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The Tiji festival is a famous Buddhist festival in Nepal that celebrate to mark God's victory over evil. The Upper Mustang Tiji Festival Trek is very famous all over the world and starts in late April or early May. The festival date varies according to their lunar calendar. The story is told through a series of dances and prayers performed by the monks of Lo Manthang Monastery.

Upper Mustang Tiji Festival Trek Highlights

- ❖ Mustang adventure trekking
- ❖ Buddhist spiritual immersion
- ❖ Beautiful Upper Mustang culture, tradition and living experience
- ❖ Incredible amazing scenery like nowhere else
- ❖ Participate in the Tiji Festival
- ❖ walk through the dry and arid surroundings of the Trans-Himalayan border
- ❖ Upper Mustang Tiji festival tour

The Tiji festival in the upper Mustang of Nepal is the most promising, and It is celebrated in the Lo-Mangthang. Local legends hold that the great Buddhist guru Padmasambhava came to Mustang and fought against the forces of evil that claimed to destroy Buddhism. Mustangs have their different lifestyle, which is quite surprising to many foreigners.

The most important festival in the region is the Tiji Festival, influenced by Tibetan Buddhism. The Tiji festival offers a three-day ritual known as the "demon hunt." The festival is scheduled to coincide with the end of the dry season. The exact date of the festival varies every year because Lamas calculate the time of the celebration according to their lunar calendar.

The three-day festival commemorates the triumph of the Buddhist deity Dorje Shonnu over the demon that was devastating to the Kingdom. During the three-day festival, the Lama monks put on various masks and perform a ritual dance that is said to cast out demons. Therefore, the ritual dance of the monks is also known as "The Hunt for Demons." The dance is accompanied by the music of traditional drums, bells, and horns. In a more profound sense, the celebration of the festival each year symbolizes the triumph of good over evil.

There is an interesting story that took place during the reign of the 15th King of Mustang. When the Kingdom suffered various problems, and the Queen could not have a child either. Then a great Sakyapa teacher was invited from Tibet. Master Sakyapa performed as the principal dancer at the Tiji Festival.

On the first day, the monks perform a dance called "Tsa Chaam." It tells the story of the birth of "Dorji Sonam," a Buddha reincarnated as a demon. This demon harassed the Mustang kingdom and wreaked havoc on the country. You can see the monks decreeing the harassment of this demon against the inhabitants of Mustang.

The Monks perform NgaCham on the second day. During the performance, Dorjee Sonam tries to bring the demon back to the Kingdom of Buddha.

On the third and last day of the festival, the "Rha Chham" dance takes place. Throughout this ritual, Dorjee Sonam triumphs over the evil devil and banishes him from Mustang.

Daily itinerary

Day 01: Arrival at Kathmandu International Airport.

Upon arrival at Kathmandu airport, you will be greeted by a representative from our office. After completing your personalized paperwork, collect your luggage; Find our office representative who will hold your name on board just outside the arrival gate. Then our representative will transfer you to the pre reserved hotel. After check-in at the hotel, there will be a trip briefing session where you can

meet your trekking guide and other team members. After that, you can rest, walk around the city. It's all depends on your interests and your condition.

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 02: City tour around Kathmandu and preparation for the trek.

Today, after having breakfast, you begin a guided city tour to several of Kathmandu's most historical and spiritual attractions. Some of these attractions are included on World Heritage sites: the historic Kathmandu Durbar Square, the sacred Pashupatinath Hindu temple, the famous Swoyambunath Stupa 'Monkey Temple' and the Buddhist shrine, which is one of the largest Buddhist stupas in Nepal.

Meals included: Breakfast.

Day 03: Drive to Pokhara from Kathmandu: 6 hours drive

Early in the morning around 7 am, you depart to Pokhara by deluxe tourist bus. Along the way, you will see more of the Nepalese countryside offering vegetation, rivers, villages, farms, and beautiful mountain landscapes. In the afternoon, you arrive at Pokhara. Pokhara provides a superb view of Dhaulagiri, Manaslu, Machhapuchhare, Annapurna, and many other peaks. Pokhara is a city of lakes, and it has many beautiful lakes. You can explore the most accessible and attractive Fewa Lake in the afternoon, also enjoy boating. Explore, relax, and dine by the tranquil Fewa Lake. Night stay at hotel in Pokhara.

Meals included: Breakfast.

