



# Bhutan Bumthang Owl Trek

13 Days



*The Adventure Company* | EST. 1969

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MOUNTAIN TRAVEL SOBEK

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AS THE PIONEER OF ADVENTURE TRAVEL

# ➤ Bhutan Bumthang Owl Trek

Few places on earth are as beautiful as the kingdom of Bhutan. Experience this magnificent place, including three days on Bhutan's Bumthang Owl Trek trail through mist-covered mountains, over scenic passes, across suspension bridges, and through fertile valleys blossoming with traditional culture. Bookend the hike with explorations of fascinating towns and remote villages where you learn about traditional arts, attend a vibrant festival, visit age-old dzongs (citadels), and even go white-water rafting. All this in the shadow of the mighty Himalaya — and with the Bhutan trekking pioneers!

## Details

Arrive: Bangkok, Thailand

Depart: Bangkok, Thailand

Duration: 13 Days

Group Size: 2-15

Minimum Age: 16 Years Old

Activity Level:



## Testimonials

*"Great experience every time with some of the most knowledgeable guides in their fields. We always come home with wonderful memories of the people we meet and things we see."*

Bob J.

*"We have traveled throughout the world, but never experienced a level of service and attention to detail as we did with MT Sobek."*

Dennis G.

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## Why Take This Trip With Us?

### REASON #01

MT Sobek pioneered trekking in Bhutan in the 1980s and continues to offer innovative routes for active travelers.

### REASON #02

Our local guides are experts with over 20 years' experience leading travelers through the kingdom.

### REASON #03

This trip combines touring and a short trek in the cultural heartland of Bumthang.

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## What to Expect



### ACTIVITIES

Moderate hiking on mountain and forest paths, covering up to 9 miles per day, and insightful cultural touring.



### LODGING

Scenic and comfortable accommodation in Bhutanese inns and lodges, plus two nights camping on the Owl Trek.



### CLIMATE

Daytime temperatures: 50°F - 70°F; night time temperatures 30°F - 45°F. Rain or snow possible.

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## Meet Our Guides

Our expert guides and trip leaders are truly the key to our trips' success. Many are locals who live in-country year-round; others have made it their second home—all are passionate, enthusiastic and endlessly knowledgeable. Meet two of the guides that might be on your trip.

Namgay Dorji is the senior manager of MT Sobek's Bhutan office and has been leading treks and tours for over 10 years. He is very knowledgeable about Bhutan's history, culture, and religion and speaks seven languages: English, Japanese, German, Spanish, Hindi, Nepalese, and Urdu. Namgay is a graduate of Bissau College, Meghalaya, India and received his diploma in tourism from the Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management in Salzburg, Austria. His many personal interests include bird watching, rock climbing, trekking, and archery. He looks forward to sharing his experience and the wonders of Bhutan with you.

**Namgay Dorji**

Tandin is a graduate of Bangkok University, Thailand, majoring in Tourism and Hospitality Management. He has been leading treks and cultural tours in Bhutan since 2000, including MT Sobek's Chomolhari Trek and new Bumthang Owl Trek. He is extremely knowledgeable about the cultures, religions, and traditions of his home country and enjoys sharing his experiences with guests—immersing them in the wonders of Bhutan every step of the way. Tandin speaks English, Nepali, Hindi and passable Thai in addition to his native Bhutanese.

**Tandin Nidup**

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# Itinerary

## DAY 1

### ARRIVE IN BANGKOK

Welcome to Bangkok! Transfer to the hotel via a free 24-hour shuttle bus. Note that most airlines arrive late at night into Bangkok, and your MT Sobek flight from Bangkok to Paro departs very early the next morning. If your flight into Bangkok is delayed by even just a few hours, you may miss the group departure flight to Paro. Therefore we encourage you to arrive a day or two early in Bangkok to explore this fascinating city, or to help overcome jet lag before the tour actually starts.

