



NAMGAY ADVENTURE TRAVELS

Memories to last a lifetime.....

Trip Information

Dates: 8 - 18 May 2011

Trip Cost: US \$ 3647

Included in Land Cost

- Accommodation on twin sharing camp accommodation & 5 star twin accommodation
- All meals
- Transfer as per itinerary
- The services of knowledgeable English speaking guide
- Monument fees
- Royalty taxes to the Government

Excluded from Land Cost

- Druk Air airfare Bangkok/Paro/Bangkok normal economy USD 850
- Tourism Development Fund (US\$ 10 per visit)
- Visa Fees (US\$ 20 for two weeks)
- Excess baggage
- Personal items like laundry & toiletries
- International airfare
- Medical, Evacuation and Trip Cancellation Insurance.
- Personal Expenses
- Travel Insurance

Duration: 10 Days, Bangkok to Bangkok

Trek Grade: Moderate-demanding

Group size: Maximum: 10 clients plus leader

Minimum: 6 clients plus leader

Accommodation

Comfortable hotels and hospitable Hotel Staff

Paro Hotel Zhiwa Ling (3 nights)

Camp Accommodation (7 nights)

Meals

Meals will be taken in the hotels with picnics or meals in local restaurants at lunch times. All meals on trek are carefully planned. Breakfast is always cooked; picnic lunch in scenic surroundings and dinner includes a choice of at least four dishes.

The main staples of the Bhutanese diet are rice and chilies, served with a variety of fresh vegetables. Meat, fish and poultry are also served. If there is anything that you would prefer please just ask.

Let us know about your food preferences, whether you are a vegetarian or a non vegetarian and about your food allergies if you have any.

Please don't hesitate to e-mail your questions to namgayadventure@druknet.bt

Facts and Figures

10 Day Trip with an optional extension

Shortest/Longest day's walk: 3/8 hrs

Climate:

Spring is a magnificent season that lasts until end of May and the most peaceful and rewarding time to visit Bhutan, with a clear blue sky, brisk breeze and bright sunshine to keep the days warm.

Flights

To be confirmed

Terrain

Farm Tracks, paths through fields, villages, woods and high passes

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Jumolhari II Namgay and Team

Sunday 8 May 2011 - Fly to Paro
Arrival, Check-in and show around

Druk Airlines Flight KB131 Bangkok/Paro

Depart Bangkok: 06:50am

Arrive Paro: 10:00 am

Altitude: 2250m

Average Temperature: figures in centigrade

Maximum 23.5 Minimum 10.6

Paro is in Western Bhutan

Transfer for the flight by Druk Air, Bhutan's national airline, to Paro, the country's only airstrip. Flying in on Druk Air, the National Airline of Bhutan, you have a spectacular raven's-eye view of the great Himalayan peaks to catch your first glimpse of Bhutan. Descending into the beautiful Paro valley at 2250m, you will land in the beautifully crafted traditional airport. Your journey, rare in time, place and spirit has begun. NAT staff will welcome you at the airport to transfer to your hotel.

Afternoon (for first time visitors)

Paro: The Paro Valley is usually the visitor's first introduction to Bhutan. As spectacular as its natural beauty is Paro's cultural and spiritual heritage. With its large, fertile and well-watered fields, this has historically been the richest area in the country, and much of its wealth has gone into the building of temples and monasteries- there are many as 155 of them in Paro district. And it is a custom among the people of Paro to spend a week walking from one temple to the other, starting with the temples on the valley floor and then going up to the hills and highland meadows which are dotted with some of Bhutan's most holy sites.

Ta Dzong- National Museum: the first excursion after refreshment and lunch will be to the National Museum, once the watchtower for the Rinpung Dzong, located high on a promontory overlooking the Paro Valley. First constructed in 1645, the Rinpung Watchtower was re-established as the National Museum in 1968 and has been rated among the best natural history museums in Asia. It holds a fascinating collection of art, relics, religious thangka paintings, handicrafts, masks, costumes, armor and Bhutan's exquisite postage stamps. The museum's circular shape augments its varied collection displayed over several floors. This first outing is meant to familiarize you with the history of Bhutan and a visit to

the National Museum is the very best way to quickly learn the culture and natural history since it houses everything that is Bhutanese in a very different museum style that will delight you.

