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Upper Mustang Bike Tour - 11 Days

Ready for the adventure of a lifetime?

Secure your spot on the Upper Mustang Bike Tour today and experience the breathtaking landscapes and rich Tibetan culture firsthand!

The Upper Mustang Bike Tour takes you through the Last Forbidden Kingdom of Upper Mustang, a region rich in ancient Tibetan Buddhist culture, traditional villages, and medieval fortresses that have largely escaped modern influence. Nestled in a remote, arid trans-Himalayan area north of the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri ranges and bordering Tibet, Upper Mustang features stunning altitudes that range from 2,800m in Jomsom to over 3,800m in Lo Manthang, presenting diverse challenges for cyclists. This region is marked by surreal, high-altitude desert landscapes, from striking red sandstones and dramatic cliffs to deep canyons and vibrant monasteries, merging natural beauty with cultural heritage.

The geography includes high-altitude plateaus and the scenic Kali Gandaki river valley, which offers varied terrain for cycling enthusiasts. Culturally, Upper Mustang stands as a Tibetan Buddhist stronghold, filled with ancient monasteries, exquisite murals, and time-honored traditions. Historically, it remained closed to foreigners until 1992 and still holds the title of one of the most preserved and restricted regions in Nepal.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Cycle through the ancient Kingdom of Lo, immersing yourself in its unspoiled Tibetan culture and architecture.
- Visit Lo Manthang, the fortified city and historic capital of Upper Mustang.

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- Explore remote villages, experiencing traditional Mustang hospitality and visiting serene Buddhist monasteries.
- Ride along the breathtaking Kali Gandaki gorge, known as one of the world’s deepest canyons.
- Witness the striking contrast between desert-like landscapes and the majestic snowy peaks of the Himalayas.

DURATION, DIFFICULTY, ACCOMMODATION & ESSENTIALS

The bike tour lasts approximately 10 days, with a difficulty level ranging from moderate to challenging due to the altitude, terrain, and the endurance required for cycling. It is best suited for bikers who have some experience with altitude trekking or biking and possess a high level of physical fitness.

Accommodation: Expect basic yet comfortable teahouses and guesthouses with simple amenities; luxury hotels are not available.

Permits Needed: A Restricted Area Permit (RAP) is mandatory and can be obtained through licensed trekking agencies, which are essential for both trekking and biking.

The best time to visit is spring (March to May), when beautiful rhododendron blooms and pleasant weather prevail, or autumn (late September to November), which offers clear skies and stable conditions.

Essential Gear: A mountain or hybrid bike with good suspension, warm clothing for the chilly desert nights, sun protection, and a basic repair kit.

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WHY CHOOSE THIS DESTINATION

The Upper Mustang bike tour stands out as a unique blend of adventure sports and deep cultural immersion in one of the Himalayas' most isolated regions. This tour offers access to a less commercialized and less restricted area, providing an exclusive and authentic experience away from the bustle of mass tourism. It combines the thrill of biking with opportunities for cultural engagement, historical exploration, and spiritual experiences. Ideal for those seeking physical challenges alongside the chance to witness living Tibetan Buddhist culture, the natural beauty and historic architecture—from mud-brick houses to impressive fortresses—offer endless photographic opportunities. Well-organized tours come with local support, experienced guides, and mule/bike assistance, ensuring safety in this rugged terrain.

Don't miss this exclusive opportunity to explore one of the most remote and culturally rich regions of the Himalayas on two wheels.

Join us for the Upper Mustang Bike Tour—where adventure meets ancient tradition.

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PRICE INCLUDES

- Airport transfers in Kathmandu (arrival and departure)
- Accommodation in Kathmandu and Pokhara: 3-star hotel with BB plan
- Accommodation: Mustang teahouses or guesthouses
- All meals during the bike tour (usually breakfast, lunch, and dinner as per the itinerary)
- Group briefing, cultural programs, and welcome & farewell dinners
- Experienced local guides familiar with Upper Mustang terrain and culture
- Necessary permits, including the Restricted Area Permit (RAP)
- Bike support and mule assistance for carrying luggage and equipment
- Local transportation as per the itinerary (e.g., Kathmandu to Naudada, Pokhara to Kathmandu)
- Sightseeing and entry fees for monasteries, caves, and historical sites mentioned
- Safety briefing and final gear checks
- Basic bike repair kit or support during the tour

PRICE EXCLUDES

- International airfare to/from Nepal
- Personal travel insurance (highly recommended)
- Personal biking gear (unless specified)
- Personal expenses such as souvenirs, phone calls, laundry, or tips
- Any meals or accommodation outside the outlined itinerary

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- Optional activities not mentioned in the itinerary (e.g., boating in Pokhara)
- Any costs arising from unforeseen circumstances like flight delays, medical emergencies, or rescue
- Nepalese visa fees (obtained upon arrival or beforehand)
- Travel vaccinations or medications
- Tip for guides and staff

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DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival in Kathmandu

Upon your arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport, our representative will be there to greet you. You'll then be transferred to your hotel. Following this, a group briefing will cover the essentials of the Upper Mustang bike adventure along with the distribution of the special permits. We will introduce you to the road conditions, altitude challenges, and safety tips, and perform final checks on your bike gear and essential equipment. You'll also have the chance to explore Thamel for souvenirs, bike accessories, and to immerse yourself in Nepali culture. In the evening, enjoy a welcome dinner that includes a cultural program.

