

Bhutan for Family | 13 Days



Bhutan is a country nestled in the eastern Himalayas. It is a land of superlatives, the last surviving example of a Tibetan Buddhist Kingdom that proudly guard and treasures its cultural and natural heritage. Blessed with a tiny population and steep inaccessible valleys and rolling hills and towering crags, with only small patches of cultivation, it holds fabulous pristine forest that are almost entirely untouched and full of wild lives.

Bhutan is not an ordinary place. It has one foot in the past and one in the future. The country has only opened its doors to foreigners quite recently, and although it does so with outstanding hospitality, it is not without some reserve, wishing to avoid the negative side-effects of uncontrolled tourism apparent in other developing nations.

Number of visitors is restricted as the government imposes a fixed and very high daily tariff. The visitors will be enlivened by a series of splendid and impressive dzongs (fortress & monasteries) that usually occupy eagle nest locations of strategic importance. The Bhutanese people still dress in traditional garb and their customs and lifestyles are preserved with enthusiasm and pride.

We have planned this trip carefully in such a way that all of these aspects of Bhutan and its people are combined to make a most rewarding and thrilling culture & nature tour destination for the entire family to explore and experience together!

Trip Highlights

- Participation in Archery session
- Cooking class & dinner or lunch at Village home
- Traditional Hot Stone bath
- See closely a typical day in the life of Bhutanese school children
- Visit a school of arts and crafts in Thimphu and observe young boys and girls mastering the skills of thirteen arts and crafts
- Watch how the medicines are purely made from mountainous herbal plants at Indigenous Herbal medicinal centre in Thimphu
- Witness mastery of weavers in a traditional weave center
- Cultural program by traditional dancers

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Paro | Drive to Thimphu (2,334 m | 51 km | 1.5 hrs)

Welcome to Bhutan! Upon arrival in Paro, clear customs and immigration. Meet your Guide and driver outside the terminal building and transfer to Thimphu. Before you drive to Thimphu visit the oldest temple Kyichu Lhakhang in Paro and attend the special welcome ceremony especially organized for you. Get blessing from the local lama priest and leave for Thimphu. In Thimphu time permits stroll around the capital city after check-in to the hotel in Thimphu. Overnight in Thimphu.

Kyichu Lhakhang in Paro

Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo in the 7th century miraculously built 108 temples, along with Jorkhang in Lhasa. Kyichu is considered to be one of them and is one of the oldest temples in Bhutan.

Drive from Paro to Thimphu

The distance of about 65 km from Paro town takes about little more than 1 hour. Drive south following Pachu river to the river confluence at Chuzom, which is also the hub of road network going to Paro, Ha,

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Thimphu and Phuntsholing. From Chuzom, the drive takes about 1 hour, staying close to the Wangchu River in the valley floor, as you pass through villages and suburbs to the capital, Thimphu. En-route, you can stop to view Tachogang temple and the nunnery at Sitsina.

Thimphu (2,300 m)

Was a wooded farming valley until 1961, when it became Bhutan's official national capital. The massive Tashicho Dzong, about 700 years old, was carefully revamped in the 1960s by the late King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk to house the royal and main government offices. Even today, it still only has a few streets and no traffic lights with estimated population of 105,000 people.

Accommodation: Hotel Riverview

Meals: Lunch, Dinner



Day 2: In Thimphu

Full day sightseeing in Thimphu. Visit Memorial Chorten, Takin Sanctuary, Buddha Point, handmade paper factory and weekend market. Towards end of the day visit Tashicho Dzong. Overnight in Thimphu.

Memorial Chorten

This landmark of Thimphu was built in 1974 in the memory of third King, Jigme Dorji Wangchuk, who is popularly regarded as Father of Modern Bhutan. It is a four-storey tall white building, containing statues and iconography of deities from complex

tantric teachings and serves as an important place of worship for Thimphu residents, as well as from other parts of the country. Takin Sanctuary: Takin (*Budorcas taxicolor*) has been chosen as the national animal of Bhutan is based both on its uniqueness and its association with country's history and mythology. It is said that Devine Madman, a popular saint is said to have created it with his magical power at a large congregation of devotees. It resembles like a cow from back and goat in the front and continues to befuddle taxonomists, who cannot quite relate to other animal.

