



Contact Information

+977 01-4813144, +9779851135348

info@adventureascent.com

Kapan Marg, Kathmandu, Nepal



Laya-Gasa Trek

Bhutan is a trekker's paradise! The scenic landscapes and pristine environment are best experienced through trekking. The trek paths are always lauded with splendid scenic beauty, lofty mountains and deep valleys untouched by modernization. Trekking in this Himalayan kingdom is a wonderful experience for anyone who enjoys hiking and camping in exotic natural habitats, meeting interesting indigenous people and learning their cultures. Only a handful of tourists trek each year and the trails are not crowded as they are in other countries. They are definitely not dotted with teashops and souvenir shops filled with tourists. You are on your own most of the time except for the few local travelers. Come enjoy our mountains and enrich your holidays! Good Season March & June & September & November for high altitude areas. December-February for lower areas. Group Nos: The minimum is normally six and though we are happy to take groups of only one or two, a surcharge will have to be paid as per government regulations. Climate Days are normally warm. Nights can at times be very cold, with winter temperatures often falling to well below freezing (especially on our mountain treks). There can be monsoon showers in summer (heaviest in July, August) and rarely in spring and autumn. What to bring Strong normal clothing (according to season). Preferably, light cotton for summer and woolen clothing for evenings and the winter. A fleece and light jacket is advised. For trekking you need strong, comfortable trekking boots, sun-glasses, lots of spare vests and socks/stockings, headgear and a waterproof jacket. Warm clothing will be required for the evenings and a down jacket is a must for treks in mountain areas. For those going on treks, a warm sleeping bag is a must. (Note: for trekking a load of 25 kg per person is allowed and will be transported on pack ponies, yaks or by porters.) We offer various trekking throughout the year. The treks can range from a simple cultural day trek to the longest 29/36 days Snow Man Trek. We can customize your trek according to your interest.

Price:

Trip Start:

Trip Ends:

Duration: 22 Days

Grade:

Altitude:

Destination:

Trip Style:

Transport:

Group Size: 1 - 30+

Best Time: March, April, May, June, July, August, September

Itinerary

Day	Title	Description
1	<u>Arrive at Paro.</u>	Flight to Paro is one of the most spectacular in all the Himalayas. One can see Mt. Everest, Kanchenjunga, Makalu as well as other peaks in Bhutan such as Chomolhari, Jichu Drakey and Tsim Gang. The first gift from Bhutan will be the cool, clean fresh air as you step out of the plane. You will be received by our representative and escorted to the hotel.
2	<u>Paro sightseeing.</u>	Drive to Sartsham Chorten and walk up to the Taktsang monastery (Tigers nest) viewpoint. It is believed that Guru Rimpoche, who brought Tantric Buddhism to Bhutan in the 8th century, meditated here for three months. The monastery was built later in the 17th century on the same site. In April 1998, a fire destroyed the main structure of the monastery and its religious contents. A complete restoration was done and has resulted in the monastery being identical to the original one. This place beholds the history of the hidden land. The walking time is approximately five hours. But it depends on one's pace. When we reach the main road we turn to the right and dive further on to Drukgyel Dzong. Built in 1649 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal & damaged by fire in 1951. On the way back we will visit one of the oldest monasteries that we have in Bhutan and it built in the 7th century by the first king of Tibet, Songtsen Gampo to introduce Buddhism into Bhutan.
3	<u>Paro – Shana. 17 KM. walking time 5-6 hours.</u>	Drive to Drukgyel Dzong (15 km), at the end of the valley where the trek begins. It goes upstream of the Paro River, through villages, gradually ascending to Shana. Overnight Camp. Altitude: 2580m.
4	<u>Shana – Soi Thangthangkha. 22 KM. Walking time 6 -7 hours.</u>	The trail again follows Pa-chu (Paro river), ascending and descending through pine, oak and spruce forests. Hot lunch will be served after crossing the bridge towards the left side of the river. After lunch follow the river climbing up through rhododendron forests and finally crossing a bridge again, before reaching camp. Overnight Camp. Altitude: 3750m
5	<u>Soi Thangthangkha – Jangothang. 19 KM. walking time 5 hours.</u>	The path ascends for a while until you reach the army camp. Then follow the river above the tree line enjoying the stunning views of the surrounding peaks. Hot lunch will be served inside a yak herder's camp. Then take a short walk in the valley to the camp at Jangothang. The view of Mt. Chomolhari and Jichu Drake are superb. Overnight Camp. Altitude: 4040 m.

