

Journey to Phoksundo Lake: A Hidden Paradise in the Himalayas

Overview:

Shey Phoksundo Lake Trek is one of Nepal's most spectacular and culturally rich Himalayan journeys, exploring the remote and untouched landscapes of the Dolpo region. Centered around the breathtaking Phoksundo Lake, this trek offers a rare combination of dramatic mountain scenery, ancient Tibetan Buddhist heritage, and the raw beauty of one of Nepal's most isolated Himalayan regions.

Located within the Shey Phoksundo National Park, Phoksundo Lake is renowned for its mesmerizing turquoise waters, surrounded by rugged cliffs, snow-capped peaks, and pristine alpine landscapes. The lake holds great spiritual significance for local communities and is considered one of Nepal's most beautiful natural wonders. Its unique color, peaceful surroundings, and remote location make it a truly unforgettable Himalayan destination.

The trek follows remote mountain trails through the culturally rich Dolpo region, where traditional lifestyles and centuries-old Buddhist traditions remain deeply preserved. The route passes through ancient villages, Buddhist monasteries, mani walls, prayer flags, and high-altitude landscapes shaped by Tibetan influences. The journey provides a rare opportunity to experience a way of life that has remained largely unchanged for generations.

Unlike the more popular trekking routes of Nepal, the Shey Phoksundo Lake Trek offers a genuine wilderness experience with fewer crowds and untouched natural surroundings. The trail crosses diverse landscapes, from forested valleys and rivers to barren alpine terrain, revealing the remarkable geographic and cultural diversity of western Nepal.

The highlight of the trek is reaching the shores of Phoksundo Lake, where the peaceful atmosphere, crystal-clear waters, and dramatic mountain backdrop create one of the most iconic scenes in the Himalayas. The combination of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and remote adventure makes this trek a truly unique experience for those seeking something beyond the classic trekking routes.

Shey Phoksundo Lake Trek is more than a journey to a beautiful lake; it is an exploration of Nepal's hidden Himalayan wilderness. With careful preparation, proper acclimatization, and experienced local support, this trek offers an unforgettable adventure through one of Nepal's most extraordinary and least-explored regions.

Quick facts:

Cost: USD per Person

Destinations: Nepalgunj / Chhepka / Jharana Hotel / Phoksundo Lake / Jhupal

Duration: 12 Days

Trek starting point: Jhupal

Trek ending point: Jhupal

Grade: Moderate

Transportation: tourist coach / domestic flight

Accommodation: tea house, tourist standard hotel in Kathmandu

Max altitude: 3,640 m

Activities: Hiking & trekking, sightseeing

Best seasons: March, April, May, September, October and November

Please do not forget to carry the following items with you:

- Passport size Photos
- Torchlight / Headlight
- Warm cap
- Sunglass and sun-cream
- Sleeping bag (light weight)
- Trekking sticks
- Dry fruits and chocolates
- Down jacket
- Trekking trousers
- Trekking shoes (No any converse and Vans shoes)

PROGRAM ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival at Kathmandu / Meet and Greet

Arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport. Our Staff member meets you and transfers you to the hotel.

Overnight stay at a hotel.

Day 2: Kathmandu Sightseeing and preparation for trekking

After breakfast at the hotel, our guide will meet you at the hotel and provide a briefing about the upcoming trek, including the itinerary, safety information, and important preparations. He will also assist you with all the necessary trekking formalities and paperwork.

After the briefing, we will go on a sightseeing tour around the Kathmandu Valley, visiting famous UNESCO World Heritage Sites such as Boudhanath Stupa, one of the largest Buddhist stupas in the world, and Swayambhunath Stupa, also known as the Monkey Temple. On this day, we will also arrange the TIMS card and other required permits for the trek. In the evening, you will have time to prepare your trekking gear and make the final arrangements for the journey ahead.

Overnight stay at a hotel.

