



## The Kali Gandaki Canyon in Nepal

In this sixth part we are going to Asia, to the land with the seat of the gods, as the highest mountains on earth are called by the Nepalese - so off to Nepal, to the river Kali Gandaki. The canyon Kali Gandaki got its name from the river of the same name flowing on its bottom, in honor of the Hindu goddess Kali, who is a personification of the powerful forces of nature but also the goddess of destruction. According to existing estimates, the depth of the canyon from the highest peak to the valley floor is more than 6,000 meters (19,700 feet), making it the deepest canyon on Earth. The Grand Canyon, on the other hand, is only 5,900 feet (1,800 meters) deep but 450 kilometers long. The canyon is surrounded by majestic mountains, Annapurna and Dhaulagiri, whose height is over 8,000 meters (26,300 feet). Thousands of travelers come here every year to feast their eyes on their mystical-looking peaks, and the natives consider these places sacred.

The bravest local people regularly come down to the bottom of the gorge to find the sacred Saligmaren stones in the murky waters. These unusual stones are the fossilized fragments of mollusks (mollusks) that were found in the river millions of years ago. These strange stones are more expensive than gold in India, as they are said to have unique healing properties and are believed to be a non-living form of Vishnu. Tourists also have an opportunity to engage in this dangerous yet exciting activity, but preferably only in the company of experienced guides. The Saligmaren are only one of the many mysteries of the Gandaki Canyon.

To see the gigantic peaks of the Nepal and in addition its deeply washed out canyons is an experience of its own kind. Already from my first test flight in this area I was so enthusiastic that I completely forgot to make the necessary notes for this trip. You can experience it yourself and if you like, tell others about it.

Have fun flying and exploring this unique landscape. Koschi.

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## LEGS

### LEG 1: VNBW - VNBP

Departure: Bhairahawa (VNBW)

Destination: Bharatpur (VNBP)

Distance: 62,8 nm



### RAMG-Ramgram



Distance:	13,2 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	13,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	49,6 nm
True Course:	85°
Magnetic Course:	84°

The journey begins at Nepal's Bhairahawa Airport. It has been Nepal's second international airport since May 16, 2022, and is served by international flights, having previously handled only domestic flights.

Ramgram is known for having a stupa that was built as early as 2,500 years before Christ. This stupa also houses relics of Buddha. Therefore, it is a pilgrimage site of Buddhism and is visited by over 7,000 pilgrims annually.

Fly over the town of Bhairahawa in an easterly direction and look out for Parasi Road, which leads east to Ramgram, or simply use the GPS course. Here you can still sit back comfortably and let the autopilot work. But this will change later. Even reading the flight instructions and descriptions of places of interest can become problematic while flying. Press the pause button in between.



**BARD-Bardsaghad**

Distance:	7,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	20,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	42,6 nm
True Course:	79°
Magnetic Course:	79°

Turn here to about 80° and fly toward the mountain range ahead. Near the town of Bardsaghad, there is a road over the mountains that can serve as a landmark.

**GANR-Gandak River**

Distance:	9,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	29,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	33,0 nm
True Course:	127°
Magnetic Course:	127°

Turn right here and keep west of the mountains in a southeasterly direction until you reach the Gandak River. It is the border river between Nepal and India.

**NARR-Narayani River**

Distance:	5,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	35,5 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	27,4 nm
True Course:	360°
Magnetic Course:	359°

Once you have reached the Gandak River, make a hairpin turn to the north and follow the river until you reach the Narayani River, a very wide river with some islands.

## VNBP-Bharatpur



Distance:	27,4 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	62,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	73°
Magnetic Course:	73°
Elevation:	681 feet
Fuel:	yes

Now follow the river to Bharatpur airport. Have a happy landing here.

