

Bhutan's Exotic & Endemic Wildlife in Manas National Park

16 Days



This Bhutan journey is carefully tailored to suit the taste of those who loves nature, wants to immerse in exotic cultures and get thrilled in adventure. This holiday can take you in to stunning Buddhist temples, monasteries and pagodas, at their best and is sure to get you closer to these fascinating cultural events, together with all the people and places that make Bhutan unique ever.

We visit all the major iconic spots in Bhutan in this trip and several Dzongs (fortress), monasteries, temples. In order to observe and understand Bhutanese way of life and their culture we plan to visit farmhouse, arts and craft school, nunnery, archery range, local market and witness festivals. Natural world and Bhutan is like synonyms and can feel its presence everywhere but to get you even closer and intimate experience with nature we embark on a short trek to Bumdra and spend a night under stars-filled sky in our tent – there, a sense of adventure awaits you away from the comfort of your own home in a camping tent enveloped by a quiet and dark night sky!

Trip Highlights

- Try to spot an impressive array of endemic bird and other wildlife species in Manas National Park
- Birding in Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Park
- Hike a mountainside to the magnificent Tiger's Nest Monastery
- Enjoy the quiet streets of Bhutan's sleepy cities, Paro and Thimphu
- Hike through river valleys, peaceful forests, and terraced farmland
- Spot Asia's 'Big Five' – Asian Elephant, Asian Water Buffalo, One-horned Rhinoceros, Clouded Leopard & the Bengal Tiger
- Good chance to see globally threatened White-bellied Heron ibisbill; Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler; Pallas's Fish Eagle in Pho Chhu River

- Might catch a sight of stunning but secretive Satyr Tragopan, Blood Pheasant, and the majestic Himalayan Monal
- Get a glimpse of rare primate – Golden and Capped Langurs

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Kolkata

Upon arrival, meet by *travel-to-nature Asia* representative and transfer to your hotel. Please look out for your name-card once you exit out of arrival area.

Rest of the day free for individual activities. Overnight stay in Kolkata.

Accommodation: The Oberoi Grand

Day 2: Fly Kolkata - Guwahati (1.33 hrs) | Drive to Gelephu (221m | 233 km | 5 hrs)

In the morning we drive to Kolkata airport to take a flight to Guwahati. We leave Guwahati and drive northwest into Assam, India and onwards to Gelephu, a bustling border town (233 km, 5 hrs). We make several brief stops on the way. We're sure to see several Lesser Adjutants and possibly Greater Adjutant en route.

Upon arrival at the entry point our Bhutan representative will pick and help us to go through the regular border formalities and transferred to our hotel. We'll spend the afternoon exploring the forested hill slopes around Gelephu. Here we may find species such as Grey Peacock Pheasant, Wreathed Hornbill, Whistling Hawk-Cuckoo, Pin-tailed Green-Pigeon, Violet Cuckoo, and Sultan Tit etc. Overnight in Gelephu.

Accommodation: Twin Dragon Resort

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 3: Drive Gelephu - Tingtibi (390 km | 11 hrs)

We'll start early today winding our way north to Tingtibi in south-central Bhutan.

Our journey takes us through a series of villages before continuing over several forest-covered passes and down equally spectacular river valleys. It's very exciting as we're

Bhutan's Exotic & Endemic Wildlife in Manas National Park

16 Days

explore the rich foothills above Gelephu early morning. During our last exploratory visit in 2016 we discovered Silverbreasted Broadbills proclaiming a territory within site of the township and we can only imagine what else might occur there. Some of the specialties we might encounter include Lesser and greater Rufous-headed Parrotbills, White-hooded babbler and Pale-headed Woodpecker and all bamboo specialists. If we are very lucky red-headed Trogon, perhaps Grey Headed Parrotbill, Great and Rufous-necked Hornbills and possibly Dark-rumped Swift. Overnight in Tingtibi.