Buddha Point

This is a new monument and main highlight of Thimphu valley. It has 165 meter high Buddha Statue

Paper Factory

Traditional papers were made from the daphne plant, using simple methods. Weekend Market: The colorful weekend market of Thimphu is held from Friday-Sunday. Residents of Thimphu and country sides come to shop for food and clothes. There are some handicrafts and gifts shop as well, and provide a great photography scene.

Tashichhodzong

This fortress serves as the office of the King, ministers and various government organizations. It also is the headquarters for central monastic body of Bhutan. Bhutan's spiritual leader Je-Khenpo and the monks of both Thimphu and Punakha reside here during summer. It is also the venue for Thimphu Festival in the fall season.

Accommodation: Hotel Riverview

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 3: Drive Thimphu - Punakha (1,242 m | 74 km | 2.25 hrs)

We leave Thimphu for Punakha which takes about 3 hours. In the afternoon, easy hike to the Fertility

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Temple (Chimi Lhakhang) and explore the local village. Overnight in Punakha.

Drive from Thimphu to Punakha/Wangdue

The drive from Thimphu (75 km) takes about 3 hours. The road climbs from Thimphu to Dochula pass and descends through ever changing forests into the semi-tropical valley of Punakha and Wangdi at around 1200 m. En-route stop at Dochula pass (3050m) where you can view the eastern Himalayas, including Bhutan's highest mountain, Gangkar Punsum (7,550 m).

Fertility Temple (Chimi Lhakhang)

A monastery and fertility temple dedicated to Lama Drukpa Kuenley, a Tibetan Buddhist saint known popularly as "the divine madman" and considered a folk hero in Bhutan for his unconventional ways. Drukpa Kuenley originally built a chorten on the site in the 14th century, on which a temple was later built in 15th century. The temple, flanked by nearly 100 tall prayer flags, sits atop a picturesque hill. It has long been a pilgrimage site for childless couples. This easy walk takes about 1/2 hour each way.

Accommodation: Hotel Zangtho Pelri

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4: In Punakha

Morning visit historical Punakha Dzong – the sacred site of Royal Wedding.

In the afternoon free for individual activities.

Overnight stay in Punakha.

Punakha Dzong: Or Pungthang Dechen Phodrang "Palace of Great Happiness" popularly known as Punakha Dzong, located on the confluence of two rivers; Pho and Mochu was built in 1637 by Shubdrung Nawang Namgyal. It serves as winter residence for the Central Monastic body, which migrate from Thimphu to Punakha in the winter. It is also the venue for Punakha Festival held in February or March.

Accommodation: Hotel Zangtho Pelri

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 5: Drive Punakha - Gangtey (Phobjikha) **(2,800 m | 80 km | 2.6 hrs)**

After breakfast, drive to Gangtey (Phobjikha). En route stop briefly at old Wangdiphodrang town. On arrival in Gangtey, visit Gangtey Gompa (monastery) and take a walk in the valley if time permits. Overnight in Phobjikha.

Drive from Punakha to Gangtey (Phobjikha)

Drive to Gangtey (Phobjikha) takes about 2 1/2 hours covering distance of 60 km. The road climbs from Wandue, drive uphill almost crosses over Pele La pass 3400m. Before, reaching the pass, the road diverges and we take the road least traveled by. This eventually leads into the 'hidden valley' containing the stunningly beautiful monastery of Gangtey Gompa. Phobjikha Valley: Phobjikha (3000m) is a wide-glacial and beautiful valley, designated as conservation zone within the Black Mountains National Park, a natural habitat for wildlife, including nesting blacknecked cranes from Central Asia (mid autumn till early spring). Because of the conservation measures, there is no electricity in the valley. The lodges use solar powered cells or generator to light which is turned off after dinner. Hot water is provided in the bucket and rooms are heated with wood stoves.

