

25-DAY ADVENTURE

SNOWMAN TREK

Bhutan

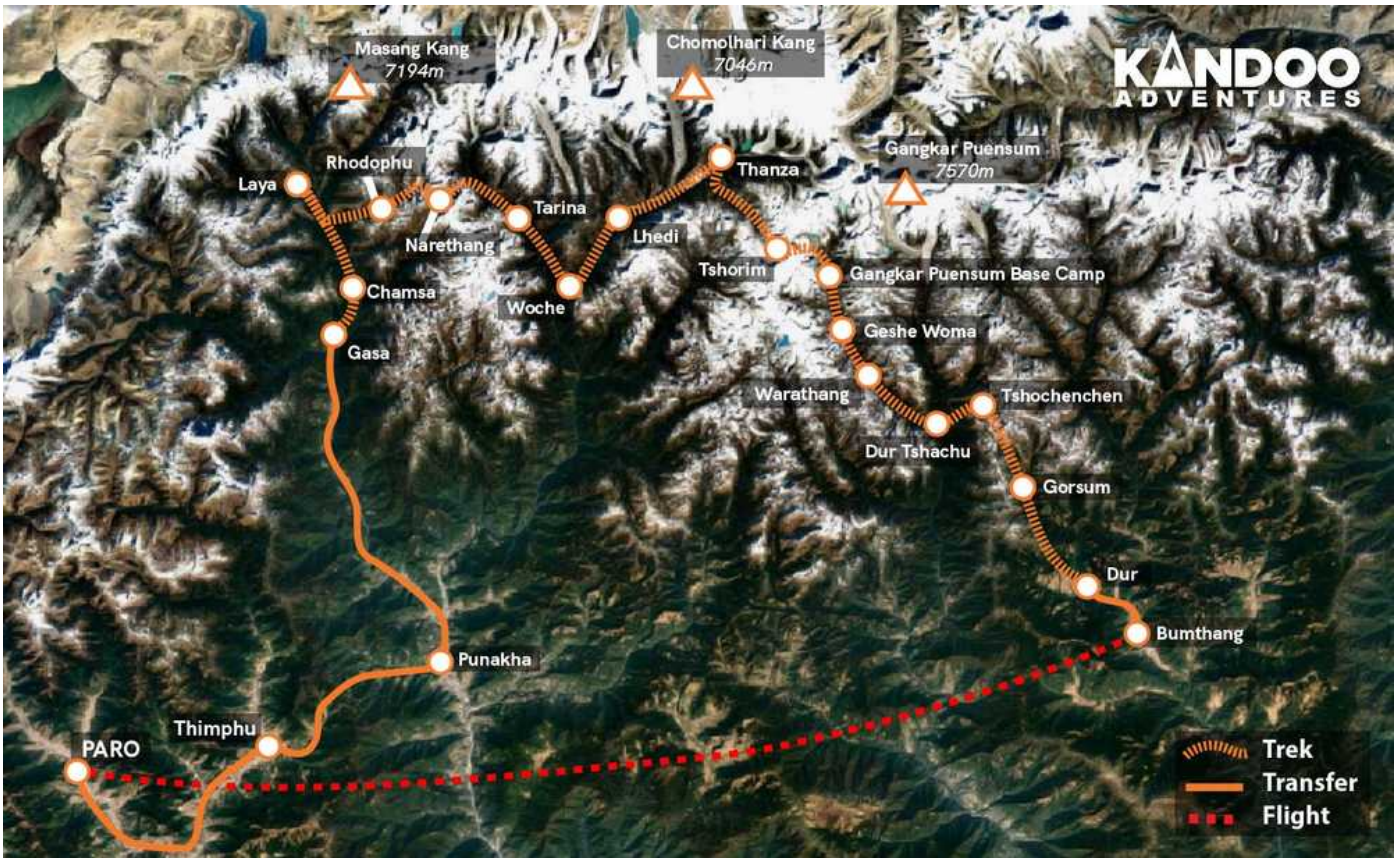
Often referred to as the ‘Land of the Thunder Dragon’, this tiny Himalayan Kingdom, nestled between India and the People’s Republic of China in the Eastern Himalayas, is one of the most isolated nations on earth. Each part of Bhutan has its own historical, geographical, cultural and religious significance, and any visit to this beautiful and largely unspoiled setting will combine spectacular mountain terrain, ancient monasteries, rich flora and fauna, and a vibrant Buddhist culture.

