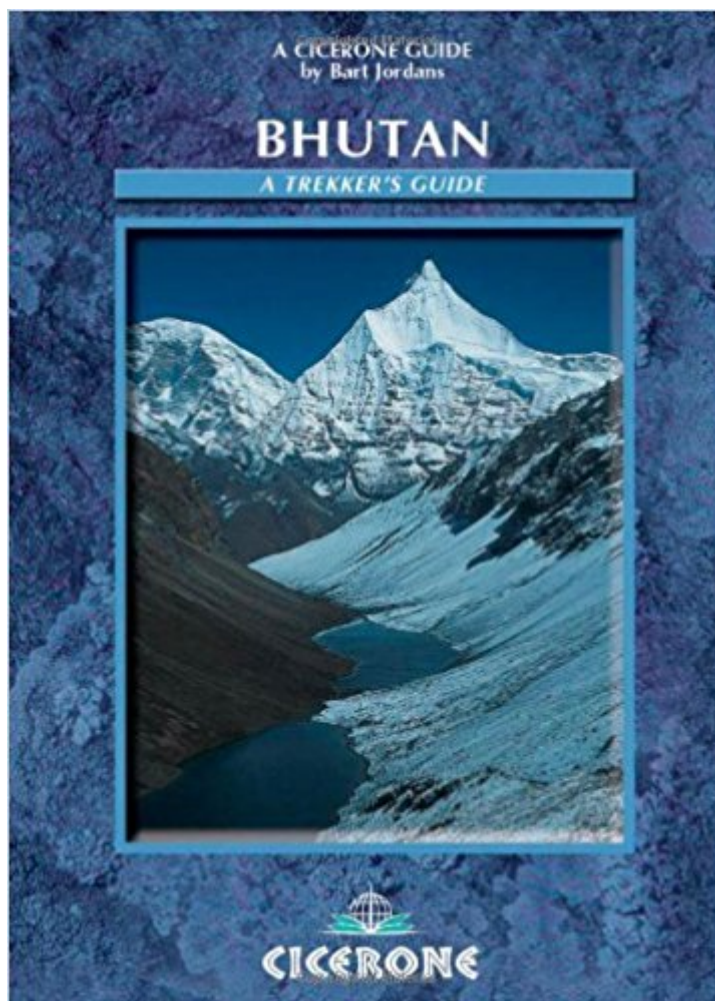


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# Bhutan: A Trekker's Guide (Cicerone Guides)



## Synopsis

A fully revised second edition guide to trekking in this mysterious country. With 19 treks of between three to 24 days in length, this guide offers a unique perspective to trekking through Bhutan. A thorough introduction offers advice on preparation and fitness, when to go and how to get there, trekking in Bhutan as well as the people and culture of this country. The guide includes:

- All the stunning trails are accompanied by full route information
- Information on preparation, health issues, permits and local culture
- Information to ensure a minimum-impact trek
- Illustrated with the author's own stunning photographs, and full-colour sketch maps of each trek.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Bart Jordans, a native of Holland, moved to Bhutan in 1999 with his wife and family. Since 1984 he has worked as a freelance trekking guide, focusing on and encouraging sustainable tourism as a sustainable community based tourism consultant.

Good reference in western and central areas of the country, but vague in eastern, less traveled region. Good book to provide overall background for persons planning to hike or trek in Bhutan. Of course, you can only go on organized program, but you can have a trek organized specifically for yourself, friends and/or group.

Good overview of trekking considerations in Bhutan. The guide offered useful details on the

Snowman Trek we completed this year.

