

Mount Chomolhari Trek to Tiger's Nest, Bhutan New

Trek to Bhutan's second highest mountain, cross many high passes, visit an ancient treasury, make a pilgrimage to a holy lake and finally descend to the Tiger's Nest.



Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

Holiday overview

Style	Trek
Accommodation	Hotels, Camping
Grade	Vigorous / Strenuous
Duration	20 days from London to London
Trekking / Walking days	On trek: 13 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	4,890m/16,043ft, Bonte La, Day 8

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available



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Departures

Group departures

2026 Dates:

Mon 04 May - Sat 23 May

Mon 05 Oct - Sat 24 Oct

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.

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.

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.

Your trip highlights

- Discover a new and remote high mountain trail from Chomolhari to the famous Tiger's Nest
- Enjoy a fully supported, well-paced camping trek with excellent acclimatisation and two rest days.
- Trek to the base camp of Mount Chomolhari with a day for exploration.
- Cross seven high passes over 4,000m, including the little-used Bonte La.
- Explore stunning Soi Yaksey Valley with its atmospheric, abandoned cliff treasury and hermitage.
- Visit one of the holiest lakes in Bhutan and pass three 'sky burial' sites.
- Camp for two nights below the cliff temple of Bumdra and descend on mountain paths to the Tiger's Nest Monastery.
- First-rate camping facilities on trek and good quality hotels in Bhutan and Kathmandu

At a glance itinerary

Days 1-3	Arrive Kathmandu. Fly to Paro in Bhutan. Sightseeing in Paro Valley.
Day 4	Begin trek to Chomolhari Base Camp
Days 5-6	Trek to Soi Thangthanka. Trek to Chomolhari Base Camp (Jangothang).
Day 7	Rest and acclimatisation day. Choice of day walks.
Day 8	Trek to Soi Yaksey Valley, crossing the Bonte La Pass, 4,890m/16,040ft.
Day 9	Explore Chorapang and historic house.
Day 10	Visit Sey Dzong 'Treasury' and trek over the Lalung La Pass. Camp in yak meadow.
Days 11-15	Trek through remote mountains, crossing 4 passes, visit the holy lake of Drakey Pang Tsho, pass by three 'sky burial sites' to arrive at Bumdra Cliff Temple.
Day 16	Descend to Tiger's Nest. Drive to Paro.
Day 17	Day at leisure
Days 18-20	Fly to Kathmandu. At leisure. Fly to London.

Trip summary

This new, exciting trip takes you on magnificent circuit deep into the heart of some of Bhutan's most spectacular Himalayan scenery, to the foot of the second-highest mountain in the Thunder Dragon Kingdom, and far beyond to arrive via remote valleys and high passes at fabulous Tiger's Nest Monastery.

The trek to Mount Chomolhari Base Camp, 7,313m/23,997ft, traverses beautiful and varied country, starting in the cultivated fields and villages of the upper Paro valley, and then climbing through the pristine, indigenous forest of the Paro Chu valley to remote, high mountain landscapes inhabited only by yak herders. You will have a full day at Chomolhari Base Camp with time to acclimatise and explore the mountain's glacier and the scenic area above the camp, with stupendous views of many big snowy summits including one of the Himalaya's most beautiful peaks, Mount Jichu Drake, 7,000m/23,000ft. First climbed by Doug Scott in 1988 - its razor sharp ridges are unreal.

Leaving Base Camp you trek past the alluring waters of the Tso Phu Lakes and cross the Bonte La pass to reach the remote but permanently inhabited Soi Yaksey valley. This is a true 'Shangri La' and you have a full day to explore this stunning area. You will see the abandoned 'Treasury' of Sey Dzong, set high into a huge crack in the rock face, and continue your trek to cross the Lalung La Pass. Over the following days you will trek through remote mountains, crossing four passes and visiting the holy lake of Drakey Pang Sho and passing three 'sky burial' sites. Finally, you will descend to the famous Tiger's Nest Monastery - a route that few others take - before returning to Paro with a free day to celebrate your achievement.