The Snowman trek goes to the remote Lunana district and is considered to be the most difficult trek in Bhutan. The combined attributes of distance, high altitudes, weather conditions and remoteness make this a very tough trek and it should only be considered if you have experience and a good level of fitness. The Snowman trek is subject to closure because of snow and is almost impossible during winter.

In addition to the trek, we will include tours of Thimphu, Punakha, Bumthang and Paro.

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit the breath-taking Tiger's Nest Monastery
- Trek through the remote Lunana region
- Be immersed in the culture of this ancient Himalayan kingdom
- Trip fully carbon offset as standard


Masang Kang
7194m
Chomolhari Kang
7046m
KANDOO
ADVENTURES
Gangkar Puensum
7570m
Rhodophu
Laya
Thanza
Tarina
Narethang
Lhedi
Tshorim
Gangkar Puensum Base Camp
Chamsa
Woche
Geshe Woma
Gasa
Warathang
Tshochenchen
Dur Tshachu
Gorsum
Dur
Bumthang
Punakha
Thimphu
PARO
Trek
Transfer
Flight

ITINERARY

DAY 1

ARRIVAL

The flight to Paro on a clear day is one of the most spectacular of all mountain flights. One can see Mt. Everest, Kanchenjunga, Makalu and other peaks in Bhutan such as Chomolhari, Jichu Drake and Tsering Ghang. The Kandoo team will meet you at the airport and transfer you to Thimphu, the capital city of Bhutan. The journey takes around 2 hours and leads through the Paro valley to the confluence of the Paro and Thimphu rivers at Chuzom. If time permits we will visit the King's Memorial Chorten, continuously circumambulated by people, murmuring mantras and spinning their prayer wheels. Construction of this landmark was the idea of Bhutan's third king, His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuk ("the father of modern Bhutan"). Completed in 1974 after his untimely death, it serves both as a memorial to the late King and as a monument to peace.

Later you will attend a pre-trek briefing with your Lead Guide to prepare you for the challenge ahead. We will spend the night at a hotel in Thimphu.

Accommodation: **Hotel**

Meals included: **Lunch / Dinner**

DAY 2

TOUR OF THIMPHU – DRIVE TO PUNAKHA

Today we will take a tour of Bhutan's capital city. We begin with a visit to the National Library, which holds a vast collection of ancient Buddhist texts and manuscripts, some dating back several hundred years, as well as modern academic books on Himalayan culture and religion. Next we will visit the nearby Institute for Zorig Chusum, commonly known as the Arts & Crafts School. The Institute offers a six-year course on the 13 traditional arts and crafts of Bhutan and during the visit, we can see students learning the various skills taught at the school. We then take a drive towards city centre to visit the Textile museum and Folk Heritage Museum. These museums, both of which opened in 2001, provide fascinating insights into Bhutanese material culture and way of life. (Please note both the National Library and the Institute for Zorig Chusum are closed at weekends and government holidays, and the Textile Museum is closed on Sundays and government holidays).

We finish our tour with a sightseeing visit to Trashichhoe Dzong, "the fortress of the glorious religion". This impressive monastery and fortress has housed the seat of Bhutan's government since 1968, the throne room of His Majesty the King and various government offices. It is also the summer residence of the Chief Abbot and central monk body.

Later in the afternoon we will drive to Punakha via the Dochu La Pass (3,088m), through magnificent forests of rhododendron and magnolia. From the pass, there is a far-reaching view of the eastern Himalayan peaks and the Lunana trekking route.

Ascent: **738 m**
Descent: **1488 m**
Max. altitude: **3088 m**
Accommodation: **Hotel**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 3

TOUR OF PUNAKHA – DRIVE TO GASA

This morning we will take a guided tour of Punakha Dzong, the second largest dzong in Bhutan. Built strategically at the junction of the Pho Chhu and Mo Chhu rivers in 1637 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, it serves as the religious and administrative centre of the region. After lunch, we will drive up the valley, following the Mo Chhu river to the village of Gasa Tshachu, famous for the curative powers of its hot springs. We will camp overnight here.

Ascent: **970 m**
Max. altitude: **2570 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 4

GASA TO CHAMSA

This morning we start our trek climbing up through thick sub-tropical forest to the village of Chamsa.

Hiking time: **4 - 5 hours**
Ascent: **330 m**
Max. altitude: **2900 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 5

CHAMSA TO LAYA

The trail descends to the bank of the Mo Chhu river. After crossing the river, we have lunch by the bridge. From here it is a gradual climb up to Laya, passing by an army camp en route, to our overnight campsite. The Laya people are very friendly and will happily pose for photographs with you in their native dress.

