

# TSUM VALLEY VILLAGE STAY AND MANASLU TREK

Ex Kathmandu 15 October 2019



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| Group size: | Min 3 people | Max-Altitude: | 5135m |
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| Destination: | Nepal | Fitness level: | Moderate Plus |
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**Duration: All times included lunch and several rest stops**

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## NEPAL

Without a doubt this country is a potpourri of culture and diversity. It boasts as having the highest mountain in the world Mt Everest mixed with unique wildlife and exotic culture. Discover yourself amidst this strange world of mystical beliefs and incredible history. Every aspect of life is tainted with spiritual reasons.. You will have many opportunities to witness this aspect of life, and to share with people your own ideas about it. The art and craft of Nepal are basically based on the religious themes taken from Buddhism and Hinduism. Nepalese art has been influenced and promoted since the earliest recorded times by the Newars. In Nepal, ethnical cultural groups are diverse and many of them have their own languages and customs. The country's capital Kathmandu and largest city simultaneously reeks of history and the wear and tear of increasing modernity. The tightly packed historical centre, with its squares and temples, continues to preserve a world light years away from shantytowns, expensive hotels, restaurants and shops on the city's outskirts. Kathmandu's core is Durbar Square, with the Vishnumati River to the west and Ratna Park to the east, The Bagmati River forms the southern boundary, whilst Thamel, the popular tourist hangout sprawls to the north. This would have to be one of the most exciting cities in the world today.

This is the true meaning of trekking in the Himalayas, pristine mountain views, rich culture and unreal adventure sum up the trek experience around the 8156m Manaslu. Opened in 1992, this area offers a combination of rich cultural heritage, unsurpassed beauty and biological diversity. Gorkha lies about half

way on the old foot trail between Kathmandu and Pokhara in central Nepal and, home of the celebrated Gorkha soldiers.

Soon after leaving civilization fades and we pass through ancient villages, observing the simple agricultural habits of its people. Ascending the verdant valley of Gandaki River valley, surrounded with waterfalls and fed by innumerable rivers, a chance for those brave enough to take a swim in the aqua blue pools. The trail sometimes has difficult sections and is quite strenuous, so excellent fitness is an all-important factor of this trek. Tourists are definitely not an attraction here as few people have the privilege to visit this pristine area surrounded by snow-clad mountains, lush green valleys and dense forests with an abundance of rhododendrons. The people become more distinctly Buddhist as their links with Tibet increase. These are the Bhotia (from Tibet) who are similar to the Sherpa. Their flat roofed houses boast Gompas (monasteries) with embossed prayer wheels. Stone-built sacred monuments called Chortens often mark the entrances to villages. The last large village, Samagoan (also called Ro) is flanked by a long "Mani wall" carved with Buddhist prayers. (As a sign of respect for local beliefs always walk past, or round, Mani walls in a clockwise direction.)

Here you will get to see many of those amazing strong high altitude animals known as the yak, grazing in the pastures above. In Samagoan (3450m) we visit the glacial green lake of Birendra, before crossing into the spiritual village of Samdo, a mere 15km from the Tibetan border. We visit sacred monasteries, where you can sit gaze and reflect upon this unique trek, with the views of Tibetan plateau against the stark white Himalayas. In the next couple of days more monasteries and Tibetan monks await us in Larkya Bazaar, along with the biggest challenge - crossing Larkya La (pass.) This 5213m snow-covered pass demands the utmost respect. Snow-covered peaks over 6500m tower above as we cross. We shall have plenty of time to explore and acclimatize before crossing the Larkya La (pass) 5135m

The highlight is going into the gorge of the Buddi Gandaki River. This gorge is long and forbidding, but as we ascend out of the gorge we are rewarded with magnificent waterfalls and the beautiful town of Tsum. Inhabited by people of Tibetan stock they farm potatoes, buckwheat and blazing red-yellow amaranths in diminutive fields. Over several days we traverse most of this area to visit villages and temples topped by towering views of Ganesh Himal. We traverse west, through high valleys and isolated yak pastures to Nup-ri, 'the western mountains', with simply amazing views of Manaslu 8163m and its companion Himal Chuli 7893m. Busy trade with Tibet over easy passes created former prosperity in this region as essential salt was carried south to middle Nepal, and even India, while grains and manufactured goods headed north. Trade is less flamboyant now but we are there at the right season, with a chance to see yak, sheep and donkey caravans grunting along with their loads, herded by Shanghai-wielding youngsters.

