

# BADWATER SPECIAL: MUSTANG TRAIL RACE

OCTOBER 2015

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**WORLD'S  
TOUGHEST**

**Trail  
Running  
Nepal**

# Badwater presents: The Mustang Trail Race, October 2015

An update after the April Earthquake

## Quick Summary

- Mustang Trail Race follows a safe itinerary, which has not been affected by the earthquake.
- Media projected images had a narrow focus, wider focus reveals many places as 'normal'.
- Mustang is far outside the earthquake-affected area, magic still present in abundance.
- Kathmandu, some key temples lost, many others standing, magic still present in abundance.

## Introduction

It cannot have escaped your attention that a M7.8 earthquake hit Nepal on April 25<sup>th</sup>. Since that time the world has been presented a very intense and very distressing image of Nepal through the media. This may have made you wonder a little about your visit to Nepal.

The earthquake has affected tens of thousands of people's homes in certain regions, and many lost their lives. The monsoon rain will bring a further settling of landslides and make life even more difficult until it subsides in September.

But people are trying to get back on their feet, to build temporary shelters while they begin to rebuild their homes. There has been a tremendous amount of goodwill, energy and money pledged in the past two weeks to help set this rebuilding programme on its way.

There was a huge setback yesterday (12<sup>th</sup> May) with a new M7.3 earthquake and many already damaged buildings finally fell. Again, people are continuing to rebuild shelter, however they are able, without delay before the monsoon arrives.

## Outside of the media focus

Kathmandu is pretty much the same; you'll. It's fully functioning. Some damage to temples, but it is surprisingly intact. By October I think a lot of work will have been done in the city.

*- Madeleine Dolling, USA – Mustang Trail Race Competitor and Kathmandu resident.*

The media has focused on devastation, the arresting images that can describe an event in seconds visually. It has a job to do of course. It's been distressing for people to watch and certainly it might seem like the entirety of Nepal has been affected in the way that the cameras have shown and that is not the case.

We on the 2015 Spring Mustang Trail Race felt the earthquake first in Lo Manthang as a short period of gentle shaking, and then soon after learned, through piecemeal radio broadcasts and phone calls, what had happened. Personally speaking, my imagination extrapolated wildly: I wondered if friends were harmed, if my house was still standing, if we'd be able to reach Kathmandu easily, and so on.

Through our Delorme inReach we were advised by the US embassy in Kathmandu, to stay in rural areas until things had settled down and that was good advice.

On returning to Kathmandu, it was hard to notice any effect, apart from some unsupported boundary walls that had toppled. Here and there buildings had cracks. Some old traditionally brick buildings had fallen like gaps in teeth.

But roads, telecommunications, the airport, bustling commerce – all seemed pretty much as it was when we left and Kathmandu is functioning relatively normally.

## Mustang

Our itinerary takes us from Kathmandu to Pokhara, and then from Pokhara into the mountains. The itinerary we have will not change.

The Mustang region is a must see. It has not been affected. The people are beautiful. The region is breathtaking - like nothing you've ever seen. You will not regret it.

- Suzanne Boyd, Calgary, Canada.

Pokhara, the town where we stay to take the morning flight to Jomsom is unaffected. The earthquake epicenter occurred a way to the east of Mustang and had little affect. On a hazard intensity scale, where the worst affected area was 10, Lo Mantang was rated at 0.1.

In Upper Mustang itself, the buildings are mainly built with a frame of arrow-straight willow trunks and canes covered with locally found clays, which are light and flexible, and are ideal in seismic mountain regions like the Himalayas.

The Monasteries are reportedly fine. When we were there we were lucky enough meet Luigi Feni leading the art restoration project in the monasteries and watch the project team at work. There is a large crack however in the five-story Royal palace, whose height had always been ambitious for a mud-built building.

## From the April Participants

The participants who ran in Mustang the April when the earthquake happened have this to say.

“Honestly. This was probably the best 10 days of my adult life. It was pretty much perfect. I'm still in awe of Mustang and the whole experience. So thanks.”

- Amy Gordon, Albuquerque, NM

British ultra runner Lizzie Wraith regarding the trails.

“The most phenomenal trails I have ever run on.”

- Lizzie Wraith, Bath, UK. Performance Pathway Scientist at the English Institute of Sport

From ultra-runner Bryon Powell of iRunFar.com

Following the tragic Nepali earthquake during this April's Mustang Trail Race, the event continued on without a hitch. I'm certain that the race will be run again in October without any detriment. After the



race, lodging and logistics were flawless in the race's transportation hubs of Jomsom, Pokhara, and Kathmandu, as well as during an independent outing on the Annapurna Base Camp Trek. While some will be tempted to shy away from Nepal out of fear or perceived respectfulness, the best way to support countless Nepalis is to go visit. Many affected folks depend on tourism. Your visit will help them while you experience their amazing country!

- Bryon Powell, Editor in Chief, [iRunFar.com](http://iRunFar.com)

## To sum it all up

Nepal is going through a very tough period, but all the reasons that people visit Nepal still hold. It is beautiful and imperfect, challenging and rewarding, down to earth friendly and uniquely magical.

It is worth stating that anyone visiting Nepal is helping people rebuild. Many if not most of the people working in tourism in Nepal live in the affected areas and are ready to work hard, as always to earn for their families future.

If you have questions or concerns you would like to raise with us, please send an email to [info@mustangtrailrace.org](mailto:info@mustangtrailrace.org) or find Richard on skype at: richard\_bull and arrange a convenient time to call.

