

Bhutan

Snowman Trek

PIONEER EXPEDITIONS



Itinerary

Snowman trek • Mudman trek

**23 Days • 22 Nights •
Various Dates**

Hadibo – Mountains of Hajjher – Dimalah – Dihazhaz – Darhoo – Dirhor Canyon – Dixsam – Scant – Qalansiyah – Dihamri – Hoq Cave – Rosh marine protected area – Ar-Ar Beach

HIGHLIGHTS

- Very challenging trek
- Explore one of the most ecologically pristine regions of Himalayas - The region which sees fewer than 100 visitors each year
- Unforgettable experience

TOUR ESSENTIALS

Tour Style	Trekking
Tour Start	Paro
Tour End	Paro
Accommodation	Hotel & Camping
Included Meals	21 Breakfasts, 22 lunches, 22 Dinners
Difficulty Level	Very Difficult

This challenging trek along Bhutan's northwestern border with Tibet introduces the traveller to one of the most ecologically pristine regions of the Himalayas. The people of Laya and Lunana, renowned for their wild beauty, welcome trekkers to this region which sees fewer than 100 visitors each year.



Overview

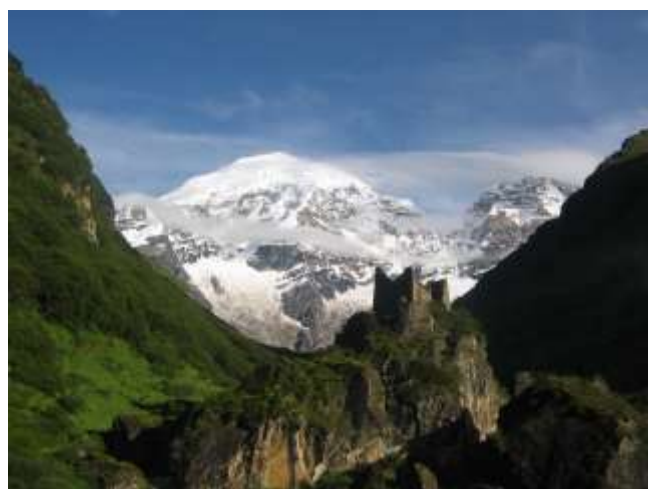
Jumolhari is Bhutan's deeply venerated guardian peak. It rises on the Tibet-Bhutan border near the major trade route from India into Tibet's Phari valley. In 1939, from a pass above Phari, F. Spencer Chapman, the mountain's first climber, saw Jumolhari and its companion peak, magnificent Jichu Drake. "Jumolhari gives a greater impression of sheer height and inaccessibility than any other mountain I know", he wrote in 'living dangerously'. "It drops in a series of almost vertical rock precipices to the foothills beneath. It is thought by many to be the most beautiful mountain in the whole of the Himalayas" It offers diverse flora and fauna, as well as a good opportunity to spot blue sheep. This trek leads to the region which is believed to be a Bey-yul (hidden land) protected by an ancient gate that leads to Laya village. 'Layaps' and Lunana village - 'Lunaps' are the nomad people of northern Bhutan.

Itinerary

DAY 1: ARRIVE IN PARO (7,400 FT) (L,D)

Early this morning you'll depart for Paro. It will be one of the most spectacular mountain flights you will experience. Getting closer to Bhutan (if the weather is clear), you'll see the massive peaks of the eastern Himalaya, including Kangchenjunga, (the third highest mountain in the world), Mt. Jumolhari, Bhutan's holy mountain and as your flight gets closer to Paro, you can see spectacular views of the Himalayas including the highest peak on earth Mt. Everest.

The green wall of hills known as the duars, or gateways into Bhutan from the plains climbs continually higher as down the forested mountain sides, and to the north, the great snowcapped peaks of the inner Himalayas rise up to the sky.



We begin our journey with exploring Paro. This bucolic valley was once the center of trade for goods coming in from Tibet. The town of Paro lies on the banks of the Pa Chhu (chhu means river) and its tiny streets are lined with brightly painted wooden shops and restaurants. We'll start our exploration with a visit to Ta Dzong 'National Museum'. It is a seventeenth century monument, which now houses the National Museum. This circular fortress formally served as a watchtower during the Tibetan invasion. "Ta" means "to watch" and Dzong a "fortress". During a short hike following the contours of the slope, there will be wonderful views of Paro Dzong and the town beyond.

