



Bhutan: The Laya-Gasa Trek

October 19 – November 6, 2021 (19 days)

Here's a truly rare opportunity to experience superb Himalayan trekking in a setting akin to a modern-day Shangri-La. Join expert Himalayan guide Cathy Ann Taylor on this fascinating trek in Bhutan, a virtually untouched part of the world, and a land of lush forests, pastoral valleys, and breathtaking mountains. Your fantastic 13-day trek brings you through scattered hamlets, wild rhododendron forests, and alpine meadows to the foot of sacred Mount Chomolhari (23,997'), Bhutan's most deeply venerated guardian peak rising abruptly on the northern border with Tibet and Ganchey Ta, the Great Tiger Mountain (22,285'). Then, it's on to the isolated enclave of Laya in the far northwestern area of Bhutan, inhabited by the semi-nomadic Layap people, with their unique culture, language, and traditions. This is an incredible journey to a place where magical dramas play out in great monasteries and where little has changed over the centuries. Cathy Ann's in-depth knowledge of Bhutan will make this trip come alive for you! You'll experience all this and more with our full-service camping and personalized service. Join us for the adventure of a lifetime!

TRIP DETAILS

Very challenging ► 13 days of very challenging hiking at medium to high elevation (max. 16,072'); 13 nights camping, 5 nights 5 star hotels

ITINERARY

(You will likely need to leave the U.S. or Mexico on October 17 in order to arrive in Paro, Bhutan, on October 19.)

You will be traveling via Delhi (Cattara will book your internal flights between Delhi and Paro) so you will need an Indian e-visa or the 10-year visa and we recommend one of the many hotels in Aero City: <https://www.ihg.com/holidayinn/hotels/gb/en/new-delhi/delap/hoteldetail> or the Holiday Inn Express inside the airport itself:

https://www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/us/en/new-delhi/delax/hoteldetail?cm_mmc=GoogleMaps--EX--IN--DELAX.

Day 1, Oct 19 ► Paro, Bhutan

Fly to Paro (7,217'), Bhutan, on Bhutan Airlines or Druk Air, the national airlines of Bhutan. If the weather cooperates, you might have spectacular views of four of the ten highest peaks in the world—Everest, Cho Oyu, Makalu, and Kanchenjunga—plus peaks in Bhutan such as Chomolhari, Jichu Drakye, and Tsering Kang. After meeting your trip leader or local guide at the Paro airport, we drive to our hotel overlooking the beautiful Paro Valley. We'll have a late afternoon visit to the National Museum, housed in an old watchtower above Paro Dzong (a dzong is a fortress-monastery). The museum's collections include displays of spectacular *thangkas* (religious scroll paintings), bronze statues, Bhutan's beautiful stamps, and the Tshogshing Lhakhang (Temple of the Tree of Wisdom), with its carvings depicting the history of Buddhism. We will also visit the Paro Dzong (Rinchen Pung Dzong, meaning "fortress on a heap of jewels"), built in 1644.

