

Dagana Wilderness Trek, Bhutan

A pioneering trek crossing high mountain passes to reach the lush forests of little-known Dagana, deep in the south of Bhutan.



Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

Holiday overview

Style	Trek
Accommodation	Hotels, Camping, Lodge
Grade	Vigorous
Duration	17 days from London to London
Trekking / Walking days	On trek: 7 days Walks on: 2 days
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Local Leader Bhutan
Land only	Joining in Kathmandu, Nepal
Max altitude	4,200m/13,780ft, Lawagu Pass, Day 9

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available



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Departures

Group departures

2022 Dates:

Sat 02 Apr - Mon 18 Apr

Sat 22 Oct - Mon 07 Nov

2023 Dates:

Sat 01 Apr - Mon 17 Apr

Sat 21 Oct - Mon 06 Nov

Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 4 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday.

If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

Your guide



You will have an English-speaking Bhutanese guide to lead your trip. Mountain Kingdoms have been working with the same partner in Bhutan since 1986 and their guides are some of the best in the Kingdom. They speak good English, as this is taught in all Bhutanese schools, and are fully qualified guides. The Tourism Authority of Bhutan insists that a Bhutanese trek or tour leader must pass his/her guiding exams in Thimphu before accompanying groups of foreign visitors. Guides receive regular ‘top-up’ training and 15 of our regular leaders have completed an extended training course run by Mountain Kingdoms in Bhutan.

Your trip highlights

- Be one of the first westerners to visit the remote township and region of Dagana
- Trek through a variety of scenery and ecological zones rich with flora and fauna
- Cross passes over 4,000 metres with fantastic views of Mount Chomolhari, Kangchenjunga and Jitchu Drake
- Explore the many stunning holy lakes around Labatama
- Visit iconic Taktsang Monastery and beautiful Punakha Dzong

At a glance itinerary

Days 1-3	Fly to Kathmandu. Fly to Paro in Bhutan.
Day 4	Walk up to Taktsang Monastery. Drive to Thimphu.
Day 5	Day walk to Phajoding.
Day 6	Drive to Geneka. Start Dagana trek. Camp at Lower Gur.
Days 7-8	Trek to Labatama via Gur. Explore lakes at Labatama.
Day 9	Cross the Lawagu Pass, 4,200m/13,780ft, to reach Tsibsaba.
Days 10-12	Trek to Dagana via Wangrapang and Kunga. Visit dzong and view megaliths.
Day 13	Drive to Punakha.
Day 14	Sightseeing in Punakha. Fly to Paro.
Days 15-17	Fly back to Kathmandu. Time at leisure. Fly to London.

Trip summary

Little-known and largely undisturbed, Dagana is a verdant region of wildlife-rich forest and isolated villages in the southernmost reaches of Bhutan. Ranging from a lowly 200m to 4,720m above sea level it has an impressively diverse and rugged landscape unspoilt by development and with few signs of intrusion from the modern world. Few westerners have ever visited Dagana and Mountain Kingdoms is delighted to be the first British company to offer a trek here.

Starting a little south of Thimphu, this stunning new trek offers an incredible variety of scenery that leads from alpine meadows to sub-tropical forests. You cross high passes over 4,000 metres, marvel at the views of Himalayan giants such as Kangchenjunga, Mount Chomolhari and Jitchu Drake, and enjoy walking through pristine rhododendron, pine and oak forests that host a rich variety of flora and fauna. You will also explore sacred lakes where, in true Bhutanese style, legends and tales of deities abound. On the last couple of days you descend to walk in dense forest terrain - the territory of tigers, leopards and bears.

A genuine wilderness trek, you are unlikely to bump into a soul except the occasional yak herder. But even though this trek is unspoilt and feels very remote, the path is well-established due to its history both as a cattle trading route and as a trail used by the old Daga Penlop (governor) to reach Thimphu from the south. Some ruins of his guesthouses are still evident along the route today. On reaching Dagana there will be time to visit its attractive dzong and view the three giant stone megaliths on the opposite side of the valley.

