Lunana Snowman Trek, Bhutan

The longest, remotest and undoubtedly most epic trek in the Himalaya crossing 14 high mountain passes on a spectacular journey through Laya, Lunana and beyond.

Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

Holiday overview

Style	Trek
Accommodation	Hotels, Camping
Grade	Strenuous
Duration	36 days from London to London
Trekking / Walking days	On trek: 28 days Walks on: 1 day
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Local leader – Karma Tenzin
Land only	Joining in Kathmandu, Nepal
Max altitude	5,454m/17,894ft, Gophu La Pass, Day 24

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available

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Group Departure Dates and Prices

Group departures

2027 Dates:

Sun 10 Oct – Sun 14 Nov With Royal Highland Festival

Group prices

Visit the holiday page of our website for up-to-date land only and flight inclusive prices for all group departure dates: https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/holiday/lunana-snowman-trek. Single supplement options can also be found here.

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.

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 trip highlights

- The classic Snowman trek to the furthest reaches of remote Lunana with a superb hike out through uncharted terrain
- Excellent acclimatisation with carefully placed rest days in the best locations for exploration
- Travel with a highly experienced Mountain Kingdoms leader supported by a Bhutanese guide and crew
- Two nights getting to know the people of Laya with their unique dress and cultural traditions
- A full day to enjoy the celebrations at the Royal Highland Festival in Laya
- Sightseeing in Paro and Punakha, including the walk to Tiger's Nest Monastery
- First-rate camping on trek and a four-star hotel in Kathmandu

At a glance itinerary

Days 1-4	Fly to Kathmandu and then to Paro in Bhutan. Sightseeing in the Paro Valley and walk to Taktsang Monastery.
Day 5	Trek to Kyichu, drive to Gunitsawa, short walk to Shana.
Days 6-8	Trek to Soi Thangthanka and Jangothang. Rest and acclimatisation day.
Days 9-10	Cross the Nyele La Pass to Lingshi and trek to Chebisa.
Days 11-12	Trek to Robulathang across the Gobu La and Jare La passes.
Days 13-14	Trek across the Shinge La to Laya. Day to rest and explore the village.
Day 15	Attend the Royal Highland Festival in Laya.
Days 16-17	Trek to Rodhophu, cross the Tsome La. Camp below Gangla Karchung.
Days 18-19	Cross the Gangla Karchung La, to reach Tarina then Woche.
Days 20-22	Trek to Lhedi across the Kashe La Pass and to Thanza for a rest day.
Days 23-24	Cross the highest pass, the Gophu La, 5,243m/17,200ft, to reach Geche Woma.
Days 24-28	Trek to Meluthang via Sachu Kheti and Demsho Wom. Rest day.
Days 29-32	Trek to Padim, cross the Khemi La Pass and end trek at Sephu. Drive to Punakha.
Days 33-36	Drive to Paro. Fly to Kathmandu. At leisure. Fly to London.

Trip summary

Treks don't come any more remote and demanding than this! Nor more rewarding. Led by a highly experienced Bhutanese leader, it takes you through fabulous country with high passes to cross virtually every day and an astonishing array of breathtaking scenery from first step to last.

Our route

In 2017 we introduced a new route for the Lunana Trek. Our M.D. Steve Berry trekked this way the year before and he and his friends were the first westerners to take this path. It is, in Steve's opinion, much better than the 'standard' Lunana route as it spends more time in wild mountains and less time in forest.

Although this is a long trek, it is a fabulous challenge and we feel that this is one of most 'special' treks. Leaving civilisation behind we head north into the towering peaks of the Bhutan Himalaya, crossing 14 high passes and journeying through some of the most inaccessible human settlements on earth. After trekking past Bhutan's second highest peak, Chomolhari, 7,314m/23,999ft, the route takes us through fabulous mountains and uninhabited areas to reach the village of Laya. Here we have a day to enjoy the celebrations at the Royal Highland Festival.

From Laya we strike east again into Lunana, without doubt, the most remote region in Bhutan – even the King has only very recently visited it. It is closed throughout the winter by snowbound passes and indeed the lowest pass to enter Lunana is 5,029m/16,500ft. It is no mean achievement and few people have managed this journey. This route into Lunana is of course the natural continuation of our Lingshi Laya Trek, thus completing a traverse of the northern border with Tibet and thereby seeing all the un-named, unclimbed, unmapped Bhutanese peaks between 6,010m/20,000ft and 7,300m/24,000ft.

From Lunana we gradually make our way back to civilsation on a new route pioneered by our MD, Steve Berry. It is a stunning exploration through a wonderfully wild landscape, and a fitting close to an exceptional trek.

Our experience running Lunana treks

Mountain Kingdoms has been running treks to Lunana for 30 plus years, and every departure has succeeded in its objectives. Logistical issues are not unusual given the challenging and remote nature of this trek, and this success is due to a well measured itinerary which allows for flexibility, and most importantly, to the critical presence of a highly experienced Bhutanese leader supported by an expert Bhutanese trek crew. Your leader carries a full medical kit and satellite phone and has access to our agency in Thimphu 24/7 in case of emergencies.

Mountain Kingdoms was the first U.K. company to operate the Lunana Snowman Trek, and we have run it scores of times over the years. Unlike other companies we build in enough rest and exploration days to allow for the unexpected. We have therefore always completed the route where others have had to turn back due to being on a too hurried itinerary. Lunana always produces the unexpected which is why an experienced Bhutanese guide is an essential element to a successful trek. We have also run dozens of treks in and out of Lunana over the years, using shorter approaches and can claim to have run more Lunana treks than any other company.