Gangtey Gompa

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Gantey Gumpa monastery sits atop a hillock that overlooks the Phobjikha valley. It is headed by the ninth Gangtey Trulku and is the largest Nyingma monastery in western Bhutan. It was founded in 1613 by Gyalse Pema Thinlay, a grandson and reincarnation of influential treasure finder Pema Lingpa. Incarnate line of Pema Thinlay, representing the body aspects of Pema Lingpa, contrasted with mind and speech emanations. The monastery has been recently built and surrounding the monastery are village homes and hermitages.

Black-necked Crane

'Thrung Trung Karmo' as this bird is passionately called in Bhutan is subject of many Bhutanese songs and folklore. They are seen among the painting on the walls of temples and Thankga. These endangered species of cranes migrate from Tibet in late autumn and typically stay till the mid march. About 3-400 cranes reside in the wetland in the center of the valley. The Observation & Education Centre (open 7-7pm – Mon-Fri) has informative display about the cranes and conservation effort in the valley.

Accommodation: Hotel Dewachen

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 6: Drive Gangtey – Jakar (2,580 m | 143 km | 3 hrs)

Drive to Jakar (Bumthang). Stop at Chendebji Chorten (stupa) enroute. Enjoy lunch at Trongsa and drive to Jakar. Overnight in Jakar.

Drive from Gangtey to Jakar

The drive to Jakar (Bumthang) takes about 5-6 hours covering distance of approx. 160 km. The road climbs again to Pele La pass (3,400 m) where we make stop for views of the snow clad peaks, including that of Bhutan's sacred peak Mt. Chomolhari. After crossing Pelela pass, descend and pass through the villages of Rukubji, Chendebji, Sephu, Langtel and several other villages and arrive in Trongsa for lunch.

From Trongsa, the drive to Jakar takes about 2 1/2 hrs. Climb from Trongsa to Yotong La (3,551 m) and descend into Chumey valley (2,700 m), the first of four Bumthang valleys. Then it is another 45 minutes, past the villages of Zugney and Prakar, and across Kiki la pass (2,860 m) to arrive at Jakar, the administrative center of Bumthang district.

Chendebji Chorten (Stupa)

This chorten stands majestically along the high way connecting west to east. The ground by the side serves as famous site for picnic lunch. This monument was believed to have been built to subdue demons dwelling around the area. It has architectural resemblance to famous Boudha Nath of Nepal.

Bumthang Valley

It is justifiably regarded as the cultural heartland of the kingdom with its many temples, holy sites, languages and traditions. It is here that most kings, rulers or priest were buried or cremated. There are four valleys and Jakar at 2,800m in Chokhor valley is the administrative center and the main town of Bumthang district.

Accommodation: The Mountain Resort

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7: Jakar (Bumthang) sightseeing

After breakfast explore the Valley by visiting the famous Jampay Lhakhang (temple), Kurjey temple complex, if time permits and if you walk to Tamshing. After visit to Tamshing, walk down through the local Bhutanese villages and farms to Swiss Farm to see beer making and cheese making in progress.

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Later you will also visit Jakar Dzong. Evening free to stroll around. Overnight in Jakar.

Places of interest in the Valley

Jambay Lhakhang is another one of the geomantic temples (like Kichu in Paro) founded in 7th century by a Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo, this time on the 'left knee of the ogrees'. Guru Rinpoche is said to have taught the local king Sindhu Raja from the temple roof in the 8th century.

Kurjey Lhakhang: Kurjey is named after the sacred power place where Guru Rinpoche (8th century) left the imprint of his body on the solid rocks, which can be seen from inside the shrine. There are three large temples within the complex surrounded by a perimeter comprising of 108 stupas. Upon entering, the first temple to the right is Guru Lhakhang (which houses the cave) dating from 1652. The middle temple Sampalundrup was built by the first King Ugyen Wangchuk in 1900, during his tenure as Trongsa Penlop. The third temple is recently constructed under patronage of Her Majesty queen mother Ashi Kesang Wangchuk.

