



Chomolhari Trek, Bhutan

Total Duration: 11 nights / 12 days (Ex Paro) **Trek Duration:** 07 nights / 08 days

Style of tour: Organized Camping trek

Grade: Moderate to Tough

Maximum Altitude: 4890m / 16039ft

Tour Starts (Paro): 01st October

Tour Ends (Paro): 12th October

Requisite Group Size: 10

Accommodation: Hotel Nights – 4; Camping Nights – 7

Food: All meals included starting from lunch on Day 01 to breakfast on Day 12

Travel: Airport Transfers and sightseeing in small vehicles / coach depending on the group size

Comments: This high altitude trek involves walking 5 – 6 hrs daily

Recommendations: Previous walking experience on high altitude is essential.

Itinerary:

Day 01: Fly Delhi / Kolkata – Paro

Upon arrival in Paro, meet and assist by our representative and transfer to hotel. A trip to Bhutan usually begins and ends in the charming village of Paro. There is an overwhelming sense of peace as we follow the willow-lined road along the rice paddy checkered valley into Paro. On clear days in Paro there is a magnificent view of Mt. Chomolhari. Guru Rimpoche meditated for three months in a nearby cave, now the sight of Taktsang Lhakhang (the Tiger's Nest) Monastery.

Paro Dzong, one of the oldest and most celebrated in Bhutan, dates from the 15th century. Above the dzong is the old watchtower, now home to Bhutan's national museum which houses a collection of ancient Bhutanese arts and artifacts, weapons and stamps, birds and animals, and silver tea ware. Dinner and overnight at a Hotel. (L, D)

Day 02: Sightseeing in Paro

Drive to Ramthangka and begin the Taktsang hike. Taktsang is one of the most sacred pilgrim sites for the Mahayana Buddhist as Guru Rimpoche meditated in the cave inside the temple. Also visit the Kitchu Lhakhang and the National Museum. Dinner and overnight at a Hotel. (B, L, D)

Day 03: Trek Paro to Shana (2788m / 9148 ft; 17 kms; 5-6 hours)

The first three days of the trek follow the Paro Chhu valley, climbing gently with only a few short, steep climbs over side ridges. The trek starts from Drukgyel Dzong at 2580m / 8462ft with a short downhill walk on a wide trail. The trail climbs very gently, traversing through well-maintained rice terraces and fields of millet. It's a well-worn trail with lots of round stones, with irrigation water running down and forest of blue pines surrounding us. Just below the shop at Guniysawa the trail crosses the Paro Chhu to a river right on a wooden cantilever bridge. It then climbs a little to the rustic little village of Shana. Just beyond Shana Zampa, are several good camping places in meadows surrounded by trees. (B, L, D)

Day 04: Trek Shana to Thangthangkha (3519m / 11545ft; 22 kms; 6-7 hours)

The trail continues its gradual climb alongside the Paro Chhu, through conifer and rhododendron forests, and later winding through patches of blue pine, maple and larch trees. About two hours from camp is Shing Karap, a stone house and clearing at 3110m / 10201ft where we will stop for lunch. Thangthangkha, at an elevation of 3630m / 11,906ft, provides us with a partial view of Chomolhari. There is a small stone shelter and a Bhutanese-style house in a cedar grove at the edge of the meadow. (B, L, D)

Day 05: Trek Thangthangkha to Jangothang (4030m / 13222ft; 19 kms; 5-6 hours)

This is not a long day, but as we gain 500 meters elevation, we will be tired when we reach camp. The trail crosses a wooden bridge over a fast-flowing stream a short distance beyond the army post. We are now entering yak country, and we will see these huge beasts lumbering across the hillside and lazing about in meadows alongside the trail. The villagers grow barley and a large succulent plant called kashaykoni that is

fed to the yaks during the winter. It is slow going uphill beside a side stream to the camp at Jangothang, 4030m / 13218ft, where we will be treated to a spectacular view of Chomolhari. The ruins of a small fortress sit atop a rock in the middle of the side valley that leads north- west to Chomolhari. (B, L, D)

Day 06: Jangothang

A rest day for acclimatization and exploration in Jangothang is one of the highlights of the trek - the views don't get any better than this! There are lots of great day hikes from here:

- a. A three to four-hour excursion up the ridge to the north of the camp and it gives a good view of Jichu Drake (6989m / 22924ft).
- b. Climb up towards the head of the valley in the direction of Chomolhari.
- c. A third hike, which can be combined with the walk up the ridge, is to trek up the main valley towards the last house, then continue up the valley towards Jichu Drake. (B, L, D)

