



Gangtey-Gogona Trek

Phobjikha Valley, at 3000meters is one of the most beautiful few glacial valleys in the Himalayas. It is the chosen home of the rare black-necked cranes which migrate here in winter from the Tibetan Plateau. The valley of Gangtey is one of the most beautiful places in Bhutan and the Gangtey Gompa monastery is the only Nyingmapa monastery on the western side of the Black mountains. This moderate trek passes through the village of Gogona and Khotokha, through meadows and fields, then forest of juniper, magnolia and rhododendrons. One of the finest low level treks in Bhutan.



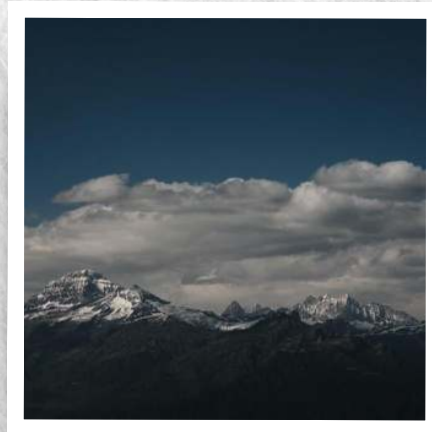
Detailed Itinerary

Day 1: Kathmandu – Paro

Upon arrival at Paro airport, you will be received by a Representative of Yak Holidays, transfer to the hotel. After Lunch, visit Ta Dzong, an ancient watchtower, which now houses the National Museum. Below the museum is the Paro Rimpung Dzong, the center of civil and religious authority in this valley. A short walk takes you to the base of the dzong and across a traditional cantilevered, covered bridge. Dinner and over

Day 2: Paro

Excursion to Taktsang. After breakfast a short drive takes us to Satsam Chorten, 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 Taktsang Jakhang (cafeteria) and then walk a short distance until we see, clearly and seemingly within reach, Taktsang monastery. The primary Lhakhang was built around Guru Rimpoche's meditation cave in 1684 by the Penlop of Paro, Gyaltse 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, the tantric mystic who brought Buddhism to Bhutan in 747 AD, flew here on the back of a flying tiger, Dorji Drolo, said to be his favourite consort. After Lunch, drive to the ruins of the Drukgyal Dzong 16 km up the valley. Built in 1647 by the great Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, father and unifier of medieval Bhutan, the dzong was destroyed by accidental fire and left in ruins as an evocative reminder of the great victories it was built to commemorate. Explore the ramparts and on a clear day experience an unforgettable view of Mt. Jhomolhari (7,314 m). On the way back, visit Kichu Lhakhang that was built in 659 by the Tibetan King Srongsen Gampo. In the evening, drive to Thimphu. Dinner and over night



Day 3: Thimphu Sightseeing

The day begins with a visit to the National Memorial Chorten (1974) built in honour of our late King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk. Then we ride to Buddha Point to see the Tallest Statue of Buddha in the world, Changangkha Lhakhang, Takin Preserve Center and the View Point.

After lunch, ride to Cheri Monastery. In the evening, visit to the Tashichho Dzong, seat of the national government and the Central Monastic Body, including the summer residence of the Je Khenpo (Chief Abbot of Bhutan) and finally visit the Handicrafts Emporium followed by shopping for souvenirs in the shops of Thimphu. Dinner and overnight

Day 4: Thimphu – Punakha

(76 Kms, 3 hours drive). After EARLY BREAKFAST, drive to Punakha via Dochula pass. If the weather is clear, we stop for a while at Dochula pass to view Higher Himalayas. On the way, stop a while to view Chimi Lhakhang, which was built by Lama Drukpa Kuenley in 15th century. He subdued the demons with his “Magical Thunder bolt”. The Temple is also known as “the Temple of Fertility”.