Tamshing Temple: Located opposite Kurjey Lhakhang this temple was founded by Bhutan's own religious treasure discoverer, Terton Pema Lingpa in 1501. Believed to be the reincarnation of Guru Rinpochey, he discovered many religious treasures around the country. The original murals on the walls still survive, which are considered to be the oldest extant painting in Bhutan.

Jakar Dzong: "Jakar Dzong" literally meaning castle of the white bird is in a picturesque location overlooking the Chokhor valley. The current structure was built in 1667 and later refurbished in 1683, is said to be one of the largest dzong in Bhutan, with impressive fortress walls, elegant structure but rather simple interior.

Swiss Farm Area: There is a small factory on the other side of the river which produces Swiss Cheese, Bumthang honey and apple wine and local beer called 'Red Panda'. It is an interesting place to

visit and taste some local made products, started by a Swiss Bhutanese.

Accommodation: The Mountain Resort

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 8: Drive Jakar – Trongsa (2,300 m | 67 km | 2 hrs)

Drive from Jakar to Trongsa is 69 km takes about 2 1/2 hours. You will drive across Kikila pass and another highest pass Yotongla at 3,551 m en route and finally descend down to Trongsa.

Afternoon visit Trongsa Dzong and if interest further visit Ta Dzong or get back to your hotel and enjoy the panorama view of the Valley. Overnight in Trongsa.

Trongsa

Trongsa (2,300 m) lies at the geographical center of Bhutan. The town of Trongsa has been developing since 1980's, with many of the shops being owned by Bhutanese of Tibetan decent. This small town located is on the face of the ridge and at the cross-road junction of lateral east-west highway, and the road leading south to Shemgang.

Trongsa Dzong or Choekhor Rabdentse is the largest and most impressively situated dzong in Bhutan, perched high on a cliff above the deep Mangdechu river gorge. It was built in 1648 on the site of temple which was built in 1543. The huge many-level fortress with its intricate wood carvings has a maze of courtyards and covered passages that follow the contour of the ridge. First and second King ruled

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the country from this fort and all successive Kings have held the post of Trongsa Penlop, (honorary governor) prior to being crowned as the King.

Ta Dzong: The watchtower above the town area is shaped like tower with wings. It contains a shrine dedicated to Gesar, the legendary epic warrior king, and another named after Jigme Namgyal, the father of the first king. The views from the tower of the dzong and town is spectacular and in ancient times, all approaches could be monitored from here.

Accommodation: The Yangkhil Resort
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 9: Drive Trongsa - Punakha (1,242 m | 137 km | 4 hrs)

After breakfast, you will drive to Punakha via Chendebji Chorten and across Pelela pass. Overnight in Punakha.

Drive from Trongsa to Punakha:
The distance is 145 km and takes about 5 1/2 hours to reach Punakha. Leaving Trongsa, the road winds for 14 kms north west via Tsamkhar to cross Mangde chu river at Bjizam. After driving for nearly one hour, you can still see the Trongsa Dzong, so close enough that you feel as though you can touch. Retrace through the villages of Tangsibji, the chorten at Chendebji stupa, and then through villages of Sephu Nikachu, Rukubji and climbing up the nomadic settlements, and Yak country to Pele la pass (3,420m). From the pass, the road downhill through

changing vegetation takes you to Wangdiphodrang and then to Punakha.

Accommodation: Hotel Zangtho Pelri
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10: Drive Punakha – Paro (2,250 m | 115 km | 3.25 hrs)

Today, we will drive back to Paro via Thimphu. After lunch at Thimphu, continue drive to Paro. In the afternoon you have time to explore down town Paro on your own, do shopping etc. Overnight in Paro.