B,L,D...Zhiwaling Hotel

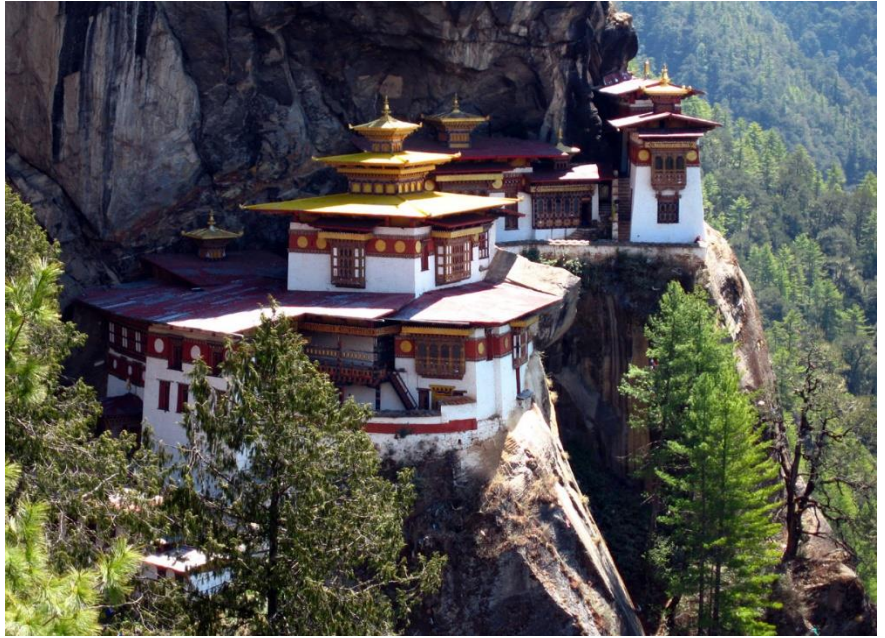


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Day 2, Oct 20 ▶ Paro

We drive a few miles north from the hotel to the trailhead where we start a wonderful two-hour hike up to Taktsang Monastery (its name means “tiger’s nest”), perched on a cliff 2,700 feet above the floor of the Paro Valley. Our hike follows a steep switchback trail and serves as a great warm-up for our trek. Lunch in Paro. In the afternoon you will be free to relax.
B,L,D...Zhiwaling Hotel

**Day 3, Oct 21 ▶ Begin trek – Shingkarab (~9,700')**

Today we start our trek to Mount Chomolhari. Drive about 2 hours to the trailhead at Sharna Zampa (8,500'), where we'll meet our local support staff and pack animals that will carry most of the gear. On the way we can visit the Drukyl Dzong and catch our first glimpse of Chomolhari. Upon arrival we begin our trek along the Paro River, passing traditional farming communities. We arrive at our first campsite alongside the Paro River near Shingkarab beyond Sharna Zampa after 2 hours of hiking. (~4 miles, 2 hours hiking.)
B,L,D...Camp

Day 4, Oct 22 ▶ Soi Thangthangkha (11,840')

Today is a strenuous day of hiking with lots of elevation gain and loss, but it is a real confidence booster for the days ahead. We continue along the Paro River through some spectacular lush forests of oak, rhododendron, spruce, red birch, and larch. As the valley narrows the trail ascends and descends across very rocky and muddy terrain while gradually gaining altitude. As we get closer to our camp for the night, we begin to catch a glimpse of the sacred snow-capped summit of Chomolhari (if the weather is clear). After a long hard day, we camp in an old growth juniper forest at Soi Thangthangkha (11,840'). (~10.5 miles, 6-7 hours hiking.)

Day 5, Oct 23 ▶ Jangothang (13,382')

We continue following the Paro River on a demanding, rocky trail, and then the valley widens again, opening to a spectacular area surrounded by high snow-capped ridges. A few yak-herding families are based in this area, and we may be lucky to pay them a visit and try some of their dried yak cheese. Camp at Jangothang (13,382') below a ruined fortress near the base of Chomolhari (23,997'). (11.5 miles, 5.5-6 hours hiking.)
B,L,D...Camp

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Day 6, Oct 24 ► Jangothang (13,382')

Today is a free day to rest and explore. You can take a beautiful optional hike to Tsophu (lake) for spectacular views of Chomolhari and Jichu Drakye (you'll gain altitude quickly, which is good for acclimatization). You can also opt to stay at camp, take in the views, and rest for the challenging day ahead. (3 -4 hours hiking.)
B,L,D...Camp



Day 7, Oct 25 ► Lingzhi (13,152')

Climb steeply up to 14,661 feet and head into a glacial valley with many moraines. As we near the ridge we can see the snowy peaks of Tsering Kang (22,268') and Jichu Drakye (22,924'). Continue up to the Nyile La at 15,980 feet ("la" means "pass"), about four hours from camp. From here the views of Chomolhari, Jichu Drakye, and Tsering Kang are spectacular (weather permitting!). We may also see Ganchey Ta (22,285') and Masang Gang (23,500'). Descend along scree slopes to a side valley at 14,596 feet, traverse a hillside, then descend on switchbacks to another side valley. Camp at Lingzhi (13,152'), at the base of Tsering Kang and Jichu Drakye. (11 miles, 7-7.5 hours hiking.)
B,L,D...Camp

Day 8, Oct 26 ► Lingzhi – Chebisa (12,628')

