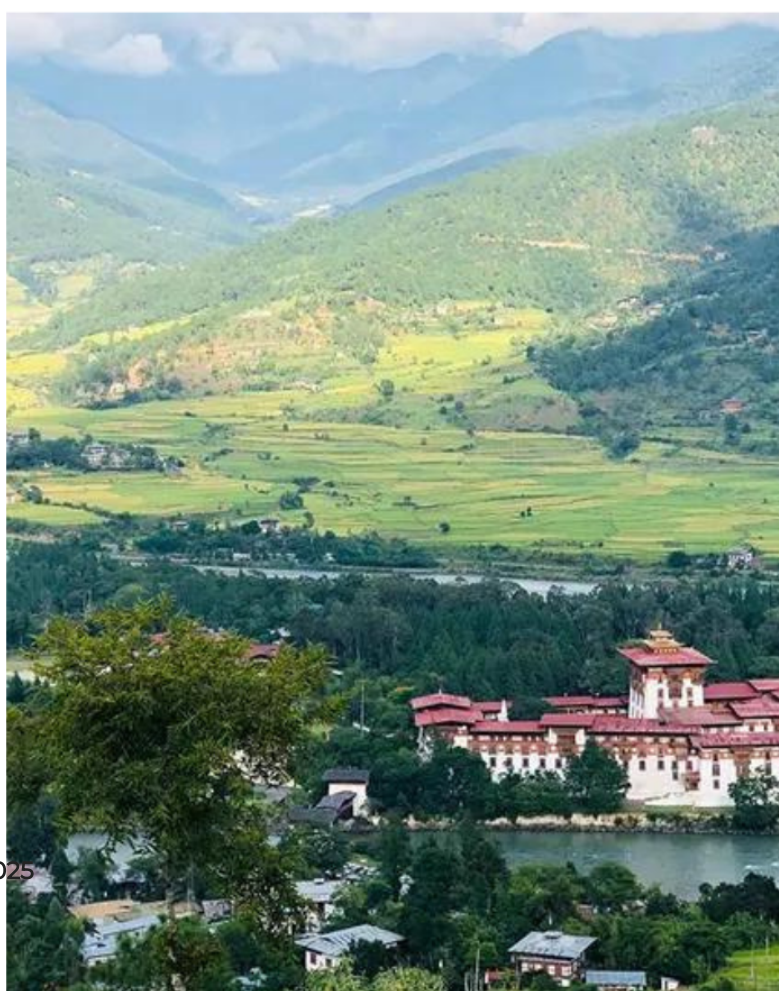
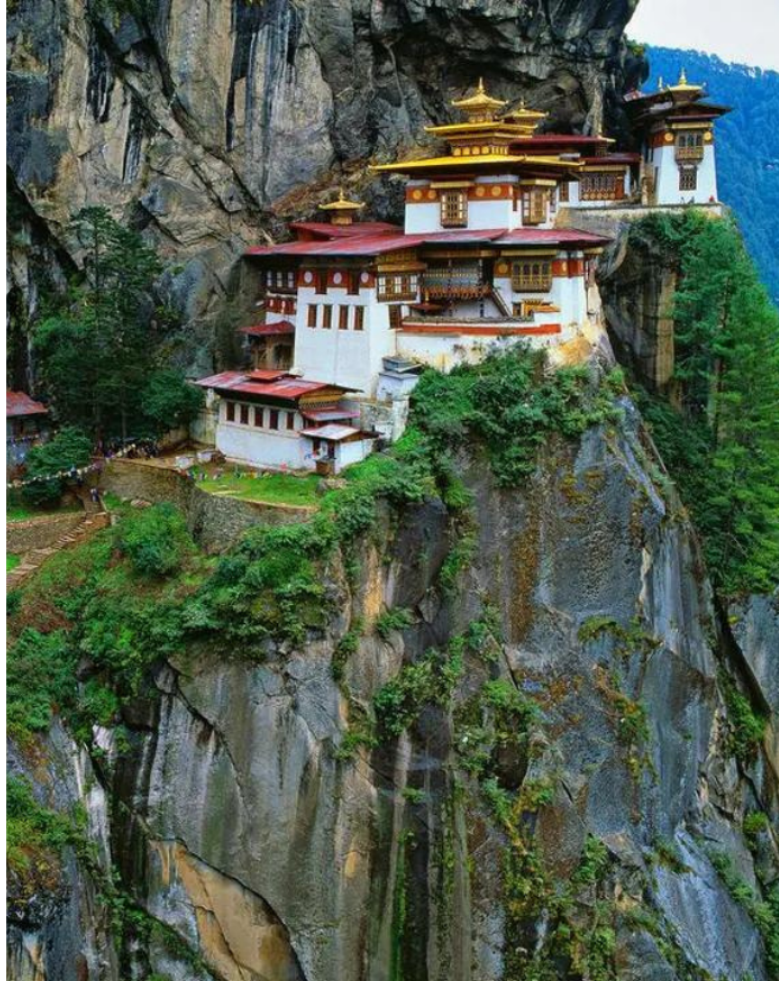




