

EXPEDITION DOSSIER

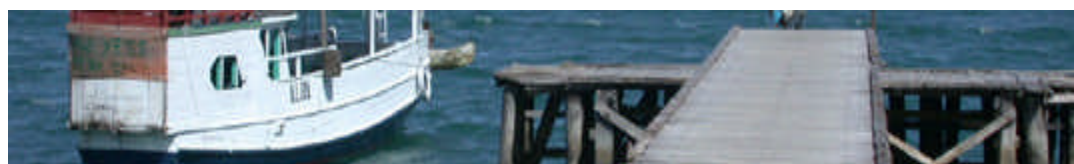
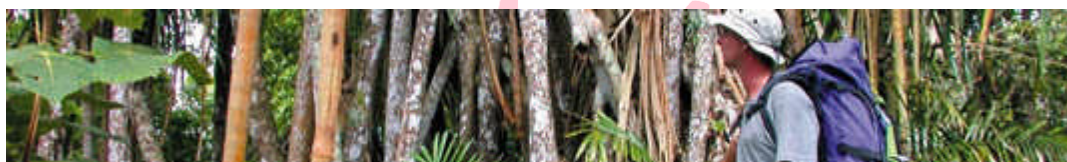
CHOMOLHARI – JITCHU DRAKE

13 DAYS

CODE XPD08

GRADE - STRENUOUS

ITINERARY – COSTS – INCLUSIONS



**FOR ANY MORE DETAILS OF EXPEDITIONS IN NEPAL, BHUTAN,
INDONESIA AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA CALL US ON (03) 9502 3789
OR SEE OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.NOROADS.COM.AU**

EXPEDITION OVERVIEW

This is a superb trek for strong walkers. Starting from Paro it goes into northern Bhutan to the land of yak-herders and to the base of Mount Chomolhari (7,316 meters / 24,000 feet), which is the most holy mountain for the Bhutanese. From there the trek goes on to remote Lingshi Dzong which once guarded the frontier with Tibet . This trek offers fabulous views of the mountains including Chomolhari, Jitchu Drake and Tsheringkhang. Besides stunning Himalayan scenery and exceptional flora, you will encounter many yak-herders and their camps but few villages. The maximum altitude gained is 4,900 meters (16,000 feet). This trek can be done from April to November but the best months are April, May, October and November.

EXPEDITION GRADE - STRENUOUS

Moderate to Strenuous trekking and camping between 2800m/8185ft and 4150m/13,615ft with hikes to 4500m/14,760ft. Hiking daily between 5-8 hours in mountain trails in varied conditions involving frequent accents and descents. Fully supported trek with cook, helpers, all meals and camping equipment led by experienced local guides. All equipment and luggage will be carried by ponies with pony-men. Clients carry a light daypack (back pack) only and walk at your own pace.



ITINERARY

DAY 01: Arrive BHUTAN

(Bhutan flights are available from Bangkok, Kathmandu or Delhi on different days)

During the flight, one will experience breathtaking views of Mount Everest, Kanchenjunga and other Himalayan Peaks like the sacred Chomolhari & Jichu Drake in Bhutan. On arrival you will be received by our representative. Overnight hotel.

DAY 02: PARO Sightseeing.

After breakfast we drive to Drugyel Dzong, the ruined fortress which once defended Paro valley. This fortress now a burnt shell was strategic in Bhutan's defense against Tibetan invasion. The sacred mountain Jhumolhari (7314 meters) can be seen in the background on a clear day. On the way back we visit the National Museum. After lunch we will hike to the famous Taktsang monastery (Tiger's Nest). Overnight hotel.

DAY 03: Trek PARO-SHANA

Altitude: 2800 meters. Distance: 17 km. 5-6hrs.

We drive up to Drugyel Dzong where the road ends and the expedition begins. Following the Pa Chu River gently uphill through a narrowing valley. Camp is just beyond an Army Post.

DAY 04: Trek SHANA-SOI THANKTHANGKA

Altitude: 3600 meters. Distance: 21 km. 7-8 hrs.

We continue uphill through the river valley. It narrows & closes in and the trail winds up and down along the river drainage. Camp is in a meadow in a stone shelter built for the trekkers.

DAY 05: Trek SOI THANGTHANGKA-JANGOTHANG

Altitude: 4040m. Distance: 19 km. 5-6hrs.

We head up the Pa Chu River, past a small Army post where the valley widens again. One can view the high ridges and then the snow-capped peaks located all around. You begin to see Yaks and yak herder camps.

