

DAGANA AND LAWAGU PASS



COUNTRIES VISITED: BHUTAN

TRIP TYPE: Trekking
TRIP GRADE: Demanding
TRIP STYLE: Camping
NAN Based On 0 Reviews
KG Carbon Footprint

TRIP LEADER: Local Leader
GROUP SIZE: 2 - 10 people
NEXT DEPARTURE: 13 Oct 2024
13 Trees Planted for each Booking

This is a remote trek in the Bhutan Himalaya to explore the hidden valley of Dagana. We cross the Lari Gang (4,267m) and Lawagu (4,427m) passes and have views of Mount Kangchenjunga, Chomolhari and Jitchu Drake.

Dagana and Lawagu pass trek explores a wilderness region of South Bhutan. It is very rarely trekked by other groups. This trek travels through deep forest and the high altitude zone near Thousand Lakes trek. On the Thimphu side, we hike through open rolling hills through Dagala range up to Lawagu pass (4,427m). Once we have crossed the pass we descend into the forest where we see trees, flowers and animal life. We continue through forest to the end point at the rarely visited Dagana village. We will visit their impressive Dzong.

We start this adventure by walking up to Taktsang Monastery (known as Tiger's nest). For acclimatisation we stay for two nights in the picturesque Haa Valley at 2,700m. We also have two nights in Thimphu and trek up to Phajoding monastery at 3,600m. By spending this time at altitude before starting the trek will prepare us for our mountain days.

In 2019 we sent our international leader, [Ade Summers](#), on a reconnaissance to Dagana. We designed this itinerary based on his feedback and suggestions. He had a wonderful trek and came back full of excitement about this trek as well as [Haa Valley Pilgrims](#) in Bhutan.

This is a camping style trek where you sleep in a tent for every night of the hike. All treks in Bhutan are camping as there are no lodges like in Nepal. Other remote camping treks in Bhutan include [Chomolhari Base Camp](#) and [Laya Gasa](#).

We include several days in this itinerary visiting Bhutan's main cultural sites. Before the trek we explore Paro Valley and after the trek, Thimphu.

REASONS TO CHOOSE US

- In November 2019 [Adrian \(Ade\) Summers](#) went on a reconnaissance trek for us. We have set up Haa Valley Pilgrim trek based on his experience and feedback.
- We are Himalayan trekking specialists having operated trips in Bhutan for many years. We have organised over ten successful Lunana Snowman treks.
- Our Dagana trek itinerary is the best for acclimatisation, safety and enjoyment.
- We have chosen the optimal time of year to complete this trek in Autumn season. Currently it is not possible to do this trek in Spring as the river levels will be too high for the river crossing on Day 9.
- Based on client feedback we won the 2018 Gold Award as AITO Tour Operator of the Year. Read more about our [Testimonials and Awards](#).
- We use sturdy A frame tents for our camping treks in Bhutan. These are high quality tents with space for two people plus gear.
- We pay for private weather forecasts from EverestWeather.com. We also use in house forecasting throughout the duration of this trek.
- We send a Thuraya satellite phone on our group treks in Bhutan. Your leader will have reliable communications for logistics, planning and group safety.
- We provide a range of tasty meals for breakfast, lunch and supper. We give everyone in the group a chocolate or muesli bar per day. For breakfast we provide fresh coffee from our Bialetti Moka coffee machine.
- We bring a comprehensive medical aid kit.
- Our team with first hand knowledge of this trek provides pre trip support.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All internal transport and transfers including airport collections in Paro.
- Twin share rooms at hotels while in Bhutan.
- All meals included while in Bhutan.
- Twin share tents while on trek.
- Trekking arrangements. Including permits and fees, tents, Bhutanese guides, pack animals and cooks.
- Weather forecasts from EverestWeather.com.
- Thuraya satellite phones for organising logistics and medical evacuations. It can also be also used for personal calls at extra cost.
- Rubberised luggage tag posted to you before departure
- Full financial protection. Our Air Travel Organiser's Licence (ATOL) number is 10921. Our Association of Bonded Travel Operators Trust (ABTOT) membership number is 5365).
- Pre departure support and advice from The Mountain Company. We are available by email, phone or face to face meetings.

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- International flight to/from Paro (flying from Bangkok, Singapore, Kathmandu and Delhi).
- Travel & trekking insurance.
- Personal clothing & equipment please see Appendix for suggested kit list.
- Tips.
- Other items not listed in "What is included".

