Visit: Upper Mustang Region · Meals: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Flight Duration: 20–25 minutes

Take an early morning scenic flight to Jomsom, enjoying breathtaking views of Annapurna and Dhaulagiri. Upon arrival, begin trekking along the Kali Gandaki River to Kagbeni, a fascinating medieval village marking the entrance to Upper Mustang.

Day 4 : Trek from Kagbeni to Chele (3,050m)

Altitude: 2,800m – 3,050m

Walk: 5–6 hours · Visit: Mustang Region

Follow the Kali Gandaki Valley through dramatic desert landscapes, colorful cliffs, and ancient cave formations. Cross several traditional villages before reaching Chele, a beautiful settlement perched above a canyon.

Day 5 : Trek from Chele to Syangboche (3,800m)

Altitude: 3,050m – 3,800m

Walk: 6–7 hours · Stay: Tea House · Visit: Upper Mustang Region · Meals: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Today's route crosses several passes, including Taklam La and Dajori La, offering magnificent views of Mustang's rugged terrain. Pass through Samar and visit sacred caves before arriving at Syangboche.

Day 6 : Trek from Syangboche to Geling (3,570m)

Altitude: 3,800m – 3,570m

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

Trek through dry valleys, juniper forests, and traditional settlements. Visit monasteries and mani walls while enjoying spectacular views of the surrounding Himalayan landscape.

Geling is one of Mustang’s oldest villages and offers excellent opportunities to experience local Tibetan culture.

Day 7 : Trek from Geling to Lo Manthang (3,810m)

Altitude: 3,570m – 3,810m

Walk: 6–7 hours · Stay: Tea House · Visit: Upper Mustang Region · Meals: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Continue across high desert plateaus and traditional trade routes toward the legendary walled city of Lo Manthang, the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Mustang.

Day 8 : Explore Lo Manthang (3,810m)

Altitude: 3,810m – 3,950m – 3,810m

Stay: Tea House · Visit: Upper Mustang Region · Meals: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Activity Duration: 4–6 hours

Spend the day exploring Lo Manthang's ancient monasteries, royal palace, traditional villages, and cultural landmarks. Learn about the history of the former Mustang Kingdom and prepare for the upcoming festival celebrations.

Day 9 : Yartung Festival Celebration – Day 1 (3,810m)

Altitude: 3,810m – 3,810m

Stay: Tea House · Visit: Upper Mustang Region · Meals: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Activity Duration: Full Day

Experience the opening celebrations of the Yartung Festival, one of Mustang's most vibrant cultural events. Witness colorful horse races, traditional music, local gatherings, and ceremonial activities.

Day 10 : Yartung Festival Celebration – Day 2 (3,810m)

Altitude: 3,810m – 3,810m

Stay: Tea House · Visit: Upper Mustang Region · Meals: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Activity Duration: Full Day

Enjoy another exciting day of Yartung festivities, featuring horse riding competitions, traditional dances, archery, singing performances, and community celebrations showcasing Mustang's rich heritage.

Day 11 : Yartung Festival Celebration – Day 3 (3,810m)

Altitude: 3,810m – 3,810m

Stay: Tea House · Visit: Upper Mustang Region · Meals: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Activity Duration: Full Day

Participate in the final day of Yartung Festival celebrations. This is a wonderful opportunity to interact with local people, photographers, monks, and horse riders while experiencing one of Nepal's most unique Himalayan festivals.

Day 12 : Trek from Lo Manthang to Ghami (3,520m)

Altitude: 3,810m – 3,520m

Walk: 6–7 hours · Stay: Tea House · Visit: Upper Mustang Region · Meals: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Begin the return journey through wide valleys and ancient villages. Descend gradually toward Ghami, known for its impressive mani wall and traditional Mustang architecture.

Day 13 : Trek from Ghami to Chhusang (2,980m)

Altitude: 3,520m – 2,980m

Walk: 6–7 hours · Stay: Tea House · Visit: Upper Mustang Region · Meals: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Continue descending through dramatic canyons, red cliffs, and ancient settlements. Rejoin the lower Mustang trail and arrive at Chhusang.

Day 14 : Drive to Jomsom and Fly to Kathmandu (1,400m)

Altitude: 2,980m – 2,720m – 1,400m

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

Drive Duration: 2–3 hours

Flight Duration: 20–25 minutes (Jomsom–Pokhara) + 25 minutes (Pokhara–Kathmandu)

Drive to Jomsom and take scenic flights via Pokhara back to Kathmandu. Upon arrival, transfer to your hotel and enjoy a relaxing evening.

Day 15 : Final Departure or Onward Travel

Visit: Nepal · Meals: Breakfast

According to your flight schedule, transfer to Tribhuvan International Airport for your onward journey.

We hope you leave Nepal with unforgettable memories of the ancient Kingdom of Mustang and

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 Day in Kathmandu · 1,400 m · day 30°C / night 20°C
- Day 3 · Flight to Jomsom and Trek to Kagbeni · 1,400 m · day 30°C / night 20°C
- Day 4 · Trek from Kagbeni to Chele · 2,800 m · day 23°C / night 11°C
- Day 5 · Trek from Chele to Syangboche · 3,050 m · day 21°C / night 9°C
- Day 6 · Trek from Syangboche to Geling · 3,800 m · day 18°C / night 5°C
- Day 7 · Trek from Geling to Lo Manthang · 3,570 m · day 19°C / night 6°C
- Day 8 · Explore Lo Manthang · 3,810 m · day 18°C / night 4°C
- Day 9 · Yartung Festival Celebration – Day 1 · 3,810 m · day 18°C / night 4°C
- Day 10 · Yartung Festival Celebration – Day 2 · 3,810 m · day 18°C / night 4°C
- Day 11 · Yartung Festival Celebration – Day 3 · 3,810 m · day 18°C / night 4°C
- Day 12 · Trek from Lo Manthang to Ghami · 3,810 m · day 18°C / night 4°C
- Day 13 · Trek from Ghami to Chhusang · 3,520 m · day 19°C / night 6°C
- Day 14 · Drive to Jomsom and Fly to Kathmandu · 2,980 m · day 22°C / night 10°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.