Hiking time: **7 - 8 hours**
Ascent: **940 m**
Max. altitude: **3840 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 6

LAYA TO RHODOPHU

From Laya, we descend, passing by the army camp once again and continuing to follow the river. After lunch, we continue climbing upwards through rhododendrons until we reach a hanging valley where there are often yaks grazing. We will camp here by the river.

Hiking time: **8 - 9 hours**
Ascent: **510 m**
Max. altitude: **4350 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 7

ACCLIMATISATION DAY IN RHODOPHU

Today we will take a hike up to a higher altitude to help our acclimatisation for our big push tomorrow over the mountain passes. We will also take time to rest and prepare ourselves for our ascent above 5000 metres over the next couple of days.

Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 8

RHODOPHU TO NARETHANG

Today we climb up to Tsimola La Pass (4,700m). After crossing the pass and summit we will have superb views of Lunana and the peaks of Mt. Chomolhari and Mt. Jichu Drake. We continue to ascend up to 4900 metres to Narethang where we will camp for the night. Tomorrow morning we will start our climb up to Ganglakarchung La Pass; at 5100 metres this will be the highest point of our trek so far.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**
Ascent: **550 m**
Max. altitude: **4900 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 9

NARETHANG TO TARINA VIA GANGLAKARCHUNG LA PASS

We will walk over fairly level ground before starting the climb up to Ganglakarchung La Pass (5,100m). The view from the trail is breath-taking, a panorama of mountain peaks rising over 7000 metres, including Masagang and Tsendegang. This is arguably one of Bhutan's most stunning mountain viewpoints so make sure you have your camera at the ready. After crossing the pass we start our long descent down to the Tarina valley and much welcome lower altitudes.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**
Ascent: **200 m**
Descent: **1120 m**
Max. altitude: **5100 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 10

TARINA TO WOCHE

The path descends through coniferous forests, following the upper reaches of the Pho Chhu river. The trail then climbs over a ridge and drops to Woche at 3,800m, the first village of Lunana.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**
Descent: **180 m**
Max. altitude: **3980 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 11

WOCHE TO LHEDI VIA KECHE LA PASS

Today's trek begins with a walk through juniper and fir forests and further ahead through rhododendron bushes. We climb up to the Keche La Pass (4,480m) and pause to enjoy the wonderful mountain views. After the pass, we descend to a river, with stunning views of Table Mountain and other peaks en route. We walk upstream along this river, which is one of the main tributaries of the Pho Chhu river, as far as Lhedi village, where we camp overnight.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**
Ascent: **680 m**
Descent: **830 m**
Max. altitude: **4480 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 12

LHEDI TO THANZA

The route continues to follow the river, rising gradually to Choejong village (the largest village in Lunana) where we stop for lunch. After lunch, we visit the village temple before continuing on our trek until we meet the river again, which we cross by a suspension bridge. Soon we reach our campsite at Thanza, the second largest village in Lunana.

Hiking time: **7 - 8 hours**
Ascent: **350 m**
Max. altitude: **4000 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 13

ACCLIMATISATION DAY IN THANZA

A welcome day of leisure, for relaxing, reading, catching up with the washing, or just strolling around. If you are feeling really energetic, you can climb up to the ridge for yet another splendid view of the mountains.

Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 14

THANZA TO TSHORIM

Today our trek starts with a climb up to the ridge, from where there is a great view of Table Mountain and Thanza valley below. We cross the ridge, and enter a small valley with a stream running through it. We continue to follow the stream up the valley, enjoying the view of snow-capped mountains, and have lunch near a crossing point. We then climb up out of the valley, crossing some small ridges to reach our campsite at Tshorim.

Hiking time: **8 - 9 hours**
Ascent: **1125 m**
Max. altitude: **5125 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 15

TSHORIM TO GANGKAR PUENSUM BASE CAMP VIA GUPHO LA PASS

Today's trek is one of the highlights of the trip. The day starts with a short climb up to the Tshorim Lake. We walk around the side of the lake, enjoying the panoramic view of Guphola ranges before climbing up to the final stretch, the Gupho La Pass (5,230m) which is very short. After crossing the pass, we descend to the base camp, walking along the ridge and enjoying a great view of Gangkar Puensum. Depending on how you are feeling, we can detour left and climb up a pyramid shaped peak for a better view, or we can go directly to Base Camp (4,970m) near the Sha Chhu river, where we will set up the camp.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**
Ascent: **105 m**
Descent: **260 m**
Max. altitude: **5230 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 16

GANGKAR PUENSUM BASE CAMP TO GESHE WOMA

The trek continues to follow the Sha Chhu river, descending gradually to Geshe Woma where we camp for the night.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**
Descent: **770 m**
Max. altitude: **4970 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 17

GESHE WOMA TO WARATHANG VIA SAKA LA PASS

The path continues along the course of the Sha Chhu river for two and half hours until we begin the stiff climb to Saka La. We stop for lunch near a yak herder's camp, then climb up to Saka La Pass (4,800m). We can take in the stunning views on the descent to the lakes before another short ascent takes us across the Warathang La Pass (4,590m). The scenery once again is stunning. We finally descend once more to our campsite at Warathang.