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## DAY 2

### FLY TO PARO, TRANSFER TO THIMPHU

Welcome to the Kingdom of Bhutan! Upon arrival in Paro Airport, situated in one of the country's most historic valleys, meet your MT Sobek guide and transfer to Thimphu, the capital city of Bhutan. Paro Valley is known as the kingdom's "rice bowl" because it produces everything from red rice to wheat, millet, potatoes, apples, and seasonal vegetables. Meanwhile Thimphu is both the political and economic center of Bhutan. Visit the Royal Textile Academy, where you get a brief introduction to Bhutan and the evolution of its textile industry.

**Meals:** B, L, D

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## DAY 3

### EXPLORE THIMPHU

Enjoy Thimphu and adjust to jet lag with an easy exploration of the town's main sights. Visit the National Institute for Zorig Chusum — commonly known as "the painting school" — which provides instruction in Bhutan's 13 traditional arts, including painting, woodcarving, and sculpture. Also stop at the National Memorial Chorten, the most iconic structure in Thimphu. In the afternoon, enjoy a gentle hike through the woods above Thimphu. Before dinner, learn about Bhutan's unique concept of Gross National Happiness by an expert in the field of, well, happiness!

**Activity:** 4-hour/3-3.5 miles hiking with 500' elevation gain

**Meals:** B, L, D

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## DAY 4

### EXPLORE DZONGS & GO RAFTING IN PUNAKHA

Drive to Punakha in the morning, stopping to visit Simtokha Dzong — a dzong is a citadel — and Dochula Pass along the way. Before descending from Dochula Pass (11,500') into the fertile Punakha Valley, if weather is agreeable you'll be treated to your first views of the majestic mountain ranges, including Gangchen Ta (Tiger Mountain, 22,440'), Masagang (23,500'), Thsengdagang (23,300') and Gangkarpheunsum (24,836'). After lunch, enjoy white-water rafting on the MoChu River, passing the incredible Punakha Dzong (also known as the

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"Palace of Happiness"). This afternoon, tour the dzong — the most beautiful and well-known fortress in all of Bhutan.

**Activity:** 1-hour whitewater rafting

**Meals:** B, L, D

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## DAY 5

### CROSS PELA LA & YUTONG LA PASSES (9180')

After breakfast, continue your journey toward the Pela La, crossing the Black Mountains, which divide western and central Bhutan. On the five-hour drive to Trongsa, enjoy lovely views of yaks grazing among magnolias and rhododendrons. Trongsa used to be the gateway between the east and the west, and its dzong, built in 1647, is a true masterpiece of Bhutanese architecture. Tour the dzong and then, after lunch, drive another three hours to Bumthang, crossing over Yutong La Pass — described as one of the most beautiful spots in Bhutan.

**Meals:** B, L, D

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## DAY 6

### ATTEND A FESTIVAL IN BUMTHANG

Enjoy the day attending one of Bumthang's many local festivals. Known throughout the kingdom for their spectacular colors and costumes, the festivals here are a true pleasure and fortune to experience. Witness the religious mask dances and find ease in interacting with the local people, who will be dressed up in their finest attire.

**Meals:** B, L, D

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## DAY 7

### BEGIN OWL TREK: BUMTHANG TO SCHONATH

Lace up your boots! Trek begins with a drive to Menchugang and the village of Dhur (9,514'), which consists of about 75 households with a population of around 800 people. Start with a walk above the village for an interesting overall view of the area. Then descend down to the river, cross it on a suspension bridge, and head up to the road. Here the trail takes a left turn following a stream, then meanders gradually uphill through pine forest, bamboo, and finally fir trees just below camp (11,319').

**Activity:** 5-6 hours/6-7 miles hiking with 1,805' elevation gain

**Meals:** B, L, D

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## DAY 8

### SCHONATH TO KITIPHU/THARPALING

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Take in the real wilderness of Bhutan as you trek through virgin forest of spruce, hemlock, fir, birch, and rhododendron (in full bloom in April and May). After about two hours, arrive at Drangela Pass (11,811'). Ascend the Kitiphu Ridge (12,697') for tonight's camp. Weather permitting, enjoy a wonderful view of the valley and the panoramic snowcapped Himalayas, including Gangkar Puensum (24,836'), Bhutan's highest mountain. Climb down to the monasteries of Zambhalha, Chuedak, and Tharpaling where you will witness life in a monastery firsthand.

