

# Damodar Kunda Trekking

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Damodar Kunda trekking is one of the holiest lakes of all Hindus as well as Buddhists. Damodar Kunda is located in Mustang district in mid western Nepal. This area is very close to the Nepal Tibet border. Lying at an altitude of 4890 meters, Damodar Kunda carries wonderful natural beauty. The Gandaki River, a major Himalayan river originates from this holy lake. Most of the part of Damodar Kunda trekking lies in the rain shadow area. So here you experience a unique barren landscape having low vegetation. While trekking you encounter coldness with sandy wind. You start this trekking from Jomsom following the route of Upper Mustang trail. After you get to Lo Manthang you acclimatize there for a day. Then you proceed to the north east. From Lo Manthang it takes three days to arrive at Damodar Kunda. From this sacred lake you see the Tibetan plateau & Damodar Himal to the north and the Annapurna Himalayan massive to the south. Damodar Himal is a mountain range. It includes Muktinath Himal (6,706m), Bhrikuti Peak (6,364m), Chuungian Chamma Himal 6165m, Mustang Himal 66234m, Arniko Chuli 6034m and other mountain peaks. On every full moon day of August a big festival occurs around this lake.

## Itinerary

### **Day 01: Kathmandu arrival & transfer to a Hotel.**

Arrive at Kathmandu International Airport and get transferred to a hotel. Our Tour Manager will give you the briefing about the trip upon arrival in the Hotel.

### **Day 02: Kathmandu**

After breakfast, proceed for a city tour of Kathmandu visiting Durbar Square, a complex of palaces, courtyard and temples, built between the 12th and 18th centuries used to be the seat of the ancient Malla kings of Kathmandu. In the afternoon visit the Swoyambunath Stupa and Patan City. Swoyambhunath Stupa, atop the hillock is one of the holiest Buddhist sites in Nepal enlisted in the World Heritage Site. Patan City is an enchanting melange of palace buildings, artistic courtyard and former palace complex. One remarkable monument here is a 16th century temple dedicated to the Hindu God Lord Krishna, built entirely of stone.

### **Day 03: Drive from Kathmandu-Pokhara (210Km) 6-7 hrs**

After breakfast, we will drive to Pokhara. Pokhara is a place of remarkable natural beauty. The serenity of Phewa Lake and the magnificence of the Fishtail Peak rising behind it create an ambiance of peace and tranquility. Pokhara is a perfect place to see the panoramic view of Himalayan region including Annapurna and Dhaulagiri.

### **Day 04: Fly from Pokhara to Jomsom 2720m and trek to Kagbeni 2800m/4 hours**

Early in the morning we fly from Pokhara to Jomsom with viewing a scenic and majestic Himalayan Ranges just above the deepest Kaligandaki gorge and after arrival in Jomsom, we meet with our support staff and will have breakfast. After breakfast, we prepared our trail along the Kaligandaki River passing Jomsom's main village. Then, we walk on the wide bank of the Kaligandaki and move on in the wind. We have a short glimpse of Mt. Dhaulagiri and Nilgiri Himal. On this bank ammonite fossils are often found. From the trail on the bank, we make a small ascent and go down again, and then we reach Eklebatti. We will have our lunch there. After lunch, we continued the slightly ascending and level trail until reaching Kagbeni Village, which is the doorway to upper Mustang. We will visit the peculiar colors and shapes of the Chhorten and Kani in the village and the ancient Sakya-Pa Sect Buddhist Monastery. From the top of the monastery, we have a great view of Nilgiri Himal, Tilicho Peak and other snow-capped mountains as well as scenic terraced fields. Stay overnight at Lodge.

#### **Day 05: Trek from Kagbeni to Tsaile 3100m/6 hours (via Tangbe/ Chuksang)**

In the morning after breakfast, we check in our restricted area permit and we are taking the first step into Upper Mustang. The route will continue on the left bank of Kaligandaki with small ups and downs along the Kaligandaki River. After a long walk, we cross a small stream and climb up on the terraced hill; we will come to Tangbe, the first Mustang village where the village has a medieval atmosphere. We will have our lunch here, and then we continue the trail traversing upward and will reach Chhusang village. From Chhusang, we will go back again to the river shore and move in the upstream direction of the Kaligandaki. There is an iron bridge where Kaligandaki River runs through a tunnel built in the huge rock that blocks the river shores and just above the bridge, there are 16 small caves. After crossing the bridge, we make a steep ascent onto the terrace ahead and we will reach Tsaile from where we can see the zigzagging Kaligandaki and Nilgiri Himal further in the interior. Stay overnight at Lodge.