Your Leader

Karma Tenzin

Karma is one of the best and most accomplished guides in Bhutan. He has been the guide for our M.D., Steve Berry, on dozens of treks in Bhutan, including treks in, and through, Lunana. Karma will have an experienced trek crew with him.

Special notes

Trekking advice
This is a tough trek and should only be attempted by clients in an excellent state of health and fitness. Having said this, it is an extreme challenge and you can truly say that you have trekked to the very remotest parts of the Himalaya if you have visited Lunana. Due to the remoteness of this region, the itinerary is more prone than usual to changes, weather, changes between one yak team and the next, washed out bridges, snowed up passes, all can happen and frequently do! You must be prepared (and indeed relish) this sort of unpredictability!

An experienced team
Mountain Kingdoms provides an experienced Bhutanese Leader who carries a Satellite phone for use in emergencies and cases of difficulty and has access 24/7 to our agency in Thimphu. He also comes supplied with a comprehensive medical kit and oxygen in case of Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS

Maps and altitudes
In these mountains more than anywhere else there seem to be a huge variations on the altitudes, in particular of passes, given on maps, guide books, on signs on the passes themselves, and on GPS systems. For consistency, the altitudes given here are from GPS readings taken on the 2019 trip. There will be many times that they don't agree with whatever other route description you are reading. Also remember there are often several choices for where you camp and you may pick a different place to the one described in this itinerary.

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 Thamel for your evening meal, or eat in the hotel restaurant if you are tired from your journey.

Overnight: Hotel Shanker or Similar, Kathmandu

Day 3: Fly to Paro, 2,250m/7,380ft. Sightseeing as time permits.

Transfer for the morning flight to Paro, the country's main airstrip. The flight often gives fantastic views of the Himalaya, including Everest, Lhotse, Makalu and Kangchenjunga. Particularly exciting is the section through the Bhutanese foothills and the thrilling landing. Try to sit on the left-hand side of the plane. On arrival you will be met by your Bhutanese Guide. It's useful to pick up a SIM card at the airport before you head off.

You should have time to look around Paro this afternoon including a visit to the dzong and museum. There may even be an archery competition in the town.

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

Day 4: Walk to Taktsang Monastery. Visit Kyichu Lakhang.

Today you will walk up to the famous 'Tiger's nest', Taktsang Monastery, perched some 2,000ft/609m up on a cliff overlooking the Paro valley and one of the iconic buildings of Bhutan. It is said to be the spot 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. This is a popular route so it is worth starting early to enjoy the solitude. The walk, which will provide good acclimatization, is quite steep and takes about 2-3 hours to go up - less to descend. You may choose to walk just as far as the tea house for fantastic views or climb to some prayer flags just above where the views are even better. If there is a particular religious gathering or VIP visit in progress, you will not be able to enter the Monastery but in any case it is worth climbing for a further half hour beyond the tea house to another viewpoint directly across from the monastery. If you are allowed to visit the temple itself you have to descend steeply from this viewpoint about 100m/330ft on steps, only to climb again to reach the temple where it clings to the rock face. It was built to be isolated!

You then descend to your vehicle and drive to a nearby restaurant for lunch. The journey back to Paro passes Kyichu. Here you will visit the ancient temple of Kyichu Lakhang, one of the oldest in Bhutan, which was one of 108 temples built by Songsten Gampo an important early Tibetan king, to pin down the Bon demon that was thought to hover over the whole of Tibet. You may also have time for further sightseeing when you return to Paro after your trek.

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

Day 5: Trek to Kyichu, drive to Gunitsawa, short walk to Shana, 2,788m/9,147ft - 5-6 hours.

You leave the hotel and walk up through the hills to a village. Further along is a nunnery that you can visit with some of the oldest paintings you will see in Bhutan. You continue along forested ridges until you reach Kyichu Lakhang after about three hours of gentle trekking. Your guide will be in his trekking clothes today, not his national dress, so won't be able to take you inside, but you can enjoy the surroundings again. Your bus will then take you along the increasingly bumpy road towards Shana, perhaps stopping somewhere near Drugyel Dzong

for a picnic lunch by the river. From the military camp at Gunitsawa, you will walk the last hour on the old path, whilst the vehicle continues on with your gear to the camp at Shana.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 6: Trek to Soi Thangthanka, 3,586m/11,765ft - 7-8 hours.

The route follows the river in heavily forested country, with isolated farmhouses and plenty of wildlife. The Bhutanese advise you to walk in pairs as there are bears in this area. You pass a junction en route, where another path leads north over the Tremo La to Tibet. Spencer Chapman crossed the Tremo La in 1937 on his way to climb Chomolhari. This can feel a tough opening day given the altitude you are at, and especially if the undulating terrain is muddy. There are a couple of rustic stone tourist shelters and toilet blocks at the campsite as well as a basic shop and electricity if you are lucky.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 7: Trek to Jangothang, 4,102m/13,458ft - 5-6 hours.

It is worth getting up early to photograph the dawn colours on Bhutan's second highest mountain, Chomolhari, which is framed at the end of the valley. After about an hour's walk, you slowly leave the forest line and gradually climb into a beautiful valley, passing Tengethang, a winter home of Yak herdsmen. There is a school here which you may be able to visit, the children enjoy it as much as you will. You should see lots of yaks today before you arrive at a large round hut, which is the base camp for Chomolhari. The 7,314m/23,997ft high mountain overlooks the camp and nearby there are the ruins of an old fortress, which used to guard Bhutan against Tibetan invasion. This is a shorter day than yesterday but you will be feeling the altitude. The camp area has another tourist shelter and basic shop.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 8: Rest and acclimatisation day.

