



# Jomolhari Trek

WITH

PANORAMIC JOURNEYS



# BHUTAN

The land of the Thunder Dragon is an extraordinary place. Vast and impressive fortresses, known as Dzongs, dominate Bhutan's landscape - from the wide subtropical valleys in the south to the Himalayan mountain ranges of the north. One of the world's biodiversity hotspots, Bhutan's national animal is the Takin - legend says it is half goat, half cow. This is a country where selling cigarettes or plastic bags is illegal, where giant protective penises are painted on the walls, where chillies and cheese with red rice is the national dish, and where Gross National Happiness is deemed more important than Gross National Product.

Tucked away from the modern world for centuries, Bhutan, the last remaining Himalayan Kingdom, is managing to retain its Buddhist culture and traditions of the past whilst taking a cautious approach to modernisation. The juxtaposition of old and new is one of Bhutan's most appealing qualities: its ancient history is one of legends and miracles performed by saints, whom the majority of the population still worship daily, whilst most of the population now have electricity produced by hydro power and 2008 saw a new King crowned and the election of a new democratic parliament - Bhutan really is an extraordinary country in transition.

## PANORAMIC JOURNEYS BHUTAN

As our name suggests, we like big panoramic vistas and encounters that give one a new perspective on life - Bhutan boasts a few of these of Himalayan proportions. We have made a name designing journeys that allow our clients to get "under the surface" of a country - to meet the people and get off the tourist route. In designing this itinerary, we have allowed time to meet local people, to walk in rural valleys, and really get to know this beautiful country, as well as taking in the most important historical and religious sights that define Bhutan.



# JOMOLHARI TREK



We think that the Jomolhari Trek is one of Bhutan's finest, most varied and fascinating trek. This route offers a great variety of trekking conditions, from picturesque farmland and forests to alpine pasture and high passes. Spectacular campsites beneath some of Bhutan's most impressive peaks, including Jomolhari and Jichu Drake, and numerous isolated Dzongs and scattered settlements, including the remote high altitude village of Laya, mean that there is also cultural interest en route.



| DAY | ITINERARY  | ACCOMMODATION    | DETAILS                |
|-----|--|------------------|------------------------|
| 1   | <p><b>Paro – Shana</b></p> <p>Drive to Paro to start your trek from Drukgyel Dzong (2580m). The trek starts with a short downhill walk on a wide trail. The trail climbs gently through well maintained rice terraces and fields of millet. The route later enters an area of apple orchards and forests. Soon the valley widens, and you reach the army post of Gunitsawa (2810m). This is the last stop before Tibet. The trail continues up to 2870m, just beyond Sharma Zampa, where there are several good camping places in meadows surrounded by trees. (Driving up to this point on a farm road is also possible but it is best to walk to acclimatize).</p> | Camping in tents | 2890m – 17km – 5/6hrs  |
| 2   | <p><b>Shana – Soi Thangthangkha</b></p> <p>The trail follows the Pa Chu (Paro river), ascending and descending through pine, oak and spruce forests. After crossing a bridge to the left bank of the river, stop for lunch. Then continue along the river, climbing upwards through rhododendron forests, and crossing the river once more before reaching your campsite (3750m).</p>  | Camping in tents | 3575m - 20km - 7-8 hrs |
| 3   | <p><b>Soi Thangthangkha – Jangothang</b></p> <p>The path ascends for a while until you reach the army camp. Follow the river above the tree line, enjoying stunning views of the surrounding peaks. Lunch is served at a yak herder’s camp. A short walk from here into the valley takes you to your campsite at Jangothang (4044m). There are great views from here of Jumolhari and Jichu Drake.</p>   | Camping in tents | 4044m - 19km - 7-8 hrs |

### **Rest day at Jangothang**

4

Enjoy a leisurely day at this scenic spot with a superb view of the south face of Jumolhari and the ruined Dzong. Jangothang provides plenty of possibilities for day hikes with great views of lakes and snow capped mountains including Jomolhari and Jichu Drake. You may spot blue sheep on the upper slopes of the valley. There are good short hiking trails in three directions. Jhomolhari and its subsidiary mountain chains lie directly west, Jichu Drake to the north and there are a number of unclimbed peaks to the east. Climb across flower-carpeted meadows to the lake at Tsho Phu (the story goes that a venerated pig used to live here protecting the area from misfortune) before passing another lake and (weather permitting) climbing steeply to prayer flag strewn Bhonte La (pass at 4890m), with great mountain views of Basingthang (5500m) and Chatarake (5570m).

Camping in tents

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### **Jangothang - Lingshi**

5

The trail follows the stream for half an hour and crosses the bridge to the right bank. Ascend up to the first ridge, enjoying breathtaking views of Jumolhari, Jichu Drake and Tserimgang. The trail then takes you across a fairly level valley floor, until the climb up to Nyele-la pass (4700m). Descend gradually from the pass to the campsite at Lingshi (4010m), enjoying a panoramic view of the mountain peaks and Lingshi Dzong.

Camping in tents

4010m - 18km  
- 7-8 hrs

### **Lingshi - Chebisa**

6

Continue on the trail past Lingshi Dzong, perched on its hilltop, and enjoy views of green hills, the winding river and magnificent peaks. It is a relatively easy day, and a pleasant walk through villages and yak herders' camps. After lunch, a short walk takes you to Chebisa village. Camp by the side of the stream (3990m).

