

The Snowman Trek

Trip Code: BST

Version: BST The Snowman Trek Snowman Trek - The Classic Trek



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



TOUGH



HIGHLIGHTS

- Take on the full Snowman Trek, from Shana to Trongsa through the Himalaya
- Traverse Laya and Lunana across 11 high passes, up to an altitude of 5300 metres
- Each year only a handful of trekking groups complete this world-class circuit
- Explore Kathmandu and Paro, and visit the Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) Monastery
- The later of this year's departures coincides with the Chomolhari Festival

AT A GLANCE

- 25 days trekking
- 5 days touring and sightseeing
- Max altitude - 5300 metres
- Join at Kathmandu

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- All meals included
- 23 nights Camping
- 6 nights Hotel

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

Quite possibly the greatest trail on Earth, Bhutan's incredible Snowman Trek traverses west to east beneath the chain of Himalayan peaks that form the border between Bhutan and Tibet. Starting out from Paro, this challenging 25 day trek crosses five 5000 metre passes and leads through the 'shangri-la' region of Lunana, one of the most isolated inhabited valleys on the planet. Along the way we'll journey through traditional villages, like Laya and have close-up views of stunning mountains, including Chomolhari, the astounding Jitchu Drake and the world's highest unclimbed peak, Gangkar Puensum. We'll also have time to absorb some of the unique culture of this special Himalayan Kingdom, with visits to the spectacular cliff-face Taktsang 'Tiger's Nest' Monastery and the picturesque Punakha Dzong. Not for novices, this tough trek is the holy grail for seasoned Himalayan trekkers.

The later departure in 2024 (BST.1) coincides with the 2-day Chomolhari Festival at Jangothang.

BOOK EARLY for BHUTAN! With only two airlines operating flights into Paro from Kathmandu, seats are limited and in high demand. Book early to guarantee your place on your chosen departure.

Is this holiday for you?

The Snowman Trek is widely regarded as one of the hardest treks in the world. This is due to its length, altitude, and the fact that 11 high passes must be crossed. The itinerary is paced to suit experienced trekkers looking for a very challenging trip. For a continuous period of almost 2 weeks we will be camping above 4000 metres and trekking for, on average, 7-8 hours a day. Prior experience of high altitude trekking is essential. The route follows a trail throughout and, though there is no scrambling or glaciers to cross, there are some rugged sections where extra care needs to be taken. You should also be prepared for variable weather and cold temperatures. Due to the remote nature of this trek a degree of flexibility with regard the itinerary is needed as the route may need to be adapted if conditions intervene.

These challenges should be judged as positive attractions to someone looking for the ultimate trekking adventure.

Itinerary

Version: BST The Snowman Trek Snowman Trek - The Classic Trek

DAY 1

Arrive Kathmandu. Transfers from Kathmandu Airport to the group hotel are provided.

The holiday starts at the group hotel in Kathmandu. Transfers from Kathmandu Airport are provided. The rest of the day is free to relax or for independent sightseeing. We have also arranged for dinner in the hotel tonight, which you can take at your own leisure.

Meals: **D**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 2

Fly to Paro in the Kingdom of Bhutan. Meet our Tour Leader and transfer to hotel.

The group will meet in the lobby of the hotel. We transfer together back to airport in time to check in for the flight to Paro.

The flight from Kathmandu to Bhutan is one of the most spectacular of all mountain flights. From the left side of the plane Everest, Makalu and Kangchenjunga, three of the world's highest mountains, are clearly visible. The total flying time is only 45 minutes and soon we are descending into the Paro Valley, enjoying the splendid views of alpine forests, small monasteries, temples and flat-roofed farmhouses. On arrival we will be met by our Tour Leader who will accompany us to the hotel.

If the flight to Paro is in the morning, there may be time today to visit the National Museum housed in an ancient watchtower, high above the Paro Valley overlooking the Dzong.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 3

Hike to the Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) Monastery (3120m)

This morning we hike up to one of the most important religious site in the entire Himalaya, the Tiger's Nest. The monastery has a most stunning location, perched on the ledge of a cliff 700 metres above the Paro Valley, and is only accessible on foot. Not just a cultural experience, this hike up to over 3000 metres will provide excellent acclimatisation ahead of our trek.

Around half way up the trail there is a classic viewpoint, looking across the gorge to the monastic buildings clinging to the cliff wall opposite. There is a small teahouse here where we can stop for a rest with a truly unforgettable view.

The final approach to the monastery takes us down to a sacred waterfall, surrounded by a thousand fluttering prayer flags, where every crack in the rock is crammed with tsa-tsas (small caskets containing the ashes of the dead), before climbing back up towards the monastery. If we are lucky we will be allowed inside to look at some of the chambers and altar rooms.