Accommodation: Camping

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4: Drive Tingtibi - Manas National Park

Tingtibi is the junction of Royal Manas Park and Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park. Situated at the northern most tip of the Royal Manas Park. It receives the heaviest rainfall in the country, resulting in the area being a thriving sub-tropical ecosystem which provides a haven for wildlife. This area of Central Bhutan had only recently been opened to foreigners and remains unknown to many.

Our campsite is in the heart of prime mid-altitude forest and provides us with opportunities to explore the wildlife of this rich biotope. We'll spend the day birding and looking for some rare mammal species in the forests between Tingtibi and Manas NP. Our breakfast and lunch will be served in the field.

We expect to arrive at Damphu, a small township close Manas NP entry point. We continue to Eco Communities Campsite our base for the following nights. Eco Communities Campsite is an enterprise which enables local villagers to participate in the Park's conservation activities and management schemes; which also aims to raise the standards of living through community tourism programmes.

This is the beginning of Royal Manas National Park and the Bhutanese section of the Natural World Heritage Site of the Greater Manas Tiger Reserve. It is divided by the Manas River from Assam, India and is renowned as an area of great bio-diversity.

Within its boundaries it is possible to see up to 59 of the recorded species of mammals; 13 of which are totally protected. It is the only park where it is possible to see all of Asia's 'Big Five': Asian Elephant, Asian Water Buffalo,

One-horned Rhinoceros, Clouded Leopard and the Bengal Tiger as well as other rare species such as Golden Cat, Gaur, Sloth Bear, Binturong (Asian Bearcat), Himalayan Black Bear, the Assamese Macaque and three rare primates: the Golden and Capped Langurs. Manas provides the perfect habitat for orchids, as well as in excess of 900 species of vascular plants. It provides the perfect habitat for over 400 different bird species – 427 recorded in 2006 and 5 more in recent years, totalling 432. These include the rare Bengal Florican, Great Hornbill, Crested Serpent Eagle and the most recently recorded Malay Night Heron and Black Baza. Birding in these subtropical forests with their thick undergrowth of bamboo we should also find: Blue-throated and Golden-throated Barbers, Rufous-necked Hornbills, Himalayan, Ashy, White-throated and Black-crested Bulbuls, Emerald Dove, Grey-capped Pygmy, Pale-headed (rare) and Fulvous-breasted Woodpeckers, Red Jungle fowl, Spotted and Eye-browed (rare) Wren babblers, Red-faced Liocichla, Yellow-vented and Rufous-faced Warblers.

With the coordination of park ranges, each night we will try set a camera trap (not guaranteed) hoping to catch one of the park's rare and endangered species. With 8 different species of cats and the largest recorded tiger density in the world, we will certainly do our best to capture an image of one!

Accommodation: Camping

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5-6: In Manas National Park

These two days we'll explore the Manas national park - unique World Natural Heritage Site and one of the oldest protected areas in Bhutan. Manas National Park has an area of 1,059 sq. km and is now linked to the Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park to the north, India's Manas Tiger Reserve in the south as well as Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary and Thrumshing La National Park through biological corridors; providing a continuous gradation of protected, natural habitats from the tropical lowlands up to the High Himalayas.

Over 90% of the park area is under forest cover including vast areas of tropical and sub-tropical monsoon forests, interspersed with expanses of natural grasslands and wide riverbeds; promoting the wide variety of wild-life found within its borders.

On these two days we will bird the route from our camp to the park office at Manas (13 km), where we will look for Golden Langur, Asian Elephant, Tiger, Leopard, Leopard Cat

Bhutan's Exotic & Endemic Wildlife in Manas National Park

16 Days

and more. Some of the birding highlights are Oriental Dwarf and Ruddy kingfishers, Puff-throated, and Stripe Tit Babblers, Red-breasted Parakeet, Indian Roller, Asian Fairy Bluebird, Dollarbird, White-rumped Shama, Citrine Wagtail, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Hill Myna, Wreathed, Oriental Pied, Rufous-necked (rare) and Great hornbills, Hooded Pitta (rare), Silver-breasted Broadbill (rare) amongst the many that frequent this ancient landscape and with a great deal of luck Great Slaty Woodpecker and Green Cochoa.

