

The Druk Path Trek including Thimphu Festival 14 – 25th September 2026

11 nights/ 12 Days

Start City: Kathmandu End City: Kathmandu

Altitude maximum: 4,235m; average: 3,654m

Group size: min 8, max 16, plus tour leader and support team

Distance: 5-day trekking 49kms

At a glance:

Day 1: Arrive Kathmandu (Hotel in Kathmandu)

Day 2: Flight to Paro (2,200m) in Bhutan (Hotel in Paro) Visit Paro Dzong & Museum

Day 3: Warm up hike 12km to Taktsang Monastery (3,120m) (Hotel in Paro)

Day 4: Trek 7km to Jele Dzong crossing Jele La Pass (3,550m) (camping)

Day 5: Trek 12km to Jangchulaka (3,700m) (camping)

Day 6: Trek 10km along the ridge to Jimi Lang Tsho reaching 4,120m (camping)

Day 7: Trek 9km to Labana, rising to 4,150m (camping)

Day 8: Trek 11km cross the Labana Pass 4,235m. Jeep transfer to Thimphu.

(Hotel in Thimphu)

Day 9: Thimphu Festival (Hotel in Thimphu)

Day 10: Early transfer to Paro for flight to Kathmandu. City or Kathmandu Valley (Hotel)

Day 11: City sightseeing or Kathmandu Valley (Hotel)

Day 12: Depart Kathmandu

DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 1: JOINING DAY:

KATHMANDU Monday 14th September

The adventure begins in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. You will be met and transferred to your hotel. The rest of the day is free to relax or you may wish to explore the nearby busy Thamel district.

We will have an evening group briefing and dinner together.

Accommodation: 4 star hotel

DAY 2: Tuesday 15th September

FLY TO PARO (2,200m); VISIT PARO DZONG AND MUSEUM

We have a morning flight to Paro today. If the weather is clear, we should get a fantastic view of much of the eastern half of the Himalaya, including Everest, Nuptse, Lhotse, Makalu, Kanchenjunga and Chomolhari (Jhomolhari).

After completing visa formalities in Paro, we transfer to our hotel. The Paro Valley is considered one of the most beautiful in Bhutan with blue pine-covered hills and attractive farmhouses among paddy fields – all dominated by the massive dzong (fort).

This afternoon, we aim to visit Paro Dzong and the national museum above it. Paro Dzong is one of the most impressive in Bhutan, and the finest example of Bhutanese architecture you will see. The inward-sloping walls form a massive structure that towers over the town. Built in the 17th century, it was one of the strongest and most important fortresses in Bhutan and was used on several occasions to defend the Paro Valley from invasions by Tibet. Formally the meeting hall for the national assembly, the dzong now houses a monastic school and district government offices. West of the dzong is a covered wooden bridge named Nyamal Zam, a reconstruction of the original bridge which was washed away in a flood in 1969.

At the top of the hill, above the dzong, is the old watchtower known locally as Ta Dzong. Originally built in 1656, it was renovated in 1968 by King Jigme Dorje Wangchuk to house the National Museum. Damaged by the earthquake in 2011, the museum is now in a new building above the Ta Dzong. Inside the museum, there are collections of masks and thangkas (Tibetan Buddhist paintings).

(Please note, the itinerary above could change subject to flight timings, which are generally unpredictable.)

Accommodation: 3 star hotel

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3: Wednesday 16th September

WARM-UP HIKE TO TAKTSANG MONASTERY (3,120m) TIGER'S NEST MONASTERY)

Today we have a warm-up hike to the beautiful Taktsang Monastery. Also known as the Tiger's Nest Monastery, it is incredibly perched on the ledge of a cliff high above the Paro Valley. Partly destroyed by fire in 1998, it has now been completely restored to its former magnificence. We drive a short

distance from the hotel and then hike up for about 1hr 30min to a viewpoint for classic views of the monastic buildings that cling impossibly to the cliff wall opposite.