We return to Paro in the afternoon. Tonight we will want to repack our bags ready for beginning our trek in the morning. You may leave some items you won't need on the trek at the hotel.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 1000M		Descent 1000M		Time 5 hrs trekking		Distance 8KM
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DAY 4

Drive to Shana (2880m) to begin our trek. Hike to Thongbu Samba (3100m)

From Paro we drive west for (30 mins) to the end of the surfaced road at the ruins of Drugyel Dzong (2530m). From here, we continue following a farm road for around 1 -1.5 hours, passing through small hamlets of houses built in traditional Bhutanese design. Arriving at Shana (2880m), we will be happy to stretch our legs. While our bags are loaded on the ponies, we will set off following a path beside the river before climbing to our first night's camp at Thongbu Samba (3100m).

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 390M		Descent 170M		Time 2 - 3 hrs trekking		Distance 7KM
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DAY 5

Trek to Soi Thangka (3600m).

We gain height slowly as we continue along the river through a mixed forest. The autumn colours of the leaves contrast with the Pale Spanish moss (old man's beard). After rain, the trail can be muddy and there

will possibly be slippery rocks to contend with. Our crew will be on hand to assist. The trail undulates as we make our way north and after crossing a bridge at 3560 metres, we make a short steep climb to reach a junction of two valleys, marked by a chorten. From near here, weather permitting, we can see Chomolhari at the head of the valley. Our trail stays on the west bank of the Paro Chu and our next camp at Soi Thangka is only a half an hour's walk away.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 770M		Descent 270M		Time 5 - 6 hrs trekking		Distance 11KM
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DAY 6

Trek to Jangothang (4100m) - Chomolhari Basecamp.

We continue our trek today on the cow herder's trail up to the small hamlet of Jumphu. From here, we re-join the main trekking trail to today's camp at Jangothang (Chomolhari Basecamp). We have lunch in a meadow at Tikithang, from where it is another hour until camp. Our camp tonight is next to a ruined dzong (4100m) beneath the huge east face of Chomolhari.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 560M		Descent 60M		Time 6 hrs trekking		Distance 13KM
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DAY 7

Acclimatisation walk to the Tshophu Lakes. Overnight at Jangothang (4100m).

We will spend a further 2 nights at Jangothang as an important part of our acclimatisation. Today, we'll take the opportunity to hike up to the twin lakes at Tshophu, a great place from which to look back at the peaks on Bhutan's northern border with Tibet including the striking Jitchu Drake. Green grass, grazing yaks, stunning mountain scenery - it doesn't come much better than this. The trail ascends into a valley running towards the south-east and it will take a couple of hours to reach the lakes. We drop back to our camp at Jangothang for a late lunch and a restful afternoon.

BST.01.24 will have the opportunity to visit the Chomolhari Festival today.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 430M		Descent 430M		Time 4 - 5 hrs trekking		Distance 11KM
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DAY 8**Rest day at Jangothang.**

Today is a scheduled rest day, intended to aid everyone's acclimatisation before we cross the Nyele La (4850m). There are further options for exploration from camp including the hike up the ridge behind the ruined dzong to a grassy summit at approximately 4500 metres, from where there is an incredible close-up view of Chomolhari. For a spectacular view of Jitchu Drake closer to camp (even better at sunrise if you can get up sufficiently early), follow the river for 20 minutes to a lone house and here the mountain is presented before you. We spend a third night at Jangothang.

BST.01.24 will have the opportunity to visit the Chomolhari Festival today.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Camping

DAY 9**Cross the Nyele La (4850m) to Lingshi and descend to camp (4010m).**

Today we must cross the Nyele La (4850m) to reach Lingshi. We follow the river for a while, before crossing it on a bridge. From here the path climbs steeply at first, the trail offers fine views toward Chomolhari and Jitchu Drake. We are now near the Tibetan Border as we make our way along a broad hanging valley to the final steep slopes leading to the Nyele La, which is adorned with prayer flags. From the pass, we descend, steeply at first, to follow a ridge before finally dropping through forests of rhododendron and pine to our camp beside the river.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Camping



Ascent
860M



Descent
950M



Time
7 - 8 hrs trekking



Distance
15KM

DAY 10**Trek to Chebisa (3880m) via Gang Yul.**

After breakfast, we climb up to Lingshi Dzong. From here, our path contours the hillside. There are views across the valley to the Basingthang Peaks and we can watch kestrels hovering above the ridges. After a couple of hours the path turns a corner and there is a view of Tserim Gang, before we descend to Gang Yul (meaning 'village at the pass'). Home to about 150 people, living in a dozen or so beautifully designed houses, this village offers great photo opportunities. The village sits beneath limestone cliffs and is dwarfed by the east face of Jitchu Drake. Leaving the village, the path continues along the hillside to Chebisa, a picturesque valley of pastures and shingle roofed stone houses. It is here that the blue sheep

(or bharal) come to graze during summer. We will make camp here for the night at 3860 metres.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 560M		Descent 710M		Time 6 hrs trekking		Distance 12KM
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DAY 11

Cross the Gombu La (4420m) to Somothang (4220m).