Hiking time: **8 - 9 hours**
Ascent: **600 m**
Descent: **800 m**
Max. altitude: **4800 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 18

WARASTHANG TO DUR TSHACHU VIA ULI LA PASS

A short half-hour climb takes us up to Uli La Pass (4,400m). After crossing the pass we descend to the riverside through dense rhododendron, juniper and conifer forests. We then cross a bridge and after a short climb reach the hot springs at Dur Tshachu, where legend has it that Guru Padsambhava bathed in the 8th century.

Hiking time: **5 - 6 hours**
Ascent: **400 m**
Descent: **450 m**
Max. altitude: **4400 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 19

DUR TSHACHU TO TSHOCHENCHEN VIA JULE LA PASS

From the spring, it is a long and steady climb blessed with great views of the mountains of Lunana. First we cross the Gokthong La Pass (4,650m) before descending to several beautiful deep blue lakes at 4220m, with yaks grazing on the surrounding pastures, and yak herders' camp. We then ascend the second pass, Jule La Pass (4,700m), before our final descent to our camp at Tshochenchen.

Hiking time: **8 - 9 hours**
Ascent: **750 m**
Descent: **850 m**
Max. altitude: **4700 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 20

TSHOCHENCHEN TO GORSUM

We trek downhill from Tshochenchen, following the Yoleng Chhu river through thick forests of cypress, spruce, juniper, maple and hemlock. A short climb brings us to our campsite at Gorsum.

Hiking time: **9 - 10 hours**
Descent: **660 m**
Max. altitude: **3850 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 21

GORSUM TO DUR – DRIVE TO BUMTHANG

This is the last day of the trek where we change from yaks to pack ponies. We have to set off early in order to reach Bumthang before dark. The path follows the Chamkhar Chhu river, descending gradually with few climbs. The trek ends when we reach the village of Dur. From here, transport will pick us up and drive us to our lodge in Bumthang.

Hiking time: **5 - 6 hours**
Descent: **540 m**
Max. altitude: **3190 m**
Accommodation: **Lodge**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 22

TOUR OF BUMTHANG

The Bumthang valley is the cultural heartland of the nation. The hills around the valley are filled with monasteries dedicated to Guru Padsambhava. The valley is also the ancestral home of the great Buddhist teacher, Pema Linga, from whose descendants the present monarchy traces its origin. We spend time exploring the valley, visiting Jakar Dzong, Kurje Lhakhang, Jambey Lhakhang and Tamshing Lhakhang, before returning to our lodge for the night.

Accommodation: **Lodge**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 23

FLY FROM BUMTHANG TO PARO

Today we fly from Bumthang to Paro. We will have free time today to rest and relax at our hotel.

Descent: **450 m**
Max. altitude: **2650 m**
Accommodation: **Hotel**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 24

EXCURSION TO TAKTSHANG LHAKHANG

In the morning we will take an excursion to Taktshang Lhakhang, commonly known as 'The Tiger's Nest Monastery'. Undoubtedly one of the most famous of Bhutan's monasteries, the Taktshang monastery is one of the most breath-taking temples in the world. This Buddhist place of worship is perched on a cliff-top at around 3,100m above sea level. The main temple complex was built in 1692, and is considered to be one of the holiest for the Bhutanese people. Legend has it that Guru Rinpoche, an 8th-century Indian Buddhist master, arrived here on the back of a tigress and meditated at this monastery, thus the name 'Tiger's Nest'. The site has been recognized as a sacred place and is now visited by all Bhutanese at least once in their lifetime. On 19 April, 1998, a fire severely damaged the main structure of building but now this Bhutanese jewel has been restored to its original splendour. After lunch we will visit the 7th century Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the 108 temples built in the Himalayas by Tibetan King, Songtsen Gampo. The building of this temple marks the introduction of Buddhism to Bhutan. We will then drive to Drukgyel Dzong, a ruined fortress where Bhutanese warriors fought Tibetan invaders centuries ago. In the early 1950s, Drukgyel Dzong was almost completely destroyed by fire. It is now listed in Bhutan's Tentative List for UNESCO inclusion. In 2016, the Prime Minister Lyonchen Tshering Tobgay, announced that the Dzong will be rebuilt and reinstated to its former glory. The snowy dome of sacred Chomolhari (7326m), 'the Bride of Kangchenjunga', can be seen in all her glory from the approach road to the Dzong. After our tours we will return to our hotel in Paro.