Overnight Eco Communities Camping in Manas.

Accommodation: Camping

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 7: Drive Manas National Park - Nganglam (145 m)

Some magnificent subtropical forests can still be found by the roadsides en route from Nanas National Park area to Nanglam offering some of the best birding in the entire country. Many significant birds are resident of this area, including the superb Rufous-necked and Blue-winged Laughingthrushes, and the lovely Crimson Liocichla. We should also encounter the magnificent Rufous-necked Hornbill and the beautiful Golden Langur monkey is relatively common here. Overnight in Nanglam.

Accommodation: Camping

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8-9: Nganglam – Yongkola

The last five days we have been exploring the lush tropical lowland and hardwood forests in the south. Now we head further up central part of the country. We will stay in comfortable mobile-safari-style camps erected by our local outfitters along the road for the next couple nights, spending much time on the upper levels of the road. This

remote area holds some of the most sought-after Himalayan species. The Eastern Himalayas are the most diverse part of that mighty mountain range, and their steep profile means that from the plains to the highest peaks the distance can be as little as 80 kilometers in places with altitudinal zone between 3700m and the valley bottom at 600 m.



The list of birds here is large and diverse, and our tally will include many species characteristic of the Eastern Himalayas. We shall, however, be concentrating on a number of prime specialties of this superb area in the time we have. These forests are bired so little that almost anything could turn up, maybe this year we'll find the enigmatic and very rarely seen Gould's Shortwing. We also look for rare and little-known Yellow-rumped Honeyguide, Rufous-necked Hornbill (rare or extirpated throughout much of its range; the forests of Bhutan are almost certainly the stronghold for this impressive species), Speckled Wood-Pigeon (generally rare throughout its entire range) Blue beared Bee-eater, and War's Trogon. The male is absolutely gorgeous. Stunning but secretive Satyr Tragopan, Blood Pheasant, and the majestic Himalayan Monal are not uncommon here. The entire length of this spectacularly forested valley is also a good area for the endangered Golden Langur monkey.

Accommodation: Camping

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Bhutan's Exotic & Endemic Wildlife in Manas National Park

16 Days

Day 10: Yongkola - Thrumsing La (3,780 m) - Jakar (2,580 m)

The drive to the Jakar Valley is considered by many to be one of the most spectacular in the world. As always our journey is likely to be conducted against a backdrop of jagged snow-capped mountains, magnificent forest, prayer flags fluttering in the breeze, and villages little changed in over 500 years. Each day in this medieval land evokes perennially special memories.

Climbing slowly through extra-ordinarily primeval larch, silver fir, spruce and towering hemlocks, we eventually reach Thrumsing La (3,780 m), the second-highest mountain pass in Bhutan, connecting its central and eastern regions across. We will spend the early morning exploring the upper reaches of this truly magnificent road, one of the great birding roads of the world. This largely paved and infrequently traveled road leads us through some of the most beautiful forests in the Himalayas. From these magnificent wonderfully rich, subtropical and warm, moist broad-leaved forests replete with many tall trees sporting impressive girths on huge buttresses, characterized by abundant orchids, a relatively sparse under storey and higher strata strung with enormous woody vines and lianas we will gradually bird our way up into some truly superb cool broad-leaved and evergreen forests.

Be especially alert to coveys of Blood Pheasants scuttling by or Himalayan orange-flanked Bush-Robins making their way up to tree line. If we are especially fortunate we may find a large mixed flock containing the elusive Fire-Tailed Myzorins; glorious Fire-tailed Sunbirds out their territory or an exquisite Rufous-bellied Bush-Robin singing its ethereal refrain from atop an ancient Hemlock.

From Thrumsing La, we will descend through wonderland of moss-draped tress. At higher elevations many of these huge sentinels will still be blanketed in snow, a totally entrancing scene. In addition to forest birds, we should check the fields far flocks of Snow Pigeons and a nearby a read of azalea scrub for Blood Pheasant.