From Chebisa we follow an undulating trail up to the Gombu La (4420m). The views back to Lingshi and the surrounding peaks are spectacular. Hill partridges have been seen here and it is common to spot lbearded vultures (ammergeier) soaring above the alpine pastures. From the pass we descend through a forest of cypress, spruce, and rhododendron to reach our camp at Somothang (4220m). We will most likely camp beside the river, but we may also decide hike up the valley for a further hour to make tomorrow's hike a little easier.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 1100M		Descent 740M		Time 7 - 8 hrs trekking		Distance 14KM
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DAY 12

Cross the Jare La (4760m) to Robluthang (4160m)

We start early for the climb up to the Jare La (4760m). There are great views of the 7000 metre Tiger Mountain (Gangchen Tagg) from the pass. We should be able to look over to tomorrow's objective, the Shinge La, which is the lowest point of the horizon opposite. As we descend through more pine forest we keep a look out for takin, the national animal of Bhutan, which are quite common in this part of Bhutan. The scenery on this day's walk inspired Victor Saunders, one of Britain's most travelled Himalayan climbers, to comment that this was the best walking he'd ever done! We cross a river and camp in a very scenic position, just a short walk up the hillside, at Robluthang (4160m).

Meals: **B L D**






	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 720M		Descent 780M		Time 6 hrs trekking		Distance 10KM
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DAY 13

Cross the Shinge La (5000m) to Limithang (4120m).

We follow a yak trail above the camp for around 2 hours until we reach a beautiful hanging valley with a lone yak herders hut. The path takes the left side of the valley and soon the Shinge La (5000m) is visible. The final climb is quite strenuous, but save some energy to place a small stone on one of the four cairns that mark the end of the climbing. This pass marks the boundary of the Laya District. Our descent follows an obvious path into the centre of the valley, to a clearing by a huge rock. We continue descending until we see a bank of moraine, which is holding back a very picturesque lake. The backdrop to this beautiful valley is Kang Che Da, the Great Tiger Mountain. We camp a short way down the valley at Limithang (4120m), in a meadow by the river.

Meals: **B L D**



	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 900M		Descent 940M		Time 7 - 8 hrs trekking		Distance 15KM
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DAY 14

Arrive into Laya (3800m).

A beautiful morning's walk today through a bird spotter's paradise. Although shorter than some of the days so far, there is quite a lot of up and down. We cross a bridge and follow the left bank of the river on an undulating trail through a forest of spruce and juniper. As we descend we start to see Spanish moss once again hanging from the trees. The path then climbs above the river and soon we see the first houses on the outskirts of Laya (3800m). The people of Laya are very welcoming and present a striking picture, with their pointed hats, hair covered in mustard oil and highly decorative jewellery. We aim to arrive in time for lunch and have the afternoon free to look around the village and visit the monastery. We set up camp on one of the village fields. In the autumn the fields have been harvested and finding a camping place is easy.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 400M		Descent 720M		Time 4 - 5 hrs trekking		Distance 11KM
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DAY 15

Rest day in Laya village.

A well earned rest day. This is also a good time to catch up on laundry, diary writing etc. There are opportunities for walks around the village for those who simply have to exercise!

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Camping

DAY 16

Trek to Rodophu (4215m).

We follow the main path through the village, which descends to the lowest house, passes through a large entrance chorten and drops down to the river. During the monsoon, from June to September, this valley receives a great deal of rainfall. As a result, the forest is particularly lush and impressive. We pass by an army camp and continue on a trail alongside the Mo Chu to a small turn off to Rodophu. From here, the ascent is gentle, through mixed shrub and coniferous forest by the side of a tributary of the Mo Chu. There are many alpine flowers, including scabious, miniature michaelmas daisy, celandine and wild roses. We continue to the traditional camping place at Rodophu (4215m), a single yak herder's hut just above the tree line.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Camping



Ascent
1250M



Descent
835M



Time
8 - 9 hrs trekking



Distance
17KM

DAY 17

Across the Tsome La (4900m) to Narethang (4940m).

We make a steady climb to the Tsome La (4900m.) where we enjoy superb views of Chomolhari and Jichu Drake, and across to Lunana and the peaks of the Tibetan border. Our route now crosses a high barren plateau to a campsite at Narethang (4940m) situated between the Tsome La and Karakachu La. This is quite a high camp at this stage of our trek but it is the only site available before crossing the Karakachu La and we will be descending again tomorrow. Our camp is facing the great Gangla Karchu whose glacial lake is also visible from here.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Camping



Ascent
920M



Descent
200M



Time
7 - 8 hrs trekking



Distance
12KM

DAY 18

Cross the Karakachu La (5080m) to Tarina (3940m).