#### **Day 06: Trek from Tsaile to Syangmochen 3800m/7 hours (via Samar)**

Morning after breakfast, we leave the village and climb up the unstable pebble road and will come to a plateau. We keep climbing the gentle slope and enter an area with the big canyons. We follow the trail that is cut out of the cliff and after passing the canyons we will reach a small pass. Then, we move to a gentle mountain flank and continue the slight descent and will reach Samar village surrounded by a poplar grove. We will have our lunch here. After lunch, we descend steeply to a stream, then climb up and descend steeply to another stream, then climb up to a plateau. We keep climbing up the right fork to the Chungsi-La and countering through the amazing canyons until reaching Ranchung Cave whose large stalactites resemble Rangchung (self-arisen; ie not man-made) chhorten. The Buddhist saint Guru Rinpoche is said to have meditated here in the 8th century during his travels in Mustang. Himalayan griffons nest in the surrounding cliffs. After visiting the cave, we climbed gradually past pasture to Syangmochen. Stay overnight at Lodge.

#### **Day 07: Trek from Syangmochen to Tsarang 3560m/7 hours (via Geling, Ghami)**

In the morning after breakfast, we climb up to a small pass where there is a colorfully painted square chhorten. We will see a large valley of Ghiling spreading out in front of us. We continue descending to the right towards Ghiling, cross a stream and move on along the stone walls in the farm fields. Here are two ancient monasteries and big huge chhortens and we will visit it. After visiting the monasteries, we walk through the big village and climb up the gentle slope with shrubberies and will join the mail trail. From here, a long ascent continues to Nyi-La. When we cross over this pass, we will enter the center of the Mustang, which used to be called the Lo Region. We descend the gentle slope and go around the valley ahead towards the left. We will be overlooking Ghami village and we will descend a steep zigzag slope and will reach the village. We will have our lunch here. After lunch, we leave the village and cross a river using the suspension bridge. We climb onto the terrace and pass along the longest Mani Wall in Mustang. The effect of the erosion on the cliff ahead attracts attention by its strange forms and the varieties of colors such as red, blue, white, etc. it is like a Mandala painted on the cliff. The trail goes around to the right and a steep ascent starts in a rocky gully, then traverses to the Tsarang-La. On the top of the pass we find a big stone pile and the Annapurna Himal in back looks beautiful. Then, we keep walking a long and gentle descent until reaching Tsarang Village. There is a huge Chhorten in the entrance of the village. This village is a long green settlement and can see farm fields spread out and surrounded by stone walls. We also can see the Gompa, which is painted in stripes of Red, White and Black as well as can see the prominent five-storied Old Palace. Stay overnight at Lodge.

#### **Day 08: Trek from Tsarang to Lo-Manthang 3840m/4 hours**

In the morning after breakfast, we will visit the Old Palace and Ancient Buddhist Monastery which is said to be where Tibetan Buddhism flourished in Upper Mustang from this Monastery. Then, we descended to the gorge of the Tsarang Khola, making a big traverse upstream and crossing by an Iron Bridge over the River. We ascended to about the same height as Tsarang on the rocky gully. Now we enter the valley and the dirt road turns north and climbs gently to a large isolated Chhorten that marks the boundary between Tsarang and Lo-Manthang. The road crosses a stream, and then becomes a wide thoroughfare traveling across a desert-like landscape painted in every hue of grey and yellow. Finally we arrive in Lo-La from where we can see the first view of the wall city of Lo-Manthang and the prayer flags are flapping in the wind. A short dusty descent leads onto the plain of aspiration; the, the trail crosses a stream by wooden bridge. Now we climb up onto the plateau of Lo-Manthang, crossing an irrigation canal at the southern wall of the city of Lo-Manthang. In the evening, we meet with King of Lo and visit the insight city as well as ancient Buddhist Monasteries. Stay overnight at Lodge.

#### **Day 09: Explore to the Lo-Manthang City and Hike to Surrounding mountains.**

Today, we will explore eastern valley of Lo-Manthang is Chooser, the site of Garphu and Nyaphu Gompas and some fascinating cave-dwelling structures. This is the main trading route to Lhasa. The ruins of numerous forts along the trail lend credence to this observation. First we descend to the small stream and cross by a wooden bridge. Then we ascend for a while and continue along the level trail until reaching Garphu and Nyapu village. We visit the scenic Monastery situated inside the Cliff and Cave with numerous rooms, then we return back from the opposite side of the valley after passing old villages. Stay overnight at Lodge.

#### **Day 10: Trek from Lo-Manthang to Yara 3900m/6 hours (via Dhi)**

We start our trek after breakfast; we leave the village and keep gently ascending until we reach Day-La with a dusty trail from where the last view of the Lo-Manthang. We continue our trail for a while and follow the left trail after skipping the trail to reach Tsarang. The trail gently climbs on the ridge viewing the scenic landscapes until reaching a small pass. Then, we climb down a steep and dusty descent in the narrow path. We again come to a wide plateau and descend rocky gully and knee crunching trail until reaching Dhi village. We will have lunch here. After lunch we cross by a suspension bridge over the Kaligandaki River and make a short steep climb. Then, we follow along the upstream of Puyung Khola, viewing the unbelievable landscapes and innumerable caves at the stone walls until reaching Yara village. Stay overnight at Lodge.