Day 3: Fly from Kathmandu to Nepalgunj (150 m): 50 – 60 minutes

After an early breakfast, we will take a scenic flight from Kathmandu (1,400 m / 4,600 ft) to Nepalgunj (150 m / 492 ft), a vibrant gateway city in Nepal's western plains. The flight, lasting approximately 50 – 60 minutes, offers beautiful aerial views of rolling hills, winding rivers, and the vast Terai landscape stretching toward the horizon. On clear days, distant Himalayan peaks provide a stunning backdrop throughout the journey.

As we descend into Nepalgunj, the scenery shifts dramatically from the cool hills of Kathmandu to the warm subtropical plains below. Upon arrival, we will transfer to our hotel and spend the night in Nepalgunj, allowing time to relax and experience the city's lively atmosphere and unique cultural blend before continuing our journey into western Nepal. Overnight stay at a hotel.

Day 4: Fly from Nepalgunj to Jhupal (2,475 m) and Trek to Dunai (2,140 m) | 3 – 4 hours

After an early breakfast, we will take a spectacular 35 minute flight from Nepalgunj to Jhupal (2,475 m / 8,120 ft), the gateway to the remote Dolpo region. The flight offers breathtaking aerial views of western Nepal's rugged hills, deep valleys, and snow-capped Himalayan peaks, providing an unforgettable start to the journey.

Upon landing at the small mountain airstrip in Jhupal, we will begin our trek toward Dunai (2,140 m / 7,020 ft), which takes approximately 3 – 4 hours. The trail descends gradually through terraced fields, traditional villages, and pine forests, following the scenic Thuli Bheri River along the way. By late afternoon, we arrive in Dunai, a peaceful Himalayan town where we will spend the night surrounded by the natural beauty and tranquility of the Dolpo region. Overnight stay at a teahouse.

Day 5: Trek from Dunai to Chhepka (2,720 m) | 5 – 6 hours

We begin our journey from Dunai (2,140 m / 7,020 ft) and set out toward Chhepka (2,720 m / 8,924 ft), a trek of approximately 5 to 6 hours. The trail follows the Thuli Bheri River, gradually leaving the small administrative town behind as we enter a quieter stretch of valley lined with forested hills and scattered farmland.

Along the way, we pass through several small riverside settlements such as Sulighat and Runggad, where traditional stone houses, small teahouses, and suspension bridges offer brief glimpses of local life. The trail also passes the entrance checkpoint area of Shey Phoksundo National Park, marking the transition into one of Nepal's most protected and remote regions.

As the journey continues, the path gently ascends through pine forests and river bends, with the sound of the Thuli Bheri accompanying much of the walk. By afternoon, we arrive at Chhepka, a quiet settlement surrounded by green hills and dense forest, offering a peaceful resting place before continuing deeper into the Phoksundo region. Overnight stay at teahouse.

Day 6: Trek from Chhepka to Jharana Hotel (3,370 m) | 4 – 6 hours

We leave Chhepka (2,720 m / 8,924 ft) and continue our journey toward Jarana Hotel, a trek of approximately 4 to 6 hours. The trail follows the Phoksundo Khola through dense pine and cedar forests, staying close to the river as we gradually move deeper into the valley.

Soon after leaving Chhepka, we cross Suligad Bridge, an important landmark that marks the gateway into Shey Phoksundo National Park. From here, the surroundings become noticeably more remote, with fewer settlements and increasingly wild forested terrain. The route continues through shaded paths, gentle ascents, and river-side walking, with the sound of flowing water accompanying much of the journey.

Along the way, we pass Rechi (2,940 m), a small scenic settlement and an important resting point used by trekkers and mule caravans on the Phoksundo route. As the valley narrows further into forested slopes, we reach Jarana Hotel by afternoon, a simple mountain lodge set in a quiet natural setting, offering a peaceful stop before continuing toward Phoksundo Lake. Overnight stay at a teahouse.

