

Trans Bhutan Trail hiking takes you along an ancient pathway that once connected the entire kingdom. Walk through remote villages, forests, and mountain passes, experiencing Bhutan's living culture, nature, and history on a scenic journey across the heart of the Himalayas.

Trip Synopsis - Trans Bhutan Trail Hiking Journey (12 Days)

This 12-day Trans Bhutan Trail journey is a deeply immersive hiking experience that blends **ancient trade routes, sacred landscapes, village life, and Himalayan panoramas**. Walking sections of the historic trail that once connected Bhutan's valleys, travelers move from **Paro to Haa, Thimphu, Punakha, Phobjikha, and back to Paro**, discovering Bhutan not just as a destination, but as a living, breathing culture.

Designed for travelers who love **meaningful hiking rather than extreme trekking**, the journey balances moderate physical challenge with spiritual depth, cultural encounters, and some of Bhutan's most scenic valleys. From alpine passes and hidden lakes to sacred monasteries and timeless villages, this is Bhutan experienced slowly, consciously, and authentically.

Trip Highlights

Walk sections of the **ancient Trans Bhutan Trail**, once used by traders, monks, and villagers

Scenic drive over **Chele La Pass (3,988m)** and **Dochula Pass (3,100m)** with Himalayan views

Gentle acclimatisation hikes in **Haa Valley** and Paro Valley

Trek from **Haa to Paro** through forests, yak pastures, and mountain passes

Cultural exploration of **Thimphu**, Bhutan's only capital without traffic lights, with scenic evening hikes

Full-day **Pumola high-altitude hike** to serene remote monasteries

Walk the legendary **Divine Madman Trail**, rich in folklore and village life

Hike to **Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten** overlooking Punakha Valley

Sacred hike to **Kabji-Hoka Tsho**, one of Bhutan's hidden spiritual lakes

Longtey to Gangtey hike into the stunning **Phobjikha Valley**

Optional **mineral hot stone bath** experience in Gangtey

Iconic **Tiger's Nest Monastery hike**, the spiritual heart of Bhutan

Short Day-by-Day Travel Plan

Day 1 - Arrival in Paro

Arrive in Bhutan. Explore Paro Valley and enjoy a gentle acclimatisation hike on the **Zuri Trail**. Overnight in Paro.

Day 2 - Paro to Haa Valley

Scenic drive via **Chele La Pass**. Afternoon **Haa Panoramic Trail hike** through forests and open valleys. Overnight in Haa.

Day 3 - Trans Bhutan Trail: Haa to Paro

Full-day trek along the **ancient Trans Bhutan Trail**, crossing mountain passes and forests before descending into Paro Valley. Overnight in Paro.

Day 4 - Thimphu Exploration

Drive to Thimphu. Visit Buddha Dordenma, cultural museums, and enjoy an evening hike to **Wangditse Goenpa**. Traditional Bhutanese dinner. Overnight in Thimphu.

Day 5 - Pumola Day Hike

Challenging and rewarding full-day hike to **Pumola Monastery** via Phajoding, with sweeping mountain views. Overnight in Thimphu.

Day 6 - Divine Madman Trail to Punakha

Drive over **Dochula Pass (3,100m)**. Walk the historic **Divine Madman Trail**, passing villages, temples, and rich floral vegetation. Overnight in Punakha.

Day 7 - Punakha Valley Hikes

Hike to **Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten**, explore Punakha Valley, visit the fertility village, Punakha Dzong, and walk the longest suspension bridge of Bhutan. Overnight in Punakha.

Day 8 - Kabji-Hoka Tsho Sacred Lake

Moderate hike to the hidden **Kabji-Hoka Tsho**, a spiritual mountain lake. Picnic and meditation time. Return to Punakha.

Day 9 - Punakha to Phobjikha

Drive to Longtey and hike into **Gangtey / Phobjikha Valley**. Nature walk and **mineral rich hot stone bath at night**. Overnight in Phobjikha.

