



## BHUTAN: Druk Path Trek

*This information should answer some of your questions about the trip and give you a better idea of what we do day-to-day. It doesn't hope to answer everything. If you have any questions please get in touch.*



*Chomolhari (7315m) just visible from from above Jele La*

- ***Follow the traditional mountain route between Paro and Thimpu***
- ***Himalayan panoramas***
- ***Good acclimatisation schedule***
- ***Vist Punakha, the ancient capital of Bhutan***
- ***Enough time to absorb some of the sights, culture & traditions***

### **Bhutan**

Mystery and legend have surrounded the tiny kingdom of Bhutan for centuries. Its steep mountains and remote forested valleys are scattered with holy places of deep mystical importance where the founders of Tibetan Buddhism have left their traces. Since the borders were opened to tourists in 1974, a tightly controlled tourism policy has allowed a very limited number of visitors to enter the country each year at a high cost price – however a proportion of the income goes towards government aid, enabling each visitor to make a personal contribution to Bhutan's expanding health and education programmes.

The Wangchuk monarchy ruled Bhutan from 1907 until March 2008 when King Wangchuk initiated the formation of a two party parliamentary democracy with elections. Both the ruling party the 'Bhutan Harmony Party' and the opposition, the 'People's Democratic Party' support the monarchy, and will continue to try to protect the fragile balance between the nation's spiritual heritage and modern economic development.

## The trip

Our route follows the Druk Path Trail, the original mountain crossing between Paro and Thimpu. This classic trek includes ridge top walking, high mountain lakes, and visits to high mountain monasteries and in clear weather, good views of snow covered Himalayan peaks.

## On trek

We are supported by ponies and a cooking and camp team. Tents, food and baggage accompany us and we carry only what we need for the day: camera, water bottle, spare clothing, waterproofs etc. A typical day starts early with a steaming mug of tea. Packing is followed by breakfast in the mess tent and we are usually away early in order to catch the best weather. A picnic lunch stop is around 12 noon and arrival in camp is usually by mid afternoon in time for tea and a snack. After sorting camp out, we can relax perhaps join in some of the throwing games which the staff often play before dinner at about 6 -7pm. 'Trekking bedtime' is seldom later than 9pm.

## DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

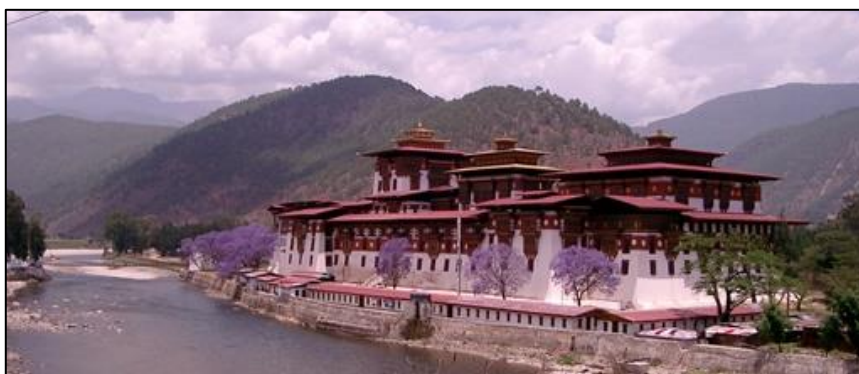
*This itinerary is flexible and should be seen as a guide only. Local conditions, weather or fitness could lead to changes in our daily plans. All times and distances are approximate. 'B,L,D' refers to meals included in the trip cost, i.e. Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.*

**This trip is 15 days ex DELHI. The first and last days refer to the days of arrival in and departure from Delhi, and may not be the days you leave or return home.**

DAY 1 Arrive Delhi. Transfer to Hotel

DAY 2 This morning we get transferred to domestic airport to board flight to Bagdogra. Located in the plains of Bengal and foothills of Himalayas, from here we drive to our hotel in Chalsa. Chalsa is a small village located in the Doars Forest in Jalpadhara National Park. **Hotel B**