Day 04: Flight to Jomsom and walk to Kagbeni: Walking distance 3-4 hours

After an early breakfast, transfer to Pokhara Airport for the first flight to Jomsom, a super scenic 25-minute flight over the mountains with views of 8,000 meters high mountain like Annapurna and Dhaulagiri, taking you to Jomsom, the headquarters of Mustang. From Jomsom, continue walking on the gradual path in the Kali Gandaki river bed for about three hours and finally reach your destination at the village of Ekley-Bhatti. After a good rest here, an hour walk takes you to

Kagbeni, which is located on the edge of two rivers. In Kagbeni, an important tributary, the Kak Khola, which comes from Muktinath to meet the Mustang Khola, and from there the river become bigger and it called Kali Gandaki River.

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Day 05: Trek from Kagbeni to Chele: Walking distance 5-6 hours

Your journey begins with a special permit check upstream and downstream of the Kaligandaki coast upstream. During the trip, you have a picturesque scenic spot to stop on the sandy and windy trails. This trail follows the rise and fall. First you arrive at the village of Tangbe with its narrow streets between whitewashed houses, apple trees, Buckwheat, barley and wheat. From there, you head towards Chhusang and crossing the head of the river towards huge red conglomerate block that fell from the cliff above, forming a tunnel through which the Kaligandaki follows. You head towards small ridges to reach the town of Chele.

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Day 06: Trek from Chele to Syanbochen: walking distance 6-7 hours

Today you start your trip walking towards to Eklo Bhatti. Climb to Taklam La Pass from side to side plateaus and narrow sections overlooking Tilicho Peak, Damodar Danda, and Yakawa Kang. Later, descend a little to the town of Samar. Climb the path that passes above the village of Samar to the ridge, and then abruptly descend to a stream. You also pass through a cave known as the Ramchung Cave. A similar 3-hour walk takes you to Syanbochen.

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Day 07: Trek from Syanbochen to Ghaymi: Walking Distance 5-6 hours

After breakfast, you go up to Yamda La, passing some tea houses, chortens, and local villages, which resembles the Tibetan style of homes with open terrace. You will cross mountain passes and an alley of poplars and barley fields. The ascent to the Nyi pass would be a little longer. Night stay at the hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Day 08: Ghaymi to Charang: Walking distance 4-5 hours

Begin the trip after breakfast with a pleasant walk. After crossing Ghaymi Khola, the road climbs up to a plateau and passes a very long Mani wall, a sacred stone wall built by the followers of Buddhism. From the end of the wall, the road heads east towards the city of Charang with a labyrinth of fields, pastures and houses, which are surrounded by stone walls in the top of the Tsarang Chu canyon. There is also a big white dzong and a red Gumba.

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Day 09: Charang to Lo-Mangthang: 5-6 hours, first day of the Tiji festival

Today it leads to Lo-Mangthang with a beautiful view of mount Nilgiri, Tilicho Lake, Annapurna I and peak Bhrikuti. The trail descends first into Charang Chu Gorge and then climbs steeply after crossing the river. Further on, the trail gently climbs up to the windy Lo Pass, 3,850 m high, from where you can see the beautiful Lo Mangthang valley. Going down to Lo-Mangthang, the views of the fortified city seem magnificent with its hills on the Tibetan border. Today is the first day of the Mustang Festival. You enjoy the ritual dance of the monks and other celebrations. Many masked dancers in sumptuous costumes will come to the plaza in front of the Royal Palace. Lamas and monks from the Nyingmapa community play music. Tibetan-looking mustangs come with their traditional clothing and jewelry. There, you can also see the horse racing and tug war.

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Day 10: Explore Lo-Mangthang, it is the second day of the festival

Today is the second day of the Mustang tiji festival. There will be similar ritual processions as the first day. Besides seeing the festival, you would also like to explore the arteries of the town and the surroundings. Visit Namgyal Gompa and Tingkhar. Located on a hill, Namgyal Gompa serves as a famous local community monastery and also as a local court. After visiting Namgyal Gompa, continue to visit Tingkhar, the last central town northwest of Lo-Mangthang, and then return to the hotel. Or you may have another option to visit Tall Champa Lkhang's

"House of God," Red Thugchen Gompa, Chyodi Gompa, and the Entrance Hall, which are the main attraction of this area. Next attraction is the four-story building known as the Raja Palace, as well as beautiful views of the nearby Himalayas.

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Day 11: Explore Lo-Mangthang, the third day of the Tiji festival.

On the third day, the festival ends with the ceremonial destruction of the remains of evil, represented by long black yak hair and red tormas, which are transformed into dark red swirl. The remains of red demons are arranged on an old tiger skin; after that, they are attacked by bow and arrow, slings, and ancient weapons. The remains of the poor devil fall to the ground, each time in a wild gorge of old muzzles and a wave of cheering and smoke.

