

# Bhutan | SPIRITUALITY & WELLNESS JOURNEY

CULTURAL IMMERSION | 8 DAYS

April 7-14, 2021

October 8-15, 2021

## TRIP ITINERARY

  
Boundless  
JOURNEYS

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 | SPIRITUALITY & WELLNESS JOURNEY

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

Often referred to as the last Shangri-La, Bhutan has been an intriguing destination for travelers since this tiny, land-locked kingdom officially opened up to tourism in 1974. Never having been colonized, Bhutan has retained its pristine landscapes, traditional architecture, and distinct culture for centuries. Spirituality is still sacred here, with the predominant religion of Buddhism influencing many aspects of life.

Join us on this journey where we explore both Bhutan's dramatic landscapes and fascinating Buddhist culture. We hike through lush river valleys with snow capped, sacred mountains looming in the distance, share tea and conversation with young monks at a local monastery, partake in guided meditation sessions in centuries old temples, and learn about Bhutan's fascinating Gross National Happiness concept by speaking with a local expert. Many more once-in-a-lifetime experiences await you in the Land of the Thunder Dragon!

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Learning about Bhutan's centuries-old traditional medicine and the significance of the sacred *mandala* in Buddhism
- Optional yoga sessions, a cooking class, a guided meditation, and a soak in the healing waters of a *tsachu*, or mineral hot spring
- Visiting hallowed meditation caves and hiking to the iconic cliffside Paro Taktsang, also known as Tiger's Nest Monastery
- Choosing to spend an optional overnight at a monastery

TOUR OVERVIEW.....	4
THE JOURNEY.....	6
ACCOMMODATIONS .....	10
WHAT TO EXPECT.....	11
OUR GUIDES .....	14
TRIP EXTENSIONS.....	15
NEXT STEPS .....	16
BOUNDLESS BEYOND.....	17



# TOUR OVERVIEW



## THE BASICS

Duration:	8-day trip
Accommodations:	7 nights in boutique hotels 1 optional monastery stay
Tour start/end:	Paro
Trip rating:	1 <b>2</b> 3      4      5 Easy ..... Strenuous (See page 11 for more details)
Land cost:	\$4,595 per person*
Single supplement:	First two solo travelers: \$45* Additional solo travelers: \$545 <i>*Must reserve at least 120 days prior</i>
Internal airfare:	\$995 per person ( <i>subject to change</i> ) Bangkok to Paro; Paro to Bangkok



## 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. Put your wallet away, leave your travel books behind, fold up your maps, and BE there. 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 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 internal airline tickets 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 arrangements to and from Bangkok. If you would like assistance with your international travel plans, please contact Boundless Journeys for a referral to one of our partners who will best fit your needs.



## ITINERARY AT-A-GLANCE

### DAY 1

Arrive at the airport in Paro, Bhutan. Transfer to the capital city of Thimphu and enjoy a short hike to the giant, golden Great Buddha Dordenma statue above town.

### DAY 2

Begin the day with a cleansing ceremony followed by a presentation about the mandala and its role in Buddhism. Later, visit the Institute of Traditional Medicine, enjoy a yoga session, and learn about Bhutan's Gross National Happiness concept from a local expert.

### DAY 3

Drive to Punakha, stopping at the Dochula Pass for a guided meditation at the caves located here. Hike to Lungchuzeykha Temple. Upon arrival in Punakha, visit the Chime Lhakang Temple to learn about the unorthodox teachings of Bhutan's legendary Divine Madman.

### DAY 4

Venture to a local *tsachu*, or mineral hot spring, to soak in its healing waters.

### DAY 5

Hike to the Khamsum Yulley Temple, visit the Punakha Dzong, and meet with young monks at the Nalanda Buddhist Institute. Optional overnight stay at the Institute's monastery.

### DAY 6

Visit a local farm and meet the owner to learn about textile dying and farm life in Bhutan. Enjoy a cooking class and lunch made from fresh ingredients from the farm before transferring to Paro. Optional evening yoga session.

### DAY 7

Hike up to the iconic, cliffside Paro Taktsang, also known as Tiger's Nest Monastery. Visit Kyichu Gumpa for a monk blessing. Enjoy a traditional hot stone bath before our farewell celebratory dinner.

### DAY 8

Depart from Paro.

**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.*



# THE JOURNEY



## DAY 1: Arrival in Bhutan

**Activity overview:** Cultural touring & hiking

**Activity level:** Easy

**Activity length:** 1-2 hours

**Drive time:** approximately 1 hour\*

Our flight into Bhutan provides spectacular views of the country's mountainous landscape as we approach the airport in the Paro Valley. The valley is a green bowl surrounded by the jagged Himalayas and 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.