# TRANS BHUTAN TRAIL



HIKING HOLIDAYS WITH ZANNA VAN DIJK  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH **INTREPID TRAVEL**

# Our Travel Style

## Hiking Holidays with Zanna Van Dijk - Hike The Trans Bhutan Trail 11 days/ 10 nights

### About Your Trip

#### Start Location

Paro, Bhutan

#### Finish Location

Paro, Bhutan

#### Accommodation

Hotel: 10 nights

#### Rooming Requirements

Twin Share

#### Included Meals

Breakfast (10)

Lunch (10)

Dinner (10)

#### Transport

Private vehicle transfers throughout.

#### Leader/Guide

English Speaking Leader throughout

#### Included Activities

Per Daily itinerary

#### Entrance/Admission Fees

Daily Government Royalties and Taxes in Bhutan (USD 100 per person per night)

One-time Bhutan Visa Fee (USD 40)

Entrance fee

#### Airport Transfers

Arrival and departure transfers are included on a group basis

#### Support

24-hour support from our local office

#### Exclusions

- Airfare
- International airport departure tax
- Services not mentioned in the itinerary.
- Early check in and late check out at hotels.
- Meals and drinks not mentioned in the itinerary.
- Horse charge for Tiger's Nest hike (we do not sell horse rides)
- Drinks with included lunches and dinners
- Tips for leaders, guide and driver
- Expenditure of personal nature
- Personal Insurance
- Medical expenses
- Optional activities



## Safe and responsible travel, always.

As you look to get back on the road, we continue to ensure our trips are safe for everyone. That includes our travellers, our leaders and crew and the people we visit along the way. Our health and safety policies follow recommendations from the World Health Organization and the World Travel & Tourism Council's (WTTC) Safe Travel protocols for tour operators. Before we resume trips in any destination, our itineraries undergo a comprehensive risk assessment and audit, while leaders and suppliers will complete COVID-19 health and safety training. We have also introduced specific policies around testing and vaccination for your safety.



### Who we are

For over 30 years we've been taking travellers around the globe, on small group tours with like-minded Intrepid people. Our extensive COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines ensure your wellbeing is looked after during your travels.



### Safe travels

We're with you every step of the way through our value chain - from our suppliers, to our on ground operations and leaders.



### Certified B Corp

When we became certified as the world's largest travel B Corp in 2018, it was not only our official pledge to be a responsible business, but also a promise to be the best travel company for the world.

## About your Driver/Driver Guide/Tour Leader

### Tour leader

On this trip you will be accompanied by one of our tour leaders. The aim of the tour leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible.

Your leader will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the places visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We aim to support local guides who have specialized knowledge of the regions we visit. If you were interested in delving deeper into the local culture at a specific site or location then your leader can recommend a local guide service in most of the main destinations of your trip.

# Hiking Holidays with Zanna Van Dijk - Hike The Trans Bhutan Trail Itinerary

**Day 1: 26th April 2025**

**Destination: Paro – Thimphu**

**Meals Included: Lunch, Dinner**

Upon arrival at Paro Airport, you will be greeted by your guide and driver and welcomed to Bhutan. From there, you will drive to Thimphu, the capital city, enjoying the scenic views. Along the way, stop at the Tachogang Lhakhang temple, which was founded by Thankthong Gyelpo, a man who is revered in Tibetan and Bhutanese culture, and see some of his belongings inside this sacred place. After visiting the temple, continue to Thimphu and check into your hotel where you'll have time to freshen up before joining your leader for an orientation walk to get acquainted with Thimphu's highlights. Tonight, head off with your leader and group for an included welcome dinner at a local restaurant and learn about the rich history of Bhutanese cuisine as you tuck into a traditional feast, including seasonal vegetables and the country's signature dish – red rice with a tasty chili cheese.

## **Arrival Transfer**

- Included on a group basis.

## **Included Activities**

- Tachogang Lhakhang temple visit
- Thimphu exploratory evening walk

## **Special Information**

Travel in Bhutan is strictly controlled and to do any independent travel outside of a group tour is extremely difficult and expensive to arrange. We provide a group visa for travellers on our tours in Bhutan, which stipulates that all travellers must arrive and depart on the same days that our tour program starts and finishes. Travel outside the tour dates on independent visas is not permitted, and additional nights of accommodation cannot be booked.

