



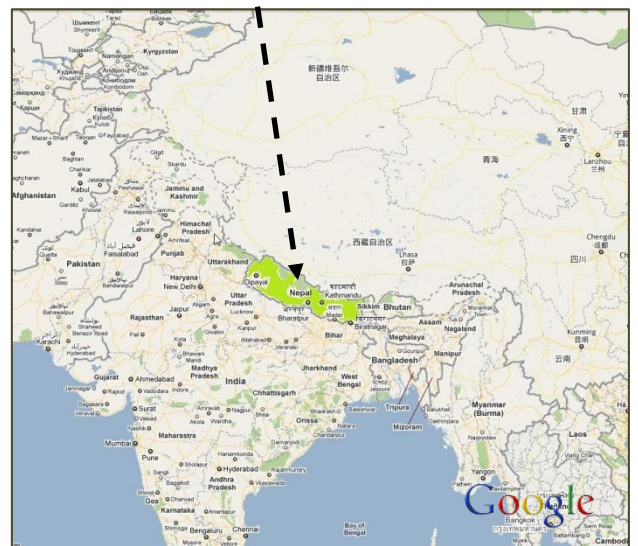
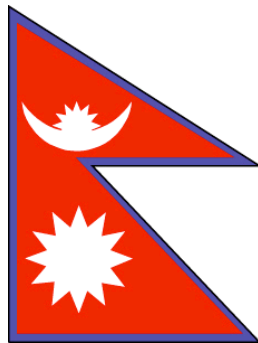
Trekking the Planet

Discovering the Cultural and Natural Significance of the World



Where are we now?

- Darren and Sandy are in Lo Manthang, Nepal, located at 29° N and 84° E.
- We have traveled approximately 24,270 miles (39,059 kilometers) from our starting point in California.

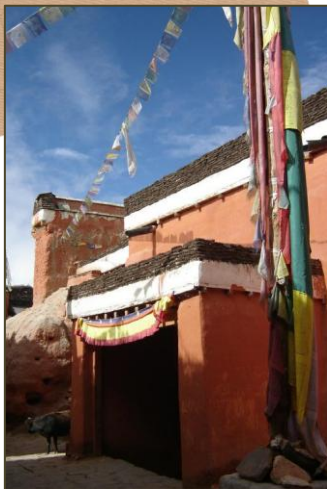




Lo Manthang (source: Geolocation.ws)

Did you know?

A gompa is an isolated monastery. Lo Manthang has three gompas in its city. **Jhampa Gompa** is the oldest, built in 1387 AD. It was modeled after a gompa still standing in Tibet. **Thupchen Gompa** was built in the early 15th century and contains ceiling and wall paintings. **Choede Gompa** is the newest, built in 1757. It features Buddhist religious paintings and images.



Thupchen Gompa (sources: Answers.com, Happy-nomads.nl, Geolocation.ws)

People and Culture

- The Lo / Mustang kingdom was founded in 1380 by a warrior named Ame Pal. From the 15th to 17th centuries Lo / Mustang controlled trade between the Himalayans and India, as the route between the two areas follows one of the lowest mountain passes in the region at 15,289 feet (4,660 meters).
- Lo Manthang is the capital of the former kingdom of Lo / Mustang region. The walled city was built in the 15th century along the Himalayan trade route.
- The kingdom was annexed by Nepal at the end of the 18th century. The Lo / Mustang monarchy, directly linked to founder Ame Pal, continued until 2008, when it was abolished along with Nepal's king.
- The region's population is about 15,000, with most of Tibetan descent. Buddhism is the main religion. In 2007, caves were discovered near Lo Manthang which depicts Buddha's life in a series of paintings.
- The area has only been open to foreign tourists since 1992 and only limited numbers are allowed to visit each year.

Nature and Environment

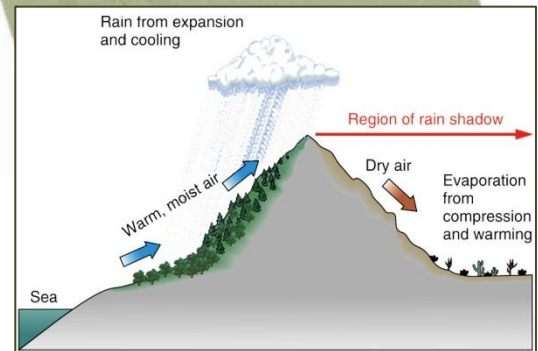
- Lo Manthang sits on the Tibetan Plateau at an elevation of 12,598 feet (3,840 meters). It is located north of the Annapurna Himalayan range of mountains.
- The climate is dry and arid with an annual rainfall of about 12.8 inches (325 millimeters). The Kali Gandaki River runs through the region and forms one of the deepest gorges in the world.
- The Lo / Mustang kingdom is about 33 miles (53 kilometers) from north to south and 37 miles (60 kilometers) from east to west. The elevations within this region range from 9,022 feet (2,750 meters) to 21,982 feet (6,700 meters).
- We will begin our trek at about 9,219 feet (2,810 meters) and make our way to the high point of our hike at about 13,123 feet (4,000 meters) before descending into Lo Manthang.



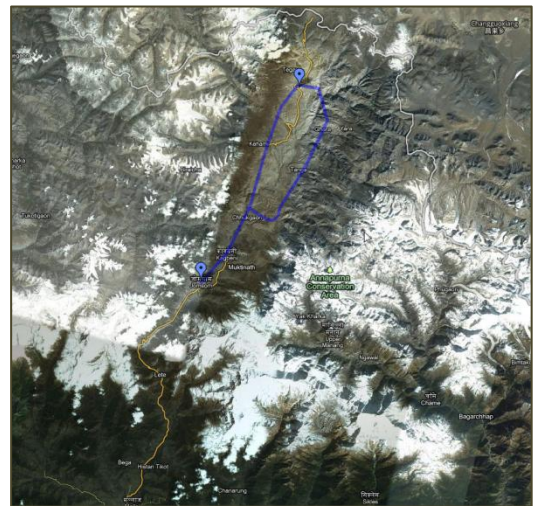
Prayer flags at Lo / Mustang mountain pass
(source: [Flickr.com/Ben Cumming](https://www.flickr.com/photos/bencumming/))

Rain Shadows

The Mustang region is not subject to the monsoon conditions that take place in other parts of Nepal from June to August. This is because it is located in the rain shadow of the Himalayas. This means it is on the dry side of the high mountains which block out the rain clouds and moist air from passing over the peaks.



source: Nepalhomepage.com



Approximate route of our trek.
Click the map to view in Google Maps

Our Plans

- We are arriving in Lo Manthang about halfway into our 12-day trekking trip in the Mustang region. After hiking five to six hours a day to arrive here, we will enjoy a rest day exploring this settlement.
- After four more days of trekking we will arrive in Pokhara, Nepal's second biggest city. We will then make our way back to Kathmandu and spend several days visiting towns and historic sites in the surrounding area before heading to China and Tibet.
- As we continue our time in Nepal, let us know what questions you have. We will try to include our answers in one of our next emails.

The Tiji Festival

The biggest festival in Lo Manthang is called Tiji. It celebrates a deity named Dorje Jono who saved the kingdom from destruction by battling his demon father. The festival takes place in the main town square.



source: Mountainsotravelphotos.com

More Information

- <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5256/>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lo_Manthang
- http://www.nepalecotrek.com/mustang_forbidden.php
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mustang>

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