Today you will the have chance to acclimatise and walk up to the Tsho Pho Lakes at 4,350m. On the walk to the lakes it is not unusual to see blue sheep plus birds of prey, also keep your eyes peeled for Marmot. There are some yak herders' huts by the lakes and great views back towards Chomolhari and Jitchu Drake. In the afternoon there is time to relax. At some point your mules from Shana will return home to be replaced by yaks or mules coming down from Lingshi.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 9: Trek to Lingshi, 4,001m/13,126ft, crossing the Nyele La Pass, 4,817m/15,804ft - 6-7 hours.

You will have a good day's walking today with spectacular views of several stunning Himalayan peaks, including Jitchu Drake, 6,850m/22,470ft, and Tsering Kang, 6,994m/22,946ft. You start climbing straight away and after some 3-4 hours reach the Nyelela Pass at an altitude of 4,817m/15,804ft. You pass yak herders' pastures and will see, if they are still in the area, their camps. Coming down to Lingshi there are the first views of a dzong atop its 600ft/183m high hill. The dzong is (just) standing despite being badly damaged by an earthquake. Camp is in the valley before and below the dzong near the huts where the workers repairing the dzong live. They are prisoners doing their time apparently, although remarkably friendly, and you should see them at work tomorrow as the path passes the dzong. They will undoubtedly wish you luck on your long trek.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 10: Trek to Chebisa, 3,870m/12,697ft - 5 hours.

This is a magical day. Leaving Lingshi behind, you contour and climb gently to reach another delightful village, Gang Yul which is set right below a 300m/1,000ft cliff. Another hour's walking brings you to a lovely little valley with a huge waterfall at one end and the Shangri-la village of Chebisa, where you camp by the side of the river

on the archery green in the middle of the village. Very leisurely walking today, with plenty of reasons and opportunities to linger. Chebisa is the first example you will see of a village that has benefitted from cordyceps. The houses are no longer mud huts but wonderfully large, ornate and well decorated structures. Cordyceps is a fungus that attacks and then grows on caterpillars above 3,500m in parts of the Himalaya. They are sold to the Chinese at around £10 a piece.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 11: Trek to Shomuthang, 4,222m/13,852ft, crossing the Gobu La Pass, 4,349m/14,268ft - 5-6 hours.

A walk up to the chorten en route to the waterfall before breakfast is recommended for lovely early morning views of the valley. You will have quite a stiff climb up to the Gobula at 4,349m/14,268ft, before dropping to a deserted valley full of rhododendrons and beautiful autumn colours. The path continues to traverse between valleys, eventually arriving at a couple of yak herders' huts in the valley below the Jare La. There are a couple of options for camping here depending on the time and energy levels!

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 12: Trek to Robulathang, 4,152m/13,662ft, crossing the Jare La Pass, 4,635m/15,207ft - 7-8 hours.

There is now a long haul over the Jare La at 4,635m/15,207ft, where once again you get stunning all-round views and the mountain of Tsering Kang 6,994m/22,946ft. You drop steeply down a forest trail to the Tcharijathang Valley, where herds of takin are said to roam at certain times of the year. The river here is your first potential river crossing: there are usually 2 or 3 temporary logs across at a narrow point, however, if not, it is an easy crossing, well below the knee, but you might want to have your sandals with you. It is a short, steep 40 minute climb out of the valley onto a flat shelf where you camp in the most wonderful amphitheatre of mountains. The valley below is full of yak herders' huts and their animals.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 13: Trek to Limithang, 4,118m/13,510ft, crossing the Shinge La La, 4,912m/16,115ft - 6-7 hours.

This is one of the hardest, but most rewarding, days of the trek. You climb slowly up to the Shinge La, which takes some 5 hours, to be rewarded with stunning views of mountains, including the spectacular Gangchentak 6,794m/22,290ft at the head of the valley. On a clear day, almost all the mountains on the northern border are clearly visible, 10-20 miles distant. Eagles, Griffin Vultures, Blue Sheep and yak abound in this area and on your descent you may once again see nomadic yak-herders. On the way down you will pass a glacial lake that recently burst through the moraine that contained it; the remains of the flood damage are still evident. You camp in a lovely spot by the river bank.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 14: Trek to Laya, 3,812m/12,506ft - 4 hours.

You will have a relatively leisurely walk today alongside the river to reach the largest village on the trek, though the walk does entail quite a bit of ascent and decent and quite a stiff climb at the end. Laya is a large and prosperous town spread across the hillside. It has a large school, electricity, a phone signal and is now only a day from the roadhead at Koina. Unlike the village in Nepal though, there are no tourists, tea houses, cafes and only a couple of basic shops. The people of Laya are famous for their vertically striped yak-hair clothing and strange conical bamboo hats. The women wear their hair long and have a great deal of turquoise and jade jewellery. The features of the people are even more Tibetan/Mongolian than the Bhutanese who live in the central valleys. The rest of the day is spent at leisure or visiting the village. Good views of Masagang, 7,165m/23,507ft, and other peaks.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 15: Attend the Royal Highland Festival at Laya.

You have a whole day to enjoy the spectacle that is the annual Royal Highland Festival in Laya.