Today's hike to Chebisa is very pleasant and easy along a rather flat and easy trail (no rock hopping and not much climbing). We'll have some time to visit some homes in the village. (12 miles, 5-6 hours hiking.)
B,L,D...Camp



Day 9, Oct 27 ► Chebisa – Shomuthang (13,973')

The trail leads through wild high pastures and across the Gobula (14,268'). Continue to Shomuthang and camp on a bench above the river, a tributary to the Mo Chu, which flows just below Gasa Tsachu (hot spring). (11 miles, 6 hours hiking.)
B,L,D...Camp

Day 10, Oct 28 ▶ Shomuthang – Robluthang (14,400')

We get an early start and cross the Jarela pass (15,088'), then descend to Tsharijathang, the valley where takin are often seen. Camp at Robluthang. (9 miles, 5 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Camp



Day 11, Oct 29 ▶ Robluthang – Lemithang (13,567')

After crossing Shinche La pass (16,072'), we descend to Lemithang. We have now entered the Laya district, and we'll pass some Laya villages. Camp beneath Ganchey Ta (22,285'), the Great Tiger Mountain. (12 miles, 7-8 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Camp

Day 12, Oct 30 ▶ Lemithang – Laya (12,595')

The trail descends along a closed-in winding river valley. The trail forks, one branch going down to the river, while we'll take the other, which stays high and leads to the west side of Laya village. Camp on a high flat bench above the east end of Laya, one of the highest villages in Bhutan. (7 miles, 3-4 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Camp

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Day 13, Oct 31 ▶ Laya – rest day

Layap women wear a traditional conical bamboo hat with a spike on top. They also keep their hair long, unlike other women in Bhutan who favour close-cropped hair. Traditional dress includes black yak wool jacket and skirt. Today we'll enjoy a day to meet and visit with the Layap in their homes or hike above our camp.

B,L,D...Camp

Day 14, Nov 1 ▶ Laya – Koena (12,628')

We leave Laya and head for Koena, following the trail as it winds up and down along the river valley. Along the way we enjoy views of the crashing river, feeder streams, and waterfalls. (12 miles, 7 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Camp



Day 15, Nov 2 ▶ Koena – Gasa Tsachu (hot spring) (9,750')

Cross Balala pass (12,267'), and continue on a roller coaster trail up and down to our campsite near Gasa Tsachu (hot spring). We'll have some time to visit the natural hot springs, where we can relax and take a long-deserved bath. The Tsachu is a famous place where people from all over the country come to bathe in its curative waters. There are four ponds and all have different healings powers. (9 miles, 6-7 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Camp

Day 16, Nov 3 ▶ Gasa Tsachu – Punakha (4,075)

We leave the hot springs and drive to Punakha (4-5 hours drive). Lunch in Punakha and we will visit the ancient 17th century Punakha Dzong, which is spectacularly situated at the confluence of the Mo and Phu Rivers.

B,L,D...Dhensa Hotel

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Day 17, Nov 4 ▶ Thimphu

On our drive to Thimphu, we will stop for a short hike to Chimi Lhakhang (temple), built by Lama Drukpa Kunley. Legend has it he subdued the demoness of the Dochu La with his “Magic Thunderbolt of Wisdom.” A wood effigy of the lama’s thunderbolt is preserved in the lhakhang, and childless women go to the temple to receive a *wang* (blessing) from the saint. We’ll then drive across the Dochu La (10,000’), marked by hundreds of colorful fluttering prayer flags, to the capital city of Thimphu. We’ll arrive around 3:30 pm and the remainder of the day is free to shop or explore on your own.

B,L,D...Dusit Hotel

Day 18, Nov 5 ▶ Thimphu – Paro

Our sightseeing in Thimphu includes the Traditional Hospital of Herbal Medicine, Folk Heritage Museum, and the School of Arts and Crafts (or “painting school”), where Bhutanese children can follow a six-year program in traditional arts, such as drawing, painting, woodcarving, and sculpture. In the late afternoon we’ll drive two hours to Paro and enjoy a festive Farewell Dinner.

B,L,D...Zhiwaling Hotel

Day 19, Nov 6 ▶ Fly to Bangkok or Delhi

Morning transfer to the Paro airport for departure on your flight to Bangkok or Delhi.

B

(You’ll arrive home on Saturday November 7.)