After about 20 minutes of gradual ascent, we reach Zuri Lhakhang (temple), and from there it's a somewhat steep descent to the main Dzong. We will visit to the Paro Rimpung Dzong (Fortress on the Heap of Jewels), an impressive structure located on a hill overlooking the town and it was built in 1646 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. Bhutan's dzongs originally served three functions: fortresses, administrative center of local government, and residence and focus for the monks' religious activity. The Dzong was also location for filming the Bernardo Bertolucci film "The Little Buddha". After exploring the Dzong we cross a traditional, cantilevered, covered bridge, and pass Ugyen Pelri, a small jewel-like palace that belongs to the Royal Family of Bhutan. Designed after the celestial paradise of Padmasambhava, the building was completed in the late 1800s. No alterations have been made to the structure or the beautiful carvings and paintings within the palace.

A short distance further is one of the country's many archery grounds. Archery is the national sport of Bhutan, and most men grow up learning it. If we are lucky, we may catch a match in action. After that we will return to hotel to enjoy a welcome dinner and a brief orientation session.

Overnight in Hotel Olathang

DAY 2: PARO SIGHTSEEING (B,L,D)

Today we make a pilgrimage to one of the most important religious sites in the Himalaya, Taktsang Goempa, known as the Tiger's Nest. This magical monastery clings to a vertical granite cliff 2,000 feet above the valley floor. The legend of Taktsang dates back to 747 AD when Guru Rimpoche (Padmasambhava), in the wrathful form of Guru Dorji Dorloe, is believed to have arrived at this site on the back of a tiger and subdued the evil spirits in the region. According to Tantric Buddhist mythology, the vanquished local deities became the protector of the dharma and one of them, Singye Samdrup, is recognized as the guardian deity of Taktsang.



After about 45 minutes of (moderately steep) hiking, we reach a small tea house that has a wonderful panoramic view of the temple. For those interested, it is possible to get a closer view by hiking another 45 minutes to an hour (each direction) to the small chorten directly across from the temple. Anyone not interested in hiking further can relax at the tea house and enjoy the view. On the return visit the 7th century Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the 108 temples built in the Himalayan region over the areas of Tibet and Bhutan by the Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo. This temple reflects the introduction of Buddhism in the kingdom. The main statue of Buddha in the temple is believed to have the same significance as the one at Potala in Tibet.

We will have time to make a last visit to the Paro town before returning to our hotel for our last dinner in Bhutan. Drive back to your hotel for arrangement for your trek and relax to acclimatize yourself.

Overnight in Hotel Olathang

DAY 3: KOINA - TARSE MARGA (B,L,D)

After breakfast, we drive to Gasa with the arid hillsides along the road as you proceed 125km to Punakha which takes about three to four hours drive. The road from Thimphu climbs up 10,218ft through Yoeseopang, Hongtsho and then to the Dochula pass festooned with colorful prayer flags and banners. Large stone chortens and new Druk Wangyal Chortens mark the site as an invocation for the protection and safety of travellers. Perched on a gentle mound at the side of the pass there is a restroom where your lunch will be served. On a clear day, there is a spectacular view of the

eastern Himalayas of the Bhutan from this viewpoint. A good set of binoculars provide a closer look at the peaks of Masagang, Terigang, Khangbum, Zongaphugang and Gangkar Puensum (at 24,596 ft the highest peak in Bhutan).

The descent down to the Lobesa valley is marked by a gradual change in vegetation of evergreens at the top and gives way to the temperate type of leafy forest in which several species of rhododendron and magnolia trees and shrubs thrive. The vegetation then turns semi tropical lower down with bananas, orange and cactus and it gets perceptibly warmer.

After lunch at Punakha, we continue our drive through various villages and semi-tropical forest with great variety of flora and fauna. Your route is on the right bank of Mochhu river. Before, trekkers used to start their trek from Tashi Thang. You'll see walnut trees, and sometimes you may spot a Bhutanese National animal called 'Takin' During winter, the



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Takin used to come down and stay for 2-3 months. It is under area of Jigme Dorji Wangchuk National Park (JDWNP).