Please note that the last day of this trek is through thick forest and several sections of the path are very narrow and precipitous with a steep drop on one side. You will need to be sure-footed, very comfortable with rocky, stony, tough terrain, and have a true spirit of adventure for this trek!

As the trek to Dagana starts at quite a high altitude you will spend a couple of days in Paro and Thimphu beforehand enjoying day walks to acclimatise, as well as seeing some important cultural sights including Taktsang Monastery - the Tiger's Nest. Your sightseeing continues after the trek with a visit to the beautiful riverside dzong at Punakha before you return to Paro for your flight back to Kathmandu.

Your trip itinerary

Day 1: Depart London.

Depart London on your overnight flight to Kathmandu.

Overnight: In flight

Day 2: Arrive Kathmandu. Group transfer to hotel.

You will be met on arrival and transferred to your hotel. You might like to venture out to nearby Thamel for your evening meal, or eat in the restaurant if you are tired from your journey.

Overnight: Hotel Shanker or Shangri La, Kathmandu

Day 3: Fly to Paro in Bhutan. Sightseeing.

Transfer to the airport for the flight to Paro. On a clear day the panoramic views of the Himalaya are sensational, including Everest, but particularly exciting is the approach through the Bhutanese foothills and the landing, including a few steep turns, to land at the tiny airstrip at Paro. You are at the mercy of the Druk air ticketing computer, but if there is an option, try to sit on the left hand side of the plane. In Paro you will be transferred to your hotel.

Depending on your arrival time you should have time for a wander around the streets of the small township of Paro, take a look at the Queen Mother's Winter Palace, and go for a walk up to look at the Dzong.

Overnight: Hotel Olathang or Similar, Paro (Meals: BLD)

Day 4: Walk up to Taktsang Monastery in the morning, 3,110m/10,200ft - 4-5 hours. Afternoon drive to Thimphu - approximately 1½ hours.

Today you visit the Paro Valley, site of the famous Tiger's nest, the Taktsang Monastery, which is perched some 600m/2,000ft up on a cliff overlooking the valley. Taktsang was said to be where the legendary Indian saint Guru Padma Sambhava flew from Tibet on the back of a tiger to defeat five demons who were opposing the spread of Buddhism in Bhutan. It's a steep uphill walk to reach the tea house viewpoint and another 45 minutes to the temple itself. You return by the same route.

In the afternoon you drive to Thimphu, a journey of around 1½ hours.



Overnight: Phuntso Pelri Hotel or Similar, Thimphu (Meals: BLD)

Day 5: Walk to Phajoding, 3,600m/11,811ft - 5-6 hours. Sightseeing in Thimphu if time permits.

Phajoding takes its name from the saint Phajo Drugom Zhigpo, who meditated there in the 13th century, and it is considered to be one of the most sacred meditational sites in Bhutan. The monastery itself is an open complex that comprises many holy buildings and relics and a state monastic school that currently houses 40 monks.

To start the walk you'll be driven to just beyond the zoo housing the intriguing looking Takin. The hike to Phajoding is a continuous uphill climb through forested area of blue pine, fir and spruce. There are great views of Thimphu from here. You can visit the monastery and then descend back down to Thimphu. This is a lovely walk in its own right, and also provides excellent acclimatisation for the trek.

In the afternoon you should have time to see some of the sights of Thimphu.

Overnight: Phuntso Pelri Hotel or Similar, Thimphu (Meals: BLD)

Day 6: Drive to Geneka, 2,800m/9,186ft, for start of Dagana trek and walk to Lower Gur, 3,300m/10,827ft - 3 hours.

It takes about 2 hours to reach Geneka from Thimphu. Your crew will be waiting for you at the road-head ready to load up the horses with your kit bags. You cross the suspension bridge and begin your ascent. It's a beautiful, peaceful walk on a well-established trail through dense pine, oak, rhododendron and larch forest. It takes about 1½ hours - 2 hours climbing before you reach the viewing point adorned with prayer flags overlooking Geneka village and the community chorten.

You continue winding your way upwards on a good, dusty trail until you reach Lower Gur - approximately 45 minutes from the viewing point.