Setting off once more across the high plateau we walk below the spectacular peak of Gangla Karchung

(6395m) before making a short, steep climb to the summit of the Karakachu La (5080m) where we find simply stunning views to the north. A whole group of unclimbed 7000 metre mountains, including Masakang, the Tshendayang Group and Teri Gang, provides one of the finest mountain panoramas in Bhutan. What makes it even more special is the fact that only a relative handful of visitors have seen it! There is still a long descent into the Tarina Valley, but the scenery is breathtaking, as we enter a huge lost valley, totally devoid of population. Our camp-site is by the river at a place known as Tarina (3940m). After last night's high camp the air down here will feel positively rich!

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 375M		Descent 1375M		Time 8 - 9 hrs trekking		Distance 18KM
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DAY 19

Trek to Green Lake (4440m) via Woche Village (3940m).

We wake up in one of the most beautiful valleys in Bhutan; snowy mountains, virgin forest, and clear mountain streams - it doesn't come much better. We follow the river down for a couple of hours before climbing up to Woche (3940m), the first village of Lunana. Woche is a small settlement of about 25 stone houses. This part of Bhutan rarely receives visitors from outside of the country and the villagers are always happy to welcome guests who have travelled from so far. From Woche, we have a steady ascent to Domchuthang, from where an hour's steep climb brings us to our campsite by the side of Green Lake (4440m).

Meals: **B L D**



	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 1000M		Descent 500M		Time 7 - 8 hrs trekking		Distance 14KM
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DAY 20

Cross Kechu La (4670m) and trek to Chozo (4070m)

Our first objective is the Kechu La (4670m), a 1 to 2 hour climb from camp to the pass. We make a steep descent to Threkha (3900m) a village of around 20 scattered houses with views of the enormous 'Table Mountain' Zongphu Gang (7100m). We descend for a further half an hour and then embark on a gentle climb to reach Lhedi (3800m) where we will stop for lunch. In the afternoon, we follow a trail along the river-bed, walking up through moraine created during the 1994 glacial outburst from the Lugge Tsho and Tshopdak Tsho. We are now in the very heart of Lunana, so isolated from the rest of Bhutan that very few people speak Dzongkha, the country's main language. We set up camp near the village of Chozo (4070m). At Chozo there will be a hand over from yaks/horses provided by our friends from Laya, to a new team from Lunana.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 800M		Descent 1170M		Time 8 - 9 hrs trekking		Distance 21KM
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DAY 21

A rest day at Chozo.

If everything has gone to schedule, we plan to have a rest day at Chozo, as there is plenty of scope for photography and exploration. A walk up to ridge above the village provides a view of Table Mountain, Kangphu Gang, Norbu gang and Jeje Kangphu (7300m).

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping
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DAY 22

Across the Sinthey La (5200m) to Tsochena (4940m).

With fresh legs after a day's rest, we trek beside the Lunana River to the base of the Sinthey La. From there we have a steep ascent of around 1000 metres to reach the top of the pass. As we climb the slope, which is covered in dwarf rhododendron we will want to pause to look back at the whole vista of the Lunana Valley, including the villages of Thanza, Chozo and Tencho. As we approach the Sinthey La the grazing yaks in the valley below appear as tiny dots. If you missed the earlier views of the table mountain (Singye Gang), Kangphu Gang or Jeje Kangphu, today's trail offers another chance to see these majestic mountains. From the Sinthey La (5200m), the trail descends offering views of two small azure blue lakes, one above the other. The nomads have named the lakes Tshokaynya (lakes resembling fishes). We camp on the shores of the larger lake at 4940 metres.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 1170M		Descent 300M		Time 8 - 9 hrs trekking		Distance 14KM
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DAY 23

Trek over the Loju La (5140m) to Jichu Dramo (5050m).

We follow the shoreline of the blue-green lake of Tsochena before making a gentle ascent to a ridge at 5100 metres where there is another spectacular panorama. After going up and down over several small hills we reach a glacial lake and the route now descends briefly before climbing again up to the next

pass, the Loju La (5140m). Finally, after crossing a small saddle we enter a wide glacial valley from where the trail descends to the campsite at Jichu Dramo (5050m.).

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 410M		Descent 300M		Time 6 hrs trekking		Distance 11KM
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DAY 24

Cross the Rinchen Zoe La (5320m) to Chukarpo (4600m).

After leaving camp we climb through ancient moraine to the crest of the Rinchen Zoe La (5320m), the highest pass of our trek. We are once more rewarded by spectacular mountain scenery with an impressive array of Himalayan peaks. Closer to hand, Rinchen Zoe Peak (5650m.) rises above the pass to the west. Descending from the pass, our route now leads into a wide valley with several lakes and descends along a moraine to the Tampe Chu. Here the vegetation begins to thicken again and we see our first real trees since Lhedi. After a couple more hours we reach our overnight camp at Chukarpo (4600m.).

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 370M		Descent 820M		Time 9 hrs trekking		Distance 20KM
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DAY 25

Trek to Tampe Tsho (4300m).