This river flows through the Chitwan National Park. On its banks and islands is a jungle landscape, which is very popular with tourists. In the middle of the jungle there are small bungalow settlements for tourists from which safaris are launched. Together with the Parsa Wildlife Reserve and the Valmiki National Park located in India, the area forms the Tiger Conservation Unit (TCU) Chitwan, which covers over 2,000 square kilometers. But also the rhinoceros should be protected, which was almost threatened with extinction. But the king of the jungle is and remains the Bengal tiger. The more than 40 native animal species also include fish cats, cane cats, marbled cats, Bengal cats, jackals, red dogs, sloth bears, Bengal foxes, binturongs, spotted linsangs, spotted musangs, large and small Indian civets, honey badgers, several species of mongoose and charras. Indian otters inhabit the countless small streams and creeks. Striped hyenas are rare and stay mainly in the Churia Mountains to the south.

Outside the national park there are many agricultural areas. By the late 1960s, 70% of the jungle area had been cleared using DDT, and a massive influx of people began using the region more and more for agriculture.



**LEG 2: VNBP - VNBL**

Departure: Bharatpur (VNBP)

Destination: Baglung (VNBL)

Distance: 80,2 nm

**DEVG-Devghat**

Distance:	3,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	3,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	76,3 nm
True Course:	355°
Magnetic Course:	354°

North of the airport you will reach the Narayani River again, which you will follow for a bit until you reach the confluence of the Seti Gandaki and Krishna Gandaki rivers. Try not to gain more than 3,000 feet in altitude until the next landing. This will give you a spectacular view of the Kali Gandaki Canyon, which you are now flying into.

Devghat is one of the famous religious and cultural centers in central Nepal. Located at the confluence of the Seti Gandaki and Kali Gandaki rivers, it is one of the holiest places in Hindu mythology as well as a sacred place for Hindu gods. Devghat houses several temples and caves dedicated to Hindu gods, goddesses and saints, including the cave of Goddess Sita, the goddess of agriculture. Huge melas (gatherings) are observed in the village every year, making it one of the largest religious melas in Nepal. Hindu pilgrims bathe at the mouth of the Seti Gandaki River, known for its rare "Saligram Sheela" (sacred stone), which Hindu devotees worship as a non-living form of Vishnu.

**KHUK-Khukuri tar**

Distance:	21,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	25,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	55,0 nm
True Course:	288°
Magnetic Course:	288°

Stay above the river Kali Gandaki and steer by hand through the narrow gorge. After that, a wide valley awaits you with terraced fields that are beautiful to look at and with houses that sometimes look as if they were glued to the mountain. Here you can navigate quite well with the HDG button. Later I would prefer the hand control again.

Khukuri tar is a narrow spit of land that, seen from above, has the shape of a kukri. The khukuri or kukri is a heavy knife, curved towards the cutting edge, with a back blade widened in the middle, which serves both as a weapon and a tool and originally comes from Nepal. Later it was used mainly in the British army and thus became known primarily as a close combat weapon.

**RIDI-Ridi**

Distance:	32,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	57,5 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	22,7 nm
True Course:	279°
Magnetic Course:	279°

In the last third of the canyon, it gets narrower and narrower. Still, try to stay below 3,000 feet. You'll have to climb very high later.

Ridi, known as Ruru Kshetra, is a popular pilgrimage site of cultural and religious significance located in a deep, narrow valley in Lumbini province. Ridi is located in the tri-junction of Gulmi, Palpa and Syangja districts in southwestern Nepal, at the confluence of the Ridi Khola and the Kali Gandaki River. It is one of the four Chardhams from Nepal, along with Mukti kshetra, Baraha kshetra and Tribeni Dham. Char Dham (four sites) is the name of a group of four Hindu pilgrimage sites in India. A trip to all four pilgrimage sites, also called dhāmans, is a great merit for devout Hindus. Some temples are only open to Hindus.



**PPKD-Run-of-river power plant Kali Gandaki**

Distance:	7,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	65,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	14,8 nm
True Course:	71°
Magnetic Course:	70°

Continue to follow the river, which from here heads in a northeasterly direction, but soon makes a sharp right turn to the east. At the confluence of the Kali Gandaki and Aadhi Khola rivers, you will come to the Kali Gadanki A run-of-river power plant.

