

This trek is one of the most challenging trek in the world. Three full weeks of highly challenging hiking, crossing some of the mightiest passes in these great mountains, in the wildest, most remote part of the legendary kingdom of Bhutan. The route leads into a hidden region of stupendous beauty, utterly removed from the outside world. The trail winds through dreamlike vistas directly below the massive snow and ice barrier of the Himalayas along the Tibetan border. Majestic peaks, crystalline waterfalls, turquoise alpine lakes, roaring glacial rivers, endless fields of exquisite mountain flowers, and encounters with rare animals and birds become the trekker's world. The people we meet along the way still live according to ancient, centuries-old patterns, following a way of life as it existed before the industrial age changed the face of the earth forever. This is the last refuge of the rarest of the Himalayan species; the blue poppy, blue sheep, takin and snow leopard and who knows, maybe even the yeti! This is a trek that will remain in your memory forever. No one who has done it will ever forget it; and if you can, you are among an elite group of trekkers. The trek is best timed during Bhutan's clear autumn season.

DAY 01: ARRIVE PARO

Flying in to the country's only airport, in the beautiful Paro valley, the clear mountain air, forested ridges, imposing monasteries and welcoming Bhutanese people in their striking national dress, provides a breath-taking first impression.

Your guide who is going to be with you throughout your trip from Bhutan Dhenzang Travel will meet you at the airport.

In the afternoon, as a part of acclimatization trip, we will hike up to the famous 17th century temple called Taktsang or the Tigers nest perched on a rock face 900 meters above Paro valley. In 8th century, Guru Rinpoche; the great Indian saint who brought Buddhism to Bhutan, is believed to have arrived here flying on the back of a tigress and have meditated here for about three months. It is revered as one of the most sacred places, every Bhutanese wish to visit this place at least once in their lifetime. To get there, it takes about three hours of uphill walk. The trail to the monastery climbs through beautiful pine forest, many of the trees festooned with Spanish moss, and an occasional grove of fluttering prayer flags. Take a short tea break at the cafeteria before returning to your hotel in Paro.

Overnight: Hotel in Paro

Altitude at Paro 2,200 meters.

DAY 2 : PARO – THIMPHU – PARO (55 KMS / 1 hour drive one way).

After breakfast drive to Thimphu to attend the annual Thimphu festival. Spend the day in Thimphu, late afternoon proceed to Paro for the night.

Overnight at hotel in Paro.

DAY 3: DRUKGYEL DZONG - SHANA (4-5 hours)

Drive up to Drukgyel Dzong (2,580m) where the road ends and the trek begin. With a gradual climb the trail follows the Pachu (Paro river) passing beautiful meadows, paddy fields and impressive farm houses. After about four hours you will reach the army post at Gunitsawa village. At the army check point your trek permit (provided by your tour operator) will be checked and endorsed. The campsite is on the opposite side of the river, not far from Gunitsawa.
Overnight: Camp: Shana (2,850m)

DAY 04: SHANA - THANGTHANGKA (7-8 hours)

On this long day, the trail continues with lots of small ups and downs. After going uphill through the river valley, you enter the Jigme Dorji National Park. The valley finally narrows gradually to a mere path which ascends to a meadow where a camp will be set up. From here, if weather permits, you will have the first great view of Mount Jhomolhari.
Overnight: Camp: Thangthangka (3,610m)

DAY 05: THANGTHANGKA - JANGOTHANG (4-5 hours)

If you did not see Mount Jhomolhari last evening, you will have a great chance to get a great view this early morning. This morning, the trek continues up the Pachu valley which widens into

patches of alpine meadow and meager growths of forest. Cross an army outpost along the way and enjoy a spectacular view of high mountain ridges and snow-capped peaks. Yaks and the herder's homes become a regular feature of the landscape. Passing the villages Soe, Takethang and Dangochang is another asset on this day. Reaching Jangothang, one of the most beautiful campsites of the Himalayas, you will again have a spectacular view of Mount Jhomolhari.

Overnight: Camp: Base Camp (4,080m)

DAY 06: HALT AT JANGOTHANG

The day in Jangothang provides plenty of possibilities for day hikes with great views on lakes and snow capped mountains such as Jhomolhari and Jichu Drake. There are good chances to spot some blue sheep on the upper slopes of the valley. Jangothang is a perfect environment for your acclimatization. Trek up to Tsophu or hike around the area. There are good short hiking trails in three directions. Jhomolhari and its subsidiary mountain chains lay directly west, Jichu Drake to the north and a number of unclimbed peaks to the east.

DAY 07: JANGOTHANG - LINGSHI (6-7 hours)

After 15 min. from the camp the trail climbs rapidly for about half an hour and then becomes a gradual ascend to the Nyilila pass at 4,870m. While on the climb enjoy the surrounding. You might see herds of blue sheep grazing on the slopes of the mountains. From the pass you will have spectacular views of Mt. Jhomolhari, Jichu Drake and Tsheringang, all of them rising above 7,000m. On the way down to the camp you will pass by some of the yak herder's tent, made from yak wool, where the herders take shelter while on the move to various pastures for their yaks. As you come down into the Lingshi basin, you get a wonderful view of Lingshi Dzong on a clear day. Tserimgang and its glaciers rise up at the north end of the valley. The campsite is next to a stone hut you reach just before Lingshi Dzong.

