



## Service and Adventure in Bhutan April 26-May 13, 2021

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. Along the way, 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 (\$7,250) 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.

### **DAY 1: 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: 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. Halfway, there is a teahouse where you can stop for refreshments before final steeper part begins. After hike, drive an hour to Thimphu.

**Overnight, hotel in Thimphu**

### **DAY 3: 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 lunch stop before our second pass, Pelela (12,000ft) on the Black Mountain range. After the Pelela Pass, we enter 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: TRONGSA TO BUMTHANG**

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 another hour drive to our project site on hilltop at Dorji Tse Gonpa. Rest of the day with Head Lama and little monk.

**Overnight at your camping tent at Project site.**

#### **DAY 5: BUMTHANG**

In the morning, finish up final work on the project and consecration ceremony by Head Lama and the monks at Dorji Tse Gonpa. Lunch at the temple and then bid farewell to our host at the monastery.

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 6: 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 7: 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 the wooden bridge we walk along the right side of river, gradually ascending through forests of rhododendron, fir, spruce and juniper to our lunch place at Kurpang 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, there we are at 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 accent which will take us above tree line to the open valley to our campsite Tashisa.

Overnight at Camp/Tent Camp Elevation: 13,582 ft.

## **DAY 8: 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 valley to the base of Tolela pass and then very steep switchbacks accent till pass (15,600 ft). There are views of the surrounding snow-capped peaks from the pass. The trail drops gradually from pass to the Zhabtsho Lake and continue passing several yak header 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 9: PANGGU TO SHING GU**

**DISTANCE: 7 miles**

**TIME: 6-7 HOURS**

**ASCEND: 1,610 ft**

**DESCEND: 1,246 ft**

From the camp, we have very steep decent 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 closer view of Gangkar Puensum.

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

## **DAY 10: SHING GU TO BAMARPO (BASE CAMP)**

**DISTANCE: 4.4 miles**

**TIME: 4 HOURS**

**ASCEND: 1,010 ft**

**DESCEND: 9 ft**

Today we have 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 highest unscaled peak in the world.

Overnight at Camp/tent Camp elevation: 14,648 ft

## **DAY 11: 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 12: 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 13: TSHAMPA TO PESHU**

**DISTANCE: 11.8 miles**

**TIME: 7-8HOURS**

**ASCEND: 285 ft**

**DESCEND: 2,549 ft**

From the camp, we cross the bridge and pass by army outpost and begin our long decent along Chamkhar River. For 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 suspension bridge to right side of Chamkhar River to our last night camp by the river side at Petsho.

Overnight camp/Tent. Camp elevation: 10,072 ft

#### **DAY 14: 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 river through bamboo and pine forests to the Chorley 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 at hotel in Bumthang.

#### **DAY 15: BUMTHANG TO PARO (DOMESTIC FLIGHT)**

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 at Hotel in Paro.**

#### **DAY 16: PARO TO BANGKOK**

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

For more information, visit [www.trekkingforkids.org](http://www.trekkingforkids.org); or contact Cindy Steuart at [cindy@trekkingforkids.org](mailto:cindy@trekkingforkids.org); 301-213-3565.

**Tashi Delek!**