It's a short day's walking today but this is necessary to avoid excessive altitude gain to the next camp. You can walk up towards the following day's camp in the afternoon and return, to aid acclimatisation. Lower Gur campsite is in a clearing in the forest - a pleasant grassy area.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 7: Walk to Upper Gur 3,600m/11,811ft - 2 hours. Acclimatisation walk in afternoon.

You continue ascending after you leave Lower Gur campsite and after about half an hour you reach a clearing with a good view of the surrounding forested hillside. A further 1-1½ hours weaving your way uphill brings you to your campsite at Upper Gur (Kipchen) 3,600m/11,811ft. There are spectacular views of Kangchenjunga, Mount Chomolhari and Jitchu Drake here. Your camp is surrounded by hemlock, larch and spruce forest. As this is a very short walk, we recommend that you do a further acclimatisation walk in the afternoon with your guide. You can easily climb above the forest and get some great views along the ridge. Your guide will let you know your options.



Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 8: Walk to Labatama, 4,000m/13,123ft, crossing pass of 4,100m/13,451ft - 6 hours.

You ascend from the campsite quite steeply at first, and then make a gradual ascent on a very good trail that contours around the hillside. You have superb views of Kangchenjunga, Mount Chomolhari and Jitchu Drake. Here you are on a splendid open hillside. It's very peaceful, and other than your trekking crew, you are unlikely to see anyone. It takes around 2-3 hours before you reach a cairn and some prayer flags and it's another half an hour or so until you reach the pass, marked by 3 cairns and adorned with silk scarves and prayer flags. In November there could be some ice on the path. After taking some photos at the pass, you begin descending, and contouring around the hillside, with fine views of the Dagala range of rocky peaks in front of you. You'll see some yak herders' camps - stone shelters where yaks are brought to graze in the summer, before returning to lower pastures in winter. In November, they should be empty. It's really wild, remote country here.

You descend to a stream, then climb up to Watshachen, which has a tourist stone campsite shelter and toilet. You contour for a bit until you descend into Labatama Valley. You then ascend gently until you reach Upper Labatama, at a stone shelter, by the river, and just down from Lake Yu Tsho. It takes about 2 hours to reach the campsite from the pass.

In the afternoon we recommend you explore the stunning sacred lakes around Labatama. There are several lakes nearby and you can have a good hike around the surrounding hills to see as many lakes as you can. Time and energy permitting, a 3 hour round trip should enable you to see around five of the lakes.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 9: Trek to Tsibsaba campsite, 3,780m/12,402ft via Lawagu Pass 4,200m/13,780ft - 5-6 hours.

You have a short descent from your campsite to the river to cross it and begin ascending on a rightwards diagonal trail. The path is well established and not too steep so the going is fairly gentle. You ascend for about 1½ hours until you reach a cairn. There are great views of Kangchenjunga here. It'll take another 1½ hours or so to reach the pass from here and there are a couple of route options. One is leftwards towards the beautiful Langtsho (Ox) Lake. The lakes are sacred in this area so try to keep noise to a minimum and no popping in for a dip! Bhutanese, especially locals, strongly believe that making noise or polluting the lakes angers dieties and brings bad weather and misfortune to the area. From the lake you ascend to Lawagu Pass 4,200m/13,780ft which is marked by prayer flags and cairns. A great view of Mount Chomolhari can be had here. It's quite a windy, cold spot and there could be snow and small patches of ice, so not a place to linger.



You descend on a good trail, steeply at first until you reach an open pasture where you'll probably have your lunch. From the pass, it takes around 1½ hours of descent to reach your campsite which is an open pasture next to the old Daga Penlop's guesthouse, at an altitude of 3,870m/12,697ft.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 10: Trek to Wangrapang 2,900m/9,514ft - 5 hours.