Accommodation: **Hotel**

Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 25

DEPARTURE

We will collect you from your hotel and transfer you to Paro Airport for your flight.

Meals included: **Breakfast**

PLEASE NOTE

It is in the nature of a trip of this kind that arrangements and participants have to be flexible. While we use all reasonable endeavours to ensure a trip runs according to your itinerary, the day-to-day agenda and ultimate goal of the trip are taken as aims and not as contractual obligations. It is a necessary condition of your joining any of our trips that you accept this flexibility. Occasionally, we may have to make changes and we reserve the right to do so at any time.

TRIP INFORMATION

DIFFICULTY

Apart from climbing Aconcagua, this is the toughest trip Kandoo operates. It regularly wins the title of the **toughest trek in the world**. To give you an idea of how tough it is, there are more Everest summiteers each year than trekkers who complete the Snowman trail. Three things combine to make this an awesome challenge. It is a **long trip**: 18 days of walking every day is very hard on the body. Staying well by eating properly and staying fully hydrated is critical. Second, although you will be walking not climbing, the paths are very difficult. Finally to add to the difficulty, it crosses eleven passes over 4500m and you are above 4000m for nearly the whole of the trek.

You need to be in excellent physical condition to take on this trek and undergo a rigorous training regime for 3 to 5 months before departure.

Looking for training advice or a training plan in preparation for this trip? We'd recommend checking out Kate Sielmann and her coaching programs that are specific to mountaineering and trekking training. Find more details here.

FOOD & DRINK

On our Bhutan trips all meals are provided during your stay, both out on activities, at the pre and post trek hotels, and whilst on your trek.

At the hotels, all meals are provided on a fixed menu basis, with a selection of options placed on your table each mealtime for you to help yourself to. Bhutanese cuisine generally consists of steamed rice (red and white) with a varied choice of spicy curries, both vegetarian and non-vegetarian, noodles, meats and chilli cheese sauce. Most hotels provide meals buffet-style. The food in hotels is often the best in town, but restaurants in the main towns are increasingly becoming popular. All tourist hotels have a good selection of international and Bhutanese beverages.

We provide healthy and nutritious cooked meals on your trek for every meal which always include a minimum of four different foods including fresh vegetables, rice and meats. Breakfast whilst trekking will be a hearty selection of foods including cereals, porridge oats, eggs or omelette, toast, jam, honey and hot water to make tea, coffee or hot chocolate. This will be taken in your dining tent at camp, or if the weather is nice you may eat al fresco. Everyday a lunch boy will catch you up on the trail in time to serve you a hot picnic lunch. They will provide a rug to sit on, plates and cutlery with which to eat your food. Lunch will consist of four hot dishes which include rice along with three other hot options. This will be served along with cake, fruit and hot water to make tea. Dinner at camp will not fall short of expectations. Each evening you will be provided with a range of noodles, seasoned meats, vegetable curries, chilli cheese, fried vegetables and of course rice. There are plenty of options to cater easily for dietary requirements. This will be taken in your dining tent at camp.

Whilst in the hotels you will be provided with bottled water. Whilst on your trek, water is boiled to ensure it is safe to drink. To reduce the use of plastic bottles, we would ask that you bring a re-usable drinks bottle that we can fill for you. If you are planning on using a hydration bag for the trek, this may not be comfortable to use around town, so we recommend you bring a smaller drinks bottle as well.

ACCOMMODATION

Hotels in Bhutan all have to be approved by the Tourism Council of Bhutan. Our standard hotels are all clean and comfortable and are chosen because of their great locations, often in quieter parts of town, to help you get a good nights' sleep.

Kandoo use good quality, durable tents to ensure you stay warm, dry and comfortable on your Bhutanese trek. These are A-frame 2 person tents and will be set up with a rug, comfortable foam 3" thick mattress covered by a sheet and a battery powered light. Keep in mind, these are proper mountain tents, designed to cope with extreme conditions so don't expect to be able to stand up and walk around inside! Your meals will be taken in a separate mess tent where you will be able to sit comfortably, while you relax and chat to your team mates and enjoy some of the delicious food that our cook has freshly prepared for you. Inside, you'll be pleased to find a table (of course) and a proper, comfortable chair with arms. With a full 2 metres of headroom, even the tallest climbers will be able to stretch a bit, and move about without hunching over.