Then walk down from the museum to the celebrated 1646 **Rinpung Dzong** a dominant architectural and aesthetic structure, as well as a hub for spiritual life and communal events. It stands out from the landscape with brightly whitewashed walls and elaborately carved and painted Buddhist motifs, including dragons and the Jachung, the mythical half-eagle-half-human figure from Mahayana Buddhist and Hindu pantheons. Home to some 300 practicing monks, Paro Dzong is the site of the annual Paro Tshechu (one of the most significant religious festivals in the country), and serves as an administrative seat of regional government. Standing in the courtyard, take time to admire the architecture of this massive fortress.

Next walk down the well traveled flagstone path from the Dzong to cross a traditional Bhutanese covered drawbridge over the Paro Chhu (chhu Means River) that leads to the **Paro Twon**.

Druk Choeding Lhakhang

Within the town square visit Druk Choeding Lhakhang. This temple in Paro town was built in 1525 by Ngawang Cheryl, one of the prince abbots of Ralung in Tibet, and an ancestor of the Shabdrung, Ngawang Namgyal.

For return visitors options

After check-in rest of the day relaxing around the property, enjoying the facilities or perhaps trying some other activity like the Bhutanese national sport of archery or maybe a therapy such as the traditional Bhutanese hot stone bath.

Or

Start a short hike to Dzongdrakha (2400m), a tranquil village of eight farmhouses and four temples. The main temple complex is situated on the cliff just above Bondey Valley. Like Taktsang and Dra Karpo, this is an area in which Guru Rinpoche meditated in the 8th century. It takes about one hour to hike to the first temple from the Chele La road. The trail begins following a dirt road. After about 20 minutes, the path turns to climb through a grove of oak trees. The entire village, set up over the cliffs, stretches horizontally along the ledge, affording beautiful views of the valley below. From the last temple, look for the tall houses of the village of Tashigang. Descend through stunted oaks to reach the chorten at the base of Dzongdrakha.

Look back from here for a wonderful panoramic view of this amazingly perched village.

Accommodation: Hotel Zhiwaling
Full Board Basis

www.zhiwaling.com

Please don't hesitate to e-mail your questions to namgyadventure@druknet.bt

Monday 9 May 2011

Taksang Acclimatization Hike

Walking distance: approximately 4-5 hrs

Difficulty : Moderate-Strenuous

After breakfast, we hike toward one of Bhutan's most sacred places—the site of a Cliffside monastery and an important pilgrimage destination. Partly damaged by fire in 1998, the Taksang (meaning Tiger's Nest) Monastery was built atop the cave where Guru Rimpoche, the father of Mahayana Buddhism, meditated for three months after arriving in the Paro Valley on the back of a legendary tigress. You're likely to see locals displaying handicrafts for sale along the route to the monastery—evidence of individual enterprise rarely seen until the past few years.

The trail rises slowly above the valley, passing through fields, forests and by large prayer wheels turned by a stream. We continue hiking across an open meadow and up a steep trail to a ridge where prayer flags rustle in the wind. Just beyond is the Taktsang teahouse, at 9,200 feet, where we stop to enjoy a hot drink and striking views of the monastery across the valley. The scene is straight out of *National Geographic*, and it's only when a local's cell phone goes off that you realize it's the 21st century! Depending on your energy level, continue just as far as our lunch spot or tackle the next mile of steep climbing to reach another dramatic viewpoint.