While the justified standard reference from the respected Cicerone guidebooks for venturesome trekkers, this also informs the rest of us who wish to learn about what lies off the highways increasingly linking what were yak trails and footpaths across this largely vertically-biased kingdom. The Himalayas to the north, the tropics to the south, in between up and down over gorges and into the highland passes and pastures lie many of the 27 treks featured here. They straddle the rugged terrain. Jordans' "Dutch-English" describes affectionately and carefully (the one drawback, if minor: a few glitches remain in his idiom, or the proofreading) the sights on the famous Snowman Trek. This same guidebook was taken along by Kevin Grange (see his *Beneath Blossom Rain: Discovering Bhutan on the Toughest Trek in the World*), and I bet Mark Horrell (*Yakking with the Thunder Dragon: Walking Bhutan's Epic Snowman Trek*) consulted it too. While it preceded in its 2005 original ed. the 1984 venture partially along that trek detailed in *Journey in Bhutan: Himalayan Trek in the Kingdom of the Thunder Dragon* by Trish Nicholson, the lore it shares will reward anybody planning a few days--or weeks--in the northern region. (I reviewed these titles in Nov. 2012.) Mastiffs guard yak herders' tents. Guides must push on ahead of trekkers--all must gain prior clearance for routes--and get to camp ahead of the visitors. Bears and leopards still roam the slopes. The flora and the fauna, given attention in the prefatory sections, both beckon. Similarly, Jordans packs a lot of information about altitude sickness, etiquette, geology, natural features, folklore, legends, and what to take along on both the day portions of the hikes and the trekking luggage carried by yaks or horses. The maps look far too generalized given the topography, but as no trekker can go it alone, they seem more like sketches for groups to get a general lay of the land than they are orientation charts. You find a summation of the elevation gains or losses each day's section, but some treks are cursorily explained while others get much more coverage. This supplements, therefore, what a guide will provide, rather than serving to direct or inform a solo trekker, given Bhutan's restrictions for tours. What adds value is the attention to adventures in the national parks. The Yeti have their own reserve, as does the Apeman: each have a trek to their name here. These creatures may remain hidden, but you find out about the yaks, takins, and those in Lunana who care for the herds. Sidebars update in the 2012 printing of the second 2008 ed. with summarized changes in roads due to weather, construction, and policy. (There's also a pdf Adobe format, unseen by me.) As Queen Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck in her forward notes, the "reorientation" of traffic as feet and beast give way to jeeps and pavement threatens the viability of networks that have been used for centuries by villagers, farmers, and traders. However,

"appreciative trekkers" may seek out "these near forgotten routes." This handy guide, with a water-resistant cover, colored maps, and an attractive array of photographs, is a must for anyone leaving the great lateral road for the heartlands of Bhutan.

This trekking guide provides an exciting vision of the high and remote places of Bhutan. It includes both standard treks and spectacular routes seldom traversed. The author writes: "More people have reached the summit of Everest than have successfully completed the Lunana trek." Bart Jordans has accomplished an incredible task of documentation and compression. The guide is intended for trail use when weight matters; tough paper, pages sewn in signatures, cover strong but flexible. OK to kick it around on a tent floor. The book has many virtues: Settlement and camp heights in feet and meters. Green boxes give average hours of travel, height changes, and distances. Clear sketch maps show peaks, settlements, camp sites, trails and rivers. A few spectacular photographs are included. There are also special blue boxes each with a different side topic: mountaineering history, botanical descriptions, local customs, explanations about monasteries and forts, snippets on such things as the taxation of yak herders, and advice on how to deal with a poisoned horse. Introductory topics include acclimatization and stretching exercises. Perhaps one day there will be a larger home edition containing all the cultural and mountaineering information that had to be cut (see [...]) The guidebook will be an invaluable addition to the information given by your Bhutanese guide. Read about the areas you will not be visiting. Get the benefit of Jordan's years of commitment to this wonderful unforgettable country. Take this book with you, as I did last year.

Solid information for the serious trekker/climber, Jordans' `BHUTAN: A Trekker's Guide' is also a delightful read with good photos for the armchair traveler (2nd edition 2008 January). There's a saying among the Bhutanese `A crow is not a bird/ A bush is not a tree/ And Thimphu is not Bhutan.' This is the real Bhutan. There are several Bhutan guidebooks but none like Mr. Jordans. This is a guide through rural Bhutan by a professional with intimate knowledge of the country's cultural heartland, starting with a wealth of in depth information from the point where you leave motorized transport behind.

This is an excellent guide to trekking routes in Bhutan. It does not provide all the general background information found in other guidebooks, but is strongly focussed on a good range of trekking routes. I have found it very useful in planning my next trek, as it includes a wider range of treks than can be found in other books and websites. The trek descriptions and sketch maps are

quite detailed and informative.

I found this book to be a very valuable resource even though it lacks depth and detail. The maps, though small, are extremely clear and informative. Trekking Maps alone justify the purchase of the book.

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