Whilst trekking you may visit local farmhouses for a real glimpse into rural Bhutanese life. Also, along the way you may see wildlife including large herds of Blue Sheep, eagles soaring above on the thermals and even, if you are lucky, footprints of that most elusive of mountain creatures, the snow leopard.

Personal Introduction by Steve Berry

Mount Chomolhari, 7,314m/23,997ft, is the second highest mountain in Bhutan and straddles the border of Bhutan and Tibet. It was first climbed by an Englishman, Freddie Spencer-Chapman with Sherpa Pasang Dawa Lama in 1937. Almost by sheer luck Spencer-Chapman managed to obtain a permit from the Tibetans, and from the 'Maharaja' of Bhutan, to attempt the peak. In those late colonial times the British often referred to the king of Bhutan as a 'Maharaja'. By coincidence Freddie was a friend of my father and lent the ice axe that he had used on Chomolhari to my dad for his 1946 attempt of Mount Nun, 7135m/23,410ft, in Kashmir.

Now, Chomolhari's base camp sits close under the magnificent east face and next to a ruined castle built in the 1600s to protect Bhutan against invasion from Tibet. If you trek to the base camp it takes two and a half days from the end of the Paro valley. Then after a day's exploring and acclimatizing to the altitude, the regular onward route parallels the chain of Himalayan giants which march north and east along the Tibetan border. Exit is then via more big passes which bring you to either the winter capital, Punakha, or via the shorter route to the modern day capital, Thimphu.

However, there is a third route from the base camp, which is less well known, that strikes south from Chomolhari over a big pass called the Bonte La, 4,890m/16,043ft. This takes you down into the remote valley of Soi Yaksey (also called the Dhumar Valley) where once a local chieftain built an extraordinary 'treasury' half way up a monstrous, near vertical cliff. This is Sey Dzong and all who see it are incredulous at its ancient miracle of engineering. The fable goes that the chieftain was tricked into leaving his treasury unguarded and a Tibetan robber called Jhakpa stole all his treasure.

Close by, to the northwest of this pretty valley, are the impressive Basingthang peaks. Mountain Kingdoms handled an expedition for the British Alpine Club to this group of peaks in 1991. They succeeded in making a number of first attempts and also came back with photographs of yeti tracks in the snow. This was in a brief era when some mountaineering was possible in Bhutan.

The normal exit from the Soi Yaksey valley back to Paro was west and south over another two big passes and down through huge forests to the road head. In recent years this route was closed due to forest fires. I have often wondered if there might be a way of trekking through the mountains south of Soi Yaksey. In 2023 I found myself poring over a large-scale map made by Bart Jordans, a Dutchman who is also author of the Cicerone guide book 'Bhutan: A Trekkers Guide'. The map was much more detailed than any I have come across before. Now, by lucky coincidence, my main guide in Bhutan, Karma Tenzin, lives directly below the Tiger's Nest cliff temple. One of his best friends is the local horse contractor, who told him that every year the local people make pilgrimages from near Tiger's Nest all the way to the holy lake of Drakey Pang Tsho and that he knew there was a track from there over a pass called the Soman La all the way to Sey Dzong. So by using Bart's map and the knowledge of Mr Karma and Mr Jiges, the horseman, we came up with a plan to attempt the route in reverse.

In mid-April 2024 we three set off to try our luck, accompanied by an old friend of mine, and with a camp crew and horses. It was very exciting! However, although three of us stood on top of Soman La pass, 4,611m/15,128ft, the horses could not manage the deep snow and we were forced to retreat. We found an alternative way out but that's another story!

In 2025 the temptation was too much and we tried again, and the itinerary you read here is the result of a successful crossing from Chomolhari Base Camp to Tiger's Nest by me, my youngest daughter Ellie, and five other wonderful friends. The local people told us we were the first Europeans to use this route. Of course, we could never have done it but for the skills of Karma Tenzin and the unshakeable confidence of Mr Jiges, plus our excellent team of cooks, assistants and horsemen.