We continue our descent, following the Tampe Chu to a meadow and yak herder huts at Gala Pang Chhu (4010m). This area is home to blood pheasant, Himalayan monal and Himalayan black bear. This is subalpine zone with good cover of forest of conifer and hemlock. From here, we climb steeply to Tampe Tsho, a beautiful clear turquoise lake where we make camp (4300m).

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 550M		Descent 850M		Time 6 hrs trekking		Distance 12KM
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DAY 26

Cross the Tampe La (4600m) to Maurothang (3610m).

From the lake we climb directly up to the final pass of the trek, the Thampe La (4600m). This is an area inhabited by blue sheep and we may well spot some of this rare breed of mountain goat. After taking in the splendid views, much softened now as we look south across the foothills, we descend to the sacred lake known as Om Thso. It is forbidden to throw stones (or anything else) into the lake and we pass it quietly and reverently. Beyond the lake we walk beside a waterfall and stream that feeds a second smaller lake. We end the day with a descent of steep ground through mixed forest to a camp known as Maurothang (3610m) on the banks of the Nikka Chu.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 410M		Descent 1100M		Time 6 hrs trekking		Distance 13KM
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DAY 27

Last day of trekking to Sephu (2870m) and transfer to Gangtey.

During our final day of trekking we need to transfer our baggage from yaks to horses as we will now be dropping down below 3000 metres and yaks do not appreciate being taken this low! The trail follows the river to reach a large grassy area overlooking the road and the village of Sephu (2870m). We finally reach the road at the Nikka Chu Bridge at Sephu where there are several stores. This is where our vehicle will be waiting for us and after saying goodbye to our team we climb aboard for a drive for approximately one hour across the Pele La to Gangtey in the Phobjikha Valley. Here we check into our hotel and enjoy the luxury of a shower and a real bed!

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 250M		Descent 990M		Time 5 hrs trekking		Distance 15KM
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DAY 28

Drive via Punakha Dzong to Thimphu.

Returning to the main east-west highway, we drive through the picturesque town of Wangdi situated below another imposing dzong. There is also an opportunity to visit Punakha. It is well worth spending some time looking around the magnificent dzong, which was built in 1637. Lying at the junction of the Mo (mother) Chu and the Po (father) Chu, the Dzong is the winter home of over 1000 monks. Back on the main road, we cross the final pass in this spectacular cross Bhutan road journey, the Dochu La and then its downhill all the way to Thimphu. We check into our hotel and there will be time for some souvenir buying before a celebratory evening meal.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 29

Fly to Kathmandu. Afternoon free for independent sightseeing.

We transfer to Paro Airport for the flight to Kathmandu. The flight takes only 45 minutes and on arrival we transfer to our comfortable hotel. The remainder of the day is free to explore the city or for shopping in the bazaars. An evening meal is included at the hotel, for those that wish to dine together, or you are free to head out into Thamel independently to a restaurant of your choice.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 30

Departure day. Transfers to Kathmandu Airport are provided.

The holiday ends after breakfast. Transfers to Kathmandu airport are provided. If you would like to spend more time exploring Nepal, why not pre-book a full day-tour of the Kathmandu Valley, or a multi-day excursion to a wildlife reserve in Chitwan National Park. Contact the KE Team for more details.

Meals: **B**

Extensions

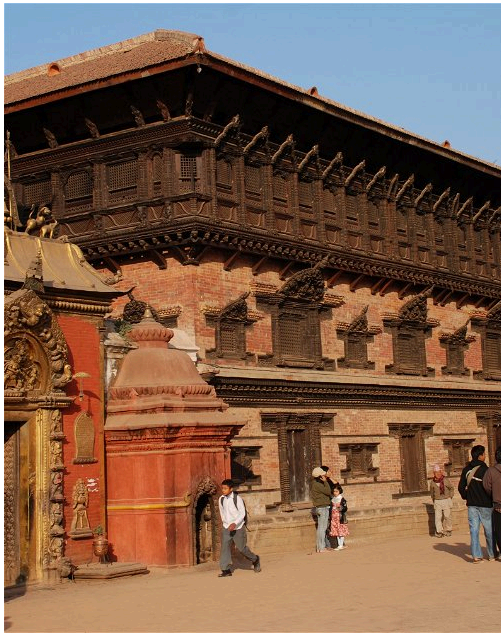
When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.



Chitwan Jungle Extension

The jungles of southern Nepal are an interesting counterpoint to trekking in the foothills or the high Himalaya. Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge provides a relaxing and comfortable base for a wildlife safari and cultural village experience. During two days of wildlife viewing in the Chitwan National Park 'buffer zone' - the interface area between visitors and the animals that live at Chitwan - you will be accompanied by expert guides on safaris by jeep by boat and on foot.

3 days from
US\$1,545 per person



Kathmandu Tour - Nagarkot and Bhaktapur

The Kathmandu Valley contains the cities of Patan, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu itself, all of which were once independent kingdoms. An exploration of the valley's historic and cultural sights is an excellent way to begin or end your adventure in Nepal. Highlights of this tour includes a very early drive up to Nagarkot on the Kathmandu Valley rim, the perfect place to watch a Himalayan sunrise. This is followed by a tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bhaktapur, renowned for its temples and traditional buildings.