Today's driving time is approximately 1.5 hours.

## **Accommodation**

Thimphu tower or similar – standard room: <https://www.thimphutowers.com/>

**Day 2: 27th April 2025**

**Destination: Thimphu**

**Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

After breakfast, embark on the Buddha Point Park Hike which will start from Debsi towards Buddha Point (Kuensel Phodrang) home to the country's largest Buddha statue. The Buddha Dordenma is located atop a hill in Kuensel Phodrang Nature Park and overlooks the Southern entrance to Thimphu Valley. Hikers can enjoy the panoramic view of the Thimphu Valley and enjoy the hike amidst fluttering colorful prayer flags and the beautiful sky while heading up the hill.

After visiting Buddha Point, you will continue the hike inside the park to Changangkha. After lunch, visit the Institute for Zorig Chusum, more commonly known as the Arts & Crafts School or Painting School, where you can watch students learning traditional artistic skills. At the National Library, you'll see printing blocks for prayer flags and many beautiful archaic texts.

## **Included Activities**

- Thimphu – Institute for Zorig Chusum
- Thimphu – National Library
- Thimphu – Buddha Point (Kuensel Phodrang) walk

### Special information

Today's walking distance is about 9.5 km and may take up to 3 hours.

Ascent: 430m.

Descent: 400m.

### Accommodation

Thimpu tower or similar – standard room: <https://www.thimphutowers.com/>

### Day 3: 28th April 2025

**Destination: Lobesa**

**Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

After breakfast, travel along the Dochula Pass which sits more than 3000 metres above sea level and is marked by a large Bhutanese Chorten and fluttering prayer flags. If the weather is clear, you'll enjoy panoramic views of the Himalayas as you hike along this scenic trail. This afternoon, you'll visit Druk Wangyal Lhakhang a temple that was built in honour of the fourth King Gyalpo Jigme Singye Wangchuk and celebrates the 100th anniversary of the monarchy in Bhutan. After visiting the temple, you'll travel down to the valley and hike a section of the trail known as the Divine Madman Trail. It is believed that Drukpa Kuenley, who is also known as the Divine Madman, came here from Tibet to overpower evil spirits. After a stop for lunch in the beautiful village of Lumitsawa, you'll continue walking until Thinleygang Lhakhang temple. Visit Thinleygang Lhakhang temple before driving to your hotel in Lobesa.

### Included Activities

- Dochula Pass hike.
- Druk Wangyal Lhakhang temple visit
- Divine Madman Trail hike

### Special information

Today's walking distance is 10.5km and may take up to 5 hours.

Ascent: 190m

Descent: 1420m.

### Accommodation

Hotel Lobesa or similar – standard room: <https://www.hotellobesa.com/>

### Day 4: 29th April 2025

**Destination: Trongsa**

**Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

After a leisurely breakfast, you'll drive to Pelela Pass and re-join the Trans Bhutan Trail at the boundary between western and central Bhutan and begin your hike. Along the way, visit the Rukubji Lhakhang temple and rest a while with your group as you share a delicious hot lunch prepared by the locals. Afterwards, transfer by vehicle to the beautiful village of Chendebji which is home to the Chendebji Chorten. If you've been to Kathmandu in Nepal, this large white structure might look familiar as it was built to resemble the famous Bouddhanath Stupa of Kathmandu. From Chendebji, you'll continue to Trongsa and visit the Trongsa Dzong which is the largest and most impressive Dzong in Bhutan. Located on a cliff overlooking the Mangde Chu river gorge, this Dzong is a magnificent sight. After you've enjoyed the view, check into your hotel where you may like to enjoy a relaxing evening after a full day of exploring.

### Included Activities

- Trans Bhutan trail hike - Pelela pass/Chendebji
- Chendebji Chorten monument visit

- Trongsa Dzong (Buddhist school) visit

### **Special information**

Today's driving time is approximately 4 hours. Today's walking distance is 9.5km and may take up to 4 hours.

Ascent: 70m.

Descent: 710m.

### **Accommodation**

Yangkhil or similar – standard room: <https://www.yangkhil.com/>

### **Day 5: 30th April 2025**

**Destination: Bumthang**

**Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

If your group didn't have time to visit Trongsa Dzong yesterday, there's time for a visit this morning before the drive to Yotongla Pass where you'll re-join the Trans Bhutan Trail and immerse yourself in the peaceful beauty of Bhutan. After hiking over the pass, you'll descend through green meadows and open forest until you reach the serene Gyaltsa River. After you've had a rest, follow this pristine river until you reach Gyaltsa Village where your private transfer to Bumthang will be waiting. You won't go hungry on this full day of walking as the group will stop to enjoy a delicious lunch along the trail. On arrival in Bumthang, check into your hotel for the next two nights.

