



*BHUTAN & BEYOND*

## *Bumthang Owl Trek - 2 days/1 night*

The Bumthang Owl Trek offers an invigorating experience of the culture and environment of the central Bumthang region. It is a moderate rated 3-day trekking route which starts from Menchugang and ends at Jakar Dzong. The trail has an abundance of flora and fauna with panoramic views of the valleys and the Himalayas offering an experience one will cherish for a lifetime. This trek is a better substitute for the Bumthang Cultural Trek that has deteriorated to a great degree by construction of more local farm roads.

**Location:** Bumthang

**Difficulty Rating: Moderate** – quite challenging in places & a good fitness level required.

**Season:** November, December, March, April, May & June

Please remember you will require additional nights in Bhutan both pre/post trek. You can access the Bumthang valley overland by road or by domestic flight from Paro.

### **Day 01: Bumthang Owl Trek**

#### **4-5 hours trekking.**

Start at Menchugang and visit the biggest village in Bumthang, called Dhur, at an elevation of 2900 meters above sea level. The village consists of about 75 households with a recorded population of around 800 people. This single village has three types of inhabitants the Kheps (tax payers) having cattle and farmland, Brokpas (nomads) having Yaks and a third group a combination of the two. This village has two different dialects, the usual Bumthang Kha and the Brokke (nomadic dialect). A walk above the village to gain an aerial view is interesting. Descend down to the river where the traditional water-driven flour mill can be visited. This traditional flour mill used to be a source of livelihood for the people of Dhur village however was abandoned after the intake channel was washed away by a flash flood. The mill process has since been rehabilitated as it symbolizes an authentic Bhutanese tradition. Continue to trek uphill through the blue pine forest and reach the camp at Schonath (3450m) in hemlock and juniper forest. The hooting of owls through the night is quite common, hence the name the Owl Trek.

#### **Overnight tented campsite.**

### **Day 02: Bumthang Owl Trek**

#### **5-6 hours trekking.**

Trekking through the virgin forest of huge temperate trees like spruce, hemlock, fir, birch and many species of rhododendron introduces you to the real wilderness of Bhutan. Bamboo is the main undergrowth of this wild forest and during the months of April and May the rhododendrons are in full bloom. After 2 hours trekking you will arrive at the Drange La Pass (3600m). Ascending the Kitiphu ridge brings you to an altitude of 3870m for the night camp. In favourable weather you have a wonderful view of the valley and the panoramic snow capped Eastern Himalaya. The highest mountain of Bhutan Gangkarpunsum (7541m) stands right in front of you when you are on the top of Kitiphu ridge at 4000m.

#### **Overnight tented campsite.**



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### Day 03: Bumthang Owl Trek

#### 4 hours trekking.

The magnificent sun rise in the morning is a new experience in Bhutan. Climb down to the monasteries of Zambhalha, Chuedak and Tharpaling which brings you into the religious life of monkhood at these historical Buddhist learning centres. Chuedak monastery has 100 Avalokitesvara in the form of *Chukchizhey* (eleven heads) that you will see nowhere else in the country. This afternoon, trek along the ridge of Kiki La and finally follow the traditional trek route between Trongsa and Bumthang (the Royal Heritage Trail) and culminating in a superb view of Jakar Dzong that will end your three day trek with many unforgettable memories.

On completion of trek you will be met and transferred by road to your overnight accommodation.

#### On this trek you have the opportunity to see:

- Village life in a very big village like Dhur.
- The virgin temperate forest of blue pine, hemlock, fir, spruce, juniper with undergrowth of bamboo species, rhododendrons, birch, maple, chestnut and many others. In spring the rhododendrons flowers are in bloom that beautifies the whole trek route.
- The valley views and the Himalayan snow capped mountains in the north.
- Birds of different species, among them the big monal pheasants can be sighted around the second camp and Tharpaling area during mornings and evenings.
- The fascinating Monastery life in Tharpaling, Choedak and Zhambala.



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