Day 7: Trek to Ringmogaon (Phoksundo) (3,640 m) | 3 – 4 hours

Departing from Jharana Hotel, we make our way toward Ringmo village (3,640 m / 11,942 ft), a short but scenic trek of approximately 3 to 4 hours. The trail gradually ascends through pine and juniper forests, with rocky sections and open stretches that begin to reveal the dramatic landscapes of the Phoksundo region.

Along the route, occasional viewpoints open up to distant cliffs and alpine scenery, offering a first glimpse of the wider lake basin as we approach higher ground. The atmosphere becomes noticeably quieter and more pristine, with the trail gently transitioning into the upper valley environment.

By late morning or early afternoon, we arrive at Ringmo village (3,600 m / 11,811 ft), a traditional settlement situated just above the shores of Phoksundo Lake. With its stone-built houses, prayer flags, and strong Tibetan Buddhist heritage, Ringmo offers a peaceful and culturally rich introduction to one of Nepal's most iconic alpine lakes. Overnight stay at tented camp near Phoksundo.

Day 8: Explore Phoksundo Lake

Today is reserved for exploration and acclimatization at Phoksundo Lake (3,640 m / 11,942 ft), allowing time to experience one of Nepal's most breathtaking alpine landscapes at a relaxed and immersive pace. The morning begins in Ringmo village, where traditional stone houses, prayer flags, and the surrounding cliffs reflect the deep Tibetan Buddhist culture of the region. A visit to Tshowa Gompa, an ancient monastery believed to be around 900 years old, offers a meaningful insight into the spiritual heritage of Dolpo. Located above the village, this sacred site remains an important place of worship for the local community and adds strong cultural depth to the journey.

Later, a short hike takes us to a viewpoint above Phoksundo Lake, where we are rewarded with sweeping views of its striking turquoise waters set against dramatic cliffs and barren alpine slopes. The contrast of colors and scale makes this one of the most unforgettable sights in the entire Dolpo region.

The rest of the day is free for lakeside walks, photography, and quiet reflection in this serene high-altitude setting. Overnight stay at tented camp or lodge near Phoksundo Lake.

Day 9: Trek to Chhepka (2,720 m) | 6 – 7 hours

We leave the serene shores of Phoksundo Lake (3,640 m / 11,942 ft) behind and begin our return journey toward Chhepka (2,720 m / 8,924 ft), a long trek of approximately 6 to 7 hours. The trail retraces its path through the dramatic valley landscapes, gradually descending from the alpine basin into forested terrain.

Along the way, we pass Ringmo village and its surrounding viewpoints once more, offering final glimpses of the turquoise lake framed by towering cliffs. As we continue downward, the scenery slowly transforms from barren high-altitude slopes into greener forests, with pine and juniper lining the trail and the sound of the Phoksundo Khola accompanying much of the walk.

The route passes familiar sections such as Rechi and other forest resting points, where trekkers and mule caravans often pause along the journey. By late afternoon, we arrive back at Chhepka, a peaceful riverside settlement surrounded by forested hills, where we settle in for the night after a rewarding descent from the Phoksundo region. Overnight stay at a teahouse.

Day 10: Trek to Juphal (2,457 m) | 5 – 6 hours

On our final day of trekking, we set out from Chhepka (2,720 m / 8,924 ft) toward Juphal (2,475 m / 8,120 ft), a journey of approximately 5 to 6 hours. The trail follows the Phoksundo Khola through forested valleys, river bends, and scattered rural settlements, creating a peaceful and reflective walk back through the lower Dolpo region.

Along the way, we pass Rechi (2,940 m), a small resting point used by trekkers and mule caravans, before continuing through shaded pine forests and gently undulating terrain. As we descend further, the surroundings gradually open into cultivated land, with terraced fields and village life becoming more prominent.