This trek is an extraordinary experience: close-up and personal views of Bhutan's second highest mountain and its dazzling satellite peaks, remote valleys steeped in history, one of Bhutan's holiest lakes literally ringed by mountains where you can actually feel time is standing still, and many a glorious pass to cross, all culminating in the sensational descent to Tiger's Nest.

I do thoroughly recommend it to you.....have it to yourselves and be some of the first 'Chillips' to pass through these mountains!!



Steve with his daughter Ellie at Dungtse Lhakhang, 2025

Your trip itinerary

Day 1: Depart London.

Depart London on your overnight flight to Kathmandu.

Overnight: In flight

Day 2: Arrive Kathmandu. 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, 2,200m/7,218 ft. Sightseeing as time allows.

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 and then you will head out to see some nearby sights. The amount of sightseeing you will be able to do depends on your flight arrival time, but you may be able to fit in a visit the National Museum above the dzong and even the ancient Duntse Lhakhang.

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

Day 4: Trek from Olathang to Kyichu, drive to Gunitsawa and trek to Shana, 2,788m/9,148ft - 5-6 hours.

Today you leave the hotel and walk up a hill to reach a village and the first of two 'Long Life' temples (1½ hours). You continue trekking along forested ridges contouring around and climbing up a bit to the second 'Long Life' temple which is now a nunnery (½ hour). It is then a pleasant 1½ hours downhill to the ancient temple of Kyichu Lhakang, one of the oldest in Bhutan. This was one of 108 temples built by Songtsen Gampo, an important early Tibetan king, to pin down the Bon demon that was thought to hover over the whole of Tibet. The temples date back to the 7th century AD and are very impressive.

From here it's an hour's drive to Gunitsawa. From the road you take a short walk through the army base to cross the river on a small bridge and walk upstream to your first camp at Shana.



Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 5: Trek from Shana to Soi Thangthanka, 3,544m/11,627ft - 7-8 hours.

This is quite a big day! You wind up the gigantic gorge, sometimes with vertical cliffs, mostly with deep dark forest, the river rushing by in a nonstop series of rapids. There are quite a few bridges to cross, some new girder bridges, some old cantilever wooden ones. There are one or two places where it looks as if you could take 'shortcuts' - but this is not to be recommended. Sometimes the trail climbs high above the river, and parts of the path are stony and necessitate boulder hopping. You may be advised by your Bhutanese guide to walk with a companion on this section as there are still bears in this area. You pass a junction en route, where another trail leads north over the Tremo La to Tibet. Spencer Chapman crossed the Tremo La in 1937 on his way to climb Chomolhari from Tibet.

When you arrive at Soi Thangthanka there is a small shop which has a wood burning stove.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 6: Trek to Chomolhari Base Camp, 4,090m/13,416ft - 5-6 hours.

It is worth getting up early to photograph the dawn colours on Chomolhari, Bhutan's second-highest mountain, which is framed at the end of the valley. When you set off trekking you pass two water driven prayer wheels before entering a forest festooned with Spanish Moss. If there was a frost in the night, sunlight makes the dew in the cobwebs look like diamonds. After an hour you slowly leave the forest line and gradually climb into a beautiful valley, passing Tengethang, a winter home of yak herdsman. A little after this there is a valley junction which apparently leads to a hermit's nest. Today you will see many peaks on the other side of the river including a distinctive pointed peak.

After about 4 or 4½ hours you come to Jangothang, a strange collection of offices and accommodation for the National Park, one of a number of small villages and hamlets in this upper valley. From here you carry on climbing. The path seems to go on forever, but actually it is only about an hour more to Base Camp, marked by a row of small chortens and some rudimentary buildings which include some toilets and a small shop/kitchen which sells a few things.