ITINERARY

DAY 1: FLY TO PARO (2,280M), AFTERNOON SIGHTSEEING

Arrival in Paro

Sightseeing in Paro

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Hotel Olathang in Paro

We will meet you on arrival at Paro airport and drive you to the hotel. When the whole group has arrived we will give a full briefing to get you ready for the Dagana trek. Later on we will organise a trip into Paro to change money at the bank and to look around the town. Afterwards we arrange sightseeing tour to visit Paro Dzong and the National museum.

Paro is Bhutan's second largest town. The valley also contains significant religious and historic sites in the country. It also has as well as Bhutan's only international airport.

DAY 2: MORNING WALK TO TAKTSANG MONASTERY (3,120M), AFTERNOON DRIVE TO HAA VALLEY (2,712M) VIA CHELE LA (3,780M)

Walking for 9km (4 hours)

Drive to Haa Valley (2 1/2 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Risum Resort in Haa Valley

After breakfast we organise a walk up to the Taktsang monastery known as the "Tiger's Nest". The hike up to the monastery through pine forest takes about 2 to 3 hours. This is a good opportunity to stretch your legs after your travels to Bhutan.

After our visit to Taktsang we drive to the Chele La pass at an altitude of 3,780m. From here on a clear day there is a view of Mount Chomolhari to the north. We descend from the pass into Haa Valley at an altitude of 2,712m where we stay for two nights. Being at this high elevation before the trek is essential for acclimatisation. Haa Valley remains one of the least visited areas in the country.

DAY 3: DAY WALK AROUND HAA VALLEY (2,712M), DRIVE TO THIMPHU

Day walk in Haa Valley

Drive to Thimphu (2 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Gyelsa Boutique Inn in Thimphu

Today we explore the Haa valley to see its villages, forests and monasteries. There are several options for day walks. One of the most popular is the walk through the lower village of Lechuna. We continue down to

the Haa Chhu (river) before crossing a wooden bridge. From here we walk up through forest up to the Jamte Gompa. After visiting the 300 year old monastery we descend to Chumpa bridge and to Chuma village. We will also visit the Lhakhang Karpo (black temple) and Lhakhang Nagpo (white temple).

In the afternoon we drive to Thimphu on a scenic road that takes about 2 ½ hours.

DAY 4: DAY WALK TO PHAJODING MONASTERY (3,600M)

Walking 5km (5 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Gyelsa Boutique Inn in Thimphu

Today is a tough day as we walk up over 1,000m to Phajoding monastery at an altitude of 3,600m. This is to aid your acclimatisation to high altitude before starting Dagana trek. This walk up to Phajoding is on the last day's walk of [Druk Path](#) on the descent to Thimphu.

DAY 5: DRIVE TO GENEKA (2,810M), TREK TO LOWER GUR CAMP (3,320M)

Drive to Geneka (1 1/2 hour)

Walking 3km (3 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

After breakfast we leave Thimphu and drive to the road head. After about 45 minutes we leave the Dochu La road and turn off onto a jeep track. We drive through traditional farms in the scenic Bhutanese countryside. After a further 30 minutes we arrive at Geneka and the start of the Dagana trek. This place is in a small clearing with a water powered prayer wheel. The trek crew will be there waiting for you. After loading the horse with kit bags and camp gear we head off.

The trek starts by crossing the suspension bridge. From there we ascend a trail in a mixed forest of pine, silver fir and rhododendron. The trail is sandy in places and after 20 minutes we come to some pray flags at a good view point. The trail continues to ascend then flattens out. We hike through a lovely forest of pine covered by old man's beard moss. After another 1 ½ hours wading uphill we arrive at a small clearing with pray flags. There are views down to Geneka village. A further 45 minutes after this viewpoint is the Lower Gur campsite. The trail traverses and is quite flat then steepens to gain the ridge. From here it descends to Lower Gur camp. We are now at 3,350m, so it is a good place to stop after gain of 500m from the start of the trek.

DAY 6: TREK TO LABATAMA (4,050M) CROSSING TWO PASSES AT 4,189M AND 4,260M

Walking 8km (6 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

We leave camp on a small path but we soon re-join the main trail that we turned off yesterday before camp. There are often eagles soaring high above the pines and rhododendron forest. After 30 minutes you

come out of the forest to open moor land scattered with juniper bushes. We climb up the trail and soon get the views of Mount Kangchenjunga and Mount Chomolhari.