DAY 06: JANGOTHANG – Acclimatization Day (4040m).

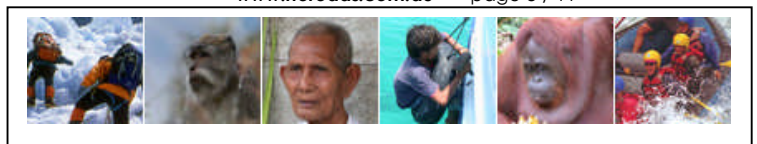
Trek up to Tsophu or there is a stupendous day-hike from here.

Jhumolhari and its subsidiary are directly west. Jichu Drake to the north and unclimbed summits and ridges to the east.

DAY 07: Trek JANGOTHANG-LINGSHI

Altitude: 4150 m. Distance: 19 km. 5-6hrs.

We travel through Yak pastures on the way up & down the pass and possibly see some people in their Yak Hair Tents depending on the time of the year. There is great view of Lingshi dzong as you come down into the Lingshi basin. We will see Tserim Gang and its descending glaciers at the north end of the valley. Camp is in a stone shelter built for the trekkers. It has an inside fire pit and you can sleep on the wooden floor or in your tent.



DAY 08: Trek LINGSHI-SHODU

Altitude: 3963 m. Distance: 22 km. 7-8hrs.

The trail ascends up to the Yalila Pass (4820m.) from the Mount Jhumolhari. On a clear day, Tserim Kang and Masagang can be seen. There is actually considerable down on this trail. Camp is in a stone shelter.

DAY 09: Trek SHODU-BARSHONG

Altitude: 3785 m. Distance: 13 km. 4-6 hrs.

Follow the Thimphu Chu River through the thick forest of Rhododendrons and water falls. It narrows and closes in and the trail winds up and down along the river. Ascending up to the ruins of Barshong Dzong, we camp just below the ruined dzong in a stone shelter.

DAY 10: Trek BARSHONG–DODINA. Drive to Thimpu.

Distance: 18 km. 6-7 hrs.

We descend to meet the Thimphu River following it gradually through the forest of Rhododendrons and ascending to the pastureland at Dolam Kencho. We continue up hill to a small pass. The trail winds up and down along the river. The wild animals like the Languor can be seen. At Dodina, we meet the transportation and drive to Thimphu.

DAY 11: THIMPU - Sightseeing.

A full day sightseeing and shopping in Thimphu. We can wander around town and visit the Handicraft Development Center. Afternoon visit Memorial Chorten, Zilukha Nunnery. Overnight hotel.

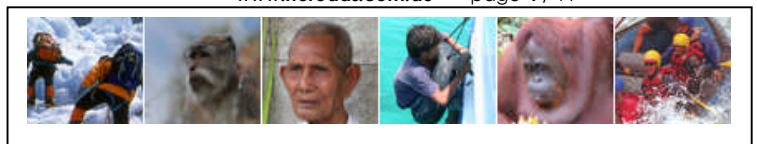
DAY 12: Day trip to PUNAKHA and WANGDUE.

Day excursion to Punakha and Wangdue (1250m) valley across Dochula Pass. On a clear day a whole range of the northern snow capped Himalayan Peaks can be seen from the pass. Punakha was the Capital of Bhutan until 1966. Je-Khempo, the head Abbot of the religion in the Kingdom and most of the monks of Thimphu occupy this most impressive Dzong in the winter months. Return to Thimphu. Overnight hotel.

DAY 13: Drive THIMPHU-PARO for DEPARTURE

Early morning drive to Paro International airport for onward flight.

(Fly to Bangkok, Kathmandu or New Delhi depending on day of the week.)



INCLUSIONS

- Airport transfers and surface transport as per itinerary;
- Hotel accommodation (in twin share rooms) for duration of tour;
- All meals (fixed breakfast, lunch & dinner) while in Bhutan;
- Services of English speaking Bhutanese guide;
- All sightseeing tours, including entrance fees as per itinerary;
- Trekking arrangements with guide, porters, camping and permits;
- Airfares extra as applicable.

