

DRUKPATH TREK

THIMPHU TO DAMCHENA (6 DAYS)

A scenic journey through alpine meadows, rhododendron forests and high mountain passes in western Bhutan.



Trekking Day 01 (Thimphu – Phajodhing)

Distance: 8kms/4.97miles (3.5 hr)

Altitude Gain: 1130m/3707ft

Altitude Loss:

Today is a short trekking day and the journey starts from Motithang in Thimphu. This climb will take us through a blue pine forested path of prayer flags, spruce, fir, juniper and rhododendron. The altitude gain today is significant so it is recommended that you walk at a slow and steady pace. The first night camp is near the Phajodhing Goemba (monastery) which is perched on the ridge and whose monks welcome visitors.

Campsite Elevation: 3640m/11942ft

Trekking Day 02 (Phajodhing – Simkotra Tsho)

Distance: 10kms/6.21miles (4hrs)

Altitude Gain: 680m/2231ft

Altitude Loss: 130m/426.50ft

The morning begins with an ascent for approximately 90min towards the Pass (4090m/13,419ft) and from there you will have a great view of Thimphu city. After this you climb a bit higher to crest at 4120m/13517ft and then go across to a hill with some prayer flags and a stone wall that marks the sky burial site. Then you drop down to Labana camp site where there is almost dry lake at 4110m/13,484ft. Labana means 'between the passes' so you have to climb over another crest at 4210m/13,812ft and traverse along a broad valley, where you could view Dochula and Mt. Jomolhari (7314m/23,996ft). The path then ascends gradually to a group of Cairns atop Labana La 4235m/13,894ft ('pass between passes'). After a long walk over a rocky path and several descents past several false summits, you will be at your campsite near stone ruins overlooking Simkotra Tsho.

Campsite Elevation: 4100m/13,451ft

Trekking Day 03 (Simkotra Tsho – Jimilang Tsho)

Distance: 11kms/6.83miles (4-5 hrs)

Altitude Gain: 400m/1312ft

Altitude Loss: 820m/2690ft

Today, we will climb at first about 50m/164ft to a ridge at 4150m/13,615ft and then descend to Janye Tsho at 3950m/12,959ft. Continue walking along the shore to reach yak herder's camp and then climb another 100m/328ft to crest where you have a view of the lake you passed. Then you make several ups and downs to another ridge and then make a climb to a single stone shelter.

From there you traverse along the side of the ridge to descend to Lake Jimilang Tsho, our campsite for today. The name Jimilang Tsho means 'Sand Ox Lake' and was named after a bull that emerged from the lake to join the cattle of a family that uses the area as a summer grazing ground. The lake is also known for its giant trout, which were introduced in the 1970s.

Campsite Elevation: 3885m/12,746ft

Trekking Day 04 (Jimilang Tsho – Jangchhu Lakha)

Distance: 11kms/6.83miles (4hrs)

Altitude Gain: 375m/1230ft

Altitude Loss: 370m/1213ft

Today after leaving the lake, we traverse to the crest and then make a short descent through boulders and rhododendrons first and then through a forest. Then make a climb for about an hour to the top of a ridge at 4175m/13,698ft, from where we will have a great view of Mt. Jomolhari (7314m/23,996ft) and Paro valley. From here we descend to a valley and make a climb up to a meadow, where yak herder's camp. After the open it is only a short gradual climb to the small pass at 4080m/13,386ft with again the view of a Paro valley and Mt. Jomolhari and leaving the pass we will descend to our campsite, an open and plain area called Jangchhu Lakha, a yak pasture.

Campsite Elevation: 3760m/12,336ft

Trekking Day 05 (Jangchhu Lakha – Jili Dzong)

Distance: 10kms/6.21miles (4hrs)

Altitude Gain: 50m/164ft

Altitude Loss: 425m/1394ft

Today's walk is a short and enjoyable ridge walk, full of short ascents and descents so there's plenty of time for an afternoon visit to Jili Dzong (fortress). We might see or hear beautiful Monal Pheasants during the day. Today's campsite is just below the Jili Dzong.

Campsite Elevation: 3480m/11,417ft

Trekking Day 06 (Jili Dzong - Damchena)

Distance: 5kms/miles (2 & half hr)

Altitude Gain: 40m/131ft

Altitude Loss: 555m/1821ft

Today after our breakfast, we will climb to Jili La (pass) 3540m/11614ft and from the pass we'll descend more than 500m/1,640ft to our destination through the hemlock, fir, bamboo and blue pine forest. After 2 hours of descent we will take us to a mani wall (carved stone) and campsite in a clearing known as Damchena (2985m/9,793ft) where we will meet our driver and a coach. From here we'll drive to our hotel.

Overnight-Paro (7478ft)