After 1 ½ to 2 hours from Lower Gur camp you arrive at Kaepchen Camp or often known as Upper Gur at 3,710m. There are good views and you will see a hut built by Tourism council of Bhutan. We come back onto the main trail ascending and traversing through gullies and ridges. As we gain height we will enjoy the fine views of Bhutanese and Indian Himalaya.

After 2 ½ hours from Upper Gur you reach the first pass with the prominent stone cairns at 4,189m. After a further 20 minutes we reach the second pass on a sandy trail with more stone cairns and pray flags at 4,260m. We descend from the pass on the trail to your left. After 30 minutes we arrive to Wa Tsho Chen where there are two Yak herders' houses. Nearby is another hut built by the Tourism Council of Bhutan. It takes another 30 minutes contouring around before descending into the Labatama valley. We camp next to the river at 4,050m.

DAY 7: TREK TO DOMPA (3,621M) VIA LARI GANG PASS (4,267M) AND LAWAGU PASS (4,427M)

Walking 9.5km (5 to 6 hours walking)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

Last night will be cold and the streams will freeze by the morning. After leaving camp we descend to the river and cross the bridge. We follow the trail up an eroded gully to the first pass called Lari Gang at 4,267m. After 10 minutes you will see a stone cairn and it takes an hour to reach the pass from camp. There are impressive views of Mount Kangchenjunga and Mount Chomolhari. From the pass follow the trail on the left which traverses around into another valley. You stay high and after 30 minutes you come to a river. After crossing you continue up around heading due south to meet a saddle in about 20 minutes. Behind you and to the North is more impressive mountain views.

Looking South you can make out the cairn and prayer flags on the next pass. You traverse along the valley staying high around 4,300m on your left. After 30 minutes we follow a grassy trail through moorland. Next we walk on a rocky steeper trail following switch backs for a further 30 minutes. We head up towards the next pass called Lawagu at 4,327m. This pass is about 3 to 3 ½ hours from camp and it is well worth a rest to take in the mountain views. From the top we descend around the corner to the left where there are good views of Lan Tsho Lake (Ox Lake). We follow the trail winding downhill. After 15 minutes on a loose rocky trail brings you to near the lake and this is a good place for lunch.

From the lake follow the path traversing along the valley and heading into the forest. After about 1 hour you will pass a yak herder's house on your right. Soon after you head into the forest of pine and rhododendrons. After 30 minutes descending through the forest you come to a fence with an open gate. 15 minutes past the fence you descend to a clearing where you turn sharp right. Follow this trail for 15 minutes and you see a derelict house. This is the old governor's 'Data Penlops' guest house. Continue on the high trail to come around to camp in about a further 10 minutes. Dampa is at a height of 3,621m and is a yak herder's pasture.

DAY 8: TREK TO SHATIKHA (2,579M)

Walking 8km (4 to 5 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

After another cold night it will be a frosty morning and warms up once the sun reaches the camp. After

leaving camp we get back onto the main trail and pass a forest of pine trees, and juniper. This is a good trail as we are following the old yak trade route from Thimpu to Dagana. There are stone staircases and other places are sandy and muddy with tree roots and mossy rocks. After 1 ½ hours we arrive at an open meadow and possible campsite with water called Nortoang at 3,343m.

After another hour walking in the forest we pass several meadows. We arrive at a large sloping meadow with pray flags. A further 20 minutes through the forest you are at a place called Wangrapang. We continue through the forest and after 30 minutes we cross a small stream on rocks or a moss covered tree trunk. After a further 20 minutes descent on a trail with slippery tree roots we arrive to Shatikha camp. This is a Yak herder's camp with a building and is at an altitude of 2,579m.

DAY 9: TREK TO TAKTSEKHA (2,810M)

Walking 8.5km (6 to 7 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

We leave camp and enter the forest following a poor trail in places. Some sections have a good stone path with staircases. After 1 to 1 ½ hours descent we reach the river at 2,039m. As there is no bridge we cross the river by foot. The river level in Autumn is usually below the knee and is quite narrow being only about 5m wide. At the right times of year the river should be straightforward to make a safe crossing. For today's walk pack your sandals and two trekking poles in your day pack.

