Trek Curator
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Shey Phoksundo Lake Trek - 12 Days

Tucked behind the rain shadow of the Dhaulagiri mountain range lies Shey Phoksundo Lake, a body of water so intensely turquoise it appears almost surreal against the stark, alpine cliffs of Lower Dolpo. Unlike Nepal's commercialized trekking routes, like the Everest Base Camp Trek or Annapurna Circuit, the trail to Phoksundo remains raw, preserved, and steeped in ancient Tibetan Bon culture.

Our 12-day Shey Phoksundo Lake Trek balances raw wilderness exploration with structured safety and logistics. You will trace the turquoise waters of the Phoksundo River, hike through cedar forests, pass towering waterfalls, and step into Ringmo Village where life moves at the pace of yaks and prayer wheels.

Route Overview

Your journey begins with a flight from Kathmandu to the sub-tropical plains of Nepalgunj, followed by an early-morning mountain flight to Juphal (2,475 m). From Juphal, you descend toward the roaring Bheri River and enter the gate of Shey Phoksundo National Park at Suligad.

Over four days of steady ascent, the trail follows the Phoksundo River northward, navigating pine forests, narrow gorge bridges, and the village of Chhepka. The final approach climbs past Nepal's highest waterfall (Suligad Waterfall - 167 m) before opening up to the calm, sacred waters of Lake Phoksundo and the mud-brick settlement of Ringmo Village.

Highlights

- Phoksundo Lake (3,611 m): Stand before Nepal's deepest alpine lake (145 m depth), famous for its vivid, ever-changing turquoise hues and complete absence of aquatic life.

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- Ancient Bon Culture: Explore the 900-year-old Tso-Wa Monastery, an active Tibetan Bon Po gompa overlooking the lake’s eastern shore.
  Suligad Waterfall: View the majestic 167-meter waterfall dropping directly from the outlet of Phoksundo Lake.
- Rain-Shadow Landscape: Trek through a desert-like landscape reminiscent of the Tibetan Plateau, surrounded by snow-capped Himalayan peaks.
- Wildlife Encounters: Walk through protected habitats home to the elusive snow leopard, blue sheep (bharal), musk deer, and Himalayan monal.
- Hassle-Free Logistics: Full handling of domestic flights (Kathmandu–Nepalgunj–Juphal), special restricted-area permits, local guides, and porters.

Why Choose Trek Curator

- Local Wilderness Guides: Led by guides born and raised in the Himalaya, ensuring native expertise and deep community roots.
- Satellite Communication: Equipped with standard safety protocols to provide constant emergency check-ins.
- Transparent Pricing: Offers guaranteed all-inclusive quotes with zero hidden permit or flight fees.
- Sustainable Tourism: Maintains a fair wage standard to deliver ethical support for all mountain porters

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How deep is Shey Phoksundo Lake?

Phoksundo Lake reaches a maximum depth of 145 meters (475 feet), making it one of Nepal's deepest alpine lakes.

2. Can you swim in Shey Phoksundo Lake?

No. Swimming in Phoksundo Lake is strictly prohibited out of respect for its deeply sacred status in Bon Po and Tibetan Buddhist traditions.

3. Why is there no life in Phoksundo Lake?

The lake's extreme cold temperatures, high mineral content, and lack of organic runoff render it oligotrophic, meaning fish and aquatic plants cannot survive in its waters.

4. What is the accommodation like on the Shey Phoksundo trek?

Accommodation consists of local teahouses offering clean, basic twin rooms with shared bathroom facilities.

5. Is there phone coverage on the trek?

Nepal Telecom (NTC) provides intermittent 2G/3G coverage at Juphal and Ringmo, but signal drops along the deep river gorges.

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6. How hard is the trail from Juphal to Ringmo?

The trail is moderately demanding with steady ascents, rocky staircases, and river gorge walkways. No technical gear or climbing expertise is required.

7. How much does the Shey Phoksundo Lake Trek cost in 2026?

The 12-day full-service trek package with Trek Curator costs between $1,450 and $1,850 USD per person, depending on group size. This covers all domestic flights, permits, meals, accommodation, and guide fees.

8. Do I need a special restricted permit for Dolpo?

Yes, a Lower Dolpo Restricted Area Permit (RAP) issued by the Nepal Department of Immigration is mandatory, alongside a Shey Phoksundo National Park Entry Permit.

9. What is the best month to trek Shey Phoksundo Lake?

April–May (Spring) and September–November (Autumn) offer clear skies. However, because Dolpo sits in a rain shadow, it is also one of Nepal's finest treks during the Monsoon months (June–August).

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