Day 10 - Phobjikha to Paro

Drive back to Paro via **Dochula Pass** and **Lamperi Botanical Park**. Evening at leisure. Overnight in Paro.

Day 11 - Tiger's Nest Hike

Hike to the iconic **Tiger's Nest Monastery**, Bhutan's most sacred site. Afternoon at leisure in Paro.

Day 12 - Departure

Transfer to Paro International Airport for departure.

Trip Inclusions

Bhutan tourist **visa fees** and visa processing

Bhutan **Sustainable Development Fee (SDF)** as per government regulation

All **airport transfers** and ground transportation in Bhutan

Licensed Bhutanese trekking guide

All meals for the whole trip (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Accommodation in carefully selected hotels in all destinations

Entrance fees to monuments, museums, and trekking permits

Tiger's Nest Monastery hike and all guided hikes mentioned in the itinerary

Drinking water (boiled/filtered) during trekking days

All applicable **government taxes and service charges**

24/7 local support and on-ground coordination

Trip Exclusions

International airfare to and from Bhutan

Personal trekking gear (trekking poles, hiking boots, clothing)

Travel insurance (mandatory for trekking and recommended with high-altitude coverage)

Personal expenses (Shopping, alcoholic beverages and so on)

Tips and gratuities for guide and drivers

Best Time to Trek in Bhutan

The best seasons for trekking in Bhutan are **spring (March to May)** and **autumn (September to**

November). Spring offers blooming rhododendrons, mild temperatures, and clear mountain views, while autumn provides crisp air, stable weather, and spectacular visibility of the Himalayan peaks. These seasons ensure the most comfortable conditions and rewarding trekking experiences.

Why Travelers Choose the Trans Bhutan Trail Hike

1. It's a walk through living history and cultural heritage

The Trans Bhutan Trail is a **400+ km ancient route** that once connected Bhutan from west to east, used for centuries by pilgrims, traders, messengers, and even royalty. Restored recently under a royal initiative, it's a rare opportunity to walk in the footsteps of generations and experience Bhutan's cultural fabric up close.

2. Unique blend of **culture, spirituality, and nature**

Unlike many alpine treks that focus mostly on wilderness, this trail weaves through:

Traditional villages

Buddhist temples and dzongs

Sacred sites and monasteries

Local communities and daily life

Hikers experience not just landscapes, but **Bhutanese heritage, religion, and people** along the way.

3. Restored as a **sustainable tourism and community project**

The trail's revival is part of a **not-for-profit initiative** that prioritises cultural preservation and community benefit. Tourism on the trail supports local livelihoods, maintains historical footpaths, and helps remote villages remain connected.

For socially conscious travelers, this adds another layer of meaning — their trip actively helps sustain the trail and communities, not just bring them profit.

4. Versatile experience — not just hardcore trekking

The trail can be experienced in different ways:

As a full end-to-end multi-week walk

In **shorter, accessible sections** tailored to ability and interests

Combined with cultural touring and temple visits

This flexibility makes it appealing to both **serious hikers** and travelers who want a **cultural walking adventure rather than a demanding high-altitude expedition**.

5. Dramatic and varied scenery

The route cuts across diverse ecological zones — from:

Forests and river valleys

Alpine passes and high meadows

Rice terraces and historic bridges

Mountain panoramas with Himalayan peaks

It's not just a single environment but a **cross-section of Bhutan's natural diversity**.

6. Authentic connection with local life

Walking through villages and communities — many of which see few tourists — offers **intimate cultural interactions** not possible on regular tours. Travelers often walk past old homesteads, meet villagers, and see farming rhythms that haven't changed for generations.

7. Spiritual and reflective journey

Because many parts of the trail connect sacred sites and ancient monasteries, the experience often goes beyond physical hiking — hikers describe it as **spiritually uplifting**, slow-paced, and mindful.
