

bhutan snowman trek



trip highlights

- Challenge yourself on one of the greatest treks of the Himalaya
- Cross 11 high passes as you trek to the isolated region of Lunana
- Absorb magnificent mountain views
- Share your trekking experience with an outstanding team of local guides and support staff
- Explore Paro and surrounds including the impressive Takstang Monastery (Tiger's Nest)
- Enjoy a fully supported trek, including comfortable sleeping and dining tents and hot showers



Trip Duration	27 days	Trip Code: BSM
Grade	Entry level Mountaineering or Exploratory Treks	
Activities	Trekking	
Summary	27 day trip, 23 day trek, 4 nights hotels, 22 nights camping	

welcome to World Expeditions

Thank you for your interest in our Bhutan Snowman Trek trip. At World Expeditions we are passionate about our off the beaten track experiences as they provide our travellers with the thrill of coming face to face with untouched cultures as well as wilderness regions of great natural beauty. We are committed to ensuring that our unique itineraries are well researched, affordable and tailored for the enjoyment of small groups or individuals - philosophies that have been at our core since 1975 when we began operating adventure holidays. Our itineraries will give you the very best travel experience, designed by people with incredible local knowledge who share our vision of authentic exchange and real exploration with a responsible tourism approach. Whether you like your adventures to include trekking, touring, cycling, mountaineering, kayaking or cruising World Expeditions can make it happen for you. We hope you will join us for a life changing experience.

why travel with World Expeditions?

When planning travel to a remote and challenging destination, many factors need to be considered. World Expeditions have been pioneering treks in the Himalaya since 1975. Our extra attention to detail and seamless operations on the ground ensure that you will have a memorable trekking experience. All our treks in Bhutan are accompanied by an experienced local leader who is highly trained in remote first aid, as well as knowledgeable crew that share a passion for the region in which they work, and a desire to share it with you. We take every precaution to ensure smooth logistics. We use comfortable 3 star accommodation in hand picked hotels, and well maintained, good quality camping equipment on trek. The highest standards of hygiene are strictly maintained, and our cooks will surprise you with a varied menu that's sure to please at the conclusion of each trekking day. World Expeditions are also the only company to provide food for our porters on trek.

Most importantly, our adventures have always sought to benefit the local peoples we interact with, safeguard the ecosystems we explore and contribute to the sustainability of travel in the regions we experience.

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World Expeditions does not require single travellers to pay a surcharge for travelling alone. We will arrange for you to share accommodation with another traveller of the same gender and if we can not match you up we will provide a single room at no extra charge. If you prefer not to share a single supplement is payable to guarantee your own room. Please refer to our website for the additional cost.

For competitive airfares and stopover ideas to join this adventure, contact our expert staff today to receive a detailed quote.

the trip

The Snowman Trek is our most challenging trek in Bhutan and ranks amongst the very finest anywhere in the Himalaya. It is undertaken by only a handful of trekkers each season and accesses Lunana, the most remote region of Bhutan. The trek crosses eleven high passes over 4,500m that define the borders of Bhutan and Tibet. Savouring views of Chomolhari and Jichu Drake, we follow trails through yak herders encampments and isolated farming settlements as we prepare for our trek to Lunana. Amid a constant backdrop of 7000m peaks we discover a region of tiny Buddhist monasteries and secluded villages that are isolated from the rest of Bhutan for many months of the year. A truly classic Himalayan trek, which we have operated successfully for many years, join us for a once in a lifetime adventure!

about your leader/escort

The western leader for the 2019 Bhutan Snowman will be announced in early 2019.

