



# Gantey Phobjikha Trek

## (Culture and Nature trekking)

This 3 day trek is one of the few easier treks in Bhutan and probably the most comfortable one that can be done through most of the year (except in the middle of the summer or in the middle of the winter). The trek begins from remote Phobjikha valley and accesses nomadic villages, provides nature and bird watching opportunity. Between October and March, you can see the rare black-necked crane in Phobjikha, Gogona and Khotokha valleys.

### Itinerary

#### Day 01: Arrive in Paro & transfer to Thimphu (D)

Arrive by Druk Air from Bangkok, Calcutta, Kathmandu or Delhi. Upon arrival in Paro airport, you are met by Wind Horse Guide and transferred to Thimphu, which is about 2 hours drive. Check into the hotel, where you are booked for 3 nights. Depending on the arrival time, you may be taken around for short stroll and for glimpse of Thimphu. Welcome dinner and overnight at the hotel.

#### Day 02: Thimphu valley sightseeing (B/L/D)

Typical sightseeing in Thimphu include visits to late king's memorial chorten, the nunnery at Zilukha, the traditional painting and craft school, the national library, the indigenous hospital, folk heritage museum, textile museum, the hand-made paper factory, Zangdopelri temple, the handicraft centers, Simtokha Dzong and visit Tashichho Dzong, the main secretariat building, which houses the offices of the government ministries, the office of the king, throne room, and the office and living quarters of the central monk body and its head abbot. On Saturdays & Sundays, you will also be able to visit the colourful weekend market. The above sightseeing will be spread out over the period of stay in Thimphu. Overnight and dinner in the hotel at Thimphu.

#### Day 03: Thimphu valley sightseeing (B/L/D)

Sightseeing of places missed on the earlier day and remaining time for shopping or to explore on your own. Overnight and dinner at hotel in Thimphu

#### Day 04: Thimphu –Gantey (Phobjikha valley) (B/L/D)

Total distance between Thimphu and Gantey is approximately 130kms and takes between 5 – 6 hours drive, including the stops. From Thimphu, winding mountain road climbs up to Dochula pass (Alt. 3140m). The pass is marked by huge chortens (stupas) and hundreds of prayer flags. On a clear day, the pass offers panoramic views of the Bhutan Himalayas. Stop for tea at the little café and enjoy the mountain views. From the pass, the road steadily descends, with changing vegetation, gorgeous scenery into the low land valley of Punakha & Wangdi at 1450m. Visit the sites in Wangdi and after lunch at the local restaurant, proceed to Gantey in Phobjikha valley. Visit the Gangtey gompa monastery, which lies on the ridge overlooking the wide and beautiful valley below. Depending on the time of the year, you may be able to see the endangered black-necked cranes, whose mating dances are particularly interesting. In the late afternoon, take a stroll around the valley. There is no proper electricity in the valley and Guest houses depend on the solar cells for light. The accommodations are very basic and limited at a village guest house. There is no running hot water but supplied in buckets. Most of the trekking groups usually camp. Overnight in village lodge or camp.

### Trekking Information

**Trek Difficulty:** Easy –moderate

**Duration:** 3 days trek excluding the tour.

**Distance:** 40 Kilometers

**Distance to Phobjikha (Gangtey):**

From Punakha or Wangdi: 2 ½ hrs drive

From Thimphu: 5–6 hours drive

From Paro: 8 hrs drive

From Trongsa: 4 hrs drive

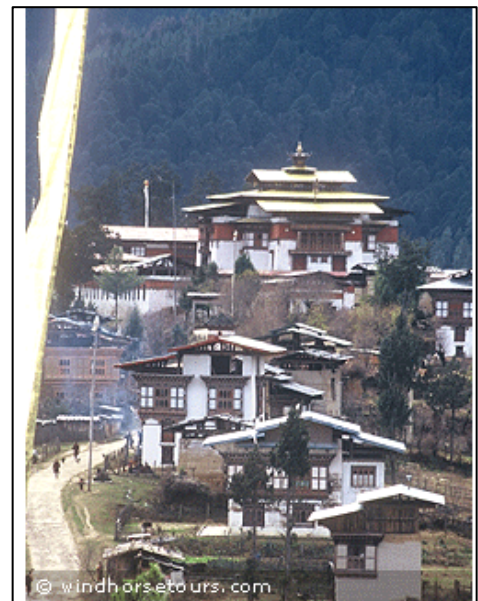
From Jakar: 5 ½ hrs drive

**Highest Point on the trek:** 3460 meters

**Season:** from Mid Feb. till May, Sept till early Dec.

**Best time:** March, April, & from Oct till mid November

**Alternative route:** You can add an extra night in Khotokha valley on the trek and spend the day walking in the surrounding areas.





#### **Day 05: Begin tek from Phobjikha to Zasa (Gogona)(B/L/D)**

Approx 14km/ about 6 hours /about 600m ascent and 300m descent



The trek starts not so far from your lodge or camping grounds (3110m). The pack ponies, an extra riding pony (for emergency), the horsemen, trekking crews (a guide, cook and assistants depending on the group size) will join you on the trek. Begin a gradual ascent through the pine, juniper forests, dwarf bamboos and rhododendrons. The path becomes steeper as it gets closer to the top, finally crossing Tselela pass or Hele la ( Alt.3440m ), after about 3 hours trek. From the pass, the trail descends gradually into a wide valley. Visit the Gogona temple, and meet with some Gomchens (the married monks). Your campsite is short walk further from the temple. Depending on the time and interest, you can explore the nearby villages. Overnight in tents at an altitude of 3140 m.

#### **Day 06: Trek to Khotokha Chorten Karpo (B/L/D)**

Approx 16km – about 6-7 hours trek/ about 320m ascent and about 740m descent.