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LAND COST

\$9695 per person (4-5 members)

\$9495 per person (6-8 members)

\$9195 per person (9-14 members)

\$1200 single supplement

\$800 (Druk Air Delhi/Paro/Delhi, 2021 price TBD)

Rates quoted are per person, based on sharing double accommodations.

*Should you choose to pay with credit card there will be a service charge of 3.5%, the fee we incur from the bank.

Note—Prices listed are subject to change. We are occasionally faced with unavoidable cost increases due to fuel increases, costs of services or currency fluctuations that we cannot absorb. We will, however, do everything we can to keep prices the same as published.

LAND COST INCLUDES...

- Expert leadership
- Accommodations in 5 * hotels in Bhutan
- All trek arrangements, including community camping and commissary equipment (comfortable and roomy tents, kitchen and dining tents, and other community equipment), camp and cook staff
- Meals as noted (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Airport transfers
- Sightseeing as noted in the itinerary
- Ground transportation
- Additional guides and porters where necessary
- Entrance fees and permits

LAND COST DOES NOT INCLUDE...

International airfare to Paro and return; meals en route to Paro; trip insurance (we strongly recommend you purchase the optional trip insurance offered by Cattara, which includes trip cancellation insurance); optional tipping to leader, guides and local staff; excess baggage charges; visas; cost of medical immunizations; and items of a personal nature (sodas, alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

TRIP PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation25% of land cost
120 days prior to departure25% of land cost
90 days prior to departure.....Balance

CANCELLATION FEE SCHEDULE

From time of reservation
until 90 days prior to departure.....25% of land cost
89-60 days prior to departure.....50% of land cost

59 days or fewer prior to departure.....100% of land cost

EXPERT LEADERSHIP

Expert leadership is the key to every successful trip. Cattara attracts knowledgeable and gifted leaders who are passionate about guiding trips and truly enjoy sharing the experience with others. They understand the cultures and traditions they work in and are a fountain of information. In addition to making sure everything runs smoothly and safely, Cattara guides enhance your experience by being educators, companions, and the best of friends.

TRIP LEADER



Cathy Ann Taylor, a high altitude trekking & cultural guide for the last 31 years will be leading his trip. Cathy Ann has trekked all over Nepal, Tibet, India and Bhutan, with well over 200 trips in the Himalayas (she still considers the Himalayas her “second home”)! She has also hiked extensively in the European Alps (Tour du Mont Blanc—six times, The Haute Route, Gran Paradiso, Scotland—two times, and the Dolomites—two times), the Georgian Caucasus—four times, South America (18 trips in Peru, 1 in Patagonia), and Uganda & Rwanda—four times. A devout hiker and

mountain biker, she leaves no trail undiscovered, and her passion for the mountains, caring nature, and boundless energy are renowned. Her experience, knowledge, positive attitude (she can find the good in anything!), and her wonderful rapport with the local staff will enhance your experience. With the help of caring and like-minded individuals she has been able to manage the sponsorship of nineteen remote village children, all of whom are in boarding school in Nepal or in universities in India, Nepal, and the United States. She consistently gets rave reviews from members of her groups and has quite a following. Cathy Ann is active in the Breast Cancer Prevention Partners and has participated in sixteen expeditions, including Mount McKinley, Mount Cho Oyu, Mount Fuji, Mount Shasta, and Mount Rainier, which helped increase awareness of breast cancer. Cat’s special trekking program, Sacred Treks, benefits Breast Cancer Prevention Partners (formerly the Breast Cancer Fund). Past trips include Bhutan, Mont Blanc, Peru, Everest, Ladakh, Mustang, Georgian Caucasus, Sikkim, Dolomites, Cordillera Blanca, and Annapurna Sanctuary treks (she has raised \$1,400,000 to date!). Cathy Ann has also been active in the American Himalayan Foundation and has helped raised \$20,000 for their STOP Girl Trafficking project. She has also raised over \$15,000 for Lama Pasang’s Himalayan Children’s Care Home which houses 87 children from Mustang. She has also reached the summit of Ama Dablam (22,500') in Nepal and Argentina's Aconcagua (22,834'), the highest peak in South America. Cathy Ann received an honorable mention in *Hooked on the Outdoors* magazine's Outdoor Person of the Year Awards, and also received a letter of recognition for her fundraising and environmental work from Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi.

