



## 25 DAY SNOWMAN TREK

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**Trip Duration:** 25 days

**Trip Difficulty:** 

**Destination:** Bhutan

**Begins in:** Paro

**Activities:** 



### INCLUDED

- 3 nights hotel in Paro, 1 night in Punakha, 2 nights in Bumthang
- Four season, 3 person tents, double occupancy
- Domestic flight from Bumthang to Paro
- Private toilet during trek
- Ground transportation
- Entrance Fees and taxes
- Bhutanese entry permit
- English speaking guides
- Meals (B, L, D)

### EXCLUDED

- Airfare
- Personal gear and hiking equipment
- Snacks
- Tips

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## Ultimate Expeditions®

**The Best Adventures on Earth.**

Ultimate Expeditions® was born out of our need for movement, our connection with nature, and our passion for adventure.

**We Know Travel.** Our staff has traveled extensively to 40-50 countries each and have more than 10 years of experience organizing and leading adventures in all corners of the globe through the world's most unique, remote, beautiful and exhilarating places. We want to share these destinations with you.

**Why Ultimate Expeditions®?** We provide high quality service without the inflated cost. Our goal is to work with you to create the ideal itinerary based on your needs, abilities and desires. We can help you plan every aspect of your trip, providing everything you need for an enjoyable experience.

## 25 DAY SNOWMAN TREK

### Itinerary

#### DAY 1 Arrive Paro Airport – Transfer to Thimphu

Your guide will meet you at the airport and transfer you to Thimphu, which takes approximately 2 hours. There you may visit the King's Memorial Chorten. People often visit the chorten for daily worship and recite prayers throughout the day. Later a pre-trek briefing will be held by the lead guide at the hotel.

#### DAY 2 Tour of Thimphu – Drive to Punakha

The day continues the tour of Thimphu. Visit the National Library, a collection manuscripts from ancient times, with modern books about Himalayan culture and religion. The Zorig Chusum Institute, an Arts and Crafts School teaches students 13 different local art and craft methods, and the Textile Museum houses the history of Bhutanese weaving. Simply Bhutan is a living museum. Finally a visit to The Fortress of the Glorious Religion, Trashichhoe Dzong, the seat of religion and government, and home to the throne room of the monarch, originally built in 1641. After lunch, we will take a 3 hour drive to Punakha, passing through the Dochu La Pass, the highest point is marked by a chorten mani wall and many prayer flags. Overnight in Punakha.

#### DAY 3 Tour of Punakha Dzong – Drive to Gasa

This morning you will tour the Punakha Dzong built in 1637 at the junction of the Mo Chhu and Pho Chhu rivers and serves as the administrative and religious centre for the region. After lunch, a drive along the Mo Chhu River towards the Gasa Tshachu village, famous for healing waters. Overnight camping.

#### DAY 4 Gasa to Chamsa Elevation: 8,431 ft to 9,514 ft Distance: 6.21 miles, Time: 3-5 hours

The trek begins with a steep climb through many forests before descending into Chamsa, where we will camp for the night.

#### DAY 5 Chamsa to Laya Elevation: 9,514 ft to 12,598 ft Distance: 12.42 miles, Time: 7-8 hours

Following the Mo Chhu River we stop for lunch at the riverbank, and then continue up a gradual climb past an army camp. Laya is one of the highest Bhutanese villages with friendly locals that make it easy to immerse yourself in their culture during your time here.

#### DAY 6 Laya to Rhodophu Elevation: 12,598 ft to 14,271 ft Distance: 11.80 miles, Time: 8-9 hours

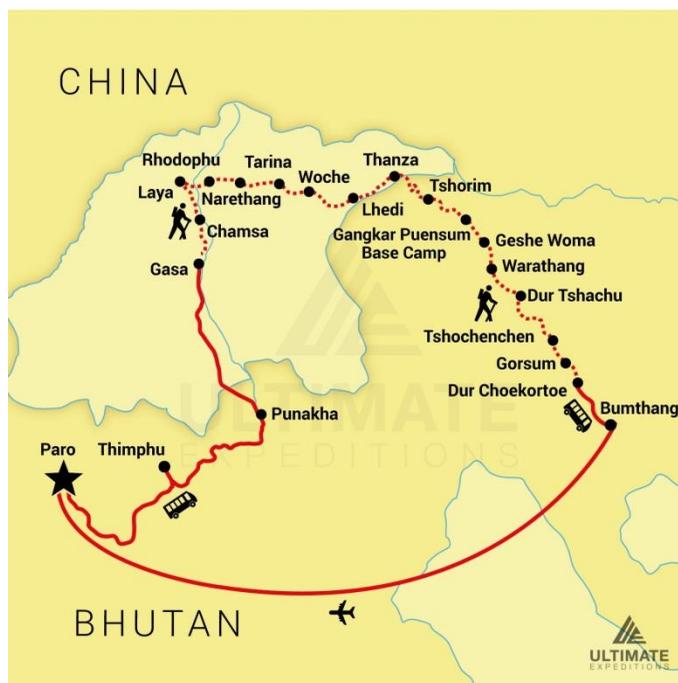
From Laya we will retrace our steps past the army camp and back to the river, which we will follow. The trail ascends passing through forests until arrival at the hanging valley where you will see yaks grazing. Overnight camp in Rhodophu.

