



# Bhutan | EASTERN BHUTAN REVEALED

CULTURAL AND HIKING JOURNEY

March 7-19, 2022

November 7-19, 2022

## TRIP ITINERARY



1.800.941.8010 | [www.boundlessjourneys.com](http://www.boundlessjourneys.com)

*How we deliver*

# THE WORLD'S GREAT ADVENTURES

**A passion for travel.** Simply put, we love to travel, and that infectious spirit is woven into every one of our journeys. Our staff travels the globe searching out hidden-gem inns and lodges, taste testing bistros, trattorias, and noodle stalls, and discovering the trails and plying the waterways of each remarkable destination. When we come home, we separate wheat from chaff, creating memorable adventures that will connect you with the very best qualities of each destination.

**Unique, award-winning itineraries.** Our flexible, hand-crafted journeys have received accolades from the world's most revered travel publications. Beginning from our appreciation for the world's most breathtaking and interesting destinations, we infuse our journeys with the elements of adventure and exploration that stimulate our souls and enliven our minds. Whether you are looking for a challenging physical expedition or a leisurely cultural exploration, Boundless Journeys has exceptional itineraries to match your sense of adventure.

**Insider connections.** There is simply no substitute for traveling with a knowledgeable insider, and our expert local guides will open doors for you that other travelers miss, like dinner with their extended family in Peru's Sacred Valley, or meeting an art scholar in Florence. Relationships developed over many years allow you to experience our destinations through a well-connected friend.

**Small groups.** Although the camaraderie of a group of like-minded travelers often enhances the journey, there can be too much of a good thing! We tread softly, and our average group size is just 8–10 guests, allowing us access to opportunities that would be unthinkable with a larger group.

**Flexibility to suit your travel style.** We offer both scheduled, small-group departures and custom journeys so that you can choose which works best for you. Not finding exactly what you are looking for? Let us customize a journey to fulfill your travel dreams.

**Customer service that goes the extra mile.** Having trouble finding flights that work for you? Want to surprise your traveling companion with a bottle of champagne at a tented camp in the Serengeti to celebrate an important milestone? There is no request that is too big—or too small—for our staff to handle. From your first call, we guide you through choosing your trip, provide advice on preparing for your adventure, and hold your hand until you return home.



Multi-year recipient of *Travel + Leisure* magazine's "World's Best Tour Operator"; and recognized by the editors of *National Geographic ADVENTURE* magazine as one of the **Best Adventure Travel Companies on Earth**.



# Bhutan | EASTERN BHUTAN REVEALED

Thank you for your interest in this fantastic journey to Bhutan. We have hand-crafted this tour from our own experience and hope you fall in love with the area—as we have!

## THE INSPIRATION FOR THIS JOURNEY

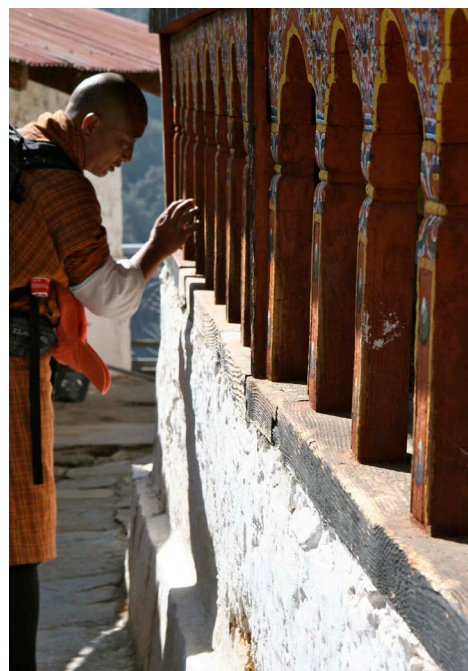
The tiny, land-locked Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan has long been referred to as the last Shangri-La, only having recently opened up to tourism in 1974. Never having been colonized, Bhutan has retained its pristine landscapes, traditional architecture, and unique culture for centuries. With the predominant religion of Buddhism influencing many aspects of life here, the country proudly maintains its traditions, while slowly and deliberately embracing modernity and the outside world. While this juxtaposition of old and new is evident in the more populous and more frequently visited western portion of the country, eastern Bhutan is practically off the map. Here, the mountains are steeper, the valleys are deeper, the trails are wilder, and the villages are more secluded. We wander this most mysterious part of the kingdom seldom visited by travelers, allowing us to gain a deeper understanding of this fascinating corner of the world.

The adventuresome few who choose to journey here enjoy hikes through the foothills of the Himalayas to quiet temples, isolated fortresses, remote monasteries, and other sacred and historic sites. Join us in catching a glimpse into Bhutan's captivating past and curious future.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Staying two nights at a family-run homestay
- Watching talented local weavers create handmade textiles in the traditional methods
- Hiking to an isolated meditation cave and chatting with the devoted caretaker

TOUR OVERVIEW.....	4
THE JOURNEY.....	6
ACCOMMODATIONS .....	11
OUR BHUTAN TEAM .....	12
WHAT TO EXPECT.....	13
TRIP EXTENSIONS.....	16
NEXT STEPS .....	17
BOUNDLESS BEYOND.....	18



