

Trekking in Bhutan

Overview:

- **18 days & 17 nights in Bhutan** including 13 days trekking along two magnificent trek routes. Visit to major touristic historic, cultural and religious sites in and around Paro, Thimphu and Punakha.
- **Jumolhari Trek** is the most enchanting adventure in Bhutan and the Himalayas. It offers a wide range of landscapes, fauna and flora. The highlight of this trek is the spectacular view of Mount Jumolhari from Jangothang basecamp. Starting in Paro valley, the trek lasts 8 days. The first three days follows the Pachhu (Paro River) valley all the way to Jangothang base camp, where we will see the stunning view of Mount Jumolhari (7315m), the second highest unclimbed peak in the world. The trek will also take us to Lingzhi, the highest settlement in the north with a unique mountain culture. En route we will enjoy spectacular views of Mount Jichu Drake (6989m) and Tshrim Gang (6789m). From Lingzhi, we will descend to the lower valleys of Thimphu through varied vegetation and gorges formed by unique rock canyons, ending the trek in the north of Thimphu valley.
- **Dagala Trek** is off the beaten track where you will meet very few hikers, if any. This relatively short-day trek passes through various shimmering high-altitude lakes; hence it is often named as the Thousand Lakes Trek. Trekking amidst the picturesque and enchanting lakes one will be treated with stunning views of some of the world's highest Himalayan ranges including Mount Everest in Nepal, Jumolhari, Masanggang, Jichu Drake, Tiger Mountain in Bhutan and many more. The trail also takes you through bird rich areas, alpine flowers, attractive meadows, and several traditional Bhutanese villages. The Dagala Trek will take you 5 days to complete.

NB: During the treks, participants will only carry their day pack. Horses will carry the rest of the luggage and equipment. A local team made up of a local guide, a cook and several horsemen will accompany the trek to ensure the needed support and logistics.

Day by Day Itinerary:

Day 1 – Flight Europe to Kathmandu

Day 2 – Kathmandu

Arrival in Kathmandu in the morning. Group meets. Overnight in Kathmandu.

Day 3 – Arrival in Paro

Flight Katmandu Paro. Arrival at Paro airport. Meet our local guide and transfer to hotel. Lunch in town. After lunch, visit Ta-Dzong and national museum Dzong of Paro. Overnight in Paro.

Day 4 – Tiger’s Nest Monastery

6KM | 5 HOURS | 600M ASCENT | DESCENT 600M | MAX ALT 3200M

Acclimatation hike to Tiger’s nest. The Tiger’s Nest Monastery is located near Paro at 3120m. Built in 1692, around the cave where Guru Rinpoche first meditated, which



is considered as the introduction to Buddhism into Bhutan. The legend says that Guru Rinpoche was carried from Tibet to this location on the back of a tigress, thus giving it the name “Tiger’s Nest”. Now, this monastery consists of four temples with residential accommodations for the monks. Despite the daily visits by tourists, Paro Takstang still functions as a monastery today. The hike will take us 4-5 hours in addition to the visit of the place. Night in Paro.



Day 5 – Paro to Sharna Zampa

17KM | 5-6 HOURS | 300M ASCENT | DESCENT 60M | CAMP ALT 2870M

On day 3 we will start our 8 days Jumolhari trek from the historic Drugyel Dzong (2580m). The Dzong is a 12km drive to the north of Paro valley. We will meet our trekking crew there. We will start walking on a wide trail that tracks along the Pa Chhu (Paro river). The trail will slowly ascend through the countryside with views of rice paddies and fields of millet. As the valley widens, we will find apple

orchards, traditional Bhutanese farmhouses and a few small settlements of Mitshi Zampa and Sangatan. Following the route through blue pine forest we will reach the army post of Gunitsawa at 2810m where trekking permits will be checked and stamped. We will then climb towards Sharna Zampa (2870m) after crossing Pa Chhu on a wooden bridge, where we will camp for the night in the meadows among the trees.