Day 2: Kathmandu to Naudada/Sarangkot

Get ready for an early morning ride out of Kathmandu towards Naudada, taking the scenic Prithvi Highway. Your journey will follow the Trishuli and Marsyangdi rivers, passing through lush forests, terraced farmlands, and local villages. You'll experience a mix of road textures as you transition from the highway to winding countryside paths on your way to Pokhara. The day ends with an overnight stay in either Sarangkot or Naudada, both renowned for their spectacular views of the Annapurna and Macchapuchre mountains.

Day 3: Sarangkot/Naudada to Jomsom

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On this day, you'll set off towards Beni, the gateway to Mustang and the Kaligandaki Gorge. The road shifts from smooth asphalt to rugged mountain tracks. As you ride through the deep Kaligandaki Gorge, you'll pass through Ghasa and Marpha before arriving in Jomsom. Marpha is famous for its apple orchards and local brandy, so be sure to taste the traditional Thakali cuisine. Jomsom, the administrative and cultural hub of Mustang, invites you to stroll through its windy streets, surrounded by the Nilgiri and Dhaulagiri peaks. Overnight stay in Jomsom.

Day 4: Jomsom to Chaile

After breakfast in Jomsom, the adventure continues as you ride towards Kagbeni, the entry point to Upper Mustang, where your permits will be checked. You'll navigate through arid landscapes, suspension bridges, and challenging trails enriched by Tibetan influence. On your journey, you'll pass small Mustang villages like Tangbe before reaching Chaile, a cliffside village adorned with whitewashed houses. In the evening, explore the narrow alleys and immerse yourself in Tibetan culture. Overnight in Chaile.

Day 5: Chaile to Lo Manthang

Today's ride leads you from Chaile to Lo Manthang, as you traverse classic Mustang high-altitude trails across desert terrain and canyons. You'll ascend through the villages of Syanboche, Ghami, and Tsarang, where you can witness mani walls, red cliffs, and caves carved into the mountains. Prepare to be captivated by breathtaking desert landscapes juxtaposed against snowy peaks. Upon arriving in Lo Manthang, the ancient walled capital of Mustang, you'll catch your first glimpse of the royal palace and traditional Tibetan-style architecture. Overnight in Lo Manthang.

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Day 6: Sightseeing in Lo Manthang**

Enjoy a full day exploring Lo Manthang, often referred to as the Forbidden Kingdom. Visit ancient monasteries such as Jampa Lhakhang, Thubchen Gompa, and Chode Monastery. You'll also ride to the Chhoser Caves, which are over 2,500 years old, and explore the royal palace while interacting with locals. In Lo Manthang, you'll gain insights into Tibetan culture, lifestyle, and traditions. Overnight stay in Lo Manthang.

Day 7: Lo Manthang to Kagbeni

Your return journey begins today as you ride back through rugged Mustang trails from Lo Manthang. You'll pass through Ghami, Samar, and Syanboche once more. The views of the Nilgiri, Annapurna, and Dhaulagiri ranges accompany you along the way, with opportunities to stop for tea in traditional Mustang villages. After reaching Kagbeni, a quaint village at the southern border of Mustang, enjoy a peaceful evening walk along the banks of the Kaligandaki River. Overnight stay in Kagbeni.

Day 8: Kagbeni to Tatopani

Today, you'll ride back through Jomsom and Marpha, descending into Lower Mustang as the terrain becomes greener. The scenic ride takes you through apple orchards, past waterfalls, and alongside pine forests. Soon, you will reach Tatopani, famous for its natural hot springs. After a challenging series of rides, take the opportunity to relax and soak in the hot spring pools, soothing your tired muscles.

Day 9: Tatopani to Pokhara

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Ride through Beni, following the Kaligandaki River valley as you continue to descend through lush riverside vistas and green hills. You'll transition back to smooth highway roads after days of off-road adventure, passing small rural towns and terraced farmlands before arriving in Pokhara, often described as a lakeside paradise. In the evening, spend your free time boating or relaxing in cafes. Overnight stay in Pokhara.

