# Soe Yaksa Trek

Soe Yaksa Trek (Jomolhari Loop) is the shortest of the Jomolhari trekking routes, which is also one of the most popular treks in Bhutan. With altitude differences of 2,500m and nearly 5,000m, it offers a wide range of landscapes, fauna, and flora.

The highlight of this trek is the spectacular view of Mount Jomolhari from Jomolhari Base Camp (Jangothang).

Trekkers who want to avoid high passes and high altitude can choose an easier version of the Jomolhari Loop by retracing their steps from Jangothang, while still having the majestic impressions of Mount Jomolhari.

| LOCATION | DURATION |
| --- | --- |
| **Paro Valley** | **10 Days** |

| DIFFICULTY | MAX ALTITUDE | BEST SEASON |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **moderate** | **4,890m** | **Mar-May, Sep-Nov** |

## Highlights

- Spectacular views of Mt. Jomolhari (7,314m) and Mt. Jichu Drake
- Camp at Jangothang, one of the most beautiful Himalayan campsites
- Cross Bhonte La Pass (4,890m), the highest point of the trek
- Trek through azalea and rhododendron hillsides
- Visit the iconic Tiger's Nest Monastery
- Spot blue sheep on the upper valley slopes

## Day-by-Day Itinerary

### Day 1: Arrive at Paro

Paro | 2,280m

You will be received by the representative from Byways Tours and Travels at the airport and driven to the hotel.

After lunch, visit **Ta Dzong**, an ancient watchtower built in 1656 and renovated in 1968, now converted into the National Museum of Bhutan. Then visit **Rinpung Dzong** (Paro Dzong), built in 1646 by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. The dzong presently houses the administrative offices of Paro District and the monastery.

Dinner and overnight in hotel.

Meals: L/D | Hotel in Paro

### Day 2: Paro Sightseeing

Paro | 2,280m | 5h hike

After breakfast, take an excursion to **Tiger's Nest Monastery**. A short drive of around 25 minutes from the main town of Paro takes you to Satsam Chorten, where the trail climbs through beautiful pine forest, many of the trees festooned with Spanish moss, and an occasional grove of fluttering prayer flags.

We stop for rest and tea with cookies at the Taktsang cafeteria, then walk a short distance until we see, clearly and seemingly within reach, Tiger's Nest Monastery. The history dates back to the 8th century when Guru Rinpoche, a tantric master, flew to this place on the back of a flying tigress, said to be his Tibetan consort known as Khandro Yeshe Tsogyal, and meditated in a cave nearby. The temple was built in the 17th century by the Penlop (governor) of Paro, Gyaltse Tenzin Rabgye. This incredible monastery clings to the edge of a sheer rock cliff that plunges 600 meters into the valley below.

After lunch, visit **Drukgyel Dzong**, built in 1644 by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal to commemorate the victory over Tibetan invaders. The dzong is now in ruins because it was completely burned down by a fire caused by a butter lamp in 1951. The name "Drukgyel" means "Victorious Druk." The dzong was used as an administrative center until 1951.

Then visit **Kyichu Lhakhang**, one of Bhutan's oldest Buddhist temples, built in 659 AD by the Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo. In the evening, stroll around the tiny town of Paro. Dinner and overnight in the hotel.

Meals: B/L/D | Hotel in Paro

### Day 3: Paro to Thangthangkha - Trek Starts

Gunitsawa to Thangthangkha | 3,610m | 7-8 hours | 22 km

This trek begins at **Gunitsawa Village** where you pass the army post. At the army checkpoint, your trek permit (provided by your tour operator) will be checked and endorsed.

On this long day, the trail continues with lots of small ups and downs. After going uphill through the river valley, the valley finally narrows gradually to a mere path which descends to a meadow where camp will be set up.

From here, if weather permits, you will have the first great view of **Mt. Jomolhari** (7,314m), the second highest snow-capped mountain of Bhutan.

Meals: B/L/D | Camping

### Day 4: Thangthangkha to Jangothang

Thangthangkha to Jangothang | 4,080m | 5-6 hours | 19 km

If you did not see Mt. Jomolhari clearly the previous evening, you will still have a chance to get a great view early this morning.

The trek continues up the Paro Chhu valley, which widens into patches of alpine meadow and scanty growths of forest. You will cross an army checkpoint along the way and enjoy a spectacular view of high mountain ridges and snow-capped peaks.