Day 6 – Sharna Zampa to Soi Thangkha

22KM | 8-9 HOURS | 900M ASCENT CAMP ALT 3750M

On the second day we will continue to follow the Pachhu (Paro river) ascending and descending through pine, oak and spruce forests. We will reach Shingkharap after crossing several streams will be served a hot lunch. After climbing through rhododendron forests and finally crossing the bridge again, we reach our camp at 3750m amidst beautiful meadows.



Day 7 – Soi Thangkha to Jangothang base camp

19KM | 4-5 HOURS | 290M ASCENT | CAMP ALT 4040M

The day 3 will be a relatively shorter day but will involve a significant gain in altitude, as well as enjoying the spectacular view of the surrounding mountain peaks. After walking through a very muddy section and passing a mani wall you will enter yak country. Inside a yak herder' camp you will be served a hot filling lunch. After lunch, we will walk past yak herder settlements of Soe and

Takethang. Some common crops that people grow here are barley, potatoes and turnips. After our lunch, we will walk across a plateau and up a stream bed. We will pass Dangochang village to the beautiful campsite of Jangothang at an altitude of 4040m. From here, the views of Mount Jumolhari and Jichu Drake will take your breath away.

Day 8 – Jangothang acclimatization and exploration

Day 6 will be an acclimatization day with a 4 hours hike to the north of our camp, all the way to 4895m to see the amazing view of Mount Jumolhari. If we are lucky, we will spot the rare blue sheep, griffon vultures and golden eagles. In the foreground below the colossal Mount Jumolhari and its neighboring mountains.



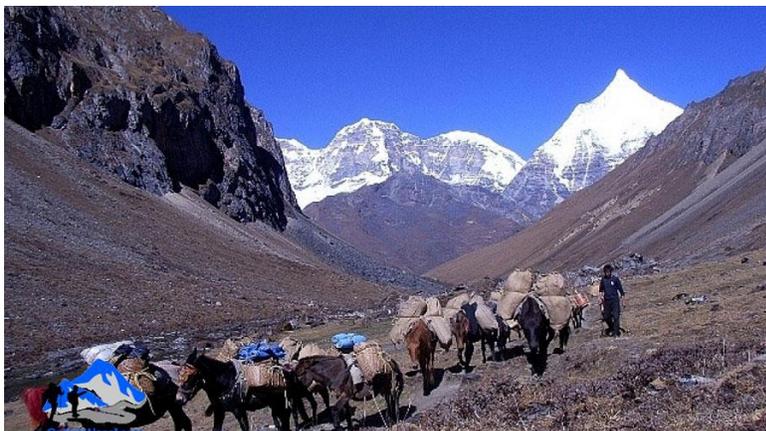
Day 9 – Jangothang to Lingshi

18KM | 6-7 HOURS | 800M ASCENT | 730M DESCENT | CAMP ALT 4010M

On day 7 our trail will follow the stream for half an hour before crossing to the right bank of the river. We will then start to climb up to the first ridge where we will be greeted by a breathtaking view of



Jumolhari (7314m), Jichu Drake (6989m) and Tshering Gang (6789m). We will then be walking on an almost flat track along the valley before climbing again to the Ngye La pass at 4700m. After the pass, a gradual descent will take us to our camp for the night. From there and weather permitting, we will enjoy a spectacular panoramic view of the peaks and the Lingshi Dzong. Sitting at 4010m, Lingshi Dzong was for centuries a way station for Buddhist pilgrims and was a defense fort against Tibetan and Mongol invaders.



Day 10 – Lingshi to Shodu

22KM | 7-8 HOURS | 940M ASCENT | 920M DESCENT | CAMP ALT 4100M

On day 8 we will leave the Laya-Gasa and Snow Man trek route to continue on the Jumolhari trek. The route ascends towards a small white Chorten on a ridge above the camp, it then turns south, up the deep Mo Chhu valley. The trail remains on the west side of the large treeless valley. We will be climbing steadily above Mo Chhu for a short distance before

crossing the river, and climbs steeply for two hours to Yele La pass (4820m). On a clear day we will be able to see Jumolhari, Gangchen Ta, Tsherim Gang and Masang Gang Mountains from the pass. We will then make a descent alongside a stream to a shelter. Walking further downstream we will reach the campsite at Shodu (4100m), its meadow and a Chorten.

