

Chomolhari, meaning 'mountain of goddess,' is the name given to one of Bhutan's most famous mountains. The classic Bhutan trek to the base camp of the mountain is a great introduction to the scenery and culture of the Kingdom. Dazzling alpine views, quiet forest trails and many of the kingdom's key heritage sites are included on the two week trip, which can be taken as an extension to a Nepal trek, or as a splendid holiday in its own right.

We start with two nights in Paro, to visit the 17th century fortress, Ta Dzong, now Bhutan's fascinating National Museum, and the kingdom's most sacred Buddhist shrine at Kyichu Lhakhang. Then a short drive brings us to the trailhead, where we meet with the trek team and set off following the Paro Valley through farmlands and scattered settlements. Climbing gradually through forests of rhododendron, pine, oak and spruce, we emerge above the tree line to enjoy fabulous views of Mt. Chomolhari from the high alpine pastures, where yak herders graze their animals. We camp near the base camp of this impressive mountain, beside a shimmering cobalt blue lake. An ever-present landmark during the next days of our trek is 6,856m Jichu Drake, first climbed by Doug Scott, Sharu Prabhu and Victor Saunders on their expedition there in 1988. There is further challenge ahead as we cross two passes to descend to the Thimphu Valley, with its rock faces and waterfalls. During the final days of the trek we follow the river downstream through bamboo forests and past ancient ruins to Dodena. Here we are met for the short drive to Bhutan's colourful capital Thimphu, where we stay overnight. A full day of sightseeing in the town and surrounds includes visits to many of Bhutan's cultural gems: Tashichhodzong, known as 'the fortress of the glorious religion', the Memorial Chorten, Painting School, Traditional Medicine Institute and Handicraft Centre.

• **Land-only prices:**

The cost of flights are less predictable than they used to be. Airlines now request full payment upfront. As a result, we will quote you a land-only cost, and quote separately for the cheapest flights we can find at the time of your booking. We will, however, require full payment for the flights prior to booking them. If you prefer to search for alternative flights yourself, we can sell you the trek at the land-only price.

• **Important note – minimum numbers:**

Before booking flights, please note that this trip requires a minimum of 4 trekkers before we can guarantee the departure at the advertised price. Please note that should you decide to book your own flights, it is essential that you check with the Community Action Treks office to ensure that the departure is guaranteed before committing financially to any flights or travel arrangements.

OUTLINE ITINERARY

**** The dates for this trip are dependent on the flights in and out of Paro. Flights into Bhutan are operated by Druk Air, who do not release their flight schedules until fairly close to each trekking season. Flights operate between Kathmandu and Paro, and between Delhi and Paro, but neither service is daily. Consequently, NO international flights should be booked prior to checking dates with the Community Action Treks office, as it may be necessary to reschedule the dates, to spend extra time in Delhi or Kathmandu, or to re-route to fit in with the Druk Air flights.**

**This itinerary currently fits into the Kathmandu – Paro schedule:
Flights Kathmandu to Paro are currently on Thursdays, and returning on Sundays.**