After the river we walk for 1 ½ to 2 hours into and out of side valleys. The trail is muddy in the gulley where you cross the river, otherwise it is a good trail in the forest. It is a lovely walk through the trees with flowers and old man's beard. After a further 1 ½ to 2 hours you get to the turn off for Kunga camp that is no longer used. From this junction it is another 30 minutes ascent up trail that is muddy in places. After 30 minutes we come to a small clearing in the forest then another hour of ascent to gain the ridge line. We follow the ridge for about 45 minutes when you arrive at a small clearing at 2,826m. After a further 15 minutes we reach the top where the altitude is 2,888m.

From here we descend to the right and soon you will see two pray flags. Taktsekha camp is below, but you have to drop down to your right and then traverse to the left. Taktsekha camp is a high yak herder camp at an elevation of 2,810m. This is a tough afternoon as we ascend 800m from the river crossing to camp.

DAY 10: TREK TO DAGANA DZONG (1,879M)

Walking 6km (3 1/2 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

We head out of camp along the main trail going downhill and after 15 minutes there is a grassy clearing. We enter a forest while descending to your left following the valley down and along. The trail is muddy and wet in places with slippery tree roots. There are tricky sections where it is quite steep and rocky.

After about 1 ½ hours you arrive at a beautiful meadow with prayer flags on your right. There are good views of the valley below. You follow a water pipe which appears from the earth at times and a further 10 minutes there are more pray flags. After a further 30 minutes the forest of pine, larch and silver fir gives way to bamboo. After another 30 minutes you exit the forest at Chu Chu Pang Kha monastery on the edge of Dagana. It is an easy walk for 20 minutes down into the village and we camp near the local government

offices. It is about an hour's walk from camp to the Dzong. The monks are friendly and will be curious about your journey from Genekha village.

DAY 11: DRIVE TO THIMPHU

Drive to Thimphu (5 to 6 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Gyelsa Boutique Inn in Thimphu

After breakfast we will visit Dagana Dzong if not visited yesterday. Then we start the drive to Thimphu. The road passes through rural countryside that is rarely visited by tourists.

DAY 12: SIGHTSEEING IN THIMPHU

Sightseeing in Thimphu

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Gyelsa Boutique Inn in Thimphu

Today we have a full day of sightseeing in Thimphu. There are many options of places to visit with your guide. We visit the Tashichho Dzong and the large Shakyamuni Buddha statue overlooking town. It is also worth taking time to explore the town centre. We can see the Clock Tower square and Changlimithang Stadium. There are lots of shops, restaurants and cafes.

DAY 13: FLY TO BACK HOME

Flight home

Breakfast

Transfer to Paro airport for flight home.

DATES & PRICES

2024

| Dates | Trip Leader | Price | Single Supplement: Room/ Tent | Availability |
|----------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| 13 Oct 2024 to 25 Oct 2024 | Local Leader | US\$4,495pp | US\$350pp / US\$250pp | 2 Left to Guarantee |

2025

| Dates | Trip Leader | Price | Single Supplement: Room/Tent | Availability |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 20 Apr 2025 to 02 May 2025 | Local Leader | US\$4,550pp | NA / US\$250pp | 2 Left to Guarantee |
| 12 Oct 2025 to 24 Oct 2025 | Local Leader | US\$4,550pp | NA / US\$250pp | 2 Left to Guarantee |

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

A Typical Day On Trek

TYPICAL DAY ON CAMPING TREK IN BHUTAN

We provide a comfortable experience on our camping style treks in Bhutan. Our team works hard to support you so that you can relax and enjoy the trek. We provide personal tents, mess tent, kitchen tent and toilet tent(s). The camp will be set up and dismantled by the trek crew. We bring along a cook and kitchen helpers to provide the meals.

The day starts with an early morning mug of tea brought to your tent by one of the trek crew. Before heading for breakfast you pack your overnight gear into your duffel bag. During breakfast the trek crew pack away the tents. The pony men load up the pack animals and set off on the trail. After breakfast, between 7am and 8am, we start walking.

The pace of the trek is moderate as there is plenty of time in the itinerary to reach the camp for tonight. There will be plenty of time to enjoy the scenery, take photos and explore the local villages. Lunch will be around midday at a spot by the side of the trail. After lunch we continue the walk and on most days we arrive to camp by mid afternoon. Some of the trek crew would have gone ahead of the group to set up camp and to put up the tents. On arrival to camp you will get a hot drink and biscuits. In the evening our cook will provide a three course meal in the mess tent around 6pm.