EXCLUSIONS

- Airport tax (in Bangkok & Paro N 600),
- Bhutan visa cost (US\$ 20) payable at the entrance point to Bhutan,
- Tips to guides, restaurants, hotel lobby porters, trek staff, etc.;
- Bottled/alcoholic drinks, room service, al a cart meals, etc.;
- Any services in Nepal/India and other expenses of a personal nature.
- Photography charges (if and when applicable);

EXPEDITION DATES

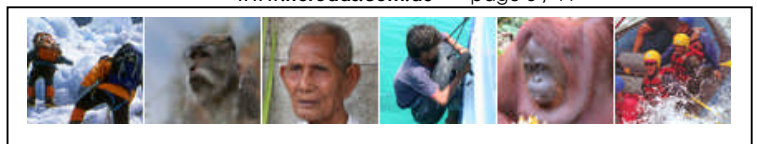
Check our website for the latest dates. www.noorads.com.au

PRICE

\$4990 ex Paro (Bhutan)

PRIVATE EXPEDITIONS

We are able to organize private expeditions for those that want familiar people to join them or our scheduled departures don't suit. We are also able to organize personalized itineraries. Depending on the number of people in your group, private expeditions can be cheaper than scheduled departures so ask us if you would like to organize something special for yourself.





BHUTAN FESTIVALS

Religious festivals are important events throughout the Tibetan Buddhist world - commemorating the deeds of Buddha, or those of the great masters of the past associated with one Buddhist tradition or another.

In Bhutan, in addition to the standard Buddhist festivals, there are yearly festivals celebrated with great fanfare in each district. The most renowned of these are the **Tsechu** (10th day) festivals, commemorating the deeds of **Padmasambhava**. Locally referred to as '*Guru Rimpoche*' or, simply as '*Guru*,' this eighth century master, introduced the *Nyingma* school of Buddhism into Tibet and Bhutan. Each 10th day of the lunar calendar is said to commemorate a special event in the life of Padmasambhava; and some of these are dramatized in the context of a religious festival. Most festival lasts from three to five days - one of which, usually, falls on the 10th day of the lunar calendar.

The regional *Dzong* and remote village communities hold their distinct annual Tsechu festival, providing the local populace with a wonderful occasion to dress up, gather together, and enjoy, in a convivial light-hearted atmosphere. It is also an occasion to renew their faith and receive blessings by watching the sacred dances, or receiving 'empowerment' from a lama or Buddhist monk.

The dances, each aspect of which has a symbolic meaning, are performed by trained monks and laymen wearing ornate costumes, and, in some cases, impressive masks. At Paro, Wangdu, Mongar and Tashigang, among other places, a large '*thanka*' scroll known as a **Tongdrol** is exhibited for a few hours, at day break of the final day of the festival, enabling the people to obtain its blessing, since such scrolls 'confer liberation by the mere sight of it' (*tongdrol* in Bhutanese).

Of these festivals the Paro Tsechu, in the spring, and the Wangue and Thimpu Tsechus, in the fall, are the most impressive. These festivals are very popular with western tourists. The festivals in Bumthang and East Bhutan attract fewer tourists and those who want to get a more authentic flavor of Bhutan's cultural and religious extravaganza will be well rewarded.

These festivals attract many western tourist and hotels and flights are sold out months in advance to organized tourist group. Anyone who wishes to visit



Bhutan during these festivals should plan and make their tour arrangements well in advance.

PRE DEPARTURE INFORMATION

Once your trek is confirmed we will send you our detailed Pre Departure Information which includes a list of recommended clothing and personal equipment along with many other relevant information to help you prepare for your trip. Later after your arrival we will conduct a detailed briefing to make sure that you are well prepared for your trek that you will embark on.

BHUTAN TOURIST VISA

Once you book your tour with us we will arrange the Bhutan visa for everyone in the group. Bhutan visas are available at the entry point to Bhutan with prior approval. As soon as your tour is confirmed with us we will apply for your visa with the authorities in Bhutan well in advance of your visit (usually 30 days prior to arrival). This will be waiting at the Paro Airport or at the land entry point at Phuntsoling if coming by land through India.

The cost is US\$ 20 per visa which has to be paid at the time the visa is stamped in your passport. Please make sure you carry with you:

- 1) 2 passport size photos
- 2) US\$ 20 in cash to pay for the Bhutan Visa.*

* Bhutan visa costs are not included in the tour cost.

Notes:

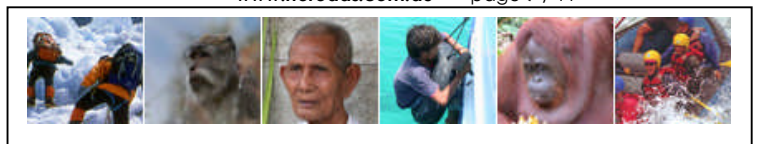
Please make sure that you have given us your full passport details to enable us to apply for your Bhutan visa as soon as you are ready to confirm the Bhutan tour/trek.

