



Service and Adventure in Bhutan October 16-October 31, 2023

Join Trekking for Kids and DAJ Expeditions on a remarkable, unforgettable trek in Bhutan to the basecamp of one of the highest unclimbed mountains in the world, Gangkar Puensum. To leave a lasting impact in the country, complete a project to improve the lives of impoverished, young monks living in a monastery near the start of the trek.

The price of the adventure includes roundtrip airfare from Bangkok to Paro, all lodging while in Bhutan, all meals, all transportation within the country, guide services, entrance fees to cultural attractions, all camping equipment, and entry visas. Exclusions are alcohol and gratuities for the guides.

Bhutan places great value on their cultural heritage, the happiness of their citizens, and the sustainability of their carbon-negative country. In an effort to mindfully manage the burgeoning tourism Bhutan has seen in the last 20 years - a growth of 4052% - the government has added a Sustainable Development daily fee of \$200 per guest, instituted to fund social programs, promote sustainable tourism, support infrastructure, and environmental protections. This fee is included in the price offered for this unique adventure opportunity.

DAY 1/October 16: ARRIVE PARO

The flight to Paro from Bangkok is one of the most spectacular mountain flights in the world, with a constantly changing panorama of some of the highest mountains on earth. Upon arrival, DAJ Expeditions representative will meet you at Paro airport exit doors following customs formalities. Later, you will have leisure afternoon to scroll the down town of Paro.

Overnight, hotel in Paro

DAY 2/October 17: TIGER'S NEST HIKE

After breakfast, hike to Taktshang Monastery. The Taktshang Monastery was built on a sheer cliff face 900 meters above the valley floor, and is a spectacular, iconic sight in Bhutan. The Monastery is also an important pilgrim site for the Buddhists. The great Guru

Rinpoche is said to have flown here on the back of a tigress when he brought the teachings of the Buddhist Dharma to Bhutan in the 8th Century. Half way, there is a teahouse where you can stop for refreshments before final steeper part begins. After the hike drive an hour to Thimphu.

Overnight, hotel in Thimpu

DAY 3/October 18: THIMPHU TO TRONGSA

We start our day with a cultural introduction to Bhutan by Francoise Pommaret, professor at the University of Bhutan and a collaborator on the Bhutan Cultural Atlas. Later, we drive to Trongsa, about 6 hrs. from Thimphu over Dochula pass (10,000ft) and descend to Punakha and Wangdi Valley where we will have a lunch stop before our second pass, Pelela (12,000ft) on the Black Mountain range. After the Pelela Pass, we enter the eastern part of Bhutan where farmhouses and temples dot the landscape and you will see local farmers herding yaks and cattle. The imposing Trongsa Dzong can be viewed across a deep canyon to signal your approach to the town around a curving road. Trongsa is the ancestral home of Bhutan's ruling dynasty.

Overnight, hotel in Trongsa.

DAY 4/October 19: TRONGSA TO BUMTHANG

The drive continues over the Yotong La pass (12,600 ft) to Bumthang, the most sacred valley in the country. Before our journey, visit Trongsa Dzong, the longest Dzong in Bhutan. The view from the Dzong is spectacular and one can see across the landscape for many miles. Also visit the Ta Dzong museum, housing an incredible collection of historical artifacts of the Royal Family.

Lunch in Bumthang valley and spend the afternoon preparing for trek departure. Overnight at hotel in Bumthang. Then another hour drive to our project site on hilltop at Dorji Tse Gonpa. Rest of the day with Head Lama and little monk.

Later in afternoon, check in to the hotel and packing for 9 days trekking to the Base camp of highest unclimbed mountain in the world.

Overnight, hotel in Bumthang

DAY 5/October 20: Start of trek: DHUR TO CHOKCHOKMAY

DISTANCE: 6.3 miles

TIME: 4-5 HOURS

STARTING ELEVATION: 9,055 ft

ASCEND: 1,433 ft

DESCEND: 219 ft

The glorious Gangkar Puensum trek starts today. We drive for an hour on a farm road from our hotel to the trek start point. We meet the trekking crew and the horsemen, handing over our luggage to the crew and then begin our trek on a gradual uphill following the valley of the Yoleng Chhu (river), which is famous for its trout. The trail goes through pine & oak forest and then very steep uphill for an hour to Gorsum meadow, our lunch place. Again, gradually walk through bamboo shrub and crossing several small streams as you near the campsite at Chokchokmay.

Overnight at Camp/Tent; Camp Elevation: 10,269 ft

DAY 6/October 21: CHOKCHOKMAY TO TASHESA

DISTANCE: 8.6 miles

TIME: 7-8 HOURS

ASCEND: 3,083 ft

DESCEND: 377 ft

The day starts by descending to the river through the forests of pine, rhododendron, bamboo and birch. After crossing a wooden bridge we walk along the right side of the river, gradually ascending through forests of rhododendron, fir, spruce and juniper to our lunch place at Kurpang, a small meadow by the river where yak herders spend the night during their summer and winter migration.