# TOUR OVERVIEW



## THE BASICS

Duration:	13-day trip
Tour start/end:	Paro
Accommodations:	10 nights in standard hotels/lodges 2 nights at a homestay
Trip rating:	1      2      3      4      5 Easy . . . . . Strenuous (See page 12 for more information)
Land cost:	\$5,195 per person
Single supplement:	First two solo travelers: \$95* Additional solo travelers: \$595 *Must reserve at least 120 days prior
Internal airfare:	\$995 per person** (Bangkok to Paro; Paro to Bangkok)
Domestic flights:	\$250 per person** (Paro to Yonphula) \$215 per person** (Jakar to Paro) **Airfare costs are subject to change



## WHAT'S INCLUDED

Just pack your bags—we've got you covered! When you're on a Boundless Journeys adventure, every detail is taken care of for you, so you can relax and truly experience each moment. Your Boundless Journeys adventure includes:

- Expert leadership
- All accommodations and meals
- Local wine and beer with included dinners
- All on-tour transportation
- All activities as noted in the itinerary
- Bhutanese visa fees and departure taxes
- All gratuities except for those for your guide and driver, which are at your discretion
- Explorers Club savings on your next scheduled, small-group trip (*conditions apply*)

**Boundless Journeys will purchase your airline tickets between Bangkok and Bhutan for you.** International airfare is not included in the price of the trip. Please contact your local travel agency or the airlines directly to make any arrangements you may need to and from Bangkok. If you would like assistance with your international travel plans, contact Boundless Journeys for a referral to our one of our partners who will best fit your needs.



## ITINERARY AT-A-GLANCE

### DAY 1

Arrive at the airport in Paro, Bhutan. Enjoy an easy warm-up hike.

### DAY 2

Begin your exploration of eastern Bhutan by flying from Paro to Yonphula. Upon arrival, enjoy a short hike to the Trashigang Dzong and explore downtown Trashigang, the district capital.

### DAY 3

In the morning, hike through the woods to the isolated Mongling Temple. In the late afternoon, meet with local college students to learn their perspective on their rapidly changing world.

### DAY 4

In the morning, hike to Rangshikhar Lhakhang Temple. This afternoon, visit Gom Kora monastery, a sacred place where Guru Rimpoche is said to have once meditated.

### DAY 5

Depart Trashigang for Mongar. In the afternoon, enjoy a short hike with stunning views of the surrounding mountains.

### DAY 6

Venture further in the rural countryside to Khoma Village. Meet your gracious host family at your homestay and explore the village.

### DAY 7

In the morning, partake in a short hike up to the Sangwa Lo Dru meditation cave. In the afternoon, drive to a nearby village to learn about the region's handmade pottery.

### DAY 8

Depart Khoma village, heading back to Mongar. Along the way, visit the imposing Takila Temple. In the afternoon, learn about how *ara*, the regional alcoholic beverage, is made.

### DAY 9

Transfer from eastern Bhutan to central Bhutan's Bumthang valley.

### DAY 10

Enjoy the Bumthang Valley scenery by hiking a portion of the "Bush Man Trek".

### DAY 11

Explore more of central Bhutan by hiking to Jambay Temple and Tamshing Temple.

### DAY 12

Bid farewell to central Bhutan and fly back to western Bhutan. Hike to Tiger's Nest, or simply relax at your hotel.

### DAY 13

Depart from Paro.



# THE JOURNEY



## DAY 1: Arrival in Paro

**Activity Overview:** Cultural touring & hiking

**Activity Level:** Easy, hiking on local paths with minimal elevation gain and loss (highest elevation: 7,267')

**Activity Length:** About 2 miles

Our flight into Bhutan provides breathtaking views as we approach Bhutan's only international airport tucked between mountains in the Paro Valley. The valley is a green bowl surrounded by steep forested hillsides, crossed by beautiful rivers and dotted with medieval fortresses. The first thing that we notice as we disembark in Bhutan is the absence of noise and a feeling of peacefulness that is rare in most other Asian cities. The Paro Valley has kept its bucolic nature, and is believed to be one of the first valleys to have received the imprint of Buddhism.

We meet our guide and embark on a short warm-up hike beginning at the village of Shaba, crossing the Paro Chu River, and ascending up an old path once frequently used by local villagers. We take our time to slowly become accustomed to the elevation. The hike affords you views of the village, its surrounding farm fields, and the clear river below, its source the glaciers high in the surrounding mountains. The path's gradual descent takes us to the neighboring village of Bondey, where our tour vehicle will be waiting to transport us to our hotel for the evening.

*Our itinerary today is dependent on flight arrival times. We may participate in all or a portion of the activities listed above.*

**Accommodation:** Raven's Nest Hotel, Paro

**Meals:** L, D

## DAY 2: Fly to Trashigang

**Activity Overview:** Cultural touring & hiking

**Activity Level:** Moderate, hiking on local paths and trails with 1,181' elevation gain (highest elevation: 3,347')

**Activity Length:** 1.5 miles

Today, we depart Paro for eastern Bhutan, our destination being the district capital Trashigang. We fly into Yonphula airport, one of four airports in the country, and the lone domestic airport serving Bhutan's isolated eastern region. The airstrip is located at about 9,000 ft and was originally constructed in the 1960s by the Indian army. It remained mostly unused until several renovations allowed it to open in 2017, at long last providing an alternative to the nearly 15+ hour overland journey from Paro to Trashigang. **Please be aware that sometimes the flights to Yonphula are delayed or even cancelled due to unfavorable weather conditions.** We are flying to eastern Bhutan during a time of year when the weather conditions provide us with better odds of avoiding weather-related travel disruptions, but there is still the chance of delays occurring.