at a glance

DAY 1	ARRIVE PARO. OVERNIGHT MANDALA RESORT (OR SIMILAR).
DAY 2	PARO VALLEY, TAKSTANG MONASTERY (3120M)
DAY 3	DRIVE PAST DRUKYEL DZONG (2580M) TO SHANA (2860M) AND COMMENCE TREK TO SHIRING KARUP (3100M), (6KMS, APPROX 4 HRS)
DAY 4	TREK TO SOI THANGTHANGKHA (3620M) (12KM, APPROX 5 HOURS)
DAY 5	TREK TO JANGOTHANG (4100M) (13.6KMS, APPROX 4/5 HOURS)
DAY 6	AT JANGOTHANG (ACCLIMATISATION DAY)
DAY 7	CROSS NYILE LA (4890M) TO LINGSHI VILLAGE (4010M) (15KMS, APPROX 7 HRS)
DAY 8	TREK TO CHEBISA VILLAGE (3880M) (11KMS, APPROX 4-5 HRS)
DAY 9	CROSS GOMBU LA (4440M) TO SHOMUTHANG (4221M) CAMP (12KMS, APPROX 7/8 HRS)
DAY 10	CROSS JARE LA (4760M) TO ROBLUTHANG (4140M) (9KMS, APPROX 6/7 HOURS)
DAY 11	CROSS SINCHE LA (5005M) TO LEMITHANG (4150M) (14KMS, APPROX 7/8 HRS)
DAY 12	TREK TO LAYA VILLAGE (3800M) (11KMS, APPROX 4 HRS)
DAY 13	REST DAY IN LAYA
DAY 14	TO RODOPHU (4215M) (18KMS, APPROX. 7/8HRS)
DAY 15	CROSS TSEMO LA (4905M) TO NARETHANG (4900M) (11KMS, APPROX. 6/7HRS)
DAY 16	CROSS KARAKACHU LA (5020M) TO TARINA (3880M) (16KMS, APPROX. 8/9HRS)
DAY 17	TARINA TO GREEN LAKE (4450M) (14KMS, APPROX 9HRS)
DAY 18	CROSS KECHE LA (4666M) TO CHOZO (4070M) (20KMS, APPROX 8/9HRS)
DAY 19	REST DAY IN CHOZO
DAY 20	TO TSHOCHENA (4940M) (14KMS, APPROX. 8/9HRS) VIA SINTIA LA (5200M)
DAY 21	TO JICHU DRAMO (5020M) VIA LOJU LA (5100M) (10KM, APPROX 5/6HRS)
DAY 22	CROSS RINCHEN ZOE LA (5326M) TO CHUKARPO (4600M) (15KM, APPROX 8/9HRS)
DAY 23	TO TAMPOE TSHO (4330M) (15KM, APPROX 6/7HRS)
DAY 24	CROSS TEMPE LA (4665M) TO MAROTHANG (3680M) (12KM, APPROX 7/8HRS)
DAY 25	TO NIKKA CHHU (2680M) (15KM, APPROX 4/5HRS), DRIVE TO PUNAKHA (APPROX. 2 HRS)
DAY 26	DRIVE TO PARO (6HRS)
DAY 27	IN PARO, TRIP CONCLUDES

what's included

- 26 breakfasts, 26 lunches and 26 dinners
- airport transfers on Day 1 and Day 27



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trip dates

2019 26 Sep - 22 Oct 2
09 Oct - 04 Nov 1,3

2020 11 Oct - 06 Nov 3
14 Oct - 09 Nov 3

important notes

1 - Group led by Soren Kruse Ledet and 2019 departure will coincide with the Chomolhari Festival

2 - Group led by Angel Armesto.

3 - 11 Oct 2020 Departure will coincide with the Chomolhari and Laya Festival. Western leader yet to be confirmed.

3 - 14 Oct 2020 Departure will coincide with Chomolhari festival. Western leader yet to be confirmed.

fast facts

Countries Visited:

Bhutan

Visas:

Yes*

Vaccinations:

Please consult a travel vaccination specialist for up to date information

Private Groups:

Private group options are available for this trip*

Singles:

A single supplement is available for this trip*

Leader:

As well as an expert local guide there will also be a World Expeditions Leader accompanying your trek. All World Expeditions Leaders are highly trained in remote wilderness first aid and high altitude medicine.

Advice for people with limited mobility

This trip is not suitable for people with limited mobility.

*Ask our staff for more information.

- World Expeditions leader
- expert bilingual guide
- group medical kit
- Portable High Altitude Chamber (PAC) & satellite phone
- good quality accommodation in Paro/Thimphu
- souvenir World Expeditions kit bag
- all group camping equipment
- private transportation
- all park entrance fees and trekking permits
- animals to carry 20kgs personal equipment
- sightseeing and site entry fees as listed
- the use of a World Expeditions trek pack which includes a quality sleeping bag, down or fibre fill jacket and insulated mat (valued at over US\$500)
- Bhutan Government visa and sustainability fees

Local cash payments are becoming increasingly popular with many operators in the adventure travel industry. The policy seems to benefit the tour operators, more than the local economies or travellers, as it avoids local taxes and transfers the cost and risk of cash handling to travellers. In accordance with our Responsible Travel practices we have chosen a policy not to ask for such payments.

what's not included

- International flights and taxes
- Bottled water, aerated and alcoholic drinks
- Items of a personal nature such as phone calls, laundry etc.
- Tips
- Travel insurance
- Airport and departure taxes

detailed itinerary

DAY 1 Arrive Paro. Overnight Mandala Resort (or similar).