In this area, yaks and their herders' homes become a regular feature of the landscape. After reaching **Jangothang**, one of the most beautiful campsites of the Himalayas, you will again have a spectacular view of **Mount Jomolhari** (7,314m).

Meals: B/L/D | Camping

### Day 5: Jangothang Rest Day

Jangothang | 4,080m

The rest day in Jangothang provides plenty of possibilities for day hikes with great views of lakes and snow-capped mountains such as **Jomolhari** and **Jichu Drake**. There are good chances to spot some blue sheep on the upper slopes of the valley.

Jangothang is a perfect environment for your acclimatization. You can also trek up to **Tshophu** (lake) or hike around the area. There are good short hiking trails in different directions.

Jomolhari and its subsidiary mountain chains lie towards the west, Jichu Drake to the north, and there are a number of unclimbed peaks to the east.

Meals: B/L/D | Camping

### Day 6: Jangothang to Soe Yaksa

Jangothang to Soe Yaksa | 3,800m | 6-7 hours | 16 km

The trail leads to a last settlement in the valley and drops to the Paro Chhu. Passing the lake of **Tshophu** (4,380m), you will climb up a steep slope to **Bhonte La Pass** at 4,890m, the highest point of this trek route.

Reaching the Soe Yaksa valley (also known as Dhumzo Chhu valley), you trek downstream passing the few houses of Soe Yaksa (Dhumzo) to arrive at your camp.

Meals: B/L/D | Camping

### Day 7: Soe Yaksa to Thombu Shong

Soe Yaksa to Thombu Shong | 4,180m | 4-5 hours | 11 km

Today's walk initially takes you past hillsides lush with a crop of azalea and rhododendron before gradually climbing above the tree line.

The trail climbs 100m over a ridge to drop to another stream down below. After crossing **Takhung La Pass** (4,520m), Jichu Drake and Tsherim Gang can be seen from the pass.

You descend to **Thombu Shong**, where there are a few yak herder huts near your camp.

Meals: B/L/D | Camping

### Day 8: Thombu Shong to Paro - Trek Ends

Thombu Shong to Paro | 2,280m | 4-5 hours | 13 km

Crossing **Thombu La Pass** (4,380m) early morning, you will reach the same place from where you started your trek, Sharna.

You will be received by your driver who will drive you to the hotel. After that, you can relax in the hotel for a few hours and stroll around Paro city if you wish. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

Meals: B/L/D | Hotel in Paro

### Day 9: Paro to Thimphu Sightseeing

Thimphu | 2,350m

After breakfast, drive to Thimphu. Visit **National Memorial Chorten**, which was built in 1974 by the mother of our third king in memory of the third king, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. The paintings and statues in the temple are dedicated to the third king.

Then visit the tallest statue of **Buddha Dordenma** (51 meters tall).

After that, visit the **Mini Zoo** where you will get a chance to see our national animal, the Takin.

Finally, visit **Tashichho Dzong** and stroll around Thimphu city for shopping. Dinner and overnight in hotel.

Meals: B/L/D | Hotel in Thimphu

### Day 10: Departure

Paro Airport | 2,280m

Early morning, drive to Paro Airport for your departure flight. Farewell!

Meals: B

## What's Included

### Included

+ Accommodation in 3* Hotels in twin sharing basis
+ All Three Meals (Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner)
+ Daily Tariff
+ Royalty and Government Taxes
+ Sustainable Development Fee of USD 100 per night per person which goes towards free education, free healthcare and infrastructure development
+ Transportation from receive till drop
+ Museum and Monument fee
+ Bottle Water in Car
+ Sightseeing
+ English Speaking Guide
+ Driver
+ Camping equipment and tents
+ Pack horses and horsemen
+ Trekking permits

### Not Included

- Air Fare
- Visa fee of USD 40 per person
- Insurance Premiums
- Payment for service provided on a personal basis
- Cost for any services not mentioned in the "Inclusive Head"
- Cost incurred due to mishaps, strikes, political unrest, etc.
- Personal expenses in items such as laundry, soft or hard drinks, camera charges, bottle water in restaurants or in hotels, portage, bellboy charges
- Charges for chartered flights necessitated by a sudden death or unforeseen mishap
- Tips to guide and driver

**Ready to Book?**

Contact our Bhutan travel experts to customize this itinerary.

**bywaysinquiry@gmail.com | +975 77973131 | www.byways.bt**