DAY 3 THIMPHU 2320m  
A short drive will take us to Phuntsholing in Bhutan as we cross the international border at Jaigaon. We take a short stop to complete immigration formalities and then continue our drive to the Bhutanese capital of Thimphu. The landscapes change completely as we leave the plains and enter the mountainous terrain of Bhutan. There will be chance to stop for lunch and also the crafts school and the old library among the other things. **Hotel B,L,D**



*Punaka Dzong*

**DAY 4 PUNAKHA 1250m**

In the morning we make a visit to a nunnery and the Taschichio Dzong. Mid mornings drive (3 hours) over Dochu La (3050m) reveals a magnificent Himalayan panorama in clear weather. From here we continue on to Punakha Dzong, the ancient capital of Bhutan and one of the most impressive sights in the country. Hotel near Punakha. **B,L,D**



*Meeting some of the nuns*

**DAY 5 TRONGSA 2230m**

This morning we make a hike to the Chimi lakang temple located on a small hillock also referred to as fertility temple as per the local beliefs, the place is also the home of deity, Lam Drukpa Kuenley. Drive to back to visit Punakha Dzong, one of the most impressive Dzong in its architecture. We spend time at the Dzong. Post lunch we head to Trongsa as we drive through the tropical vegetation to Nobling and Pele la 3300m. Hotel. **B,L,D**

**DAY 6** Visit the mighty Dzongs of Trongsa. Visiting Gangtey Goempa, which overlooks the large green expanse of Phobjikha valley, a glacial valley on the western slopes of the black mountain range. The valley is an important wildlife centre in Bhutan and is the roosting ground of the endangered black necked cranes that fly there from the Tibetan plateau during the winter grounds. After visiting the Dzongs we continue driving to Thimphu. Camp **B,L,D**

**DAY 7 PHAJODING 3870m**

Today we start our trek near Thimphu, as we walk uphill to Phajoding 3870m. The trek to is all the way up hill through a forested area mostly constituting of Blue pines. We maintain a leisurely pace on this day. Distance 4-5kms/Duration 3-4 hrs. Camp **B,L,D**

DAY 8 SIMKOTA 4040m

We begin with a gradual climb up to Phume la (4210m) the highest point on this trek. If the weather permits we will have beautiful views of Mt. Gangkhar Punsum (7541m) the highest mountain in Bhutan and other Himalayan peaks. Distance 10 kms/Duration 3-4 hrs.Camp **B,L,D**

DAY 9 JIMILANGTSHO 3880m

The trail takes us through dwarf Rhododendrons trees as we pass by the lake Janye Tsho. Today we may come across some Yak herders camp and can have a look in to their routine lives. Distance 6 kms/Duration 4-5 hrs. **B,L,D**



Day 10 JANGCHILAKHA 3780m

Today's trail follows the ridge and on a clear day the views of the mountains and valley are beautiful, in particular the Jichu Drake(6989m). Distance 11kms/Duration 4-5 hrs.Camp **B,L,D**

DAY 11 JELE DZONG 3450m and PARO

This morning we may see some yak herders near the camp site. The trek takes us through thick alpine forest and rhododendrons trees, most of the walking is up and down on a ridge. Weather permitting, we will be rewarded with good views of Mt. Jumolhari and Paro Valley below us. From Jele Dzong, we continue walking towards Paro on a gradual trail and then downhill up to Dopshari (2300m) Distance 14 kms/Duration 5-6 hrs.Camp **B,L,D**



DAY 12 PARO

Towering above the Paro Valley at 2900m on precarious rock ledges lies Taktsang Monastery: the Tiger's Lair. A 2-3 hour hike through shady forest will bring us to within a stone's throw,

*Tiger Nest Monastery*

and acts as great acclimatisation for the trek. We may be allowed to have a look inside the monastery. **B,L,D**

DAY 13 DEPART PARO, ARRIVE AGRA

Hope for final Himalayan views from the plane. On Arrival in Delhi we drive to Agra and stay overnight there. **B**

DAY 14 TAJ MAHAL

This morning we will visit the famous Taj Mahal



*Taj Mahal*

and spend some time there. Later we visit the Agra Fort and head back to Delhi for the final overnight on this trip.

