

# BHUTAN TREK 2010

Cost includes all major expenses, airfare from Los Angeles, hotels, trekking and most meals.

*This is arranged as a group fare only.*

Cost double occupancy is \$7,985.

Cost single occupancy is \$8,585.



**Day 1 - September 10:** Meet the group for the first time in Los Angeles. Board United Airlines for the trip across the Pacific and the International dateline.

**Day 2 - September 11:** A very short night due to crossing the International dateline.

**Day 3 - September 12:** Early morning departure on Druk Air, the only national carrier to Paro, Bhutan. The flight offers beautiful views of the Himalayas and Indian landscapes. On arrival and after visa formalities, we will be received by Bhutan Horizons staff, eagerly awaiting us at the EXIT point to welcome us all to Bhutan. Load up the bus and drive through Paro Valley, enjoying the beauty of the valley and the unique Bhutanese architecture. Check into Olathang Hotel, lunch and take an afternoon walk. Paro is at 2,200 m (7,216')

**Day 4 - September 13:** Paro valley sightseeing; Paro National Museum was originally built as a watch tower and renovated in 1968 as the Museum by the 3rd King. The Museum has a spectacular collection of thanngas, philatelic collection on the top floor, ancient icons, textiles, natural history. Visit Paro Ringpung Dzong, the fortress of the Heap of Jewels, built in 1647 by the Great Unifier of Bhutan. The original building burned down in 1905 and rebuilt in the same style and shape by Paro Penlop in the same year. After our visit we walk down to wooden bridge and Kichu Lhakhang, the first and the oldest Lhakhang in Bhutan, is said to have been built in 659 by the Tibetan King Songtsen Genpo of Tibet. The main figure inside the main building is a large statue of Sakyamuni. After lunch we drive to Drukgyel Dzong. At the end of the road, 14km from Paro, stand the ruins of Drukgyel Dzong. The Dzong was built in 1649 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in a location chosen for its control of the route to Tibet. The Dzong was named 'Druk'(Bhutan) 'Gyel' (victory) to commemorate the victory of Bhutan over the Tibetan invaders in 1644. Drive back and view Taktshang Goemba (Tiger's Nest) from the road. This is the most famous of Bhutan's monasteries, perched on the side of a cliff 900m (2,952') above the floor of Paro valley. We will visit the monastery the day before we leave Bhutan. Visit a farm house to see the life style and ways of the Bhutanese people...perhaps we will see an archery competition. Overnight in Paro at the Olathang Hotel.

**Day 5 - September 14:** Start of JUNIPER TREK. 4 nights and 5 days  
Chuzomtoe/Tsendu La 5-6 hours

It's about a 2 hour drive to the trail head at Chuzomtoe 3,310m (10,856') to begin our trek from where there is a superb view of Bhutan's Himalayas on a clear day. The trail runs gradually up along the ridge for over two hours 'til the base of the treeless peak, occasionally passing by beautiful meadows that are being used by the yak herders to keep their yaks in winter. The trail then traverses for sometime before you make your way up through the thick alpine forest of firs, rhododendrons and junipers to Tsendu La, a beautiful meadow on top of the ridge with breath taking views, be it of mountains or of valleys underneath.

Overnight: Camp at Tsendu La 3,775m (12,382')

**Day 6 - September 15:** Tsendu la/Pangka La 4-5 hours

After a late breakfast, we will trek down the hill 'til we get to Dongle La pass 3,565m (11,693') which is marked by an old two legged chorten. This pass is along the forsaken ancient trade route between Paro and Haa valley.

**Day 6 - September 15 continued:**

Not so long ago this route was like the present day highway, with traffic of mules and people being the beast of burden in the same way. From here the trail goes gradually up through the alpine forest 'til you get above the tree line in the vicinity of huge meadow of Pangka La.

Overnight: Camp at Pangka La 4,150m (13,612')

**Day 7 - September 16:** Pangka La/Chele La 5- 6 hours

It is worth rising up early in the morning to see the sun rise over the eastern Himalayan Mountains or just to experience the solitude of this heaven-like place on earth. After enjoying the peace and the serenity of this place, we'll start walking down slowly along the wide and well used yak's trail for a while 'til it becomes level. Along the ridge we will come across some yak herder's camps and then we have a short climb before we make our way down to yet another abandoned mule track at Dzongle La 3,565m (11,693'). From here the path gets more level traversing along one side of the rocky ridge 'til you get to the highest motorable pass in the country which is marked with a grove of fluttering prayer flags known as Chele La 3,750m (12,300').