A substantial drop in altitude takes us through an incredible range of Himalayan forest to the Marsyandi River. The descent, once off the snow takes us through alpine and tropical areas, with an abundance of ferns, bamboo, pine trees, waterfalls and aqua-blue green lakes. We then hit the main Annapurna Circuit Trail where we will pick up our vehicle and drive to Pokhara to enjoy a couple of days relaxation before flying to Kathmandu.

## **TSUM VALLEY**

Discover the secret Tibetan Buddhist land lying at the edge of one of the most secluded Himalayan valleys. Tsum Valley is one of world's remotest Himalayan Valleys which was also a restricted region until recently. The trek to Tsum Valley takes you into the majestic surroundings of the Ganesh Himal, Sringi Himal, and Boudha Himal ranges. The region once being part of Tibet looks completely different from what you will find elsewhere. The people of Tsum Valley or the Tsumbas belong to Tibetan origin with their own ancient form of dialect, art, culture and religion. Very few adventure travelers have made it to this high and mysterious valley, which used to be an important trade link with Tibet. In the initial days,

we trek the route of Around Manaslu Trek or the Manaslu Circuit Trek. The Tsum Valley lies on the northern part of Manaslu and used to be a restricted area until 2008. The region is still less exposed in comparison to other touristy areas, with relatively virgin and less beaten paths in comparison to the more popular regions. The Tsum people have their own way of family life, which may be quite surprising for many outsiders. All the brothers in the family are married to a single girl, what you may call a practice of polyandry.

## **PROPOSED MANASLU AND TSUM VALLEY ITINERARY**

**Oct 15-Day 01:** Arrival Kathmandu Met and transferred to your hotel. **Overnight Hotel (B)**

**Oct 16-Day 02:** KATHMANDU – After breakfast your city guide will come to your hotel and take you on a ½ day sightseeing tour. In the afternoon you will have free time before meeting your trekking guide who will brief you on your trek preparation for the following day. **Overnight at hotel. (B)**

**Oct 17 Day 03 Kathmandu to Darje** This morning we will depart our at 630 am by land cruiser. We will take the main Privthi Highway west towards India, after 3 hours we will then head north for 1 hour to Darding. Here we will take a short break, and lunch at a local restaurant. After lunch we will continue on a rough unsealed road, which can sometimes be very dusty, be prepared for an uncomfortable 5 hour drive to our destination of Budditum . Depending on the road conditions, we should hopefully arrive at our destination of Darje by 3-4pm .It is an interesting and sometimes exciting drive with unexpected delays. Once you reach the village you will understand that it was worth the drive **(BLD) Overnight Homestay (BLD)**

**October18 Day 04: Village** Today we will take a short hike to the village of Maguwa to visit Saraswasi School. This village has approximately 23 homes, a population of around 400 and before the earthquake had 115 students, now the numbers are down to 65 due to families moving away. These people are predominantly Buddhist and Christian, who are all farmers. We will have the opportunity of visiting the homes and interacting with the children and their families. **Return to our homestay (BLD)**

**October 19 -Day 05: Darje to Thulo Dhunga (1250m/4,101ft.) 7-8 hours** Today we begin our hike towards Tsum Valley. The first part you will follow the Machhakhola (River) then cross suspension bridge walk. Due to the road being constructed you will take an alternative trekking route to the village of Khorlabeshi, before returning to the regular trekking route **Overnight at lodge (BLD)**

**Oct 20 -Day 06: Thulo Dhunga to Lokpa (2240m/7,349ft.)** walk via Jagat and the Tsum Valley special permits entrance gate.

Today you will see why you have come to the Himalayas, the views will be spectacular. Today is an easy walk from Khorlabeshi, crossing the Budhi Gandaki river several times – one section being a cantilevered metal walkway across a cliff face above the river which replaces a section of trail which was lost as a result of the 2015 earthquake. Jagat feels like a compact trading post in a narrow section of the Budhi Gandaki gorge. Today you will be able to have a shower and time to do a bit of laundry . If clear weather you may catch a glimpse of Shringi mountain. **( walking hours 7-8 overnight) at lodge (BLD)**

**Oct 21-Day 07: Lokpa to Chumling (2,386m/7,636ft)** The walk from Lokpa to Chumling is more challenging than you might expect. It involves a lot of steep up and down. You realize by the end of it why Tsum Valley has remained isolated until very recently. You cross another newer section of

cantilevered metal walkway across a cliff face. The collapse of this section of the trail in 2015 left Tsum Valley almost cut off from Nepal for several months. Just before you arrive in Chumling you cross a suspension bridge over the Shiar Khola and one more climb brings you up into a more open valley where you can see why people have chosen to live in such an inaccessible place for hundreds of years – plenty of terraced fields on the north side and mature Bhutan pine forest on the south side of the valley.