**Activity:** 6-7 hours/8-9 miles hiking with 500' elevation gain

**Meals:** B, L, D

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## DAY 9

### THARPALING TO BUMTHANG

After breakfast, descend towards the local monasteries, and have the opportunity to visit Chuedak Monastery, distinguished by the 100 Avoloketeshwara (the god of compassion). Here, you may pray for yourself and all living beings. Towards the afternoon, the hike will take you along the Kikila Ridge following the traditional trekking route used by the Royals to migrate between Trongsa and Bumthang. At the trail end, you will be picked up and transferred to the hotel.

**Activity:** 4-5 hours/6-7 miles hiking with 2,627' elevation loss

**Meals:** B, L, D

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## DAY 10

### RETURN TO PARO

Easy day today! This morning, transfer to the Bumthang Airport for your flight to Paro, where the rest of the day is free to explore.

**Meals:** B, L, D

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## DAY 11

### HIKE TO TAKTSANG MONASTERY

Today it's a steep hike to a traditional teahouse for a great view of Taktsang Monastery, perched on a cliff 2,700 feet above the Paro Valley floor. Taktsang, meaning "tiger's nest," is Bhutan's most spiritual place and a major pilgrimage spot. Partly destroyed by fire in 1998, Taktsang has been completely rebuilt. After a tea break, continue up to visit the temple built on the cliff. Enjoy lunch on the way down, some free time back in Paro, and then a festive farewell dinner with the group.

**Activity:** 5 hours/2.5 miles hiking with 1,707' elevation gain/loss

**Meals:** B, L, D

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## DAY 12

### DEPART FOR BANGKOK

After breakfast, bid farewell to the kingdom of Bhutan as you transfer to the Paro Airport for your departure to Bangkok. Upon arrival, take the shuttle to the hotel. The remainder of the day is free to shop, sightsee, and enjoy lunch and dinner on your own.

**Meals:** B

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## DAY 13

### DEPART FOR HOME

Take the hotel shuttle to the international terminal and depart on your homeward-bound flight. Or if you'd prefer to spend a bit more time in Asia, join one of our exciting extensions in India, Vietnam, or Cambodia. Ask our Regional Specialist for details!

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## Dates

Nov 6 - 18, 2021

For full terms and conditions please visit [www.mtsobek.com/terms](http://www.mtsobek.com/terms). Please note that our itineraries may be subject to change.

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## Pricing

2021

from \$5,795 per person dbl. occ.

### Additional Cost

from \$1,270 Internal Airfare

from \$1,000 Single Supplement

### PRICE INCLUDES

- Expert leadership from experienced adventure guides
- Accommodations as noted in the itinerary
- Meals as noted in the daily itinerary
- Potable water and snacks throughout
- 1 glass of wine or beer at dinner
- All tips and gratuities for support staff with the exception of your lead adventure guide(s)
- All necessary rafting and camping gear
- All group entrance fees, activities, and ground transportation
- Arrival and departure hotel shuttle airport transfers

### PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE

- International airfare, any airport taxes, or excess baggage charges
- 1 breakfast, 1 lunch and 1 dinner
- Optional tips to your lead adventure guides
- Personal expenses such as medical immunizations, phone calls, laundry, or souvenirs
- Airport hotel transfers if arriving outside of Day 1
- Optional travel protection

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## ➤ The World of MT Sobek

At Mountain Travel Sobek, we believe life is an adventure and adventure is life.

As the originators, innovators and leaders in adventure travel for more than five decades, we passionately create, craft and share indelible, transformative journeys to the world's most memorable places. Our more than 200 unique and once-in-a-lifetime trips are designed to inspire and exhilarate, enliven and excite--opening eyes and minds through profoundly personal connections with nature and culture.

Our small group and custom adventures span the globe, and the spectrum—of interests, environments and activities—every one expertly planned and knowledgeably and passionately guided. And our commitment to making every experience a remarkable one has earned us preferred travel outfitter status for National Geographic Active Expeditions, Active New York Times Journeys, and Smithsonian Active Journeys.

We are *the* adventure company.

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### Awards



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