1 day from
US\$175 per person

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader plus support crew
- Bhutan visa fee
- Flights between Kathmandu and Paro
- All transfers and land transport involved in the itinerary
- All accommodation as described
- All meals
- Full service camping on trek including all camping equipment
- 'Thermarest' inflatable camping mats whilst camping
- FREE Sleeping bag and down jacket hire is available for this holiday on request

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Nepalese visa costs
- Tips for drivers and trek staff
- Miscellaneous expenses - beer and souvenirs etc

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The holiday starts at the group hotel in Kathmandu.

Airport transfers are provided for all clients arriving Kathmandu on Day 1 and departing on the last day of the Land Only itinerary and all clients with additional nights booked through KE.

Hotel contact details and an emergency telephone number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All meals are included in the holiday price.

Food & Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

The Bhutanese love chillies; red, green, raw, cooked and flavouring their condiments – fans of spicy food will be in their element in Bhutan! Don't panic if spicy food is not for you, all the hotels and restaurants in Thimpu and Paro offer a range of delicious dishes suitable for all tastes. Breakfasts whilst in hotels will consist of choice of cereal or muesli, eggs, toast, beans, sausage or bacon with tea, coffee and juices.

You can expect to be fed very well during the trekking section of your holiday. Our trekking chefs are old hands at managing camps and meals whilst in the mountains. A senior trek cook and camp manager must have a minimum of five years of training and experience to qualify for the post! Our cooks have undergone training both on Bhutanese and continental dishes and can be expected to serve a wide variety of delicious food on trek. Breakfast and dinner will be taken at the camp sites, whilst lunches will generally be carried on ponies and served mid-way on the trekking route for the day. Tea and hot drinks will be provided at mealtimes and you will also usually get a wakeup call from the camp crew with a nice cup of hot *Chai*! Whilst on trek drinking water will be purified by boiling and will be provided regularly. We recommend that you bring along a few of your favourite snacks to eat on the trail as depending on the day's requirements, there may be several hours between breakfast and lunch.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Accommodation

This holiday includes 2 nights in Kathmandu, one en route to Bhutan and one on the return journey. In Kathmandu we use a comfortable, centrally located hotel. In Bhutan, we will also use comfortable and well-located hotels throughout.

Whilst on trek there are 23 nights full service camping where you will enjoy a full-service from our friendly camp team. You will sleep in hardy 2 man dome tents and inflatable Thermarest mattresses are provided.

All the camp equipment and luggage will be transported between camps by ponies or yaks, you need only carry your day pack. Our team will erect and dismantle the tents for you, cook, and take care of all the camp chores.

During walking days, having stayed behind to collapse camp, it is usual for the team and the pack animals to overtake us during the day and we will usually arrive into camp to find it already established, with our personal bags already placed into our pre-assigned tents and the kettle on!

In camp, as well as the tents used for sleeping, there will also be a mess tent, with chairs and tables, where the group will dine (and socialise into the evening), a toilet tent and even a shower tent where hot water can be provided for you to wash with. Hot water in bowls for washing will also be provided to you in the mornings and when you arrive at the camp each day. On cold nights, we'll even provide hot water bags/bottles when it is time for you to retreat to your tents for the evening.

All accommodation is on a twin share basis. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired with another single traveller of the same sex. Single rooms and/or single tents are available for a supplementary cost. If you are planning to extend your holiday, additional nights in Kathmandu are available on request.

Internal flights

Flights to Bhutan

It is possible to fly to Bhutan from Kathmandu, Delhi, Bangkok and Singapore, as well as from Dhaka and several regional airports in India. Our preferred port of transit for this holiday is Kathmandu, which has daily flights to Paro and a good tourism infrastructure. In addition, Nepal visas are easily obtained on arrival and are relatively inexpensive. Druk Air and Bhutan Airlines are the only airlines operating flights to Bhutan and seats can be limited, particularly around the time of the major festivals. Early booking is essential. It is not always possible to confirm seats immediately and it is not uncommon for passengers to be 'waitlisted' for several weeks until their booking clears. In rare circumstances, it may be necessary to route our groups or individual clients through an alternative airport if waiting lists are not cleared in good time.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be met and escorted in Kathmandu by a local KE representative. Once in Bhutan the group will be accompanied throughout by a professional and qualified tour leader. During the trek the tour leader will be assisted by local guides and a full trek crew including cooks, baggage animals and their handlers.

Altitude

This holiday involves going to very high altitude. During the course of your trip you will be spending at least one night above 4000 metres and/or trekking to 5000 metres or above. This is not something that you should worry about; the human body is quite capable of adapting to a very wide range of altitudes, but it is important that we follow some simple rules in order to acclimatise successfully. Before coming on this holiday you should read the advice on [trekking at high altitude](#). Unless you have previous experience of trekking above 4000 metres you should consult one of our trekking experts before embarking on this holiday. On this trip we carry a portable altitude chamber (PAC-bag) and/or bottled oxygen for use in emergencies.

