

Earthbound Expeditions

Bumthang Cultural Trekking Bhutan

14 days, from US$4,697 per person

Duration	Group size	Country
14 days	**8 people**	**Bhutan**

Bumthang Cultural Trekking Bhutan Overview

A short cultural trek through the villages and heritage sites of the Bumthang valley in Bhutan.

Bumthang Cultural Trekking Bhutan

Learn about the culture of Bhutan on a combined trek and tour.
The Bumthang trek is a cultural trek through the villages and heritage sites of the Bumthang area. The Bumthang valley is the religious heartland of Bhutan and home to some of its oldest Buddhist temples and monasteries. The trek passes through the Chokhor and Tang valleys, visiting remote villages, ancient temples and the manor of Ugyen Choling.

The Bumthang trek is relatively easy and short. One day involves a long climb and descent (about 500 metres) over Phephe La (3,360 metres). However, there is no significant altitude gain, and all overnight stops are below 3,100 metres (10,100 feet).

The three-day trek passes through several villages on its winding route through the Bumthang countryside and gives a good opportunity to meet people and see rural life in Bhutan.

Travel through Nepal and Bhutan with us.

Itinerary

Day 1

Arrive in Kathmandu, Nepal

Our Earthbound Expeditions representative meets you at Tribhuvan International Airport, holding an Earthbound Expeditions sign, and transfers you to your hotel.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, arrival day Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: None

Day 2

Kathmandu Valley sightseeing

After breakfast, the tour begins with a visit to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of the Kathmandu Valley. Travelling in a comfortable air-conditioned bus, we visit Pashupatinath, Boudhanath, Swayambhunath and Patan Durbar Square.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast

Day 3

Fly to Paro, Bhutan

There are flights to Paro from Bangkok, Delhi, Dhaka and Kathmandu. The flight into Paro is scenic, and the heavily forested country has fresh air and panoramic views. In clear weather you can see the Paro valley under a clear sky. Overnight in Paro.

Altitude: 2,200 m On foot: None, flight day Night: Hotel, Paro Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4

Paro sightseeing

Today you explore Paro. The quiet town lies to the north-west of Paro Dzong, which we visit. The dzong once hosted meetings of the National Assembly, and in earlier times it was used to defend against invasions from Tibet. From there, we continue to the National Museum, a former watchtower, known for its collection of thangkas and festival masks. We then hike to Taktsang Monastery, which sits on a cliff with wide views. The quiet surroundings are well suited to meditation.

Altitude: 2,200 m On foot: 4–5 hrs Night: Hotel, Paro Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5

Drive to Thimphu

Today you travel to Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan. The drive takes about an hour. Thimphu is the only capital in the world without traffic lights, and it combines traditional culture with modern city life. We visit Tashichho Dzong, the city's main landmark, and the Buddhist temple of Changangkha Lhakhang, built in the 12th century, where many parents come to have their children named. If your visit falls on a weekend, you can also see Thimphu's weekend market, which sells many local goods. Afterwards, return to your hotel.

Altitude: 2,320 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Thimphu Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6

Drive to Punakha

After breakfast, we leave for Punakha, the former capital of Bhutan. The road passes through pine forest hung with lichen up to the Dochula Pass, which has clear views of the Himalayas, then descends a series of hairpin bends to the fertile Punakha Valley. We visit Punakha Dzong and the Buddhist monastery of Chimi Lhakhang. From Punakha, a half-hour drive takes us to Wangdue Phodrang, a small town of closely packed shops beside a river.

Altitude: 1,300 m On foot: None, 3–4 hr drive Night: Hotel, Wangdue Phodrang Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7

Drive to Phobjikha (Gangtey)

Today we travel to central Bhutan through tropical vegetation, with panoramic views of the Bhutanese countryside and small settlements along the way. It takes about an hour to reach the Pele La pass, where we take the road towards Gangtey Gompa. After descending for an hour towards the Phobjikha valley, we enter an open valley where you can see the gompa on top of a hill. The valley is an important habitat for the black-necked crane.

Altitude: 2,900 m On foot: None, 3 hr drive Night: Hotel, Phobjikha Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8

Drive to Bumthang to start the trek

The drive from Trongsa to Bumthang takes about 3 hours. In Bumthang, check in to your lodge.

Altitude: 2,600 m On foot: None, 5–6 hr drive Night: Lodge, Bumthang Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9

Trek to Mebartsho (Bumthang)

Mebar Tsho is known as the Burning Lake. It lies on the route to Tang village, on the feeder road below the Bumthang valley. The lake is a sacred site in the region and is associated with the religious treasure revealer (terton) Pema Lingpa. It is a pilgrimage site, surrounded by multi-coloured prayer flags, and you can see small butter lamps there.

Altitude: 2,600 m On foot: 3–4 hrs Night: Lodge, Bumthang Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10

Trek in Bumthang

After breakfast, we hike up to Tamshing Monastery and to Kurjey Lhakhang, where Guru Rinpoche is believed to have subdued a demon. We also visit Jambay Lhakhang, considered by many to be one of the oldest temples in Bhutan. If your dates coincide, you may see the Tangbi Mani festival, with masked dances accompanied by drums, horns and the chants of Buddhist monks.

Altitude: 2,600 m On foot: 4–5 hrs Night: Lodge, Bumthang Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12

Drive to Paro from Bumthang

Drive back to Paro, with views of the Bhutanese countryside along the way.

Altitude: 2,200 m On foot: None, 9–10 hr drive Night: Hotel, Paro Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 14

Departure

Today your journey ends. Our representative takes you to the international airport in Bhutan for your departure.

Altitude: 2,200 m On foot: None, departure day Night: No overnight Meals: Breakfast

What's included

- Accommodation in 3-star hotels in the cities. During the trek, only simple lodges or tented camps are available.
- Ground transport.
- Sightseeing in Kathmandu with an Earthbound Expeditions city tour guide.
- Full-board meals throughout the trek, with camping equipment.
- Government-trained guides and the necessary number of porters, including their insurance, salary and meals.
- Farewell dinner with a cultural show.
- Entry fees and trekking permits.
- Domestic flights, booked according to the itinerary.
- Sleeping bags and down jackets for the trek.
- Car, bus and domestic flights as per the itinerary.

Not included

- International flights.
- Museum entrance fees.
- All personal expenses such as bar bills, drinks and snacks.
- Airport taxes.
- Extra charges for hot showers, battery charging, laundry and similar.
- Personal clothing and equipment.
- Tips for guides and porters.
- Costs arising from cancellations, landslides, weather, political unrest or illness, as these are outside our control.

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: earthbound.rajansimkhada.com/bumthang-cultural-trekking-bhutan