

Group size:	1+	Max-Altitude:	1520m
Destination:	Nepal	Fitness level:	Easy
Arrival on:	Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA)	Departure from:	Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA)
Meals:	Breakfast in Kathmandu and All standard meals (B+L+D) during the Trip		
Best Season:	October/November		
Accommodation:	Three star rated Hotel in Kathmandu and Pokhara and Best lodge/Tea house Available during the Trek.		

Trip Introduction

Dashain and Tihar Festival of Nepal

While the Himalayas are the identity of Nepal, its traditional norms and vibrant festivals shape the cultural lifestyle of the country. With approximately 80% of the people being Hindus, Dashain and Tihar are two of the most widely and grandly celebrated festivals in the country. As such, Dashain is celebrated for nearly two weeks and Tihar is celebrated for five days. Both these festivals mark reunions, joy, and the victory of good over evil. Since the offices are closed during these festivals, tourists who come to Nepal can observe their grand celebration.

Dashain: Celebration of Good Prevailing over Evil

Dashain is the main festival of the Hindus and is celebrated for two weeks that fall in late September or early October. It begins on the bright lunar fortnight and lasts till the day of the full moon according to the Nepalese calendar. This festival celebrates the power of Goddess Durga, the triumph of good over evil.

During Dashain, Nepal is truly a sight to behold. People clean their houses and some even renovate them to make them even more beautiful. People who have left their homes to work or study return to celebrate this occasion with their families. Various local fairs are also held and another famous attraction is the makeshift swings made of bamboo. People also fly kites and this is a popular form of entertainment during Dashain.

Visiting Nepal during this time is a great opportunity to enjoy the traditional Hindu culture at its finest peak while also being a part of the celebrations and enjoyment. The different days of Dashain are:

Ghatasthapana

Ghatasthapana is the first day of the fifteen-day long festival. On this day, people fill a vessel with some sand and cow dung and sow maize and barley seeds in it. This vessel is then covered and worshipped for ten days. The Goddess Durga is believed to reside in this vessel and will protect the family. Holy water is used to water the sand every day. By the tenth day, the seeds will grow into small plants and are known as Jamara. This is later used in the final and main day of the festival. This day is usually observed privately at the homes of people. Some people also visit temples for special ceremonies marked to celebrate this day.

Phoolpati

Phoolpati or Saptami is the seventh day of the Dashain festival. On this day, nine types of holy plants are either decorated outside the house or brought into the room designated for worshiping the deities. Here, the plants are worshiped alongside the jamara. The nine plants are manabriksha, jayanti, ashoka, belpatra, ginger, turmeric, rice stalk, pomegranate, and banana. These plants each represent a different God or Goddess and a mix of these nine ingredients is called navapatriva. The plants are believed to put an end to evil while bringing happiness and prosperity to the people. The navapatriva is taken out on the tenth day and is set off on a holy river. Besides this, some people also worship the tools of their trades as it is believed to bring prosperity in their endeavors. The Nepal Army also organizes a parade at Tudhikhel which is observed by the president and government officials every year.

Mahaastami

On the eighth day of Dashain, Goddess Kali, an incarnation of Goddess Durga, is worshiped. Many animals like buffaloes, goats, hens, and ducks are sacrificed to her. The meat is said to be blessed and it is believed to be auspicious to eat the meat of the slaughtered animal. Likewise, an increasing number of families use fruits and vegetables as an offering to Goddess Durga as well. The celebration continues with a feast consisting of traditional Nepali food. Many devotees also fast and visit many temples and shrines of the goddess. On this day, special worship is held at the "Dashain Ghar" at Hanuman Dhoka in Kathmandu Durbar Square.

Mahanawami

On this day, the celebrations reach their peaks and people begin to prepare for the final day of the festival. Families believe that demons hide in the bodies of animals to save themselves from getting annihilated by the Goddess and this day is dedicated to hunting those demons. Many people worship their instruments of trade on this day as well as it is believed to ensure safety at work over the year. This is also the only day of the year when the Taleju Bhawani temple in Kathmandu Durbar Square is open to the public. Many devotees use this opportunity to worship the Goddess and get her blessings. Constructed in

the 1500s, this temple has exquisite architecture as well as a lot of history. Animal sacrifices are also conducted by the official military in the Kot Courtyard of the Hanuman Dhoka Royal Palaces where buffaloes are sacrificed with gunfire salutes.