Day 07: Jangothang to Yaksa Soi (3800 m / 12464 ft; 17 kms; 6 to 7 hrs)

2 hours from Jangothang is the Tshophu Lake, from the lake, it's another 2 hours to the Bhonte La (4890m / 16039ft). From the pass, the route winds down a ridge with many criss-crossing yak trails, and finally leads back down to a stream. We trek downstream to a ridge, cross to the south side of the stream, and continue a short distance to our camp at 3800m / 12464ft. (B, L, D)

Day 08: Trek Yaksa Soi to Thombu (4180m / 13715ft; 14 kms; 5 hours)

Climbing out of Yaksa, you will see the few houses that make up the Yaksa village across the valley, and the pass you came over yesterday. About 2 hours of gradual climbing and you will cross the tree line, entering another valley. The pass is a 1 hour climb from here. From the pass Thongbu La (4550m / 14929ft), you can see the yak herders grazing grounds of Thombu, our camp. On a clear day, you can even see some houses in Tibet. (B, L, D)

Day 09: Trek Thombu to Shana Zampa (13 kms; 4 to 5 hrs)

This morning we climb out of the valley to a crest at 4360m / 14301ft, and then make a steep descent down the ridge to the heli-pad at Gunyitsawa (2730m / 8954ft). We cross the river and go upstream to camp at the same place as our first night of the trek (B, L, D)

Day 10: Trek Shana Zampa to Thimphu (2350m / 7310ft; Drive - 4 hrs.)

We trek down to Drukgyel Dzong; Paro. From here we drive down to Thimphu.(B, L, D)

Day 11: Thimphu sightseeing

After breakfast, visit the National Memorial Chorten built in memory of the late King in 1974. Visit the 15th century Changangkha temple, Takin (National Animal) sanctuary and the viewpoint of Thimphu city. On the way back to the town, visit the Zilukha Nunnery and Dechen Phodrang Monastic School. Lunch in the town. After lunch, visit National Library where ancient manuscripts are preserved, School of Arts & Crafts, Government Handicrafts Emporium. In the evening visit the Tashichodzong – the main Secretariat building. Evening transfer to Paro. Overnight stay in a hotel. (B, L, D)

Day 12: Paro – Departure

Transfer to the airport for the flight to the onward destination (B)

Tour Ends...

Cost per Person (Ex Paro):

Particulars	UAE Dirhams	US Dollars
Tour Cost	AED 8150	US\$ 2200
Single Supplement	AED 225	US\$ 60

Cost Includes:

Accommodation:

Accommodation in good hotels on twin sharing / AP basis (All meals included)

07 nights / 08 days trekking arrangement including all meals and accommodations in small camping tents.

Travel:

Arrival / Departure transfers & sightseeing in a deluxe vehicle / coach

Others

One tour representative

Trek permits as required

Royalties to the Government & tourism development fees

Monument visit fees

Costs Excludes:

International Airfare

Govt. Service Tax as applicable

Visa Fees

Items of a personal nature such as bar bills, telephone calls, laundry, extra mileage and any extra costs incurred due to natural calamities, flight delays etc.

Tips to the porters, guide, etc.

Personal insurance, evacuation and medical expenses.

Items not specified in "Cost Includes".

Special Notes:

It is important to purchase a comprehensive insurance policy against illness, hospitalization, flight delays, cancellations and amendments due to weather conditions, political disturbances or natural calamities as well as emergency helicopter evacuation etc.

Delays are expected on account of roadblock & weather conditions. Our effort will be to continue with the trip as per the schedule & make you as comfortable as possible. But in such situations we may have to compromise on the campsite / hotels & adjust to these situations then & there.

The itinerary should be viewed as ideal & we may have to make some spot changes due to various reasons.

The distances & altitude mentioned in the above itinerary are to the best of our knowledge & information; marginal variance in the actual distances & altitudes is possible.

Prices subject to change.

General Information:

Our effort is to give a clear idea about various aspects of the trip to avoid any misunderstanding during the tour. We request you to please read all the information given herewith carefully.

Accommodation:

In cities: Accommodation will be on twin sharing basis in good hotels / AP basis (All meals included)

On the trek: Accommodation will be in small camping tents on twin / triple sharing basis.