Our lunch today takes place at the Taksang View Point Cafeteria enjoying typical Bhutanese food while taking in phenomenal views of the monastery perched across the ravine. We then retrace our steps for the descent. Back at the base of this rewarding pilgrimage, we board the car and drive further up the valley to Drukgyel Dzong, built in 1644 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal to control the northern route to Tibet. The drive is picturesque, and the site of ancient, now ruined dzong is magnificent. From here, it is only a two-day hike to the border with Tibet, dominated by the sacred Mt Jhomolhari

Accommodation Zhiwaling Hotel

Full Board Basis

Tuesday 10 May

The Jumolhari Trek

The Jumolhari Trek takes you from 2600m up to 4760m and provides an opportunity to trek to the base of the impressive Jumolhari Mountain, the beautiful campsites and the amazing views of Jichu Drakey, Jho Drakey, Tshering Gang and Masang Gang

Trek-Day 1 Drukgyel Dzong (2500m) to Shana (2820m)

Distance 17km, time 5-6 hours, Total altitude gain 320m, Level of Difficulty-Easy

Starting from Drukgyel Dzong, the fortress that once guarded the Paro Valley against Tibetan invaders, the first day is a pleasant walk following the left side of the Pachu river. The farm roads serve as the trek route and passes through a number of very small villages with traditional houses and rice and vegetable fields to the left and right of the trail.

After about an hour's walk, the farm road ends at Mitsizampa. Crossing a bridge to the right side of the river, the trail climbs very gradually for another hour through woods to Zakhapang (2600m) a nice lunch-break spot in an open and clean space. There is a small shop selling basic necessities for the locals.

After lunch the trek continues through blue pine forests, following the river closely. Gunyitsawa army outpost appears not long before the end of the first day's trek. The campsite at Shana, just beyond, is situated at an altitude of 2820m in a beautiful open space surrounded by blue pine forest. Two traditional houses on the other side of the wide, fast flowing make up Shana Village.

Accommodation: Camp
Full board basis

Wednesday 11 May 2011

Trek-Day 2: 2820m) to Thangthangkha (3580m)

Distance 22km, time 7-8 hours, Total altitude gain 760m. Level of Difficulty: Long but not difficult.

This is the longest trekking day, taking about eight hours to reach campsite. The trail continues to follow the river gradually ascending through a mixed forest of blue pine and oak and later in the afternoon, tall rhododendron trees, birch, fir and maple. Though the trail is rocky and bumpy, it is not strenuous. There are several simple wooden bridges to cross. The lunch break comes after about 4 hours of walking through an ever-narrowing valley.

Not long before reaching the campsite the trail leads you up a ridge to a chorten. Beyond, in the distance, at the end of the valley the Jumolhari Mountain comes into view. Finally, after about eight hours walk, you reach campsite.

The campsite is located in a spacious clearing and directly faces Mount Jumolhari. The view of the early morning sun striking the top of Jumolhari is breathtaking. Mount Jumolhari, at 7314m, is among the world's highest mountains.

Accommodation: Luxury Camp
Full board basis

Thursday 12 May 2011

Trek-Day 3: Thangthangkha (3580m to Jangothang (4000m)

distance 19km, time 5-6 hours, Total altitude gain 420m, Level of Difficulty: moderate

Your climb today gains elevation and you will be comfortably worn out at day's end. You are now entering "yak" country. Yaks are utilized for pack animals as well as supply cheese, milk, tea, meat and Yak hair for weaving of huts, blankets, clothes, backpacks and hats. Burley and huge, the yak plays an important role in Bhutan history, yesterday and today. Remote villages are dotted throughout this area. A stone and log bridge provides access to Jangothang.

The altitude at the base camp is 4000m and is a beautiful place to spend the night. The imposing rounded bulk of the Jumolhari mountain fills the view to the northeast and in the evening the profile of the ruined jangothang Dzong, populated by huge ravens creates a mystical atmosphere.

Apparently a proud king once ruled this area from the Dzong. Myth has it that the king had instructed his subjects to raze one of the mountains to the ground because it was blocking the sunlight. In a meeting to discuss how this herculean task was to be achieved, an old lady suggested that it would be simpler to chop off the head of the king rather than the top of the mountain. Thus, the deed was carried out.

This area is rich in bird life. Birds sighted en route include the Fire-tailed Sunbird, Ibisbill, White throated Dipper, Yellow billed Chough, Rosy Pipit, Snow Pегion, Blue fronted Redstart, Plumbeous Water Redstart, Blook Pheasant, Show Partridge and many more.....