If you are connecting via New Delhi (or other ports) in India or if your travel includes India you need an India Visa before you leave your home. Please note visas are **not** available at the airports in India.

If you are traveling via Thailand or Nepal, you can get a Visa upon arrival in Bangkok or Kathmandu airports.

AIR SEATS TO BHUTAN

Please note that space on flights in and out of Bhutan is very tight, specially during the tourist seasons, therefore we would like to suggest that you work on your dates for your flights AS SOON AS POSSIBLE and send requests for air seats. FYI: Last Autumn many



potential travelers had to cancel/postpone their trips to Bhutan because they could not secure air seats in time. We can book your flight to from Bhutan. Flights to Bhutan are available from Bangkok, Kathmandu and New Delhi on different days of the week. Please visit www.DrukAir.com.bt for flight schedule.

INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any comments, questions or want more information, please let us know. We are here to support you with all information to help you prepare for your travels to the Himalayas.

ACCOMMODATION

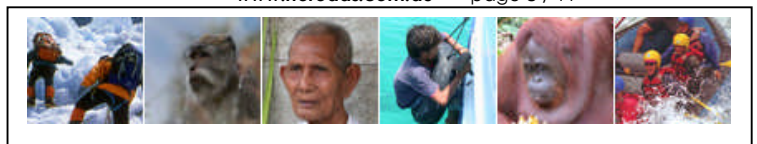
In the major towns such as Thimpu, Paro, and Phuentsoling, comfortable hotels await the visitor, while in smaller towns, modest, but adequate, hotels, lodges and guest houses are available. Your tour agent should ensure that the best available accommodations are arranged for you. The Tourism Authority of Bhutan (TAB), regulates hotel standards and all travel regulations in Bhutan. The cost of the accommodation is included in the tour cost.

FOOD AND DRINK

Traditional Bhutanese food is hot and spicy. For our visitors, however, Chinese, Indian, and Continental fares are served. The more adventurous can try the local delicacies like the tasty, but fiery, *ematatshi*, the national dish of Bhutan, made with red chillis and cottage cheese. Meals are normally served buffet style in the hotels. On trekking tours, we serve simple but nutritious and tasty dishes, freshly cooked by our trained cooks. The daily tour cost includes all meals while in Bhutan as well as other services, including trekking arrangements, as required. Your only extra expenses will be mineral water, liquor, laundry, souvenirs and optional tips to the guide, driver and hotel staff.

TRANSPORT

We use comfortable and safe Japanese cars, jeeps, vans and coaches to transport our guests. The cost of transport is already included in the daily tour cost. All our drivers are fully trained in safety and are well experienced in driving in Bhutan. You will find that you are more comfortable driving through the winding hilly roads of Bhutan, where sane driving prevails, and drivers are unusually courteous to each other, unlike in some of the neighboring countries.



GUIDES

All tourist groups will be accompanied throughout their stay in Bhutan by an English-speaking guide and have a vehicle and driver at your disposal at all times.

All of our guides are trained by the Tourism Authority of Bhutan (TAB) and licensed by the Government. Our trekking guides and cooks undergo an additional mountain guide training, including safety and first aid instruction. TAB has received assistance from the Austrian Government in the form of trainers and funds to establish the training programs for tourist guides.

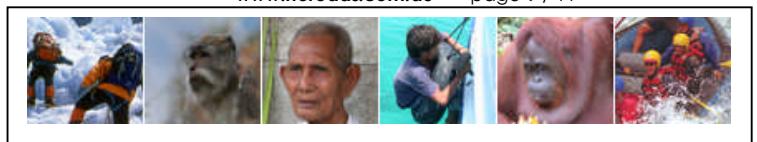
BEST TIME TO VISIT

A visit to Bhutan can be planned anytime of the year but the best period is from mid-September to May. The peak seasons, when most visitors come to Bhutan, are during the Spring and Autumn. Spring is from April through June and Autumn from September through November. There are many festivals during these periods, and visitors come to take advantage both of the pleasant climate and the wonderful festivals. However, Bhutan has limited tourism infrastructure and during peak seasons facilities are packed. For those wanting to avoid the busy tourist periods the winter months of December, January, February, are recommended.

