

LAYA GASA TREK

17 Days & 16 Nights



OVERVIEW: - 16 Nights 17 Days Laya Gasa Trek in Bhutan

DAY	PLACE	DATE	ALTITUDE
1	Arrive Paro and Local Sightseeing		2000 m
2	Hike to tiger nest monastery		3120 m
3	Gunitsawa Village – Sharna Zampa		2850 m
4	Sharna Zampa - Thangthangkha		3610 m
5	Thangthangkha – Jangothang		4080 m
6	Rest day at Jangothang		4080 m
7	Jangothang – Lingshi		4010 m

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8	Lingshi – Chebisa	3880 m
9	Chebisa – Shomuthang	4220 m
10	Shomuthang – Robluthang	4160 m
11	Robluthang – Limithang	4140 m
12	Limithang – Laya	3840 m
13	Laya - Koina	3050 m
14	Koina – Gasa	2240 m
15	Trek Ends – Drive to Punakha	1242 m
16	Punakha - Thimphu	3970 m
17	Depart from Paro	2200 m

Day 1

LAND PARO - SIGHTSEEING

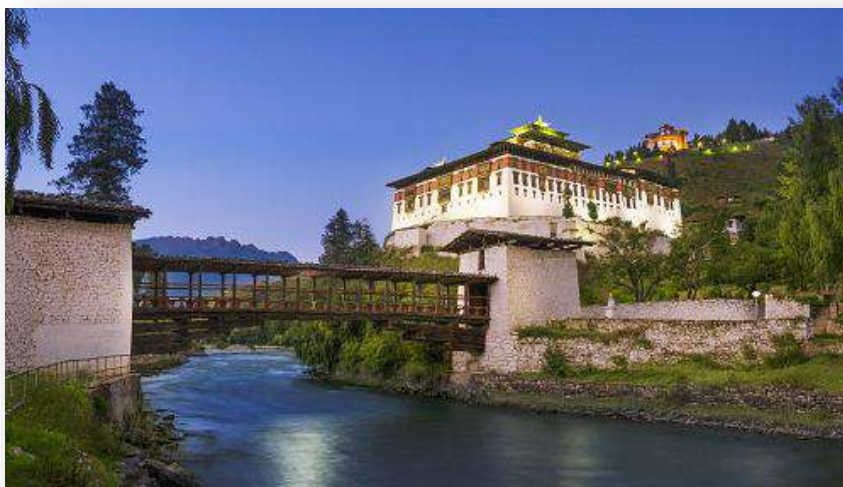
Fly into Paro by DrukAir / Bhutan Airline After completing your immigration formalities, you will be received by our representative who will be your tour guide throughout your tour. On arrival at paro check into your hotel and visit the following places:

National Museum, housed in the Ta Dzong (watchtower). Here an intriguing collection of artifacts provide a wonderful introduction to the rich culture and heritage of the Kingdom.

Paro Dzong, a fine example of Bhutanese historic architecture. It is also known as the Rinpung Dzong which means a "fortress that sits on a heap of jewels". This imposing dzong located above the Paro River is a fine example of Bhutanese architecture with its inward sloping walls that rise to an impressive height.

The dzong was built in the 16th century on the foundation of a monastery built by Guru Rinpoche (who is regarded as the "second Buddha.").

From the dzong, walk further down to Nyamai Zampa, an oldest traditional cantilever bridge in Bhutan.



In the evening stroll through the Paro town and visit local handicraft stores.

Day 2

EXCURSION TO TIGER'S NEST MONASSATERY

After breakfast, drive to Paro which takes about 1 hr and then hike up to Taktsang Monastery, also known as 'Tiger's Nest'. The walk up to the viewpoint will take about 1 – 1 ½ hrs depending on your fitness and from View Point you will enjoy a spectacular view of the monastery clinging to the side of the cliff. Stop for refreshment at the View Point Cafeteria. Then walk further up to the monastery which will take about 1 hour.

It is said that in the 8th century Guru Rinpoche flew on the back of a tigress from eastern Bhutan to this place and meditated in a cave here for 3 months. The principal Lhakhang (monastery) of the present monastic complex dates from 1692. Taktsang was damaged severely by fire in 1998 but has now been fully restored to its former glory. After visiting the monastery, walk downhill back to the road on the way stop for lunch at the view point cafeteria and then walk further downhill to the road point. Then drive back to hotel.