Overnight: Camp: Lingshi (4,010m)

DAY 08: LINGSHI - CHEBISA (5-6 hours)

Cross the stream below the camp on a wooden bridge and climb up the opposite side to a

Chorten just below Lingshi Dzong. In the valley to the east is a cluster of wood shingled houses which is one part of Lingshi village. If you look back at Tsering Kang you can see a very distinct rock pinnacle sticking up at the end of the East Ridge. The climb is gradual and easy. The camp site is on a meadow just opposite the Chebisa village (3880 m).

Overnight: Camp: Chebisa (3,880m)

DAY 09: CHEBISA - SHOMUTHANG (6-7 hours)

This morning, we have a big uphill climb along the vast meadow till Gobula pass (4440m). As we climb up slowly, we may see some blue sheep grazing in high yak pastures and some vultures flying high and handsome in the clear blue sky. After the Gobula pass, it's mostly downhill to our camp beside a stream through the forests of junipers and firs.

Overnight: Camp: Shomuthang (4,260m)

DAY 10: SHOMUTHANG - ROBLUTHANG (6-7 hours)

We have a short steep climb and then the trail is level before it gradually starts to climb up the valley crossing the stream for a few times. On this stretch of our trek, we can see lots of edelweiss flowers and we can also have the view of snowcapped peak to the south-east called Khang Bum (6,526 m). Once we are at Jhari La (4,747 m), the trail goes steep down for about two hours through dwarf rhododendrons, junipers and firs till the campsite. If you are here in the summertime, there will be hundreds of takins to be seen grazing on the slopes of the nearby hills for this valley is a chosen summer home.

Overnight: Camp: Robluthang (4,160m)

DAY 11: ROBLUTHANG - LIMITHANG (6-7 hours)

Today we have a long, hard day, crossing Sinchu La, the last and the highest pass on the trek. It's a tough climb from here to the pass because the high altitude will slow you down considerably. Passing a false summit with a cairn, the trail levels out a little before reaching some rock cairns and prayer flags on Sinchu La (5,005m). The snow covered peak of Gangchentag fills the horizon to the north.

The descent is on a rough, rocky trail that follows a moraine into another glacial valley. It's then a short walk on a good trail through a cedar forest interspersed with small meadows to

Limithang (4140m), a lovely camp site in a big meadow by the river. The peak of Gangchentang towers over the campsite, even though it's quite a distance away.

Overnight: Camp: Lingmithang (4,140m)

DAY 12: LIMITHANG - LAYA (4-5 hours)

Today it is mostly downhill along a winding river, the trail splits, one going down with the river to the camp site used by the army. The other stays high and takes you into the West Side of Laya Village. We will camp on a high flat bench above the East End of the Laya village (3800m).

Overnight: Camp:Laya (3,800m)

DAY 13: LAYA – HALT.

A days' rest is a must to regain your lost strength. If you are interested visit the village's only temple and also visit farm houses around Laya or hike above laya village.

DAY 14: LAYA - RHODUPHU (7-8 hours)

From Laya we descend to an army camp and continue following the river till the turn off point to Rhoduphu. After lunch the climb continues through rhododendron bushes till you reach the camp at Roduphu just next to the Rhodu Chhu.

Overnight Camp- Rhoduphu (4,160m)

DAY 15: RHODUPHU - NARETHANG (5-6 hours)

After following the river for about half an hour you will have a steady climb to a high open valley at 4,600m and then further up to Tsomo La (4,900m). Tsomo La offers a superb view of Lunana, Mount Jomolhari and Jichu Drake, and the Tibetan border. The route then crosses a

flat, barren plateau at about 5,000m. The campsite at Narethang is towered by the peak of Gangla Karchung (6,395m).

Overnight: Camp: Narethang (4,900m)

DAY 16: NARETHANG - TARINA (6-7 hours)

From the camp you will climb for about an hour to Gangla Karchung La (5,120m). The view from the pass is breathtaking and the whole range of mountains including Jekangphu Gang (7,100m), Tsenda Kang and Teri Gang (7,300m) can be seen. The pass descends along a large moraine. Again one has great views: a massive glacier descends from Teri Kang to a deep turquoise lake at its foot. Up here a glacial lake burst through its dam in the early 1960s, causing widespread damage and partially destroying Punakha Dzong. Finally, it is a very long descent through thick rhododendron to Tarina valley, where you will find several good campsites along the Tang Chhu.

Overnight: Camp: Tarina (3,970m)

DAY 17: TARINA - WOCHÉ (6-7 hours)

The walk leads down through conifer forests following the upper ridges of the Pho Chhu, passing some impressive waterfalls. The trail then climbs over a ridge and drops to Woche, a settlement of a few houses, the first village in the Lunana region.