Along the way, if we have time we will explore the Ura Valley, the loveliest of the Bumthang Valleys. Ensclosed in the depths of the charming valley is startlingly exotic temple dedicated to Guru Rinpoche. This ornate monastery located in a delightful village, provides us a magical window from which to experience the daily lives of these hardy people. Nearby, Red-billed Choughs abuse visitors from shingle roofs, while flocks of Russet Sparrows and Plain Mountain Finches search for seeds among recently plowed fields. With

its spring light and pastel shades this valley and its village are indeed an artist's dream. Overnight in Jakar.

Accommodation: The Mountain Resort

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11: Drive Jakar - Punakha (1,242 m | 204 km | 5.66 hrs)

We will head to Punakha today, we will pass through some truly magnificent rhododendreon/mognolia forests. At Chendebji and the site of a classic Nepalese Chorten, we we'll search along a picture-perfect stream for a resident pair of Crested Kingfishers. In additional, Brown Dippers and White-capped Water Redstarts are usually seen feeding midstream, while Yellow-billed Blue magpies search or insects among the many flowering rhododendrons. From Chedebji we'll continue on to Pele la pass where we will enjoy a relaxed lunch while watching the winter flock of Himalayan Griffons. From Pele La we descend to the valley floor and continue to sub-tropical Punakha. At an altitude of 1,350 m the difference in temperature and flora is apparent. Overnight in Punakha.

Accommodation: Meri Puensum Resort

Meal:s Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 11: In Punakha

Today we will spend the morning birding in this beautiful pristine forest area of Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Park, at an elevation of 1,400 m. This area is much warmer than we have previously experienced, which means a very early rise in order to catch bird activities in the beauty of the warm broad-leaved forest. Here we may encounter: River Lapwing, Red-headed Trogon, Gray-headed Woodpecker, Greater Yellownappe, Striated Bulbul, the glowing Little Niltava, the three Tesias, Ferruginous Flycatcher and Spotted Wren Babbler (a constant singer with a beautiful

Bhutan's Exotic & Endemic Wildlife in Manas National Park

16 Days

voice!), and the dazzling Scarlet Finch, Nepal Fulvetta, Slaty-backed and Spotted Forktail.

As the heat of the day increases we will drop down to Punakha to visit the Dzong the fortress. Punakha was the old capital of Bhutan and the dzong was the second one to be built in Bhutan. This remarkable fortress position at the confluence of the Mo and Pho Chhu is quite spectacular and it has survived many fires, an earthquake and a glacial flood. Over the years it has been repaired and added to and has several interesting features to protect it against invasion. In April the front of this majestic building is highlighted by the blossoming of the Jacaranda trees; their purple flowers softening the giant walls, encouraging your eye to the intricate hand-carved and painted windows.

If time permits we will drive along the Pho Chhu River, where it is hoped that as well as seeing a number of interesting waterfowl, we will also see: Ibisbill; Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler; Palla's Fish Eagle and the globally threatened White-bellied Heron. Overnight in Punakha.

Accommodation: Meri Puensum Resort

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 13: Drive Punakha - Thimphu (2,334 m | 74 m | 2.25 hrs)

This morning we leave the terraced fields and sub-tropical forests around Punakha and travel to Dochu La 3,116 m, stopping at Lumetshawa before light in order to get to the site where we hope to spot our target bird for the day: Ward's Trogon, amongst other avian species such as Mountain Hawk and Black eagles; Eurasian Treecreeper; Spotted Forktail and Slaty Blue Flycatcher.

After a hot picnic breakfast we continue to the Royal Botanical Park at Lampelri, which forms one of the critical biological corridors connecting the Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park and the Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Park. It has cool broad leaf forests, mixed conifer forests, fir and sub-alpine forests and a temperate rain forest with hundred of species of flora and fauna. Here we will look for: Chestnut crowned Warbler; Dark-rumped and Dark-breasted Rosefinches. With a bit of luck, we may also encounter rare species of mammals that the park supports; Musk Deer, Leopard, Red Panda and the Leopard Cat.