#### DAY 7 Acclimatization Day in Rhodophu Elevation: 14,271 ft

Spend the day in Rhodophu preparing for the next part of the trek taking you to over 16,400 ft. Take a short hike to a higher altitude acclimatize. You can rest today in preparation for the high mountain passes over the next few days.

#### DAY 8 Rhodophu to Narethang Elevation: 14,271 ft to 16,076 ft Distance: 10.56 miles, Time: 5-7 hours

Your ascent begins with a climb to Tsimola La Pass where you will enjoy spectacular views across the Lunana region to the peaks of Jichu Drake and Chomolhari. Camp will be Narethang at 16,076 ft in elevation.



**DAY 9 Narethang to Tarina via Ganglakarchung La Pass Elevation: 16,076 ft to 16,732 ft to 13,057 ft Distance: 11.18 miles, Time: 5-7 hours**

The day starts with a level trek before climbing to the Ganglakarchung La Pass, the highest peak. You will enjoy some of the most spectacular mountain views in Bhutan, including the Masagang and Tsendegang. From the pass, follow a long descent to the Tarina valley.

**DAY 10 Tarina to Woche Elevation: 13,057 ft to 12,467 ft Distance: 10.56 miles, Time: 6-7 hours**

Follow the upper reaches of the Pho Chhu River, while you descend through coniferous forests. A final climb over the ridge as you descend into Woche, the first village since Laya.

**DAY 11 Woche to Lhedi via Keche La Pass Elevation: 12,467 ft to 14,698 ft to 11,975 ft Distance: 10.56 miles, Time: 6-7 hours**

The day begins with a trek through forests before climbing to 14,698 feet to the Keche La Pass. You will enjoy the stunning mountain views before descending from the pass to a branch of the Pho Chhu River. The trail follows this river upstream to the Lhedi village towards camp.

**DAY 12 Lhedi to Thanza Elevation: 11,975 ft to 13,123 ft Distance: 10.56 miles, Time: 7-8 hours**

Today you will ascend gradually to the Choejong village, the largest in the Lunana region. Here you will lunch and can visit the village temple before continuing. A suspension bridge crossing gets us to our next campsite in Thanza.

**DAY 13 Acclimatization Day in Thanza Elevation: 13,123 ft**

Enjoy a day of rest before heading back above 16,404 feet. Thanza is the second largest village in Lunana, allowing you to explore or relax. For those with energy, hike to the ridge behind the village for more beautiful views.

**DAY 14 Thanza to Tshorim Elevation: 13,123 ft to 16,814 ft Distance: 11.80 miles, Time: 8-9 hours**

Today's trek starts with a climb onto the ridge, offering excellent views of the Thanza Valley and Table Mountain. After crossing the ridge, you enter a small valley and follow the river upstream then the trail climbs out of the valley continuing onto smaller ridges. Overnight camp at Tshorim at 16,814 feet.

**DAY 15 Tshorim to Gangkar Puensum Base Camp via Gupho La Pass Elevation: 16,814 ft to 17,158 ft to 16,305 ft Distance: 9.94 miles, Time: 6-7 hours**

The trek to Gangkar Puensum Base Camp is a highlight of the trip. It's a short climb to Tshorim Lake, where you will enjoy views of the Guphola ranges, and then another short climb takes you to the Gupho La Pass at 17,158 feet above sea level. Here we will descend from the pass along a ridge, offering outstanding views of the Gangkar Puensum. Overnight camp by the Sha Chhu River.

**DAY 16 Gangkar Puensum Base Camp to Geshe Woma Elevation: 16,305 ft to 13,779 ft Distance: 8.70, Time: 6-7 hours**

We follow the Sha Chhu River along a gradual descent to our next campsite at Geshe Woma.

**DAY 17 Geshe Woma to Warathang via Saka La Pass Elevation: 13,779 to 15,748 ft to 13,123 ft Distance: 11.18 miles, Time: 8-9 hours**

Follow the Sha Chhu River for 2 to 3 hours before ascending to Saka La. Break for lunch at a yak herder's camp. Breathe in amazing views as you descend towards a plateau with two lakes. The trail crosses another short ascent to the second pass Warathang La Pass before descending to camp at Warathang.

**DAY 18 Warathang to Dur Tshachu via Uli La Pass Elevation: 13,123 ft to 14,435 ft to 12,959 ft Distance: 8.70 miles, Time: 5-6 hours**

A short climb to the Uli La Pass at 14,435 feet elevation, then descend through several forests before reaching the river. After crossing the river, we'll have another short climb to Dur Tshachu. According to legendary tales, Guru Padsambhava bathed in the hot springs here in the 8th century.

**DAY 19 Dur Tshachu to Tshochenchen via Jule La Pass Elevation: 12,959 ft to 15,419 ft to 12,631 ft  
Distance: 9.94 miles, Time: 8-9 hours**

Enjoy stunning views of the mountains of Lunana. Cross the Gokthong La Pass at 15,255 feet in elevation before descending around 1,312 feet to several glacial lakes and yak grazing pastures. The trail then climbs to the Jule La Pass at 15,419 feet, followed by the final descent to Tshochenchen.