At 7,314m/ 23,997ft Chomolhari overlooks the camp. Nearby there are ruins of the old fortress which used to guard Bhutan against Tibetan invasion. Spencer Chapman's book 'Memoirs of a Mountaineer' has an excellent tale of a yeti encountered by local men near Chomolhari.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 7: Rest and acclimatisation day. Possible excursion to Doug Scott's Jitchu Drake base camp - 3 or 4 hours acclimatisation hike.

It is highly advisable that you do some sort of walk involving height gain today to help with acclimatisation. There are several excellent walks to choose from. You may hike up towards the Chomolhari glacier, climb the grassy ridge just north of the base camp to reach a small peak at 4,760m/15,617ft for great views, or for an easier option walk up the valley towards Jitchu Drake base camp 4,420m/14,500 ft. The latter option gives fantastic views and is approximately 3.7 mls/6 kms and a 3 hour round trip.

You should also have spare time to thoroughly explore the old, ruined castle.



Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 8: Trek to Soi Yaksey Valley, 3,800m/12,460ft, crossing the Bonte La Pass, 4,890m/16,040ft - 8-9 hrs.

The walk today is fabulous. An initial steep climb takes you up a wide, grassy hanging valley used by yak herders in the spring. There are marmot burrows everywhere, and you may well see blue sheep on the steep rocky hillsides. It is well worth stopping several times as you climb up the side of the valley to look back at the stunning views of Chomolhari and Jitchu Drake. Towards the top of the valley are the remote and beautiful Tso Phu Lakes. The path leads up the side of the valley for an hour or so, with great views down to the lakes. Once you reach the top, the views open out with stunning peaks and wild countryside all around, and the ascent becomes more gradual. It is another couple of hours beautiful walking before you gradually climb to reach the actual pass, marked by a square chorten. There are all round views of big mountains including the Basingthang Peaks.

The route now descends to the dramatic steep-sided Soi Yaksey valley, dominated by huge cliffs at its head. You may well see yak herders on the upper grassy slopes, before the exciting descent to the green valley far below. In the past, large herds of blue sheep have been seen here. You cross the river and camp on the other side.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 9: Rest day or explore Dhumar Valley. Visit large old house at the end of the valley, south east of the Basingthang Peaks. 3 or 4 hours round trip.

After a tough day yesterday, the relatively low altitude of the Soi Yaksey valley makes this a good place for a rest day, as well as the chance to do some washing. But we do recommend you make time for some exploration.

If you wish, you could arrange to take a packed lunch with you. A side trip up the valley is particularly recommended. There are numerous scattered farmhouses and small hamlets up here, but in particular, the fine old house at the very end of the valley, which once belonged to the 'king' of this small principedom, merits a visit. This house is not occupied all year round, but if the family happens to be in residence they may invite you inside for salt-butter tea, such a visit offering a privileged and fascinating glimpse into Bhutanese history and a way of life in such a remote setting.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 10: Visit Sey Dzong. Descend to cross river on bridge at 3847m/12,709ft, climb to cross the Lalung La pass 4,599m/15,088ft and trek to yak pasture camp, 4,318m/14,166ft - approximately 6-7 hours.

From the yak pasture camp it is a short distance on a gradually rising mountain path to arrive at the best viewpoint below Sey Dzong. What an amazing sight Sey Dzong is! It is said the 'Treasury' was finally abandoned near the end of the last century and was left as it was, complete with cooking utensils. The main structure is reputed to be connected by tunnels to meditation caves. There is one gigantic log, jammed into a massive cleft in the 300m rock face, and the three-storey building is supported mainly on this log. The very steep ladder/staircase which gave access is now mostly disintegrated. Legend has it that the dzong was built by a local Chieftain to keep all his treasure in. The story goes that one day he could see a big party in full swing further up the valley. He set off to investigate, and while he was away a band of robbers stole all his treasure. Truly Sey Dzong is like something out of a magical fairy story. An amazing place!



