



Merak - Sakten Trek – 12 days/7 day trekking

Explore the unknown East of Bhutan

Tour JTT-BT02: Guwahati – Samdrup Jonkhar - Donmong Chu - Merek - TREK - Jornkhar Teng - Guwahati

While trekking through the easternmost national park of Bhutan, Sakteng N.P., we'll encounter the unique culture of the Brogpa herders. In springtime, these semi-nomadic people migrate to the high pastures with their yaks, sheep, cows and horses. It is quite an exotic adventure to track their movements and follow them all the way up the high mountains., You'll walk through some of the most scenic pastoral valleys of Bhutan and enjoy magnificent vistas of the Himalayas and, in spring time, be amazed at the vibrant hues of the flowering rhododendron trees.



Itinerary

Day 01: Guwahati – Samdrup Jongkhar

Your guide will be at the border to greet you and then assist with the custom formalities. After checking into a comfortable hotel, we will visit the Zangdopelri Monastery at Samdrup Jongkhar.

Day 02: Samdrup Jongkhar – Trashigang

After an early breakfast, you will drive north to Trashigang. As you head further north, the misty mountains and a landscape littered with ferns, rhododendrons and primulas gives this journey a surreal flavor. Late in the afternoon, we will visit the Trashigang Dzong that houses the monastic institute for monks and the administrative center for the valley. Dinner and overnight stay is at a hotel in Trashigang.

Day 3: Trashigang/Chaling – Donmong Chu (approx. 19 km/ 7 ½ hrs., 1215m ascend and 230m descend)



You drive from Trashigang for 1½ hrs. till the road ends at Chaling at 2148m. This is the starting point of the trek. The trek you're embarking on is moderately strenuous. The maximum elevation you will reach is at the Nachu-La Mountain Pass: 4153m. On this day, you first pass the village of Chaling and then climb towards the scenic Shaktimi meadow. You continue the climb to reach Mendu-La Pass at 3354m. After crossing the pass, it is all downhill through gorgeous rhododendron forests till you reach a delightful (campsite) meadow by the river at Donmong chu (3124m). Overnight stay is in your tented camp.

Day 4: Donmong Chu – Merak (approx. 14km/ 5 hrs., 396m ascend)

You trek along the Donmong Chu through some beautiful rhododendron forests and shrubs. There are no steep climbs today and the trail in most part follows the river bends, gradually gaining both height and beauty. The first village you come across is Gangu and after another 45 minutes, you arrive at the picturesque Merak village located at an altitude of 3520m. This village has a unique culture of semi-nomadic yak herders. You visit the local village homes, interact with the local people and get fascinating insights into their extraordinary, indigenous culture. Overnight stay is in your tented camp.

Day 5: Merak – Miksateng (approx. 16 kms/ 5 hrs., 633m ascend and 1074m descend)

Today's journey is the toughest but also the most rewarding one with the crossing of the highest pass of this trek, along with a few smaller passes and ridges. You start early from the camp, head towards the east with a gradual climb to the first pass at 3900m. You continue along the tree line with juniper and rhododendron forests on one side until you reach Nachung-La mountain pass at 4153m. Then, you descend down to Miksateng village. The campsite is at 3079m.

Day 6: Miksateng – Sakteng (approx. 14 km/ 3.5 hrs., 81m ascend and 310m descent)

After breakfast, you descend down to the river and after crossing it, follow the river basin for a few hours. Then, you gradually make a climb towards a small pass with a small stupa or chorten on the hill overlooking the Sakteng valley. From the ridge, you drop down to the valley and camp for the night in a meadow by the riverside in Sakteng at an altitude of 2950m.



Day 7: Sakteng Exploration

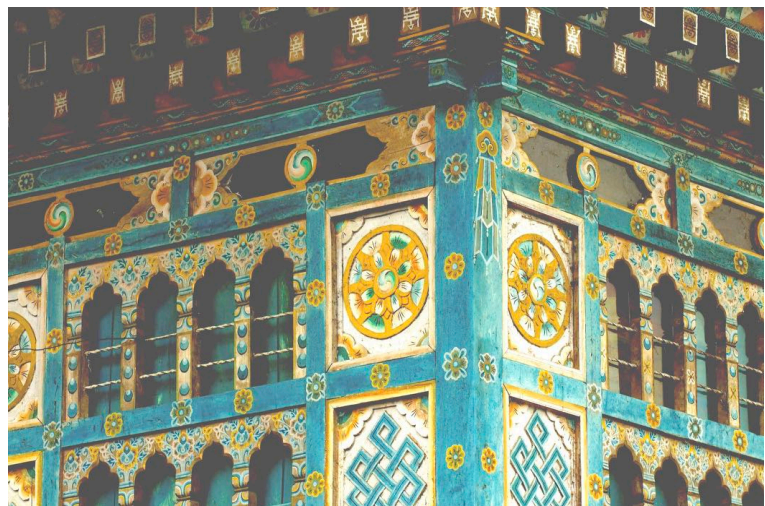
Today is a rest day to explore the valley and visit one or two of the surrounding villages and experience the lifestyle and unique living culture of this ethnic group. In the evening, you enjoy a cultural programme especially organised for you by the local people.

Day 8: Sakteng – Joenkhar Teng (approx. 17km/ 7hrs., 74m ascend and 1291m descent)

Today's journey will be longer and so we will start early from the camp. Leaving Sakteng, you start with a short climb to the small hill towards the west end of the village. Then, you descend down to the river and walk alongside it through the broad leaf forests. You reach a very pretty meadow near the river by Joenkhar Teng village (1733m) where you camp for the night.

Day 9: Joenkhar Teng – Phongmey/Trashigang (approx. 12km/ 5 ½ hrs., 346m ascend and 942m descent)

Our last day of the trek begins with a short climb through the Joenkhar Teng village. You cross a few of the suspension bridges, and after a few short climbs you reach Phongmay where your car and driver will be waiting for you. You drive to Trashigang where you spend the night in a hotel sleeping in a comfortable bed after a seemingly long time.



Day 10 – Trashigang – Day Excursion to Trashi Yangtse

Today, you drive to Trashi

Yangtse. On the way, you pass a gorgeous waterfall and want to check out the very picturesque temple at Gom Kora. It is also known as Gomphu Kora, which denotes the sacred meditation site of Guru Rinpoche. You continue on your drive till you reach Chorten Kora, built in the 1700's and considered to be the largest chorten in Bhutan. We'll then head into the valley of Trashi Yangtse where the locals are very famous for their woodwork. A picnic lunch will be served en-route. Dinner and overnight stay is at a hotel.

Day 11 – Trashigang – Samdrup Jongkhar

You drive south to Samdrup Jongkhar. As the road descends, you pass through a variety of vegetation zones in the Himalayan foothills. The roadside is rich in plants including ferns, rhododendrons and primulas.

If time permits, you will visit the Zangdopelri Monastery at Samdrup Jongkhar. Dinner and overnight stay is at a local hotel where you spend your last night in Bhutan.

Day 12: Samdrup Jongkhar - Guwahati

After breakfast in the hotel, Indian drivers will pick you up to take you to Guwahati or any other onward destination.

Price

In high season (March, April, May, Sept, Oct. Nov) for parties of three and more: USD 2750 per person; in low season (Dec, Jan, Feb, June, July & Aug) USD 2200, all-inclusive.

USD 40 surcharge per person per day for individual travelers, USD 30 per day for parties of two.

Travel from and to India not included. Please ask for quotation.