PHYSICAL EXPECTATIONS

This trip is very challenging and is designed for those who are very fit and experienced in the outdoors. We expect you to be a strong, experienced hiker and in great physical condition. On this trip, you will hike six to seven hours a day, up and down mountain trails that are steep and rocky, and mostly at elevations above 11,000 feet. High altitude trekking can be very physically taxing and

may create discomfort. You may experience symptoms of illness that you do not experience while exercising at sea level, such as shortness of breath, restlessness or sleeplessness at night, and headaches. You should be aware of the demands and risks imposed by very high altitude, be in excellent underlying health, and prepare by training rigorously. We recommend you have a thorough physical exam and evaluation to uncover any general medical problem that might flare up while trekking in the remote areas of Bhutan, where medical care may be many days away.

This trek is designed to allow time for acclimatization while trying to follow a schedule that accommodates peoples' time constraints. Certain aspects of the trek organization and schedule that may seem illogical are designed to maximize acclimatization. For instance, once at altitude, elevation gains between camps are limited: you may climb higher during the day but descend to sleep (climb high, sleep low). Extra nights are spent at the same elevation after each 2,000-3,000-foot gain over 12,000 feet.

While on trek, you should drink a lot of water—this helps to avoid dehydration. The prescription drug Acetazolamide (Diamox) can also help acclimatization, prevent acute mountain sickness, and treat mild cases of mountain sickness. It is also very helpful for altitude insomnia and should be used in preference to sleeping pills or Valium, which are dangerous at altitude. Consult with your physician for advice on trekking at high altitude and any prescription medications you may need. Gingko has been further studied and has been found to help acclimatization as has ibuprofen.

For physical preparation for this very challenging trek, we strongly suggest regular cardiovascular exercise for one to two hours at least 4-5 times a week. We recommend stair climbing, running, and mountain biking and hiking on hills or elliptical or treadmill training in the gym with 15-20 pound day packs. This gets the heart rate going, which will be very beneficial for the type of high altitude trekking you will be undertaking. There is no better way to train for a trek than to hike as much in the mountains and on hills as you can!

LIFE ON THE TRAIL

Your trekking day typically starts at 6:30 am, when the camp staff will bring you “bed tea” to start the day, along with a large bowl of hot water for washing. (Bring along a washcloth and you can have a full sponge bath in the privacy of your tent!) After packing your bags, you'll enjoy a hearty breakfast of porridge, eggs, and toast. By 8:00 or 8:30 you're off on the trail.

The morning's hike takes you through villages, forests, and up and down green hills and valleys or along rocky mountain trails. You'll have time to stop for a view or a photo, and exchange a smile or greeting (Kuzu Zangpo la!) with the friendly Bhutanese people who share the trail. A picnic trailside lunch breaks up the day, giving you time to rest and refuel before heading out on the trail for the afternoon hike.

You arrive in camp by 4:00 pm and have time to wash up and get settled in your tent before enjoying tea and snacks in the dining tent. While waiting for dinner, you can write in your journal, read a book, play cards, or simply relax. The day ends with a hot, multi-course dinner, which often includes ethnic cuisine as well as American favorites. After dinner you can gaze at the stars

(incredible viewing in this part of the world) and the moonlit peaks, go over the events of the day, or retire to your tent to read for a while before heading off to sleep.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

In addition to a passport, valid for at least six months beyond the date of completion of the trip, you will need a visa for Bhutan and our office in Thimphu will obtain it for you. Please **email us a photocopy of the photo page of your passport** (your visas will be stamped in your passport upon arrival in Paro). U.S. citizens do not need a visa for Thailand for visits of up to 30 days.

Note—it's a good idea to make a photocopy of the photo page of your passport and carry it separately from your passport. If your passport is lost or stolen, a photocopy will help the local consulate speed up authorization for replacement. Extra passport photos can also be helpful to have just in case.

AIR TRAVEL

Airfare is not included in the land cost of the trip. For air reservations, please contact the airlines directly, either by phone or via the Internet. Many travelers elect to use their "frequent flyer" miles when traveling, but please check with us before purchasing or obtaining your tickets. We need to verify your arrival and departure schedule and ensure we have enough participants to operate the trip. Note—Names on air tickets and passports must match!