DAY 11 – Shodu to Domshisa

22KM | 7-8 HOURS | 250M ASCENT | 670M DESCENT | CAMP ALT 3400M

On day 9 we will be back to tree line. The path follows Thimphu River, descending through rhododendron, juniper and other alpine forests. We will be able to see stunning views of rocky cliffs and waterfalls, rest by the riverside while enjoying a hot meal. After lunch we will gradually ascend to the ruins of Barshong Dzong and then continue to our campsite near the Domshisa river, at 3400m.

Day 12 – Domshisa to Thimphu

17KM | 4-5 HOURS | 200M ASCENT | 280M DESCENT

The trail descends gently through a dense forest of rhododendron, birch and conifers, and then drops steeply to meet Thimphu chhu river. The trail stays on the left side of river, climbing over ridges and descending to side streams, following which it traverses a steep cliff to Dolam Kencho, at 3600m. Then the trail goes in and out steeply to the river and follows it southward to the road head at Dodena. Hot lunch will be served there before being picked-up by our local partner and drive to Thimphu. Rest at the hotel and for the one who wish, visit to the giant Buddha statue. Overnight stay in Thimphu.



Day 13 – Thimpu to Punakha

On day 13 we will attend Dechenphu Tshechu festival in Timphu. This tshechu is dedicated to Gay Ngyen Jakpa Melen, a powerful guardian deity of Bhutan. Some of the sacred dances performed during the festival include the Zhananga Cham, Genyen Kunchaam, Shazam Cham, and Nga Cham. Many traditional and classical dances are also performed. The festival is only day in a year when foreign tourist are allowed in Dechenphu lhakhang. Early afternoon we will drive to Dochula La Pass (3,100

meters), where we will be greeted by the scenic view of the distant Himalayas. The Pass is a famous site and it is adorned with 108 beautiful Chortens. We will stop there absorbing the scenery before heading to Punakha. Once in Punakha we will visit the Zangdhopelri Temple before heading to our hotel. Overnight stay at Punakha.

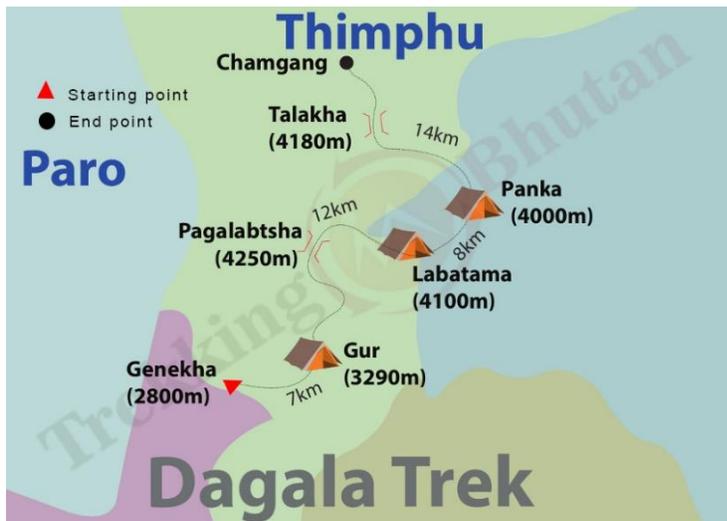
Day 14 – Punakha Sightseeing back to Thimphu

After breakfast drive a short distance to Punakha, for a tour around the famous Punakha Dzong. Built on the confluence of the Mo Chhu (Mother) and Pho Chhu (Father) Rivers, the Punakha Dzong was the second built in Bhutan and was previously the seat of Government. Legend has it that the building of the Dzong was foretold by Guru Rinpoche, who predicted that a person named Namgyal will arrive at a hill that looks like an elephant and build. True to the prediction Ngawang Namgyal (the Shabdrung) arrived in the 16th century and built the Dzong at the tip of the elephant trunk, which is right on the confluence of the two rivers. The Punakha Dzong was the scene of some fine victories by the Bhutanese against invading Tibetan forces. The mixture of administrative, religious and defensive function has been used as the model. After visiting the Punakha Dzong drive to Yebisa for a short hike to Khamsum Yuley temple. Later drive to Chimi Lhakhang for lunch. After lunch short hike to the temple of Divine Madman Lama Drukpa Kuenley known as fertility temple. Then hike back to the car and drive to Thimphu. Overnight stay in Thimphu.