If you're feeling energetic, walk another 45 minutes to the actual monastery. The walk is good for acclimatisation. Returning to the hotel, we have time in the afternoon to explore Paro town.

Accommodation: 3 star hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Distance covered: 12km. Ascent: 660m Descent: 660m

Activity hours: 6

DAY 4: Thursday 17th September

TREK from 2,620m to JELE LA 3,550m, then camp at JELE DZONG

Today we start our trek. After breakfast, we have a short drive to about 2,620m, just above the ancient Ta Dzong watchtower. The first day's trekking is not long in terms of hours but it's uphill all the way and we gain quite a lot of height.

From our start point, it is a gentle climb for about 1hr 30min on a jeep track to a prayer wall. The trail then narrows, and we continue climbing on a rocky path through the forest. We have lunch in a clearing about an hour further on and then it's about an hour's walk in the afternoon to the Jele La (11,645ft/3,550m) and our camp just below the pass and Jele Dzong. If the weather is clear, we can see the Paro Valley below. If you're still keen to walk, trek further up the ridge from the Jele La to a ruined shepherd hut with a small Bon shrine inside.

Accommodation: Full-service camping (sleeping altitude: 3,530m)

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Distance covered: 7km Ascent: 954m. Descent: 70m Activity hours: 4

DAY 5: Friday 18th September

TREK TO JANGCHULAKA (3,700m)

After breakfast, we walk five minutes back up to the main trail and continue climbing for about 30 minutes to Jele Dzong. If it is open, we can go inside the 14th-century dzong. Continuing up the ridge for a short way, we can see the Paro Valley way below and, if the weather is clear, we may even spot the peak of Chomolhari in the distance. The trail undulates through thick rhododendron forests this morning – keep your eyes peeled for colourful monal and blood pheasants.

Lunch is in a forest clearing and we have a short walk in the afternoon to our camp at Rawna.

Please note, if there are other trekking groups around, we may have to camp at Jangchu Lakha (3,700m) or Tsokam (3,750m). All three campsites are close by, each in different forest clearings.

Accommodation: Full-service camping

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Distance covered: 12km Ascent: 680m Descent: 295m Activity hours: 4

DAY 6: Saturday 19th September

FOLLOW THE RIDGE WITH SPECTACULAR VIEWS OF JICHODRAKE TO REACH JIMI LANG TSHO

It's a long day today and probably the hardest walk of the trek. We climb steeply from camp on a narrow trail for about an hour to rejoin the main trail. We continue climbing through a rocky landscape littered with small rhododendron bushes. We reach a col at (4,073m) marked with prayer flags and then drop down a short way to a cave. The trail then climbs again quite steeply to a ridge at (4,080m), where we get spectacular mountain views on a clear day, including Chomolhari and Jichodrake.

We have lunch on the ridge while enjoying the views and then continue a little further up the ridge to 4,120m. From here, we contour round a little and then drop steeply on a rocky trail to the shores of Jimi Lang Tsho, well known for its trout.

Accommodation: Full-service camping (sleeping altitude: 3,885m)

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Distance covered: 10km Ascent: 628m Descent: 622m Activity hours: 7

DAY 7: Sunday 20th September

TREK TO LABANA 4,100m

We have another long but great day's walk with good mountain views. The trail climbs from camp along a rocky trail up to Janye Tsho Lake. Climbing even higher to a col at 4,150m, we then have a short descent to Simthokha Lake (13,420ft/4,090m), the highest lake on our trek. From here, the trail undulates all the way to our camp at Labana.

Accommodation: Full-service camping 4,100m

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Distance covered: 9km. Ascent: 708m Descent: 460m Activity hours: 7

DAY 8: Monday 21st September

CROSS THE LABANA PASS (4,235m) AND DESCEND TO PHAJODING; TRANSFER TO THIMPHU

The trail climbs gradually up to the Labana Pass, the highest point of this trek at (4,235m). The views get better and better and, on a clear day, we can see Gangar Punsum, Table Mountain and much of the Bhutan Himalaya. Way below is the Thimphu Valley.

