

Culture & Nature Trek to Dudh Kunda (Milk Lake) – 15 days

Tour JTT-NE-T06: Kathmandu – Jiri – Bhandar – Sete - Junbesi – Thupten Chholing - Shengephuk – Chhusang – Samar – Geling – Tsarang – Saharshbeni – Dudh Kunda – Thimba – Chhusang – Ringmo – Phaplu – Kathmandu

Best time: March – May, October/November

Introduction

Jiri, from where we will begin our trek, is popularly referred to as Nepal's Switzerland. It was once only a gateway to Mt. Everest before the Lukla airport was constructed. Early expeditions such as George Mallory's and Sir Edmund Hillary's group trekked from Jiri all the way to the Everest Base Camp. On this trek, we will follow the Jiri-Lukla old route



before heading to a completely different region through forested ridges and a sparsely inhabited area. This trek is through high pastures, pine and rhododendron forest areas, which do not have any permanent settlement from Phungmuche onward. Walking upstream the Beni Khola, we reach Dudh Kunda and keep one day for exploring around. Rather than retracing our footsteps in return, we fly to Kathmandu from Phaplu.

Dudh Kunda, which literally means 'milky lake', is believed to be a holy lake. The locals believe that taking a dip in the holy water will fulfill the wishes of barren women and cleanse their sins. It is also one of the great treks that offers panoramic Himalayan views of the Everest, Number Himal and Everest Himalaya range with lush green forests of Rhododendron flowers and pine trees. It also offers very good chances of seeing wild animals like mountain thars (wild sheep), bears, leopards, and jackals. In August at full moon, pilgrims and Jhankris (Shaman Priests) throng to the holy lake for a week-long

celebration. This area offers diverse ethnic groups living in harmony such as the Sherpas, Rais, Tamangs, Magars, and Gurungs. These groups form the majority here and have a reputation to be very hospitable.

Itinerary

Day 01: Arrival Kathmandu

You arrive at the Kathmandu airport. You are met by your tour guide who will escort you to your hotel in Kathmandu.

Day 01: Sight seeing around Kathmandu

After breakfast, we begin the sightseeing tour visiting the King's cities - Boudhanath, Pashupatinath and Bhaktapur city. Bhaktapur is the third largest city in Kathmandu valley today but was once the capital of Nepal from the 12th to the 15th century. Pashupatinath is one of the most significant Hindu temples of Lord Shiva in the world. Boudhanath is one of the most important Buddhist sites in the world.

Day 03: Drive to Jiri and to Shivalaya (Distance / hrs, 1900m /9 hrs)

After breakfast, we drive to Jiri by private car/coach. The road from Kathmandu now extends as far as Jiri, almost into the sherpa country. The 6 to 8 hours drive is in itself interesting, passing through diverse countryside, crossing the Sun Koshi (river of Gold) and climbing high over forested ridges before reaching Jiri. Once there, we stay overnight at a lodge the first night. Ever since the road was built, Jiri has become something of a boom town.

Day 04: Trek to Bhandar (Distance / hrs, 2190m / 7 hrs)

Today the trek starts. The trail leads up the east ridge of the river, through Tamang villages, to Kharubas pass (2,713m). We climb through rhododendron forests, pass old water mills and mani walls to Bulders Pass, marked by mani walls. After descending to Chyangma through a forest of rhododendron and oak, we pass a large Chorten. A beautiful valley marks the entrance to Sherpa country. The village of Chyangma has some Tamang and Newar people but the Sherpas are clearly in majority. Mani walls welcome the weary traveler to the village. An interesting shop display, chang (homemade wine) bottles, tea chums, essential items of sherpa home will make you feel very special and comfortable.

Day 05: Trek to Sete (Distance / hrs, 2600m / 7 hrs)

We go through a steep descent through forests, then more gradually past terraced fields to Phedi, a small Chhetri settlement. We cross a suspension bridge and walk along the river to Kenja at the junction of two rivers, a bustling bazaar with a primary school, tea houses and fabric shops. The village populace is a combination of Sherpa, Newar and Chhetri people. We climb steeply through the rhododendron forest with a view to the south of the receding hills and lush valleys. Mani walls mark the entrance to the monastery village of Sete, the first Tibetan Buddhist monastery on the Everest trail. A visit to the hilltop monastery is worthwhile.