Camping in tents

3990m -  
10km - 5-6  
hrs

**Chebisa - Shoumuthang**

Today begins with a tough ascent of nearly four hours up a ridge to Gubu-la pass (4500m). Descend from the pass through rhododendrons to for lunch. Cross the stream and continue along the up and down path, through rhododendron forests and yak herders' camps. Look out for flocks of blue sheep. Tonight's campsite is at an altitude of 4250m.

Camping in tents

4000m -  
17km - 6-7  
hrs

7

**Shoumuthang - Robluthang**

Today you start with a climb up to Jari-la pass (4700m). Descend from here to Tasharijathang valley, the summer grazing ground of the rare Himalayan takin (Bhutan's national animal). You may have to ford the stream here, as the footbridge is frequently washed away. After crossing to the left bank of the stream, the trail ascends to Robluthang (4200m) and the camp for the night.

Camping in tents

4160m -  
18km - 6-7  
hrs

8

**Robluthang - Limithang**

Start the day with a long climb up to Shinje-la pass (4900m), enjoying stunning mountain views from the path. After crossing the pass descend to Limithang. The path is quite narrow, and you may have to ford the stream again. The last part of today's trek is a bit of a scramble down a steep path. This is compensated by spectacular views of Gangchenta peak (6840m). Tonight's camp is at 4100m on flat ground in a forested area above the river, with Gangchenta towering directly above to the north.

Camping in tents

4160m -  
19km - 7-8  
hrs

9

**Limithang - Laya**

In the morning you should wake to a superb view of Gangchenta peak in front of your camp. The walk to Laya is very pleasant with wonderful views along the way. Pass through a damp forest, filled with moss and singing birds. We set up camp on arrival at Laya village, the second highest settlement in the country, at 3800m

Camping in tents

3800m -  
10km - 4-5  
hrs

10

**Rest Day at Laya**

11 Today explore the village and environs. Visit some of the Layap families in their houses. Traditional Bhutanese hospitality is extended to strangers, and a cup of tea and/or chang (an alcoholic drink) is normally offered. The women in the village wear plain black yak wool garments, set off by elaborate necklaces and conical bamboo hats decorated with turquoise and silver ornaments. In the evening, watch a cultural program of dances performed by the villagers by the camp fire. If you have a strong stomach, enjoy the local alcohol with some of the villagers (ara and chang, brewed from barley).

Camping in tents

**Laya - Chamsa**

12 Bid goodbye to the villagers and descend from Laya to the army camp at the side of the Mo Chu (Mother river of Punakha), and walk alongside the river till reaching a bridge. After crossing the bridge, the track winds up and down through juniper and fir forests. Camp in the forest at Chamsa (3800m).

Camping in tents

3800m -  
19km - 8-9  
hrs

**Chamsa – Gasa Tsachu**

13 After a 30 minute walk over flat land to Bele-la pass, it's downhill all the way to Gasa Tsachu. After lunch visit the village (2700m), and Gasa Dzong. The Dzong was built in the 17th century by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, to protect the valley against Tibetan invaders. Descend to Gasa Tsachu (hot springs), where we set up our camp (2200m).

Camping in tents

2220m - 14km  
- 6-7 hrs

**Rest Day at Gasa Tshachu**

14 After a long trek, this is the place to relax! Enjoy a hot bath and try some of the local beer.

Camping in tents



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|----|--|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 15 | <b>Gasa Tshachu/Drive to Punakha</b><br>Walk to the road head. The road winds up and down through heavily forested areas where many wild orchids grow. Head back to your hotel for a well earned hot shower! | Meri Puensum<br>Resort, Punakha | 4160m -<br>19km - 7-<br>8hrs |
|----|--|---------------------------------|------------------------------|

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|----|---|---------------------------------|--|
| 16 | <b>Punakha</b><br>A day of sightseeing in Punakha. Drive up to the other side of Punakha valley to visit the Khamsum Yuelley Namgual chorten. It's a 45 minute hike up to the chorten over a suspension bridge. Afterwards, either raft or drive back down into the valley for a picnic lunch and to visit the spectacular Punakha Dzong - arguably the most beautiful Dzong in Bhutan, where you will take time to explore some of the magnificent temples. This afternoon take a gentle walk through paddy fields to Chimi Lhakhang, a small temple set on a hill dedicated to the Divine Madman. | Meri Puensum<br>Resort, Punakha |  |
|----|---|---------------------------------|--|

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| 17 | <b>Depart Bhutan</b><br>Transfer to the airport for your flight home or onwards to your next destination. |  |  |
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# Jomolhari Trek

## HOW TO BOOK

### 1. GET IN TOUCH

This itinerary is just a suggestion, a starting point, something to build upon. Everyone of our itineraries is unique to you – we can add or lose days, tweak the activities, change the accommodation or hire a private jet until it's perfect for you. So, let's have a chat. Call one of our experts to discuss creating your private journey to Bhutan.

### 2. BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY

Once we've crafted the perfect journey for you we can sign you ready to go. We accept bank transfers, Visa, Mastercard or American Express, and UK cheques. Full payment methods are detailed in our booking conditions. We shall then send you a booking confirmation together with an invoice for the full payment of your holiday which is due 90 days before your departure date.

### ANY QUESTIONS?

Call one of our experts on +44 (0)1608 676821 or email us at [info@panoramicjourneys.com](mailto:info@panoramicjourneys.com).

Some quick travel facts can be found in the Essentials section on the Bhutan page of our website

<https://www.panoramicjourneys.com/Destinations/Bhutan>. We will also send you a comprehensive Bhutan Practicalities document once you have booked.