Food:

A typical menu on the trek will be as follows,

Breakfast: Cornflakes or porridge with milk / Juice / Butter toast / tea or coffee

Lunch: Noodles, Cheese Momo with pickles

Dinner: Red rice, vegetable curry, vegetable chowmein, vegetable pokara.

Travel:

All transfers & travel arrangements in Bhutan will be in non-AC small deluxe vehicles or non-AC deluxe mini coach.

Please note that only Druk Airways has flights to Paro from New Delhi, Kolkata, Katmandu & Bangkok. For further details please visit: <http://www.drukair.com.bt/summer.htm>

On The Trek:**Equipment:**

Duffel Bag, small backpack & cap will be provided complimentary.

All camping equipment like carry mats, tents, will be provided by us. Sleeping bags will be provided by us on a returnable basis. But if you prefer, you can bring your own sleeping bags for hygiene purpose.

Besides camping tents there will be a separate kitchen tent. A dining tent will be provided for a group of 4 persons and above.

Dry toilet tents will be put up.

Luggage & Porters:

Porters / Mules will carry all personal luggage up to a maximum of 15 kgs. Members will carry only a small rucksack while walking. Please ensure that your rucksack has sturdy straps.

If a client wishes to hire a porter so that he can walk along with the guest, then an extra porter can be arranged on the spot for which the client must make the extra payment.

Tour Escort:

For smaller group sizes our tour escorts are locals with good experience in leading trekking & other trips. Most of these escorts are good at communicating in English. For group size of 12 & above, another equally experienced tour escort accompanies the group.

Average Temperature Chart:

Average Temperatures in Celsius Degree (High / Low)		
	Paro	Thimphu
April	17.6 / 4.6	20.0 / 7.1
May	23.5 / 10.6	22.5 / 13.1
Oct	18.7 / 7.4	21.9 / 10.4
Nov	13.9 / 1.4	17.9 / 5.0

Comments:

The temperatures on the trek especially at higher altitudes can drop as low as sub zero. Generally **April to May and October to November are the best times to visit** – rainfall is at a minimum and temperatures are conducive to active days of sightseeing.

Medical & First Aid:

This tour takes us through remote regions where professional medical help may not be available. We carry with us a comprehensive medical first-aid kit advised by a doctor and our main leaders, though not qualified medically, are all competent to give first-aid if and when required. It would be advisable to speak to your group escort in case of any health problems that you may face on the tour.

Insurance:

Any kind of insurance on luggage, accident, life or other allied matters is not provided for by us. Clients coming on our trips will have to make their own arrangements for the same.

Booking:

The tour booking will be confirmed only upon receipt of: Non Refundable amount of 20% of tour cost, in addition to the charges such as air, rail fares, etc along with completed personal information form.

Balance 80% of the tour cost to be paid 45 days prior to departure.

(The trip will be considered confirmed only if there is no default in the above payment procedure.)

Cancellation by You:

In the event of any cancellation by you, the initial deposit amount paid, shall stand forfeited and further cancellation shall be levied as per the following terms:

46 days before date of departure: 20% of tour cost + Air / Rail cancellation charges

45 to 31 days before date of departure: 50% of tour cost + Air / Rail cancellation charges

30 to 15 days before date of departure: 80% of tour cost + Air / Rail cancellation charges

15 to 0 days before date of departure: 100% of tour cost + Air / Rail cancellation charges (*Will be considered as no show*)

Cancellation by Us:

We reserve the right to cancel a tour if the minimum number of persons as specified, do not book on the tour. We reserve the right to refuse or cancel any booking if we consider it necessary. In such cases, we shall refund all the money that you have paid.

If cancellation or alteration by us is caused by events including war or threat of war, strikes, civil strife, natural disaster, technical or political difficulties affecting air or ground transport, or events amounting to *force majeure*, this will naturally limit our liability. If such events occur before the departure date, we will do our best to make alternative arrangements.

Terms of Payment:

Payment to be made either in cash or by cheque / DD in favour of "Absolute Adventure" payable in Dubai. Payment can also be made directly to our NBD Bank account number 01-51-54358-4.