You drop down to the stream far below which is crossed on a good timber bridge. Now begins the long climb up and round into a ravine, crossing two more bridges. The further up you go, the more expansive the views are, looking back to distant mountains; one in particular has a strange, pointed rock tower on its summit. You can see Sey Dzong for a long time until it becomes a small dot and disappears as the path winds round and above a higher altitude valley. You will pass a single yak herder's hut above and to the left. Up ahead, three more yak herder huts lie on the other side of the river. Your climb continues, and you leave them behind. Ahead you climb, up and up, and around the flank of a mountain (shown on maps as the Lalung Pass, 4,480m/14,698ft) to take you out and above a large series of flat grazing meadows used by yaks in the summer. You drop down into this high meadow land to camp, within sight now of Sonam La. Your camp here is enclosed by a semi-circular ring of peaks and ridges. Stunning Himalayan peaks are seen to the south, mostly unnamed. The largest is Chataraka, 5,570m/18,274ft. Another has a spectacular summit capped with a rock spire many hundreds of feet high.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 11: Cross the Soman La Pass 4,612m/15,131ft - 1½hrs. Cross the Doley La Pass 4,541/14,898ft. Descend into the big valley to camp at Jeuchu Pang 4,013m/13,167ft. Approximately 6 hours in total.

From camp the pass looks a dauntingly long way. In fact, you should be standing on the summit of Soman La after about 1½ hours. Distances and times can be deceptive in the Himalaya! The sun is slow to arrive as the pass faces west. There is a chorten on the pass, and the views are amazing. From here you can see Chomolhari I & II, Jitchu Drake, Tshering Kang, and even Kangchenjunga. Given clear weather you can also now see the next pass, the Doley La. In the mid-distance is a rocky mountain with a flattish top, whose cliffs are facing you. The pass itself is on the right side of this mountain. It looks like there is a path keeping high nearly all the way to the Doley La but as this route has some 'tricky' bits, our advice is to stay on the path the horses take which takes you down to a lower level. It should take 2½ to 3 hours from Soman La to Doley La.

There is a now whole new vista of mountains to gaze at. Trains of yaks may well pass you today and swathes of rhododendron, shrubs and pretty flowers cover the hill sides. After the thrill of passing the Doley La, in 1½

hours you 'cross' another tiny unnamed pass at 4,482/14,705. Another pass lies ahead, the Lamane La, but you will be pleased not to cross it today. Instead, you camp near a ruined yak herder's stone hut just above a stream. Just below the hut a wooden bridge has half collapsed into the stream. The bridge can still be used with care. Some tents may be pitched close to the stream.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 12: Cross the river and climb to the next pass, the Laname La 4,304m/14,121ft, next to a small lake. Continue down to camp at Daluna, below Drakey Pangtsho. Approximately 5-6 hours.

The bridge below camp, which was once substantial and covered, has been wrecked but with a bit of scrambling can still be used. Ahead is a gradual climb on a good path through the acres of rhododendrons. You come to a very big rocky outcrop. You bypass this and somewhere on the climb you may stop for lunch, perhaps here. Finally, you come to a rise to find the exquisite Lamane Lake in front of you. It is magical and almost perfectly circular. Perhaps a meteor caused it millennia ago, or was it volcanic?

You carry on anti-clockwise and descend on a beautiful rocky path to Daluna, located below Drakey Pang Tsho Lake, west of Lamane Lake.



Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 13: Visit sacred Drakey Pang Tsho. Continue to the Seytshola Pass 4,133m/13,588. Descend to Chuthana and through rhododendron forest to camp at Charkha Pang, 3,919m/12,859ft. Approximately 6-7 hours.