After supper the leaders will discuss the plan for the next day. Afterwards people might stay in the mess tent chatting about the day's events or playing cards. After a tiring day most people head to their tent quite early for the night. Tomorrow is likely to be very similar as today! The only difference is that if we are crossing a high pass or climbing to a summit we leave camp earlier in the morning.

Food provided on Camping Trek

FOOD PROVIDED ON CAMPING TREK IN BHUTAN

While on a camping style trek in Bhutan we provide tasty and nutritional food. We make sure there is more than enough quantity to go around as trekkers will be hungry after a long day on the trail. Over the years we have worked on increasing the variety of the menus. We have expanded the list of ingredients provided to the cooks so they have more to work with. Also in 2015 we purchased two food dehydrators with a vacuum sealing machine. We dehydrate a large number of different vegetables in Paro before departure. This has transformed the quality of food especially on the longer treks to remote areas.

For breakfast we provide porridge or cereal, toast or chapatis and eggs. There will be hot drinks including tea, herbal teas, hot chocolate and coffee. We provide fresh coffee from our Bialetti Moka coffee machine.

For lunch we stop at a convenient spot with water at the side of the trail. In Bhutan the cooks prepare lunch after breakfast before leaving camp in the morning. One of the ponies carries the insulated "tiffin" containers to the lunch place. After lunch we have time to relax before starting to walk again in the afternoon.

On arrival at camp in the afternoon you have biscuits and a hot drink such as tea or coffee. Around 6pm we serve a three course meal in the mess tent. The starter is often soup with popcorn or poppadums. We

have a range of main dishes and carbohydrates including rice, potatoes or pasta.

We cater for a variety of dietary requirements. Our meals are suitable for vegetarians. If there is a meat dish then we also provide vegetarian options as standard. During booking we find out if you have any dietary needs and agree upon meal plans before departure. If you have any questions about the food provided please get in touch with us to discuss further.

Communications

COMMUNICATIONS

We bring a Thuraya satellite phone for logistical, safety and personal use. Personal calls charged at £4 (US\$5 or €4.50) per minute and £2 (US\$3 €4.50) to send and receive SMS text.

Kit List

KIT LIST FOR DAGANA

This is the mandatory kit list for the safety of everyone in the group and to ensure a successful trek. You must have the following items tailored for Dagana trek. The group leader will check your gear in Paro before departure for the trek.

As a reminder, the weather on this trek will vary season to season and day to day as you ascend to higher elevations. At the start of the trek you will experience hot conditions with temperatures up to 25 Celsius. You experience the coldest temperatures in Labatama at an altitude of 4,050m. Overnight lows here will be down to between -5 to -10 Celsius.

You should bring a rucksack or backpack for gear required during the day. Your pack should contain items such as warm clothes, jacket, camera, water bottles, personal first aid kit and snacks. **The weight limit is 5kg.** A porter will carry the rest of your personal equipment packed in a duffel or kit bag. **The weight limit for your duffel bag is 15kg.** Please mark your bag on the outside for easy identification.

Print the kit list and tick items off as you pack them then weigh your kit bag before you come on trek.

Footwear

- Walking Boots. A pair of water repellent boots with ankle support. Boots must be in good condition, the best approach is to get new boots and break in before the trek. Over the years we have had several boots fall apart so you should also bring trail shoes as a backup.
- Trail shoes. Used around camp and as a replacement if your walking boots fall apart!
- Sandals. Enclosed sandals are best to protect your feet during river crossings. Required for river crossings as well as two trekking poles.
- Walking socks.

Clothing

- Waterproof and Windproof jacket (with hood) and trousers (goretex or similar). For use if it rains or snows during the trek and in windy conditions.
- Trekking trousers. (eg. Mountain Hardwear Mesa V2 or The North Face Paramount Peak).
- Soft Shell Trousers.
- Long sleeve tops or shirts (not cotton).
- Micro fleece.
- Mid to heavyweight fleece or synthetic/ primaloft top.
- Sleeveless/ gilet or body warmer type fleece / synthetic top. This will help keep your core warm while not bulking when layering up. Gilet used in combination with base layers, other fleeces and down jacket. This provides the most warmth and insulation.
- Thermals or base layer for top & bottom (merino wool or synthetic).
- Fleece or synthetic leggings. Worn around the camp or added as a layer when the temperatures start to drop higher up.
- Medium weight down jacket.