Our exploration of eastern Bhutan begins with a short, but steep hike from Chagzam Bridge up to the Trashigang Dzong, perched high above the river valley below. This dzong is one of the largest in Bhutan and is referred to as the "Fortress of the Auspicious Hill". A short walk takes us from the dzong to downtown Trashigang, where we find local farmers selling their crops at their stands on the street and local shops containing everyday essentials alongside interesting handmade, local crafts.

**Accommodation:** Lingkhar Lodge, Trashigang

**Meals:** B, L, D



## DAY 3: Mongling Temple Hike

**Activity Overview:** Hiking & cultural touring

**Activity Level:** Moderate to strenuous, hiking on local paths and trails with 2,970' elevation gain and 820' elevation loss (highest elevation: 8,137')

**Activity Length:** 4 miles

We begin our day with a hike to the remote Mongling Lhakhang Temple. This small temple sits atop a hill high above Nimshong village and contains a statue of the local deity Jampelyang Shenjey, which many locals still worship to this day. Our hike up to the temple takes us through the countryside, past farmer's fields and traditional Bhutanese farmhouses. After our hike and a picnic lunch, we head back to Trashigang for the opportunity to visit the campus of Sherubtse College and chat with some students. Sherubtse College was the first accredited college in Bhutan, founded in 1966 by Jesuit priests. Today, it is Bhutan's most prestigious university with roughly two-thirds of its graduates working for the Royal Government of Bhutan. Gain some insight from this discussion with young Bhutanese students and learn what it was like to grow up in Bhutan during a time of great change.

**Accommodation:** Lingkhar Lodge, Trashigang

**Meals:** B, L, D

## DAY 4: Hike to Rangshikhar Lhakhang

**Activity Overview:** Hiking & cultural touring

**Activity Level:** Strenuous

**Hiking overview:** Hiking on local paths and trails with 2,214' elevation gain (highest elevation: 5,856')

**Activity Length:** 1.5 miles

This morning, we partake in another short, but steep hike up to the unique Rangshikhar Lhakhang, a newly constructed temple where the grounds contain a variety of statues depicting scenes from the life of Buddha. Rangshikhar Lhakhang is the residence of the revered Rangshikhar Rinpoche, making this temple a popular place for local people to visit to receive Rangshikhar Rinpoche's blessings. We enjoy a picnic lunch or perhaps lunch at Rangshikhar Ngagtshang, the neighboring homestay. In the afternoon, we drive to visit the sacred Gom Kora Temple, a popular pilgrimage site for the Bhutanese due to its religious significance. Here the famous Guru Rinpoche is said to have meditated and left his impression in a massive rock. The word "kora" translates to "circumambulation" and devotees can be found walking around the temple praying and gaining merit for their next life.

**Accommodation:** Lingkhar Lodge, Trashigang

**Meals:** B, L, D

## DAY 5: Transfer to Mongar

**Activity Overview:** Hiking & cultural touring

**Activity Level:** Easy to moderate, hiking on local paths and trails with 1,345' elevation gain (highest elevation: 6,726')

**Activity Length:** 1.5 miles

**Drive time:** Approximately 2.5-3 hrs

This morning, we depart Trashigang and head to the neighboring town of Mongar, the fastest growing district in eastern Bhutan, in part due to its newly constructed regional hospital and a hydroelectric power plant. Mongar is well known for its lemongrass, which is harvested and used to produce lemongrass essential oil. Upon arrival in Mongar we will check into our hotel and have time to explore the



town or visit the nearby Mongar Dzong before lunch at our hotel. Built in 1930, the Mongar Dzong is a relatively new construction due to the original dzong being destroyed by a fire and earthquake. However, when the dzong was rebuilt it was constructed in the traditional style architecture using traditional construction methods. In the afternoon, we have the opportunity to take a scenic hike from Yakgau Village to Phungchula, passing small *chortens*, (holy structures containing religious relics) along the way while enjoying views of the Kuri Chu river valley below.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Wangchuk, Mongar

**Meals:** B, L, D

## DAY 6: Transfer to Khoma Village

**Activity Overview:** Cultural touring & walking/hiking

**Activity Level:** Easy

**Activity Length:** 2-3 hours

**Drive time:** Approximately 2.5 hours

Today, we drive to the remote village of Khoma, a small but well-known village throughout Bhutan for producing the most elaborate and high quality hand-woven textiles. On the drive to this rural area, we have the opportunity to stop and stretch our legs, enjoying the mountain scenery. One particularly beautiful spot is at the Autsho chorten, a Tibetan-style stupa situated on the east bank of the Kuri Chu River alongside several rows of vertical prayer flag poles, the many flags fluttering in the breeze. The small town of Autsho is a short walk from the picturesque chorten, and depending upon timing, we may have lunch at a local homestay in town and enjoy a short hike through the pine forest on the outskirts of town.

Upon arrival to the quaint Khoma village, your gracious homestay host family will welcome you into their home, offering you a cup of ara, a traditional Bhutanese alcoholic beverage that is a customary offering to guests. Although the homestay is a very basic accommodation, the opportunity to stay with a local family allows for a very special experience, one that allows adventurous travelers to better connect with Bhutanese culture.