Accommodation: Camp
Full board basis

Friday 13 May 2011

Trek-Day 4: Jangothang Rest day

Today is a day to rest and acclimatize to the altitude and provides an opportunity to explore the valley and enjoy the wonderful views of the mountains. A one-hour trek a little further up the valley to the right of the campsite takes you to a point from where you can view the majestic, cone-shaped Jichu Drakey piercing the clear blue sky. Jichu Drakey cannot fail to remind you of the Matterhorn from this perspective. It is a sight to behold. Many rank this as the most beautiful mountain in Bhutan. An hour's leisurely trek will take you to the twin lakes of Thsophu. Today's walk allows acclimatization in preparation for crossing the Bonte La on Trek - Day 5.

Accommodation: Camp
Full board basis

Saturday 14 May 2011

Trek - Day 5: Jangothang (4000m) to Dhumzo Chhu (3730m) via Tsho Phu Lakes (4310m) and Bonte La (4760) distance 17km, time 6-7 hrs, Total Altitude Loss 270m, Level of difficulty : Strenuous

Leaving Jangothang the trail climbs sharply and ascends about 300m in a very short distance to the twin lakes at Tshopu located at an altitude of 4310m. This point in the Jumolhari Trek gives you unequalled views of Jumolhari and Jichu Drake. The two lakes are surrounded on both sides by rocky cliffs and they reflect the two peaks of Jumolhari to the left and the beautiful Jichu Drakey to the right. The sight is breath taking. From this point on you can expect to see the black yak hair tents belonging to the nomadic yak herders that live in this area.

Following the left side of the lakes, the steep climb continues, taking the trekker up to the top of the ridge. Ruddy Shelducks and Common Mergansers are sighted swimming and wading along the shores of the lakes in which huge trout are said to be abundant. This is also the territory of Blue Sheep with massive horns who graze in large groups of 70 or more.

Almost four hours of steady climbing brings you to the top of Boney La at an altitude of 4760m. Bonte La is the highest pass of this trek. Take time to enjoy the scenery. The trail drops steeply to Dhumzo Chhu Valley where camp is arranged for the night.

Accommodation: Camp
Full board basis

Sunday 15 May 2011

Trek - Day 6: Dhumzo Chhu (3730m) to Thombu Shong (4070m) via Takhung La (4410m)

distance 11km time 5 hrs Total Altitude gain 340m, Level of Difficulty-Moderate

The route today is through a nice wooded area. For a while, only a gentle ascent is made through alpine meadows. Once the climb to the Takhung La begins, the climb starts to get more strenuous. The pass is reached about 4 hours later. The altitude here is 4410m.

One hour downhill from the Takhung La is the campsite at Thombu shong. The campsite is situated in a beautiful valley where you will see two yak herder's dwellings built out of stone, with a wooden shingle roof. You can still see the Takhung La peak to the back of the camp.

Yaks graze in this valley that stretches endlessly into the mountains beyond the campsite. The Jho Drakey mountain is located to the left and can be seen if you trek up the mountain ridge to the left and right side of the campsite.

Accommodation: Camp
Full board basis

Monday 16 May 2011

Trek - Day 7: Thombu Shong (4070m) to Shana (2600m) via Thombu La (14005ft)

distance 14.5km time 4-5 hrs Total altitude loss 1470m Level of difficulty: moderate

Cross the valley through rhododendron bushes climbing steeply to Thombu La. From the pass, view Mt. Kanchenjunga on the Sikkim-Nepal border, as well as some smaller peaks in

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north Sikkim. The ridge walk from the pass is one of the best parts of the trek: very high above the valleys on a good trail with a beautiful view. From here it takes about an hour to reach a giant descent. The trail ends at today's night camp by the Paro Chhu.

Accommodation: Camp
Full board basis

Tuesday 17 May 2011

Trek - Day 8: Shana (2600m to Drukgyel Dzong (2500)

Distance 17km time 4 hrs Total altitude loss 100m Level of Difficulty: Easy

Four hours hike through the lovely valley, finishing at Drukgyel Dzong.