Head and Gloves

- Fleece gloves.
- Warm mittens and/or gloves.
- Wool or fleece hat.
- Sun hat.
- Bandana or scarf (eg. Buff Headwear).
- Head torch. Bring extra batteries.
- Sunglasses. The lenses need to be Category 4 rated. They should have side protection or wraparound design.

Personal equipment

- Sleeping bag. Overnight lows down to -10 Celsius.
- Fleece or silk liner for your sleeping bag. A liner protects your sleeping bag from getting dirty. Also helps by adding extra insulation to keep you warm at night.
- Sleeping mat (eg. Thermarest). On trek we provide everyone with a foam mat. We recommend two layers for insulation and comfort. We also provide everyone with a pillow.
- Day pack. Recommended size is around 40 litres. You need to have enough space to carry water bottles, camera, snacks and extra clothing and climbing gear. The pack should have a good waist belt. It is also a good idea to bring a rain cover to keep the contents dry.
- Stuff sacks for keeping your gear dry and organised. Or even better are fold dry bags such as from Exped.
- Trekking poles (Black Diamond with "Flick Lock" are best). Two poles are mandatory for your safety. These will be helpful on steep sections of the trail and river crossings. Also for walking on snow or ice higher up.
- Two water bottles. Nalgene wide mouth bottles are the best. You may use a hydration pack lower down but the tube will freeze in the cold so ensure you still have two water bottles.
- Pee bottle. Recommended as means you do not have to get up to find the toilet tent at night! For men you can use an old water bottle. For women take a look at SheWee.
- Sunscreen and lip salve with a high SPF.
- Water purification tablets (Pristine, Biox Aqua or Aqua Mira).
- Favourite snack food.
- Books and cards etc.
- Camera with spare batteries and memory cards.
- Insurance certificate.
- Earplugs (optional).
- Baby wipes (optional).
- Hand sanitizer. Keep this in your day pack for use after a toilet break during the trek or before eating any snacks. We provide sanitizer for use before meals.

Travelling

- Duffel bag for your personal gear on the trek. Will be carried by a horse. Rugged and waterproof made of a plastic material. Size 100-120 litres. Eg. Mountain Equipment 100l or Rab 120l. Bring a small combination padlock to secure the bag.
- Travel clothes. You will need casual clothing for air travel days and time spent before and after the trek.
- Toiletry bag with soap, travel towel, toothbrush etc. We provide toilet paper while on trek.

Personal first aid kit

We provide a [comprehensive group first aid kit](#). Please bring personal medications and other items you might use such as:

- Any personal medications.
- Blister treatment (Compeed patches are the best)
- Rehydration powder (eg Dioralyte).
- Analgesics (paracetamol, ibuprofen and aspirin).
- Plasters and zinc oxide tape.
- Throat lozenges.
- Diamox (helps with acclimatisation).

Threat and risk assessment

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR DAGANA TREK

You should be aware trekking in a developing country involves a risk of personal injury or death. You must accept these risks and be responsible for your own actions and involvement. Adventure travel requires an open and flexible attitude. You may experience extreme conditions and unpredictable weather. There could be last minute changes to the itinerary beyond our control. The ability to work in a team is an important aspect of our trips.

We have performed a threat and risk assessment for our Dhaulagiri Circuit trek. Our trips have a degree of risk. This is part of the attraction of adventure travel and why so many people choose to join this type of holiday. By identifying the hazards we assess the level of risk. We have control measures in place to reduce this happening or to reduce the impact.

Our risk assessment is available to clients on request. We have listed below a summary of the significant risks and hazards identified by us:

- Falls and trips resulting in physical injury eg. slipping on ice or falling off the path.
- Altitude illness including but not limited to AMS, HACE and HAPE.
- Getting lost or becoming separated from the group.
- Severe bad weather and conditions when camping.
- Climatic injuries (dehydration, sunburn, heat exhaustion, hypothermia or heat stroke).
- Crossing a river with no bridge resulting in drowning and/ or a fall.
- Rock fall and landslides.
- Snow and ice avalanches.
- Lightning strike.
- Wildlife, pack animals (e.g. donkeys or horses) or stray dogs. Pack animals can knock people off the path. Dogs can attack and bite. Discuss rabies vaccination with your doctor.
- Earthquake.
- Risk of fire in the hotel or lodge.
- Endemic local diseases. Discuss vaccinations with your doctor before departure.
- Physiological injury. Such as heart attack, appendicitis, hernia, toothache etc. in a remote area.
- Road traffic accidents.
- Contaminated food and/ or water.