In Bhutan, all the hotels will have western flushing toilets. On the trek, the remote nature of the trip means the toilets will be less luxurious, however we do everything we can to make them private and as comfortable as possible in such extreme conditions. At camp, you will have a toilet tent that provides a little privacy and will simply cover a hole in the ground upon which a portable seat has been set up. If you need to use the toilet whilst trekking then this will be a case of finding somewhere hidden, off the path and going wild. We can guarantee it will be the most scenic toilet break you've ever had!

YOUR GUIDE

In Bhutan having a guide is a mandatory requirement to visit the mountainous areas outside of Paro and Thimphu. During your trip in Bhutan your guide and drivers will be at your disposal from your point of arrival to your drop off at the airport. Our itineraries are jam packed with things to do, so it is therefore important that if you wish to explore particular places during your free days or have a particular activity in mind for your free time, you will need to discuss this with the guide.

TRANSPORT

We insist on using a **high standard of vehicle and driver** for all of our transfers. In Bhutan it is not a legal requirement to have seatbelts fitted in the back of vehicles, and while we try to use vehicles that do have rear seatbelts fitted, this cannot always be guaranteed. If you are unhappy about any aspect of the vehicle or the standard of driving, please speak to the driver or our local office immediately.

LUGGAGE

Bag weight: 15kg

We operate a strict limit of 15kg for your main equipment bag. This is more than sufficient for your needs on the trek. Your bag will be weighed before you leave the hotel to start the trek and if it is overweight you will have to take items out and leave them at the hotel.
Your main equipment bag will be carried by mules for the trek. You should also bring a small day pack to carry water, snacks and anything else you may need whilst trekking. This could be used as your hand luggage on your flight. On the trek all items must be packed in your main equipment bag or daypack. They should not be attached to the outside, as we are not responsible if items fall off when the bags are being carried by the mules.

HOW DO I GET THERE?

The main airport in Bhutan is Paro (2,225m) which currently receives flights from Bangkok, Dhaka, Delhi, Kolkata, Kathmandu, Doha, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. This means that you need to get to one of these hubs to catch a connecting flight to Paro. Druk Air has also introduced flights twice per week on a Tuesdays and Saturdays from Dubai to Paro, making connections to Bhutan a much easier process!

The flight into Paro is pretty exciting as the position of the airport requires the plane to get much closer to the mountain tops than most other flights in the world. If you are lucky enough to fly from Kathmandu to Paro and the weather is clear you will fly over 4 of the 5 highest mountains in the world - Mt. Everest, Lhotse, Makalu and Kangchenjunga.

If you are changing airlines or re-checking your luggage at an airport on route, please ensure you leave a minimum of 3 hours between flights. This will account for any delays on arrival, travel time across airports (this can take longer than you think) and time taken to re-check baggage.

Once you have cleared immigration and collected your luggage, make your way to the main doors. Your driver will be outside these doors, holding a 'Kandoo' sign. Paro airport terminal building is very small so they will be hard to miss. It is roughly a 20 minute drive from the airport to our hotel.

Travelling Responsibly

Here at Kandoo, we like to support our guests to make their travel more sustainable. As of 2025, we are offsetting the carbon on all of our trips from arrival in destination to dropping you back off at the airport. As we don't include flight travel in our trips these aren't included in our offsetting calculations, so we are providing you with the calculator below for you to do this yourselves.

eC02 Flights Calculator

BUDGET & CHANGE

The Bhutanese Ngultrum (Nu) is the local currency of Bhutan and equal in value to the Indian Rupee. It is a closed currency so you will not be able to buy this before you arrive. All major currencies, such as US Dollars, Sterling Pounds and Euros, can be exchanged at Paro Airport, banks and hotels. We would recommend exchanging your money at the airport as you may not get a chance to do so after leaving the airport terminal. Top tip:$50 bills (and larger) get a better exchange rate than smaller bills.

Bhutan is a cash economy and credit cards are not commonly accepted. Mastercard may be accepted in larger shops and hotels, but Amex is rarely accepted. If you are relying on a credit or debit card for emergency funds while you travel, make sure you tell your card issuer that you will be using it abroad, or you may find that it won't work when you really need it.