After checking into the hotel, head out for a visit of Bumthang Brewery, producers of Bhutan's celebrated Red Panda Beer. Nearby is Bhutan's only commercial cheese factory. Both the brewery and the cheese factory are legacies of a Swiss-run development project called Swiss Farm, which introduced distinctive European farming and production techniques into the Bumthang area.

Or

Choose to hike to Tamshing Lhakhang Temple, which is on the other side of the Bumthang Chhu River. During this interesting walk, you'll cross a strong swing bridge decorated with colorful flags and then take a short stroll along the riverbank, where you might see some wild cannabis plants growing along the way. Later after the pleasant walk drive back to your hotel.

### **Included Activities**

- Trans Bhutan Trail hike - Yotongla Pass/Gyaltsa village

### **Special information**

Today's driving time is approximately 2.5 hours. Today's walking distance is 9km and may take 3 to 4 hours.

Ascent: 225m

Descent: 770m.

### **Accommodation**

Ugyenling or similar – standard room- <https://bhutanhotels.com.bt/hotel-ugyenling/>

### **Day 6: 1st of May 2025**

**Destination: Bumthang**

**Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

After breakfast, begin your day with an excursion to the luscious yet secluded Tang Valley. You'll have time to take in the splendor of this tranquil location, which is home to sacred shrines, herds of yaks, and verdant hillsides dotted with grazing sheep.

After reaching Tang village, you start a short hike crossing the suspension bridge towards the century old Ugyen Sholing Heritage Museum. After visiting the museum, you drive to Pema Choling Nunnery where women and girls who enroll here follow a nine-year course in the Nyingma Peling Buddhist tradition and are known for a particular drum ceremony known as “chod”.

After visiting the nunnery, head south along the Trans Bhutan Trail towards the sacred Mebar Tsho (Burning Lake), where, in the 15th century, the great treasure hunter Pema Lingpa is said to have discovered several of Guru Rinpoche's hidden treasures. Take time to appreciate the beauty of your surroundings and consider engaging in some meditation, as many locals do. You will continue the second half of the hike by climbing gently through the forest and reach another small, beautiful village of Phomrong. Our vehicle will be waiting for us in Phomrong to transfer us back to the hotel.

Later in the evening if permitted you can visit one of the farmhouses and participate in cooking their famous- Food eg. – “Jang Bali” and share dinner with the local family.

#### **Included Activity**

- Tang Valley walk
- Ugyen Sholing Heritage Museum visit
- Tang Valley - Farmhouse lunch
- Hike: Nunnery - Mebar Tsho (Burning Lake) – Phomrong village
- Pema Choling Nunnery

#### **Special information**

Today's driving time is approximately 1.5 hours. Today's walking distance is about 6 km and will take about 3 hours.

Ascent: 400m

Descent: 300m.

#### **Accommodation**

Ugyenling or similar – standard room- <https://bhutanhotels.com.bt/hotel-ugyenling/>

#### **Day 7: 2nd of May 2025**

**Destination: Trongsa- Gangtey**

**Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

Today you will head back to Punakha via Trongsa to walk along one of the most iconic sections of the Trans Bhutan Trail and recreate what it was like for those arriving in the city of Trongsa on foot many years ago.

Drive to Trongsa. Your hike starts from Trongsa Dzong, you'll descend until the Mangde River. After crossing the old cantilever bridge over the river, stretch your legs for a steep climb through the forest until the Trongsa viewpoint. After some rest and spending some time at the viewpoint, sit back and relax on the drive to Gangtey and again join The Gangtey Nature Trail a two-hour trek that lets you soak up the remarkable Phobjikha Valley. Starting at the 17th-century Gangtey Monastery, you'll amble down a fairly flat terrain that ends at the bottom of the valley. En route, you'll pass grass planes, farmhouses, and dense pine forests before reaching a vast open space of the wide valley.

The endangered, black-necked cranes make Phobjikha Valley their breeding ground in winter and can be observed feeding on the valley marshlands from late October to mid-February. Your driver will meet you and your guide at the end of the trail and on the way back to your hotel you can call into the Crane Information Centre to learn more about these fascinating birds and their place in Bhutan's culture and beliefs. The center is a basic affair but has several sets of decent binoculars set up on tripods with which you can get a close look at the birds.