## **DAY 15 DEPART DELHI**

The trip ends with a transfer to the International airport. **B**

### **Accommodation**

Outside of the trek we stay in comfortable, traditional hotels or guesthouses with en-suite rooms. Whilst trekking we camp in 2 person tents.

### **Food**

Whilst in Bhutan, all meals are included, though in towns you will be asked to pay for your own drinks. Please note that in Bhutan there are almost no 'extras', as all meals are included.

### **Health and hygiene**

We have an excellent record of staying fit and well, and the local food is delicious. The key seems to be

- Avoid drinking any untreated water, even when cleaning your teeth
- Be scrupulous about washing your hands before eating.

### **Altitude**

Above 3000m, the air is thinner, the pressure lower and there is less oxygen available in the atmosphere. Acclimatisation is the process by which the body adapts to these conditions. The key to acclimatisation is a good itinerary with a gradual initial height gain, walking at a slow and steady pace, and increasing fluid intake – drinking at least 4 litres a day is advisable above 3000m

Many people have some minor side effects from altitude, such as headache, nausea or general lassitude. The optional use of 'Diamox' has proved useful for some people, as this drug can reduce these symptoms. You will be given more information on 'Diamox' with your Final Information, between 8 and 10 weeks before departure.

### **Tipping**

There is a custom to tip the crew at the end of the trek. Last year approx £ 90 per person covered all tips. You may have some outdoor gear that you are willing to donate at the end of the trek – eg woollen socks are difficult for locals to obtain and are always well received.

### **Trip grade**

This trip is graded steady, though the effects of bad weather or the cold temperatures expected in December could increase the grade for some people.

### **Transport**

Whilst in Bhutan we travel by private bus or jeep.

### **Visas**

All visitors to Bhutan must have a visa approved prior to arriving in the kingdom, which must be paid for in advance (US\$40 – not included in trip cost). High Places make the application on your behalf and we will send you more information before departure.

For Indian Visa, A full passport is required to apply for the Indian visa, with a validity of at least 6 months beyond the intended duration of stay in the country. It is the client's



responsibility to complete all the application procedures and obtain their visas before the intended date of departure. We have no say in the immigration and consular processes and are not responsible for their actions.

UK passport holders can apply themselves for Indian Visa through India High Commissions Visa service VFS by logging on to <http://in.vfsglobal.co.uk/>. Current visa fee for British passport holders is £ 80 (there is an additional consular fee and a service charge of £ 12.20 on top of this amount). Visa fee for other nationalities will differ; it is advised to contact your nearest Indian High Commission or Consular office for further details.

### What our clients say...

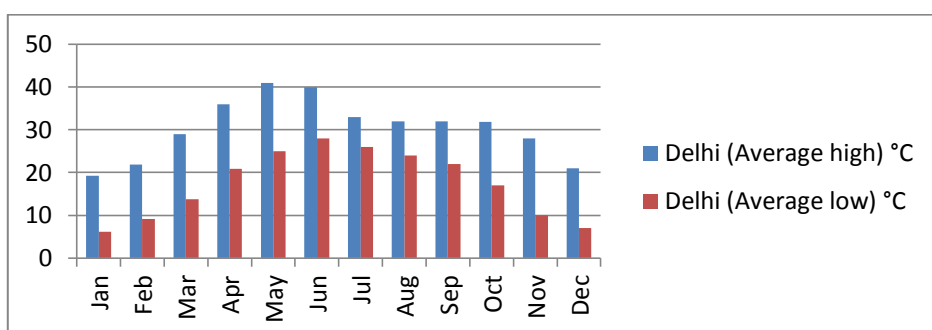
"I thoroughly enjoyed every minute I was in Bhutan. The combination of trekking and sightseeing as just right to get a taste of this extraordinary country." Sylvia Chong Tai, Druk Path Trek

### Climate

On trek in April we hope for clear skies but any weather is possible and there could be fresh snow on the trail. Clearer skies are expected from November onwards with at times warm days and colder nights, temperatures dropping at times to -10°C or lower at night, good mountain views and few others on the trail.

In Inida portion the weather is generally pleasant during November to March, with warmer afternoon at times.

**Temperatures in Delhi**



**Temperatures in Bhutan/Trek**