With an installed capacity of 144 MW, Kali Gandaki A is currently (as of March 2015) the largest hydropower plant in Nepal. The three machines each have a maximum output of 48 MW. Although they were commissioned successively in March, April and May 2002, they were initially unable to achieve full output because the 132 kV power line to Pokhara was not completed until August. Both the Francis turbines and the associated generators were supplied by Toshiba.

Hydropower accounts for 86% of the electricity supply in Nepal. To date, Nepal suffers from acute power shortages, which result in daily power cuts or voltage drops. To date, not even half of the population is connected to the power grid. Demand continues to rise, but the power utilities are still unable to ensure supply.

**VNBL-Baglung**

Distance:	14,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	80,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	18°
Magnetic Course:	17°
Elevation:	3231 feet
Fuel:	no

The next landing site is at the confluence of the Modi and Kali Gandaki rivers at an elevation of 3,300 feet. Gain some altitude about 7 nautical miles before that so you can initiate the landing approach. The runway is easily identified by its white markings.

Baglung Airport originally opened in 1965. However, when the road to Pokhara was completed in 1992, it no longer operated. On January 14, 2018, the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal, several airlines, and the Baglung Municipality signed an agreement to reopen the airport. In March 2018, Tara Air conducted its test flight to the airport and officially reopened it 26 years after its closure.

The area is famous for the Modibeni Dham and the many caves in the area, and is an important place for pilgrims and believers. This place is also famous for the four highest and longest suspension bridges in the country. In terms of religious places of worship, this place is notable for the various



temples, monasteries and the Sahasradhara or thousandfold spring. There are also fascinating caves that have religious significance for pilgrims.

This area is also a major attraction for adventure sports such as bungee jumping and sky cycling. Located 10 kilometers north of the district headquarters of Kushma, adventure seekers come here to rappel down the Mahabhir waterfall in Durlung.

**LEG 3: VNBL - VNJS**

Departure: Baglung (VNBL)

Destination: Jomsom (VNJS)

Distance: 37,7 nm

**BAGL-Baglung City**

Distance:	4,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	4,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	33,0 nm
True Course:	313°
Magnetic Course:	312°

After takeoff, continue your flight over the Kali Gandaki River in a northeasterly direction. Now it is better not to fly low over the valley floor, but to climb steadily to above 10,000 feet. The next landing site is at an altitude of 9,000 feet. Now we are heading into the high mountains.

Baglung is the main center for business, finance, education, services and health care for the people of the middle Kali Gandaki Valley. The town is located at the intersection of the Kaligandaki Corridor Highway and the Midhill Highway, which cross Nepal in north-south and east-west directions, respectively. Suspension bridges for pedestrian traffic are abundant in the area. So much so that the nickname "Land of Suspension Bridges" is used for it. The bridge over Kali Gandaki, which connects Kaiya to Kushma, features the highest and longest span in Nepal. A mechanical ropeway spans Kali Gandaki and connects Narayansthan with Kushma. Many other suspension bridges span numerous rivers and streams within the city limits, and even motorized two-wheelers can ride on them.

Some history: In 1534 AD, King Pratapi Narayan of Parbat married the daughter of King Manimukunda Sen of Palpa. When the wedding procession reached Baglung, the king decided, according to a dream, to establish the goddess Kalika, brought from Palpa, at this place. The holder of the goddess sword Chakra Panwar was given the title of Khadka and asked to stay behind as the caretaker of the goddess. He was also granted the land that today forms Baglung Bazar. The Magar bearers of the idol were settled in the Lung Gau area of Baglung. During the Chaitre Dashain festival, a temple was built



and a fair was held. Descendants of Chakra Panwar Khadka built irrigation canals, pastures, water holes, orchards and established first settlements in Baglung. The town also developed into an outpost for tax collection and taxation, as the Khadka family also served as local tax collection officials and militia commanders.

### BENI-Beni



Distance:	4,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	9,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	28,2 nm
True Course:	338°
Magnetic Course:	338°

Beni is located at the confluence of the Kali Gandaki River and the Myagdi River at an elevation of 2,949 feet (899 meters). It is the northernmost of Nepal's Tri-Cities areas, an area that includes the towns of Baglung, Beni, and Kushma as core market centers.