The trail starts with a slight descent through shrub and rhododendron forest. You pass by ruins of Daga Penlop's guesthouse where there is a yak herder's winter pasture below which is likely to be occupied if you trek in November. The trail continues descending through the forest, passing through a range of ecological zones from dry alpine scrubs, juniper, rhododendron, fir, spruce, hemlock, blue pine forests to warm broadleaved forests. Walking is primarily in the forest today, on a good trail, which can be muddy when wet. You'll come across some open pastures where there may be a herd of yaks or horses. After 5 hours of so of leisurely descending, you'll arrive at a big open meadow which is Wangrapang, and this is your campsite for the night. Enjoy the relative warmth of low altitude here!

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 11: Trek to Kunga, 2,100m/6,890ft - 5 hours.

You continue descending through broadleaf forests, which become denser as the day progresses. You'll probably need to take your shoes and socks off to wade across a stream - it'll be around calf height but not too fast flowing. You really feel you're in the heart of the jungle here. Yellow throated laughing thrushes and long tailed magpies are just two of the exotic birds you might see here.

From the stream, you ascend quite steeply for a short while and then the trail is undulating, through dense forest. You eventually take a right hand path off the main trail which leads to your campsite - Kunga. Your lungs will thank you for the lower altitude here and it will feel some degrees warmer.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 12: Trek to Dagana, 1,790m/5,873ft - 6-7 hours. View rock megaliths.

You climb for 20 minutes or so out of the campsite to the main trail. Today the going is trickier than previous days and full concentration is required to negotiate the precipitous sections of the trail. There were lots of signs of bear activity here so your guide and crew will utter loud noises and whistles to warn them of your arrival so hopefully they will scatter before you encounter them! Today you really get the sense of being in wild jungle territory and you see a wealth of colourful birds, monkeys and hopefully deer. The undergrowth is dense and this one section of the trail isn't that well maintained. It's undulating and, unlike previous days, you don't emerge at large clearings/meadows, so the going will feel a bit more relentless. After a while you'll be following the water pipeline to Dagana which runs parallel to the trail. Eventually you emerge at the road-head - the end of this trail is marked with prayer flags and a small shrine. Congratulations on completing a wild, adventurous trek in the heart of rural Bhutan.

Whilst in Dagana you can visit its attractive dzong - the Daga Trashi Yangtse Dzong which was built in 1655 under the command of the Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. Also worth seeing are the three stone megaliths, known as "Sky Pillar Rock", "The Rock of Ancient Steps" and "The Frontier Sky Fortress". Legend has it that when the dzong was being constructed, the "Frontier Sky Fortress" emitted telepathic messages to the builders stating that the dzong would collapse if it was built any higher than it currently stands. Which is why the golden cupola of the Dzong is said to be level with the tip of the 20m high megalith.

You will overnight at a basic 'hotel' which will be similar in standard to a Nepali tea house. There are no tourist standard hotels in Dagana.

Overnight: Lodge (Meals: BLD)

Day 13: Drive to Punakha - 6 hours.

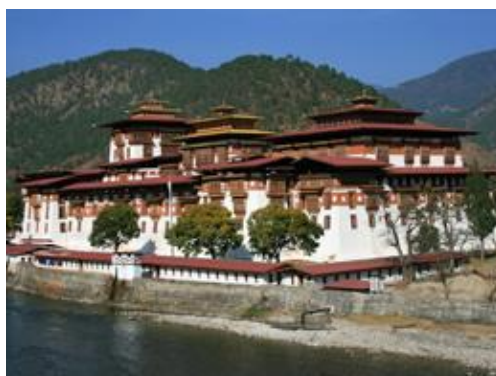
It's about 5½ - 6 hours driving from Dagana to Punakha. The drive is pretty spectacular as you wind your way on twisting, turning mountain roads northwards. As you head further towards Punakha you'll see a massive hydro-electric project going on. This is due to be completed in 2025 and is so ambitious in scope that the goal is for it to help Bhutan become self-sufficient financially and free of outside support from India and NGOs. You pass through Wangdi and will see the dzong which is under re-construction since being damaged by fire.

Eventually you reach Punakha and will see the dzong and its picturesque setting by the river. You'll be taken to your hotel. After a luxurious and well deserved hot shower and rest, there may be time to explore Punakha Dzong in the afternoon. If not, you can do this tomorrow morning.

