

Dhaulagiri Circuit

REGION	Dhaulagiri Himal · Myagdi
DURATION	18 days
MAX ALTITUDE	5,360 m
GRADE	Strenuous · Alpine
SEASON	Mar-May · Sep-Dec
FROM	from \$5,000

Overview

A true high-mountain circuit round the seventh-highest peak

An extremely adventurous journey around the massif of Dhaulagiri (8,167m), the world's seventh-highest peak. Remote, demanding, and largely off the beaten path, this circuit combines two high mountain passes, three legendary base camps, and some of the wildest scenery in the Nepal Himalaya - all wrapped around a full loop from Kathmandu, through Pokhara and the Myagdi District, and out through Mustang.

The Dhaulagiri Circuit Trek is one of Nepal's most committing camping treks, threading through the remote Myagdi District west of the Annapurna range. It is not a trip for the uninitiated - the route demands solid fitness, stamina, and ideally some prior trekking or basic mountaineering experience - but for those who take it on, it delivers a true expedition-style journey through forests, glacial moraine, and windswept high passes.

After a scenic flight from Kathmandu to Pokhara and a drive to Darbang, the trek proper begins along the Myagdi Khola, passing through Magar villages such as Dharapani, Muri, and Boghara before the trail turns increasingly wild and remote beyond Dobhan and Sallaghari. From here to Italian Base Camp and beyond, the trail leaves villages behind entirely - this stretch of the route is supported by tents and a trekking kitchen crew rather than teahouses, giving the trek the feel of a genuine mountaineering expedition.

Acclimatization days are built in at Italian Base Camp, Glacier Camp, and Dhaulagiri Base Camp before the trek's two big set-pieces: French Pass (5,360m), leading into the stark, high-altitude beauty of Hidden Valley, and Dhampus Pass (5,244m), which drops the route back down toward Alu Bari and, eventually, Marpha - a village worth savoring for its orchards and locally distilled apple brandy. From Jomsom, a short flight returns trekkers to Pokhara and on to Kathmandu, with a free day to explore the valley's temples and stupas before final departure.

A Note on Trek Style: Teahouse and Camping Combined

This is not a pure teahouse trek. Villages with lodges thin out beyond Sallaghari, and from Italian Base Camp through Glacier Camp, Dhaulagiri Base Camp, and Hidden Valley, the group sleeps in expedition-style tents supported by a dedicated cook and kitchen crew. Meals at these high camps are freshly prepared on the trail - porridge, eggs, and Tibetan bread for breakfast; dal bhat, pasta, noodles, and soups for lunch and dinner - with unlimited tea, coffee, and boiled water. There's no electricity at these camps, so a headtorch and spare batteries (or a small solar charger) are essential from the point, the trail leaves the last village until it reaches Marpha.

Permits

Two permits are required for this route:

-Annapurna Conservation Area Permit (ACAP) - approx. USD 25 per person, valid for the duration of the trek

-Dhaulagiri Restricted Area Permit - approx. USD 20 per person, per week (two weeks' worth required for this itinerary)

Both are arranged in advance using your passport and passport-sized photos and should be carried with you at all times - they're checked at entry points such as Beni and at intervals along the trail.

Highlights

- Sightseeing in Kathmandu and Pokhara Valley.
- A scenic drive from Pokhara to Darbang, then on foot along the Myagdi Khola.
- Dramatic shift in scenery, from the Dhaulagiri region's deep river gorges to the arid, high-desert landscapes of Mustang.
- Trekking beside the Kali Gandaki Gorge, one of the deepest gorges on Earth.
- Remote, traditional villages: Dharapani, Phaliyagaon, Muri, Boghara, Dobhan.
- Sweeping views of Dhaulagiri I, II, III, and V from Italian Base Camp and Glacier Camp.
- The Chhonbardan (Chhongardan) Glacier en route to Dhaulagiri Base Camp.
- A full 360-degree panorama of the Dhaulagiri range from Dhaulagiri Base Camp itself.
- Crossing two formidable passes: French Pass (5,360m) and Dhampus Pass (5,244m).
- The serene, high-altitude solitude of Hidden Valley.
- An optional add-on ascent of Dhampus Peak (6,012m) for those with mountaineering experience.
- Immersion in Magar, Gurung, Thakali, and Chhetri village life.
- Marpha, famous for its apple orchards and locally made apple brandy.
- Jomsom, the capital of the Mustang district, and a short scenic flight back to Pokhara.

Itinerary

Day 1 - Arrival in Kathmandu (1,400m / 4,592ft)

On arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport, you'll be met and transferred to your hotel, with time to rest and refresh. Later, a short trip briefing will walk you through what to expect over the coming three weeks, followed by some free time to explore the surrounding streets before an early night ahead of tomorrow's flight.

- Overnight: Hotel in Kathmandu

Day 2 - Fly from Kathmandu to Pokhara (800m / 2,624ft), Flight duration: approx. 25 minutes

A short, scenic morning flight carries you over the foothills to Pokhara, Nepal's lake city, with fine views of the Annapurna range along the way. The rest of the day is free - a good opportunity for a relaxed wander along the lakeside, or simply to rest before the trek begins.