Beni was the winter headquarters of Parvat Rajya. Parvat was once a powerful kingdom in Nepal, comprising 24 principalities.

### CHHY-Chhyo



Distance:	17,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	27,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	10,5 nm
True Course:	9°
Magnetic Course:	8°

We continue up the river to the small community of Chhyo.

What surprised me is that on my map, east of Chhyo a lake is drawn. On closer inspection, however, it turned out that it is a barren area due to glacial sediments. Here is also the deepest point of the canyon. The mighty peak of Dhaulagiri (8,167 meters / 26,795 feet) is now visible to the west and the peak of Annapurna (8,091 meters / 26,545 feet) to the southeast.

## VNJS-Jomsom



Distance:	10,5 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	37,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	31°
Magnetic Course:	31°
Elevation:	8997 feet
Fuel:	yes

I hope you have reached a good altitude to begin your approach to Jomsom Airport soon. The airport is currently served by 6 airlines on a regular basis. Due to its location and relatively short runway, the airport is one of the most dangerous in the world. Two examples:

On May 14, 2012, 15 people died in a crash of a Dornier 228 twin-engine aircraft operated by Agni Air. The plane, carrying 21 people, had taken off from Jomsom Airport for a flight to Pokhara and turned back to the airport due to technical problems. On approach, the aircraft crashed into one of the surrounding mountains.

On May 29, 2022, air traffic control in Nepal lost contact with a De Havilland Canada DHC-6 Twin Otter shortly after takeoff. The twin-engine Tara Air aircraft was en route from Pokhara to Jomsom Airport with 22 people on board. The flight was scheduled to take only 15 minutes. According to the airline, 19 passengers and three crew members were on board.

Do YOU better and have a safe landing here.



**LEG 4: VNJS - VNMA**

Departure: Jomsom (VNJS)  
Destination: Flugplatz Manang (VNMA)  
Distance: 55,3 nm

**MUKT-Muktinath Ashram**

Distance: 4,6 nm  
Dist. from Dept.: 4,6 nm  
Dist. to Dest.: 50,7 nm  
True Course: 43°  
Magnetic Course: 42°

After the start, gain altitude continuously here as well and follow the river in a northerly direction.

Not far from Jomsom is Muktinath Ashram, the famous pilgrimage site for Buddhists and Hindus. For Hindus, Muktinath is a sacred place of salvation. They believe that bathing in the waters here guarantees salvation after death. The Hindu god Brahma is said to have ignited the eternal flames that burn at Muktinath. For Buddhists, Muktinath is a place where the great sage Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava), who brought Buddhism to Tibet, came to meditate.

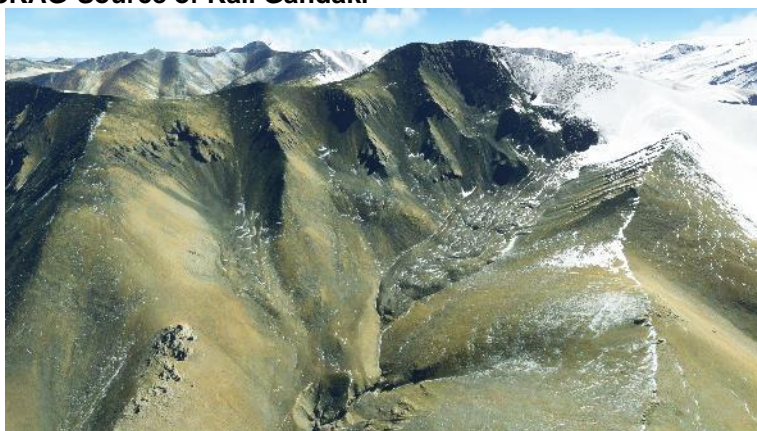
**LOMA-Lo Mantang**

Distance:	18,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	23,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	32,0 nm
True Course:	32°
Magnetic Course:	31°

When you reach this waypoint, your altitude should be 20,000 feet. Since this is not possible with the Cessna Grand Caravan on this short route, just continue flying straight ahead to gain more altitude, then turn around and reach this waypoint again.