**Accommodation:** Chimi Yuden Homestay, Khoma

**Meals:** B, L, D

## DAY 7: Sangwa Lo Dru Cave; Gangzur

**Activity Overview:** Hiking & cultural touring

**Activity Level:** Moderate, hiking on local paths and trails with 919' elevation gain and loss (highest elevation: 5,200')

**Activity Length:** 2.5 miles

This morning, we hike from the homestay to the Sangwa Lo Dru meditation cave, high above Khoma Village. This is a popular meditation spot, and the hospitable caretaker will share with us the history behind the meditation cave, as well as details about the holy relics of this sacred site.

In the afternoon, we have the opportunity to explore Khoma Village, perhaps observing the local women weave the vibrant and intricate textiles for which they are famous. Later in the day, we drive to the nearby village of Gangzur to learn about this region's vanishing art of handmade clay pottery.

**Accommodation:** Chimi Yuden Homestay, Khoma

**Meals:** B, L, D



## A BOUNDLESS MOMENT IN BHUTAN...

*The many narrow walkways form a labyrinth through the village, where we pass by the local residents going about their daily lives. Children shout and laugh on their walk home from school. A wooden clacking noise punctuates the air as women work their textile looms, creating their elaborate, colorful masterpieces. We arrive at our homestay where the host greets us with a smile and a pot of hot, steaming ara, a customary welcome drink for visitors to a Bhutanese home.*



### DAY 8: Takela Temple; Transfer to Mongar

**Activity overview:** Cultural touring

**Activity level:** Easy

**Drive time:** Approximately 2.5-3 hours

We bid our homestay family farewell and leave the quaint village of Khoma behind to make our way back to Mongar. En route to Mongar we drive up the steep mountainside past traditional Bhutanese farmhouses, our spectacular mountain views expanding as we continue our climb upwards, our destination being the magnificent Takela Temple. At a height of 173 ft, Takela Temple is home to the largest statue of Guru Rinpoche in the world. Upon arrival in Mongar, we have lunch at our hotel before a visit to a local ara maker where we can learn more about this traditional Bhutanese beverage. This evening you may relax at your hotel or take a stroll through the small town of Mongar.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Wangchuk, Mongar

**Meals:** B, L, D

### DAY 9: Transfer to Jakar

**Activity overview:** Cultural touring

**Activity level:** Easy

**Drive time:** Approximately 6-7 hours

Today, we leave eastern Bhutan and make our way to central Bhutan's Bumthang Valley. About halfway into our drive we stop for lunch at a local teahouse located in a small village popular amongst yak herders as a location to pasture their herds during certain months of the year. After our lunch and further along on our drive, we have the option to enjoy a

short hike in the lovely Ura Valley. Depending upon timing, we may stop at Tang Mebartsho (Burning Lake) before arriving at the hotel. Here a famous reincarnated lama, Terton Pema Lingpa, is said to have discovered a religious treasure in the 12th century. This lake is very sacred and is visited by many Bhutanese during auspicious days to offer butter lamps.

**Accommodation:** Bhutan Mountain Lodge, Jakar

**Meals:** B, L, D

### DAY 10: Explore Bumthang

**Activity overview:** Hiking & cultural touring

**Activity level:** Moderate to strenuous

**Hiking overview:** Hiking on local paths and hiking trails with 1,509' elevation gain and 1,148 ft loss (highest elevation: 10,072')

**Activity Length:** 4 miles

After breakfast, we partake in a hike that takes us from Chamkhar Kharchu Dratshang Monastery to Bebjur Village. This hike is known as the "Bush Man Trek" where we gradually make our way uphill through blue pine forests, the scenery not nearly as mountainous as eastern Bhutan, but equally beautiful. We keep an eye out for wild boars, deer, monal pheasants, and other animal inhabitants of the forest while we make our way along the trail. Our hike concludes with lunch at Bebjur Village.

After lunch, we will drive to a local estate where the residents converted sections of their ancestral home into a museum in an effort to preserve and share their heritage. Now both travelers to Bhutan and generations of young Bhutanese can learn what life was like for the nobility of the past, prior

to the dissolution of the Bhutanese feudal system in the 1950s.

**Accommodation:** Bhutan Mountain Lodge, Jakar

**Meals:** B, L, D

## DAY 11: Lhakhang Hike

**Activity overview:** Hiking & cultural touring

**Activity level:** Easy

**Activity Length:** 4 miles

This morning's cultural hike begins at the hotel and heads to the Jambay Lhakhang Temple. This local temple is said to be one of the 108 temples built by Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo on a single day to pin down to the earth an angry, destructive ogre. We continue our hike to Kurjey Lhakhang, another temple which contains the remains of the first three kings of Bhutan. After lunch at a local farmhouse, our hike concludes at Tamshing Lhakhang, a monastery that also operates as an orphanage for young boys. Some of the young monks here have families, but these families are unable to afford to send them to a state school. From here our tour vehicle will be waiting for us to drive us back into Jakar town to visit two unique places you wouldn't expect to find in the Bumthang Valley—a Swiss cheese factory and beer brewery! We end our day learning about these bold entrepreneurs providing a taste of the Western world by producing European style cheeses and craft beers.

**Accommodation:** Bhutan Mountain Lodge Jakar

**Meals:** B, L, D

## DAY 12: Transfer to Paro

**Activity overview:** Hiking & cultural touring

**Activity level:** Moderate to strenuous

**Hiking overview:** Hiking on hiking trails and stone steps with 1,650' elevation gain and loss (highest elevation: 10,171')

**Activity Length:** 4-5 hours (4.5 miles)

This morning, we fly from central Bhutan back to western Bhutan. We have the option to relax at the hotel, or partake in a hike to the famous cliff-side hermitage called Taktsang—"Tiger's Nest"—a monastic retreat built into a sheer cliff face high above the Paro Valley. The hike begins on the valley floor and is a steady uphill climb on a wide hiking trail that

switchbacks through pine forests, with glimpses of Tiger's Nest along the way. We pass water-powered prayer wheels and mani stones, as well as a shrine where a high lama was supposedly born—all reminders that this is not just a hike, but a spiritual pilgrimage for many.