Continue through the landslide area. On a big trunk observe more graffiti: Welcome to Gasa. You can view Gasa Dzong and hot spring marked by prayer flags. The whole area is well organized. Due to medical visits for curing rheumatism and some skin diseases it is busy. There are five pools of different temperatures. After crossing the last bridge we have 15min drive to Gasa at 2760m and it is pretty straightforward. There is a River through this bridge which comes from Lingzhi.

Starting Elevation: 7400ft/2156m

Time: 6 hours

Distance: 189km

Elevation Gain: 690ft/210m

Elevation Loss: 787ft/240m

Ending Elevation: 9053ft/2760m

Camping tonight will be on the right side of the town where you can view Gasa Dzong and Mount. Khangbum (6526m).

Overnight Camp at Gasa campsite.

DAY 4: GASA - KOINA (TREK START) (B,L,D)

Before you start your trek to Koina, you'll make a quick visit to Gasa Dzong, formerly known as Tashi Thongmen Dzong, it was built in 17th century and same date to Paro Dzong by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal to protect the valley against Tibetan invaders. Today your walk will be upwards for the morning, after crossing the stream you are walking uphill and will see a very good view of Gasa Dzong and the impressive mountain of Gang Bum. There are also few good places to take pictures.

This trails follows the side of ridge with deep forest of fir, spruce and oak, in and out of side valleys, for almost 3 ½ hrs to Bari La at 3920m. There are some parts where the trails follows the side of a ridge and you walk gingerly across logs that dangle out into space and some parts are so muddy.

Starting Elevation: 9053ft/22760m

Time: 6 hours

Distance: 12km

Elevation Gain: 510ft/1680m

Elevation Loss: 2165ft/660m

Ending Elevation: 10,627ft/3240m

Welcome to Koina (3100m), a muddy bog in the forest by the bridge. If it is full of other trekkers the next alternative is that you have to walk another 1 ½ hrs to Mo Chhu river.

Overnight Camp at the Koina campsite.

DAY 5: KOINA - TARSE MARGA/ LAYA M (B,L,D)

Continuing your trail alongside the Mo Chhu to an overhanging rock that forms a cave, after crossing Kohi Lapcha at 3300m the trail goes down for few minutes to river side and following the Mo Chhu river. You will cross the bridge to

Starting Elevation: 10,627ft/3240m

Time: 6hours

Distance: 15km

Elevation Gain: 1837ft/560m

Elevation Loss: Nil

Ending Elevation: 11,775ft/3590m

the right side and continue your trails uphill through muddy parts and different varieties of trees. Finally you will reach Tarsel Marga army camp site and here your guide will take part in some formalities. The peak of Mount Massang Gang is barely visible at the head of the side valley. Your camp will near by the army camp at 3590m.

Overnight Camp at the Tarsel Marga campsite



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DAY 6: DAY HIKE TO LAYA VILLAGE (B,L,D)

Usually it is a scheduled rest day. There are plenty of options for a walk, but the one recommended is to make day excursion to Laya, Laya is the northern village of Bhutan inhabited by unique and interesting people. Their livelihood is all depended on Yaks since they are all semi nomadic Yak herders. The Laya women wear confiscated black yak hair costumes with conical bamboo hats. They spend the entire summer in Yak tents but also have well built stone houses used as the main home and primarily for shelter during the winter. A cultural program by the villagers is a highlight during the rest day here and there is a fascinating tour of the village houses. No matter what you choose to do today, the cooks will have had all day to prepare dinner and a veritable banquet



will be waiting at the end of the day.

Elevation: 11,775ft/3590m
(day excursion to Laya and back)
Elevation of Lay: 12, 465ft/4215m

Overnight Camp at the Tarsel Marga campsite

DAY 7: TARSE MARGA/ LAYA - RODUPHU (B,L,D)

Today is the first day that you are doing the main Snowman trek. After your breakfast return down towards Koina for one hour and then the trail goes to the left next to a big tree, take care not to miss this fork. You'll follow one of the tributaries of the Mo Chu as it winds steeply into the high country. The crashing river is your constant companion, the

vegetation changes rapidly. The trail continues through forest with several steep climbs, it is bit trough because of big stones and mud. Just before reaching camp there is one steeper climb through a bouldery area, after which the valley opens up again and camp is in the valley of a braided river at 4215m.