Overnight: Zhingkhram Resort or Similar, Punakha (Meals: BLD)

Day 14: Morning sightseeing in Punaka. Afternoon return to Paro - 3½-4 hours.

Before leaving Punakha you will visit its spectacular Dzong (if you did not do this yesterday). The main monastery/fortress in Punakha was the power base for the old system of re-incarnated rulers. The remains of the original ruler of Bhutan, Nawang Namgyal, are kept in a small room at the top of the highest tower; only the King and the head of the Monastic Order are allowed to enter it. Provided the head of the monastic order and his monks have not migrated from Thimphu, it should be possible to view the inner courtyards of Punakha Dzong. In 1997 there was a major flood in the town as a glacial lake burst up in the mountains causing tremendous havoc in the town. The dzong was badly damaged but has been beautifully restored and renovated.



You will also pay a visit to Chimi Lhakhang, taking a short walk across the paddy fields to see this delightful small temple built by Drukpa Kunley. Known as the 'the Divine Madman', Drukpa Kunley was a 15th Century Bhutanese lama and is Bhutan's most popular saint and one of the most important figures in Bhutanese folklore. Despite the apparent conservatism of the Bhutanese people, Drukpa Kunley with his unconventional views on sex is a great favourite throughout the country - the phallus symbols painted on the outside walls of houses date back to his teachings. Chimi Lhakhang is especially popular with women who come here to pray for children. The temple is characterised by its many phallic symbols.

You then return to Paro via Thimphu. The drive to Thimphu on winding mountain roads takes about 2 hours and crosses the Dochu La, 3,116m/10,223ft where on a clear day panoramic views can be had of the eastern Himalaya, including the highest peak in Bhutan, Gangkar Punsum, at 7,550m/24,770ft. You continue on to Paro which takes another 1-1½ hours.

Overnight: Hotel Olathang or Similar, Paro (Meals: BLD)

Day 15: Fly back to Kathmandu. Transfer to hotel.

Today you will have another chance to enjoy a flight along the Himalaya, passing Kangchenjunga, Makalu and Everest. On arrival in Kathmandu you will be transferred to the Shangri La Hotel, where rooms will be available from midday. The rest of the day is yours to enjoy some final sightseeing, souvenir shopping or just relax at your hotel.

Overnight: Hotel Shanker or Shangri La, Kathmandu (Meals: B)

Day 16: Day at leisure in Kathmandu. Group transfer to airport. Depart for London.

You will have time at leisure in Kathmandu today when you may do some sightseeing or shopping, or simply relax at your hotel. Later in the afternoon there will be a transfer to the airport for your overnight flight to London.



Overnight: In flight (Meals: B)

Day 17: Arrive London.

Our grading system

Dagana Wilderness Trek is graded as a Vigorous trekking holiday, as described below.

Vigorous

Typically these trips involve 8 to 14 days (occasionally more) trekking in relatively remote landscapes. High passes up to 4,900m/16,000ft may be crossed (sometimes snow-covered) and there may also be glacier travel and peak ascents. Walking days can be between 5 and 8 hours with considerable ascents and descents. This grade also covers some European treks of shorter durations. Overnight stops on trek could be in tea houses, mountain huts or camping.

These holidays would suit enthusiastic hill/mountain walkers.

Trip altitude

Important - please be aware that this trip involves travel at altitude. Whilst all our itineraries are carefully designed to optimise acclimatisation to high altitudes, participants on this trip are likely to experience some symptoms of being at altitude. The Dossier pack we provide when you book your holiday includes comprehensive advice on safe travel at altitude. If you require further information or advice on travel at altitude prior to booking please contact the office to speak to an experienced member of our team. Alternatively we recommend www.medex.org.uk as a good source of information.