As we near the monastery, we stop by a small teahouse for snacks and tea and take in our first up-close view of Taktsang. From here, our hiking trail levels out for a short while, before we begin climbing down steps and cross a bridge, eventually leading us to this most impressive sacred site. Legend has it that the Tibetan Buddhist saint, Padmasambhava, flew across the Himalayas on the back of a tiger and landed here, bringing Buddhism to Bhutan. We have the chance to visit several shrines that comprise the temple complex. During our exploration, our guide brings Tiger's Nest to life with the tales of Buddhism that make this one of the most famous pilgrimage sites in all of Bhutan.

We return to the valley floor, where we enjoy a trail-side picnic lunch before heading back to our hotel. We have some time this afternoon to stroll the Paro market, or you can simply rest at the hotel before our final farewell dinner.

**Accommodation:** Raven's Nest Hotel, Paro

**Meals:** B, L, D

## DAY 13: Departure from Paro

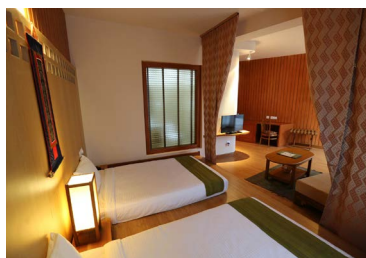
We are transferred to the airport in time for our departure from Paro.

**Meals:** B

**PLEASE NOTE:** *This is a typical itinerary, and actual activities may vary to take advantage of weather conditions, local events and to allow serendipity to play a hand in your experience. Accommodations are as outlined in the itinerary, although we reserve the right to change these should the need arise. See our booking terms and conditions for more information about our change policy.*

# ACCOMMODATIONS

Generally the hotels in eastern Bhutan are of lower quality compared to hotels in western Bhutan, but they are comfortable and offer all necessary facilities. Guests also stay at a local homestay for two nights where mattresses are laid out on the floor and the shared bathroom facilities are located outside of the room. We believe that any inconveniences due to these modest accommodations are far outweighed by the unforgettable experience of visiting eastern Bhutan. *Hotels are subject to change. The listed accommodations will most likely be what we can expect, but may alter due to availability.*



## NIGHTS 1 & 12

### Raven's Nest Hotel

Tel: +975 8 270244/46 | [ravensnestbt@gmail.com](mailto:ravensnestbt@gmail.com)

Raven's Nest Resort is situated amidst farmhouses and rice fields and is near to the trailhead for Tiger's Nest Monastery. The hotel features a library, meditation room, spa with a sauna, steam bath and massage services, and a restaurant serving Bhutanese, Indian and western style dishes.



## NIGHTS 2, 3, 4

### Hotel Lingkhar

Tel: +975 17 11 67 66 | [lingkharlodge@gmail.com](mailto:lingkharlodge@gmail.com)

One of the nicest hotels in the area, this lodge is situated among lush, picturesque surroundings which ensures a peaceful and relaxing stay. Rooms have private balconies offering panoramic vistas.



## NIGHTS 5, 8

### Hotel Wangchuk

Tel: +975 4 641522 | [mongar@wangchukhotel.com](mailto:mongar@wangchukhotel.com)

Situated on a hill overlooking the small town of Mongar and terraced farmland, Hotel Wangchuk offers comfortable rooms and is walking distance from downtown Mongar, the local market, and the Mongar dzong.



## NIGHTS 6, 7

### Chimi Yuden Homestay

Khoma Village

Owner Tshering Yangki ensures a comfortable stay with basic amenities and warm hospitality. Shared bathroom facilities are located outside of the room and mattresses are laid out on the floor at this rustic, but charming rural homestay.



## NIGHTS 9, 10, 11

### Bhutan Mountain Resort

Tel: +975 3 631255 | [info@bhutanmountainresort.com](mailto:info@bhutanmountainresort.com)

With views of the pine wood forest, this family-owned property offers simple, comfortable accommodations and warm service. All rooms are appointed with wood paneling, heated by firewood stoves (or Bukhari), with ensuite baths.



# OUR BHUTAN TEAM

## TRIP MANAGER



### **Kristen Bernarsky**

Originally from Pennsylvania, Kristen first came to Vermont for college. She then spent two years teaching in Asia before returning to Vermont permanently. Kristen joined the Boundless Journeys home team in 2015 as our guest services coordinator and moved into a destination manager role shortly thereafter. She is the manager for Palau and our Asia adventures, having developed our Japan and Nepal trek itineraries. Kristen enjoys sunset hikes and back-country skiing with her husband and their three dogs.

## GUIDES

With a Boundless Journeys guide, your experience is that of friend and local adventurer. We believe strongly in working with local guides, experts in the areas to which we travel, and they hold the keys to unlocking the hidden delights of your chosen destination. Although you will never know they are at work—the mark of a truly great leader—our guides make magical things happen and add a dimension to your trip that you could not experience on your own.

Over the years we have forged bonds with some of the best guides in the world, and we typically work with a small team of guides in each region. You will be informed of the guide for your trip one month prior to your departure.