Spending Money

Approximately £350 (or equivalent in Euros, US dollars etc.) changed into local currency should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses including porter and trek crew tips, drinks, snacks etc. We recommend that you carry your travel money in the form of cash, since you will exchange the majority of this on arrival (into Nepalese rupees in Kathmandu, and into Bhutanese Ngultrum at Paro Airport). Sterling, US Dollars and Euros are equally acceptable for exchange in Nepal and in Bhutan. You can withdraw cash from ATM's in Kathmandu. In Bhutan money can be easily exchanged but you cannot rely on withdrawing money from ATM's.

Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is the accepted way of saying thank you for good service.

As a rough guide we suggest that each group member contributes US\$400 (in local currency equivalent) to a group tipping pool, around \$20 per person of this should go into a kitty for drivers, hotel porters and waiters (you can give this to your tour leader who will make sure it is distributed fairly).

Normally the trek staff (assistant guides, cook, ponymen etc...) are given their tips at the end of the trek. You will usually have two different trek crews during the Snowman Trek, one as far as Laya and another for the trek into Lunana. The tipping pool should be split fairly between the crews. Your Bhutanese tour leader will advise the group on an appropriate level of tipping for each crew and crew member. Most groups will mark the end of their trek by handing out the tips with a bit of a ceremony on the last evening.

A tip for your main Bhutanese tour leader(s) is not included in the above. As a group you may want to make a separate collection to tip your tour leader(s) separately during dinner on your final evening in Bhutan.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage, which should be a soft duffel bag, and a daypack. Your bag on trek will be carried by pack animals and should not weigh more than 15kg. It is possible to leave extra baggage at the hotel in Kathmandu and also in Paro. Baggage left in Paro will meet you at your first hotel post trek. Checked baggage allowance for the flight from Kathmandu to Paro is 30kg. For other international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

Visa Nepal

All nationalities require a visa. The visa process is partly automated and the fee is \$30 for 15 days, \$50 for 30 days, \$125 for 90 days. The visa is FREE for children under 10 years. The visa allows multiple re-entry. Payment must be made in cash and USD, GBP or Euros are accepted.

Part of this on-arrival visa process involves filling in a 'Tourist Visa Application Form' and you can simplify the procedure at Kathmandu Airport by filling this form in online (**within 15 days of travelling**) at [this link](#). This generates a receipt which you present (hard copy or saved on your phone) on arrival. This should allow you to go straight to the cashier to pay for your visa and has the potential to save you time in the visa queue.

Whilst these are not now needed for the visa process, we recommend that you travel with at least 2 spare passport photographs.

If you are travelling via India (Delhi or Calcutta) to your destination you may also require a visa for India. This may apply even if you are not leaving the airport unless your baggage has been checked all the way through to your destination. Generally, if you use the same carrier for both legs of your journey, you will not need an India Visa. Please download the detailed information document: [Visa PDF India](#).

Visa Bhutan

All nationalities require a visa. KE will apply for the visa for you and the visa fee is included in your holiday cost.

Please note that this will be a group visa and will list the names, date of birth and passport details for all members of the group. A copy of this visa will be issued to each member of the group in Kathmandu prior to your check-in for the flight to Paro in Bhutan and your passport will be stamped on arrival in Paro.

We require a copy of the information page of your passport in order to make the arrangements for your Bhutan Visa. A colour scan must be emailed or posted to us at the earliest opportunity.

Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

Dengue fever is a known risk in places visited. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you [take precautions to avoid mosquito bites](#).

Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid.

Malarial prophylaxis is not usually required for trips in the mountains, however if you are visiting rural and remote low lying areas then they might be necessary.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

Currency

The unit of currency in Nepal is the Nepalese Rupee.

The unit of currency in Bhutan is the Bhutanese Ngultrum.

Preparing for your Holiday

Getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. This holiday falls within our highest grade and you need to be aerobically fit and also comfortable with walking up to 7 or 8 hours each day with ascents and/or descents of up to 1000 metres (3300 feet) over several days. Hill walking, with a good amount of ascent and descent, is the best training, and we would suggest that you try to fit in a number of long weekend walks before you depart. Running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardio vascular fitness and stamina.

There is little you can do to prepare for the altitude but if you have an excellent level of fitness this can help.