Day 10: Pokhara to Kathmandu

Enjoy a morning departure for Kathmandu. As you travel back, take in the scenic views of hills, rivers, and local towns. You should arrive in Kathmandu by evening, where a celebratory dinner with the group awaits you.

Day 11: Departure

On your final day, check out of your hotel and head to the airport according to your flight schedule. You'll conclude your journey with endless memories of the stunning Mustang adventure.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the Upper Mustang Bike Tour like?

The Upper Mustang Bike Tour is an adventurous high-altitude cycling journey through one of Nepal's most remote and culturally fascinating regions. The route takes you through the Kali Gandaki Valley, traditional mountain villages, dramatic cliffs, ancient monasteries, and the unique desert-like landscapes of Upper Mustang before reaching Lo Manthang.

It is a combination of challenging cycling, Himalayan scenery, local culture, and exploration, making it very different from a typical cycling holiday.

2. How difficult is the Upper Mustang Bike Tour?

The Upper Mustang Bike Tour is considered a moderate to challenging cycling adventure. The main challenges are high altitude, long riding days, steep climbs, rough gravel roads, strong winds, and changing mountain weather.

You do not have to be a professional cyclist, but good endurance and previous experience with long-distance or mountain cycling will make the journey considerably more comfortable.

3. Do I need previous mountain biking experience?

Previous mountain or long-distance cycling experience is recommended. You should feel comfortable riding on gravel, rocky surfaces, uneven roads, climbs, and descents.

If you normally cycle only on paved roads, spend some time training on hills and rougher surfaces before your trip.

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4. What is the highest altitude reached during the Upper Mustang Bike Tour?

The route reaches approximately 4,230 meters above sea level. Because of the altitude, maintaining a comfortable pace and allowing your body time to adjust are important.

Staying hydrated, eating regularly, getting enough rest, and paying attention to how you feel can all help you adapt to the high-altitude environment.

5. Do I need a special permit for Upper Mustang?

Yes. Upper Mustang is a restricted area of Nepal, so travelers need special permits to enter the region.

For an organized bike tour, the required permits are arranged by the trekking or cycling agency. It is important to confirm the latest permit requirements and fees before your departure because regulations can change.

6. What is the best time for an Upper Mustang Bike Tour?

Spring and autumn are generally popular seasons for cycling in Upper Mustang. March to May usually brings favorable riding conditions, while late September to November often offers clear skies and good mountain visibility.

Upper Mustang lies in the Himalayan rain-shadow region, so it receives much less rainfall than many other parts of Nepal. Even so, mountain weather can change quickly, particularly at higher elevations.

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7. Can I do the Upper Mustang Bike Tour during the monsoon?

Yes. Upper Mustang is located in a rain-shadow area, making it one of the drier regions of Nepal during the monsoon.

However, getting to and from Upper Mustang can still be affected by rain, landslides, road conditions, and transportation delays in lower areas. A flexible itinerary is therefore recommended for monsoon travel.

8. What type of bike is best for Upper Mustang?

A reliable mountain bike or touring bike with suitable gearing, strong brakes, and durable tires is recommended.

The route includes a mixture of paved sections, gravel roads, rocky tracks, climbs, and descents. Your bicycle should therefore be properly serviced and prepared for rough mountain conditions before starting the trip.

9. Can I bring my own bicycle to Nepal?

Yes, you can bring your own bicycle to Nepal. If you do, make sure it is thoroughly serviced before the trip and suitable for rough mountain roads.

It is also wise to carry spare tubes, brake pads, a chain tool, tire levers, a pump, and other bicycle-specific spare parts. Basic mechanical support may be available during an organized tour, but every rider should be prepared to handle simple repairs.

10. What are the roads like on the Upper Mustang cycling route?

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The route includes paved roads, gravel tracks, rocky sections, uneven mountain trails, steep climbs, and descents.

As you travel deeper into Upper Mustang, the terrain becomes increasingly rugged and dry. Dust, loose stones, bumps, and strong winds are all part of the experience.

11. How many hours will I cycle each day?

Daily cycling time varies depending on the route, elevation, weather, road conditions, and group pace.

Some days are relatively relaxed, while others involve longer climbs and more challenging terrain. The journey is designed to combine cycling with opportunities to rest, explore villages, visit cultural sites, and enjoy the Himalayan scenery.

12. What can I see during the Upper Mustang Bike Tour?

The route offers a remarkable variety of landscapes and cultural attractions. You can expect to see colorful cliffs, dry Himalayan valleys, traditional villages, Buddhist monasteries, ancient caves, suspension bridges, and spectacular mountain scenery.

The journey toward Lo Manthang is particularly memorable because of its unique combination of landscape, architecture, and Tibetan-influenced culture.