Drive from Punakha to Paro via Thimphu: The drive takes about 5 hours covering a distance of 142 km. From Punakha, drive west and climb up to Dochula pass (3,050m), where you have another opportunity to view the peaks of the eastern Himalayas. Descend to Thimphu from Dochula takes about 40 minutes. The western branch of lateral highway from Thimphu, runs close to the Wangchu river in the valley floor, through the suburbs and villages of Thimphu to arrive at the river confluence of Chuzom, which is also the hub of road network going to Paro, Ha, Thimphu and Phuntsholing. From Chuzom, it is north-west for about 1/2 hour, following Pa Chu river upstream, passing Tachogang temple on the other side of the river, then through relatively straight road, into the villages and farm houses of Paro valley.

Paro Town: Paro is one of the most beautiful valleys in the country with Bhutan's only airport located here, among the terraced fields, and elegant farm houses. Willow trees line many of the roads, contrasting with bright colors of the fields and the most popular and important sites also found within Paro district. Paro town (2,280m) is still a small town with one main street and less than one hundred small family-run shops. The weekend market in Paro is held on Saturdays.

Accommodation: Tashi Namgay Resort
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11: Hike Paro – Tiger's Nest Monastery (3,120 m)

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Today you will be taken for a hike to Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest Monastery). Overnight in Paro.

Hike to Taktsang: Drive to north of Paro town for about 1/2 hr and embark on a trek to the famed Taktsang (Tiger's lair) monastery. Taktsang monastery is located on the face of a 1,000m seemingly impossible sheer, vertical cliff, above Paro valley. The trail begins near the Satsam (2650m) and climbs steeply uphill to the Cafeteria (2,940m), an area of exposed ridge with panoramic view of Takstang. This takes little more than an hour. (Ponies are provided on request to ride up till this Cafeteria, but rest of way, including return downhill must be on foot.) You can get a good view from the Cafeteria or hike further uphill for another hour or so to the temple itself. There are several other temples and sites within the vicinity. Lunch is served at the tea house. The return trek to the road head is quite steep downhill, where you will be met by the transport and drive to the hotel.

Accommodation: Tashi Namgay Resort
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 12: Fly Paro – Kolkata

After breakfast drive to the airport with wonderful memories of Bhutan to catch the outgoing flight to Kolkata.

On the way to your hotel visit Kolkata famous Flower market and the "Slum" at the bank of Hooghly river. Rest of the day free for individual activities or go for a Sunset Cruise followed with nice farewell dinner at the hotel.

Accommodation: The Oberoi Grand
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 13: Depart Kolkata

Transfer to airport for your homeward-bound flight.

Note: Depending upon your flight schedule you have an opportunity to Explore Kolkata city before your departure.

The interesting sights are (Optional):

Mother Teresa's Mother House: In 1950 Mother Teresa founded the Missionaries of Charity (MOC) in the city of Kolkata (Calcutta) to lend aid to the poor, disabled and infirm. What started out as a small community of 12 Sisters has grown to include more than 4,500 volunteer Sisters working worldwide. It is a holy place. Mother's tomb is on the ground floor and the chapel on the first. Opposite this is the simple room in which Mother lived. You can actually piece together her austere and simple life.

Victoria Memorial Hall: Built entirely of white marble, one of India's most beautiful monuments which represent a unique combination of classical European architecture and Mughal motifs. The domed and white marble museum sprawls over 64 acres and is set in a landscaped garden at the southern side of the Kolkata's maidan (ground) near Jawaharlal Nehru Road. It has a vast collection of pictures, statues, manuscripts, letters etc, relating to the Nawabi and British times in Bengal.

Flower Market: In the early morning this market gets filled with colorful flowers from the northern part of Calcutta. You can see flowers everywhere in this market on the ground, on people's head, in carts and trucks and on display. By 7PM the market start winding down and by 8 pm all the sale is over.