Climate

In general the climate of Bhutan is colder and damper than one would expect to find in the Himalaya of India or Nepal. The monsoon usually arrives in June, and lasts until early September, bringing with it the heavy rainfall which is responsible for the lush vegetation which carpets much of Bhutan. March and April, as well as late September through to November are the best months to visit Bhutan. Post-monsoon the weather is normally bright and clear. Day-time highs of around 20°C can be expected at altitudes around 2000 metres, whilst at our highest camps the maximum daytime temperature will be 10°C to 12°C. At night-time, the temperature will fall below freezing and at our highest camps you need to be prepared for very cold night time temperatures. Although prolonged periods of bad weather are not common outside of the monsoon season, mountains do create their own weather and short-lived periods of rain or snow can never be completely ruled out.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- 'Lunana - A Yak in the Classroom' (2019 film) - Bhutan's first Oscar-nominated film.
- Bhutan, a Trekker's guide. Bart Jordans. Cicerone Press.
- Bhutan. (Lonely Planet Guide). Stan Armington.
- Bhutan, Land of the Thunder Dragon. Owen Edmunds

Maps

Bhutan Himalaya. Nepa Maps

Indexed general map of Bhutan, providing a general overview at 1:390,000 of the main trekking routes. Bold hill-shading indicates the general relief, and light green shading highlights the national park areas. Highways, main roads and selected minor routes are marked, and highlighted in different colours are the trekking routes. Selected peaks passes and altitudes are marked, and symbols denote campsites, monasteries, monuments, and places of interest.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

Please try to keep the weight of your trek bag to a minimum. See the 'baggage allowance' section for further details.

The packed weight of your kit bag while trekking should be no more than 15kg.

You **SHOULD** bring the following items:

Sleeping Bag (comfort rating -15C)*

Warm jacket (down)*

Hiking boots

Waterproof and windproof jacket

- Waterproof and windproof overtrousers
- Trekking trousers
- Thermal baselayer leggings

- Thermal baselayer shirts
 - Fleece jacket
 - Sunhat
 - Fleece hat
 - Scarf or buff
 - Sunglasses
 - Thermal gloves
 - Warm and waterproof gloves or mittens
 - Daypack 30 litres.
 - Headtorch with spare batteries
 - Washbag and toiletries
 - Antibacterial handwash
 - Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
 - Water bottles (2 or 3 x 1 Litre). (Note that the tube on camelback / platypus type systems can be prone to freezing in cold conditions) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
 - Water purification tablets
 - Selection of dry bags (to keep kit bag contents dry)
- Basic First Aid Kit including: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), altitude (Diamox), painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite). Glucose tablets and multi-vitamin tablets are also a good idea.

The following items are optional:

- Sleeping bag liner
- Thermos flask
- Swimwear (for the hotel pool in Kathmandu)
- Travel clothes
- Trainers or similar
- Spare laces
- Trekking poles
- Gaiters (highly recommended due to muddy conditions)
- Insect repellent - (DEET)
- Pen-knife (note: always pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Camera
- Small travel towel
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Notes

*FREE sleeping bag and down jacket hire is included in your KE holiday booking upon request.

Please make all requests at least 6 weeks prior to the trip departure date. Note all hire / rental equipment is issued in Bhutan. Please remember to allow room in your trek bag for these items.

'Thermarest' inflatable camping mats are provided whilst camping.

PHD Gear Advisor: PHD specialise in cold weather equipment, from the world's lightest right up to the most protective for Everest or the Poles. It's a large range. So to help you choose what you need to keep you warm, PHD have listed the gear that is appropriate for this expedition. [Click here.](#)

FESTIVAL DRESS CODE

The Bhutanese get dressed up for festivals and you may want to take a smarter set of clothes with you to use on the days you are attending the festivals. Long sleeves and long trousers are best, women might want to bring a scarf. Dirty boots or open toed sandals should be avoided where possible. Hats and umbrellas should be avoided.

FESTIVAL ETIQUETTE

Bhutan's Tshechus (festivals) are religious events and the festival grounds are purified and consecrated by lamas. The dancers are in a state of meditation, they believe that they transform themselves into the deities they represent on the dance ground, generating a spiritual power, which purifies, enlightens and blesses the spectators. Out of respect, whilst watching the dances, you should not eat, drink, talk or laugh loudly at inappropriate times. You should not use flash photography and please be respectful when photographing dancers or onlookers. The festivals are not tourist attractions, they are manifestations of religious traditions thousands of year's old, which we are fortunate to be able to witness.

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers. [-> Find out more](#)

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for joining at the hotel in Kathmandu. Transfers from Tribhuvan International (Kathmandu) Airport to/from the group hotel are provided on the first and last day of the holiday.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Kathmandu. Outbound flights will usually depart from the UK in the evening, arriving mid afternoon the following day (day 1 of the itinerary). Return flights will depart Kathmandu usually in the morning of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK later the same day.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

THE GREATEST AND MOST CHALLENGING HIMALAYAN TREK OF ALL! We are one of the few companies that offer the complete Snowman Trek, all the way from Shana, west of Paro, following the border with Tibet, to Lunana beneath Gangar Puensum, the highest unclimbed mountain on Earth! Bhutan visa fees, all meals, and return flights from Kathmandu to Paro are included, and there's even FREE sleeping bag and down jacket hire available too.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 19/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change