Starting Elevation: 11775ft/3590m
Time: 7-8hrs
Distance: 15km
Elevation gain: 3200ft/975m
Elevation Loss: 1840ft/560m
Ending Elevation: 13,825ft/4215m

Overnight Camp at the Roduphu campsite

DAY 8: RODUPHU-NARETHANG (B,L,D)

After your breakfast walk upstream through a wet area and sometimes some part of this area is so slippery and there are some slippery boulders too. Slightly over the pass Cross the first heroic pass is the Tsemo La (4905m). It takes 3 hours from the camp and on the other side the mountain, Gangla Karchung is visible. If you climb a little bit up, west

from the pass there is a superb view towards Lunana and across to Jumolhari and Jichu Drake. The trail drops slightly after the pass then winds higher through alpine meadows and yak pastures, to a camp higher than the pass beneath the mountain Gangla Karchung (6310m).

Starting Elevation: 13825ft/4215m
Time: 7 hours
Distance: 15km
Elevation Gain: 2375ft/725m
Elevation Loss: little bit
Ending Elevation: 16,200ft/4940m

Overnight Camp at the Narethang/ Pechu Gom campsite.



DAY 9: NARETHANG - TARINA (B,L,D)

About an hour from camp you cross the Karakachu La (5020m). The high peaks of Lunana are visible from the pass in good weather. The trail down offers spectacular views of two glacial lakes tucked beneath the imposing faces of Jejekhangphu gang(7200m) and Tsenda Gang(7000m). They are the source of the Pho Chu. The first 1,500 feet of

Starting Elevation: 16,200ft/4940m
Time: 7-8 hours
Distance: 16km
Elevation Gain: 265ft/80m
Elevation Loss: 35550ft/1082m
Ending Elevation: 12,915ft/3938m

descent is through alpine meadow and moraine. The trail descends steeply into the rhododendron forest. This section may be the worst trail in the world to some. In wet weather, rhododendron roots and mud make this a slippery and treacherous trail. The trail flattens in the Pho Chu Valley and meanders along to camp.

Overnight Camp at the Tarina/Pechu Wom/ campsite.

DAY 10: TARINA – WOCHÉ (B,L,D)



Today you'll walk down the Pho Chu, surrounded by granite escarpments and roaring waterfalls, which contrast with quiet springs and autumn foliage.

A steep climb out of the river valley brings you to camp in Woche, Woche is the boundary between Laya and Lunana and it is the first settlement after Laya and Gasa. Notably, it is also the first village in Lunana District.

Wheat is the primary crop and vegetation is mainly juniper and rhododendron. Woche and Lhedi are the part of lower Lunana, known as Phumey. Woche

Starting Elevation: 12,915ft/3938m
Time: 5-6 hours
Distance: 14km
Elevation Gain: 740ft/225m
Elevation Loss: Nil
Ending Elevation: 13,655ft/4163m

village (3905m) might be reached rather early, perhaps too early for lunch and camp. A good campsite can be found 1 ½ hrs further on.

Overnight Camp at the Woche campsite.

DAY 11: WOCHÉ- LHEDI (B,L,D)

The trail out of Woche winds through yak pastures, with views of Gangla Karchung, Jejekangphu Kang and Tsenda Kang. Climb over the Keche La (4667m) then descend to the village of Thega. From here there are excellent views

Starting Elevation: 13,655ft/4163m
Time: 5-6 hours
Distance: 13km
Elevation Gain: 1650ft/503m
Elevation Loss: 250ft/765m
Ending Elevation: 12,790ft/3900m

up the Pho Chhu valley towards Lhedi, Table Mountain and the surrounding hillsides with many different alpine flowers. N.b. initially they used to camp at Thega, but due to short distance and Lhedi is only an hour and half more walk from Thega, camp site is at Lhedi. Alt: 12800 Dist: 18kms.

Overnight Camp at the Lhedi campsite.



