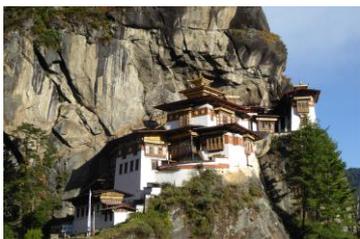


Bumdra Trek Bhutan



Bhutan - extension option

The Bumdra trek is a wonderful two day trek, with a perfect mix of challenging walking and culture. You ascend 900m to Bumdra monastery above the Paro Valley, and then on up to a viewing point for stunning views of snow-capped Mount Chomolhari. You camp the night at a scenic spot just below the monastery and the following day you have a leisurely descent, stopping at four monasteries, culminating in the famous Taktsang Monastery. This extension can be added to any of our scheduled group holidays in Bhutan.



Day 1 - Trek from Sangchoeker Buddhist College 2,800m/9,186ft to Bumdra Monastery 3,700m/12,139ft - 4½ hours.

You will be picked up from your hotel in Paro and driven to the start point for the trek at nearby Sangchen Choekor Shedra, a Buddhist college, about 10-15 minutes' drive away. There you will meet your trek crew and the horses that will be carrying the kit. Once they are loaded you are ready to start the trek.

You begin climbing on a narrow dirt trail which winds steeply upwards through a pine forest. After 2½-3 hours of walking, you emerge into a clearing with prayer flags followed by a good flat section next to reach Cheochongtsey monastery where you'll enjoy a fabulous view of the Paro Valley whilst having lunch. After lunch it's another steep ascent on a twisting path for half an hour or so, through larch, juniper and hemlock forest. Eventually the path levels out a little then becomes undulating, with a final pull up to an open meadow where there is a chorten and prayer flags. You'll camp just up from here. It takes about 1½ hours from your lunch spot to your campsite at 3,700m/12,139ft. Congratulate yourself on gaining nearly 900m of ascent! There are fabulous views of forested hills and jagged peaks from here and you may see yellow headed magpies and laughing thrushes flitting around in the trees and flora around the campsite.

After a well-earned rest and cup of tea you can make the short walk up to picturesque Bumdra Monastery in the afternoon. Legend has it that the monastery was built on a spot frequented by 100,000 dakinis (angels) and, if the caretaker is around, you may be able to go inside. From the monastery you can continue all the way up to the collection of prayer flags at the top of the hill (a sky burial site). The summit is at 4,100m, and if you can muster the energy, the views of Mount Chomolhari are well worth the effort. Descend the same way to camp. It takes about an hour to reach the top from the campsite so take some warm clothes, water and possibly a head torch if you want to stay to savour the sunset views.

Overnight: Camp (B L D)



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Day 2 - Trek to Taktsang Monastery, the Tiger's Nest

Today you descend from the campsite on a different path through larch, juniper and rhododendron forest on a good, zig zag dirt trail. It will take about an hour to reach Yusergang monastery which has the figures of the past, present and future Buddhas behind the altar. Butter lamps are now encased in metal stands to avoid fires. There is also a photograph of the 69th head of religion in Bhutan here as he spent some years at this monastery before he became the head. Nowadays it is predominantly used as a place of meditation. It will take another half an hour or so of leisurely downhill walking until you reach Ugyentsemo monastery. This monastery has an impressive central piece showing Guru Rimpoche in heavenly paradise along with all his consorts. The walls of religious scenes and figures are mainly covered to avoid light and sun damage.

You head further down for another half an hour until you reach Zangtopelri Lhakhang, perched on top of a hill, giving fantastic views down to Taktsang Monastery and the Paro valley. This perspective of Taktsang is one that very few visitors get to see. It'll take about an hour to walk from here to Taktsang Monastery.

Iconic Taktsang Monastery has a spectacular position, perched some 600m/2,000ft up on a cliff overlooking the valley. Taktsang was said to be where the legendary Indian saint Guru Padma Sambhava flew from Tibet on the back of a tiger to defeat five demons who were opposing the spread of Buddhism in Bhutan. It's one of the most famous and important monasteries in the whole of Bhutan.

After looking around Taktsang, you descend on a good, zig zag trail for about 15 minutes before you join the main path to Taktsang where suddenly you will meet many tourists heading up to the monastery. Continuing down on a well-established dirt trail you will reach a café after about 45 minutes and then it's a further half to one hour to reach the road head.

You will be met here and driven back to your hotel in Paro.

Overnight: Olathang Hotel or similar, Paro (B L D)

Prices*:

£450 per person for two people travelling on a twin share basis

£550 per person for a solo traveller

Price includes: English-speaking guide; driver and private transport; sightseeing as specified with entry fees where applicable; trekking arrangement with cook horses to carry your kit, sleeping tent, dining tent with table and chairs, toilet tent; all meals; one night's hotel accommodation at the Olathang Hotel in Paro at the end.

Price does not include: Flights to Bhutan; hotel accommodation in Paro on the night before the trek (if not included in your group holiday); tips.

**Prices in this leaflet are valid until 31st December 2019*



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