After clearing customs and immigration you will meet your Bhutanese leader and drive a short distance via the main street of Paro to our accommodation. At some stage in the afternoon we will visit the main part of town, and visit the National Museum. It will depend on our time of arrival into Paro, and when trek preparations are completed.

meals: L,D

DAY 2 Paro Valley, Takstang Monastery (3120m)

A really exciting and informative day as an introduction to this wonderful country (described in part above). The Paro valley is truly beautiful, being a location for various farming activities, including commercial quantities of asparagus, strawberries and shitake mushrooms for export, plus various grain and vegetable crops. It is a patchwork of colours delineated by well kept traditional design farm houses that are ornately decorated. All of the slopes surrounding the valley are forested and the hint of mountains beyond is alluring. Our morning is spent exploring and appreciating the Tigers Nest Monastery or Taktsang, as it is known in Bhutan, a short drive from our resort. It takes us about one and a half hours to walk up the winding trail steeply through chir pine forest to a tea house and excellent vantage point. Another half hour walk takes us almost directly opposite the cliffs where the monastery is set. The monastery is the divine resting place of the Guru

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thoughtful travel

The natural environments that you'll travel through are fragile; the cultures and traditions precious and often the communities we pass through are reliant on tourism. It is our responsibility as visitors to minimise the impact of our presence, protect what is precious and where we can leave a positive impact. Learn how you can do this by downloading the Thoughtful Traveller booklet from our website.

trip grading

Entry level Mountaineering or Exploratory Treks

Anyone undertaking a challenging adventure should be aware of the physical and mental demands involved. Our challenging treks are designed for experienced adventurers who are seeking a real challenge. A well above average level of fitness is required as days can involve 10 hours of strenuous exercise in very remote and rugged terrain.

Altitudes are generally less than 6000m although higher pass crossings are possible.

Generally trekkers can expect to carry a day weighing around 8kgs, however lower altitude treks may involve carrying full packs (approx. 12kg or more). The terrain will often be rugged and some walks may be exploratory, venturing far off the beaten track. Weather conditions may be harsh at times, and you will need to be comfortable trekking in adverse weather conditions.

We suggest up to one hour of strenuous exercise each day, interspersed with a relatively demanding bushwalk at the weekend. The best exercise for trekking is bushwalking involving relatively steep ascents and descents; multi day walks are ideal preparation for our challenging adventures.

Rinpoche, and although it was once accidentally burnt down, reconstruction is now finished, and the monastery restored. We return back to our resort for lunch and then some touring in the afternoon.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 3 Drive past Drukuel Dzong (2580m) to Shana (2860m) and commence trek to Shiring Karup (3100m), (6kms, approx 4 hrs)

It is a short drive of approx 20 minutes up the Paro valley to Drukuel Dzong, which was originally built as a fortress in 1647 to guard against Tibetans invading the Paro Valley. We continue the drive to Shana (1-1.5h drive) from where our trek commences. On this scenic drive we pass through farm country made up of fields of rice, wheat, barley, mustard, potato, and radish as well as herds of cows. The traditional Bhutanese two storey, timber and stone houses can be seen here. We also gain our first views of the summit of Chomolhari (7314m) at the head of the valley. We get under way and take a break for lunch where it suits us, as we are carrying a packed lunch. Initially the trail is wide and flat, as it meanders steadily through lightly forested fields, which in recent years have been the site of the ongoing large-scale Bhutan Government project to bring electricity to the isolated villages further up the valley. It is a reasonable day's walk today, our first day's trek, taking us past Overnight camp Thongo Zampa.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 4 Trek to Soi Thangthangkha (3620m) (12km, approx 5 hours)

We now trekking within Jigme Dorje National Park, the largest protected area in the country (4350 sq kms.) which extends beyond Laya to Lunana in the east and all the territory to the south. Whilst it is a protected wilderness, the park management which is based at Gasa, has to cope with the needs of lowland farmers and semi-nomadic yak herders. There is an amazing variety of species of plants and animals in the park at both high and low altitudes. The forests are tall and thick, comprising a variety of oaks, maple, birch, larch pine and alders that will be replaced by more and more rhododendron and pines as we trek higher. There are numerous different varieties of the former, and depending on the onset of warmer temperatures after winter, flowers will be in bloom, or past bloom, as the lower altitudes flower earliest. As we climb higher the rhododendron species change from the common rhododendron arboreum (Nepal's national flower) to griffithianum and cinnabarinum.

Many of the camps we stop at are not settlements as might be implied by them having a place name. Most are merely clearings beside a water source, which are also suitable camping sites for seasonal yak herders and workers who are involved in the large scale electrification project that will bring electricity to this region of Bhutan.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 5 Trek to Jangothang (4100m) (13.6kms, approx 4/5 hours)

We continue higher to the camp at the base of Chomolhari, a superb alpine setting. Jichu Drake (6794m) rises to our right, with a fine, elegant ridge running down toward the pass that we will cross on our next trekking day. We camp in the vicinity of yak herders from the Paro Valley, who, like their counterparts in Southern Tibet, live in woven yak wool tents throughout the summer months. By now we are above the treeline and the area is characterised by low tundra of juniper and rhododendron setosum, while blue sheep have also been spotted in the higher rocky outcrops.

meals: B,L,D

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adventure travel

By its very nature adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected. In remote and developing countries do not expect standards you are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable and itineraries may be altered. To get the most out of your adventure it is important that you are flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise. If you are uncertain about your suitability for this trip we recommend that you speak with your consultant or travel agent.

important note

These trip notes represent the most current information for this itinerary, and may supersede any information in the current brochure, including but not limited to the itinerary and price. The itinerary should be seen as a guide only. This itinerary may change at any time due to inclement weather, forces of nature and other circumstances beyond our control.