#### **Day 11: Trek from Yara to Ghuma Thanti 4800m/7 hours (via Luri Cave)**

Today, we will climb up to reach Luri Cave Monastery and visit that interesting Cave Monastery. After that, we followed the barren valley after crossing the 5100 meter pass; today we prepared a packed lunch due to no appropriate cooking possibilities on the trek. Stay overnight at Lodge.

#### **Day 12: Trek from Ghuma Thanti to Damodar Kunda 4890m/10 hours**

On this day, we start after breakfast, the trail continues with ups and downs. After crossing another 5600 meter pass we will reach High Altitude Damodar Kunda. We need to make lunch packs due to no appropriate cooking possibilities in the trail. Stay overnight at Lodge.

#### **Day 13: Exploring the high altitude Damodar Kunda/Lake, Stay overnight at Lodge.**

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**Day 14: Trek from Damodar Kunda to Ghuma Thanti 4800m/8 hours**

Today, we will return back all the same way passing over the 5600m high pass. The trail again ups and down the same as before. We will make our lunch in some small stream in the trail. Stay overnight at Lodge.

**Day 15: Trek from Ghuma Thanti to Yara 3900m/7 hours,**

In this also we come back all the same route which before we climb up. The trail continues downhill until reaching Yara Village. We prepare our lunch on the trail. Stay overnight at Lodge.

**Day 16: Trek from Yara to Tangye 3240m/8 hours**

Today is also a difficult and long day for us. Therefore we start really early in the morning. We first have a short and steep ascent and then a long flat way trail. Then the trail continues steep down to Dechhyang Khola whose origin is from Damodar Kunda. It takes about 30 minutes. We find Saligramas everywhere (the black fossils of marine animals). Then the trail steeply ascends and leads us to the top of the pass where we have our packed lunch break, so we need to make a packed lunch in Yara due to no appropriate cooking possibilities in the trail. After lunch, the trail goes up and down and then we are on a huge plateau and cross it to Tangya village. We can see several big Chhortens. Stay overnight at Lodge.

**Day 17: Trek from Tangya to Tetang 3040m/10 hours (via Paha)**

Today is also a long day again. Therefore we start again really early in the morning. We leave the village, cross the suspension bridge and follow the short river route. After crossing the river, we steeply climb up to reach a small pass. Then the trail goes straight to Paha (shelter house) where we make our lunch. Here is a small water tap for drinking water. After the lunch break we continue crossing many small passes until we reach the top of the hill. It takes about 2 hours. Then the trail steeply descends and we encounter strong winds until we reach Tetang village. We have a superb view of Nilgiri Himal, Dhaulagiri I, Tukucho Peak, and other snow peaks during the trail. Stay overnight at Lodge.

#### **Day 18: Trek from Tetang to Muktinath 3700m/6 hours,**

In the morning after breakfast, we follow our trail through the village after passing the scenic Mani walls. Then, we will climb up to the wide valley. After walking the plateau, we keep ascending until reaching a small pass from where we can see the high mountains and picturesque view of Muktinath. Then, we drop down to the small stream and cross by a suspension bridge. After that, we enter the village of Chhyongar and follow the level trail until reaching Muktinath passing Kani/gate. In the evening, we will explore a secret place for Hindus and Tibetan Buddhist in about 30 minutes in its compound. We can visit the 108 brass water spouts, Muktinath temple stands enshrining Vishnu, a Hindu god. When we visit Muktinath Temple at once, we are free/salvation of escape from the cycle of birth and rebirth. Below the temple there is another Buddhist monastery where the combination of earth-water-fire gives for Muktinath's great religious significance. And we can also see the magnificent view of Nilgiri Himal and Dhaulagiri I. Stay overnight at a tented camp.

#### **Day 19: Trek from Muktinath to Jomsom 2720m/5 hours,**

In the morning after breakfast, we leave the village and drop down to Jharkot village where we visit the ancient Sakyamuni Buddhist Monastery and Traditional Medical Center. Then, we follow the dusty road trail for a while and choose a shortcut to the left trail until reaching Eklebatti where we have our lunch. After lunch, we again took a dusty and windy road level trail along the Kaligandaki River to reach Jomsom. Stay overnight at Lodge.

#### **Day 20: Fly from Jomsom to Pokhara 820m**

Early in the morning after breakfast, we fly back to Pokhara which takes about 20 minutes approximately, then transfer to a Hotel in Pokhara. After lunch, we will visit the valley. Stay overnight in Hotel.

#### **Day 21: Pokhara - Kathmandu (210 km) 6-7 hrs**

After Breakfast, we will drive back to Kathmandu through the bank of the Trisuli river.

**Day 22: Kathmandu Departure**

Free for adequate personal activities till departure transfer from hotel to the International Airport.