From the top, we traverse the hillside with great mountain views and descend towards Thimphu. There are a couple of small climbs to cols but the general direction is downhill. From the Phajoding Labsa chorten (shrine), we descend quite steeply to Phajoding Monastery for lunch. There are several temples here and a monastic school and the place is visited by many Bhutanese. We descend even

further through forests of blue pine to the end of our trek at Motithang, just above Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan.

We should reach our hotel by mid-afternoon. The evening is free to explore Thimphu.

Accommodation: 3 star hotel

Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Distance covered: 7mi (11km); Ascent: 771ft (235m); Descent: 5,102ft (1,555m)

Activity hours: 6

DAY 9: Tuesday 22nd October

THIMPHU FESTIVAL

We spend the day at the Festival, one of the largest and most popular Tshechus in Bhutan, the Thimphu Tshechu is held at the Tashichho Dzong in the city. The festival offers a variety of masked dances, folk songs, and traditional music, providing an excellent opportunity to experience Bhutanese culture at its finest.

Accommodation: 3 star hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

DAY 10: Wednesday 23rd October

FLY TO KATHMANDU

An early morning flight to Kathmandu.

Once back in Nepal, one option is to go straight to the Prakriti Rural Resort Hotel in the Kathmandu Valley, in the heart of Shivapuri National Park. An eco-friendly resort in lush green valleys and organic farmlands. Here we can stay the night and enjoy the serenity and beauty of the surroundings, returning to Kathmandu tomorrow afternoon.

Alternatively, after our arrival in Kathmandu, you will have the rest of the day free to explore the temples and markets of the city. There are several sightseeing tours available which can be arranged locally or you may want to explore on your own. You could visit the monkey temple at Swayambhunath, the largest Hindu temple in Nepal at Pashupatinath, or one of the largest Buddhist stupas in Asia at Boudhanath. Once you've had your fill of culture, the colourful markets of Thamel are great for souvenir hunting.

Accommodation: 4 star hotel

Meals included: Breakfast

DAY 11: Thursday 24th October

IN KATHMANDU

Either, return from the Prakriti Resort hotel in the Kathmandu Valley,

Or,

Optional sightseeing tours in Kathmandu city, arranged locally, locally to drive to Bhaktapur and explore Durbar Square; drive up to Changu Narayan temple and Nagarkot for mountain views.

Accommodation: 4 star hotel

Meals included: Breakfast

DAY 12: Friday 25th October

DEPARTURE TRANSFER to KATHMANDU AIRPORT

Meal included: Breakfast

Tour cost:

£3,500 per person for a minimum group size of 8 pax (twin sharing)

Cost Includes:

- 7 nights hotel/resort accommodation based on Twin sharing
- 4 nights full-service camping with portage of point-to-point walking
- Daily buffet breakfast in Kathmandu
- Breakfast/lunch/dinner in Bhutan
- Thimphu Festival entry fees
- Bhutan Visa and Sustainable Development fees
- Return flights between Kathmandu and Paro
- Services of accompanying Bhutanese English-Speaking Guide in Bhutan
- Monument Entrance Fee during sightseeing in Bhutan
- All transfers in Kathmandu
- All Transfers and sightseeing by Cars /Mini Coach in Bhutan
- All applicable hotel taxes

Not included:

- International flights to/from Kathmandu
- Personal travel insurance (up to 4,235m)
- Lunch and dinner are not included in Nepal
- VISA fee for Nepal
- Optional sightseeing tours in Kathmandu City on Days 1, and 10 & 11
- Optional Prakriti Resort stay overnight in the Kathmandu Valley on Day 10 (enquire for price)
- Personal expenses such as laundry, phone calls, mini-bar charges, table drinks, tips.
- Local tips for drivers, hotel staff and the trekking team
- Any expenses caused by reason beyond our control such as road blocks, weather conditions , natural calamities, flight cancellation, rescheduling, delays etc
- Camera / Video Camera charges at monuments

HOW TO BOOK:

This trip will be in association with High Places UK, a UK based travel agency affiliated with my ground agent in Delhi. All deposits and payments will be processed through them and financially protected. High Places holds an ATOL certification for flight-only operations and an ABTOT certification covering non-flight packages starting in Delhi. This will give you security and peace of mind.