This trip visits a remote area. You are away from the usual emergency services and medical facilities. Evacuation for a serious injury requiring hospitalisation could take up to several days. This delay could impede your ensuing recovery. Helicopters are the usual means of evacuation. They are not always available or hindered by poor weather and flying conditions.

Weather and conditions

WEATHER AND CONDITIONS FOR DAGANA

Dagana trek will have a wide range of temperatures. This depends on the season, altitude and time of day depending on the altitude and the time of day. In the mountains between 2,000m and 3,500m the nights will be cool around 5 Celsius. During the day temperatures sometimes rise to 25 Celsius. At higher altitudes temperatures range from about 15 to -10 Celsius.

The time of year is important to increase the chances of completing the journey. The optimal time in Autumn season is to start in early October. The monsoon should be winding down although the exact date varies year to year. Currently it is only possible to do this trek in October when the river levels are lower.

There is a river crossing on Day 9 as there is no bridge over the river.

Suggested reading

SUGGESTED READING AND MAPS BHUTAN TREK

Books

Bhutan A Trekker's Guide: Bart Jordans, published by Cicerone

Beneath Blossom Rain: Discovering Bhutan on the Toughest Trek in the World. By Kevin Grange

Pocket Guide to the Birds of Bhutan: Grimmett R, Inskipp C & T.

Bhutan, An Illustrated Guide: Françoise Pommaret, Odyssey Guides

Maps

Bhutan Himalaya. 1:390,000 by Nepal maps.

Cultural information

DRESS CODE AND CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR ENTERING DZONGS

It is important to follow the dress code for dzongs, monasteries and lhakhangs. Use the details below to assist with your planning for the trip. We understand when on trek you will have fewer smart clothes with you. Your guide will discuss each days visits with you to reconfirm appropriate attire.

- Go for smart casual look such as long sleeved shirt with collar i.e no T shirts or short sleeved shirts.
- Full length trousers or long skirts (ankles must be covered) i.e no shorts, $\frac{3}{4}$ length trousers or short skirts.
- Shoes with socks covering ankles i.e no sandals or slippers.
- No hats and umbrellas allowed.
- Photographs are only allowed in the courtyard of most monasteries.
- Walk around Buddhist temples or stupas in a clockwise direction.
- Turn off your mobile/ cell phone and talk in a quiet tone.
- It is customary to give a small donation when visiting a monastery.

ETHICS AND ETIQUETTE IN BHUTAN

The Royal Government of Bhutan has a policy to preserve its cultural values.

- Lakes in Bhutan are holy and inhabited by spirits. No fishing, swimming or throwing stones.
- Do not disturb or feed wildlife or do anything to destroy their natural habitat.
- Do not use detergent in or near rivers. For personal washing use biodegradable soap at least 50m from any watercourse.
- Do not give sweets, pens or gifts to children or distribute medicine to villagers. There are Basic Health Units operated by Bhutan Government throughout the country.
- Do not buy local household items or religious artefacts from villagers. Antiques may not be taken out of the country.
- Please respect the culture and traditions of local people. This includes trek crew, villagers and pack animal owners.

ACCOMMODATION

HOTEL OLATHANG IN PARO



Hotel Olathang is set amidst 28 acres of blue pine forest on a hill overlooking Paro valley. This hotel is in traditional Bhutanese style.

There are 28 rooms with attached bathrooms and the cottages have an outdoor deck with chairs. There is a restaurant and bar in the main building. Other facilities include a spa and a traditional hot stone bath.

This was the first hotel built for tourists in Bhutan. Established in 1974 for the guests invited to the coronation of the Fourth King of Bhutan.

GYELSA BOUTIQUE INN IN THIMPHU



Gyelsa Boutique Inn is a family-run hotel located in the centre of Thimphu city. It is within walking distance of the restaurants, cafes and shops of the largest city in Bhutan.

The hotel has 6 suites and 12 twin rooms. The furniture is made in Bhutan from Himalayan wood. Facilities include a restaurant, bar and café. Every room has wifi.

CAMPING IN BHUTAN



We use A frame tents in Bhutan. These sturdy tents work well with the conditions experienced in Bhutan. They are waterproof plus have ample headroom inside.

Notes downloaded on: 08-05-2024