DAY 6 At Jangothang (acclimatisation day)

An important day set aside for day acclimatisation. A side trip up the small valley towards Chomolhari takes us to a dramatic viewpoint towards the glacier. Alternatively we may make a scenic excursion up to Tshophu lake set adjacent to Nyile La pass, both will be worthy photo excursions. As far as mountaineering is concerned, these two peaks, like the rest of Bhutan, have seen little expedition activity from outsiders. Doug Scott successfully climbed Jichu Drake in 1988 on his third attempt, demonstrating that conditions are not so easy on this far east location of the Himalaya being first in line geographically for monsoonal influences. In 2019, the group will also get the opportunity to experience the Chomolhari Festival today. The festival celebrates the culture of the communities living together with the natural wonders that surround them.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 7 Cross Nyile La (4890m) to Lingshi village (4010m) (15kms, approx 7 hrs)

From camp we commence our ascent over rolling slopes of grassland and small brush to the Nyile La (4850 metres). This stage is not unduly demanding and if this is your first Himalayan pass just take your time, particularly on the final steeper stages just below the pass, where grasses give way to scree and sand. The views enroute to Jichu Drake will inspire you. From the Nyile La we leave Chomolhari and Jichu Drake behind and make a steep descent through stands of pure rhododendron to the outskirts of Lingshi village. Of particular note is the Lingshi Dzong, built to protect this and the other outlying villages of Bhutan from the periodic raids from Tibet.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 8 Trek to Chebisa village (3880m) (11kms, approx 4-5 hrs)

We continue to head northeastward, ascending past the Lingshi Dzong across high alpine pastures dotted with rhododendron and daphne to Chebisa. It is a picturesque valley of pastures and shingle roofed, stone houses. At its head, a short stroll from camp is a tall waterfall cascading from a gap in rocky cliffs with a suspected hanging lake behind. Beneath are stands of very tall, gnarled juniper trees. Above Chebisa are the alpine pastures of the blue sheep (or bharal) that graze to the margins of the snowmelt during the summer months and descend way below the villages during the winter.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 9 Cross Gombu La (4440m) to Shomuthang (4221m) camp (12kms, approx 7/8 hrs)

From Chebisa the trail gradually ascends to the Gombu La (4450 metres). The views back to Lingshi and the surrounding peaks are spectacular. Here, hill partridges have been sighted, while the lammergeier is seen soaring above the alpine pastures. The descent to our camp beside some yak herder camps at Shomuthang is through a forest of cypress then spruce and birch with large stands of rhododendron - griffithianum and campylocarpum. Iris and edelweiss may also be in flower. Our camp will most likely be beside the river, with soaring mountains at the head of the valley. But we may also hike up the valley an hour to make tomorrow's hike easier.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 10 Cross Jare La (4760m) to Robluthang (4140m) (9kms, approx 6/7 hours)

Our route takes us directly upwards this morning, traversing around many grassy slopes to the Jare La. Blue sheep and lammergeirs can often be seen here. Once at the gap, marked by flags and several cairns we can look expansively across to the adjacent valley and our next pass, the Sinche La. The trail winds down through

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rhododendron, spruce, cypress and birch towards a broad valley floor where yaks may be seen grazing. This may well be our first encounter with the people of Laya whom differentiate themselves by wearing the distinctive woven conical hats with a spike in the top and colourful beads draped around the back. Their 'mobile accommodation' as with all high altitude animal herders in this part of the world, is in heavy woven tents, usually made from yak wool. We trek several hundred metres in height up the opposite side of the valley to our camp in a hollow at Robluthang.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 11 Cross Sinche La (5005m) to Lemithang (4150m) (14kms, approx 7/8 hrs)

It will take us approximately four hours to make our ascent of Sinche La. A slow steady pace is essential to gain it comfortably and make the long descent on the other side. At the pass itself there are glimpses of peaks to our left including Gangchenta. Descending, through boulders and grassy slopes, unparalleled views open out before us. Glacial blue lakes and white ribbon streams are set beneath the dramatic peaks of the 'Tigers Ears' Gangchenta. Further down, classic glacial erosion is at work, with fresh lateral and terminal moraine filling the valley floor along with an enormous milky grey lake. The forests are thick here, and our lovely riverside camp is surrounded by very tall conifers and the Tigers Ears as our backdrop.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 12 Trek to Laya village (3800m) (11kms, approx 4 hrs)