A gradual climb of 1½ hours brings you to one of the holiest lakes in Bhutan, but hardly known to foreigners as it is so remote. Every year hundreds of Bhutanese make a pilgrimage here. Rather like Lamane Lake, Drakey Pang Tsho is completely circular, but much larger. It is quite a coincidence that these two are so close together! The legends that surround this lake are powerful and mystic. One is that Bhutan's most important Buddhist saint, Padma Sambhava, also known as Guru Rimpoche, hid 'termas' (sacred text or treasures) in the lake in the 8th century, being encouraged to do so by the guardian deity of the Paro Valley, Juwo Drake. He is not the only Bhutanese saint to have performed miracles here and it is also said that on auspicious days, depending on your karma (good merit you have built up in your lifetime) you may see 'treasures' appear in the lake, or hear mystical sounds. At the same time a visit to the lake will give you great merit and improve your personal karma. Drakey Pang Tsho is therefore a very holy place and any kind of impure act or thought, such as the burning of rubbish, might bring about disasters or bad weather. In fact, if there is a drought, it is said the local people do sometimes resort to suspending the flesh of a dead animal over the lake to anger the spirits and thereby bring on the rain!

Our MD tried to make a recce of this route in 2024 but the packhorses could not cross the Soman La because of deep snow. At the end of this visit in 2024 he was given a copy of 'Treasures of the Thunder Dragon' by Queen Mother, Dorji Wangmo Wangchuk in which she describes in wonderful detail some of her many pilgrimages, including one to the holy lake Drakey Pangtsho. Steve says "it proved to me once and for all that the path did exist, even though it is not shown on the Bart Jordans map, and it encouraged me to attempt again to find the route".

Having visited the wonderful Drakey Pang Tsho you now have a gradual walk of about 1½ hours to reach the Seytshola Pass, 4,133m/13,558ft. From here it is another 1½ hours to Chuthana, 3,784m/12,420ft. From here there is a great walk through ancient rhododendron forest. The trees are large and encrusted with thick layers of moss. It is about an hour from Chuthana to two yak herders' huts at Charkha Pang, 3,919m/12,859ft, where you will camp.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 14: Climb to cross the Namgyal Pass, 4,133m/13,588. Continue pass meditation cave and 'sky burial' mountains to reach Bumdra, 4,071m/13,537ft. Pass. Approximately 7-8 hours.

On a clear day you will have unique views looking down at Drugyel Dzong and the top end of the Paro Valley. Your path traverses to within sight of the three mountains ahead which are still used for 'sky burials'. You ascend a big boulder field - look out for famous Blue Poppies of Bhutan hereabouts. From camp it is roughly 2½ hours to reach the Namgyal Pass. Half an hour further on and you pass by a small 'Meditation Cave'. Beyond, the path traverses under some awesome vertical cliffs and a seemingly unlikely path skirts around the 'sky burial' tops. It is not far now to the camp site at Bumdra. When you arrive you will feel a sense of elation to have completed such a fantastic path through the mountains.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 15: Rest and buffer day at Bumdra. Visit Bumdra Lakhang.

What a fantastic place to have a rest day! Bumdra is a cliff temple situated high in the mountains above Tiger's Nest. It is remote, historic and highly atmospheric. If you are lucky, the resident lama may offer you yak butter tea. The temple itself has ancient shrines and Buddhist statues - you have to climb a steep ladder to gain entry. Bumdra Gompa is said to be where the 8th century saint Padma Sambhava (Guru Rimpoche) meditated with his consort, the Tibetan saint Yeshe Tsogyal. Legend has it that this is the place where 100,000 dakinis (female spirits) left their footprints on the cliff face as they flew off to paradise.



You could also walk up to near the closest of the three Sky Burial sites which you saw yesterday. On a clear day it gives amazing views of Mount Chomolhari. From here the realisation of your great achievement will sink in! There are yak herder stone houses not far from your campsite and occasionally the yak herder families have invited small groups to visit them. If there are local people themselves visiting the sky burial site we advise you to leave them in peace.

This will be your last night with your trek crew so perhaps the opportunity for a bit of a celebration.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 16: Trek down to Tigers Nest (Taktsang Monastery), via three other temples. Descend to the Paro Valley. Approximately 7-8 hours in total.

The walk down through the forest today is a delight. After about an hour of easy descent, through larch and silver pine, you arrive at the first of several temples. There are around half a dozen lakhangs or smaller shrines which occupy positions on the mountainside here. They are all beautiful, all different and worth visiting but you will probably not wish to enter them all - Tiger's Nest awaits!