13. Does the Upper Mustang Bike Tour include Lo Manthang?

Yes. Lo Manthang is one of the major highlights of the Upper Mustang cycling itinerary.

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The historic walled settlement provides an opportunity to explore traditional architecture, monasteries, surrounding villages, and the distinctive culture of the former Kingdom of Lo.

14. What is accommodation like during the bike tour?

Accommodation is generally provided in local teahouses and guesthouses.

Facilities become simpler as you travel farther into the remote areas of Upper Mustang, so travelers should be prepared for basic rooms and facilities. The simplicity is also part of the experience, allowing you to stay close to local communities.

15. What food is available during the Upper Mustang cycling trip?

Meals generally include a combination of Nepali and commonly available continental-style dishes. Depending on the location, you may find dal bhat, rice, noodles, pasta, soup, vegetables, eggs, and other simple meals.

Because cycling at high altitude requires considerable energy, eating regularly and drinking enough water are especially important.

16. What should I pack for an Upper Mustang Bike Tour?

You should pack for both cycling and high-altitude mountain conditions.

Important items include:

- Comfortable cycling clothing
- Warm layers

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- Waterproof or windproof jacket
- Cycling gloves
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Hat or cap
- Suitable cycling shoes
- Water bottle or hydration system
- Personal medication
- Basic bicycle repair equipment
- Spare tubes and essential bike parts
- Personal toiletries.

Layering is particularly useful because temperatures can change significantly between daytime and nighttime.

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17. How should I train for the Upper Mustang Bike Tour?

Begin your cycling preparation several weeks before departure. Focus on endurance, hill climbing, and long-distance riding rather than speed.

Regular cycling combined with strength training can help. If possible, include some gravel and uneven-road riding in your training so you become comfortable with the type of terrain found in Mustang.

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18. Is the Upper Mustang Bike Tour suitable for beginners?

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It depends on your overall cycling experience. Someone who is new to mountain biking but already has strong long-distance cycling fitness may be able to prepare for the tour.

However, Upper Mustang is not an ideal first cycling adventure for someone with very little riding experience. The combination of altitude, distance, rough roads, and changing weather requires reasonable fitness and preparation

19. Is Upper Mustang safe for cyclists?

Upper Mustang is a remote high-altitude destination, so cyclists need to be prepared for the environment.

Following the planned itinerary, maintaining a sensible riding pace, staying hydrated, carrying appropriate equipment, and communicating any health or mechanical problems to the support team are important.

Traveling with an experienced local cycling team can also make navigation and logistics much easier in this remote region.

20. Can I customize my Upper Mustang Bike Tour?

Yes. Private Upper Mustang cycling trips can often be adjusted according to your travel dates, group size, cycling experience, preferred pace, and available time.

If you have specific requirements, discuss them with the tour operator before booking so the itinerary and logistics can be planned accordingly.

21. Is a private Upper Mustang cycling trip available?

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Yes. A private bike tour can be a good option for friends, families with suitable cycling experience, cycling clubs, and small groups.

Private departures can provide more flexibility with riding pace, rest stops, accommodation preferences, and the overall itinerary.

22. What happens if my bicycle breaks down during the tour?

Basic bicycle support can be provided during an organized tour, particularly for common mechanical problems.

However, you should still bring spare parts that are specific to your bicycle. It is also recommended to have your bike thoroughly inspected and serviced before leaving Kathmandu.

23. Do I need travel insurance for the Upper Mustang Bike Tour?

Travel insurance is strongly recommended for a high-altitude cycling adventure.

Check that your policy covers adventure activities, high-altitude travel, emergency medical treatment, and evacuation where applicable. Pay particular attention to the maximum altitude covered by your insurance policy.

24. What makes Upper Mustang different from other cycling destinations in Nepal?

Upper Mustang offers a landscape unlike many other parts of Nepal. Instead of the lush green hills found in lower regions, cyclists enter a dry trans-Himalayan environment characterized by colorful cliffs, barren valleys, ancient settlements, monasteries, and dramatic mountain scenery.

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The trip also provides an opportunity to experience the Tibetan-influenced culture and traditions of the Mustang region.

25. Why choose a guided Upper Mustang Bike Tour?

Upper Mustang is remote, and organized cycling tours simplify many of the logistics involved in visiting the region.

A guided trip can take care of permits, accommodation, route planning, local support, transportation logistics, and bicycle assistance. This allows riders to concentrate more on cycling and enjoying the landscape.

26. How do I book an Upper Mustang Bike Tour?

To book an Upper Mustang Bike Tour, contact Trek Curator with your preferred travel dates, group size, cycling experience, and any specific requirements you may have.

Because Upper Mustang is a restricted region and involves considerable logistical planning, booking in advance gives your local team enough time to arrange permits, accommodation, transportation, and cycling support.

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