A meal out for 2 people in Bhutan will cost ~$18, however this is included in the cost of your trip so, unless you wish to eat at a different restaurant, the only money you need is for tips and souvenirs. The most common souvenir purchases are Bhutanese wall hangings. These can be expensive, ranging from $20-$1000. Prepare for this if you plan on bringing one home. There are, however, plenty of inexpensive souvenirs you can pick up as well. Our recommended guidance for spending budget in Bhutan would be between $50-150 on top of your tips, give you ample souvenir spending money.

TIPS

Tipping is not approved by the Bhutanese tourist board. However, it has become **customary practice** to tip the guides, cooks and other members of the support team who have assisted you throughout your trek. The decision on how much to tip should be determined by how well the team served you while you were on the trek. Tips can be made in US dollars or Bhutanese Ngultrum. It is very important that US bills be new (less than 10 years old), crisp and untorn.

As this trip is sold on a private basis only, crew members will depend on the requirements of the group. Tip recommendations for this trip will be sent out to participants 3 weeks before departure.

FORMALITIES & HEALTH

PASSPORT

Please double check that your passport is valid for 6 months beyond the date of arrival in Bhutan. We recommend that you take a photocopy of your passport and keep it separate from the original, as this will be useful if the original is lost while you are traveling.

VISA

Visa requirements:
Visas can only be arranged by travel companies and are issued on arrival to those on a prepaid all-inclusive tour. In order to process your Bhutan visa we require a clear readable colour copy of your passport containing the passport number and photograph in JPEG or PDF format.

Transit visas:
Your domestic flight into Bhutan is likely to be on a separate ticket to your international flight. As a result, your luggage will not be checked right through to your final destination and you will need to clear immigration at your transit airport in order to collect your bag and check it back in for your international connection. Double check with your airline what the immigration and visa requirements are for the airport you are to transit through, and whether they are able to re-check your bags for you. Otherwise, you may need to arrange transit visas prior to travel. This is especially important if you are planning on travelling via India, as a transit visa is required and it must be arranged in advance.

VACCINATIONS

The standard vaccinations required for Bhutan are hepatitis A, tetanus and typhoid.

Cholera vaccination is recommended but not required.

Yellow fever vaccination is only required if you are travelling from a country where yellow fever is prevalent.

Vaccination requirements are subject to change and you should always consult your doctor or travel clinic for the most up to date advice.

INSURANCE

Before you can join any Kandoo Adventures trek, you will need to insure yourself against accident, injury, and illness.

Your insurance must cover the cost of helicopter evacuation and repatriation if necessary. Make sure your insurer knows of your travel plans, and verify that your policy fully covers your trek, climb, and any other activities you will participate in. Specifically, treks to Chomolhari require insurance coverage up to 5000m, for the Druk Path up to 4500m is required and the Snowman Trek up to 6000m.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are fully and adequately insured for the duration of your trip. Please ensure that all activities, excursions and destinations in your itinerary are included in your travel insurance policy, in addition to your regular cover for cancellation and medical expenses.

We ask that you keep a copy of your policy summary (containing policy number and the emergency contact number for your insurer) in your day sack at all times, so that we can access this information should we need to contact the insurer on your behalf.

HEALTH

Malaria

There is little risk of malaria on the majority of Bhutanese treks that we operate, due to the altitude, particularly in Bumthang, Gasa, Paro and Thimphu. However, there is a risk of malaria in areas below 1,500m so we recommend you take advice if traveling outside the areas in which we operate. In addition to any medication, we would recommend you take every precaution to prevent mosquito bites by wearing long-sleeved trousers and shirts at dusk and dawn when the mosquitos are active, and by using a DEET based mosquito repellent.

Altitude Sickness

Altitude sickness, also called Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), hypobaropathy and soroche, is an illness caused by exposure to low air pressure, especially low partial pressure of oxygen, which many trekkers experience at high altitudes. AMS is caused by exerting yourself at high altitudes, especially if you have not been properly acclimatised. It is most common at altitudes above 2400 metres. All trekking routes that involve trekking to high altitudes have been carefully designed to aid your acclimatisation wherever possible, but the following will also help your body to adjust:

Slow and steady. You need to keep your respiration rate low enough to maintain a normal conversation. If you are panting or breathing hard, you must slow down. There is no pressure on you to keep up with other members of your group.

Drink much more water than you think you need. Proper hydration helps acclimatisation dramatically. You need to drink at least three litres each day.

Diamox. There has been a lot of research on Diamox that shows it has been reasonably well proven to be helpful in avoiding AMS by speeding up the acclimatisation process. In the UK in it a prescription only drug which must be prescribed by a doctor, but some doctors are reluctant to prescribe it. The concern is that, by taking Diamox, people believe that they are immune from AMS and can ignore the symptoms. In reality, although Diamox can help prevent the symptoms, should symptoms still develop it means that you are not acclimatising and you have to take notice. Diamox is taken before you start trekking to prevent altitude sickness, not once you are on the trek and symptoms have developed.