**Oct 22 -Day 08: Chumling to Chhokang Paro (3,031m/9,944ft.)**

First part of today trek is easy going, it is then a steep climb up to Chhokang Paro – crossing some landslide areas requiring extra care. The following morning you will be rewarded by a brilliant sunrise on Baudha Himal and Himal Chuli from the hotel. **5 -6 hours overnight at lodge (BLD)**

**Oct 23-Day 09: Chhokang Paro to Mu Gompa (3,709m/12,168ft.)**

The easy walk from Chhokang Paro to Nile is through beautiful, fertile, large, flat fields – the amazing and valuable productive land of the upper Tsum Valley. Lots of chortens, mani walls and gompas on the way – leaving you in no doubt that you are amongst Buddhists. Beyond the fields to the east and west the near vertical walls of the valley become the snow capped, 6,000 metre peaks of Cherke Himal, Kipu Himal and Langju Himal. After Nile the valley narrows and the fields cease.. The Gompa is perched up on an east facing slope, austere but well maintained. You can climb up a bit further to a nunnery not far from Mu Gompa or for the really energetic you can climb at least another 1,000 metres above the monastery for great views. If you are lucky, from Mu Gompa, you can see sunset and sunrise on Ganesh 2 to the south. **6 hours overnight at monastery lodge (BLD)**

**Oct 24 -Day 10: Mu Gompa Explore day (BLD) Day hiking**

The walk further north to Bhajyo is on the road for the first hour. Then you have to cross two short but unstable and a bit scary landslide areas. After that the trail is easy – through yak kharkas with blue sheep and marmots grazing in the sunshine – the slopes above and below are covered in shrubs showing their autumn colours – berberis, rose and dwarf cotoneaster. Bhajyo is a beautiful spot – a great place to relax in amongst the high mountains in the afternoon sunshine – Langju Himal and Tabsar look spectacular – but bitterly cold in the shade first thing in the morning. After lunch walk up to beyond Thongbu (4,500 metres) to get a clear view of the pass and a chorten on the border between Nepal and China. 4 hours overnight at lodge (BLD)

**Oct 25 -Day 11: Mu Gompa to Chhokang Paro (3,031m/9,944ft.)** On your return you will visit Rachen monastery for lunch Lama Gaun before hiking back to Chhokang paro **7 hours overnight at lodge (BLD)**

**Oct 26-Day 12: Chhokang Paro to Lokpa (1,960m/6,430ft.)** **6-7 hours overnight at lodge (BLD)**

**Oct 27-Day 13: Lokpa to Deng (1,860m/6,102ft.)**

From Lokpa you descend through the forest to re-join the main Manaslu Circuit trail.. The main trail squeezes its way through the Budhi Gandaki gorge crossing the river several times on long suspension bridges before reaching Deng. Deng is not a very attractive place. **5-6 hours overnight at lodge (BLD)**

**Oct 28-Day 14: Deng to Namrung (2,630m/8,628ft.)**

Today you will follow the main trail to Bihi Phedi and Ghap for lunch. After Ghap the Budhi Gandaki valley widens. At one point we cross a suspension bridge over the river and from the bridge we can see the Budhi Gandaki forced under a natural stone arch. Then it's a sustained climb up a beautifully built stone staircase to Namrung. **7-8 hours overnight at lodge (BLD)**

**Oct 29-Day 15: Nameung to Lho (3,180m/10,433ft.)**

An easy half days walk to Lho with great views of Himalchuli at the head of Hinang Glacier before Sho. In the afternoon take a hike to the large and prosperous looking Ribung Monastery and climb up to the top of the hill behind, to get great views of the Manaslu Massif **4 hours overnight at lodge (BLD)**

**Oct 30-Day 16: Lho to Samagaon (3,520m/11,548ft.)**

After breakfast, it is an easy half day walk to Samagaon photographing another classic view of Manaslu with a chorten in front of it near Lho and then stopping for tea at Shyala, a sleepy village, with magnificent clear views of Himalchuli, Nadi Chuli, Manaslu, Naika peak, Larkya peak and Samdo and Saula Himal. In Sama you will stay in the comfortable, busy but very efficiently run Hotel Manaslu. In the afternoon walk up to Birendra Tal – about an hour's walk from Sama where you will see an impressively tall chorten. **5 hours overnight at lodge (BLD)**

