

Upper Mustang Tiji Festival Trek

REGION	Trans-Himalaya · Lo Manthang
DURATION	15 days
MAX ALTITUDE	3,800 m
GRADE	Moderate
SEASON	Mar-May · Sep-Dec
FROM	from \$5,000

Overview

The walled city of the old salt road

The Tiji Festival is one of Nepal's most vivid and spiritually rich celebrations, held annually within the ancient walled city of Lo Manthang, capital of Upper Mustang. This journey carries you from Kathmandu through Pokhara and into the remote, restricted region of Upper Mustang - a high-altitude desert landscape of eroded cliffs, whitewashed monasteries, and centuries-old trade routes along the Kali Gandaki River.

Trekking through villages such as Kagbeni, Chele, Syangbochen, and Ghiling, you'll experience the raw beauty and deep Tibetan cultural roots of the region before arriving in Lo Manthang in time for the festival's opening ceremony. Over three unforgettable days, you'll witness the sacred Tiji drama unfold, performed by monks of the Chhoede Monastery amid fluttering prayer flags and echoing horns. Following the celebration, the journey returns via Jomsom and Pokhara before concluding in Kathmandu, leaving you with a rare, unforgettable encounter with one of the Himalayas' most sacred living festivals.

About the Tiji Festival

The word "Tiji" is short for "Tenchi," meaning Prayer for World Peace. This three-day Tibetan Buddhist festival tells the story of Dorje Jono, a deity who saved Mustang from destruction by defeating a demon threatening the region. The festival showcases sacred masked dances known as "Cham," performed by monks of the Chhoede Monastery in Lo Manthang, with each day representing a different act of the legendary battle:

- Day 1 - Tsa Chham: Monks perform dances depicting the beginning of evil in the region
- Day 2 - Nga Chham: The dances portray Dorje Jono's attempts to defeat the demon
- Day 3 - Rha Chham: Victory is declared as the demon is banished and peace is restored

Surrounded by ancient monasteries and chanting lamas, the atmosphere is mystical, immersive, and unforgettable - a rare opportunity to witness a centuries-old spiritual performance in one of the most remote corners of the world.

Lo Manthang itself sits at around 3,800 meters and is known for its whitewashed mud-brick palaces, centuries-old monasteries, and distinct Tibetan architecture, largely unchanged for generations due to the region's isolation.

Tiji Festival 2027 dates: 1st-3rd June 2027 (as per the Tibetan lunar calendar)

Highlights

- Witness the legendary Tiji Festival in Lo Manthang, a rare three-day Tibetan Buddhist celebration of masked "Cham" dances performed by monks of the Chhoede Monastery.
- Trek through the restricted region of Upper Mustang, a Trans-Himalayan desert landscape of eroded cliffs and ancient trade routes.
- Explore Lo Manthang, the ancient walled capital of Mustang, with its whitewashed mud-brick palaces and centuries-old monasteries.
- Visit culturally rich villages along the trail, including Kagbeni, Chele, Syangbochen, Ghiling, and Tsarang.
- Take in panoramic Himalayan views, including the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri ranges, along high mountain passes.
- Enjoy scenic mountain flights over the Annapurna range, connecting Kathmandu, Pokhara, and Upper Mustang.
- Experience authentic Tibetan Buddhist culture through architecture, cuisine, and daily rural life in one of Nepal's most remote regions.

Itinerary

Day 1 - Arrival in Kathmandu (1,400 m)

Upon arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport, our representative will greet you and transfer you to your hotel in Thamel. After check-in and some rest, take a short walk to explore the neighborhood. In the evening, we hold a detailed trek briefing and introduce your guide ahead of the journey.

- Overnight stay at hotel in Kathmandu.

Day 2 - Kathmandu Sightseeing and Trek Preparation

Today we explore the cultural heart of Kathmandu Valley, visiting UNESCO World Heritage Sites including Swayambhunath (the Monkey Temple), Boudhanath Stupa, and Pashupatinath Temple. The afternoon is reserved for final gear checks, last-minute shopping, and permit arrangements ahead of the trek.

- Overnight stay at hotel in Kathmandu.
- Breakfast included.

Day 3 - Fly to Pokhara (827 m) and Drive to Kagbeni (2,800 m)

An early morning flight takes us from Kathmandu to Pokhara, offering fine views of the Annapurna range along the way. From Pokhara, we continue by private jeep to Kagbeni - a village of medieval alleyways, prayer wheels, and a striking blend of Tibetan and Nepali tradition, marking the gateway to Upper Mustang.

- Overnight stay at a teahouse in Kagbeni.
- Breakfast, lunch, and dinner included.

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

After checking permits at the regional checkpoint, we enter the restricted area of Upper Mustang. The trail climbs through eroded cliffs and stark terrain, passing Tangbe village with its maze of alleys and apple orchards, before reaching Chele - a quiet village perched above steep gorges, surrounded by dramatic, barren scenery.

- Overnight stay at a teahouse in Chele.
- Breakfast, lunch, and dinner included.