Town Hall: Town Hall displays Palladian Neo-classical Doric style architecture and has been used as the Town Court House as well as the office of Public Services Commission. Constructed in 1813 using wood and bricks. The 25 feet high ground floor has an intricate network of numerous small rooms and a central marble hall. Numerous community meetings

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and social gatherings have been organized in front of the town hall of Kolkata.

Meal: Breakfast

Includes

- Airport (pick up/drop off) transfers by private A/C vehicle
- Bhutan visa
- Twin-Sharing accommodation in all Hotel/Resort/Lodge as mentioned
- All meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner), afternoon tea and bottled water throughout the tour
- All sightseeing and long distance transportation in private air-condition vehicle (cars/SUVs or mini/micro-bus etc. depending on group size). This includes all state taxes, toll taxes, parking, allowance for driver, outstation overnight charges for the driver
- All sightseeing as per the itinerary
- English speaking licensed tour guide
- All entrance fees to the mentioned monument/museum
- Road permit, royalty and all internal taxes
- All applicable government taxes

Excludes

- International flight tickets
- Visa fee
- Travel insurance
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Personal clothing and equipment
- Tips for trip leader/guide, driver, hotel staff and porters
- Items of personal nature such as alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, laundry, and other unforeseen expenses
- Items/services not listed in "included"
- Extra expenses/payment for 'Optional' activities/programs if participated

Accommodation

Hotel Riverview, Thimphu

One of the finest properties in Thimphu, elegantly situated on the East bank of Thimphu River. It presents commanding view of both town and the valley. An interesting feature of the place is the fact that all the rooms overlook Thimphu River and have private balconies offering panoramic vistas.



Hotel Zangtho Pelri, Punakha

Named after the heaven of Guru Rimpoche and situated majestically on a hillock, the hotel features spacious, well designed rooms in small cabins as well as in main building. A charming place to stay, the guests enjoy fascinating view of the rice terraces, Punakha river and constantly changing Himalayan valley weather.

Dewachen Hotel & Spa, Gangtey

Encircled by pine forests in the picturesque valley of Phobjikha, Dewachen hotel features 28 spacious, comfortably furnished rooms, with en suite facilities. All rooms are designed and decorated in traditional Bhutanese style perfectly blended with natural surroundings, for a perfect hideaway relaxation. Rooms are well heated by traditional 'bukhari' (iron stove), so you feel cozy and comfortable during cold winter nights.

The Mountain Resort, Bumthang

The Mountain Resort in Bumthang has come a long way without losing its roots. Our family-run resort was started by a man of exceptional kindness, who

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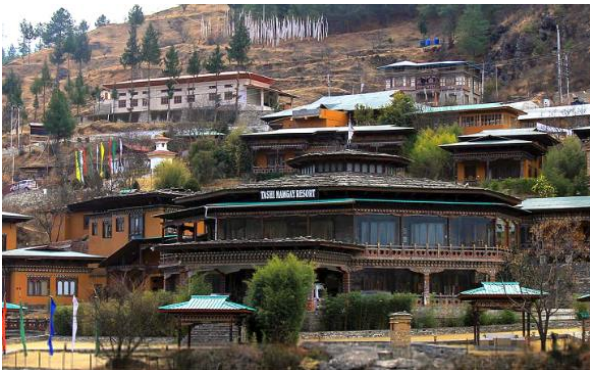
dreamed of a place that would be gracious, spacious, and rooted in the genuine traditions of Bhutanese hospitality - a place brimming with the love of our dearly beloved family elder.

The Yangkhil Resort, Trongsa

The Yangkhil Resort is situated not far from the Trongsa offering spectacular views of the deep valleys surrounding it. Resort has 21 spacious rooms of modern design combined with traditional Bhutanese architecture and wooden flooring. All rooms are fully insulated and the bathroom has a bathtub with a shower over. Hot and cold running water is available all day long.

Tashi Namgay Resort, Paro

The resort is set amidst five acres of lush foliage and green lawns. Located conveniently in the heart of Paro Valley but away from the distractions of the main town, Tashi Namgay Resort offers you a calm and peaceful environment within its compound. Traditional Bhutanese and modern architecture have been uniquely blended, yet offering all the amenities of a modern lifestyle.