After a further three hours or so of descent you reach Zangto Pelri Monastery - be sure to stop at the gardens and peer over the side for your first fantastic views of the golden roofs of Taktsang Monastery on the cliff below. From here it's a steep half hour down a rock-hewn staircase to reach the famed Tiger's Nest, an approach that very few people experience.

Taktsang monastery is perched some 600m/2,000ft up on a cliff overlooking Paro Valley. It 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. If it's open, you will be able to visit the monastery before continuing down to reach the car park where your vehicle will be waiting to take you back to the comforts of your hotel in Paro.

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

Day 17: Day at leisure in Paro.

Today you will have some welcome time to rest and reflect on and celebrate your achievement. There will also be time for some further exploration in Paro.

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

Day 18: Fly to Kathmandu. Transfer to hotel.

Today you will sadly say farewell to Bhutan. After breakfast, you will transfer to the airport for your flight to Kathmandu. This is normally an early morning flight which takes you out and over the Bhutanese mountains and past Kangchenjunga, Makalu and Everest, finally dropping down into Kathmandu Valley. You will be met and transferred to your hotel, after which there will be plenty of time to relax and gather your thoughts.

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

Day 19: At leisure. Afternoon group transfer to airport. Depart Kathmandu.

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

Overnight: In flight (Meals: B)

Day 20: Arrive London.

Our grading system

Mount Chomolhari Trek to Tiger's Nest is graded as a Vigorous/Strenuous 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.

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.

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:

- ✓ All meals in Bhutan, B&B in Kathmandu: 17 x breakfasts, 15 x lunches, 15 x dinners
- ✓ Good quality 4* hotel accommodation in Kathmandu, on a twin share, bed and breakfast basis
- ✓ In Bhutan, good standard hotel accommodation in Paro, on a twin-share, full board basis
- ✓ An English-speaking Bhutanese guide
- ✓ Flights between Kathmandu and Paro and hotel/airport transfers
- ✓ Full-service camping on trek (tents on a twin-share basis). All portage on trek, usually horses and yaks
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicles
- ✓ Bhutan visa and Bhutan departure tax
- ✓ The use of a good-quality down jacket and sleeping bag (when travelling to Bhutan via Kathmandu).
- ✓ Sightseeing where specified
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK & UK Departure Tax (flight inclusive only)
- ✓ Single, group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ Carbon offset for clients taking our flight-inclusive option
- ✓ A free high-quality Mountain Kingdoms kit bag

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
- ✗ Airport transfers (if your flights do not coincide with the Mountain Kingdoms group flights)
- ✗ Lunch and evening meals in Kathmandu
- ✗ Optional trips
- ✗ 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 <https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign>.

Your accommodation

We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in this itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is unavailable we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.



Hotel Shanker or Similar, 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.