Transfer to Hotel Zhiwaling, check in and rest of the day relaxing around the property, enjoying the facilities or perhaps trying some other activity like the Bhutanese national sport of archery or maybe a therapy such as the traditional Bhutanese hot stone bath.

Accommodation: Hotel Zhiwaling
Full board basis

Wednesday 18 May 2011

Departure Bangkok (summer schedule no published as yet)

Will recommend a night's layover in Bangkok to budget time for unforeseen delay.

Optional for those who would like to stay back for a cultural tour in the western regions of Punakha and visit the capital, Thimphu.

Mode of Transport : Coaster Bus/Land Cruiser depending on the group size

Driving Distance : 64km

Driving Time : 1 hr

Altitude : 2350m

Average Temperature: figures in centigrade

Maximum 22.5 Minimum 13.1

Thimphu is in Western Bhutan

The capital city of Thimphu sprawls up the wooded western hillside of the Wang Chhu and is the centre of government, religion and commerce, Thimphu is a bustling town where traditional ways mingle with modern introductions. Thimphu has been the capital of Bhutan since 1955.

Thimphu sightseeing may include the Post Office, The National Textile Museum, The Folk Heritage Museum, the national Memorial Chorten, The National Institute of Traditional Medicine, Takin Preserve, and the Changlimithang Stadium

After check in our first excursion will be to the Bank for Exchange of Money and also to the Post Office.

Post office

While bare-footed couriers still deliver the mail in many remote regions of Bhutan, our postage stamps remain world-renowned in the philatelic community. Colorful, creative and collectible, Bhutan's stamp launch in the 1960s of the world's most innovative stamps not only caused a sensation each time they were released, but more importantly were valued by Bhutan as its chief revenue producer for many years.

The National Textile Museum: showcases a range of beautiful Bhutanese textiles. The museum has exhibitions on six major themes:

- wrap pattern weaves
- weft pattern weaves
- role of textile in religion
- achievements in textile arts
- textiles from indigenous fibers
- the Royal collection

The museum introduces visitors to major weaving techniques, styles of local dress and the variety of textiles.

The Folk Heritage Museum: also known as Phelchey Toenkhim, is a resorted three-storied traditional building which dates back to mid 19th century. It provides a fascinating insight into the traditional Bhutanese farm house and rural past through exhibits and documentation of rural life to present:

- a typical Bhutanese rural setting
- a traditional water mill (with mill stones that date back more than 150 years)
- traditional style kitchen garden with vegetables
- the famous traditional hot stone bath complement the museum building and the exhibits within

The National Memorial Chorten: This large impressive monument with its golden spire was built in 1974 to honor the memory of our third King, His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck (1928 - 1972). Built by his mother Her Majesty the late Queen Ashi Phuntsho Choden Wangchuck, the whitewashed chorten is decorated with richly carved annexes facing the four directions, and features elaborate mandalas, and statues. There are numerous religious paintings and complex tantric statues housed inside reflecting both peaceful and wrathful aspects of Buddhist deities.

The memorial chorten, with its sun-catching golden finial, is one of the most visible religious structures in Thimphu, and for the local Bhutanese people it is the focus of daily worship. Throughout the day people circumambulate the chorten, whirl the large red prayer wheels and pray in the adjacent shrine. The early morning is particularly tranquil as elderly people shuffle in and spruced-up kids on their way to school whiz in and out to pay homage.

Paper Factory

Next visit the paper factory by the river where freshly made sheets dry in the sun and new batches of daphne bark boil in the cauldron, ready to be pulped in an ingenious home-made hand-propelled contraption. This is a small but flourishing business, employing local Bhutanese people with little pressure on the land, for in Bhutan nature is generous but never abused.

The National Institute of Traditional Meidicine

In old times Bhutan was referred to —Lho Menjong|| or the Southern Land of Medicines. Rich herbal medicines are prepared here from herbs that grow in abundance in Bhutan. The institute also imparts the art of herbal medicines to would be practitioners. It was established in 1988 and visitors are most welcome to get a check up by any one of the Bhutanese Dingtshos.