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Day 12: Trek from Lo-Mangthang to Drakmar: walking distance 6-7 hours

Upon returning from Lo-Manthan, you will take a different route than you did. Travel to Drakmar through Gyakar with Ghar Gompa for 1200 years with Guru Rinpoche as the first figure. The Gompa is also famous for its cave paintings. According to legend, whoever wishes to make a wish to Ghar Gompa, the dream is granted. Explore the area.

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Day 13: Trek from Dhakmar to Ghiling: Walking distance 5-6 hours

Today you return to Ghiling because your night trip after a long walk lasts 5 to 6 hours. After arrival and lunch, take advantage of the day to explore the area, but there will be dusty wind in the afternoon, so we suggest walking in the evening or early morning.

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Day 14: Trek from Ghiling to Chhuksang: Walking distance 5-6 hours

You return to Ghiling for the night stop after 5 hours of walking. You will have incredible landscapes during the trip with a view of the Himalayas. Enjoy your trip, and spend the night in the tea house.

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Day 15: Trek from Chhuksang to Jomsom: Walking distance 6-7 hours

Today, the walk will be long. It is better to walk early and walk towards Kagbeni. End of the top Mustang trails, and you join the regular Annapurna circuit route. After lunch in Kagbeni, direction Jomsom for the night. Or, if you can save an extra day, your guide will also take you to Muktinath.

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Day 16: Return flight to Pokhara

After breakfast early in the morning, you checked in at the airport to return to Pokhara with the spectacular 20-minute flight to Pokhara between the gorges of the two huge mountains Annapurna and Dhaulagiri. Upon arrival at Pokhara Airport, the guide will transfer you to the hotel by the lake. The rest of the time, explore the lakeside and spend the night at the hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast.

Day 17: Back to Kathmandu by deluxe tourist bus.

After breakfast, drive from Pokhara to Kathmandu. The trip will be 210 kilometers to Kathmandu. Upon arrival in Kathmandu, we will transfer to your hotel. There's nothing to do. You can spend the afternoon peacefully; you can do last-minute shopping in the Thamel area.

Meals included: Breakfast.

Day 18: Transfer to the airport:

Depending on your flight schedule, we will take you to the international airport. We wish you a pleasant journey and hope to see you next time.

Meals included: Breakfast.

The price includes:

- ❖ Reception at the airport and return by private vehicle.
- ❖ Three nights of accommodation in Kathmandu with breakfast.
- ❖ Two nights of accommodation in Pokhara with breakfast.
- ❖ Excursion to Kathmandu with a guide and private vehicle.
- ❖ All Entry tickets for the Kathmandu cultural tour.
- ❖ Standard meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) during the trip.
- ❖ All necessary documents and the entry permit for the conservation area.
- ❖ Special permit for Mustang trek
- ❖ Conservation fee of Annapurna
- ❖ Pokhara - Jomsom - Pokhara flight price.
- ❖ Kathmandu - Pokhara - Kathmandu by tourist bus.
- ❖ All lodgings in tea houses/cottages
- ❖ A government-approved guide and porters.
- ❖ Salary, food, hotel, transport, and insurance for the guide and the porter.
- ❖ Necessary government taxes.

Price does not include:

- ❖ Lunch and dinner in Kathmandu and Pokhara.
- ❖ All kinds of drinks (alcoholic, cold, and hot beverages).
- ❖ Excess baggage charges
- ❖ Personal equipment.
- ❖ Personal travel and medical insurance.
- ❖ All kinds of personal expenses.
- ❖ Tips for trekking staff, driver.
- ❖ Any donation to the monastery.
- ❖ Entrances fee to Mustang monastery.

Food and Accommodation

In the village along the main hiking area, there is a tea house lodge to accommodate the trekkers. Mustang Trekking has not been for a long time as the

Annapurna or Everest region, so there are generally fewer standard lodges. However, they are all comfortable and at least have functional bathrooms, dining rooms, beds, and often showers and even Wi-Fi. Shelters can sometimes fill up quickly in high season, so large groups often bring camping supplies just in case. However, as the region gains popularity, more pavilions are being built.

Trekking in the remote Mustang region is also an opportunity to live a simple life far from the pleasures of the world in the lap of the Himalayas. It is an experience in itself to stay in tea houses that offer minimalist food like soup, noodles, pasta, potatoes, vegetables, dal Bhat, fried rice, eggs, etc. and simple accommodation. We will provide Three meals in one day. During this stay, you can also observe the lifestyle and traditions of the inhabitants.

Climate and the best time to trek

Upper Mustang is in the rain shadow area, so you can go to this region during the monsoon season also because there is little or no precipitation. Some places in this region are so heavenly with the blossoming Alpine monsoon flowers. The average temperature of the area is around 10 degrees centigrade. However, it can drop to -15 ° C in winter, making the trip almost impossible.

