

TREK 14: Dhaulagiri Circuit via French Pass

Grade Challenging

Permits: TIMS, ACAP permit

Days: 14.

Highest point: 5300m

Map: Round Dhaulagiri/French Pass or West Dhaulagiri/Kanjirowa

Cautions: Licensed guide required. Avalanche risk. Not recommended December to April

Overview:

This route has been on the itinerary of trekking agencies for many years. It is easy to understand its appeal. The route cuts through the main ridge-line of the Dhaulagiri range between two of its highest peaks (I & II), and thus offers a unique experience with awesome close-up views of these and other peaks. Individual trekkers must be accompanied by a registered guide.

Be aware that there is a risk of avalanches on this route, a fact not always highlighted by trekking agencies. In recent years snow fall has been unseasonably heavy in October – the prime trekking month. Trekking in the spring season (March-April) is not recommended.

This trek is not popular with porters, mostly because of the time they must spend hanging about (inadequately clothed) in the freezing cold of high-altitude camps, waiting for clients (well-clothed in down jackets) to acclimatize to the altitude. So, if you decide to do this trek, make sure that your porters, as well as yourself, have adequate clothing and sleeping gear. At 4500m + night temperatures are likely to be minus 10 degrees or colder.

The details vary between the TAs, but all follow the same route. They always recommend the northerly direction for the trek which allows for easier altitude acclimatization. Since this is a route well-known to trekking agencies, the following is a summary of a sample itinerary.

Day 1: Pokhara to Dharapani 1500m

Day 2: Dharapani to Muri 1720m

Day 3: Muri to Bagar 2080m

Day 4: Bagar to Dobang 2500m

Day 5: Dobang to Sallaghari 2820m

Day 6: Sallaghari to Italian Base Camp 3600m

Day 7: Acclimatization rest day

Day 8: Italian Base Camp to Japanese Base Camp 4150m

Day 9: Japanese BC to Dhaulagiri Base Camp 4700m

Day 10: Acclimatization rest day

Day 11: Dhaulagiri Base Camp to Hidden Valley 5140m via French Pass 5370m

Day 12: Hidden Valley to Alu Bari (3900m) via Dhampus Pass 5280m

Day 13: Alu Bari to Marpha 2660m

Day 14: Marpha to Pokhara by road