



# Mustang Yartong Horse Festival – 2016

**28 August – 18 September 2016 (22 days in Nepal)**

**Mustang is a unique corner of Nepal, a genuine Shangri La. Culturally and geographically a part of Tibet, Mustang has until relatively recently been closed to the world. Tourism is still strictly limited and controlled.**

**This is an amazing opportunity to experience a medieval, Buddhist world set amongst some of the world's most dramatic mountains, the world's deepest valley and a breathtakingly beautiful high altitude desert.**

*'Authentic Tibetan culture survives only in exile in a few places like Mustang, which has had long historical and cultural ties with Tibet.'* Dalai Lama

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## Now is the time to go!

**Changes are coming fast to Mustang, and the next couple of years provide the last window of opportunity to explore a relatively untouched corner of old Tibet.**



Currently the most significant 20<sup>th</sup> century intrusion into Mustang is mobile phones, but a road is fast being constructed from both the Chinese/Tibetan border and from Jomsom. Already a small number of extremely intrepid 4WD trucks and tractors make it all the way to Lo Manthang during the dry season.

Not only does this trek take you into an incredibly dramatic environment, it will introduce you to some amazing people – people who you will enjoy getting to know and will be proud to count as friends. The trekking crew speaks excellent English. Each one is an impressive and interesting character in his own right, and they're great company. Because of our connections, you'll also meet locals – monks, teachers, children, farmers, inn-keepers, nomads... maybe even the King of Mustang if he's at home.

You will find the trek reasonably demanding, but unique Tibetan ponies are provided for you to ride and they make life much easier on the ankle-twisting stones at the bottom of the Kali Gandaki gorge, and on long climbs. Descents are completed on foot. You do not need any horse-riding experience. The ponies are calm, sure-footed and beautifully trained.

The highest passes we traverse are around 4,500 metres (14,750 ft.), but because we don't sleep at high altitude, and the altitudes we do sleep at increase progressively, altitude sickness is extremely unlikely to be a problem.



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## The Nepal Trekking Crew

All *you* have to do carry is a day pack, ride your pony, and walk downhill. The trekking crew does the rest.

Tents are erected for you. Three excellent meals per day are cooked for you (rigid sanitary rules are observed in food preparation).

You don't have to think about anything – except about getting the most enjoyment possible from your adventure!



**Stan Armington** is a 40-year veteran of Nepal and was one of the first Europeans to visit Mustang. He was also the author of Lonely Planet's trekking guide for many years. Stan has close connections with the region, and has recently been involved with local people working on temple restoration, schools and student hostels.



**Norbu Lama**, an old friend and colleague of Stan's, and a highly experienced Sirdar (trek leader) from the Jumla region of western Nepal, manages the expedition crew.



**Tenzing**, a Tibetan refugee, and founder of Ghiling School used to roam alone in these mountains as an eight-year-old goat herder. At times it seems he knows every single person in Mustang.



**Tashi Wangal**, a highly-respected Lo Manthang local and wonderful horseman, provides and manages the ponies.

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## 2016– Dates

The Yartong Horse Festival Trek is planned for 28 August – 18 September 2016. The dates are picked to correspond with auspicious days in the Tibetan Lunar calendar.

Allow more time if you want to buffer against unforeseen delays and if you want to explore the Kathmandu Valley or the Terai (Nepal's tropical lowlands).



The Yartong Horse Racing Festival will give us an opportunity to take part in festivities with the local people of Mustang.

People come out in the finest local dress to enjoy the races... This is the **Kentucky Derby of Mustang**. If we are fortunate we will have a chance to join the King and his friends for the races... There will be plenty of dancing, horse racing, festivities, singing, gambling and a good time had by all.



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## Ideal Itinerary

Allow a minimum of three weeks for the complete trip. This includes our ideal 22 day/21 night itinerary in Nepal - plus travel to and from Nepal.