By afternoon, we arrive at Jhupal, the gateway town of Dolpo and home to the local airstrip, marking the end of our trekking journey through this remote Himalayan region. Overnight stay at teahouse in Jhupal.

Day 11: Fly from Juphal to Nepalgunj and Continue to Kathmandu

After an early breakfast, we take a short flight from Jhupal to Nepalgunj, offering one last aerial glimpse of the rugged hills and deep valleys of Dolpo as we descend toward the lowland plains. Upon arrival in Nepalgunj, we connect to our onward flight to Kathmandu, continuing the journey eastward across Nepal's diverse landscapes, from the flat Terai region back toward the central hills.

As domestic flights in Nepal are weather dependent, there may be a short wait or possible delay in Nepalgunj before the connection to Kathmandu. Once the flight operates, we continue to Kathmandu, where the scenery gradually shifts from lowland plains to rolling green hills and finally the familiar bowl-shaped Kathmandu Valley. On arrival, we transfer to the hotel and conclude our remarkable journey through Dolpo, carrying lasting memories of remote valleys, high passes, and the serene beauty of Phoksundo Lake.

Day 12: Departure day:

After an early breakfast, we will transfer to Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu for your onward departure. The drive offers a final glimpse of the Kathmandu Valley, with its bustling streets, ancient temples, and surrounding green hills slowly fading into the background as the journey comes to a close.

Depending on your flight schedule, our team will ensure a smooth and timely transfer to the airport. This marks the end of your Phoksundo Lake Trek, leaving you with lasting memories of the turquoise alpine lake, remote Himalayan trails, and the unique culture of the Dolpo region.

What's Included:

- ✓ Airport Pick-up and drop Service
- ✓ Hotel Accommodation in Kathmandu and Nepalgunj (twin sharing basis) with breakfast
- ✓ Two way flight between Kathmandu to Nepalgunj, including connection flight to Juphal
- ✓ Guided Tour of Kathmandu valley with an experienced tour guide
- ✓ Sightseeing charges and Entry fees
- ✓ Accommodation during the trek (teahouse / guesthouse / homestay)
- ✓ All meals during the trek (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)
- ✓ Transportation (tourist coach / local bus / private vehicle)
- ✓ Experienced licensed English-speaking trekking guide
- ✓ Local government Entry Permit of Rs. 2000 (started in 2018)
- ✓ Insurance of the Guide and Porter
- ✓ Phoksundo National Park Entry Fee
- ✓ Low Dolpo Restricted Area Special Permit
- ✓ TIMS (Trekking Information Management System) Trekking Permit Card
- ✓ Medical kits carried by the guide
- ✓ All necessary paper works, office service charge and all Government Taxes

Optional Add-Ons:

- ✓ Porter (cost: 20 USD per day, carries 15 – 20 kg load. Porter's accommodation, transport and meal is paid by the company)
- ✓ Down jacket, all-season sleeping bag, duffel bag and trekking map (in case you don't have your own. Down jacket, sleeping bag and duffel bag must be returned after completion of the trip).

What's Excluded:

- ✗ Travel insurance (Mandatory: Should include emergency evacuation coverage while trekking up to 5500+ m)
- ✗ International airfare and Visa costs (you can get Visa upon arrival at the airport)
- ✗ Personal interest items or gears
- ✗ Tips to guide / driver / porter
- ✗ Beverage and Drink Items / Other Extra facilities like hot shower during trek
- ✗ Any other expenses which are not mentioned in "What's Included" section

Important note:

This note represents the most current information for this itinerary and may supersede any information in the current brochure, including but not limited to the itinerary and price. The itinerary should be seen as a guide only. This itinerary may change at any time due to inclement weather, forces of nature and other circumstances beyond our control. We do our best to provide you the best available services but at the same time ask for your understanding to be flexible, in case of unpredictable conditions.

Thank you for choosing Trekadviser, Nepal as your travel partner. We wish you a very pleasant stay in Nepal.