### **Arun Rai**

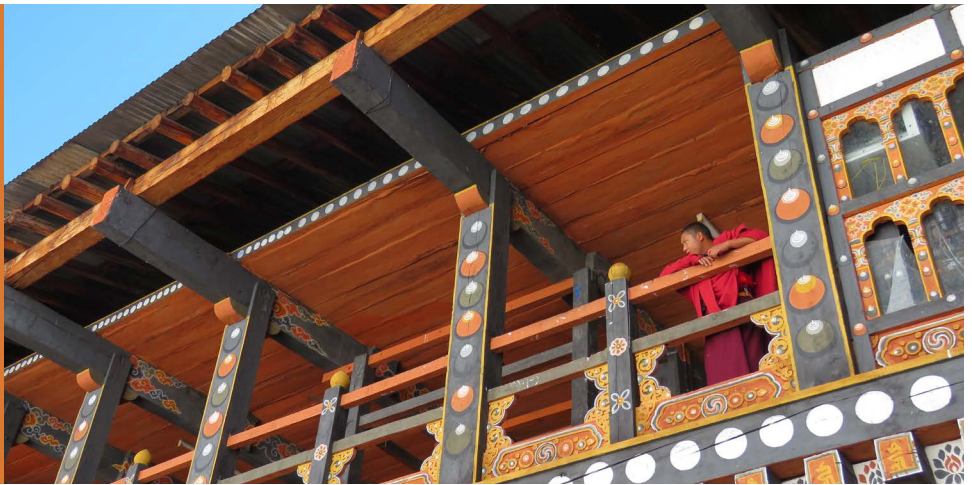
Arun has led a variety of Boundless Journeys tours, from treks in the mountains to festival celebrations in the valleys. His local knowledge and amicable personality make him a real treasure to have on the trail. Whether hiking at high altitude or exploring local towns in the lowlands, Arun ensures that our guests come away with an outstanding experience.



### **Sangay Dhendup**

Over the years Sangay has led many tours for Boundless Journeys, becoming a favorite among our guests. Very friendly and down to earth, Sangay is extremely knowledgeable and very skilled at sharing his country and culture with travelers, making him an invaluable asset to the Boundless Journey team.

# WHAT TO EXPECT



## TRIP RATING

Boundless Journeys' trips are designed for energetic and flexible individuals who like to be active and have a spirit of adventure and a positive attitude. Eastern Bhutan Revealed is rated 3, moderate to strenuous, on a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being the most strenuous). The walks and hikes on this trip are moderate to strenuous day hikes on terrain that is steep and trails that are not frequently traveled, but instead rough, overgrown in spots, and minimally maintained. Hikes generally are from 2-6 hours in length with minimal vehicle support. A hike may be short in distance, but steep. Hiking poles are strongly recommended.

## PREPARING FOR THIS TRIP

It is very important that you realistically assess your physical condition with regard to the demands of this trip. The more well-prepared you are for the activities, the more you will enjoy yourself. As a general guideline, we suggest that you engage in moderate aerobic activities (such as hiking, jogging, or cycling) for at least 30-45 minutes several times a week for 4-6 weeks before the trip. If you live in a flat area, try to incorporate some stairs into your workout, or use a treadmill with varying incline capability (consult your doctor before undertaking any new fitness program). Please contact us if you have any doubts regarding your physical match with this tour.

## THE ALTITUDE

Our trip begins in Paro, which is situated at 7,200 feet, in the foothills of the Himalayas. After one night in Paro, we fly to eastern Bhutan, with the Yonphula Airport located at an elevation of 9,000', but doing the majority of our hikes and staying overnight at far lower elevations. Our hikes will take

place at elevations from 2,000' to a little over 10,000'. There is time to move at a comfortable pace, allowing ourselves to adjust to the mountain air. Keeping well hydrated, avoiding excessive alcohol, eating frequent, light meals, and getting plenty of rest will help with any effects of altitude that you may feel.

## WEATHER

The mountainous areas of Bhutan have pronounced rainy and dry seasons. The driest weather and clearest skies are in the spring and fall. The planting and ploughing time of year is March through May and colorful flowers are in bloom during this time. The harvest season is October through November. The months of December through February are clear and cold and can be below freezing at night. The monsoon season generally takes place June through August and it is not recommended to travel to Bhutan at this time of the year.

We have found that most real time weather websites and smart phone apps do not reflect accurate temperatures for Bhutan. For the most reliable information, we recommend visiting [www.weatherbase.com](http://www.weatherbase.com).

AVERAGE TEMPERATURE °F (HIGH/LOW)	
	OCTOBER
Paro	66/45
Trashigang	84/64
Mongar	73/60
Jakar	67/43





## GETTING TO BHUTAN

When you reserve a trip to Bhutan with Boundless Journeys, we handle reserving a seat for you on your flights into and out of Bhutan, typically from Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport (BKK). Guests are responsible for arranging their own international flights to and from Bangkok. We recommend flying to and from Bangkok due to Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport being a major international hub, with several airlines flying in and out of it regularly. Also, there are multiple flights daily between Bangkok and Bhutan, making Bangkok the preferred starting point for your Bhutan adventure. Please contact Boundless Journeys if you are curious about other regional airport options.

## WHEN TO RESERVE

It is important to reserve your trip early since there are limited daily flights into and out of Bhutan. Flights can only be confirmed upon receipt of your deposit, as well as the payment of \$995 (*subject to change*) for your flights into and out of Bhutan. Please contact our office with any questions, or to reserve your spot on this tour.