While in Punakha, visit Punakha Dzong built in 1637 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal and is situated between Pho Chu (Male river) and Mo Chu (Female river). For many years until the time of the second king, it served as the seat of the Government. The construction of the Dzong was foretold by Guru Rimpoche, who predicted, “...a person named Namgyal will arrive at a hill that looks like an elephant”. There was a smaller building here called Dzong Chu (Small Dzong) that housed a statue of Buddha. It is said that Shabdrung ordered the architect, Zowe Palep, to sleep in front of the statue, while Palep was sleeping; the Shabdrung took him in his dreams to Zangtopelri and showed him the palace of Guru Rimpoche. From his vision, the architect conceived the design for the new Dzong, which in keeping with the tradition, was never committed to paper. The Dzong was named Druk Pungthang Dechen Phodrang (Palace of Great Happiness). The war materials captured during the battle with Tibetans are preserved here. Punakha is still the winter residence of Je-Khenpo and King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk convened the First National Assembly here in 1952.

Day 5: Punakha – Gangtey

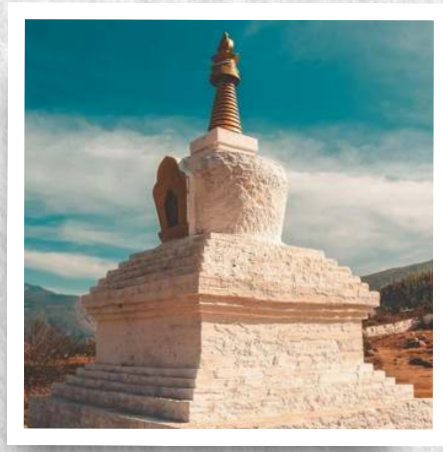
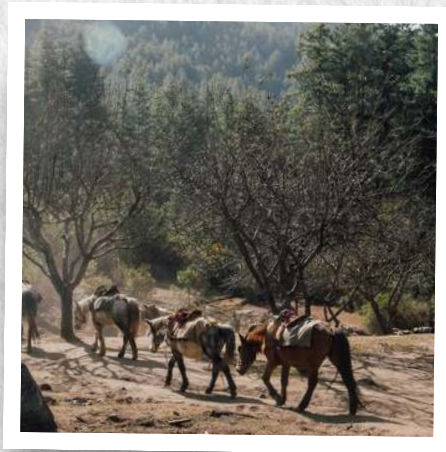
After breakfast, drive for 2 hours to Gangtey. On the way, visit Wangduephodrang Dzong built in 1638. Legend relates that as the people were searching for the site of the Dzong, four ravens were seen flying away in four directions. This was considered auspicious sign, representing the spread of religion to the four points of the compass. The Dzong is situated at the confluence of Mo Chu and Tang Chu rivers. Drive further to Gangtey. Visit Gangtey Gompa Monastery from outside. Gyaltshe Pema Thinley, the grandson and mind reincarnation of Pema Lingpa founded the Temple in 1613, and Tenzin Legpai Dhendup, the second re-incarnation, built the temple. The present Abbot, Kunzang Pema Namgyal is the ninth re-incarnation. It is a Nyingmapa monastery and is affiliated to other Nyingmapa monasteries including Tamshing in Bumthang. Explore Phobjikha valley, famous for the Black Necked Cranes during winter. Dinner and overnight.

Day 6: Gangey – Gogona

Start of Trek – The trail winds up on a slow climb through field and then ascends the Tselela Pass for your lunch stop. Then the trail descends gradually for some time through forest of juniper, bamboo, magnolia and rhododendron. After the last short climb you will reach Gogona village. The people of Gogona were originally nomads and they speak a language, “Jopkha” (language of the nomads).

Day 7: Gogona – Khotokha

In the morning you will climb up a gentle slope to Shobjula (11,155 ft.) for your lunch stop. Then the path leads down to a wide valley of Khotokha, a summer place of the people of Sha (under district of Wangduephodrang).



Day 8: Khotokha – Chazam – Wangdue

A short ascend leads to Mulaila pass (9200ft.) then the path descends through ever-changing vegetation till the bridge in Wangdi Phodrang. Your trek ends here at. Dinner and overnight.

Day 9: Wangdiphodrang – Thimphu

After breakfast, drive to Thimphu. After Lunch, witness Archery Match, visit to Philatelic office. Dinner and over night in Hotel.

Day 10: Departure

Early morning, drive to the airport and farewell.



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