MEDICAL MATTERS

No vaccinations are currently required to enter Bhutan, but immunizations for typhoid, tetanus, hepatitis A, and polio are *recommended*. These regulations and recommendations change frequently, so please check with your local health department or the CDC for more information (www.cdc.gov).

Please advise us of any pre-existing medical conditions that may affect your health on the trek (recent injuries or surgeries, chronic illnesses, etc.). Hospital facilities for serious medical emergencies may be far away and evacuation can be difficult (and expensive).

To avoid intestinal problems while on the trip, do not drink tap water or even use it to brush your teeth. In Paro and Thimphu you will be provided with bottled water at meals, but you will need to buy your own water to fill up your water bottles or to take to your room at night. While on trek, the camp staff will provide boiled water for daily use. Your trip leader will give you more guidelines on staying healthy while in Bhutan.

We recommend you bring your own personal first-aid kit, which should include antibiotics (Cipro or other), pain killers, and allergy medicines if you are prone to allergic reactions. The trip leader will also carry a basic kit for emergencies, but will not have any prescription medications.

MONEY MATTERS

You should bring enough money for any souvenirs you may buy, plus a few meals that are not included in the cost of the trip (e.g. meals in Bangkok). Depending on how much of a shopper you are, \$600-\$700 is usually enough for incidentals and souvenirs. You should bring an additional amount for optional gratuities to the trip leader and local trekking staff. At least US \$600 is recommended for the trip leader (presenting this personally rather than collectively gives you the opportunity to say thank you individually and is greatly appreciated) and at least \$300 toward a group tip for the trekking staff, preferably paid in local currency, as traveler's checks are impossible for the trekking staff to exchange.

Bring most of your money in cash (old or torn bills are not accepted or exchanged). There are also ATMs in both Paro and Thimphu. Cash can be exchanged at the hotels in Paro and Thimphu. Keep in mind that you will not be able to convert ngultrums, Bhutan's local currency (~69 ngultrums are equivalent to US \$1), back into US dollars. Bring along your credit card in case of emergencies, or to use at the hotels and some of the shops.

WEATHER & CLIMATE

In the months of October & November you will encounter pleasant to cool weather conditions in Paro and Thimphu. At higher elevations (10,000 feet and above), daytime temperatures will range between 30's° and 60's°F, and drop to 20's° to 50's°F at night. If it's windy, the air will be quite chilly, and temperatures will drop considerably. Please prepare yourself for a variety of climatic changes—rain, snow, hot or cold, wet or dry. The best way to be comfortable and still travel light is by layering your clothes.

WHILE ON THE TRIP

Our camping accommodations are quite comfortable! We provide roomy three-person Mountain Hardware tents, plenty of space for you and your gear. In Paro and Thimphu, we stay in beautiful, clean, and comfortable hotels. Lunches and dinners are generally buffet-style and plentiful.

INCIDENTALS

Laundry: Laundry service is available at the hotel in Paro. While on trek, wash basins are available for any laundry you may want to do yourself on rest days. Most days it will be too cold for things to dry. Synthetic fabrics are the easiest to wash, and they dry quickly. Please make sure you bring biodegradable soap.

Electricity: Bhutan is on the 220V system. Sockets are usually the three-pin variety, but they vary. If you are planning to use something like a hairdryer or electric shaver at the hotel bring a converter and a selection of plug adapters (you can buy these in drugstores or travel specialty stores in the U.S.).

Time Zones: Bhutan is Greenwich Mean Time plus six hours. That means that Thimphu is eleven hours ahead of New York and fourteen hours ahead of California.

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Environmental Responsibility: We ask you to carry out whatever you carry in, including non-biodegradable items such as batteries, flashlight bulbs, empty film canisters, empty plastic containers, and so on. Bhutan does not have the proper facilities to process this kind of waste and your throwaways will end up in the river or tossed down a hillside.