The Royal Highland Festival is a vibrant celebration that offers a unique glimpse into the lives and traditions of Bhutan's highlanders. Rooted in the vision of promoting a thriving highland economy and showcasing the innovation and cultural heritage of the local communities, the festival brings together people from across the region. It's a dynamic exchange of knowledge, skills, and best practices related to yak farming and sustainable highland livelihoods, as well as a celebration of the local culture. You'll witness cultural performances, unusual sporting contests and bustling stalls with local produce. The festival was founded in 2016 by the current king, and he remains a keen supporter.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 16: Trek via Taksaka to Rodhophu, 4,206m/13,800ft - 7-8 hours.

A tough day made longer with the packing of a new set of mules and yaks. You descend from the village a long way down into the start of the gorge. Look out for the ancient wooden gateway leaving the village. It is an hour and a half to reach the small army post of Taksaka. After a further forty minutes down the gorge you turn left, 3,240m/10,630ft, and start to head east towards Lunana. This is the start of your journey to Lunana proper.

Turning east you gradually climb through forest to a clearing with the remains of an old hut. There may be nomads camped near here. In places the path is high above the valley floor and the herders have to take care with the mules. You proceed in and out of the tree line, all the time climbing gradually into a high altitude valley with an impressive river and rapids. Eventually, you enter a flat-bottomed valley ringed with rocky mountains and a ruined tourist shelter. This is camp! With the ups and downs, it is 1,000m of ascent from the checkpost: this is a long hard day and if the weather is inclement can be quite a challenge.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 17: Cross Tsome La Pass, 4,709m/15,450ft. Tek to below Gangla Karchung La, 4,900m/16,076ft - 5-6 hours.

The path up here can look quite exciting, however it is far better than it looks and in 2019 a gang of workers were camped here, substantially improving the route. 2-3 hours walking brings you to a small pass called the Tsome La, 4,709m/15,450ft. You are now in a region that is totally remote and exceedingly beautiful and as the day wears on the views and remoteness become even more acute. After the pass the route crosses an undulating series of ridges and then contours around a large mountainside; you may see a yak herders camp below. On and on, closer and closer to Gangla Karchung, until it rises sheer in front of you. This is one of the few mountains in Bhutan that has been climbed - in this case by a French expedition. The campsite below the face is spectacular.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 18: Cross the Gangla Karchung La, 5,156m/16,916ft, to Tarina, 3,919m/12,857ft - 6-7 hours.

A great day! The climb up to the pass is rewarded by wonderful views of the glacial lakes and Mount Kang Bum, 7,100m/23,294ft, hemmed in by moraine dams at the head of the first of the Lunana valleys. These lakes are the source of the Po Chu and are like snakes twisting down the valley. The path then runs down through a wide belt of rhododendron with stunning views in all directions. It is a long descent, which can be quite steep and slippery. A choice of various camp sites are available amongst stunted heather.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 19: Trek to camp above Woche, 4,114m/13,599ft - 6 hours.

A pleasant walk down the valley past a clearing named Tarina. The valley is hemmed in by rock walls and rocky peaks on all sides. Every half mile, spectacular waterfalls come thundering into the valley with its pine clad hillsides. The valley itself is a mass of colourful heather, flowers, brushwood, with no sign of human habitation. Finally, there is a steep climb through the forest at the end of the valley and contouring round to the first Lunana village of Woche. Woche used to be a simple village where you might get a butter tea. It is now another 'cordyceps' village with large, beautifully painted timber houses that would be more at home in the Swiss Alps. You might enjoy lunch here and get to meet some of the locals tending the fields and their animals. Most of the children will at the Lunana School which you will pass tomorrow. The crew will probably want to push on to the foot of tomorrow's pass, another hour and a half. It is a beautiful, flat, grassy campsite on the far side of the river with plenty of grazing for the mules.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 20: Trek to Lhedi, 3,728m/12,231ft, across the Kashe La Pass, 4,556m/14,947ft - 6-7 hours.

From the the camp site near the river there is a steep haul to cross the Kashe La, 4,556m/14,947ft. On the way you pass a sacred lake, a beautiful pea green colour. You shouldn't throw stones into this as it would anger the spirit of the lake. Continuing, there is a huge cairn of stones and prayer flags on the pass before walking down the other side quite steeply, to the little village of Tegar. Watch out for the very pretty chorten just before the village. A new path traverses left above the village slowly losing height towards the valley floor. There is a particularly exciting cantilever bridge over a roaring torrent coming down between two cliffs. This is now the main valley leading up to Thanza in the distance - the wind rattles through it and the vast flood plain is evidence of the 1994 moraine breach. Lhedi is a string of houses on a terrace high above the river, rock walls behind and terraced fields in front. There is space to camp just after the village on the archery course. The school is definitely worth a visit. Children come from the surrounding villages and board here. In mid-November the teachers are helicoptered out and the school shuts for winter.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 21: Trek to Thanza, 4,126m/13,537ft - 4-5 hours.

Route descriptions vary massively on this section, mostly because of the chaos and route changes caused by the moraine dam burst. It is only really a four hour walk, though it is worth enjoying and stopping in Chozo. Firstly, you follow the river for several hours to a junction of valleys, the main river flowing out of a much higher plateau down through numerous rapids. Once into the upper valley it broadens right out flat, with the river forming lakes and broad reaches and shortly afterwards you arrive at the village of Chozo. This is the only village that has a dzong in Lunana, which is well worth a detour to take a peek at. The people of Lunana are very superstitious and have very strong beliefs in the spirits of seven Tibetan brothers, who many hundreds of years previously, were defeated in a battle in Tibet. Each of these spirits dwells in their own locality in Lunana. The most powerful, Chumna, lives in a wood near the dzong of Chozo.