Changlimithang National Stadium

Spend some time at Changlimithang National Stadium watching people compete in the an archery tournament/match. The stadium houses tennis and squash courts, a soccer field, a cricket ground, 2 archery fields, and Bhutan's Olympic headquarters. Events are free and open to everyone.

One thing that makes the archery matches here so fun to watch is the shouts and taunts one team will throw at the other. No need to remain quiet at all, even as an archer is taking aim. When the target is hit, a little victory song and dance are requisite, sometimes with a response by the other team. The songs and dances are traditional, hundreds of years old.

Takin Preserve houses the rare national animal of Bhutan. The Takin is listed by international conservation agencies as a vulnerable species and it is a rare animal found only in Bhutan, Nepal, Burma and China. The Takin is chosen as the National Animal of Bhutan for its uniqueness and its association with the country's religious history and mythology. You have time in the evening to roam the streets of Thimphu, Bhutan's capital and largest city. By western standards and compared to other Bhutanese centers of commerce, Thimphu is the only center that rates being called a city. There are no traffic lights here—one was installed and quickly removed after citizens complained--but there are two traffic huts in the center of the main road that provide shade for white-gloved policemen who wave their arms in slow motion. Small shops line the street, mostly catering to the locals. There are a few —tourist shops|| but you must seek them out. To make the most of your free time, feel free to ask a guide or driver to accompany you. Accommodation:

Druk Hotel Executive Floor

www.drukhotels.com

Thursday 19 May 2011

Transfer to Punakha countryside

Driving Distance : 77 kms
Driving Time : 3.5 hrs+stops
Altitude : 3100m

3 hours drive to Punakha via Dochula pass (3050m) through wonderful forest of rhododendron and magnolia. From the pass, weather allowing, you have panoramic view of the Eastern Himalayan peaks, among them Mt. Masagang (7158m) and our highest peak, Mt. Gangkar Puensum. Passing the magnificent group of 109 Chortens (stupas) at Dochula, the Druk Wangyel (or Great Victory) Chortens, the road curls its way down into the relative lowlands of the Punakha Valley. Before Thimphu was made the permanent capital of Bhutan, Punakha was the Winter Capital for 300 years because of its more temperate climate. The Je Khenpo (leader of Bhutan's religious order) and his council of monks still come to pass the winter months here.

Time to stretch the legs with a short walk across rice paddies to Chhimi Lhakhang a half an hour walk across a local village and rice fields from the road head. The temple was built in 1499 and

is located on a hillock in the centre of the valley. It is dedicated to Lama Drukpa Kunley, who in the late 15th century used humor, songs and outrageous behavior to dramatize his teachings and hence is also known as the —Devine Mad Man|| It is widely believed that childless couples who pray at this temple are usually blessed with children

Accommodation: Hotel Zangto Pelri
Full board basis

Friday 20 May 2011

Transfer to Paro

4 hours drive+ stops

After breakfast head for Paro and time to retrace our steps back over the Dochu La for a second chance of that wonderful view of the Himalayan range. Returning to the Chuzum or confluence we catch a glimpse of the three shrines in Nepali, Tibetan and Bhutanese style which were built to ward off evil spirits near the checkpoint. On the final leg the road snakes

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alongside the Pa Chhu, through apple orchards and rice paddies, past quaint homesteads to your Hotel in Paro.

Accommodation: Hotel Uma

www.uma.paro.como.bz

Saturday 21 May 2011

Departure Bangkok

Hike Grade

Moderate: a medium hike is a fairly easy walk over a full day or a short hike on more difficult terrain. Some hiking at higher altitudes and occasional longer or more difficult days may be involved, but generally conditions underfoot will be fair. A trekking day would normally be between 5-8 hours long. It is advisable to be in good health and reasonably fit.

Strenuous: for any hike at this level, fitness is most important. Strenuous treks are extended walking in a mountain terrain at higher altitudes. Trekkers should be able to cope with difficult paths on steep mountainsides.

TASHI DELEK