SHOPPING

There are wonderful shopping opportunities in Bhutan, including beautiful hand-woven textiles, *thangka* paintings, jewelry, baskets, and more. In Thimphu you will visit the School of Arts and Crafts, where you can purchase reasonably priced items made by the students. The Handicraft Emporium is also a good place to shop, along with many other shops in Thimphu. With the exception of the Handicraft Emporium, most stores accept cash only, so plan accordingly. Examples: a large piece of fabric used for *kiras* (traditional women's dress) or a woven wall hanging can cost up to \$500; jewelry can be anywhere from \$25-\$100, depending on stone and craftsmanship; *thangka* paintings are between \$20-\$200 (or more), depending on size and detail.

While on trek, you will have a chance to buy items such as yak ropes, slings, tassels, and bells from local yak herders.

Please remember that the concept of bargaining is uncommon in Bhutan. If you buy more than one item in a shop, you may ask the proprietor if he or she is offering a discount. But please do not try to haggle the price down.

WHAT TO BRING: CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT LIST

Packing Notes

It's best to go as light as possible and take only the essentials. Excess baggage can be a burden, not only to you but to support personnel. Your trekking duffel must not weigh more than **30 lbs.**, because it will be carried by a pack animal. This includes all items you will need while on trek as well as your sleeping bag. We suggest you bring an additional small duffel to store non-trek clothes and items. We'll store it for you and return it to you at the hotel in Paro upon your return from the trek.

In addition, due to limited space on the aircraft, there are baggage weight restrictions on the Druk Air flights between Bangkok or Delhi and Paro. **You can take only one piece of checked luggage weighing no more than 44 lbs., and only one carryon piece (this may be your daypack), which must fit under the seat in front of you or in the overhead bin.** Always bring all irreplaceable items, such as camera, medications, important documentation, and trekking boots in your carryon luggage.

Luggage

- ☐ Duffel bag. A good size is about 14" x 15" x 36" (7,560 cu. in)—large enough to hold your sleeping bag plus your trekking clothes and gear. It should have a full-length zipper (for easy access) and be sturdy and waterproof.
- ☐ Daypack with a capacity of 2,000 to 2,500 cubic inches, with a good padded waist belt. It can double as your carryon bag.
- ☐ Spare roll-up duffel. This is essential if you wish to store your city clothes while on the trek and to bring home those great souvenirs! It should be lockable.

Clothing Notes

You should be prepared for very unpredictable weather. Bring comfortable clothing that will protect you from cold and wet weather. Synthetic fabrics (such as polypropylene, capilene, or pile) are the most effective barriers against the cold. They provide the best insulation, are light in weight, wick away perspiration, and dry quickly if wet. (Cotton garments are not good in cold or wet mountain conditions.)

Layering is the way to go. Your innermost layer should be a synthetic T-shirt or long underwear. The middle layer can be a synthetic turtleneck or wool shirt, and pants. The outermost layer should be a synthetic or down jacket, and/or a good quality wind/rain parka and over-pants.

We suggest women trek in comfortable, loose-fitting long pants. Not only are these the most comfortable, you will be dressed modestly enough to enter the dzongs (it would be culturally insensitive for women visitors to wear skin-tight pants or skimpy shorts and "sports bra" tops). The same goes for men—please do not go bare-chested or wear running shorts. Long, baggy hiking-type shorts for men are acceptable on the trek, although full-length pants are best because it is generally too cold for shorts.

We haven't included quantities for each item listed. Use your own judgment, based on the expected weather conditions, your personal needs, and the overall weight restrictions for your luggage.

Underwear

- ☐ Regular underwear. Synthetics are easier to wash and dry. Depending on the weather, you may be able to hand-wash some on your rest days during the trek.
- ☐ Thermal underwear (one lightweight and one medium-weight), top and bottoms, of a synthetic-type fabric. Wool and wool/synthetic blends are also suitable. You can use them to sleep at night and as layers for maximum warmth.

Socks

- ☐ Athletic socks (synthetic for easy washing and drying) that are suitable for your walking (not hiking) shoes. You can store them in your extra duffel while on trek.
- ☐ Hiking socks (synthetic or wool/synthetic).
- ☐ Synthetic or silk sock liners—optional. Some people wear sock liners to help prevent blisters, and some wear the same pair of hiking socks for three days in a row and achieve the same result.

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Shirts

- ☐ Long-sleeved, synthetic or wool shirts.
- ☐ Short-sleeved synthetic T-shirts (in case we have some hot, sunny days on trek).