Olathang Cottages or Similar, Paro

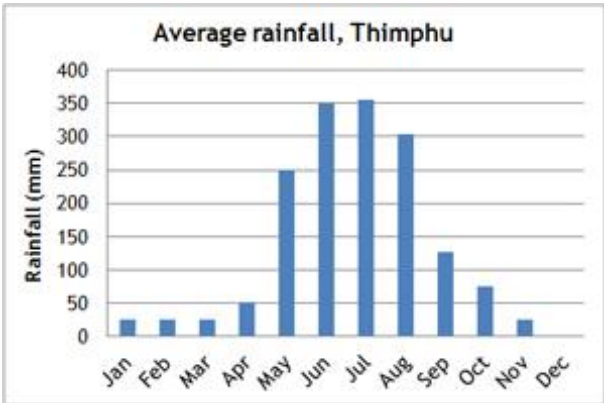
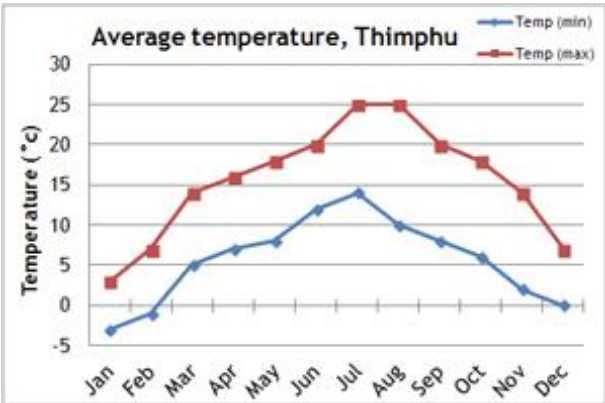
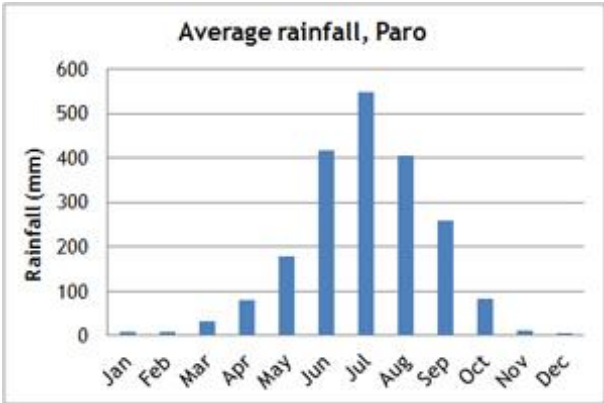
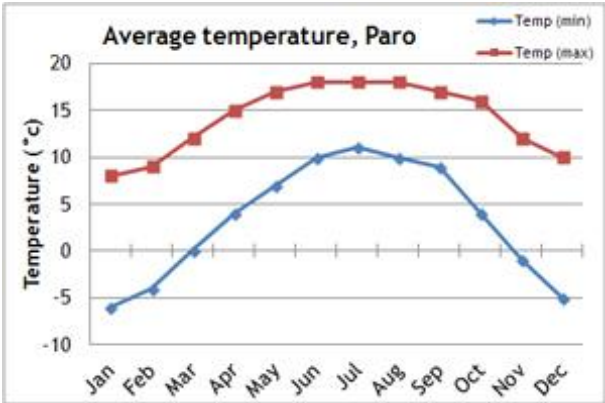
This charming boutique style property sits on a hillside quite separate to, and above the Olathang - the famous first hotel ever to be built in the kingdom. Olathang Cottages has a delightful garden which has been developed by the owner's wife. It commands panoramic views of the Paro Valley, and has a quieter more secluded feel. The bedrooms are all en suite and spacious. Traditional paintwork is much in evidence and there is a feeling that you are staying in an elaborate log cabin.



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.

Climate information



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.

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?

- This is an exciting new exploratory type trek for Bhutan and unique to Mountain Kingdoms.
- The itinerary provides excellent acclimatisation and crucially has rest/acclimatisation days built in. It includes time to thoroughly explore the many remarkable cultural, historic and sacred sights that you will encounter along the trail.
- Your trek will be led by a highly experienced guide supported by a trek crew - they 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.
- We use first-rate camping equipment including three-person tents to accommodate two people.
- Our MD, Steve Berry, carried out the research trek in 2025, and has visited Bhutan more than 30 times. No one knows the country better, and Steve would be happy to help with any queries you may have about this trekking holiday. Call him on 01453 844400.
- We have been operating treks and tours in Bhutan since 1988 and are still working with the same excellent partners we started with. Our contacts and knowledge of Bhutan are second to none.
- 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.
- 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 Manager, April, 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 trek is an extraordinary experience: close-up and personal views of Bhutan's second highest mountain and its dazzling satellite peaks, remote valleys steeped in history, one of Bhutan's holiest lakes literally ringed by mountains where you can actually feel time is standing still, and many a glorious pass to cross, all culminating in the sensational descent to Tiger's Nest.

-Steve Berry, MD, 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.