## SMALL GROUP TRAVEL

Small group travel affords us the opportunity to seek out the most remote and exotic destinations on the planet. Often we are exploring these locales with just 6-12 guests. The nature of active group travel is such that not all participants have the same ability level or interests. Traveling at a pace that is comfortable for the entire group, with a spirit of flexibility and adventure are all part of this shared experience.

## TRAVELER'S RESPONSIBILITY

As a trip participant, you have responsibilities to Boundless Journeys, your fellow travelers and guide, and the local people you encounter. This includes understanding and preparing for the conditions described in the itinerary, ensuring it meets your interests and abilities, and following the health and safety guidelines of Boundless Journeys, local authorities, and/or the CDC. At their discretion, a guide may ask a guest to leave the trip if further participation may be detrimental to the individual or other participants.

We strongly urge any guest feeling ill shortly before departure to cancel their trip. To help cover your investment, we highly recommend purchasing travel insurance with supplemental "Cancel for Any Reason" coverage. If you feel unwell during the tour, please immediately inform your guide, who can help take the appropriate next steps. We appreciate your cooperation.

## DEVELOPMENT IN BHUTAN

Although visiting Bhutan, in many ways, is like stepping back in time and has been a longtime favorite of Boundless Journeys' travelers for this reason, it is important to understand that this evolving society is also eager to keep pace with the modern world. While the government is approaching the development of their country with a sensitivity towards preserving the environment and culture, you can still expect to encounter some of the less positive signs of modernization. Some examples include: road construction projects that may hinder driving or cause noise and dust, litter in developed areas, begging, and packs of free-roaming street dogs. We ask you to visit Bhutan with an open mind and leave any rigid expectations about the



pristine nature of the country behind. It is important to embrace what you see and experience without judgment and recognize that Bhutan, just as any country, is struggling to be a part of this complex and rapidly changing world. We are confident that with this attitude, the Bhutan you experience will be a fascinating and memorable place.

## ROAD CONDITIONS IN BHUTAN

Due to the ongoing road-widening project taking place on the national highway from Thimphu to Samdrubjongkhar, you can expect some delays and rough roads especially for those traveling towards central and eastern Bhutan. If you are prone to motion sickness, please come prepared with medication and request to sit towards the front of the vehicle.

## CUISINE

Bhutanese dishes borrow elements of Indian and Chinese cuisine, however it is also unique in its style and tastes. One of the most distinguishing features of Bhutanese cuisine is the ubiquitous chili. *Ema datse*, a dish made with chillies and cheese, is a spicy favorite. Some excellent non-spicy options include *kewa datse* (potatoes and cheese sauce), and *shamu datse* (mushrooms with cheese sauce). Bhutanese also love momos. Though a Tibetan specialty, these dumplings now occupy a permanent place in Bhutanese cuisine. Chicken or pork momos are favored, but cheese momos are most common. Another important feature of this exotic cuisine is the use of rice, found in various forms in dishes ranging from breakfast to dinner.

We do our best to offer a la carte meals at unique local establishments, however, options are quite limited in the smaller towns, so many of the meals will be served buffet-style at our hotels. There are usually continental, Bhutanese, Chinese, and Indian dishes served.

Our goal is to offer our guests the best possible meals and food available in Bhutan, it is important to know that the food there, also local and fresh, is very simple and basic and does not offer the variety and quality that we may be accustomed to at home and traveling elsewhere in the world. Please travel to Bhutan with an open mind and do not have high expectations in this regard and you will not be disappointed.

Vegetarians and travelers with other dietary preferences or restrictions can be accommodated with advance notice.

## DRINKS WITH MEALS

At Boundless Journeys, we believe group dinners are a time to celebrate our day, while enjoying the best of local cuisine, and good company. In keeping with this spirit, we typically include local beer and wine with group dinners. If you prefer premium wine, or liquor, please feel free to order what you like, and you may settle your tab at the end of the meal.

## DRINKING WATER

We provide clean drinking water to guests throughout this tour. In an effort to reduce waste, we strongly encourage you to bring a reusable water bottle to refill because we make every effort to provide purified water from larger containers, rather than using many small single-use plastic bottles. However, using single-use plastic water bottles may be our only safe drinking water option at times throughout the tour.

We strive to travel more responsibly and we appreciate your efforts in helping us to protect the extraordinary places we visit. Boundless Journeys has taken the Travelers Against Plastic company pledge to promote sustainable travel and encourage travelers to avoid buying bottled water when they travel. You can take the pledge, too, and learn more about TAP's efforts at [www.travelersagainstplastic.org](http://www.travelersagainstplastic.org).

## GROUND TRANSPORTATION

All on-tour transportation is provided in private, air-conditioned, passenger vans. Due to the remoteness and mountainous terrain of eastern Bhutan, please be aware that time spent in the tour vehicle is unavoidable to explore this rugged and beautiful region. Driving times are best estimates and delays may occur due to road construction.

## DOMESTIC FLIGHTS

Air travel in a mountainous, Himalayan country is at the mercy of the unpredictable mountain weather. Please be aware that sometimes the flights to Yonphula are delayed or even cancelled due to unfavorable weather conditions. We are running this tour during a time of year when the weather conditions provide us with better odds of not experiencing weather-related travel disruptions, but there is still the chance of delays occurring. We will do everything in our power to minimize any travel inconveniences due to weather.