This morning we walk directly away from the mountain environment before us, descending the Zamdo Nangi Chhu valley to Laya, the largest village of the trek. The forests are thick for the several hours; and the trail winds down beside the river steeply, until we reach pastures of the farmers of outer Laya. A swing in the trail brings us up to the main settlement which is spread out over a broad spur several hundred metres above the Mo Chu River. There are approximately 1,000 inhabitants in this high set village, and there is a school, Basic Health Unit, several small shops and a gumpa (temple) to meet their needs. Life is not easy in this cooler, isolated location that is snowed in during winter. Much of their living is reliant on yaks (meat, wool and dried cheese), and one annual crop of barley, mustard and turnips. Beneath the village is an army post protecting the frontier with Tibet, whilst above us to the east are spectacular views ahead to Masang Gang (7194m) and toward the region of Lunana where we will trek for the next 12 days. Prevailing snow conditions will be influential to our journey, as Lunana gets snowed-in at cold times of the year, and your guides will do their best to achieve our trip program without compromising safety. Furthermore, with good luck, we will be able to synchronise our change of animal portage some time soon after our arrival and we can head off on the trail the next morning.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 13 Rest Day in Laya

Some time to relax is most welcome after the exertions of the past few days. After a leisurely start to the day, we will enjoy some additional visiting time in Laya, threshing wheat with the ladies, visiting the school or perhaps enjoying a soda in one of the small shops.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 14 To Rodophu (4215m) (18kms, approx. 7/8hrs)

We start hiking early, as today is one of the toughest days of the trek with a lot of steep uphill. After passing the Army Camp and crossing the river we begin our ascent towards Lunana and the most remote stages of our trek. It will take us more than three days to reach the first settlement of Lunana, Woche. The forest is luxuriant and the

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steep trail winds up among tall trunks and root buttresses. As we climb higher we walk among pines, oaks and rhododendron, emerging finally to a broad river valley of alpine pastures. The valley is surrounded by steep slopes and rocky crags and being at higher elevations now, our evening camps will be cooler.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 15 Cross Tsemo La (4905m) to Narethang (4900m) (11kms, approx. 6/7hrs)

We gradually ascend the slopes of dwarf rhododendrons, and once this is achieved, trek on through another small valley of alpine pastures to a small pass, Tsemo La (4905m). We descend and traverse around some slopes to be rewarded with a line of snowy peaks, with Gangla Karchung (6395m) the highest. Our camp is on grassy slopes, surrounded by glaciers, moraines and a few small alpine lakes.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 16 Cross Karakachu La (5020m) to Tarina (3880m) (16kms, approx. 8/9hrs)

Today's magnificent hike will take us into the pristine and remote Lunana District. It takes us about one and a half hours to reach our pass at the head of the valley and then we have a very long descent of approx 1200 metres to the valley of the Tang Chuu. At the pass, the Karakachu La (5020m), the peaks of Jejekanhphu Gang (7300m) and Tsenda Kang (7100m) can be seen on to our left. These dramatic peaks feed the lakes, hanging glaciers and river system before us. We drop down through lateral moraine and then forests of rhododendron to the valley floor where we walk a further 2 to 3 hours to our camp set in a clearing downstream.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 17 Tarina to Green Lake (4450m) (14kms, approx 9hrs)

Following the river, we descend the valley to see the impact of a number of large landslides. They have taken out tracts of forests and left an enormous pile of rubble in its wake. We climb over a ridge to the village of Woche at 3940m, the first village of Lunana. We may see families all helping to thresh their crops of wheat or buckwheat in the fields with traditional rotating sticks. Continuing on, we cross the river and make our way up through dwarf rhododendron towards the pass. There is time to relax and enjoy the views across the cirque-like valley that we have just passed through. Each day of trekking in this remote wilderness region of Bhutan should be savoured as no two days are the same.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 18 Cross Keche La (4666m) To Chozo (4070m) (20kms, approx 8/9hrs)

Having made most of our ascent yesterday, we only have approx 200 metres to trek to the gap of the Keche La (4670m). There is time to relax and enjoy the views across the cirque like valley that we have just passed through. Turning towards our destination, we see distant unnamed peaks but have to descend continually to Thega village and the river of the Pho Chuu, one of the principal rivers of Lunana. The temperatures are warm here and we trek leisurely beside the river and sometimes in the river bed, past the small village of Lhedi and on to Chozo. In recent times there has been a washout of the valley by the bursting of a large glacial lake near Thanza. This means finishing the day with a strenuous walk across the side moraine to reach Chozo so make sure to carry some snacks to support this extra, end-of-the-day effort. Arriving there, we forget all about the hard work. Our camp by the river offers 360 degrees of incredible views. Both Chozo and Thanza are considered the two main villages of Lunana, both are set before a spectacular array of mountains; the most dominating is Table Mountain (7100m) that has an expansive summit that seems to stretch for kilometres! We aim

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to have a rest day here in Chozo, to enjoy the location and prepare ourselves for the challenging traverse ahead over three major passes out of the Lunana region. Yaks need to be changed and this can present delays if the local people are not in residence.
meals: B,L,D

DAY 19 Rest Day in Chozo

Time to do washing, relax, or perhaps go for a walk up the moraine to the glacier near Table Mountain and Thanza. There is a small hillock behind the village which offers glimpses of the neighbour of Table Mountain, Kangphu Gang (7212m). You can also snap pictures of Chozo Dzong but, according to legend, the dzong is haunted and you should not make loud noises, go inside or step foot in its courtyard!
meals: B,L,D