Day 15 – Genekha to Gur

7KM | 5-6 HOURS | 230M ASCENT | DESCENT 60M | CAMP ALT 3290M



The day will start with a 45 min drive to the beautiful Genekha Village from where our second trek will start. The surrounding villages are famous for producing matsutake and chanterelle mushrooms. We will walk over mule path, through terraced fields and coniferous forests rich with alpine flora and plenty of birds. We will then descend down to the river and after two hours of gradual uphill climb, we reach a huge rock platform at 3350m, which offers a picturesque view of the valley. After another two hours of trek, we will reach the campsite at Gur (3290m).

Day 16 – Gur to Labatama with views of Kanchenjunga and Dagala range

12KM | 6 HOURS | 1010M ASCENT | CAMP ALT 4300M

While trekking across the ridges, one will enjoy the beauty of the rugged mountain vegetation. Today’s trek will take place amidst flowers, wild asparagus (in spring) and large meadows. Weaving through tiny streams, we will climb gently through scattered birches and rhododendrons to arrive at Pagalabtsa pass (4250m) marked by huge cairns. From the pass, we will have spectacular views of Kanchenjunga (Sikkim)

and most of the Bhutanese Himalayan peaks. Descending from the pass we will view whole Dagala range meadows and yak herders camp, where we will have lunch. We will then descend into the Labatama valley and then ascend gradually through the valley passing some yak herder huts till we reach Utsho Lake (4300m) where golden trouts are in abundance and where we will set our camp for the night.

Day 17 – Exploratory halt at Labatama

On day 15, we will spend the day exploring any one of nearby lakes such as Relitsho, Hentsho, Setsho and Jagetsho Lakes. These lake are full of trouts and our trekking leader will tell us mystic stories about these lakes. Lunch by the lakeside. After lunch, the ones who want can climb the Jomo peak at an altitude of 5,050m before returning to the camp by dusk and prepare for the next day.



Day 18 – Labatama to Panka

8KM | 5-6 HOURS | 220M ASCENT | 520M DESCENT | CAMP ALT 4000M

On day 16, we will walk along the western side of Dalatsho up to a saddle at (4520m) from where we will have a majestic view of the prominent Himalayan peaks such as Everest (Nepal), Kanchenjunga (Sikkim), Masangang, Tiger Mountain, Tsendagang and Jichu Drake in Bhutan. From the saddle the path descends to Doccha Chuu River, passing some yak herder huts. We will follow the river for a while, staying higher up on the slope until we reach Panka (4000m) where we will camp.



Day 19 – Panka via Talakha and Chamgang to Thimphu

14KM | 8 HOURS | 180M ASCENT | 1540M DESCENT

Today, we will be crossing several passes, each one more impressive than the other. Different varieties of Blue Poppy (June-July) and mountain birds can be found on the trail. Lunch at the junction point between the trail to Talakha and the one to Wangduephodrang. After lunch, a gradual climb will bring us to the last pass on our trip, Tale La (4180m). From there the views of Dagala range and Thimphu is

superb. We will then start our last and long descent through forest of spruce, birch, juniper and rhododendrons to Talakha Goempa (3080m) then the Village of Chamgang. Our vehicle will be waiting there for transfer to Thimphu and later to Paro. Overnight stay in Paro.

Day 20 – Departure

Early morning drive to the Airport of Paro and fly back to Kathmandu and connecting flight to Europe.

Day 21 – Arrival Europe

Price (indicative - for a group of 8 persons):

5'200€ - NB: Price includes 18 days & 17 nights in Bhutan as well as transit in Kathmandu (1 night) and flight from Kathmandu to Paro and return / Price does not include flights from Europe to Kathmandu and return.