Climb up gradually through a large meadow and forests of mixed conifers, rhododendron azaleas and daphne as the trail ascends the thickly forested Shobjula pass (3,460m) for about 2 ½ hrs. After the pass, the trail descends through thick forests, known to have many birdlife. Once you reach the valley floor, the walk is mostly on the tractor trail (used by lumber industry), through the forests of mostly pine trees. Your campsite is the broad valley near Khotokha village (2740m). This village is also the summer home of people from Sha.

#### **Day 07: Chorten Karpo to Tikke Zampa - transfer to Punakha (B/L/D)**

Approx. 11km – about 5 hours /90m ascent and 1250m descent.

A short ascent will bring you to the Tashila pass or Mulai la( 2780m ). At the Tashila, you can watch the ropeway bringing up the supplies to the village and taking the logs and coal down below. At your own risk and cost, you may be able to take this 45 minutes ride down in a open wooden box and save the 3-4 hour steep downhill trek (1250m descent). This long but wonderful descent is through beautiful, ever changing vegetation is beloved by bird watchers. You will also pass many small villages or houses. This later part of trek can be hard on your knees because it is downhill and it is likely to feel very hot as the altitude drops. From the trek end point, you are met by Windhorse transport and transferred to the hotel near Punakha.



#### **Day 08: Punakha and Wangdi valley sightseeing (B/L/D)**

Punakha and Wangdue Valleys are at lower elevation of approx. 1400m and therefore it is warmer with semi-tropical climate. In fact Punakha Dzong used to be the winter capital of Bhutan, the traditions that is still followed by the central monk body. The head Abbot and central monks reside in the Punkha Dzong during the winter months and move to Tashicho Dzong in Thimphu during the summer.

In the morning hike to Chimi Lhakhang, the divine madman's temple. It is a pleasant 20 minutes of leveled walk. Visit Punakha Dzong, and walk up hill to Khamsum Yuelley Namgyal chorten temple. Overnight and dinner at the hotel near Punakha

#### **Day 09: Punakha -Thimphu –Paro (B/L/D)**

Drive to Thimphu is about 3 hours, where we take a break for snacks or for lunch and proceed to Paro, which is a 2 hour drive further. In Paro, visit the national museum housed in the ancient watch tower above the Paro Dzong. In the evening visit Paro Rinphung Dzong, another impressive fortress cum monastery, which houses the Paro district administration office and the living quarters for the monks of Paro Rabdey. Overnight hotel in Paro.

#### **Day 10: Paro valley sightseeing (B/L/D)**

Spend the day hiking to the famous Taktsang monastery. The hike to the tea house near Taktsang takes about 1& ½ hours and you have the option to get closer to site or stay and enjoy the view from here. It takes another 1 hour one way from the tea house to Taktsang After lunch at Taktang tea house, the return trek downhill takes about half as long to get up. En-route to Paro, visit a typical farm house, the ruins of Drugyal Dzong and view the 7<sup>th</sup> century Kyichu lhakhang. In the evening, stroll around the Paro town. Overnight and dinner at the hotel.

#### **Day 11: Departure (B)**

Fly on Druk Air to Bangkok, Calcutta, Delhi or Kathamandu. The flight out of Bhutan usually departs early in the morning.

**Booking, Payment & Terms:**

US \$ 150/ person booking deposit required at the time of booking.

The final payment is due 61 days before the departure.

Please note that full payment of Druk Air tickets is required once we confirm the seats at the time of booking. Druk Air tickets are subject to cancellation charges as per their policy.

For more details on booking and terms, visit our [website](http://www.windhorsetours.com/pdf/booking_form_terms.pdf) at [http://www.windhorsetours.com/pdf/booking\\_form\\_terms.pdf](http://www.windhorsetours.com/pdf/booking_form_terms.pdf)

**Pricing Guarantee:**

Once you have paid up the full tour cost, unless of course there is major hike in the prices by government, hotels or substantial increase of fuel prices or increase of Druk Air fares, we guarantee the cost will not change.

**International Airfare**

International airfare is not included in the land cost of our trips. We will be glad to find the best routing and competitive airfares for passengers originating from USA and suggest agents for passengers traveling from else where.

**Important note on Itinerary:**

Although we will do our very best to adhere to the itinerary and its schedule, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities, and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of events. It is likely that there will be changes in the itinerary in terms of anything from the exact hotel used to the villages we may stop in for the night. Tour Guides and our crew will do everything to ensure that you are inconvenienced as little as possible.

**Equipment & Clothing**

After your booking is processed, we will send you a full tour dossier, which contains a suggested gear and clothing list. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us and we will be pleased to offer advice.

**Extension Ideas**

Before your tour of Bhutan or after the trip, options for other extension are endless. Speak to one of our staff or [email](#)

**Cost Information****Cost Per Person**

**1 Person:** US\$ 2570

**2 People:** \$2320

**3-5 People:** \$1920

Single room supplement: \$250

Plus Druk Air fare

**Includes:**

- Accommodation with all meals in Bhutan
- Best tourist hotels and lodges on tours
- Tent camps on treks
- All transfers and sightseeing with entrance fees
- English Speaking Wind Horse local Guide.
- Bhutan Visa fees and processing
- Druk Air ticket booking
- Pack animals (Horse/mules) to carry luggage
- Trekking crews (cooks/assistants/Guide)
- All taxes and tourism fees
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**Do Not Include:**

- International Airfares
- Travel Insurance
- Personal expenses such as drinks, alcohol, laundry, telephone calls etc (beverages included on the trek)
- tips and gratuities (optional)
- All other costs that is not mentioned in the Includes section

