

# Laya-Lingzhi-Gasa Trek



**Dates** April-May and September-November

**Trip Duration** Trek: 13 nights / 14 days  
Total stay: 19 nights / 20 days

**Difficulty Rating** Difficult

**Highlights** This trek leads through high mountains (16,100ft) into the wilderness above the treeline - a world of snow peaks, herds of blue sheep, alpine blossom and home of the hospitable layaps. The route also takes you through the therapeutic hot spring of Gasa and ends in the sub-tropical valley of Punakha.

**Cost** Cost depends on the group size. Contact us for details. Costs will include ground transportation to and from Paro airport, transportation and entrance fees to all listed activities, entry fees, all meals, accommodations.

**Itinerary**

Day 1 Arrive at Paro Airport. You will be received by our guide at the Paro International Airport and escorted to your hotel for refreshment. Evening stroll around Paro's main street. Overnight at the hotel in Paro.

Day 2 Paro. Morning visit to Ta Dzong, built in 17th century as a watchtower to defend Paro Dzong and valley. This fortress was later converted into the National Museum and is filled with antique thangkha paintings, textiles, weapons and Bhutan's renowned postage stamps. Below the Ta Dzong, is fascinating Rinpung Dzong meaning 'fortress of the heap of jewels', which has a long and interesting history. Afternoon visit to Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the oldest and most sacred shrines of Bhutan. Overnight at the hotel in Paro.

Day 3 Paro - Shana. The trek starts from Drukgyel Dzong at 8,500 ft with a short downhill walk on a wide trail. The trail climbs gently, traversing through well maintained rice terraces and fields of millet. The route later enters an area of apple orchards and forests. Soon the valley widens and you reach the army post of Gunyitsawa at 9,200 ft. This is the last stop before Tibet. Just beyond Sharma Zampa, there are several good camping places in meadows surrounded by trees. Distance 10.5 miles; Time 5-6 hours.

Day 4 Shana - Soi Thangthangka, The trail again follows Pa Chhu (Paro river), ascending and descending through pine, oak and spruce forests. Hot lunch will be served beside a river. After lunch, follow the river climbing up through rhododendron forests and finally crossing the bridge again, reaching the campsite. Altitude of 12,300 ft; Distance 12.5 miles; Time 7-8 hours.

Day 5 Soi Thangthangka - Jangothang. The path ascends for a while until you reach the army camp. Then follow the river above the treeline enjoying the stunning view of the surrounding peaks. Hot lunch will be served inside a yak herder's camp. A short walk into the valley will take you to the camp at Jangothang. From here, views of Jhomolhari and Jitchu Drake are superb. Altitude 13,300 ft; Distance 11.8 miles; Time 7-8 hours.

Day 6 Jangothang - Jhomolhari Base camp. A rest day with chance to acclimatize and walk up to the Jhomolhari glacier to the lakes.

Day 7 Jangothang - Lingzhi. The trail follows the stream for half an hour and crosses the bridge to the right side. Start the ascent up to the first ridge with a breathtaking view of Jhomolhari, Jitchu Drake and Tsrin Khang. Then walk towards the valley, almost flat for a while, until the climb to the Nyele-la pass at an altitude of 15,500 ft. After the pass, it's a gradual descent to the Lingzhi camp, enjoying the panoramic view of the peaks and Lingzhi Dzong. Altitude 13,100 ft; Distance 11.2 miles; Time 7-8 hours.

Day 8 Lingzhi - Chebisa. This is a magical day. En route we pass by two villages, delightful village of Gom Yu, which is set below a 1,000 ft cliff and a lovely little valley with a huge waterfall at one end of the Shangri-la village of Chebisa, where we camp by the side of the river. Altitude 12,400 ft; Distance 7.5 miles; Time 4-5 hours.

Day 9 Chebisa - Shomuthang, The day begins with stiff climb to Gomby-la (14,600 ft) then it is a long descent to a stream at 13,600 ft. Later the trail again climbs over a small ridge through a cedar forest. It is a long climb over the ridge, and then the trail descends on a muddy path into main Jholethang Valley in a deep forest of fir and birch. Afternoon, the trail traverses high above the valley floor on stream right to Chachim, a yak pasture at 14,000 ft. The camp at 14,000 ft is in a cluster of brush beside a stream at the bottom of the valley. Altitude 14,000 ft; Distance 10.5 miles; Time 6-7 hours.

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- Day 10 Shomuthang - Robluthang. The trek begins with a climb to Jari-la pass at altitude 15,400 ft then descends to Tasharijathang Valley, the summer residence of rare Himalayan Takin (Bhutan's national animal). After crossing the stream, the trail ascends until you reach Robluthang camp. Altitude of 13,800 ft; Distance 11 miles; Time 6-7 hours.
- Day 11 Roluthang - Limithang. This day is long as well as tough crossing Shinje-la (16,000 ft), the last and highest pass en route. You may be able to spot Blue Sheep high on the slopes. From Shinje-la, the descent is on a rough, rocky trail that follows a moraine into another glacial valley. The last part of the trek is very interesting with fascinating views of Mt. Gangchey Ta. Camp in a meadow. Altitude 13,500 ft; Distance 11.8 miles; Time 7-8 hours.
- Day 12 Limithang - Laya. The walk to Laya is very pleasant with wonderful views. You will pass through a damp forest, filled with moss and singing birds. Arrive at Laya village, the second highest settlement in the country. Altitude 12,500 ft; Distance 6.2 miles; Time 4-5 hours.
- Day 13 Laya - Chamsa. Descend to an army camp and join the Mo Chhu River. Follow the river. After the bridge it is up and down several times through juniper and fir forests until you reach the camp at Chamsa. Altitude 11,500 ft; Distance 11.8 miles; Time 8-9 hours.
- Day 14 Chamsa - Gasa Tsachu. Walk for about half an hour over flat land until the Bari-la (12,800 ft). There is a small rock cairn and a few prayer flags at the pass. The route starts down again, sometimes steeply, through a bamboo forest to a stream. Later it is downhill all the way to Gasa Tsachu. Afternoon visit to Gasa Village and Dzong built in 17th century. Then descend to Gasa Tsachu (hot springs) for camp. Altitude 7,200 ft; Distance 8.7 miles; Time 6-7 hours.
- Day 15 Gasa Tsachu - Damji. The path continues ascending and descending through heavily forested areas and wild orchids. Overnight camp. Altitude 7,900 ft; Distance 11 miles; Time 6 hours.
- Day 16 Damji - Punakha. Continue following the Mo Chhu river through heavily forested area till you reach Tashithang at an altitude of 5,300 ft. Picked up by our transport and transfer to the hotel in Punakha. Overnight at hotel.
- Day 17 Punakha - Thimphu. Morning visit to Punakha Dzong and Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten. Then drive to Wanduephodrang Dzong and local market. Evening drive to Thimphu. Overnight at hotel.
- Day 18 Thimphu. Full day of sightseeing in Thimphu, visit to Memorial Chorten, Trashichho Dzong, National Library, Arts and Crafts School, Textile and Folk Heritage Museum, Handicrafts Emporium. Overnight at hotel.
- Day 19 Thimphu - Paro. Early morning drive to Paro and hike 1 hour to Tiger's Nest Monastery. Also visit a typical Bhutanese farmhouse for a cup of yak butter tea or local wine. Overnight at hotel.
- Day 20 Paro. Early morning drive to Paro international airport after breakfast.