Overnight: Camp: Woche (3,910m)

DAY 18: WOCHÉ - LHEDI (6-7 hours)

The trek starts through juniper and fir forests, and further ahead, through rhododendron bushes. Climb up to Keche La pass (4,650m) where one can have the great view of surrounding mountains again. After the pass, descend to the riverside walking through a village with a stunning view of Table Mountain and others. Follow up the river till Lhedi Village. Lhedi has a basic health unit, a school and a wireless telephone connection.

Overnight: Camp: Lhedi (3,700m)

DAY 19: LHEDI - THANZA (6-7 hours)

In clear weather, you will have great views of Table Mountain (7,100m). Around lunchtime you will pass the small village of Chozo (4,090m) which has a dzong still in use. Reaching Thanza again you will have a great view of Table Mountain which forms a 3,000m high wall of snow and ice behind the village. Although there are possibilities to camp directly at Thanza, most groups prefer to camp in Thoencha.

Overnight: Camp: Thanza (4,150m)

DAY 20 : HALT AT THANZA

A days rest at Thanza. If you are interested visit the nearby village farm house or you can either hike up to the lakes above Thanza , below the enormous Table mountain. This is also the place where we change horses to Yaks to carry our camping equipments and food stuffs.

DAY 21 : THANZA – TSHORIM (17kms/ 6-7 hours)

The initial climb toward a small pass (alt. 5,100 m) before Tshorim is steep but once you reach there you could see a very beautiful view of the Table mountain and other distant peaks in Tibet. Enroute cross a yak herders hut.

DAY 22 : TSHORIM – GANGKHAR PUENSUM BASE CAMP (19 kms / 7-8 hours)

In the morning after hiking about 1 hour 45 minutes cross the highest pass on this trek, called Gophula (alt. 5,250 m). Enroute we can see the first glimpses of Gangkhar Puensum – the highest unclimbed mountain peak in the world. As you approach the pass the scenery is once again quite unlike anything previously encountered on the trek. Two enormous turquoise lakes, a circque of snowy peaks in the promise of reaching Gangkhar Puensum, makes this yet another great day's trekking. We follow the path in an isolation valley to the left of the glacier and turn a corner to enter the upper part of Sasha Chhu valley, and camp beneath the gigantic southwest Face of the Gangkhar Puensum.

DAY 23 : HALT AT GANGKHAR PUENSUM BASE CAMP

Explore around the base camp of Mt. Gangkhar Puensum (7,549m), the highest unclimbed mountain in Bhutan.

DAY 24 : BASE CAMP – GESHE WOMA (18 KMS / 6 hours)

Leave the big mountains and follow the Sasha Chhu on a long and gradual descent past few Yak herder's huts at Geshe Woma. We camp further below Geshe Woma at 4,200m.

DAY 25: GESHE WOMA – WARATANG (18 KMS / 8 – 9 hours)

The trail continues down the Sasha Chhu for two hours till the tree line and take a steep trail to cross three passes including Saka La (4, 600m) and the Warthang La (4, 600m). Scenery enroute is exceptional with small lakes, peaks in the north and thick forests in the south. Camp at Waratang at 4,000 m.

DAY 26 : WARATHANG – DUR TSHACHU (16 KMS / 5 – 6 hours)

In the morning climb the Uli La Pass (4, 400m) which is just above the campsite and then, descend through thick forests of rhododendrons, juniper and conifer and maple trees to Mangde Chhu river. Camp at Dur Tshachu (hot spring). You can dip in one of the many pools, all at pleasant temperatures.

DAY 27 : DUR TSHACHU – TSHOCHENCHEN (18 KMS / 7 hours)

In the morning climb to Gothong La, then, descend to a lake and then a steep climb to Jule La (4,700m). Then, descend to the wide valley of Tshochenchen at 3, 800m.

DAY 28 : TSHOCHENCHEN – GORSUM – DUR - JAKAR (35 KMS / 10 hours)

Trek all way downhill following the Yoleng Chhu river and through thick forests of Cyprus, Juniper, Spruce, Hemlock and Maple, climb again to Gorsum, then steep descend to Dur valley and drive to Jakar. Overnight at hotel in Bumthang.

Altitude of Bumthang : 2, 650m.

DAY 29 : BUMTHANG FESTIVAL - TRONGSA

Spend the full day in Bumthang. Attend the festival in the morning and do some sightseeing in the valley in the afternoon. Visit the Jakar Dzong, the Kurjey Lhakhang, Kenchosum Lhakhang and the Tamshing Monastery. Late afternoon proceed to Trongsa for the night. Dinner and over at Hotel in Trongsa.

DAY 30 : TRONGSA - PARO

Today is a long drive of about 8 – 9 hours from Trongsa to Paro. It is advisable to spend your last night in Paro if you are leaving by flight the next day. Dinner and overnight at Hotel in Paro.

DAY 31 : PARO – DELHI (Departure)

After breakfast, you will be driven to the Paro airport to board your Druk Air flight from Paro to Delhi. Your Bhutanese escort will bid you farewell and Tashi Delek !