Day 06: Cross Lamjura Pass (3500m) to Junbesi (2670m / 7 hrs)

We climb up to the Lamjura Pass (3,530m), through a pine forest. The trekker is hailed by a mass of colors (in season) as the pass ascends through a rhododendron forest. Some unnamed rocky summits at the head of the Rolwaling valley are visible from the pass. Lamjura marks a transition point between the receding hills to the south west and the Solu



Khumbu Valley ahead. We descend through rhododendron and pine trees to Thakdor, a Sherpa village with huge carved mani rocks. While continuing down through the pretty fields of primulas, we come down to Junbesi, a large Sherpa village with a chorten, large monastery and a school built by Sir Edmund Hillary. From here, you get a very nice view of Numbur (6957m).

Day 07: Thupten Chholing Gumba (2920m / 2 hrs)

Today we veer of the Everest Basecamp Trail and head north along a much less trodden trail. It's about 3 hours walk to Thupten Chholing Gumpa. The trail to the Gumpa from Junbesi is beautiful especially as we pass several villages and potato fields. Most of the monks live in the Thupten Chholing Gumpa. It's a big monastery and there are many monks who came from Tibet long time ago. You can go in and pray in the monastery if you like.

Day 08: Shengephuk (3940m / 5-6 hrs walk)

We pass the Phungmuche Monastery, a meditation camp and a lama school before reaching Shengephuk.

Day 09: Saharsbeni (3835m) – 5/6 hours walk

Trekking from Shengepuk to Sasarbeni provides a great opportunity to observe wildlife and vegetation. You would really enjoy witnessing the Sherpa culture in depth, the animal herding on the Himalayan pastures, and experiencing a wild and beautiful landscape.



Day 10: Visit Dudh Kunda (4561m / 5-6 hrs walk)

The trek to Dudhkunda is in a high place and a sacred pilgrimage site. We can see the mountains and the Himalayas and get a fantastic lake view.

Day 11: Trek Thimba (3800m / 5 hrs walk)

We switch off the trail from Saharsbeni and walk to the south via Chuware Khola till we reach the pasture land called Thimba (or Kharka).

Day 12: Visit Taksindhu Monastery (2960m) and trek to Ringmo (2720m) / 7-8 hrs walk

We trek to Takshindu via Sarkaripati, Guhepati with a chorten marking the top of the pass. From the chorten, you get towering views of Kangtega (6779m) and Thamserku (6623m) across the Dudh Koshi valley. We drop down through the forest to the pagodalike monastery of Takshindu. We visit a cheese factory before descending down to Ringmo.

Day 13: Visit Chiwang Gomba and trek to Phaplu (2430m / 5-6 hrs walk)

We walk through the mixed alpine forests experiencing a rich wildlife and birdwatching. We get a chance to see a Sherpa settlement up close and some wildlife and vegetation. We take our time to visit the Chiwang monastery before heading towards Phalplu.

The Chiwong Monastery is perched on a cliff, at an altitude of 9,000 feet, a short walk from Ringmo. The Sherpas regard the Solu Khumbu as Beyul - a sacred valley. In this remote part of Nepal bordering Tibet, Buddhism survives with a deep faith and resonance, and is filled with Buddhist monasteries, including Chiwong.

Day 14: Fly to Kathmandu, Transfer to Hotel in Kathmandu

We fly from Phaplu to Kathmandu. You take an early morning flight back to Kathmandu.

Day 15: Departure from Kathmandu

We go to the airport to take a flight out of Kathmandu.

Price

- 2 pers. US\$2655 per person
- 3-5 pers. US\$2385 per person
- 6-8 pers. US\$1960 per person
- Single supplement: US\$ 70 per person.

Price Includes:

- 01: Arrival/departure transfers
- 02: Sightseeing tour in Kathmandu as per itinerary with tour guide
- 03: Private transfer to Shivalaya
- 04: All meals and accommodation in tented camp during the trek.
- 05: Cooking and eating utensils.
- 06: Service of sardar (guide), cook, kitchen and sherpa assistants.
- 07: Porters to carry personal baggage (each 15 kg.), food and camping equipment.
- 08: Accident insurance for staff and porters.
- 09: Hotel accommodation in Kathmandu on BB using a 3 star category hotel

Price does not include:

- 01: Personal clothing, sleeping bag.
- 02: Personal accident and health insurance. Emergency evacuation and medical-box.
- 03: Alcoholic and bottled beverage, laundry, and tips.
- 04: Any other services and expenses that are not specifically mentioned in the programme