Dehydration

You can easily become dehydrated at high altitudes. The lower air pressure forces you to breathe more quickly and deeply, and you lose a lot of water through your lungs. You will also be exerting yourself, sweating and you may also suffer from diarrhoea. As a result, you will have to drink much more water than you normally would so you should drink at least 3 litres of fluids every day while trekking. Even when you do not feel thirsty you have to drink this amount as a minimum, preferably more. Stay on the look-out for signs of dehydration in yourself and your fellow trekkers. The most common symptoms include thirst, dry lips, mouth or nose, headache and feeling fatigues or lethargic.

OTHER INFORMATION

Animal welfare:

In the Bhutanese mountains the use of mules and muleteers is very common. The mules have spent their lives up here in the mountains and they can transport your gear with ease. Bhutan is a Buddhist country and, as a result, animals are generally treated with great respect and consideration for their well-being.

Kandoo Adventures are committed to ensuring that the mules we use on our treks receive only the very best treatment.

To ensure the animals are never overloaded we have placed restrictions on the weight of the luggage you can bring with you. Reducing the loads the mules carry will ensure the health and comfort of the mule as well as a sustainable working life. We will not start trekking with mules who are obviously lame, sick or wounded. We will never condone the use of traditional bits which can cause terrible pain for the animals. We only work with a select number of horsemen who we know and trust to provide the very best level of care to their animals.

EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING

CLOTHING TO BRING

HEADGEAR

- Warm beanie style hat – knitted or fleece
- Neck gaiter or scarf. It can get dusty in Bhutan and the air very cold. A scarf or balaclava comes in useful for keeping dust out and can double as a warm layer for your neck / face!
- Sun hat – preferably wide-brimmed for protection
- Sunglasses – high UV protection
- Headlamp (plus extra batteries)

UPPER BODY

- Thermal or fleece base layer (x1)
- Long sleeve shirt/tshirt – light or medium weight, moisture wicking (x1)
- Short sleeved shirt/tshirt – lightweight, moisture wicking (x2)
- Fleece or soft shell jacket (x1)
- Insulated jacket – down or primaloft
- Lightweight water/windproof hard shell outer jacket
- Gloves – lightweight, fleece or quick drying fabric
- Gloves or mittens – heavyweight, insulated, preferably water resistant

LEGS

- Leggings – thermal or fleece base layer (x1)
- Trekking trousers – light or medium weight (x2) – convertible trousers work well
- Waterproof hard shell trousers – ski pants work fine (x1)

FEET

- Trekking boots – mid weight with good ankle support
- Training shoe or similar – to wear around camp
- Mid-weight trekking socks (x3 pairs)
- Breathable, high-wicking liner socks (x2 pairs)
- Thermal trekking socks for upper reaches of your trek (x1 pair)
- Microspikes

EQUIPMENT TO BRING

- Small Rucksack or Daypack (30-40 litres) to carry water and personal items
- Waterproof duffle bag (approx 80-100 litres) – max weight when full should be 15kg. This weight restriction includes your sleeping bag. Your duffle will be carried by a porter
- Sleeping bag (4 season or -20 Deg C) and compression sack
- Trekking poles
- Water bottle or hydration bag – must be able to carry 1.5-2L of water

OTHER ACCESSORIES

- Sunscreen high SPF
- Toiletries, including wet wipes and hand sanitiser – please carry all rubbish back off the trail
- Camera and spare batteries
- Plug adapter, for charging devices in hotels
- Personal medication and first aid kit
- Personal snacks and energy bars – dried fruit and nuts are also a good source of energy
- Isotonic drink powder / energy drink powder to mix in with your water. This improves flavour and helps replace electrolytes
- Microfibre towel for wiping hands and face each day
- Ear plugs, if you are a light sleeper
- Pee bottle, useful for late night toilet needs
- Dry bag (only required if your main duffle bag is not waterproof)

HOW TO BOOK THIS TRIP

1 CHOOSE YOUR DATE AND CHECK AVAILABILITY

A full list of available dates can be found on our website.

2 CONTACT US

Contact us by phone, email or through our website. We will answer any questions you may have and send you a personalized itinerary and quote.

3 COMPLETE BOOKING AND PAYMENT

When you are ready to book, we will send you a link to our online booking forms and participation agreements. We accept all major credit and debit cards and require a low 20% deposit to secure your place.