We return to our vehicle and continue our journey to Thimphu. The route climbs steeply in places to the Dochula Pass. At 3,050 m, an awe-inspiring sight with the road

festooned with prayer flags taking their blessings to all sentient beings and 108 chortens, celebrating the safe return of the fourth king from a threatened invasion. From here on a clear day, there are magnificent panoramic views of the high Himalayas, including Masagang 7,158 m, Tsendagang 6,960 m, Terigang 7,060 m, Jejegangphug 7,158 m, Kangphugang 7,170 m, Zongphugang 7,060 m and Gangkar Puensum – the highest peak in Bhutan at 7,497 m. We descend from the high pass to Thimphu and our hotel for overnight. Overnight in Thimphu.

Accommodation: Hotel Jumolhari

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 14: Drive Thimphu - Paro (2,250 m | 51 km | 1.33 hrs)

Before heading for Paro, we explore capital city Thimphu. We will visit some of the well-known landmarks in the city. In the city centre, you will find the traffic policeman directing the traffic flow instead of traffic signals. It is said that Thimphu is the only capital in the world without traffic signals.

Across the town the Zorig Chusum Institute, which literally translates as the thirteen (chusum) arts and crafts (zorig) of Bhutan. We will meet the talented artists and students at work. Just a short walk away is the National Institute for Traditional Medicine. The Institute produces indigenous medical products from herbs, minerals, gemstones and animal products. Some of the herbs are rare plants collected high in the Himalayas. Drive past the only public golf course in the country, on our way to the Trashichho Dzong – the 17th Century Dzong houses the offices of the Central Government and the Monastic Body and also the Throne Room of His Majesty.

Late in the afternoon we drive to Paro for our last two nights in Bhutan. Overnight in Paro.

Accommodation: Tashi Namgay Resort

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 15: Paro – Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest) (3,120 m)

Today, we will make our way to the base of the mountain to begin our hike to visit the magnificent Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest) that clings dramatically on a huge rock cliff, 900 m above the valley. According to the legend, Guru Rinpoche or Padmasambhava, who spread Buddhism across

Bhutan's Exotic & Endemic Wildlife in Manas National Park

16 Days

the entire Himalayas is said to have flown here in the Eighth Century on the back of a Tigress, and meditated for three years in a small cave where the main shrine of the monastery stands today.



It is a steep uphill walk through woods, of about 1½-2hrs, to reach a tea house an ascent of 340 m. After a welcome refreshment at the tea house, one of the principle viewpoints of the monastery we will climb the further half hour's ascent, which brings us to another viewpoint directly across from the monastery. The final section of the walk takes us from this viewpoint steeply down 100m into the gorge that separates us from the monastery and then climbs back up again to reach the monastery gate – the monastery was designed to be isolated! We then descend back to the valley floor by our outward route back to where our vehicle will be waiting. The full walk to the monastery and back involves approximately 740 m ascent.

Along this hike we may see bird species such as Green-backed, Coal, and Grey-crested Tits, White-tailed Nuthatch, Yellow-billed Blue Magpie, Spotted Nutcracker, Black-faced, Chestnut-crowned, White-throated and Spotted Laughing thrushes. Up at the monastery by the rocky ledges we will scan for flocks of Snow Pigeon and Alpine Accentor while the waterfall next to the monastery often gives us the opportunity to see Little Forktail and White-capped and Plumbeous Water Redstarts.

The Paro valley lies beneath Jhomolhari one of the highest of Bhutan's Himalayan peaks. Later if time permits will visit the impressive ruins of Drugyel Dzong, named to commemorate a victory over the Tibetan invasion of 1644. This picturesque ruin stands on a hillside above the lovely village of Drugyel with imposing views of Jhomolhari from the approach roads; here we may encounter Brown Parrotbill, Common Kestrels, White-collared Blackbirds and the Grey-backed Shrike. There may also be time for further sightseeing to visit the ancient temple of KychuLhakhang, one of 108 temples built by Songtsen Goenbo an important

early Tibetan king, to pin down the Bon demon who was thought to hover over the whole of Tibet. We may also see the some of the treasures from Bhutan's National Museum. The Museum itself is closed, apparently until 2015 following the earthquake in 2011, but many of its artifacts and displays may be temporarily housed in a nearby building. In the evening we will head out for dinner on one of Paro's excellent restaurants. Overnight in Paro.