Carrying on across the plain, assisted by the wind, (look out for the large area of rippled sand) you eventually reach another rise into an even higher upper valley. Here there is a big village split either side of the river. To the north are the rock-walls behind which is the 7,300m/24,000ft Table Mountain and to the south are more snowy mountains. Again the village people are friendly, although they see very few westerners. Thanza is the largest village in Lunana and there is always plenty of activity to watch. Most houses have solar panels, and there is a phone signal: the last now till you reach the roadhead.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 22: Rest day in Thanza.

The rest day today will be well-earned and extremely welcome. You may wish to do a few personal chores before spending time wandering around the village, meeting people and discovering something of the hard way of life of these remote tribespeople. The next 3 days are the longest of the trek, and there is increasingly a

trend to set off in the afternoon of the rest day to get 3 or 4 hours up the valley.

Most groups prefer to have a full rest day followed by 3 long days, but your leader may want to make the decision based on the weather forecast and group fitness.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 23: Trek to before Gophu La, stop at Tshorim, 5,225m/17,142ft - 7-8 hours.

You will climb steadily for an hour to a cairn, undoubtedly sad to be leaving Thanza, but full of excitement about crossing the Gophu La. Looking back down the valley, Chozo and its dzong can be picked out and as it is an early start, smoke will still be drifting off the roofs of all the houses in the villages below. You carry on now, up a valley, more rapids and minor waterfalls, towards a large, pointed rock peak at its head. Slowly, but surely you come opposite the granite mountain, to have lunch in a circular low stone wall shelter. Carrying on, the scenery becomes more magnificent, until you reach camp near a lake surrounded by snowy peaks. The last few hours can be tough, winding their way through moraines with no obvious end in sight. There are two campsite options depending on how you are progressing: the first before and the second below the lake. It will be very cold at night whichever you stop at, though stunning.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 24: Cross the Gophu La, 5,454m/17,894ft, to Geche Woma, 4,625m/15,174ft - 8 hours.

This surely must be one of the most beautiful trek days anywhere in the Himalaya. Try to see the sunrise, as the pink colours on the high snows are really fabulous. It is, in fact, not far to climb to the main pass, skirting around the edges of lakes, which, on a still day, mirror the ice-fluted peaks that you are passing between. As you come to the Gophu La, the highest mountain in Bhutan, Gangkar Punsum, 7,550m/24,770ft, towers above the horizon. It seems to be a piece of earth elevated to a higher, purer plain and is completely dazzling. It is a very long and tiring descent through moraines and boulders to the valley floor which is still at 4,800m. There is a river crossing here with no bridge so you may get wet sandals. There are usually boulders to get across on but some may be below the surface of the water and slippery. The crew will help you here, but you will be tired so take your time. Geche Woma is the name of the camping place in the valley but actually there are three different places you can camp spread out down the valley. Ideally you want to get to at least the middle site otherwise tomorrow becomes a very long day. Coming down into the valley look back and see a 'Rupert Bear' peak framed at the end - perfectly conical and if you are lucky, ringed with cloud. Enjoy the remoteness, this is a very wild setting.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 25: Cross the Saga La pass, 4,930m/16,175ft. Trek to Sachu Kheti, 4,267m/14,000ft - 7-8 hours.

The path follows on down the valley now, completely uninhabited, before a track leads back up the hillside to a small plateau. From there it climbs for 45 minutes to the lunch spot. After a welcome rest you cross a small pass and wind down to some yak herder huts. You then cross a narrow defile, past a large slope of sand, perhaps part of the old Tethyan Ocean. Coming to the top of the slope you are faced with an amazingly beautiful lake, locked in by a circle of rocky peaks, with an impossible looking path contouring up and around to a col, the Saga La Pass. The views are wonderful from this very dramatic point.
From here you drop down steeply but on an easy path to your campsite with cliffs and rocky peaks all around. You will have now passed the turning for Dur Hot Springs and the Bumthang exit, and will be breaking out into genuinely unexplored territory. This is a long day and could be split at the yak herder's hut if needs be.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 26: Cross unnamed pass, 4,520m/14,829ft, trek to Demsho Wom, 4,520m/14,892ft - 4 hours.

A fabulous day as you strike out for a week into the mainly uninhabited stretch of mountains between you and the road head. There are many blue sheep in this area. From camp it is steeply, but easily, down for an hour

to a bridge. Stop and enjoy watching the yaks cross over. It is now a lovely afternoon climbing slowly up to a small 'pass' above the camp at Demsho Wom. The climb takes about 3 hours stopping for lunch en route or having it in camp on arrival. As you get higher there is a great vertical cliff on your right. To your left is a stream cascading over the lip of a valley above and crashing down steep rapids. Looking back you can see the other side you have just descended, and the horizon is a line of snow peaks and cliffs. The granite ridges produce odd shaped towers, unusual spires, mushrooms of rock and great cantilevered flakes. There are the sounds of Himalayan pheasants and choughs, and rhododendron everywhere. You also get views of the Saga La Pass. The path contours improbably and rises to a small pass. Camp lies just below, next to the stream. A huge valley meanders off to your right with more intriguing peaks and cliffs. Spend the afternoon relaxing or exploring the surrounding valleys. There are several high viewpoints easily achievable.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 27: Cross Demsho La pass, 4,848m/15,905ft, and continue trek to Tshering Dorji Yak Herder Camp (Meluthang), 4,425m/14,518ft - 6 hours.