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| 6 | <u>Rest day at Jangothang. (Optional walk around)</u> | Today is a rest day and is free to take a hike to Tshophu, walk towards the glacial lake of Chhomolhari or to the Jichu Drake glacial lake. |
| 7 | <u>Jangothang – Lingshi. 18 KM. walking time 7-8 hours.</u> | The trail follows the stream for half an hour and crosses the bridge to the right. Start the climb up to the first ridge with a breathtaking view of Chomolhari, Jichu Drake and Tsrin Gang. Then walk towards the valley, almost flat for a while, until the climb to the Nyele la pass at an altitude of 4,700 meters. After the pass it's a gradual descent to the Lingshi camp, enjoying the panoramic view of the peaks and Lingshi Dzong. Overnight Camp. Altitude: 4000m. |
| 8 | <u>Lingshi – Chebisa. 10 KM. walking time 5-6 hours.</u> | Walk past the Lingshi Dzong, perched on the hilltop with a commanding view of the green hills, the Winding River and magnificent peaks. This is a very easy and pleasant walk, through villages and yak herders's camps. Lunch will be served at scenic Goyuna village. After lunch, a short walk to Chebisa village. We camp here by the side of a stream at an altitude of 3,850 meters. |
| 9 | <u>Chebisa – Shomuthang. 17 KM. walking time 7 – 8 hours.</u> | Today begins with a stiff climb up a ridge to Gobu la pass at an altitude of 4,500 meters, taking nearly 4 hours to the top. After the pass descend to a lunch spot, through rhododendron bushes. Afternoon continues along an undulating path, after crossing the stream, through rhododendron forests and across yak herder's camps. You may see some flocks of Blue Sheep now and then. Arrive at camp. Altitude: 4,250 meters. |
| 10 | <u>Shomuthang – Robluthang. 18 KM. walking time 8 – 9 hours.</u> | The trek starts with a climb to Jari la pass at an altitude of 4,600 meters. Then descend to Tsharijathang valley, the summer residence of the rare Himalayan Takin (national animal of Bhutan). From here we may have to cross the stream and get wet, as most of the time the footbridge is washed away. After crossing the stream towards the left the trail ascends to Robluthang camp at an altitude of 4400 meters. |
| 11 | <u>Robluthang – Lemithang. 19 KM. walking time 6 – 7 hours</u> | A long climb up to the Shiche la passes (altitude 5005 meters). The views of the mountains from the pass are breathtaking. After the pass descend to Lemithang. The path is quite narrow and you may have to cross the stream and get wet again. The last part of the trek is very interesting, with the view of Mount Gangchey -Ta peak. Arrive at camp with an altitude of 4100 meters. |

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| 12 | <u>Lemithang – Laya.</u>
<u>10 KM. walking</u>
<u>time 4 – 5 hours.</u> | In the morning you wake up with a superb view of Gangchey Ta peak in front of you. The walk to Laya is very pleasant with wonderful views. You will pass through a damp forest, filled with moss and singing birds. Arrive at Laya village, the second highest settlement in the country, at an altitude of 3,800 meter. |
| 13 | <u>Rest day at Laya.</u> | Explore the village. You can go and visit many of the houses in the village. By tradition one can go to any house without an Invitation. A cup of tea or chang (local drink) is always offered. The people in this village are very interesting with a unique dress, language and ornaments. Overnight Camp. |
| 14 | <u>Laya – Chamsa.</u>
<u>19 KM. walking</u>
<u>time 6- 7 hours.</u> | Descend to army camp and join the Mo Chu (Mother River of Punakha) and follow the river until you cross the bridge. After the bridge it's up and down several times through juniper and fir forests until you reach the camp at Chamsa at an altitude of 3,800 meters. |
| 15 | <u>Chamsa – Gasa</u>
<u>Tshachu. 16 KM.</u>
<u>walking time 6- 7</u>
<u>hours.</u> | Walk for half an hour over flat land to the Bele la pass. It is downhill all the way to Gasa Tsachu (hot spring). Make a stop for Lunch at Gasa village at the altitude of 2,700 meters. After lunch visit the village and Dzong. The Dzong was built in 17th century by the first religious king, Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, to protect the valley against Tibetan invaders. Then descend to Gasa Tshachu (hot spring) for camp at an altitude of 2,200 meters. |
| 16 | <u>Gasa Tshachu</u>
<u>rest day.</u> | After a long trek this is the place to relax. Enjoy a hot spring bath and explore the surrounding area. You may meet a lot of people coming to this Tshachu for treatments. |
| 17 | <u>Gasa Tshachu –</u>
<u>Damji. 15 Km.</u>
<u>walking time 4- 5</u>
<u>hours.</u> | The path continues descending and ascending, through heavily forested areas with lots of wild orchids. In this area there are leeches so one must be careful especially in the summer. Camp will near the village at Damji an altitude of 2,200 meters. |
| 18 | <u>Damji –</u>
<u>Tashithang –</u>
<u>Punakha. 16 KM.</u>
<u>4 walking time 4- 5</u>
<u>hours.</u> | The last days of trekking will continually follow the Mochu down through heavily forested area until you reach Tashithang at an altitude of 1,620 meters. Our coach will be waiting to drive you to Punakha (15km), following the river all the way. Overnight Punakha. |
| 19 | <u>Punakha –</u>
<u>Thimphu.</u> | In morning visit Punakha Dzong the old capital of Bhutan. It was built in 1637. Drive to the Dochula for lunch. The Dochula Pass is an altitude of 3,050 meters. On a clear day one can have a magnificent view of the eastern Himalayan range of peaks. Overnight Thimphu. |

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| 20 | <u>Thimphu sightseeing.</u> | Visit the Memorial Chorten, built in 1974 in memory of the late king of Bhutan; the Indigenous Hospital where traditional medicines are still practiced; the National Library where ancient texts and manuscripts are stored and the painting school where children learn the traditional technique of painting and arts. |
| 21 | <u>Thimphu – Paro</u> | Morning visit the Handicraft Emporium and free time for shopping. After lunch drive to Paro. |
| 22 | <u>Departure.</u> | Drive to Paro Airport. Your guide will bid you farewell! |