Accommodation: Tashi Namgay Resort

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 16: Depart Paro

Transfer to the airport for your homeward-bound flight.

Meal: Breakfast

Includes

- Airport (pick up/drop off) transfers by private A/C vehicle
- Twin-Sharing accommodation in all Hotel/Resort/Lodge as mentioned
- All meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner), afternoon tea and bottled-water throughout the tour in Bhutan
- During the camping, it includes accommodation in tents, sleeping mats, cook, waiters and porters ponies
- All sightseeing as per the itinerary
- English speaking licensed guide 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 road permit, toll taxes, parking, allowance for driver, outstation overnight charges for the driver
- Monument/museum entrance fees
- Bhutan visa
- Royalty and all internal taxes

Excludes

- International flight tickets
- Visa fee

Bhutan's Exotic & Endemic Wildlife in Manas National Park 16 Days

- 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

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.



Twin Dragon Resort, Gelephu

The Twin Dragon Resort is located 4 km away from the main town on the Trongsa highway and one of the few nice places to stay in Gelephu. Its air-conditioned rooms are quiet and nice with views of mountains, fields. Resort has a swimming pool, restaurant and nice outdoor seating area.

Camping Tent

Our classic A-frame or ridge tents are sturdy and have plenty of room for two people. We use water and windproof flysheet which help make the tent nice and cozy inside. To complete the setup we provide a high-quality foam mattress together with an insulation pad so that you get a good sleep after a long tiring day.



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 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.

Meri Puensum Resort, Punakha

Situated on a hilltop, offering panoramic vistas across the river and the valley, Meri Puensum, established in 1999, is one of the first resorts to come up in the serene and culturally rich valley of Punakha. This family run resort delivers highly personalized services and takes special care to the needs of its guests, in true tradition of Bhutanese hospitality.

Hotel Jumolhari, Thimphu

Hotel Jumolhari has been providing quality services to travelers and adventurers for 31 years. Established in 1984, the hotel has rooms ranging from the standard to deluxe & suites. Recently renovated Hotel Jumolhari has firmly established itself as the leading hotel in Thimphu. The traditional Bhutanese hospitality combined with a distinctive boutique style décor makes it one of the most distinguished addresses in Thimphu.

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.

Bhutan's Exotic & Endemic Wildlife in Manas National Park 16 Days



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 and 13 lunches and 14 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.

Whilst camping, our camping crew/staff will bring a hot drink (usually tea) to your tent each morning. When you reach camp in the afternoon tea and biscuits will be served. At breakfast, dinner and in the afternoons, there is a choice of hot drinks. Breakfasts typically include cereal and/or porridge plus toast and eggs. Lunch on trek is usually served as a picnic en route (except on shorter days when it

is in camp). Lunch and dinner typically include soup to start, followed by a variety of hot dishes (both local and western) such as potatoes/chips, vegetables, curry, pasta, rice, dhal and vegetables. At dinner time a dessert such as fresh or tinned fruit, fritters or cake is also served. Please note that although some meals will include meat, it is not as readily available whilst camping.

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.

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

Bhutan's Exotic & Endemic Wildlife in Manas National Park

16 Days

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=Mg,,&subid=MTQ>,

Follow the link below if you intend to apply e-visa:
<https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html>

Please note: Visa regulations may change without notice, therefore please make sure to check the most current/updated 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 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

BHUTAN: 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 (Feb 2025) the approximate exchange rates are 91 Euro and 88 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 91 to the Euro and 88 to the US\$. It is illegal to import or export rupees. Do not accept torn or (very)

Bhutan's Exotic & Endemic Wildlife in Manas National Park

16 Days

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 be 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 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.

Updated: Feb 2025