What the price includes

Mountain Kingdoms aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

What's included:

- ✓ An English speaking Bhutanese leader
- ✓ All flights between Kathmandu and Paro and domestic airport transfers
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicles
- ✓ Bhutan departure tax and Bhutan visa
- ✓ 4 star hotel accommodation in Kathmandu, on a twin share bed and breakfast basis
- ✓ In Bhutan, good standard hotel accommodation in main towns and best available hotels in outlying towns, on twin share, full board basis. Plus one night in a simple lodge in Dagana.
- ✓ The use of a good quality down jacket and sleeping bag (when travelling to Bhutan via Kathmandu).
- ✓ All camping facilities (twin share tents) and all meals on trek
- ✓ Camp staff to carry out all camp work
- ✓ Sightseeing where specified
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK & UK Departure Tax (flight inclusive only)
- ✓ Single, timed, group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)
- ✓ A free high-quality Mountain Kingdoms kit bag
- ✓ Bhutan visa and tourist taxes
- ✓ The opportunity to attend one of our pre trip meets in the Cotswolds

Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

What's not included:

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Visa fees for Nepal
- ✗ Lunch and evening meals in Kathmandu
- ✗ Tips

Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

Our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag for their holiday (these are required for certain treks), will instead receive a free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle. These unique Water-to-Go bottles can also be purchased from us at a discounted rate. For further information about our campaign visit [For further information about our campaign visit <https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign>](https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign).

Your accommodation

Hotels in Bhutan

Please note that there is generally a shortage of hotel/lodge accommodation in Bhutan, especially outside Paro and Thimphu. Although we pre-book rooms as far in advance as possible, anything can happen and probably will, e.g. if the royal family suddenly has a visiting delegation, accommodation may be changed at short notice. Additionally, during peak seasons, it can sometimes be very difficult to secure not only the hotels/lodges we want, but also the single rooms we might need. In these circumstances singles may occasionally be asked to share but in such cases we refund any single room supplements that might apply. Given these conditions we will make every effort to secure any of the hotels below. If we are unable to secure the hotels named in this itinerary we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.

For the night spent in Dagana we will use a basic lodge (similar in standard to a tea house in Nepal) as there are no tourist class hotels in the town.



Hotel Shanker or Similar, Kathmandu (2022 & spring 2023 departures)

The Shanker is a 4* heritage hotel situated just a 10-15 minute walk from the tourist area of Thamel. It has an outdoor swimming pool, a spa and a lovely garden, plus a choice of restaurants and bars. Rooms are large, elegant and well-equipped. The hotel is a converted royal palace with a fascinating history which in recent years has undergone a thorough and tasteful renovation.



Hotel Shangri La, Kathmandu (Autumn 2023 departures)

The Shangri La Hotel is a 4* hotel of character, just a stone's throw from the British Embassy and only a 20 minute walk or short taxi ride into the popular tourist area of Thamel. The hotel has a swimming pool, a lovely, landscaped garden, and a choice of restaurants and bars. Recent entertainment additions include a casino and fitness centre.



Hotel Olathang or Similar, Paro

Originally built for the coronation of the Bhutan's 4th King in 1974, this attractive hotel stands on a hill overlooking Paro town. Rooms in the main building are set around a peaceful courtyard and there are also a number of cottages dotted around the spacious grounds. Decoration is typically Bhutanese with stripped wooden floors and colourfully painted walls. Rooms are well-equipped and the hotel has its own spa, international restaurant and bar.



Phuntso Pelri Hotel or Similar, Thimphu

Despite its somewhat dark entrance hall, this new hotel is very well appointed, with custom made Bhutanese wooden furniture and good sized rooms. During busy periods, especially during festivals, we may use the Jomolhari Hotel, the Kisa Hotel, Hotel Gakyil, Hotel Osel or the Amodhara Hotel. These are amongst the best tourist class hotels in Thimphu.



Zhingkhram Resort or Similar, Punakha

Overlooking Punakha Dzong, and only opened in 2016, the Zhingkhram Resort is one of the best hotels in Punakha. The well-proportioned, stylish rooms come complete with free Wi-Fi, minibars and coffee/tea making facilities as well as balconies giving picture-perfect views of the dzong and the surrounding hills and countryside.