DAY 20 To Tshochena (4940m) (14kms, approx. 8/9hrs) via Sintia La (5200m)

Two solid trekking days ahead through a region where the weather can change easily, from sun to sleet and snowstorms, and we should be well equipped for any conditions. Crossing the river first thing, we commence our steep ascent of a long rolling slope and narrow valley of dwarf rhododendron to the Sintia La at 5200m. It will take us around four hours but the views back towards Lunana are spectacular. The pass is more a passage than a gap, which is long and sustained, almost like a lunar landscape with expanses of rocks and flats that are scattered with small glacial lakes and enclosed by a dazzling array of peaks. Stay close to your guides and trekking mates, as fog can quickly roll in and make visibility quite difficult. Camp is set on a barren plateau where blue sheep or ibex may be seen. Past trekking parties have reported seeing a family of snow leopards here. We do not go to Tshochena via Thanza due to time constraints.
meals: B,L,D

DAY 21 To Jichu Dramo (5020m) via Loju La (5100m) (10km, approx 5/6hrs)

The trail undulates between snow-capped peaks and crosses the Loju La (5145m). Winding around several ridges, more expansive views open out before us including distant views to our most major pass of the trek, the Rinchen Zoe La (5320m). Few, if any, of these peaks have been climbed, making our panorama all the more special. We camp in a little patch of grassy tundra, wedged between expansive rocks and trickling streams.
meals: B,L,D

DAY 22 Cross Rinchen Zoe La (5326m) To Chukarpo (4600m) (15km, approx 8/9hrs)

Leaving our yak herder camp below the pass, we walk through a lunar landscape of rocks, lakes of incredible green hues, glaciers and snowy summits. Today we cross our highest pass, the Rinchen Zoe La (5326m) before crossing a plateau reminiscent of the Tibetan Plateau and descending to our camp set beside the river in a forest clearing. It will take us several hours to gain the pass, and in the final approach the views are unmatched. Vast glaciers run down from a series of snowy mountains into two major glacial blue lakes that have a scattering of small 'icebergs' across them. At the gap we take time to take photos and appreciate our achievement, then continue on to our camp. The hike to the camp involves a steep descent beside a moraine and some rock-hopping next to the river where we find our camp.
meals: B,L,D

DAY 23 To Tampoe Tsho (4330m) (15km, approx 6/7hrs)

After crossing the river we follow the main valley, entering the forest and warmer temperatures. The scenery is pretty, both immediately around us and to the snowy

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peaks in the distance down valley. The trail weaves in and out of boulders in and at the side of the river, and then enters thick tall forest of pines, rhododendron, birch and maple. It is soft underfoot; mosses and mud reflect the damp conditions now. A solid day of trekking brings us to a camp just beneath our last pass. We wind up through the forest following a narrow valley to a hanging lake or tarn, this climb is quite sustained and we gain considerable altitude however we are rewarded with a beautiful setting for our last mountain camp.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 24 Cross Tempe La (4665m) to Marothang (3680m) (12km, approx 7/8hrs)

It takes us under an hour to reach the Tempe La (4665m), our last pass of the trek. From here the trek is all downhill to camp. Initially it is quite steep, winding down and past the large turquoise lake of Om Tsho, and then traversing back and forth across cliffs to the valley floor. From now on to Marothang we follow the Nikka Chhu river through rhododendron and pine forest, and yak pastures along fairly level terrain. At Marothang we encounter the first shop since Laya, a lovely little wooden house beside the river. If we are using yaks we will change to horses for the last day's trek tomorrow.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 25 To Nikka Chhu (2680m) (15km, approx 4/5hrs), drive to Punakha (approx. 2 hrs)

The trail follows the Nikka Chhu through thick, lush forest that is cool and pleasant. We emerge into bamboo thickets and patchwork hillsides of crops and houses of the Sephu district. Our transport meets us at the trailhead and we drive about two hours to our overnight accommodation in Punakha. The end of this extraordinary trek and time to get back to civilization!

meals: B,L,D

DAY 26 Drive to Paro (6hrs)

We aim get an early start for our drive from Gangtey to Paro. The first stop once in town is the Paro Dzong - as with all Dzongs the fortress is the center for civil and religious activities. The Dzong lies just below the national museum and is accessible by an old cantilevered bridge. After lunch, we will visit the Kyichu Lhakhang. This is one of Bhutan's oldest monasteries and believed to have been built in 659 by King Songtsen Gampo of Tibet. Later additions to the temple were made by the Je Khenpo - Chief Abbot of Bhutan and the Royal Family. Overnight Mandala Resort (or similar).

meals: B,L,D

DAY 27 In Paro, trip concludes

Trip concludes in the morning after breakfast.

meals: B

This itinerary is subject to change with any change in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.

am i suitable for this trip?