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

- Upper Mustang restricted Area permits (Issued by Department of Immigration)
- Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) permits.
- Local Government entry 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 – 16 Mar 2027 · USD 3,090 · Available
- 16 Mar 2027 – 30 Mar 2027 · USD 3,090 · Available
- 06 Apr 2027 – 20 Apr 2027 · USD 3,090 · Available
- 20 Apr 2027 – 04 May 2027 · USD 3,090 · Available
- 04 May 2027 – 18 May 2027 · USD 3,090 · 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 traditional teahouses, lodges, and guesthouses throughout the trekking

route.

Villages such as Kagbeni, Chele, Ghami, Tsarang, and Lo Manthang offer comfortable lodge accommodations with twin-sharing rooms and basic amenities.

Facilities are generally simple but comfortable, reflecting the traditional lifestyle of the Mustang region.

Meals

A full-board meal system (Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner) is provided throughout the trek.

Meals feature a combination of Nepali, Tibetan, and local Mustang cuisine.

Typical menu options include:

- Traditional Dal Bhat set meals
- Tibetan bread and chapati
- Noodles, pasta, and fried rice
- Potatoes, vegetables, and soups
- Eggs, pancakes, and porridge
- Tea, coffee, butter tea, and local beverages

During the Yartung Festival, visitors may also experience traditional local foods served during community celebrations.

Difficulty & Physical Requirements

The Mustang Yartung Festival Trek is classified as moderate, making it suitable for trekkers with average fitness and some hiking experience.

Daily walking generally ranges from 5 to 7 hours, following well-established trails through valleys, villages, and high desert terrain.

No technical climbing is required, although trekkers should be prepared for extended days of walking at moderate altitude.

Permits

Required permits include:

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

A licensed guide is mandatory for all Upper Mustang treks.

Best Season

The trek is specifically timed to coincide with the annual Yartung Festival, usually held during August.

Other suitable trekking periods include:

- Spring (March–May): Pleasant temperatures and clear mountain views
- Summer (June–August): Festival season and ideal weather due to Mustang's rain-shadow location
- Autumn (September–November): Stable weather and excellent visibility

Unlike many trekking regions in Nepal, Upper Mustang remains accessible during the monsoon season.

Transportation & Access

The journey typically begins with travel from Kathmandu to Pokhara, followed by a flight to Jomsom.

From Jomsom, the trek follows the historic Kali Gandaki Valley through Kagbeni and into Upper Mustang before reaching Lo Manthang, where the Yartung Festival celebrations take place.

Safety & Acclimatization

The trek reaches elevations of approximately 4,000–4,200 meters and requires proper acclimatization.

Important safety considerations include:

- Gradual altitude gain
- Strong afternoon winds in Mustang valleys
- Dry climate requiring adequate hydration
- Sun exposure in open desert landscapes
- Monitoring for altitude-related symptoms

Experienced guides provide assistance with acclimatization, route planning, and festival logistics.

Travel Insurance

Comprehensive travel insurance is strongly recommended and should include:

- High-altitude trekking coverage (minimum 5,000m)
- Emergency helicopter evacuation
- Medical treatment and hospitalization
- Accident and trip cancellation coverage

Additional information

Guide & Porter Services

A licensed guide is mandatory due to Upper Mustang’s restricted area status.

Porters are available to assist with luggage transportation, allowing trekkers to enjoy the journey comfortably with a light daypack.

Guides provide valuable cultural insights into Mustang’s history, traditions, and festival customs.

Festival & Cultural Highlights

The Yartung Festival is one of the most important cultural events in Mustang and offers visitors a rare opportunity to witness authentic Himalayan traditions:

- Traditional horse races and equestrian competitions
- Colorful local costumes and ceremonial dress
- Traditional Tibetan music, dances, and celebrations
- Community feasts and social gatherings
- Ancient Buddhist rituals and blessings
- Cultural interactions with local Mustang communities
- Historic atmosphere within Lo Manthang
- Unique insight into the lifestyle of the former Kingdom of Lo

Essential Equipment

Recommended trekking gear includes:

- Comfortable trekking boots
- Layered clothing system
- Warm jacket for evenings and higher elevations
- Windproof and waterproof outer layers
- Hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen
- Trekking poles
- Daypack (30–40L)
- Personal first aid kit and medications
- Reusable water bottles and hydration system

Communication & Connectivity

Mobile network coverage is available in many villages, including Lo Manthang, although signal quality may vary.

Wi-Fi services are available in some lodges and guesthouses for an additional fee.

Why Choose the Mustang Yartung Festival Trek?

The Mustang Yartung Festival Trek offers a rare combination of cultural immersion and Himalayan adventure:

- Experience the famous Yartung Horse Festival
- Witness authentic Mustang traditions and celebrations
- Explore the ancient kingdom of Lo Manthang
- Discover centuries-old Tibetan Buddhist culture
- Trek through dramatic trans-Himalayan desert landscapes
- Enjoy a unique monsoon-season trekking destination
- Experience traditional horse racing and local festivities
- Visit ancient monasteries, caves, and historic settlements

Frequently asked questions

How difficult is the Mustang Yartung Festival?

The Mustang 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 Mustang 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 Mustang 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 Mustang 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 Mustang 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 Mustang 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 Mustang 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/mustang-yartung-festival/

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