On the way visit Kyichu temple, one of the 108 temples built in the 7th century by the Tibetan King Songsten Gampo. The story goes that a giant demon lay across the whole area of Tibet and the Himalayas and was preventing the spread of Buddhism. To overcome her, King Songtsen Gampo decided to build 108 temples, which would be placed on all the points of her body. Of these 108 temples, 12

were built in accordance with precise plans. Thus, it happened that in about the year AD 638 the temple of Jokhang in Lhasa was built over the very heart of the demon.

**Day
3**

GUNITSAWA VILLAGE – SHARNA ZAMPA

This trek begins at Gunitsawa Village where you pass the army post. At the army check post your trek permit (provided by your tour operator) will be checked and endorsed. The campsite is on the opposite side of the river, not far from Gunitsawa.

Time: 40 Min | Accents: Descent 80m | Camp Altitude: 2850 m

Day 4

SHARNA ZAMPA – THANGTHANGKHA

The trail again follows the Pa Chu (Paro river), ascending and descending through pine, oak and spruce forest. After crossing a bridge to the left bank of the river, we stop for lunch. Then continue along the river, climbing upwards through Rhododendron forest, and crossing the river once more before reaching the campsite (3750m).

Distance	22 km
Time	7-8 hours
Ascent	Ascent 770 m, descent 10 m
Camp Altitude	3,610 m

Day 5

THANGTHANGKHA – JANGOTHANG

If you did not see Mt. Jomolhari the previous evening, you will still have a chance to get a great view early this morning. This morning the trek continues up the Paro Chhu valley which widens into patches of alpine meadow and scanty growths of forest. You will cross an army checkpoint along the way and enjoy a spectacular view of high mountain ridges and snow-capped peaks. In this area yaks and their herder's homes become a regular feature of the landscape. Passing the villages Soe, Takethang and Dangochang is another asset on this day. After reaching Jangothang, one of the most beautiful campsites of the Himalayas, you will again have a spectacular view of Mount Jomolhari.

Distance	19 km
Time	5-6 hours
Ascent	Ascent 480 m
Camp Altitude	4,080 m

Day 6

JANGOTHANG – REST DAY

A rest day. A chance to acclimatize and walk up to the Jhomolhari glacier or to the lakes in the opposite direction.

Day 7

JANGOTHANG – LINGSHI

This is one of the longest days of the trek. A short distance from the camp the trail begins climbing rapidly for about half an hour and then becomes a gradual ascent to the Nyilila pass at 4,870m. While on the climb enjoy the surroundings.

Distance	18 km
Time	6-7 hours
Ascent	Ascent 840 m, descent 870 m
Camp Altitude	4,010 m

Day 8

LINGSHI – CHEBISA

Today is the shortest walking day, and you can really take it easy. Shortly after starting you will reach a chorten below Lingshi Dzong. Here, you have the choice of staying on the main trail or taking a detour up to the Lingshi Dzong (4,220m), which sits right atop a high ridge. This Dzong is under reconstruction from a 2011 earthquake which damaged its central building. In addition to a very special atmosphere of mystic tranquility, Lingshi Dzong provides a great view over the valley.

Distance	10 km
Time	5-6 hours
Ascent	Ascent 280 m, descent 410 m
Camp Altitude	3,880 m

Day 9

CHEBISA – SHOMUTHANG

The morning starts with a long ascent behind Chebisa Village (2-3 hours) through a wide pastureland towards Gobu La (pass). On the way, you will see a few people herding yaks. There is also a great chance to spot large herds of blue sheep above the trail. After crossing Gobu La (4,410m), you descend into the valley, then climb again a little bit, before descending again to Shakshepasa (3,980), a large U-shaped valley. Climbing from here you will finally reach the campsite at Shomuthang, above a river, which is a tributary of the Nochu river.

Distance	17 km
Time	6-7 hours
Ascent	Ascent 890 m, descent 540 m
Camp Altitude	4,220 m

Day 10

SHOMUTHANG – ROBLUTHANG

As the walk is a little strenuous, it is advisable to start early. Climbing up the valley to view Kang Bum (6,526 m) and some edelweiss. After two hours of climbing you will reach Jhari La (4,750m), from where you catch the first sight of Sinche La, the pass you will have to cross the day after. The big snow peak in the north is Gangchhenta 6,840 m, better known as the Great Tiger Mountain. If weather is clear, Tserim Kang and the top of Jumolhari will be visible. The camp by the river is called Tsheri Jathang. Herds of takin, the Bhutanese National Animal, migrate to this valley in summer and remain for about

Distance	18 km
Time	6-7 hours
Ascent	Ascent 700 m, descent 760 m
Camp Altitude	4,160 m

Day 11

four months. The valley has been declared a takin sanctuary. Climb up a little bit and you will reach the campsite at Robluthang in a rocky meadow.