Day 5 - Trek from Chele to Syangbochen (3,800 m)

Today's trail is dramatic, winding through deep canyons, suspension bridges, and rocky ridgelines. We climb over the Taklam La and Dajori La passes, descending into the villages of Samar and Bhena, before reaching Syangbochen - a small settlement offering expansive views and a restful night at altitude.

- Overnight stay at a teahouse in Syangbochen.
- Breakfast, lunch, and dinner included.

Day 6 - Trek from Syangbochen to Ghiling (3,570 m)

Crossing the Yamda La (3,850 m) and Nyi La (4,010 m) passes, the landscape opens into high desert plains, with magnificent views of the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri ranges on clear days. A gradual descent brings us into Ghiling, where traditional mud-brick houses and ancient chortens create a timeless Tibetan atmosphere.

- Overnight stay at a teahouse in Ghiling.
- Breakfast, lunch, and dinner included.

Day 7 - Trek from Ghiling to Tsarang (3,560 m)

We walk past crumbling monasteries, barley fields, and mani walls en route to Tsarang, home to one of Mustang's most revered gompas and an old royal palace. It's a fitting introduction to the deep Buddhist faith that will take center stage during the festival ahead.

- Overnight stay at a teahouse in Tsarang.
- Breakfast, lunch, and dinner included.

Day 8 - Trek from Tsarang to Lo Manthang (3,800 m)

A short but rewarding day. After crossing the Lo La Pass, we're greeted with our first panoramic view of Lo Manthang - Upper Mustang's iconic walled capital. Its whitewashed mud-brick structures, fluttering prayer flags, and medieval alleyways make for an unforgettable arrival, like stepping into a living museum of Tibetan culture.

- Overnight stay at a teahouse in Lo Manthang.
- Breakfast, lunch, and dinner included.

Day 9 - Tiji Festival - Day 1 (Tsa Chham)

The sacred Tiji Festival begins today with the Tsa Chham ceremony, symbolizing the arrival of evil forces threatening the region. Monks perform intricate masked dances accompanied by deep chants, horns, and drums, transforming the royal palace courtyard into a vibrant spiritual arena filled with locals in ceremonial dress.

- Overnight stay at a teahouse in Lo Manthang.
- Breakfast, lunch, and dinner included.

Day 10 - Tiji Festival - Day 2 (Nga Chham)

On the festival's second day, the deity Dorje Jono confronts the demon threatening Mustang. The energy in the square intensifies as performers depict the mythical struggle, the air thick with incense, tradition, and reverence - a profound cultural and spiritual experience.

- Overnight stay at a teahouse in Lo Manthang.
- Breakfast, lunch, and dinner included.

Day 11 - Tiji Festival - Day 3 (Rha Chham)

The festival's final day celebrates the banishment of evil and the restoration of harmony. The concluding ritual, Rha Chham, features dramatic sequences, sacred chants, and symbolic victory, closing with blessings for peace, fertility, and good fortune.

- Overnight stay at a teahouse in Lo Manthang.

- Breakfast, lunch, and dinner included.

Day 12 - Drive from Lo Manthang to Jomsom (2,700 m)

Bidding farewell to Lo Manthang, we drive back to Jomsom by jeep, retracing the route through Mustang's dramatic high-desert scenery. It's a chance to take in the landscape one final time as the spiritual high of the festival settles in.

- Overnight stay at a teahouse in Jomsom.
- Breakfast, lunch, and dinner included.

Day 13 - Drive from Jomsom to Pokhara (827 m)

We continue by road from Jomsom back to Pokhara, descending from the high Mustang plateau through the Kali Gandaki valley. The rest of the day is free for leisure - explore the Lakeside area, relax by Phewa Lake, or enjoy a well-earned massage after the trek.

- Overnight stay at hotel in Pokhara.
- Breakfast included.

Day 14 - Fly from Pokhara to Kathmandu

A scenic short flight returns us to Kathmandu, offering one final aerial glimpse of the Annapurna range. After check-in, the rest of the day is free to shop for souvenirs, revisit favorite landmarks, or enjoy a farewell dinner with fellow travelers.

- Overnight stay at hotel in Kathmandu.
- Breakfast included.

Day 15 - Final Departure from Kathmandu

Depending on your flight schedule, our team will transfer you to the international airport. You'll leave Nepal with more than photographs - with lifelong memories of Mustang's mystic landscapes and the unforgettable Tiji Festival.

- Breakfast included.

What's included

- Upper Mustang restricted permits
- Licensed guide + support crew
- Teahouse accommodation
- All ground transport & domestic flights
- Pre-trip briefing & gear check
- 5% funds village schools & health posts

Not included

- International flights to/from Nepal
- Travel & high-altitude insurance
- Personal trekking & climbing gear
- Nepal entry visa fees
- Tips for guides and porters
- Personal expenses (drinks, wifi, laundry)

Available departures

- 15 Mar 2026
- 02 Apr 2026
- 21 Apr 2026
- 12 May 2026
- 18 Sep 2026
- 06 Oct 2026