For those travelling from the USA it is recommended you allow us to arrange a (nearly) connecting flight through to Pokhara (the jumping-off point for the Mustang trek) from Kathmandu.

There are numerous possible variations to your trip involving longer stays in Kathmandu, or side trips to other regions, including rafting trips, and elephant safaris in Nepal's tropical lowlands.

Kathmandu is a fascinating place (one of the world's great historic cities) but it is also crowded, chaotic and polluted.



Pokhara is a relaxed holiday town on the shores of Phewa Lake, in the shadow of the Annapurna Massif, and a stopover on the famed Overland Trail pioneered in '70s.

Our ideal Mustang itinerary builds in time to acclimatise to high altitudes and spare time, which can buffer against unforeseen events. No Nepalese itinerary is cast in stone! Factors like weather can play havoc with planes coming in and out of Pokhara, not to mention with high-altitude passes and river crossings.

**Talk to Jim if you're curious about details or possibilities –**

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## MUSTANG - Yartong Horse Festival

**28 August – 18 September 2014**

**(22 days in Nepal)**

**Please note that no Nepalese itinerary is cast in stone!**

Bad weather can wreak havoc with plane travel in and out of Pokhara, as well as travel over high-altitude passes and river crossings. This proposed itinerary allows for acclimatisation to high altitudes and spare time to buffer against bad weather or other unforeseen events.

### YARTONG FESTIVAL

**Depart for Nepal  
(2 days travel time from USA)**

Fri 28-Aug	Arrive Kathmandu Fly to Pokhara Stay Tibet Resort
Sat 29-Aug	Pokhara Dance show
Sun 30-Aug	Fly to Jomsom Trek to Marpha
Mon 31-Aug	Kagbeni
Tue 01-Sep	Chele
Wed 02-Sep	Ghiling
Thu 03-Sep	Ghiling
Fri 04-Sep	Charang

Yartong Horse Festival

Sat 05-Sep	Lo Manthang
Sun 06-Sep	Lo Manthang
Mon 07-Sep	Lo Manthang
Tue 08-Sep	Lo Manthang
Wed 09-Sep	Lo Gekar
Thu 10-Sep	Chunkar
Fri 11-Sep	Samar
Sat 12-Sep	Chhuksang
Sun 13-Sep	Kagbeni
Mon 14-Sep	Jomsom
Tue 15-Sep	Fly to Pokhara, StayTibet Resort
Wed 16-Sep	In Pokhara
Thu 17-Sep	Fly to Kathmandu
Fri 18-Sep	Depart for Home

**(1 day travel time to USA)**



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## What is the cost for this once in a lifetime opportunity?

The total cost of this itinerary includes all accommodations, all meals (except lunch and dinner in Kathmandu), the \$50-per-day permit for Mustang (one of the reasons tourist numbers are kept relatively low), domestic air travel between Kathmandu and Pokhara, domestic air travel between Pokhara and Jomsom, and a \$100 contribution to the Himalayan Childrens' Care Home ([www.hchmustang.org](http://www.hchmustang.org)).

**Additional expenses to consider are tips for the trekking crew (allow \$200 to \$250), the international air fare to/from Kathmandu, travel insurance, any personal equipment you might need to buy (walking boots, warm clothing and sleeping bag), and any alcohol you choose to consume.**

**PRICE PER PERSON (8 members):  
\$5550/person (22 days  
in Nepal) + \$650 ACAP  
Special Area Fee (cash  
required)**

**TOTAL: \$6200/PERSON**

### The Fine Print

The total price includes a figure of \$445 for domestic airfares. Given the uncertainty with pricing in this area we reserve the right to pass on any price rise above a total of \$475.

The total price includes the \$50/day mandatory Nepal government restricted area fee and the Annapurna Conservation Area (ACAP) conservation fee. The fees must be paid in **CASH** upon arrival in Kathmandu as part of the Nepal government regulation.