- Overnight: Hotel in Pokhara

Day 3 - Drive from Pokhara to Darbang (1,110m / 3,640ft), Trek to Dharapani (1,560m / 5,120ft) Driving: 5

The drive from Pokhara follows the road through Beni Bazaar, at the confluence of the Kali Gandaki and Myagdi rivers, then continues on to Darbang, passing small settlements including Tatopani and Babiyachaur along the way. At Darbang, permits are checked at the police post, and the trek begins in earnest, following the Myagdi Khola through Magar villages to Dharapani.

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Overnight: Lodge in Dharapani

Day 4 - Trek from Dharapani to Muri (1,720m / 5,650ft) Duration: 6-7 hours

A steep downhill start, followed by several stream crossings and a climb to a ridge and pass at 1,607m - a fine viewpoint over Mt. Ghustung South. From here the trail winds through dense jungle past the villages of Mahatala and Naura before reaching Boghara, known for its traditional stone-roofed houses and views of Manapathi Peak.

- Overnight: Lodge in Boghara

Day 5 - Trek from Muri to Boghara / Bagar (2,080m / 6,830ft), Duration: 6-7 hours

A steep downhill start, followed by several stream crossings and a climb to a ridge and pass at 1,607m - a fine viewpoint over Mt. Ghustung South. From here the trail winds through dense jungle past the villages of Mahatala and Naura before reaching Boghara, known for its traditional stone-roofed houses and views of Manapathi Peak.

- Overnight: Lodge in Boghara

Day 6 - Trek from Boghara to Dobhan Kharka (2,520m / 8,270ft) Duration: 5-6 hours

The trail follows a forested path along the Myagdi River, with a few seasonal tea shops offering welcome rest stops. Beyond this point, human settlements grow scarce for several days as the route continues in genuine isolation, crossing rocky terrain to Lipsaba (Lipse) before climbing through forest to Dobhan.

- Overnight: Camp/lodge at Dobhan Kharka

Day 7 - Trek from Dobang to Sallaghari (2,820m / 9,250ft) Duration: 5-6 hours

Dense jungle lines the riverside trail out of Dobang, crossed at points by wooden bridges over the Myagdi Khola. Pastures grazed by sheep, goats, and cattle give way to a steep climb through several landslide-prone sections, with a striking waterfall marking the approach to Sallaghari.

- Overnight: Camp at Sallaghari

Day 8 - Trek from Sallaghari to Italian Base Camp (3,660m / 12,007ft) Duration: 5-6 hours

A steady climb through thick jungle and increasingly open vegetation, crossing the terminal moraine of a glacier along the way. As the trail nears Italian Base Camp, treeline gives way to heather and juniper scrub, and the temperature drops noticeably. The reward on arrival: dramatic close-up views of Dhaulagiri I (8,172m) and its neighboring peaks.

- Overnight: Camping at Italian Base Camp

Day 9 - Acclimatization Day at Italian Base Camp

A rest day built in for altitude adjustment. An optional short hike along the lateral moraine leads toward a small ice cave, with close views of Dhaulagiri's west face - and a chance of spotting blue sheep grazing on the surrounding cliffs.

- Overnight: Camping at Italian Base Camp

Day 10 - Trek from Italian Base Camp to Glacier Camp (4,200m / 13,780ft) Duration: 5-6 hours

The trail climbs a grassy slope behind camp to the edge of the glacial moraine, continuing over a steep, sometimes slippery section to Swiss Base Camp before easing onto flatter, rock-strewn terrain. Along the way, the Chhonbardan Glacier comes into view, framed by Dhaulagiri, Dhampus Peak, Manapathi Peak, and Tsaurabong Peak.

- Overnight: Camping at Glacier Camp

Day 11 - Acclimatization Day at Glacier Camp

Another rest day to adjust to the altitude and take in the surroundings. An early hike around the glacier reveals a waterfall tumbling down the valley wall and a scattering of small, ice-covered lakes - good preparation, physically and mentally, for the push to Dhaulagiri Base Camp.

- Overnight: Camping at Glacier Camp

Day 12 - Trek from Glacier Camp to Dhaulagiri Base Camp (4,750m / 15,590ft) Duration: 5-6 hours

One of the trek's major milestones. The trail climbs steeply up the central moraine, following the natural curve of the glacier, with a striking view of Tukucho Peak opening up partway through the day. The valley eventually widens to a broad junction between Dhaulagiri and Tukucho before a short final stretch over rocky terrain to Dhaulagiri Base Camp, where prayer flags snap in the wind beneath the icefall of the Dhaulagiri massif.

- Overnight: Camping at Dhaulagiri Base Camp

Day 13 - Acclimatization Day at Dhaulagiri Base Camp

Having climbed above 4,500m, a further rest day here is a wise precaution against altitude sickness. An optional short climb just above camp offers superb views over the full Dhaulagiri range, or you can simply rest and take in the surroundings at your own pace.