A DAY ON EXPEDITION

A trekking day usually consists of five to seven hours of walking. Pack animals, ponies, and yaks for the higher altitude treks, are provided to porter provisions, baggage and equipment. All necessary camping and kitchen equipment is provided and included in the trek cost.

All trekking parties are accompanied by a trained guide, a cook, an assistant and pack animal. At least one riding pony is always taken along just in case it is needed. The support crew walks ahead of the trekking party each day and pitches camp before the trekkers arrive. A warm cup of tea or coffee waiting in the dining tent is a most welcome treat after a day's trek. All meals are carefully planned and prepared. Breakfast and dinner are served freshly prepared at camp and includes a choice of, at least, four dishes. During the day a picnic lunch is served at a pleasant and scenic place. All cooking and cleaning chores are taken care of by our trek staff so you can enjoy the trek fully.



WHAT DO OUR ECO-EXPEDITIONS EXPEDITIONS INCLUDE?

SERVICES OF AN EXPERIENCED LOCAL GUIDE

All our trek guides have been carefully selected for their ability and temperament. Each guide has training and proven abilities in eco-friendly methods, safety and, careful trek operations, keeping the health and happiness of the trekkers as well his crew, uppermost. Our guides are committed to making sure that all our trekkers have an enjoyable trek, comes back safe and are overwhelmed by their experience. Your guide will be a friend and companion, who takes pleasure in showing you his country's specialties and, perhaps, meet his home and family too.

SERVICES OF PORTER/S AND PONIES TO CARRY LUGGAGE AND EQUIPMENT

Where ever possible we employ porters/pack-animals locally at the beginning of the trek. This is one of the many measures we take to make sure that most of the cost our clients pays goes directly into the local economies where you trek. All our porters, as all our field staff, are covered by insurance and, on high altitude treks, are issued warm clothing and footwear to prepare them better. Porters who prove themselves are chosen for training as trek helpers, cooks and guides, thus giving them an avenue to improve the quality of their life.

ALL MEALS WHILE ON TREK

The trek includes three basic meals, breakfast, lunch and dinner, each day. Breakfast and dinners are ordered at the restaurant attached to the lodge where we stay overnight. Lunches are ordered at a trail-side tea-house around mid-day. Most lodges serve, Nepali meals - rice, lentil soup and curried vegetables or meat - soups, noodles, momos (meat or veg-stuffed steamed dumplings), pancakes, chappati breads, etc. Many also offer other exotic dishes. Three basic meals will be provided. Desserts, drinks, and special items listed in the menus are not included. *It is best to bring Iodine water purification tablets for purifying drinking water during the trek which is environmental friendly and cheaper. Boiled and/or filtered water and bottled water are available at extra cost.*



EXPEDITION GRADE (EXPEDITION DIFFICULTY)

GRADE 1 - EASY

Easy trekking, by Himalayan standards is generally between 900m/3,000ft. and 2,000m/6,500ft. There are always plenty of 'ups and downs' anywhere in the Himalaya and clients need to be regular walkers to get full enjoyment from their experience. It is possible however to design 'easier' three to four day treks with perhaps only three to four hours walking per day on request.

GRADE 2 - MODERATE

Moderate trekking 900m/3,000ft. and 3,000m/10,000ft. but possibly involving side trips to higher elevations.

GRADE 3 - DIFFICULT

Reasonably demanding trekking at altitudes up to 4,000m/13,000ft. with side trips to higher elevations. Some treks included here will, in part, be well away from villages on ill-defined mountain trails.

GRADE 4 - STRENUOUS

Treks of a demanding nature, requiring all participants to be fit and in excellent health, often in remote alpine areas and sometimes reaching altitudes in excess of 5000m/18,000ft. Here we include all Tibet trips primarily because of the rigors of the climate and overall altitude, varying between Lhasa, at 3,700m/12,000ft., to high pass crossing, by vehicle or on foot in excess of 5,000m/16,000ft.

ALPINE

Extremely demanding treks sometimes in very remote areas on rough terrain and perhaps including (in Nepal) one or more of the so called 'trekking peaks' - maximum altitude, Mt. Mera at 6,461m/21,192ft. Participants should have at least a basic knowledge of use of crampons and ice axes, though first time climbers may be accepted on some of the so called 'easy' routes on these peaks. Medical certificates are required prior to acceptance on any climbing treks.

BOOKINGS

If you would like to discuss this or any other matter with us please feel free to call us on **(03) 9502 3789** or email us at info@noroads.com.au

For bookings you can either contact us directly or through the **Adventure Travel Company** on **(03) 9696 8400**.