What a day! Another big challenge. 45 mins from camp you come to a large lake, Demsho Lake, and above that two smaller lakes. Now you turn right for the pass which may be snow covered. In 2016 our group saw the tracks of fox and snow leopard and just near the pass they saw a small rodent-like creature with ears like small saucers. They also saw three deer sprinting across the snow. Below the pass is a huge, beautiful valley containing two big lakes, one behind the other. You are so far from civilisation now. The air is clean and clear and nature is completely unspoilt. A magical place.

From the end of the second lake you come to a 'lip' in the valley which falls away below you. The stream is like a snake heading off into the distance. Further down you come to some hillocks on your left and behind one of these is a yak herder's summer hut belonging to Tshering Dorji and his wife Pem Dem. They live here for 7 months of the year. Pem's brother Namgay lives over the other side of the hill to the east. Camp below their hut. The river needs crossing to get to camp, but there are a couple of places where the boulders are so large they are like bridges.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 28: Rest and exploration day.

You'll probably want to relax today, but if not then the ridges on either side of camp are easily achievable and offer great views.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 29: Cross small pass, 4,360m/14,340ft, trek to Padim, 4,515m/14,813ft - 5 hours

A grand day! You leave the lovely camp at Meluthang behind with its yak hut on the hill and its resident ravens, and it is steeply downhill for less than an hour to a bridge. In 2019 we met a family camped here with their 70 yaks as they slowly made their way out to Sephu for the winter. We enjoyed butter tea and yak cheese with them. After this it is a steep zig zag climb of 250m for an hour to then follow a traverse around a bowl in the mountains which climbs to a 'pass' and a small cairn. There is then a slanting descent to above a most beautiful lake. It is hemmed in by mountains and granite cliffs and is a lovely colour of green. The path goes around the lake, but several hundred feet above it, eventually climbing up and out of this bowl with big drops below, to a level grassy platform. This platform gives the most wonderful views of the massive main valley stretching several days hard walking in either direction. Hugely impressive! The mountains you have passed through are stacked on the horizon. Leading off the main valley are many side valleys, and right opposite is the valley where Tshering Dorji, Pem Dem, their son Wangchuk and their herd of yaks live.

Beyond their valley is the one Namgay lives in, and beyond that again are various other valleys that the herders from the Tongsa region inhabit in the summer. It is said that there is a path that leads to Gangkar Punsum heading north, but for humans only; it is too difficult for animals. That must be something!! After soaking up the view the path traverses around the mountainside to a small bowl with room to camp. If the weather is kind the sunset and sunrise from this eyrie are sensational.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 30: Trek across the Khemi La, 4,572m/15,000ft, to below the Chachi La, 4,361m/14,308ft - 6-7 hours.

Worth getting up early for the fiery orange sunrise over the peaks to the east and north. A steep short path leads to a small unmarked pass, and then there is a very fine path to the left of the mountain leading to the Khemi La marked by a cairn and prayer flags. One hour to the pass. Fantastic views on both sides of un-named, un-climbed mountains on both sides of the pass in an un-known area. Our guide and our cook had been this way previously with friends and came upon a herd of thirty Takin here. It is now three hours to the river far below, 3,560m/11,680ft. As you get nearer the river there is a massive rock wall on your right. The bridge and the ferocious rapids stun and amaze, and lunch will probably be taken near here.

Then it is a long ascent through giant moss encrusted rhododendron with a thundering stream to the left. A 565m climb brings you to a huge lake penned in by mountains, where the stream needs to be crossed on easy stepping stones. The sting in the tail is another forty minutes to a great camp above the lake. This is a popular yak herders' pasture and there are many stone shelters and enclosures here, though the herders will probably have already left after the summer months.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 31: Trek to Maurothang, 3,682m/12,080ft, across the Chachi la pass, 4,638m/15,216ft - 6-7 hours.

Above camp is another lake which is traversed on the east to enter a small cwm. Half an hour to the lake, half an hour to the top of the cwm. Now the climb to the pass begins in earnest. The pass could well be snow covered. Again to reach the Chachi La Pass is about an hour from the head of the cwm turning right up what seems the least probable of routes out of the valley. Great exultation on reaching the pass, the last big crossing! Many a group photo is needed here, and for those with energy, the grassy slopes up to the right provide even better views looking back down. If there is snow on the pass then again you may well see evidence of wild animals. Wonderful, wonderful views and on a clear day you can see Gangkar Punsum and many, many of the biggest peaks on the border with Tibet. There is a great colossus of a black rock peak looming over the pass too. Now begins the big descent.

An hour brings you above a lake fed by a stream in the shape of a serpent - with beautiful views and prayer flags it makes for a fine lunch spot. Civilisation approaches! First a summer village of 13 huts, and at the bottom of the valley another 7 huts. Then you reach a junction with the main path coming from Lunana. This is the route many parties use. Five and a half hours from last night's camp to this point. Fifteen minutes more and you reach the first shop, and another fifteen minutes to the first of a couple of campsite options at Maurothang.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 32: Trek to Sephu, 2,672m/8,766ft - 5-6 hours. Drive to Punakha - 3½ hours.