Vijaya Dashami

This day marks the victory of Lord Ram over the demon Ravana and is celebrated with great zest and traditional practices. On the most important day of Dashain, the younger members of the family receive tika—a mixture of rice, yogurt, and vermillion. Likewise, they also receive jamara and blessings from the eldest of the family. Daksnina or a small amount of money is also given to them. Because Dashain is all about togetherness and family, people from far away also come back home to receive tika. The tika ceremony lasts for around four days when everyone goes to meet their relatives and receive their blessings.

Tihar: Festival of Light

Tihar or Deepawali is celebrated in October or November, a few weeks after Dashain. It has been suitably nicknamed “The Festival of Lights” because, during this time, people decorate their houses with lights and vibrant colors. They also use diyos- traditional clay lamp, that is filled with oil and cotton dipped into it to light it up. Apart from this, people also sing, dance, play cards, and enjoy various other forms of entertainment. Deusi and Bhailo are popular activities around Tihar which are when people make groups and visit various houses singing door-to-door. Tihar is by-far the most beautiful festival with its colorful Mandap and Diyos.

Kag Tihar

On this day, people worship and feed the crows (Kag in Nepali dialect) early in the morning. Crows are considered to be the messengers of Yamaraj or Death. People believe that feeding the crows will keep their beloved ones happy and healthy. It is believed that worshipping them will bring good luck to the house. This day marks the beginning of the Tihar festival.

Laxmi Puja and Kukur Tihar

On Kukur Tihar, people celebrate the man’s best friend—dogs. This is believed to protect families from evil. People feed the dogs and worship them by putting tika on their foreheads and garlands around their necks. The Nepal Police partake in this as well and worship the police dogs for their service. Stray dogs without a home are included in the celebration as well.

In the Hindu religion, Goddess Laxmi is the goddess of wealth and prosperity. On the day of Laxmi Puja, people clean their houses and decorate with lights. A small Mandap is usually made in front of the main gate and a path made of tiny footsteps or red mud is painted from the main door to the room where the puja is to take place. The puja is a private occasion with only family members participating in it. People enjoy playing Deusi Bhailo and cards on this day.

Goru Puja

Oxen are also an important part of the daily life of the people, especially in remote areas where agriculture is the primary occupation. On this day, they are worshiped for their efforts into helping the people in farming and agriculture. Much like the dogs, the oxen are also given delicious food, and a garland is put around their necks and a red tika is applied on their foreheads. Similarly, the Newar community also has a unique way of celebrating the festivals. They celebrate the day as Mha Puja and worship their bodies.

Bhaitika

The last day of the festival is Bhai tika which is a day when sisters worship their brothers and pray for their long and prosperous life. This day is used to celebrate the pure bond between brothers and sisters. The sisters put a multicolored tika on their brothers' foreheads and put a chrysanthemum garland around their necks. They also give gifts and sweets to their brothers. The brothers, in return, give their sisters gifts and money and pray for their sisters as well.

In Conclusion

Nepal is an amazing land for many different reasons. Its magnificent festivals are one of them. Dashain and Tihar are the two of the grandest Hindu festivals. Being a part of these celebrations, you can learn a lot and enjoy it as well. Learn about the ancient stories and culture that have created such a glorious Nepali society. Be a part of the festivals and rejoice the colors, lights, and rituals. Enjoy the best that Nepal has to offer during Dashain and Tihar.

Outline Itinerary

Notes:

- All above trekking hours and distances are approximate and it's absolutely for general ideas only.
- The above data is a guide and standard layout of what we give. Our trek can be customized at your request to suit your particular necessities
- Your safety is of supreme concern while engaging with Snowy Dream World. Please note that your leader has the authority to adjust or cancel any part of the itinerary if it is estimated required due to safety issues. Every determination will be made to keep to the above itinerary. Weather conditions, health condition, unexpected natural disasters can all affect in the itinerary.