Walking and journey times are approximate

- Day 1 Arrive Kathmandu or Delhi ****
Transfer to the hotel. Rest of the day free.
- Day 2 Fly to Bhutan**
Transfer to the airport for the short flight to Bhutan. On arrival we are met and transferred to the hotel. Evening visit to Paro market and town. Overnight at the hotel in Paro.
- Day 3 Paro**
Morning visit to Ta Dzong, built in the 17th Century, as a watch tower to defend Paro Dzong and valley. This fortress was later converted into the National Museum in 1967 and is filled with antique thangka paintings, textiles, weapons and Bhutan's renowned postage stamps. Below Ta Dzong, is fascinating Rinpung Dzong, meaning 'fortress of the heap of jewels' which has an interesting history. In the afternoon we visit Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the oldest and most sacred shrines of Bhutan. Overnight at the hotel in Paro.
- Day 4 Paro to Shana 2580m**
5 / 6 hours walking
Drive to Drukgyel Dzong, at the end of valley. Our trek begins from here, following the Paro river upstream passing villages and gradually ascending to 2580m at Shana camp.
- Day 5 Shana to Soi Thangthangkha 3750m**
9 / 10 hours walking
The trail again follows Pa Chu (Paro river), ascending and descending through pine, oak and spruce forests. After a hot lunch we follow the valley, climbing up through rhododendron forests and finally crossing the river again, reaching the campsite at an altitude of 3750m.
- Day 6 Soi Thangthangkha to Jangothang 4040m**
The path ascends for a while till we reach the army camp. We then follow the river above the tree line enjoying the stunning view of the surrounding peaks. Hot lunch will be served inside a yak herder's camp. A short walk into the valley takes us to the camp at Jangothang at an altitude of 4040m. From here, views of Mt Chomolhari and Jitchu Drake are superb.
- Day 7 Jangothang to Lingshi 4000m via the Nyele La Pass 4700m 7 / 8 hours walking**
The trail follows the stream for half an hour and crosses the bridge to the right. We start the climb up to the first ridge with a breathtaking view of Chomolhari, Jitchu Drake and Tsrin Khang. Then we walk towards the valley, which is almost flat for a while, until the climb to the Nyele La pass at an altitude of 4700m. After the pass it's a gradual descent to Lingshi camp, enjoying the panoramic view of the peaks and Lingshi Dzong.
- Day 8 Lingshi to Shodu 3750m**
9 / 10 hours walking
A long but scenically superb day of trekking. The path follows the stream up towards the valley opposite the Dzong. We have a gradual ascent through the valley for about four hours until the stiff climb at the pass. After the pass it is a long but steady drop to the Shodu camp at an altitude of 3750m.
- Day 9 Shodu to Barshong 3600m**
6 / 7 hours walking
By now we are almost back to the tree line. The path follows the Thimphu River, descending through rhododendron, juniper and other alpine forests. The view of the cliffs and waterfalls is stunning. A hot lunch will be served by the river side. After lunch the trail gradually climbs to the ruins of Barshong Dzong where we reach camp.
- Day 10 Barshong to Thimphu**
10 hours walking
We drop down steadily through alpine forests and once again join the Thimphu River for a while. After lunch we climb up to Dolamkencho then the path descends through bamboo forests all the way to Dolamkencho, finally joining Thimphu River once again. Arriving at Dodena we are met by our transport and driven to Thimphu. We overnight at our hotel in Thimphu.

Day 11 Thimphu to Paro

Full day of sightseeing in Thimphu valley, visiting the Memorial Chorten, Tashichhodzong, National Library, Painting School, Traditional Medicine Institute and Handicrafts Emporium. Evening drive to Paro. We overnight at the hotel in Paro.

Day 12 Fly to Kathmandu or Delhi **

After breakfast, drive to Paro airport for flight to Kathmandu or Delhi. Transfer to hotel.

Day 13 Depart Nepal or India **

Transfer to the airport for return flight. Extra days in Kathmandu or Delhi, or extensions in Nepal or India can be arranged if you wish once the Druk Air schedule has been released.

Important Note: Whilst we expect that the trek will run as per the itinerary, participants should accept that there is a possibility of changes being necessary subject to local conditions.



The Price Includes:

- Return scheduled flights between Kathmandu/Delhi ** and Paro
- Airport transfers in Nepal/India** and Bhutan
- Accommodation for 2 nights in hotel in Kathmandu/Delhi** in room with shower and wc and inclusive of breakfast
- Participation in trek as detailed, inclusive of full board, transportation to/from start/end of trek, camping equipment (not sleeping bags) guide and porter services (15kg load per trekker), trek permit and national park fees
- Hotel accommodation in Bhutan as per itinerary

Not Included:

- Meals other than breakfast in Kathmandu/Delhi**
- Nepal/India and Bhutan Airport taxes (allow approximately £25)
- Nepalese or Indian** visa (Nepal: Multiple entry tourist visa: £15 for 15 days validity, Indian transit visa approx £26)
- Bhutan visa (allow approximately £40)
- Bhutan Tourism Fee (allow approximately £7)
- Drinks, telephone calls, laundry, souvenirs and other such personal expenses
- Travel insurance
- Tips