The Oberoi Grand, Kolkata

Fondly referred to as the Grand Dame of Chowringhee, our 5 star hotel: The Oberoi Grand has been an icon on the landscape of Kolkata for more than a century; with a reputation for taking care of its guests that befits the best hotel in Kolkata. The sense of calm that pervades the outdoor space is carried

into the classically appointed rooms and suites that encircle the courtyard.

Group/Individual

On this trip you will be traveling privately with your family & friends. Our representative/tour partner will look after your transfers to and from the airport and will be around to answer other questions you may have about your trip.

Accommodation – Hotel, Resort

Your accommodation has been selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a fine heritage hotel in another or a family-run guesthouse or lodges in a smaller town. Accommodation in remote areas tend to be basic and may not have western amenities.

Single Accommodation

Single (room) supplement is provided on request (single supplement charge applies) and are subject to availability.

Food & Transport

All breakfasts, 11 lunches and 12 dinners are included.

Bhutanese cuisine is influenced by Chinese, Tibetan and Indian culture and generally in spicy side. However, don't be too worried if you aren't able to eat food that is too spicy. A majority of Bhutan's professional chefs/cooks take into account the foreigners' less spicy taste. The hotel/restaurant meals in Bhutan are usually buffet style and include Bhutanese and Western food.

For airport, sightseeing transfers, and for long drives we use a private air-con car, jeep, van depending upon group size. Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

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Weather

Generally, the ideal time to visit Bhutan is either in autumn from September to November or in spring between March and May. Himalayan views tend to be best between October to December, as the weather is generally clear with sunny skies. From March to May the valleys are awash with colour when the famous rhododendrons bloom (particularly in May); the country has over 45 wild species. You will experience a range of temperatures during the trip depending on the altitude. During the day temperatures will be approx. 10°C-20°C. At night temperatures will drop in autumn to about 3°C-4°C.

Baggage Allowance

At time of writing the standard weight limit is one checked baggage is 25kg (55lb) and hand baggage 7kg (15lbs). We recommend packing only one piece of checked baggage. Luggage allowances for both hand and checked luggage are subject to change, we suggest you check the airline's website for the latest information prior to your departure.

Please note there is no direct flight to Paro (Bhutan) from Europe or America. You have to fly to Paro either via Kathmandu, Bangkok, Kolkata and Delhi.

ESSENTIAL/PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Passport & Visas

All nationalities require a passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information below is primarily for EU passport holders, and other nationalities should check with the relevant embassies. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at

points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

BHUTAN: Visa is required to enter Bhutan and as per government rules Bhutan visa should be processed through a travel agency. Hence, we will arrange/process visa for you. You will need to send us a clear copy of your passport at the time of booking; as we have to arrange/process in advance. It can either be sent by post or scanned; it should be very clear and in colour. If you need to get a new passport for the journey, please apply for this immediately, and send us the copy/scan as soon as you receive your new passport. It is important the information you give us is correct, and that the passport copy you send us is the one on which you will be travelling to Bhutan.

INDIA: Visas are required if you are German and for most other nationalities. Visa information changes regularly for India; for the latest information on applying for a visa please follow these links for more information.

[https://indianembassyberlin.gov.in/pages?id=Mq,,&su bid=MTQ,](https://indianembassyberlin.gov.in/pages?id=Mq,,&su bid=MTQ)

Please note: Visa regulations can change without notice, therefore please check the current regulations or contact us.

Vaccination & Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad.

BHUTAN/INDIA: There are no mandatory vaccination requirements for Bhutan. However, recommended vaccinations for this trip are: Polio, Tetanus, Diphtheria, Typhoid, Hepatitis A, hepatitis B, cholera, rabies, and tuberculosis.