ROBLUTHANG - LIMITHANG

After crossing Sinche La (5,005m) – the last and highest pass on the trek in case you don't intend to continue the Snowman trek from Laya onwards – you descend to a little stone house where a few Laya women – dressed in typical Laya costume with long pointed bamboo hats on their head – live and offer

Distance	19 km
Time	6-7 hours
Ascent	Ascent 850 m, descent 870 m
Camp Altitude	4,140 m

their weaving products. Right behind the stone house you will see an impressive terminal moraine and a glacial lake at the foot of the valley. You can see classic examples of the lateral moraines where the glacier has pushed rocks up both sides of the valley. Below the moraine, you cross the Kango Chhu and soon reach the Limithang campsite. The peak of Gangchhenta towers over the campsite even though it's quite a distance away.

Day 12

LIMITHANG – LAYA

Today, you walk all the way downhill along a narrow winding river valley. After a long time, you again trek partly through deep forest. The trail leads you to the west side of Laya village. From the west of the village you will view Gangchhenta again and catch a glimpse of Masagang. In the village centre is a community school and a basic health unit with telephone connection. The campsite is below the school.

Distance	10 km
Time	4-5 hours
Ascent	Ascent 60 m, descent 340 m
Camp Altitude	3,840 m

Day 13

LAYA – KOINA

The trail winds up and down along the river valley of Mo Chhu avoiding natural obstacles and affording breath-taking views of the raging river, feeder streams and waterfalls. Lots of ups and downs will lead you to Kohi Lapcha at 3,300 m. The trek then drops down to the large stream of Koina Chhu, where you will find the campsite of Koina.

Distance: 19 Km | Time: 6 – 7 Hours | Camp: 3050 m

Day 14

KOINA – GASA (Trek Ends)

Today you will have the last major climb of the Laya Gasa Trek. You will cross Bari La (3,740m), after which the trail descends all the way until you reach Gasa village (2,770m), where you will find the first restaurants since you started from Drukgyel Dzong. There also is a campsite close to Gasa Dzong. You will have to decide whether you want to stay in Gasa village or descend for another hour to the Gasa Tsachu (hot springs) and relax in the rejuvenating mineral waters. The Gasa Tsachu is one of the most popular hot springs in Bhutan.

Distance: 14 Km | Time: 6 – 7 Hours | Camp: 2240 m

Day 15

GASA – PUNAKHA

This morning long drive to Punakha (210km, Approx. 7 hrs). This is a scenic drive, passing many small villages, waterfalls with spectacular landscape, crossing Black mountains, the ever-changing vegetation and finally arriving in the warm valley of Punakha. As the valley is at a lower elevation of about 1250m (4100 ft.) above sea level, it enjoys subtropical climate with warm summers and pleasant winters. After a short rest at the hotel, we guide you to today's highlight - Punakha Dzong. It is a very beautiful Bhutanese architecture located at the confluence of Pho Chu and Mo Chu rivers.



Day 16

PUNAKHA – THIMPHU

After breakfast, drive to thimphu via the Dochula pass. Around 3 hrs drive from punakha will take you to this pass (3140 m) where one can have a superb view of the Eastern Himalayas on a clear day with a powerful binocular telescope. Visit the beautiful 108 chortens built on the hill by Her Majesty Ashi Dorji Wangmo for the security and well being of His Majesty the King of Bhutan. Also visit Druk Wangyel Temple which was built to honor His Majesty, the fourth king Jigme Singye Wangchuck.

Drive to Kuensel Phodrang where you can see tallest Buddha status · Visit Buddha Point and offer your prayers to the largest Buddha statue in the country and walk around to enjoy the great view of Thimphu valley below.

The Tashichho Dzong, fortress of the glorious religion then, visit the government-run Handicrafts Emporium and local crafts shops, to browse through examples of Bhutan's fine traditional arts. Here you can buy hand-woven textiles, thangka paintings, masks, ceramics, slate and wood carvings, jewelry, and other interesting items made from local materials. Over Night at Thimphu.



**Day
17**

DEPART FROM PARO