(In case of any direct deposits made, we would request you to keep us informed either by phone or email. The bookings will be confirmed only on issue of receipt)

Kit List

1. Duffel Bag / Kit bag
2. Minimum 60 - 70 litre backpack - For backpacking treks
3. Small backpack with sturdy straps
4. Proper trekking shoes with spare laces – please ensure that they are well broken in before the trek
5. Slippers / Sports sandals / Floaters **[For walking around at campsites]**
6. Sun Cap *(Complimentary)*
7. Small towel or scarf to use underneath cap to shield ears
8. A pair of walking poles **[A must have]**
9. 4 pairs liner socks, 2 pairs woolen socks **[wear two pairs of socks while walking to avoid blisters]**
10. For trek- 2-3 pairs of trousers, 3 shirts **[Avoid jeans or any other tight fitting pants]**
11. Full sleeved thick woolen sweater / fleece jacket
12. Thermal base layers **[Essential for the entire trek]**
13. Woolen or fleece cap / Balaclava
14. Wind cheater / Wind Breaker
15. Poncho
16. Woolen or fleece gloves
17. Sunglasses **[Good quality, 100%-uv-protection lens, not blue shade]**
18. Cold cream / Hand lotion, sunscreen
19. Chapstick or Lip Balm
20. Torch with 2 extra sets of cells **[No pencil cell torch, Head lamp is best]**
21. Light towel **[Should be a thin quick-drying towel]**
22. Water bottle (1 liter) or hydration bladder **[Avoid simple plastic bottles, one hard plastic bottle is recommended for boiled water at higher camps]**
23. Adequate underclothing
24. Air Pillow
25. Personal toilet kit, toilet paper
26. Water proofs
27. Personal medicines (with written instructions), assorted antiseptic plaster / blister kit / friction free tapes
28. Plastic bags to contain all the above, plus a few spare ones **[Ziplocs are ideal– get lots of them]**
29. Water purifying tablets

Important Travel Information for Bhutan:

Religion:

Mahayana Buddhism is the state religion; the majority of Bhutanese people follow the Drukpa school of the Kagyupa sect. Those living in the south are mainly Hindu.

Language:

Dzongkha is the official language. A large number of dialects are spoken, owing to the physical isolation of many villages. Shar chop Kha, from eastern Bhutan, is the most widely spoken. Nepali is common in the south of the country. English has been the language of educational instruction since 1964 and is widely spoken.

Food & Drink:

Restaurants are relatively scarce and most tourists eat in their hotels. Meals are often buffet-style and mostly vegetarian. Cheese is a very popular ingredient in dishes and the most popular cheeses are *dartsi* (cow's milk cheese), sometimes served in a dish with red chilies (*ema dartsi*), and yak cheese. Rice is ubiquitous, sometimes flavored with saffron. The most popular drink is *souza* (Bhutanese tea).

Visa & Documentation:

Indian Nationals entering Bhutan by air should produce Passport or Voters Identity Card at the Immigration Center at Paro airport for getting entry permit.

Please carry at least 6 copies of passport size photographs while traveling in Bhutan.

For US passport holders:

U.S. Passport must be valid 3 months beyond intended stay

Tickets and Documents for return or onward travel

Visa must be applied minimum of 30 days before travel. All visas must be approved by Bhutan Foreign Ministry, from where a clearance number will be issued.

A visa application form must be mailed, along with four copies of original passport size photographs. The actual visa is stamped on arrival in Bhutan while visa is cleared in advance and a visa clearance number issued.

For all travelers, entering Bhutan by Druk Air, the visa clearance number is forwarded to concerned overseas Druk Air stations and without the Clearance Number; passengers are not allowed to board the flight. Visa Clearance Number is also required while issuing Druk Air tickets.

For all travelers, entering into the country by surface through Phuntsholing (the border town south of Bhutan), the visa is stamped on arrival and Clearance Number is forwarded to Foreign Ministry's office for references and record.

Visa fee is US\$ 20.00 per person for 14 days visa, which can be further extended with additional fee of US\$ 15.00. Visa fee is payable on arrival in cash

Vaccinations:

International Certificates of Vaccination for Yellow Fever and Cholera are required if traveling from an infected area

Time:

Bhutan local time is GMT + 06:00 hrs

Currency:

Bhutan unit of currency is the Ngultrum. 1 Ngultrum (NU) = 100 Chetrum (Ch)

Approx. 1 \$ = Nu. 42 (US Dollars are also widely accepted throughout the kingdom.)

The Ngultrum is pegged to the value of Indian Rupee. (Which is also accepted as legal tender).

Credit & debit cards:

American Express and Diners Club have very limited acceptability. Check with your credit, or debit, card company for details of merchant acceptability and other services, which may be available.