Lo Mantang is a small town in Nepal in the Mustang district, which should be just below this waypoint. In the simulator, only a few individual houses can be seen. It was the former capital of the Kingdom of Mustang (or Kingdom of Lo) and is located a five-hour walk from the border with Tibet, China, at 3,840 meters (12,598 feet) above sea level. It is surrounded by walls and contains about one hundred and twenty houses, three monasteries, and a royal palace. As of the 2011 census, it had 569 inhabitants. They speak mainly Tibetan and trade with Tibet to the north and Nepal to the south.

Dressed in colorful tunics, wearing wooden animal masks from another time, the monks swirl to the rhythm of trumpets and drums. Around them, in the paved square across from the royal palace, the crowd huddles in respectful silence. Every year in May or June according to the Tibetan calendar, the Tenji or Tiji festival, during three days, forms the main religious ceremony of Mustang. It was instituted in the 17th century by King Samduk Rabten and commemorates the victory of Dorje Sonam, an incarnation of Buddha, who defeated a demon named Ma Tam Ru Ta in a legendary story. Hundreds of men, women and children parade up the mountain for several days to make offerings to the monks - food, firewood or a bit of money. Each village also sends a few precious handfuls of wheat and barley, which are used to decorate small clay statuettes - the embodiment of the demons this ceremony is meant to ward off.

**SKAG-Source of Kali Gandaki**

Distance:	7,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	30,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	24,7 nm
True Course:	115°
Magnetic Course:	115°

Once you have reached the 20,000 feet, you should also reach the additional 2,500 feet on the route ahead of you to fly over the summit, which is to be reached after the source of the Kali Gandaki.



The farther you fly up the mountain, the less there is of the river, which should be nothing more than a stream here. The stream is fed by rain and melt water flowing down the mountain. Hundreds of other streams slowly swell the Kali Gandaki into a river that eventually flows into the Narayani River and other rivers, all the way to the Ganges and the Indian Ocean. Unfortunately, I have not found a name for the grade you fly over afterwards.

For centuries, an important trade route between Tibet and India ran along the Kali Gandaki, especially for salt and rice. The river valley is one of the most popular trekking destinations in the country, the western part of the Annapurna Circuit passes mostly through the valley. It is located in the Annapurna Conservation Area and tourists must purchase a permit to enter, which must be shown at checkpoints. For this purpose, among other things, the paths and suspension bridges are maintained and maintenance work is carried out. Nevertheless, it can happen that one does not keep up with the repairs, especially during the monsoon season.

### **KHUM-Khumjungar Himal**



Distance:	9,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	40,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	15,0 nm
True Course:	171°
Magnetic Course:	170°

Continue to gain altitude, heading for and flying over Khumjungar Himal.

Khumjungar Himal, with an altitude of 6,759 meters (22,175 feet), is the highest peak in the Damodar Himal massif. On the northern flank of Khumjungar Himal stretches the Damodar Glacier. Khumjungar Himal was probably first climbed by a Japanese expedition in 1982. If you were to continue flying straight, you would encounter the summit of Annapurna II, which is at nearly 8,000 meters (26,247 feet), but the Cessna Grand Caravan cannot do that.

### **VNMA-Flugplatz Manang**



Distance:	15,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	55,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	188°
Magnetic Course:	187°
Elevation:	11124 feet
Fuel:	yes

Flying over the Khumjungar Himal was already quite a torture for the aircraft until it reached the appropriate altitude. Now the task is to enter the Marsyangy valley and approach the Manang airfield in such a way that a safe landing is possible. Good luck and a safe landing at Manang airfield.

You have now landed safely at the last airfield of this trip. Congratulations! If you liked this trip, please leave some stars on the corresponding page of the marketplace. If you didn't like it, write to support

and tell them what we can do better. Also, I would be happy to see you on the next trip through Yarlung Tsangbo Canyon, in Tibet.

Good luck in your future endeavors. Koschi.