DAY 12: LHEDI - THANZA (B,L,D)

This morning we will follow escarpments above a tributary of the Pho Chu until the trail drops to the riverside village of Lhedi. We will continue up the river on a trail crossing glacial drainages where there will be unclimbed peaks that gleam in every direction. Forest fights their natural battle with the elements but not with men in this pristine Himalayan wilderness. Chozo village perches on the edge of a braided river at the southeast end of the wide Lunana Valley. If the caretaker is

Starting Elevation: 12,790ft/3900m

Time: 3-4 hours

Distance: 17km

Elevation Gain: 720ft/220m

Elevation Loss: Nil

Ending Elevation: 13,450ft/4100m

home, we may visit the Chozo Dzong, the highest in Bhutan. Walk along a braided river, which meanders through a wide valley to approach the village of Thanza.

Stop enroute to visit a temple carved out of the valley wall. Walk past homes and yak herders, past the south edge of Thanza to camp beside the upper reaches of the Pho Chu. Mountain faces, cliffs and glaciers frame the village.

Overnight Camp at the Thanza campsite.

DAY 13: THANZA (HALT) (B,L,D)

Lie in the sun and absorb the peace of this hidden valley, visit the nearby village and farmhouses, or climb the ridges above to across wild peaks into Tibet. Lunap people will come closer to you and they love to have conversations with visitors. Whatever you plan to do for the day, your cooks will be very happy to arrange special lunch and dinner for you and if you are interested they can arrange a local cultural program.

Overnight Camp at the Thanza campsite.

Elevation: 13,450ft/4100m



DAY 14: THANZA –DJUNDE (B,L,D)

After having relaxed in Lunana and having enjoyed village life and a dancing show by Lunap ladies, your trek continues to Djundje. A new group of yaks and handlers will be there for the rest of the trek. The route climbs from Thanza/Toencha on a good trail up a rounded and sparsely vegetated hill to the east, to a large square-looking boulder on hill south of the village. From here there are excellent views of Thanza, Toencha, Chozo and the surrounding mountains. The path is through the yak meadows with some yak herder's huts and relatively flat and easy walking. There is ample opportunity to explore the area. A few hundreds of meters up the valley, a small trail climbs the ridge to the left, leading to a higher valley behind. The top of the ridge offers excellent views of the surrounding mountainscape.

Starting Elevation: 13,450ft/4100m

Time: 4 hours

Distance: 8km

Elevation Gain: 1640ft/500m

Elevation Loss: Nil

Ending Elevation: 14,890ft/4540m

Overnight Camp at the Djundje campsite.



DAY 15: DJUNDJE - TSHOCHENA (B,L,D)

There is a trail junction near the camp site at Djundje. The trail up the left side valley leads to Gangkar Puensum base camp and to Bumthang. The trail to the end of the trek crosses the creek and leads up a rocky side valley climbs across several false summit toward the Jaze La at 5150m, which offers spectacular mountain views in all directions. The pass is a long way

Starting Elevation: 14,890ft/4540m
Time: 5-6 hours
Distance: 10km
Elevation Gain: 2001ft/610m
Elevation Loss: 6255ft/190m
Ending Elevation: 16,272ft/4960m

off, and is crossed later on in your day of hiking. Keep an eye out for Bahrain, the Himalayan blue sheep. They'll be grazing high above you or leaping from boulder to boulder in their vertical pastures. Climb through cirque after granite cirque, set with tiny lakes.

Descend beyond the pass to camp at Tsho Chena (tsho means lake) with 4970m of elevation. This is the first of two nights of your camping above 4900m. You are now surrounded by elegant little peaks mostly under 20,000'.

Overnight Camp at the Tshochena campsite.

DAY 16: TSHOCHENA - JICHU DRAMO (B,L,D)

The trail follows the shore of the blue green lake before to a ridge at 5100m. On top you are surrounded by a 360-degree panorama of snowy peaks, while, far below, the Pho Chhu river descends towards Punakha. The road and microwave tower at Dochu La between Thimphu and Punakha are just visible in the distance. The path through this ridge makes several ups and downs and you are advised to walk bit slower due to high altitude.

Starting Elevation: 16,272ft/4960m
Time: 6-7 hours
Distance: 20km
Elevation Gain: 605ft/185m
Elevation Loss: 280ft/85m
Ending Elevation: 16,595ft/5060m

Climb over the Loju La at 5140m, walking in purely alpine terrain with (if the weather is clear) an unimpeded view in all directions. The trail descends gradually to the camp site at Jichu Dramo with elevation of 5050m, a small pasture on the east side of the valley.