#### **Included Activity**

- Trans Bhutan Trail hike - Trongsa Dzong/Mangde River/Trongsa Viewpoint
- Gangtey Natural Trail Hike

Today's driving time is approximately 3-4 hrs (120 km)

#### **Accommodation**

Dewachen or similar: <https://dewachenhotel.com/>

#### **Day 8: 3rd of May 2025**

**Destination: Gangtey to Punakha**

**Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

After breakfast, we'll drive to Punakha, the old capital city and before arrival, stop at a local village and take a short hike to the Chimi Lhakhang – The Temple of Fertility. Your leader will explain how people from all corners of the country visit the Lhakhang to seek a blessing from Drukpa Kuenley, also known as the 'Divine Madman'. A revered womanizer and drinker, this wandering preacher taught that sexual freedom was at the center of Truth.

On the walk through the village of Sopsokha to the temple you will notice the phallic symbols painted on walls, a symbol of fertility and protection from evil.

Then again take a short drive to the base of a hill where a ridge-top monastery sits. In this almost sub-tropical valley, begin a hike at a suspension bridge that crosses the Mo Chu River and passes through paddy fields before starting to climb a moderately inclined trail to the Khamsum Yulley temple. Built by the Queen Mother, the temple is a classic example of Bhutan's fine architectural and artistic traditions. From the top, you can take in sweeping views across the valley.

After lunch, you'll visit the white-walled, red-roofed Punakha Dzong, the administrative and religious center and winter retreat of His Holiness, Je Khenpo – the chief abbot of Bhutan. The Dzong boasts intricately carved woodwork, prayer halls, and beautiful religious paintings on walls and doorways. End the day at the Sangchen Dorji Lhuendrup Temple and nunnery.

#### **Included Activity**

- Punakha Valley - Chimi Lhakhang
- Khamsum Yulley
- Sangchen Dorji Lhendrup Nunnery
- Punakha Dzong
- Suspension dzong

Today's driving time is approximately 2- 3 hrs (75.6 km)

#### **Accommodation**

River Valley or similar <https://bhutanhotel.bt/hotel-river-valley/>

#### **Day 9: 4th of May 2025**

**Destination: Punakha- Paro**

**Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

After breakfast, drive to Dochulla Pass from where we will start our hike to Simtokha. Throughout the hike, we are treated to a scenic path that runs alongside charming villages and meandering streams, granting us unique glimpses into Bhutanese life and culture. Prepare yourself for one of the longest hours hikes of this trip. After reaching Simtokha, you'll drive to Paro. Check-in to the hotel and relax for the rest of the evening.

#### **Included Activities**

- Dochula Pass to Simtokha Hike

#### **Special information**



Today's driving time is approximately 3-4 hours. Today's walking distance is up to 15km and may take up to 5-6 hours.

Ascent: 690m

Descent: 1370m.

#### **Accommodation**

Mandal or similar [https://www.facebook.com/mandalaresortbhutan/?locale=mg\\_MG](https://www.facebook.com/mandalaresortbhutan/?locale=mg_MG)

#### **Day 10: 5th of May 2025**

**Destination: Paro**

**Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

After breakfast, lace up your hiking boots and set off on a 5 hour hike to the Taktshang Monastery, one of Bhutan's most famous monasteries. Perched on the side of a cliff 900m above the Paro valley floor, it's also known as the 'Tiger's Nest'. This site is considered to be a deeply sacred place and is visited by all Bhutanese at least once in their lifetime. On 19 April 1998, a fire severely damaged the main structure of the building but now this Bhutanese jewel has been restored to its original splendour. Along the way, you'll also visit the 7th century Kyichu Lhakhang, one of 108 temples built in the Himalayas by the Tibetan King, Songtsen Gampo. This is one of the country's most famous temples as it marks the introduction of Buddhism to Bhutan. After you've returned to your hotel and had time to freshen up, join your leader for a stroll around the streets and market area of Paro.

#### **Included Activities**

Paro - Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) Monastery hike

#### **Special information**

Today's walking distance is 10km and may take up to 5-6 hours.

Ascent: 900m

Descent: 900m.

#### **Accommodation**

Mandal or similar [https://www.facebook.com/mandalaresortbhutan/?locale=mg\\_MG](https://www.facebook.com/mandalaresortbhutan/?locale=mg_MG)

#### **Day 11: 6th of May 2025**

**Destination: Paro – Departure**

**Meals Included: Breakfast**

After a leisurely breakfast at your hotel, your adventure will come to an end and your driver will transfer you to Paro International Airport for your flight out of Bhutan.

#### **Airport transfer**

- Included on a group basis.

#### **Special information**

Due to group visa requirements, all travelers are required to leave Bhutan on the same day.