Camping

On our camping treks, the following are provided: a sleeping tent, a dining tent, a toilet tent exclusively for your group to use, and a kitchen tent. There are camp chairs or stools, a lamp for reading in the dining tent at night, a dining table, crockery and tableware. The staff put up and take down the tents, make the tea, cook the food, wash the dishes, and load the porters or pack animals. Your kit bag is carried for you either by porters or pack animals and you just trek with a light day sack.

Meal arrangements

Bed and breakfast in Kathmandu. All meals in Bhutan.

Flight arrangements

Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

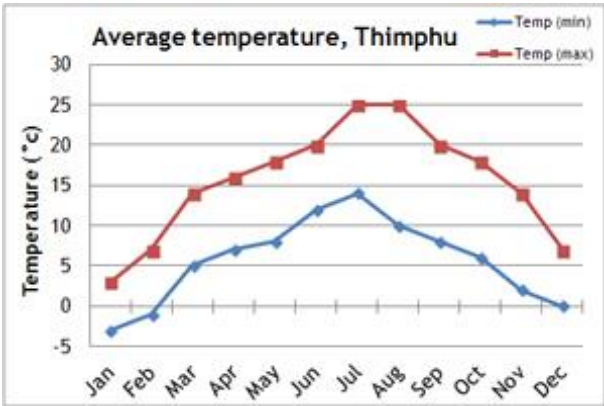
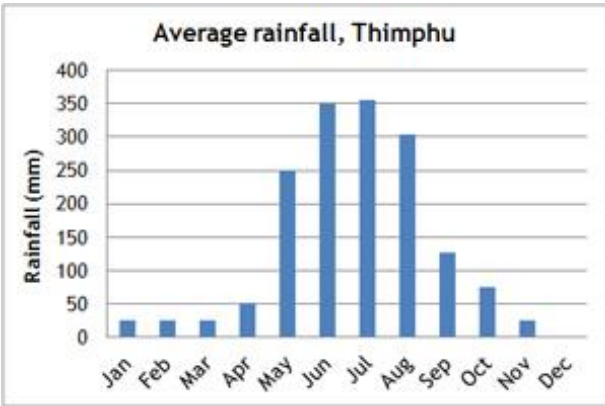
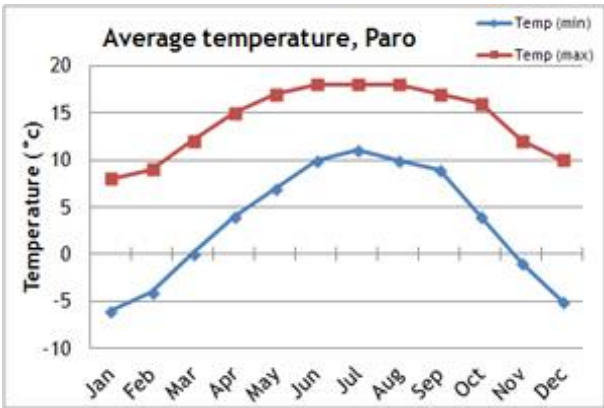
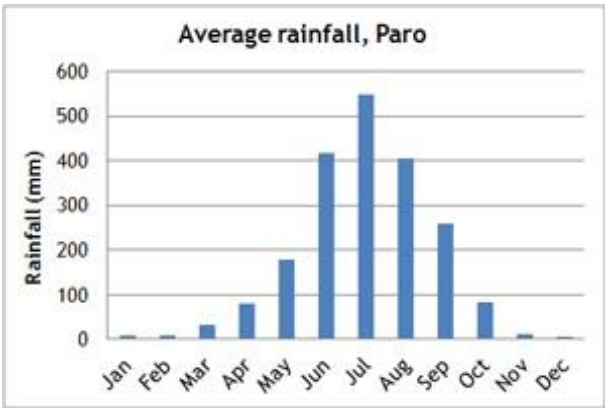
Further information

When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

The nature of adventure travel

Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

Climate information



Extensions

Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at www.mountainkingdoms.com.



Hotel upgrades and extra nights in Bhutan

If you would like to upgrade your hotel during your holiday take a look at our selection of luxury properties in Bhutan such as Uma Paro or the Taj Tashi in Thimphu, you can download a leaflet from our website detailing all hotel options. We can also add additional nights in Bhutan at the start or end of your trip.