We continue to hike on the right side of the river for a while before we cross another wooden bridge, to a junction; the left trail leads to Snowman Trek or to Dur hot springs, but we continue on right hand trail along the river and begin our short steep ascent which will take us above tree line to the open valley to our campsite Tashisa.

Overnight at Camp/Tent; Camp Elevation: 13,585

DAY 7/October 22/: TASHESA TO PANGGU

DISTANCE: 9.1 miles

TIME: 7-8 HOURS

ASCEND: 2,132 ft

DESCEND: 2,253 ft

Today we will have our biggest challenge for the day. After breakfast, for an hour we will walk along the valley to the base of Tolela pass and then very steep switchback ascent until the pass (15,600 ft). There are views of the surrounding snow-capped peaks from the pass. The trail drops gradually from the pass to the Zhabtsho Lake and continue passing several yak herder huts. Finally, we will camp on Pang Gu on the ridge top with the amazing view of Mengla Karchung, 23,622 ft

Overnight at Camp/Tent; Camp elevation: 13,320 ft.

DAY 8/October 23: PANGGU TO SHING GU

DISTANCE: 7 miles
TIME: 6-7 HOURS
ASCEND: 1,610 ft
DESCEND: 1,246 ft

From the camp, we have a very steep decent of about 45 minutes to Tshampa temple. After that, gradually ascend to Shing Gu (meaning above tree line) camp, passing several yak herder huts along the rocky trail. From the camp we will have a closer view of Gangkar Puensum.

Overnight at Camp/Tent; Camp elevation: 13,650 ft.

DAY 9/October 24: SHING GU TO BAMARPO (BASE CAMP)

DISTANCE: 4.4 miles
TIME: 4 HOURS
ASCEND: 1,010 ft
DESCEND: 9 ft

Today we have an easy day, about 4 hours of hiking along the open valley to base camp of mighty Gangkar Puensum; however, being above 13,000 ft may make you get tired more quickly than normal but if the weather favors, you will really enjoy the stunning view of the highest unscaled peak in the world.

Overnight at Camp/Tent; Camp elevation: 14,648 ft

DAY 10/October 25: BAMARPO (BASE CAMP) REST DAY

DISTANCE: 00KMS
TIME: 00HOURS
ASCEND: 00M
DESCEND: 00M

Enjoy breakfast and many options for the day, including hiking along the valley, closer to glacier lakes, hiking to ridge and hills close by for better view or ideally being at camp to relax and shower.

Overnight at Camp/Tent; Camp elevation: 14,648 ft.

DAY 11/October 26: BAMARPO (BASE CAMP) TO TSHAMPA

DISTANCE: 6.2 miles

TIME: 6-7 HOURS
ASCEND: 65 ft
DESCEND: 2,273 f.

This is the same trail that we descend back to Tshampa temple and the army outpost. We will camp at the confluence below Tshampa temple.

Overnight at Camp/Tent; Camp elevation: 12,385 ft

DAY 12/October 27: TSHAMPA TO PETSCHO

DISTANCE: 11.8 miles
TIME: 7-8HOURS
ASCEND: 285 ft
DESCEND: 2,549 ft

From the camp, we cross the bridge and pass by the army outpost and begin our long decent along Chamkhar River. For the next two days we will enjoy music from Chamkhar river, negotiating rough rocky terrain and several streams joins the main river. After lunch we cross a suspension bridge to the right side of Chamkhar River to our last night camp by the river side at Petscho.

Overnight Camp/Tent; Camp elevation: 10,072 ft

DAY 13/October 28: PETSCHO TO BUMTHANG

DISTANCE: 4.9 miles
TIME: 3HOURS
ASCEND: 118 ft
DES: 767 ft

Today is our last day for trekking and we continue along the river through bamboo and pine forests to the Chorthey village. Before we hit the road, we have to pass by another army outpost at Khagtang and shortly we will be greeted by our driver at Nasphey village. We bid farewell to our trekking crew and horses and drive for an hour to the hotel in Bumthang.

Overnight: hotel in Bumthang.

DAY 14/October 29: Project day at Dorji Tse Gonpa Monastery.

Spend the day at the Monastery completing the project, sharing games and toys with the young monks, and participating in a gratitude ceremony with the monks.

Overnight tent camping at Project site.

DAY 15/October 30: Flight back to Paro

Enjoy afternoon sightseeing around Paro, visit the Rinpung Dzong to see the painting of the great saint Milarepa, considered as the master of meditation by the Bhutanese and believed to have attained enlightenment in a lifetime. Dzong's are large monasteries and district administrative centers, which were once strategic forts. Last minutes shopping in Paro town.

Overnight: Hotel in Paro.

DAY 16/October 31: PARO TO BANGKOK

Breakfast in the hotel, and then drive to the airport for flights to your onward destination.

Tashi Delek!