# TRIP EXTENSIONS

There are several options for extending your trip in Asia and we would love to have you join us! The following trip extensions serve as a great addition to a journey to Bhutan.

## CAMBODIA: TEMPLES OF ANGKOR

- Highlights:
- UNESCO World Heritage Site of Angkor Wat
  - Bustling streets and markets of Siem Reap
  - Boat cruise exploration of the iconic stilt villages
  - Visit an artisans cooperative or silk farm

Duration: 4-day trip  
Tour start/end: Siem Reap, Cambodia  
Accommodations: 3 nights in a deluxe hotel  
Trip rating: **1** 2 3 4 5  
Easy . . . . . Strenuous  
Land cost: \$1,495 per person  
Single Supplement: \$565



## NEPAL: KATHMANDU EXTENSIONS

- Highlights:
- Bhaktapur, known for its local artisans
  - UNESCO World Heritage sites including Hindu temples, Buddhist stupas, and Durbar Square
  - See Mount Everest on an optional scenic flight
  - Optional stay at a nature lodge above the city

Duration: 4-day trip  
Tour start/end: Kathmandu, Nepal  
Accommodations: 3 nights in a deluxe hotel  
Trip rating: **1** 2 3 4 5  
Easy . . . . . Strenuous  
Land cost: \$1,395 - \$1,595 per person  
Single Supplement: \$325-\$500



Please contact Boundless Journeys with any questions about the above extensions, to receive a sample extension itinerary, or to create your very own customized extension.

# NEXT STEPS



## TO MAKE A RESERVATION

You can call Boundless Journeys at 800-941-8010, request a reservation online, or contact your travel agent. We will confirm your spot with a deposit of \$500 per person and the payment of internal airfare, payable by check or credit card.

## ONCE YOU RESERVE

As soon as you confirm your adventure, we will provide you with an extensive, detailed trip planner that includes arrival and departure instructions, a complete packing list, regional information, required documents, a reading list, and other details.

## CANCELLATION & REFUND POLICY

Please check our Terms & Conditions page on our website for our comprehensive cancellation and refund policies: [www.boundlessjourneys.com/terms-and-conditions](http://www.boundlessjourneys.com/terms-and-conditions).

## TRIP CANCELLATION INSURANCE

In addition to your detailed trip planner, we will email you a quote for Travel Guard trip insurance. Please let us know if you would like us to purchase a policy on your behalf. Boundless Journeys strongly recommends purchasing Trip Insurance.

## QUESTIONS? WHICH TRIP IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Adventure travel may involve exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, and activities that may be new to you. If you have any questions about the level of comfort, difficulty, or activities included on your trip, please call Boundless Journeys at 800-941-8010, or email us at [info@boundlessjourneys.com](mailto:info@boundlessjourneys.com). Our travel experts look forward to helping you select the perfect adventure.

### VISIT US ONLINE

[www.boundlessjourneys.com](http://www.boundlessjourneys.com) for:

- additional departures
- special promotions
- detailed itineraries
- inspiring photography
- guide bios

### LOOKING FOR MORE CULTURE?

Check out . . .

- VIETNAM: Cultural Explorer
- JAPAN: Hiking the Nakasendo Trail

### PREFER A PRIVATE TRIP?

Ask about our Bhutan Custom Tours.

Please visit us online to learn about custom tour options to Bhutan.



# BOUNDLESS BEYOND



## RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

At Boundless Journeys, our goal is to create meaningful experiences that protect the delicate ecosystems and attributes of every location we visit. We aim to educate our guests on the best responsible travel practices for each destination.

## WE ARE COMMITTED TO

**Making connections.** Our local guides offer insider knowledge of their country, including tips on etiquette and customs. They facilitate meaningful interactions with the people and places we visit, such as dinner at the home of a local family. While you may arrive in a destination as a visitor, you leave with a deeper understanding and connection to each place.

**Going local.** Boundless Journeys' small group size stems from a desire to provide a more intimate traveler experience, giving us the freedom to move through the tight alleys of old towns on foot, eat and sleep at traditional guesthouses, participate in immersive cultural exchanges, and leave a smaller footprint on all of the locales we visit. This mobility allows us to support local economies directly, forging strong relationships with our partners and friends abroad as we return year after year.

**Respecting people and the environment.** We support organizations working to protect ecosystems and improve the livelihoods of local communities. On many of our trips, we explore stunning natural landscapes where conservation is of the utmost importance. As visitors, we practice Leave No Trace ethics and actively contribute to the conservation of parks and protected areas.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

**Give back.** Instead of receiving a Boundless Journeys t-shirt or water bottle, you can opt to donate the value of your gift to our travel scholarship fund, which will be awarded to a local student for an educational or service-based travel opportunity.

**Learn more.** Visit [boundlessjourneys.com/responsible-travel](https://boundlessjourneys.com/responsible-travel) to read more about how our values are reflected in our trip offerings. We also offer a selection of Resources for the Responsible Traveler, which suggests ways to tread lightly and ensure your journey has a positive impact.

**Join us.** Boundless Journeys has taken the Travelers Against Plastic company pledge to promote sustainable travel and encourage travelers to avoid buying bottled water when they travel. You can take the pledge at [travelersagainstoplastic.org](https://travelersagainstoplastic.org).

## CONSERVATION IN ACTION

Boundless Journeys is a proud member of the Adventure Travel and Trade Association, a global network of adventure seekers who believe in the protection and promotion of local communities and wilderness areas.