All major festivals, cultural programs take place in summer in this region. Trekking in summer, therefore, offers you an excellent opportunity to explore the culture and way of life of the local population. If you can bear the cold, you can also walk in other seasons.

Spring and fall are the most popular times to visit Upper Mustang. In the spring, many foreign visitors enjoy going to spring festivals in the region. At the same time, fall is the most popular hiking season in all of Nepal because after the monsoon, the weather is dry, and temperatures are very comfortable. Summer is a lesser-known but ideal alternative time to visit Upper Mustang. Mountains surround mustang area so block storms, the Mustang is said to be in a "rain shadow" and is therefore dry most of the year.

Culture and festivals in the Mustang region

Upper Mustang is well known for its many monasteries, caves, and magnificent palaces. Lo Mangthang has two of the most famous monasteries, Thubchen and Jampa, which was built in the 15th century. Luri Gompa, another famous monastery in the region, is believed to be even older. Luri Gompa is a troglodyte monastery, a unique attraction in the Upper Mustang. It is estimated that there are more than 10,000 caves in the upper Mustang region; some of them should be more than 2,000 years old. Many caves have been used and are still used today, as meditation chambers or small monasteries. Others have historically served as storage spaces, military lookouts, and war shelters. However, others are complete mysteries, and archaeologists come to Upper Mustang to investigate the caves and try to discover their purpose and their ancient inhabitants. Many caves are somehow dug hundreds of feet off the ground in loose, brittle rocks, and the mystery is what continues to bring National Geographic archaeological missions to the region.

One of the largest festivals held in the region is the Tiji Festival, which takes place in the spring, often in early May. The festival is celebrated on the occasion of the victory of incarnations of Lord Buddha over a demon. It takes place for a few days with dances and various religious rituals in the center of Lo Manthang. It is very popular with tourists for its colorful shows, dances, and elaborate costumes. Yarthum is another famous festival in the region, held in August / September at the end of summer. Also known as the horse festival, the yarthum takes place over approximately three days with various horse sporting events, parties, and dances. Lo Manthang yarthum is the most famous in the region, but in recent years other villages have started to organize their Yarthum festivals, namely Ghami.

Trekking guide (s) and staff arrangements

The most important thing that makes your Mustang trip successful, enjoyable, and memorable is the qualified, experienced, courteous, and helpful guide and crew members capable of spending your days in the mountains with no hassle. The best and most professional leaders will lead your walk. Our entire trekking leaders are carefully selected based on their appropriate experience, leadership

skills, and personal skills. To support local communities, we only employ local staff who have adequate knowledge of the region's culture (s), flora, fauna, geography, and history.

Travel insurance

Travel insurance for any itinerary of our company is a condition for the holiday reservation. At a minimum, you must have emergency medical and repatriation insurance, which should include the cost of the mountain rescue. Please carefully review the general conditions of your insurers; In particular, you should ensure that the following are covered: 1) Activity (i.e., hiking, trekking, or mountaineering) 2) Maximum altitude reached during the trek 3) Evacuation of the helicopter in an emergency. You should understand that you will be responsible for all expenses incurred in evacuation and repatriation procedures, and that is your responsibility to pay all costs incurred in the event of an evacuation or medical treatment. You must be fully aware of the implications of organizing your travel insurance and understand the limitations and exclusions of your policy. Please note that in certain circumstances, our company guide can initiate helicopter rescue procedures in medical emergencies without first contacting your insurance company for approval.

Physical condition and experience requirements

Upper Mustang Trek falls into the Moderate Plus classification. You must walk on the terrain in high altitude regions, and the trail can be difficult and steep in places. You have to walk 5-6 hours a day on barren rocky terrain. Some days you may even have to walk 8 to 9 hours. Trekking at Elevation is more physically difficult than walking at low elevations; however, if you are in excellent health with average fitness, a positive attitude, self-confidence, and strong determination, you can complete the trip. So you have to be physically and mentally capable of doing this hike. Exercising and running regularly for a few months before the trip is a good idea, as it will improve your strength and stability. Previous hiking experience is preferred, but technical skill is not necessary. You should consult your doctor before booking this trip.

Suggested preparation

- ❖ Cardiovascular exercises such as running, cycling, jogging, push-ups for approximately 4 to 5 days a week for three months before your trip will be beneficial.
- ❖ You should also participate in the development of core strength and muscular endurance in bodybuilding.
- ❖ Walking on the hills in different weather conditions will be proper preparation for this trip.
- ❖ If you have access, kayaking and swimming can be a very beneficial way to develop the strength and endurance necessary for this journey.