A Challenging trip is more difficult than any other program we offer. Each of these expeditions has an ambitious objective or goal that necessitates cooperation, contribution and a positive spirit from every member for it to be successful and ultimately rewarding and enjoyable for all. Being personally very fit and healthy will allow you to cope with the rigours of the trip through all conditions right through to the finish, and being mentally ready to embrace the variety of experiences involved is equally important. We strongly encourage intending participants to talk



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and meet with us directly as early as possible to discuss your ideas and ensure you have chosen the right trip for your level of experience and fitness.

country information

Bhutan is a small, independent Buddhist kingdom situated on the eastern side of the Himalaya about 300km long by 150kms wide. It is bordered with India, (Sikkim, Assam, West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh), China (Tibet) and Bangladesh. Virtually the entire country is mountainous, ranging in elevation from 100m in the south to the 7544m Kulha Gangri peak on the northern border. It receives more rainfall than any other Himalayan region, and on average half to two metres of precipitation falls annually in the foothills and mountains. This ensures a lush and diverse flora from small orchids to enormous conifers and rhododendrons, and the country's small population (approx 600,000), their religious beliefs as practising Buddhists, and a protective government has allowed the wilderness to be well preserved. There are hundreds of unique species of plants and animals to be found here. Most of the people of Bhutan originate from the north (Tibet) and practise a Buddhism similar to that region yet it has its own unique beliefs and practises. It is officially called Drukpa Kagyu, and includes practising their faith and traditions of art, dance, drama and various crafts including weaving, carpentry, metalwork and painting. It is obvious that the culture and history is rich in Bhutan, and the foresight of the late King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck who is succeeded by his son, King Jigme Singye Wangchuck to develop and maintain a program that is for the betterment of the people and the land rather than a quick financial return, is an encouraging sign to a sound future.

climate

Bhutan, like Eastern Nepal, comes under the influence of the Indian monsoon which precludes trekking throughout the summer months from the end of May till the middle of September. The ideal time to trek in Bhutan is therefore either pre-monsoon from mid March when the snow begins to melt off the high passes until the end of May. Post-monsoon October through to mid November are ideal. Temperatures on the treks can vary considerably. On any one trek the temperature may vary from 20C during the day to -10C when the occasional storm breaks over the high passes. You will be pleased that you have been provided with good down jackets, sleeping bags and two-person tents that we send to Bhutan from our operational base in Kathmandu.

a typical day

You will be woken with a cup of tea brought to your tent around 6:30am, followed by a small bowl of warm water for washing. Before breakfast you pack your gear into your kit bag which is then taken by the pack-animals or porters and will not be available to you until you reach camp that afternoon. After a wholesome breakfast we are usually on the trail between 7.30 – 8am, depending upon the duration and nature of the day's walk. We will walk for around 3-4 hours and then generally break for lunch for about 1 hour. Some of our staff will walk ahead and select a suitable place to stop. The afternoon walk is generally a little shorter and camp is usually reached by around 3.30 - 4.30 pm. Once we have reached camp and the kitchen is set up, afternoon tea will be prepared. From then until dinner there is time to rest or explore the surrounding area. Dinner is usually served between 6-7 pm. Remember to bring your headlamp and your water bottles to the dining tent so they can be filled with boiling water. Trekking evenings afford some of the best memories of your trek, whether it is talking, playing cards, chatting with the crew or joining in some singing and dancing with the local people. Much of the enjoyment of an expedition is in the journey itself.

dietary requirements

Provided we are advised in advance of your departure we are able to cater for vegetarian diets and can assist with medically recommended diets (allergies and intolerances). Please ensure you discuss your requirements with us well in advance (at least 1 month prior to your trip) to



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determine whether we can cater to such dietary requirements on your chosen adventure. Please note that options are likely to be limited in very remote locations or alternatives may be more expensive or unavailable. There may be times when those with special requirements may need to provide their own food. We are unable to guarantee a peanut-free or allergen-free trip, and therefore, we strongly encourage that travellers with life-threatening or severe allergies take all necessary medical precautions to prepare for the possibility of exposure. Passengers must travel with all necessary medications for food allergies and be capable of self-administering these medications.

pre and post tour accommodation

In Bhutan a group is considered to be three (3) people or more travelling together. We recommended that you arrive in Bhutan with the rest of the group, on the flights arranged by us. Pre and post tour accommodation is available. Please contact your reservations consultant for assistance.

what you carry

In your daypack you will need to carry extra warm clothing (depending on the altitude, location and weather), two water bottles, camera, and personal items such as sunscreen, etc. Porters and mules carry all group gear and your trek pack.

equipment required

Specialist gear required include walking boots and day pack (a comprehensive gear list is provided in the pre-departure information provided on booking).

acute mountain sickness

When we ascend above 2500 metres our bodies have to acclimatise to the decreasing amount of the oxygen available. To allow our bodies to adjust we have structured our treks so that you ascend slowly, allowing acclimatisation to occur. However, during the acclimatisation process, you may experience some of the following symptoms.