Overnight Camp at the Jichu Dramo campsite.

DAY 17: JICHU DRAMO - CHHU KARPO (B,L,D)

After leaving camp, the trail climbs through a moraine to Rinchen Zoe La (5320m) The pass is surrounded by breathtaking mountain scenery. Rinchen Zoe Peak (5650m) towers above the pass to the west and major Himalayan mountains stretch along the northern horizon, some part of the mount Gangkar Puensum is also visible from this side. When you continue

Starting Elevation: 16,585ft/5060m
Time: 7-8 hours
Distance: 19km
Elevation Gain: 870ft/265m
Elevation Loss: 2870ft/875m
Ending Elevation: 15,186ft/4630m

down the river from the pass, the trail descends into a broad, marshy valley with a string of lakes. The path is through yak pasture and the vegetation gradually begins to thicken, first to rhododendron and juniper shrubs and eventually to trees of both species. After couple of hours you will reach to the camp site at Chhu Karpo (4630m) and you'll set up camp in a stand of trees next to the stream.

Overnight Camp at the Chhu Karpo campsite



DAY 18: CHHU KARPO - TENPE TSHO (B,L,D)

You will experience plenty of sunlight during breakfast time and it will warm you up. Today, your trail will be through many small streams and you will need to cross by hopping from stone to stone. It is also very slippery and muddy at first and later is covered with many boulders until it reaches a yak pasture at place called Gangla Pang (4015m). You might be lucky enough to spot some Takins on the hills across the river. Shortly afterwards, a steep climb through a forest of juniper and silver fir leads towards Tenpe Tsho (tsho means Lake). The path follows a stream to the beautiful, clear, turquoise-coloured lake, set in a bowl and surrounded by steep mountain walls. Your camp site will be at the far end of the Tenpe Tsho at 4300m.

Starting Elevation: 15,186ft/4630m
Time: 5-6 hours
Distance: 15km
Elevation Gain: 1000ft/305m
Elevation Loss: 1310ft/400m
Ending Elevation: 14,596ft/4450m

Overnight Camp at the Tenpe Tsho campsite

DAY 19: TENPE TSHO - MAUROTHANG (B,L,D)

From the camp, it is a reasonably steep climb on a good trail to the Tenpe La pass at 4605m. The trail is steep, loose rubble as it descends the pass through yak pasture past Omtoe Tsho. This is a scared lake in which Pemalingpa, one of Bhutan's most famous saints is said to have discovered treasures hidden for future generations by the great Guru Padmasambhava. From the second lake, the path descend very steeply to the headwaters of the Nikka Chhu, in this area the yaks have a very difficult time descending to come down this stretch. The drainage of the second lake also forms a waterfall. Continue on to Maurothang (3610m) through mixed forest and located with a large clearing on the banks of the river beside a few yak herder's huts.

Starting Elevation: 14,596ft/4450m
Time: 5 hours
Distance: 21km
Elevation Gain: 1015ft/310m
Elevation Loss: 3165ft/965m
Ending Elevation: 12,130ft/33698m

Overnight Camp at the Maurothang campsite.

DAY 20: MAUROTHANG - NIKKA CHHU - WANGDUE PHODRANG (B,L,D)

The last day of the trek is all down hill, first through yak pastures and eventually it emerges into a large grassy area, overlooking the road and the village of Sephu then past terraced fields to the bridge at Nikka Chhu at 2627m. This river is reserved at this point as a private fishing area for the Royal Family. A guard is alert to remain all those of that fact.

Starting Elevation: 12,130ft/3698m
Time: 5 hours
Distance: 23km
Elevation Gain: Nil
Elevation Loss: 3510ft/1070m
Ending Elevation: 8617ft/2627m

On arrival at Nikka Chhu, our vehicle will pick us up. Before driving to the Wangduephodrang, Gangkar Adventures will organize happy farewell drinks for you, trekking staffs and porters where you can exchange your farewell greetings.

Late afternoon we are you driving to Wangduephodrang which will take about 3hours and will arrive by late evening.

Overnight in Dragon Nest Resort.