**DAY 20 Tshochenchen to Gorsum Elevation: 12,631 ft to 10,465 ft Distance: 16.77 miles, Time: 9-10 hour**

From Tshochenchen the trail follows downhill through different forests along the Yoleng Chhu River. Enjoy a final short climb before reaching camp at Gorsum.

**DAY 21 Gorsum to Dur – Drive to Bumthang Elevation: 10,465 ft to 8,694 ft Trekking distance: 11.18 miles, Trekking time: 6 hours**

On the final day, pack ponies will replace yaks to carry camping equipment. We begin early to reach Bumthang before nightfall. The trail descends gradually with a few climbs as it follows the Chamkhar Chhu River. The trek ends at Dur with a transport to Bumthang lodge.

**DAY 22 Cultural Tour of Bumthang**

The Bumthang valley is the most historic region of Bhutan, which enjoys a large number of ancient temples and sacred sites. Several monasteries are housed in the valley's hills, which are dedicated to Guru Padsambhava. This is also the ancestral home of Pema Lingpa, the ancestor to the current monarchy. Visit Jambey Lhakhang, the oldest lhakhang in Bhutan, and one of 108 temples built by the Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo in the 7th century. Jakar Dzong, the Castle of the White Bird, which was constructed as a fortress in 1549 to defend the eastern regions of Bhutan and also became the seat of the first king.

**DAY 23 Flight from Bumthang to Paro**

A flight from Bumthang gets you to Paro. On arrival, you will have free time to relax at the hotel.

**DAY 24 Excursion to Taktshang Lhakhang**

Take a tour to Taktshang Lhakhang, the Tiger's Nest Monastery, one of the most famous monasteries in the world. Nestled on a cliff top at 10,170 feet in elevation and built in 1692, the main temple of the monastery is one of the holiest sites for the Bhutanese people. In the afternoon, visit Kyichu Lhakhang. This temple marks the introduction of Buddhism to Bhutan in the 7th century. From here, you are driven to the ruined fortress of Drukgyel Dzong. Overnight in Paro.

**DAY 25 Depart Paro Airport**

Your guide will meet you at the hotel and transfer you to Paro airport for your departing flight.

## BHUTAN

### Best Time to Visit

Bhutan is a great destination year-round; however, the weather varies dramatically depending on elevation and season. Autumn is the high season; September and October have the highest number of tshechus (monastic festivals) and the region offers clear mountain views and picturesque landscape of terraced rice fields.

#### Autumn

September-November; Bhutan offers sunny skies and pleasant temperatures and it is a great time for a mountain trek.

#### Winter

December-February; the low valleys are typically in the 50s to 60s, but higher elevations will be cold and the Snowman Trek is often closed during this time due to snow. The trade-off is fewer travelers and clear skies.

#### Spring

March-May; brings mild weather with chance of mountain views, the flora will be in full bloom as the rhododendron forests fill with color, expect rain beginning May.

#### Summer

June-August; is monsoon season where the days are long, hot and humid. If you can tolerate the heat, this is an opportunity to beat the crowds. Afternoon showers during July and August are typical and get up to 14 inches of rain.

#### Temperature

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Average High (F)	48	56	58	63	74	77
Average Low (F)	21	34	33	40	51	57

Month	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average High (F)	80	77	74	65	57	52
Average Low (F)	58	58	53	45	34	28

### Entry Requirements

Visas are processed through an online system by our licensed Bhutanese partners. A photo copy of the passport photo page and \$40 processing fee is required. Upon arrival you will show your visa clearance letter to customs and the visa will be stamped into your passport.

### Vaccinations

All travelers should be up to date on routine vaccinations which, includes measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), diphtheria-



tetanus-pertussis, varicella (chickenpox), polio, and the flu shot. In addition, it is recommended to get Hepatitis A and Typhoid vaccines. If you are staying in Bhutan for a month or longer, consult with your doctor about any other vaccines and/or medicines you may need for your trip. The government of Bhutan requires proof of yellow fever vaccination only if you are arriving from a country with risk of yellow fever (this does not include the US). For more information visit the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel).

### Travel Advisories

Make two photocopies of valuables such as your passport, tickets, visas and travelers' cheques. Keep one copy with you in a separate place to the original and leave another copy with someone at home.

Be sure to inform your credit card company as well as your bank you will travel internationally into Bhutan. This will eliminate any credit card holds for fraudulent activity.

### Currency

Carrying cash or traveler's check, also a credit card that can be used for cash advances in case of emergency is advisable. The best places to exchange money are normally bureau de change, which are fast, have longer hours and often give slightly better rates than banks. Local currency is boliviano (BOB), and it is advised to carry hard notes of USD. Better hotels, lodges, and camps will accept credit cards, however it is advised to withdraw cash when visiting remote areas and villages.

### Government

Since 2008 the government of Bhutan has been a constitutional monarchy.

### Religion

75% Drukpa Kagyu or Nyingma Buddhism and 25% Hinduism.