Additional accommodation in Nepal

If you would like to extend your stay in Nepal, you can add extra nights at your group tour accommodation or choose from our range of distinctive properties in Pokhara and the Kathmandu area. We can offer luxury resorts, heritage hotels, tranquil lodges and characterful cottages. Our selection includes Dwarika's Resort at Dhulikhel, Pavilions Himalaya at Pokhara, Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge and Shivapuri Heights Cottage. Individual extension leaflets for all these options can be downloaded from our website or requested from our office.



Kathmandu Valley sightseeing excursions

We can arrange half day or full day sightseeing tours taking you to the key cultural attractions of central Kathmandu or the Kathmandu Valley including the World Heritage Sites of Bhaktapur and Patan. Your tour will be led by an English speaking guide and you will have a private vehicle and driver.



Bumthang Extension

A five night extension taking in the key sights of the cultural heartland of Bhutan. The Bumthang region is a centre for Bhutanese weaving and is home to some of the country's most spectacular temples and fortresses. It is also very scenic and offers ample opportunities for walks along its four main valleys.



Wildlife extensions in Nepal - Chitwan, Bardia & Koshi Tappu

Visit Chitwan or Bardia National Parks home to a rich variety of birds and animals including elephant, rhinos, leopard and Bengal tiger. Stay in a comfortable lodge and enjoy a range of wildlife viewing activities. Alternatively visit the renowned Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve - one of the finest birdwatching and wildlife areas in all Asia.



Royal Manas National Park, Bhutan

Extend your stay in Bhutan with an extension to the Royal Manas National park, a wonderful birder's paradise close to the Indian border. Our extension package gives you three full days to explore the park and surrounding area, and you will be accompanied throughout by a specialist bird and wildlife guide. We also include all meals, private transport to/from Paro, and hotel accommodation close to the park.

Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

- We are the only UK tour operator offering this stunning new trek. You will be one of the very first westerners ever to visit the Dagana region.
- All of our treks are planned with the importance of good acclimatisation in mind. On this trip you will undertake two acclimatisation walks (one in Paro and one in Thimphu) on the days before the start of your trek.
- We have been pioneering holidays in Bhutan for over 30 years. Our M.D. Steve Berry, is one of the leading authorities on Bhutan in the travel industry and has written two books about his experiences in the Thunder Dragon Kingdom.
- Many members of the Mountain Kingdoms team have first-hand experience of Bhutan. Our Operations Manager, Niki Morgan did the recce of this exact route and can answer any queries you may have.
- Your trek will be led by a knowledgeable, well-trained English speaking guide supported by an experienced trekking crew. They will provide an excellent standard of service and your cook in Bhutan will provide you with varied, tasty, nutritious meals every day.
- We use a good standard, 4 star hotel in Kathmandu.
- Our maximum group size is 12 for this trip. This provides for a genuine small group travel experience and helps reduce the negative aspects often associated with larger trekking groups.
- We offer a flexible service and can extend your holiday with extra hotel nights, upgrades and exciting activities.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.
- If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights team for flight options, quotes and further information.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: www.mountainkingdoms.com or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.

What we say



This is an exciting new trek that has great contrast in scenery and terrain - from crossing snow-covered passes over 4,000m and gazing at fantastic views of Mount Chomolhari and Kangchenjunga, to descending through the forest with an abundance of birds and wildlife. Dagana is a place totally off the tourist track so you have a real feeling of pioneering on this trek.

- Niki Morgan, Operations Manager, Mountain Kingdoms

Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

Truly independent

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

Complete financial security

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

No Surcharge Guarantee

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

Award winning Responsible Tourism

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at www.mountainkingdoms.com.

Genuine small group travel

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

Loyalty Discount

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

Comprehensive information

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.



RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit www.tourismdeclares.com

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

Carbon Offsetting

Already doing:

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

Will do:

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

Reducing Carbon Emissions

Already doing:

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

Will do:

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.

