

DAGALA THOUSAND LAKES TREK

Day 01. Arrive Paro: During the journey to Paro, one will experience, from the left side of the plane, breath taking views of Mount Everest, Kanchenjunga and other famous Himalayan peaks, including the sacred Jhomolhari and Jichu Drake in Bhutan. On arrival at Paro International Airport, you will be received by representatives of Bhutan Dragon Adventures who will escort you to your hotel. Dinner and overnight at the hotel in Paro.

Day 02. Paro Sightseeing: After breakfast, we will drive sixteen km to Drukgyel Dzong whose name means "Victorious Druk." Although in ruins, it is of great historical importance. It was on this spot that the Bhutanese finally defeated the invading Tibetans and drove them back. From here the peak of Jhomolhari, "Mountain of the Goddess," can be seen on a clear day. On our way back into Paro we will explore a typical Bhutanese farmhouse. After lunch at the hotel, we are off to visit the Paro Rinpung Dzong. This massive fortress sits on a small hill just above the Paro River (Pa Chu). We walk for about fifteen minutes, crossing an old cantilevered wooden bridge of traditional Bhutanese architecture. Constructed in 1645, this Dzong houses the District Administration offices and the District Monk Body. We will also find time to visit the National Museum, Ta Dzong, an ancient watch tower on the hill just above the Rinpung Dzong and Kyichu Lhakhang. The monastery, build in 659 by King Songsten Gempo of Tibet and is considered one of the holiest places in Bhutan as it marks the advent of Buddhism in the country.

Day 03. Paro – Thimpu: The drive to Thimpu takes about two hours. We will check into the hotel and spend some time sightseeing in Thimpu. First the Memorial Chorten built in 1974 in memory of the third King of Bhutan Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, then on to the National Library where ancient manuscripts are preserved. Afterwards we will visit Taschicho Dzong. This massive structure houses part of the government ministries, the office of the King and the Throne Room. It also houses the State Monastic Body and the living quarters of the Chief Abbot and senior monks.

Day 04. Sightseeing: Today we will visit Simtokha Dzong, one of the oldest fortresses in Bhutan, built in 1829. Then we will tour the woodcraft and painting school where traditional arts and crafts are taught to talented young people. We also will go to the Handicrafts Emporium where Bhutanese textiles and other arts are displayed and can be purchased.

Day 05. Thimpu – Talekha (Start of Trek): (Distance 12 kms. Time 2 hrs. Altitude 2,925 m, 9,500 ft.) The trek begins at Simtokha Dzong where the ponies and camping crew will be waiting. The trail winds through blue pine and evergreen forest to Talekha Village. The first two hours are a difficult climb, but the remaining two hours are a pleasant walk through the forests. Talekha Village consists of five houses and a huge temple called Tale-Lhakhang. We will overnight at a campsite there.

Day 06. Talekha - Japhuna: (Distance 8 kms. Time 4 hrs. Altitude 4000 m, 13,000 ft.) Today the trail winds for two and one half hours through thick forests of blue pine and oak which gradually change into soft pine and spruce. For lunch we will stop at a yak campsite and the tree line ends. After lunch we cross Jeleze La pass with fabulous views of the Thimphu Valley and its surrounding mountain ridges. After crossing two of these ridges, we will arrive at our campsite, Japhuna.

Day 07. Japhuna - Jaduna): (Distance 8 kms. Time 5/6 hrs. Altitude 4100 m, 13,500 ft)
The trail from Japhuna takes you up and down over several ridges for about four hours until you come to a small stream where there are two trails which both lead to the same destination. Along the route, there are many small lakes. After another hour and a half climb through rhododendron shrubs, you reach the third campsite, another yak camp.

Day 08. Jaduna - Labatama: (Distance 7 kms. Time 5 hrs. Altitude 4460 m, 14,600 ft)
There are two trails, one going on the left side of Aum Jomo (the highest peak in the Dagala range), and the other onto the right side of Aum Jomo over the Jomigie pass to Setso and Yumtso Lakes. We follow the right trail and over the pass and going by Dungka Tso Lake. From the pass you can see beautiful views of the high mountains in Northern Bhutan. The trail then descends for two hours to reach Labatama yak camp by the side of Yumtso Lake where we will camp for the night.

DAY 09. Labatama Rest Day: You can visit several lakes and enjoy a good day fishing or go back to Jomigie pass and climb Aum Jomo to the summit at 16,500 ft. which will take five to six hours.

Day 10. Labatama - Grenache: (Distance 7 kms. Time 5 hrs. Altitude 4170 m, 13,700 ft)
Today we leave the lovely pasture of Labara and move out of the Dagala range. The trail ascends gradually through lovely landscapes until we reach Pagalaptsa pass, the highest point of the day. From the pass there are beautiful views of Genekha Village and a portion of the Paro Valley. After the pass the trail winds gradually down through thick rhododendrons and oak forest until we reach Genekha where we will camp.

Day 11. Genekha – Paro (End of Trek): A short walk brings us to the motor road and our transport back to Paro where we will overnight in the hotel.

Day 12. Paro Sightseeing: It will be a very special day, with an excursion to view the spectacular Taktshang (Tiger's Nest) Monastery. After breakfast a short drive takes us to Satsam Chorten. And we walk from there to the monastery. The trail climbs through beautiful pine forest, many of the trees festooned with Spanish moss, and an occasional grove of fluttering prayer flags. We stop for a rest and light refreshments at the Taktshang Jakhang (cafeteria) and then walk a short distance until we see, clearly and seemingly within reach, Taktshang Monastery. The first part was built around Guru Rimpoche's meditation cave in the 1684 by the Penlop of Paro, Gyaltsen Tenzin Rabgay. This incredible monastery clings to the edge of a sheer rock cliff that plunges 900 meters into the valley below. Legend has it that Guru Padmasambhava (Guru Rimpoche), the tantric mystic who brought Buddhism to Bhutan, flew here on the back of a flying tiger, Dorji Drolo, said to be his favorite consort. Lunch is served at the cafeteria.

Day 13. Departure: Early morning, drive to the airport and farewell.