- Headache
- Tiredness
- Disturbed sleep
- Loss of appetite/nausea
- Shortness of breath
- Cough
- Palpitation
- Swelling of the hands and face

Individuals acclimatise at different rates. Your best strategy is to take your time and drink plenty of water. These symptoms may not indicate the onset of A.M.S. and if you experience them it does not necessarily mean that you should not continue. All our group leaders have extensive first aid training and we urge you to communicate with the group leader at all times should you believe you have any symptoms in order that we can effectively monitor your symptoms. The only cure for Acute Mountain Sickness is to descend.

Please note that your group leader has ultimate responsibility and may ask you to descend if symptoms persist.

special visa requirements

The visa process for Bhutan requires you to provide us with a scanned colour copy of your passport as we require your full passport details (full name as it appears in your passport).



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nationality, date of birth, passport number, date of issue and expiry date, and occupation) at least 30 days before your arrival in Bhutan. Following the processing of your visa clearance we will provide you with a clearance number to enable you to board the plane from your respective airport; you will then receive a stamped visa upon arrival at Paro airport. You must carry the visa approval letter with you and you will be required to show this when checking in for your DRUK flight into Paro.

NOTE:- Please be aware that it is very usual that we do not receive visa clearance numbers from the Bhutanese government until the week of travel, sometimes 2 or 3 days before departure date. If you have already left on your travels prior to receiving the visa clearance number, then the visa number will be emailed to you shortly before departure date. Please ensure that we have your correct and up-to-date email and contact details.

vehicles & safety

During the course of your trip, we will use a variety of vehicles, all of which are fit for purpose and the conditions encountered. It should be noted that laws governing transportation safety may differ from those in your home country and whilst wherever possible, vehicles with seatbelts are provided, on occasion some vehicles may not have seat belts fitted.

visas

The cost of your Bhutan visa is included in your trip cost. The visa process for Bhutan requires you to provide us with a scanned colour copy of your passport as we require your full passport details (full name as it appears in your passport, nationality, date of birth, passport number, date of issue and expiry date, and occupation) at least 30 days before your arrival in Bhutan. Following the processing of your visa clearance we will provide you with a clearance number to enable you to board the plane from your respective airport; you will then receive a stamped visa upon arrival at Paro airport. You must carry the visa approval letter with you and you will be required to show this when checking in for your DRUK flight into Paro.

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If you are doing more than one tour in Bhutan you may be required to extend your visa, this will be done for you while you are in Bhutan.

Please bear in mind that visas may be required for countries you are visiting en route or transiting through on the way to your destination. It is important that you check the requirements of all countries you will visit. Visa costs and requirements do change regularly so we suggest you check with your travel agent or World Expeditions reservations consultant. It is your responsibility to obtain all necessary visas.

info nights

World Expeditions invites you to attend our inspiring adventure travel information nights. These special evenings are designed to inform and entertain and are hosted by our most experienced and passionate adventure travellers and mountaineers. Ask our staff for a info night schedule or register on our website - www.worldexpeditions.com. Shows can fill early so it is important to register your attendance so we know to save a seat, or two.

private groups

The adventures featured in our brochures, and on our website, are just a starting point for many of our private group travellers. Working closely with our Groups Department we can organise custom designed itineraries for groups of friends, clubs, charity's, schools or even work colleagues.



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Our team will assist you with all aspects of your private group adventure from itinerary design to group flights. Contact our team today.

subscribe to our e-newsletter

Never miss an amazing deal, inspirational speaker tour or exciting new trips and cutting edge adventure news. Head to our website to subscribe to our regular e-newsletter.

social networking

Connect with us on social

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Follow us at instagram.com/worldexpeditions

YOUTUBE: World Expeditions

Subscribe to our channel at youtube.com/worldexpeditions

Share the love

Use the hashtag #WorldExpeditions on your best travel photos and videos to be featured.

trip availability

If this trip seems right for you then we encourage you to call us now to check availability. There are many reasons why you may not be able to join your desired departure and limited space on our small group departures is just one of them. Bhutan is a heavily restricted destination. The Bhutanese Airline Druk, is the only airline that services Paro International airport. Flights operate daily in high season but seats are extremely limited. The demand for these services is increasing each year making it difficult to join a trip last minute. To ensure we can assist you onto your adventure of a lifetime we ask that you check your trip availability with our team at your earliest convenience.

how to book

To book a World Expeditions trip, you will need to complete a booking form and pay a non refundable deposit which you can do by using our online booking function for most trips, or if you prefer, download a booking form from the website and return to us by fax, or mail your booking form and deposit to your nearest World Expeditions office or travel agent. We can also help you with any additional arrangements that you require, such as competitive airfares to get you to your destination, stopovers, pre or post trip accommodation or any additional tours that you wish to take in conjunction with the main World Expeditions trip.