DAY 21: WANGDIPHODRANG – THIMPHU (B,L,D)

After your breakfast drive 40min to Punakha at 1,350 m (4,430ft). It is hardly surprising that it served for 300 years as the old winter capital of Bhutan. Punakha has also played a very prominent and significant role in Bhutanese history but this is hardly apparent from the small town and settlement across from the Dzong. Druk Pungthang Dewachengi Phodrang Dzong: 'The Palace of Great Happiness'. The Punakha Dzong is set on a narrow strip of land just above the confluence of the Phochhu (male) & Mochhu (female) rivers. The Dzong was constructed by the Shabdrung in 1637 fulfilling the prophecy made by Guru Rimpoche that a man named Namgyal would build a fort at the present site. The site on the front edge of the hill that is said to look like an elephant's trunk.

The famed architect Zauw Balip is believed to have conceived the design of the Punakha Dzong after a vision in his dream. It was also here in the Punakha Dzong that the first king of Bhutan had his coronation on 17th December 1907 and that the first National Assembly of Bhutan was constituted in 1952. The Je Khenpo (chief abbot) still resides here during

the winter with the monk body, continuing the age of old practice. On the way back and continuing to Thimphu, hike to Chhimi Lhakhang built in circa 1500 and associated with the Divine Madmen, known for its fertility blessings. Divine Mad Monk Drukpa Kuenley. It is widely believed that childless women can bear children if they offer their prayers at this temple. And then drive continues to Thimphu via Dochhu La pass (3150m).

Upon arrival at Thimphu you are driving over a bridge named Lungtenzampa, which means "the bridge of prophecy". In accordance with a prophecy, Lama Phajo Drugom Shigpo, the founder of the Drukpa School in Bhutan, and his future wife, a young country girl Wangzom Sonam Peydoe spent their first night in a cavern beneath this bridge. Their sons would contribute to the spread of Drukpa School in Western Bhutan. Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan since 1955. It is a lovely valley with the people living on both sides of the Thimphu Chhu, at an altitude of 2400 meters. Unlike many modern cities. Thimphu, today has a population of about 70,000 composed of a large monk body, the Kingdoms esteemed royal family, government and civil service as well a growing middle class. It was only in the early 1970's that Thimphu began to take on the form that we see today and the city has kept a strong national character in its architecture and all the buildings in the city have traditional and distinctive style. We check into the hotel in the heart of Thimphu city.

Starting elevation: 4100ft/1250m
Ending elevation: 7872ft/2400m

Overnight Namgay Heritage Hotel.

DAY 22: THIMPHU – PARO (B,L,D)



Breakfast you will enjoy the sights of Thimphu in the morning. As the only true "city" in Bhutan, it is a unique mix of Himalayan and western sensibilities. Well, you can visit a hospital and also visit National Indigenous hospital. You can also visit the following places:
Textile Museum: this museum was inaugurated under the patronage of Queen Ashi Sangay Choden Wangchuk in June 2001. Many intricate designs of Bhutanese textiles are displayed here. It will also serve as a center for conservation, restoration and documentation of Bhutanese textiles.

National Folk Heritage Museum: one of the oldest houses in the capital Thimphu, having been restored and transformed into Folk Heritage Museum in the year 2001 under the patronage of Her



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Majesty the Queen Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuk and this museum is meant to serve an account of everyday rural life for the young urbanized generations and as a place for preserving objects related to this life, in case this way of life disappears as time passes. Drupthob Goempa: it was built at the beginning of the 1980s. This monastery, situated just above the Dzong and surrounded by prayer flags, has the role of protecting the Dzong from fire. Its other name, "Drupthob Lhakhang", is derived from the incarnation of Saint Drupthob Thangtong Gyalpo who lived there and had the idea of constructing it. Today, the monastery is a nunnery and there are around 55 nuns. From this spot the view of the Dzong is superb, especially in the afternoon.