Overnight: Camp at Chele La pass 3,989m (13,084')

**Day 8 - September 17:** Chele La /Ningu La 6 hours

This morning, after enjoying the peace and serenity of this place and the view of the Mt. Jhomolhari and Jichu Drakye, we begin the trek uphill to Chele Gung Karpola 4,160m (13,645'), with its view of Paro and Haa Valley. If the weather permits, we will have a terrific view of Paro Dzong and the world's third highest peak, Kanchenjunga 8,500m (27,880'). On the way we pass a sky burial ground for infants under two years of age. In Mahayana Buddhism we offer the dead child to god believing in a quick rebirth. We will continue through the woods and then pass a yak herder's camp. Today we will have clear views on Bhutan's highest peak, Gangkhar Puensum 7,500m (24,600') and other peaks, if the weather permits.

Overnight: Camp at Ningula 3,909m (12,822')

**Day 9 - September 18:** Ningu La – Paro 5 Hours

We begin the trek with a steep climb to Ningu La, through the dwarf rhododendrons and down through narrow grazing path. We'll have a spectacular view of the Tiger's Nest monastery and the Himalayan peaks 'til we reach the Saga La pass. After the pass we descend through mixed broad leaved conifer forest 'til we meet our coach.

The trek finishes near Drukgyeldzong, then drive to the hotel and rest.

Overnight at the Riverview Hotel in Thimpu.

**Day 10 - September 19:** Thimphu sightseeing, National Institute of Traditional Medicine: Established in 1988 it is one of the more interesting facilities in Thimphu. The European Union provides funding for the project, which prepares and dispenses traditional herbal and medicines. There is an impressive, large laboratory and production facility that insures the quality of the products, the components of which may includes plants, minerals, animals parts, precious metals and gems. The National Institute for Zorig Chusum is commonly known as the 'painting school'. The students follow a comprehensive course that starts with drawing and progresses through painting, woodcarving, embroidery and statue making. The institute offers a six-year course that provides instruction in many of Bhutan's traditional arts to students from throughout the country whose aptitude is more artistic than academic. National Textile Museum: Fabric and weaving are an inseparable part of Bhutan's rich culture. The colors, weaves and textures have evolved over centuries. A particular design cannot only be attributed to a particular village but to a home and a family. After lunch we will a paper factory to see how Bhutanese paper is made from the bark of a daphne tree. If time permits we can visit the Mini zoo and the 180 degree angle view point of Thimphu city.

Overnight at the Riverview Hotel in Thimpu. Evening free in Town.

**Day 11 - September 20:** Thimphu - Wangdue: 3hr drive

After breakfast we drive to Hongtsho valley and visit to The Tashigang Monastery where the little Monks are and where we all get the gifts we have purchased blessed by the Rinpoche and sit with the elder monks for the chanting and receiving a long-life blessing from the head of the Monastery.

**Day 11 - September 20 continued:**

Lunch will be either served at Dochula pass. We will drive to Wangdue and overnight at the Kichu Resort next to the river.

**Day 12 - September 21:** Punakha - Thimphu - Paro: 4 1/2 hour drive

After breakfast we drive to Punakha to visit the most beautiful and the historic Punakha Dzong built at the confluence of Pho Chhu and Mo Chhu rivers. After our visit we drive back to Thimphu for lunch and then drive back to Paro for overnight stay at the Olathang Hotel.

**Day 13 - September 22:** Excursion to Tiger's Nest:

After breakfast we drive for half an hour to Ramthangkha where we start our hike to the Tiger's Nest: Taktshang Goemba is the most famous of Bhutan's monasteries, perched on the side of a cliff 900m (2,952') above the floor of Paro valley, where the only sounds are the murmurs of wind, water and chanting of monks. The name means tiger's nest. The Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava) is said to have flown to the site of the monastery on the back of a tigress. He then meditated in a cave there for three months. The primary Jhakhang was built in 1692 around the holy cave where he meditated. On 19 April 1998 a fire destroyed the main structure of Taktshang and all its contents. Reconstruction started on an auspicious day in April 2000 and authentic replicas of the original structures have been built. With luck we may have a private meeting with the Rinpoche. The hike to Tiger's Nest is about 2 hours uphill and an hour down hill. We have our closing dinner this evening. Overnight stay at the Olathang Hotel.

**Day 14 - September 23:** Departure to Bangkok.

Transfer early morning to the airport for departure to Ko Samui, Thailand

**Day 14-18 - September 23-28:** Ko Samui! Unscheduled time to relax and play on this lush green gem in the ocean, lovely accommodations, powder white beaches, great restaurants, snorkeling and shopping, gracious Thai residents...nothing to do but enjoy yourself. Heaven on earth! The last night we share a closing dinner at the Pavilion.

**Day 19- September 28:**

Early morning departure for Bangkok and Los Angeles. Arriving in Los Angeles, September 28 in the afternoon! We are home again!