You will also need a yellow fever vaccination certificate if you're arriving from a country with risk of yellow fever transmission or transiting for more than 12 hours through a country with risk of yellow fever transmission. Please confirm your vaccine

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recommendations and requirements with your doctor or travel clinic.

Dengue (a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes) risk is present throughout the country at elevations below 2300 m. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available, so take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

Local Time

BHUTAN: UTC/GMT + 6 hours.

INDIA: UTC/GMT + 5:30 hours.

Electricity

Bhutan operates on 230V and 50 Hz. There are three plug types in Bhutan - C, D & G. Plug type C has two round pins, whereas type D also has round pins but three. Plug G has three rectangular pins in a triangular pattern.

INDIA: 230V & 50Mz. India uses three plug types - C, D & M. Plug type C has two round pins, whereas type D also has round pins but three. Type M plugs are often used alongside type D for heavier/larger appliances.

Money

The Bhutanese unit of currency is the Ngultrum and 1Nu = 100 Chetrum. The Ngultrum is pegged to the value of the Indian Rupee and at the time of this publication (May 2023) the approximate exchange rates are 92 Euro and 82 US\$.

It is illegal to import or export Ngultrum. You are advised to bring most of your money in cash as you may have difficulty changing travellers cheques outside Thimphu/Paro. It makes no difference whether you bring Euro or US Dollars. You should change your money on arrival at Paro either at the airport or hotel (please note that the hotel often gives a better rate than the airport).

To get the best exchange rates for Ngultrum, bigger denominations Euro/US\$ that are in pristine conditions (no fold, no mark, no tear, no stain) are required.

INDIA: The national currency of India is the Indian Rupee (INR), with an exchange rate at the time of publication of approximately 89 to the Euro and 82 to the US\$. It is illegal to import or export rupees. Do not accept torn or (very) dirty Indian banknotes from banks or in change as they will almost certainly not be accepted as legal tender in India. Please ask for low denomination notes of 100, 200 or 500 Rupees as 2000 Rupee notes.

ATM | Credit Cards

Throughout the major towns of Bhutan, you will find ATM kiosks of the major Bhutanese banks like the Bank of Bhutan, Druk PNB Bank and Bhutan National Bank. Money can be withdrawn from these ATM kiosks using some major credit cards such as Visa and MasterCard. We recommend you change most of the money you need for the trip before leaving Thimphu. Please do not rely wholly on ATM machines as often they are broken or run out of cash. Credit cards are accepted in larger shops, handicraft stores and hotels in Thimphu other major towns.

Extra Expenses & Spending Money

You will need to bring some extra money to cover drinks, laundry, souvenirs and any other personal expense, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Though it totally depends on individual but generally an approximate amount of US\$150 per person, per week should be sufficient (more if you enjoy a few beers); however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount. Or if you are the one frugal with money probably allocating less would also suffice.

Optional Tours may be offered in some city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each optional tour/activity will be arranged locally by our

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local partner/guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

Tipping

Tipping is of course entirely at your discretion and it is not customary and compulsory in Bhutan but always appreciated. Tips should be given individually and at the end of their service.

Itinerary Change

In case of some unusual events/incidents the order of programs (sightseeing, excursions etc.) might have to change in order to accommodate the local situations. In these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements while maintaining the overall integrity of your trip.

The domestic airlines may change their schedule frequently and, in such cases, our local partner/guide will inform you about the changes.

Travel Insurance

We highly recommend to choose/get an insurance plan/policy that covers your needs. And please make sure to keep/carry a hard-copy of your travel insurance documents on your person while on tour. It's prudent to check thoroughly the inclusions and procedure to file claims prior to purchasing insurance coverage. *travel-to-nature Asia* will not be responsible for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to purchase appropriate travel insurance from the date of booking.

Important Information

On all guided trips although our leaders/guides are well trained to deal with different capabilities, if they have any concerns about someone's ability to safely partake in an activity, or their impact on other people's enjoyment, we authorize them to take necessary action which, in some circumstances, may involve asking someone to miss that activity.