The last day's trekking! It is a long walk down the valley, mainly through forest. The path is pretty 'bouldery' and focus is needed. After the first hour you cross the main river to the left bank. Another forty five minutes brings you to a rather odd pagoda. Several more bridges and forested paths lie ahead with ever increasing signs of human habitation. Finally, without warning, you come to the end of the trek and at a tarmac road at the Wangchuck Centennial National Park sign transport awaits.

All aboard the magic bus to hot baths, warm comfortable beds and beer in Punakha.

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

Day 33: Sightseeing in Punakha. Drive to Paro - 4 hours.

You will have time in the morning to do a little sightseeing in Punakha. A visit to the dzong is a dazzling experience. It is one of the largest and oldest monastery fortresses in Bhutan and the history and legends surrounding it are fascinating.

In the afternoon you will drive over the Dochu La pass, and bypassing Thimphu, you will carry on to the Paro valley.

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

Day 34: Fly to Kathmandu. Afternoon at leisure.

Again, a sensational take-off and scenic Himalayan flight, including views of Chomolhari that you trekked past. In Kathmandu, you transfer back to your hotel, with time to relax and reflect on your adventure.

Overnight: Hotel Shanker or Similar, Kathmandu (Meals: B)

Day 35: At leisure. 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 36: Arrive London.

Our grading system

Lunana Snowman Trek is graded as a Strenuous trekking holiday, as described below.

Strenuous
Our strenuous trekking holidays can involve anything from 10 to 30 days on trek and are often in remote areas, far from 'civilisation'. Rest days are interspersed but there may be up to 7 consecutive days of hard walking. Most treks reach altitudes of at least 4,900m/16,000ft and there will be a great deal of ascent and descent. The majority of our strenuous treks utilise camping, tea house or mountain lodge accommodation.

These holidays are suitable for fit individuals who have regular experience of mountain walking.

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:

- ✓ 33 x breakfasts, 31 x lunches, 31 x dinners
- ✓ A Mountain Kingdoms appointed western leader supported by an expert Bhutanese guide
- ✓ 4* hotel accommodation in Kathmandu on a twin share, bed and breakfast basis
- ✓ In Bhutan, good standard hotel accommodation on a twin-share basis, full board basis
- ✓ Bhutan visa and Bhutan visitor taxes
- ✓ Full-service camping with good quality equipment and camp staff to carry out all work (tents on a twin-share basis)
- ✓ All flights between Kathmandu and Paro and domestic hotel/airport transfers
- ✓ A satellite phone is carried by your guide in case of an emergency
- ✓ A free high-quality Mountain Kingdoms kit bag
- ✓ The use of a good quality down jacket and sleeping bag with liner (when travelling via Kathmandu)
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicles
- ✓ Sightseeing where specified
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK & UK Departure Tax (flight inclusive only)
- ✓ 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)

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
- × Optional trips
- × Tips

Your accommodation

We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.

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 following hotels but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.

Hotel Shanker, Kathmandu
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 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.

Zhingkham Resort or Similar, Punakha
Overlooking Punakha Dzong, and only opened in 2016, the Zhingkham 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

33 x breakfasts, 31 x lunches, 31 x dinners. 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.

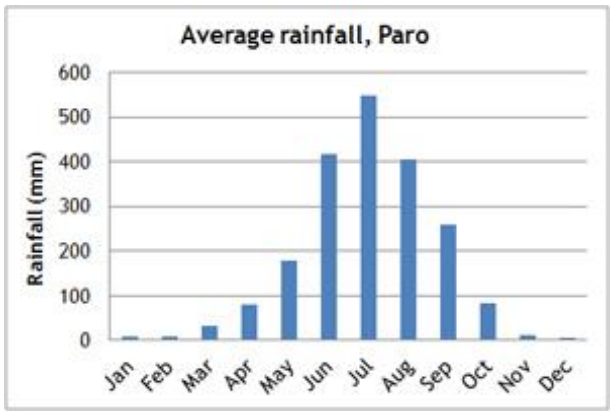
Further information

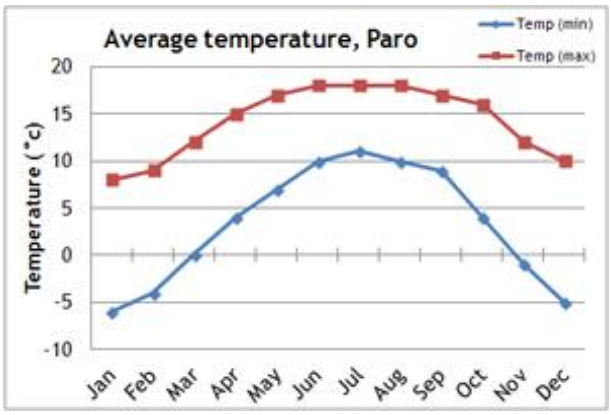
When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