**Oct 31-Day 17: Samagaon day hiking explore Manaslu base camp (BLD)**

Today is your 'rest' day in Sama or you may prefer to do a four hour walk up to Manaslu Base Camp (4,770 metres) – a truly amazing spot with spectacular views of Manaslu, Manaslu North and Naika Peak. At base camp you may see a collection of large yellow tents, and several climbers waiting for their window of opportunity to climb Manaslu. **(BLD)**

**Nov 1 -Day 18: Samagaon to Samdo (3,875m/12,713ft.)** Another very easy walk from Sama to Samdo still following the much diminished Budhi Gandaki – no fields and no big trees – just some small birch, juniper and larch trees and lots of scrubby bushes including berberis and rose. **4 hours overnight at lodge (BLD)**

**Nov 2-Day 19: Samdo to Dharamsala (4,460m/14,632ft.)**

Today is a beautiful walk apart from the altitude, easy walk up to Dharamsala, hopefully you will enjoy perfect clear sky with truly impressive views of Samdo Peak, Naika Peak, Larke Peak and Cheo Himal and briefly Manaslu and Manaslu North. **4 hours overnight at lodge (BLD)**

**Nov 3-Day 20: Dharamsala to Bhimtang (3,700m/12,139ft.) via Lark pass (5,160m/16,924ft.)**

Today you cross Larka La. Depart your lodge at around 4am to walk over the pass. You may experience snow on the ground which will smooth the underlying rough rocky trail across the glacial moraine. It is a long slow steady climb and in the distance you will see the coloured prayer flags depicting the top of the pass. At the top you will experience wonderful views of sunrise on Larke Peak. At dawn a strong and

bitterly cold wind usually starts blowing so it is not advised to linger. Hike along to the second set of prayer flags and commence the long, steep and in places icy zigzag descent. A few hundred metres below the pass you will be able to take shelter from the wind to have a welcomed smack break after the steady 5 hour climb. As you carefully descent over the icy scree you will see the lodges of Bhimtang– the next village down. Your lodge is a welcome sight after such a long and gruelling day. . Fine views from Bhimtang of sunset on Manaslu as well as Phungi Himal, Nadi Chuli, Cheo Himal. Himlung, Ponkar Peak and Kang Guru can be seen from your lodge. . If you have a clear sunrise on the peaks will be stunning. 8- **9 hours overnight lodge (BLD)**.

**Nov 4-Day 21: Bhimtang to Dharapani (1963m/6440ft.)**

Excellent views of Mt. Manasalu with Himlung himal, Lamjung himal and other peaks are being offered while walking on the ridges at Bimthang. The trail slowly goes down through pasture land of Sangre Kharka and cross a bridge leading you all the way through beautiful rhododendron forests that blossoms magically during the spring months. You will again walk through open areas taking you up towards the ridges and finally arrive at Dharapani for overnight stay. **7-8 hours overnight at lodge (BLD)**

**Nov 5 22: Dharapani to Besishar** local jeep to Besishar and Pokhara by car or jeep depend on group **size (BLD)** Overnight Hotel

**Nov 6-Day 23:** Free Day Pokhara (B)

**Nov 7 – Day 24** Afternoon flight to Kathmandu (B)

**Nov 8 – Day 25** Depart to the airport for your return journey home

**Price Includes**

- Airport pickup and drop service
- Three night Hotel in Kathmandu with Breakfast twin sharing basic
- 2 Nights Pokhara including bfast
- All food and lodging during the trek (B,L,D included)
- Transportation costs: Private vehicle from Kathmandu to trekking starting point and trekking ending point from Dharapani to Besishar via Local Jeep, and Besishar to Pokhara, by private car
- Professionally trained and highly experienced English speaking trekking guide and a porter (1Porter for 2 trekkers with max load of 25kg) along with their salary, lodging, food and insurance
- Flight Pokhara to Kathmandu
- Trekking permits: Manaslu Conservation Area fees, Manaslu special permit , Tsum valley Special permits, Annapurna conversation area permits and TIMS Card
- Kathmandu sightseeing with Car and guide half day two places including entrance fee.
- m First aid medical box
- All required trekking gears like sleeping bag and down jacket made available on rent
- 13% VAT and 10% company service charge
- Farewell Dinner

**Price Excludes**

- Visa fee to enter Nepal AUD\$60
- International flight tickets and extra baggage charges
- Travel insurance/ Rescue operation costs
- All personal expenses
- Tip for guide and porter