- Overnight: Camping at Dhaulagiri Base Camp

Day 14 - Trek from Dhaulagiri Base Camp to Hidden Valley (5,140m / 16,870ft) via French Pass (5,360m / 17,580ft)

One of the longest and most demanding days of the trek. The top of French Pass delivers a sweeping 360-degree panorama - Dhaulagiri, Tukucho Peak, Thapa Peak, Dhampus Peak, Mukut Himal, and Tashi Kang among the peaks on show. The descent into Hidden Valley is steep and can be slippery underfoot, crossing gravel, loose dirt, and patches of snow.

- Overnight: Camping in Hidden Valley

Day 15 - Exploration Day in Hidden Valley (5,140m / 16,870ft)

A day to recover from the pass crossing and take in one of the trek's most remote corners. A short hike to a ridge on the valley's north-western side gives dramatic views over Dhaulagiri, Nilgiri, and Annapurna. Trekkers with mountaineering experience have the option of an additional ascent of Dhampus Peak (6,012m) - this requires an extra climbing permit and dedicated arrangements.

- Overnight: Camping in Hidden Valley

Day 16 - Trek from Hidden Valley to Alu Bari (3,900m / 12,780ft) via Dhampus Pass (5,244m / 17,200ft), Dhaulagiri Base Camp

The trek's second high pass, and a genuine test of endurance after two demanding weeks. Prayer flags mark the top of Dhampus Pass, with fine views of Tukucho Peak, Dhampus Peak, and the Annapurna range. The trail then descends through forest to Alu Bari.

- Overnight: Camping/lodge at Alu Bari

Day 17 - Trek from Alu Bari to Jomsom (2,670m / 8,760ft) Duration: 4-5 hours

A gentler final trekking day through oak and pine forest - good territory for birdlife - opening out to small hamlets and farmland. The trail passes through Marpha, celebrated for its picturesque lanes and apple orchards, with a last glimpse of Dhaulagiri on the horizon before the trail gains a little elevation to reach Jomsom, where Thakali food and culture make for a well-earned final trail night.

- Overnight: Lodge in Jomsom

Day 18 - 18 Fly from Jomsom to Pokhara, then on to Kathmandu Flight duration: approx. 50 minutes each way

An early flight lifts off from Jomsom with fine aerial views of the surrounding peaks, landing in Pokhara before a connecting flight back to Kathmandu. The rest of the day is free to rest or explore nearby streets and cafés.

- Overnight: Hotel in Kathmandu

Day 19 - Free Day in Kathmandu

A day to recover and explore at your own pace. Kathmandu Valley's major religious sites - Pashupatinath (a sacred Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Shiva), Boudhanath (one of the largest stupas in the world), and Swayambhunath (the "monkey temple") - are all worth visiting. The evening

is free for last-minute souvenir shopping.

- Overnight: Hotel in Kathmandu

Day 20 - Final Departure from Kathmandu

A transfer to Tribhuvan International Airport is arranged according to your flight schedule, bringing the trek to a close. Trekkers with extra time may want to extend their stay for a Kathmandu Valley cultural tour, a Chitwan jungle safari, paragliding, or rafting, or to continue on to neighboring Bhutan, India, or Tibet.

What's included

- Airport transfers in Kathmandu
- Kathmandu-Pokhara flight and Pokhara-Darbang drive
- Return flights from Jomsom to Pokhara and on to Kathmandu
- Hotel accommodation in Kathmandu and Pokhara as per the itinerary
- Teahouse/lodge accommodation in trail villages
- Camping accommodation (tents, kitchen and dining tents) at the high camps beyond Sallaghari
- Full board (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) throughout the trek, plus afternoon tea at the high camps
- Boiled/treated drinking water on the trail
- Government-licensed English-speaking trekking guide
- Dedicated cook and kitchen crew for the camping sections
- Required porters to carry group and camping equipment
- Annapurna Conservation Area Permit (ACAP)
- Dhaulagiri Restricted Area Permit
- Trekkers' Information Management System (TIMS) card
- Tents, sleeping mats, and camping equipment for the high camps
- Basic first aid kit
- Rescue coordination in case of emergency

Not included

- International flight costs
- Nepal entry visa fee
- Travel insurance covering high-altitude emergency evacuation (compulsory)
- Lunch and dinner in Kathmandu and Pokhara (breakfast only is included at hotels)
- Personal expenses: laundry, Wi-Fi, battery charging, hot showers, snacks, and drinks
- Tips for guide, cook, and porters
- Personal trekking gear and clothing (sleeping bags and down jackets can be rented in Kathmandu)
- The optional Dhamphus Peak climbing permit and associated arrangements, if you choose to attempt the ascent
- Any additional costs arising from delays, weather, illness, or itinerary changes beyond reasonable control

Available departures

- 15 Mar 2026
- 02 Apr 2026

- 21 Apr 2026
- 12 May 2026
- 18 Sep 2026
- 06 Oct 2026