Pants

- ☐ Full-length pants, preferably of quick-drying synthetic fabric.
- ☐ Fleece pants, ideal for camp time or layering for warmth.

Outerwear

- ☐ Medium-weight jacket of synthetic fabric, such as fleece.
- ☐ Medium to heavy-weight down or synthetic-fill jacket (10-12 oz. of down or 15-20 oz. of fiberfill). A must for camp.
- ☐ Rain/wind parka (must fit over bulky clothing).
- ☐ Rain/wind pants, preferably with full-length side zipper (must fit over your other pants).
- ☐ Gloves and/or mittens (fleece & wind/waterproof).

Head Gear

- ☐ Sun hat with wide brim, preferably with a chin strap to keep it from blowing off.
- ☐ Buff or neck gaiter for sun protection and warmth.
- ☐ Fleece or wool hat.
- ☐ Bandanna. A generally useful item—it will keep your neck from getting sunburned and can double as a hand towel in the field.

Footwear

Please break new boots in well before the trip.

- ☐ Medium-weight, hiking boots with padded ankle, good arch support, and lug sole for traction. Your hiking boots should be waterproofed, well broken in, and suitable for prolonged walking on rocks, mud and in rain and snow.
- ☐ Sneakers or warm clogs to wear in camp.
- ☐ Comfortable walking shoes to wear while in towns (you will store these in your extra duffel).
- ☐ Gaiters (in case of snow and useful in muddy conditions).

Sleeping Gear

- ☐ Sleeping bag. We recommend a rating of 0° to -15° F.
- ☐ We provide a 3" foam sleeping pad with attached closed cell foam pad; you may want to bring an additional one for added comfort and warmth, we recommend a full-length lightweight Therm-a-Rest.

Other Items

- ☐ Water bottles, 1 or 1.5 quart capacity. Make sure they are leak-proof, heavy-duty, and **wide mouthed**. Bring 2 and mark them with your name or initials or in some clever way as several people may have the same bottle. **Note—CamelBaks or other bladder hydration systems**

are not recommended, as they often break or leak, are difficult to fill with boiled water, and are hard to keep clean.

- ☐ **Hiking sticks—a must!** These are essential on the strenuous, rocky, and sometimes icy high-altitude terrain and help relieve the impact on your knees during long downhill; they are also useful on uphill, particularly when walking on rocks, snow, or ice. Practice with them before the trip.
- ☐ Parachute cord to use as a clothesline inside your tent.
- ☐ Swimsuit (for the swimming pool at the hotel in Bangkok or Delhi).
- ☐ Set of casual city clothes that are dressier than your trekking clothes. You will store these in your extra duffel while you are on trek.
- ☐ Toiletry kit—biodegradable soap, toothbrush, etc.
- ☐ Roll of toilet paper. Toilet paper is provided at camp, but you need to carry your own on trek during the day.
- ☐ Purell hand sanitizer for quick hand washing and hygiene (a must!).
- ☐ Personal medical kit.
- ☐ Small towel of synthetic-type fabric.
- ☐ Sponge or washcloth to wash up at camp.
- ☐ Ace bandage or brace if you're prone to sore knees or ankles.
- ☐ Sunglasses (100% UVA/URB protected).
- ☐ Spare pair of prescription glasses, prescription sunglasses, or contact lenses.
- ☐ Sunscreen lotion and lipstick of SPF 25 or higher.
- ☐ Small headlamp with spare batteries.
- ☐ Trash bags to waterproof and sort out clothes and other items in your duffel. Ziploc bags are great for small items and camera gear; stuff sacks are also handy.
- ☐ Small padlocks or combination locks for your duffels.
- ☐ Extra passport photos. Keep them with your travel documents as you may need them throughout your journey.

Optional Travel Accessories

- ☐ Camera and plenty of memory cards, and extra batteries.
- ☐ Repair kit with needle, thread, and safety pins.
- ☐ Pair of compact binoculars.
- ☐ Swiss Army-type pocket knife.
- ☐ Powdered mixes for your water (these provide good electrolytes).
- ☐ A few of your favorite trail snacks, energy bar or candy for each trekking day.
- ☐ Money belt or neck pouch to store cash.
- ☐ Reading and writing material.
- ☐ Sit upon pad for the trail.

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