Paper Factory: Visit a handmade paper workshop where artisans create beautiful and unusual handmade papers, the handmade paper industry in Bhutan stems from the age old handicraft tradition and its history can be traced back to the 8th century. Handmade papers are made out of Daphne papyri era sieb, Edge worthia papyri era sieb and Pine apple plants. And a weaving workshop where the looms are filled with traditional and updated versions of the world-renowned Bhutanese textile arts. National Institute for Zorig. Chusum (Thirteen Arts & Crafts): the Royal Government of Bhutan has sponsored and established this national institute in the year 1971 to preserve and promote culture and to contribute to the country's economy through quality products and services. In the course of the history Bhutan has developed a unique artistic tradition, which has played a vital role in modeling its distinct cultural heritage and this tradition is reflected in thirteen traditional arts & crafts.

This afternoon you can explore the capital town and if you are shopper, the handicrafts Emporium is a good place to browse through examples of Bhutan's fine traditional arts and crafts. Here you can buy textiles, Thangkas, scenic painting, mask, ceramics, slate and woodcarvings, musical instruments, jewelry, butter-tea cups, yak tail dusters and all kinds of exotic and fascinating objects. Well, while drive to Paro, en route visit the Simtokha Dzong, built by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in the year 1629. Officially known as Sangak Zabdhon Phodrang (Palace of the Profound Meaning of Secret Mantras). It is often said to be the first Dzong built in Bhutan. In fact, there were Dzongs in Bhutan as early as 1153, but this is the first Dzong built by Shabdrung. Until 2012, it was the home of the Institute for Language and Cultural Studies.

Paro, driving through the idyllic countryside, dotted with villages and paddy fields, crossing rivers and natural forests to Paro. Tonight you will have a farewell dinner celebration as you enjoy your last evening in Bhutan. If you are interested, we may be able to arrange Bhutanese "hot stone bath" this evening.

Starting elevation: 7872ft/2400m

Ending elevation: 7216ft/2200m

Overnight in Olathang Hotel

DAY 23: DEPART PARO

This morning you depart the Land of the Thunder Dragon for Bangkok/Delhi/Dhaka/ Kathmandu/Kolkata /Singapore Bangkok.



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Important Information

INCLUDED

- 🌍 The Bhutan VISA fees
- 🌍 The royalty and all taxes to the government
- 🌍 Bank charges to International and national bank.
- 🌍 All hotel and guesthouse accommodations in Bhutan as listed in the itinerary
- 🌍 All ground transportation while in Bhutan (4WD for travelling couples or mini bus or bus for bigger groups)
- 🌍 Meals as noted in the itinerary (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner)
- 🌍 **Note:** Included meals may be at a local restaurant
- 🌍 Packaged water in the car/van/coach
- 🌍 The services of a senior/qualified English-speaking Bhutanese Licensed guide and
- 🌍 An experienced driver
- 🌍 Fees for the museum, institutes, temples and monuments.
- 🌍 All tips / gratuity to support staff (porters, drivers, cooks, etc.)
- 🌍 GAEB Medical Assistance Services
- 🌍 Services of porter, supply of pack ponies on the trekking
- 🌍 The services of senior Bhutanese licensed cook and staff on the trekking

NOT INCLUDED

- Air transport to and from Bhutan. Druk-Air ticketing cost is usually not included in our listed travel packages due to the fluctuation of foreign exchange.
- International airfare and en route stopovers (e.g., Bangkok)
- Accommodation and meals at 5 Star restaurants. Breakfast at 5 stars restaurant is included if you have booked a night at the hotel.
- Air-lifting in case of emergencies
- Any soft or hard drinks unless provided as complimentary or specified otherwise
- Excess baggage charges
- Passport fees
- Special language guide
- Items of a personal nature such as liquor, laundry, mail, phone calls and cables.
- Lectures//Talk sessions on Buddhism, GNH etc. (for smaller group)
- Any other miscellaneous expenses not specified above
- Trip cancellation, travel delay or baggage loss insurance (which is highly recommended)



Additional Information

ACTIVITY DURATION	7 hours + per day
MAXIMUM ELEVATION	16,200ft/4,940m
SEASON	November through May
BEST TIME TO GO	November through May
GROUP SIZE	Minimum 2 pax
EXPEDITION SCHEDULE	Tailormade to suit your dates

DIFFICULTY LEVEL

Our grades have been designated based on our perception of the degree of physical activity you are likely to require to enjoy the adventure. These are only a guideline. This itinerary has a 'very difficult' level (challenging activities for more than 7 hours per day). This means that you will need to be fit and training will be required.