A booking form will be sent to you if you'd like to secure a place with a £500 deposit payment. The balance will be due 56 days in advance of the departure date.

ACCOMMODATION

We spend 7 nights in hotels and four nights in full-service camps.

The camping is in spacious two-person tents. A dining and toilet tents are also provided, chairs, tables, cooking and kitchen gear and there is a team of support staff. I will be with you throughout the trek supported by a local guide, a cook and his assistants, and yak men.

On the trek you will be woken with a cup of hot tea or coffee and a small bowl of warm washing water each morning.

Single accommodation is limited. Please enquire for single supplement cost.

FOOD & DRINK

Breakfast is included for each of the 11 nights throughout the trip.

Eight lunches and dinners are provided in Bhutan.

During your adventure in Bhutan, prepare to savour a delightful array of flavours that blend Bhutanese and Western cuisines. While Bhutanese dishes are traditionally seasoned with chilies, often tempered for foreign palates, the local cuisine boasts rich and varied tastes. Enjoy a diverse selection of meat, vegetable, rice, and potato dishes, alongside iconic specialities like ema datshi – featuring chilis and cheese. If you fancy a more authentic or spicier culinary experience, of course this can be requested and your preferences will be tailored for.

While camping, the team bring a hot drink to your tent each morning. When you reach camp in the afternoon, tea and biscuits are served. At breakfast, dinner and in the afternoons, there is a choice of hot drinks.

Breakfasts typically include cereal and/or porridge plus toast and eggs. Lunch on trek is usually served as a picnic en route. Lunch and dinner typically include soup to start, followed by hot dishes (both local and Western) such as potatoes/chips, vegetables, curry, pasta, rice, dhal and vegetables. At dinner, a dessert such as fruit or cake is also served. Please note, although some meals include meat, it is not as readily available while camping.

(Please allow the equivalent of US\$30-40 per day for other main meals in Kathmandu.)

DRINKING WATER

Staying hydrated is always important and particularly at high altitude where it is generally recommended to drink at least three to four litres per day.

However, there is a growing problem of plastic pollution in the trekking areas of Bhutan and it is strongly encouraged not to buy bottled water.

On trek, the cooks collect and boil drinking water from the mountain streams and fill up your bottles for you, but you may need to collect water during the day and may wish to use your own water purification treatment as well. Purification tablets are widely used but you may choose to use a Steripen to treat any non-boiled water.

TRANSPORT

For all transfers and road journeys a private minibus or jeeps will be used.

For the flights between Paro and Kathmandu, Druk Air or Bhutan Airlines are used. All bookings on regional flights are made in economy class. Checked in luggage allowance for these flights is 30kgs.

The Paro-Kathmandu flights are notoriously unpredictable and so changes to the schedule may be inevitable but you will be notified well in advance.

WEATHER

Himalayan views tend to be best between October to December, as the weather is generally clear with sunny skies. You will experience a range of temperatures during the trip depending on the altitude. During the day, temperatures will be around 18-20C, and at night, around 10- 12C. There is always a chance of rain in Bhutan and you should be prepared for this.

VISAS

You will need a visa for Bhutan which will be organised for you. The cost of the visa is included in your trip cost.

You will need to obtain your visa for Nepal in advance or upon arrival at Kathmandu. I will advise you further on this nearer to the departure date.

VACCINATIONS and HEALTH

BHUTAN – there are no required vaccinations. However, you may want to consider vaccinations for hepatitis A, tetanus, typhoid, cholera, hepatitis B, Japanese encephalitis, rabies and tuberculosis. Please confirm with your doctor or travel clinic.