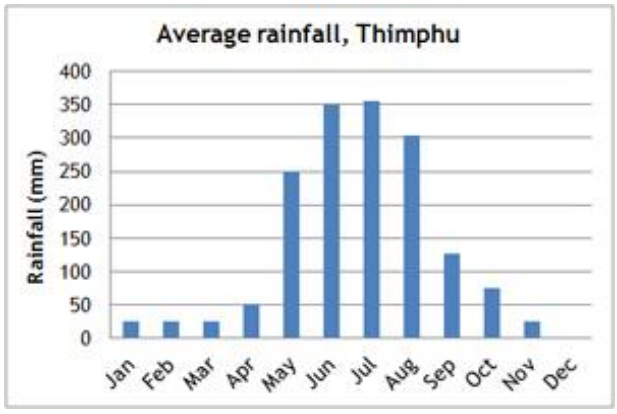
The nature of adventure travel

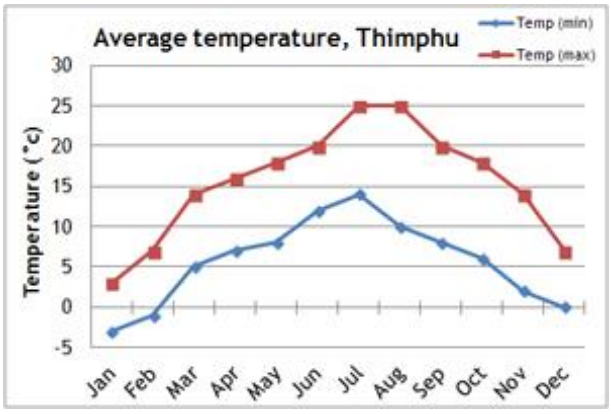
Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather 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.

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 supply an experienced western leader and a Bhutanese guide for your safety and to solve unexpected logistical problems that often occur in Lunana.
- You will be accompanied by an experienced trek crew who will take very good care of you. The camp will be set up for you each day, you will enjoy excellent meals and have your gear portered so you only need to carry a day pack.
- The itinerary provides excellent acclimatisation and crucially allows rest days at important stopping places. There is enough leeway to allow for unseen problems, something Lunana is famous for.
- The trek is timed to coincide with a mountain festival for a unique insight into the culture and heritage of the region.
- We have been pioneering treks in Bhutan, including Lunana, 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. If you have any questions about this trek then contact Steve on 01453 844400.
- 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 time in Bhutan or Kathmandu with extra hotel nights, upgrades and other exciting activities and tours.
- 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 our clients say

It is difficult in a few words to express how pleased we were for the very professional way the entire crew and our leader in particular treated us. We could not have wished for a better guide and crew. Everything was very professionally handled. We felt very safe and well treated by everyone.
-P & A, Copenhagen

The thing I appreciated in you offering this trek is that you had the intention to do the complete trek and add quite a lot of extra days for bad weather etc. The other groups doing the trek were a lot more stressed to get things done.
-Mr K, Holland

The trek was brilliant, Bhutan absolutely magical. I feel privileged and proud to have got around in one piece as it was the hardest sustained physical thing I have ever done
- Ms F, Solihull

You use the best local trekking company, with reliable staff, to enable us to enjoy one of the remotest and most beautiful treks in the world. The extra rest days included in your itinerary allowed the leader to sit out the snowstorm and later to split a long day to the benefit of us all. All this in marked contrast to other groups trekking at the same time as us.
-Mr & Mrs L, Scotland

All organisational aspects were seamless and there seemed to be a real empathetic understanding of the cultures we visited. MK guides know their stuff and are dependable leaders.
-Mr & Mrs H, Switzerland

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 a 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

For almost four decades, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now have trips to all corners of the globe but are conscious that our holidays can have a detrimental impact on the world around us and want to do all we can to reduce that.

We have focused our main responsible tourism efforts on reducing the carbon emissions produced by our holidays, and counterbalancing 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

Since 2007, we have donated a percentage of our client and staff flight costs to the Ecoan tree planting project in Peru. Ecoan are a trusted local NGO who use the funds directly to purchase seedling trees with the long-term goal of restoring 2.5 million acres of Andean land.

Ecoan maintains over 100 tree nurseries across Peru where their tree saplings are grown and then transported to planting sites during the rainy season. They use native trees such as the Polylepis, as these can survive at high altitudes. As well as sequestering carbon, they help protect against soil erosion, landslides and the effects of extreme weather on local crops. As such, they are enormously beneficial to the economic well-being of the surrounding communities. This is very much a community-led conservation project, with the local Quechuan people coming together to plant tens of thousands of saplings in the Andean highlands where they live. During the annual Queuña Raymi (tree festival), over 150,000 native trees can be planted in a single day!

For every person booking a long-haul, flight inclusive holiday with us, Ecoan can purchase and plant 20 trees in Peru, and for short-haul flights, 7 trees. Typically, we send over $7,000 per year to Ecoan, which is over 7,000 trees.

Reducing carbon emissions

- ✓ We offer the majority of our clients a free, filtered Water-to-Go bottle to help reduce the need for single-use plastic bottles during their travels.
- ✓ We predominantly use locally-owned hotels and guesthouses rather than multinational chains. In some of our destinations, such as Bhutan, we use homestays. Not only does this type of small-sized, locally-owned accommodation have a much-reduced carbon footprint, but it also helps support communities.
- ✓ We evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel-efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, choose direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We have stopped offering unnecessary optional flights, such as Everest sightseeing. We try to minimise internal flights where possible.
- ✓ We recycle as much of our office waste as possible and have introduced a client portal to reduce paperwork and to make it easier for clients to manage their trips online.

Wider commitment to responsible and sustainable tourism

- ✓ We are signatories to the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside other like-minded travel companies to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.
- ✓ We will continue to support several charities with whom we have a long-standing relationship, such as Shiva Charity in Nepal.

Over the years, we have given sizeable payments to emergency relief when a disaster has occurred in the countries we operate in. We always try to ensure that these funds go directly to those who need them most to help rebuild their lives.