NEPAL – there are no required vaccinations. However, you may want to consider vaccinations for hepatitis A, tetanus, typhoid, cholera, hepatitis B, Japanese encephalitis, rabies and tuberculosis. Please confirm with your doctor or travel clinic.

EXTRA EXPENSES & SPENDING MONEY

You will need approximately £250 to allow for miscellaneous expenses including porter and trek crew tips, drinks in Bhutan, and extra meals in Nepal, plus extra for optional sightseeing tours or shopping.

It is recommended to bring your travel money in cash: Nepalese rupees & Bhutanese Ngultrum. Sterling and US Dollars are equally acceptable in Nepal and in Bhutan.

It is customary to tip in both Nepal and Bhutan as a way to say thank you. The equivalent of £125 is the suggested amount to be put into a group tipping pool. Of this, around £25 per person is allocated to form a kitty for hotel porters, waiters and drivers.

ALTITUDE WARNING

This trip includes several nights over 3,500m above sea level, where there is a genuine risk of being affected by acute mountain sickness (AMS). If left untreated, AMS can be life threatening. It is expected to experience mild symptoms of altitude sickness, such as headaches, shortness of breath while walking or sleeplessness. I and my guide are trained to identify symptoms of severe AMS and if you do require any extra care, we have all the arrangements in place to assist you and provide a rapid descent if necessary. I will be carrying a full medical kit including Diamox (acetazolamide), an oxygen tank and other drugs to treat more serious AMS symptoms.

Several medical conditions or medications can reduce your body's ability to acclimatise. This may affect your performance and make you more susceptible to AMS. If you are worried about pre-existing conditions, such as heart conditions, or your overall physical ability, you must seek medical advice prior to booking. Those of you considering using Diamox should speak to their doctor about the drug, its side-effects and a prescription. When taking out insurance, please make sure your policy covers you up to the maximum altitude of this trip (4,235m), including the use of a helicopter for emergency medical evacuation.

What to take:

You will be restricted to 15kg of luggage on the trek for portage. A soft duffle bag type bag (approx 90 litres) is suitable for the trek, to be carried by the yaks and mules. You will be carrying your own day pack during the trek with water, waterproofs, extra layers etc.

You can leave any suitcases and luggage that you don't need for the trek in the Kathmandu hotel and/or the Paro hotel. Any luggage left in Paro is transferred to the hotel in Thimphu for you.

1. Four-season sleeping bag
2. Ground mat
3. Three/four-season down jacket
4. Waterproof walking shoes/boots
5. Waterproof jacket and trousers
6. Gaiters (optional)

7. Trekking poles
8. Trekking/lightweight sandals for sightseeing and evenings
9. Warm hat and gloves, buff.
10. Wide-brimmed sun hat, sun glasses, sunscreen, lip salve
11. Several pairs of walking socks
12. Comfortable wear/tracksuit
13. Mid layer fleece
14. T-shirts and long-sleeved thermal base layers
15. Lightweight walking trousers
16. Walking shorts or skirts – to just above the knee
17. Mosquito repellent
18. Backpack for the day
19. Head torch and spare batteries
20. Refillable water bottles/water bladder (minimum 2 x 1 litres)
21. Sterilisation tablets or steripen, filter bottles
22. Dry sacks for day packs to keep things dry in case of rain
23. Trekking towel
24. Hand sanitizer gel
25. Mini toiletries eg shampoo, shower gel
26. Toilet paper/ tissues
27. Small personal first aid kit eg paracetamol, plasters, antiseptic
28. We will be visiting monasteries and so you must cover your legs and arms. Please note shawls are not acceptable for men and women
29. For the Festival: Bhutanese dress in their finest clothes so please bring a set of smart clothes. Long skirts and long-sleeved shirts for ladies and long trousers for men with long-sleeved shirts for men.
30. Umbrella (sun/rain) (optional)