Our Bhutanese guide(s) meets us at the airport and we transfer to Thimphu, home of the royal family. Before becoming Bhutan's official national capital in 1961, Thimphu was a simple, rural farming valley. Small and secluded, it is unlike any other world capital. The city is quiet, and may be the only capital in the world without a traffic light.

*Our itinerary today is dependent on flight arrival times and is subject to change.*

We enjoy a short hike to stretch our legs after our travels. Our destination is Great Buddha Dordenma, the gigantic golden Shakyamuni Buddha statue perched above Thimphu. Completed in 2015, this imposing statue commemorates the Bhutanese monarchy and fulfills two prophecies, one claiming such a statue would be built in the area to bestow blessings, peace, and happiness on the entire world.

Dinner this evening will highlight Bhutanese cuisine, either at our hotel or one of Thimphu's fine restaurants.

**Accommodation:** Zhiwa Ling Ascent, Thimphu

**Meals:** L, D

## DAY 2: Mandala making; Traditional Medicine

**Activity overview:** Cultural touring & walking

**Activity level:** Easy

**Activity length:** 5-6 hours

This morning, we head to a farmhouse to begin our day and spiritual journey in Bhutan with a traditional cleansing ceremony led by a local monk. After enjoying breakfast at the farmhouse, the monk teaches us about the *mandala*, an aid used in focusing the mind during meditation. Mandalas are common in religions throughout the world, and the monk shares specifically how Bhutanese mandalas are made and their popular themes. We have a chance to try our hand at making our own colorful creations, before destroying them as part of the Buddhist concept of impermanence.

We also visit the Institute of Traditional Medicine's museum to learn about the medicinal properties of various Himalayan plants and animals. These have played a role in the health and well-being of the Bhutanese people for centuries.

This evening before dinner, we enjoy a private yoga session before attending an informal cultural teaching delivered by a local expert on Bhutan's remarkable Gross National Happiness concept, an opportunity to learn more about Bhutan's unique culture.

**Accommodation:** Zhiwa Ling Ascent, Thimphu

**Meals:** B, L, D



*"The Bhutan tour exceeded my expectations in every way. I was pleasantly surprised by how good the food and hotel accommodations were. I truly had so many unique experiences in Bhutan that I will never forget. Bhutan is a very special place and I feel so fortunate to have made this journey. This trip by far exceeds any other trip I have ever been on."*

*- S.G. Rochester, NY*

## DAY 3: Lungchuzeykha Temple Hike

**Activity overview:** Cultural touring & hiking

**Activity level:** Moderate with 1,540' elevation gain/loss  
(highest elevation: 11,646')

**Activity length:** 3.5 hours, 4 miles

**Drive time:** approximately 3 hours\*

After an early breakfast, we say goodbye to Thimphu and transfer to the Punakha Valley, our home for the next two nights. En route, we cross the Dochula Pass (10,230'), which offers a great view of the eastern Himalayas. We stop and explore the meditation caves here, and after a guided meditation led by a local monk, we hike to Lungchuzeykha Temple. We take a slow, easy pace due to the elevation and are rewarded with near 360-degree views of the mountains surrounding this remote monastery. After soaking in the epic scenery during a picnic lunch, we return to Dochula Pass and continue to Punakha through pine and rhododendron forests and some of Bhutan's most picturesque countryside.

On the road to Punakha, we stop in a small village for a short walk to the Chime Lhakang temple, dedicated to the Lama Drukpa Kunley, one of Bhutan's favorite saints. More commonly known as the "Divine Madman," Kunley traveled throughout Bhutan and Tibet using songs, humor, and outrageous behavior to dramatize his teachings, believing that the formality of the clergy and social conventions were keeping people from understanding true Buddhism. This site is still believed to hold fertility powers for women wanting to conceive.

We arrive at our hotel with time to freshen up before dinner.

**Accommodation:** Dhumra Hotel, Punakha

**Meals:** B, L, D

## DAY 4: Gasa Tsachu

**Activity overview:** Hot spring soak

**Activity level:** Easy

**Activity length:** 2 hours

**Drive time:** approximately 6 hours

Today's adventure takes us north of Punakha to the Gasa District to experience an important part of Bhutanese health and wellness—the *tsachu*. These mineral hot springs are found throughout this small, mountainous country. The Bhutanese believe hot springs have healing powers making these sites not only a place of relaxation and well-being, but also of holy significance. Tsachus are often featured in Bhutanese folklore, with the beloved Guru Rimpoche said to be the creator of these sacred tsachus.

Our drive to Gasa is slow-going as the road is rough and infrequently traveled. Gasa is fairly remote, and few foreign travelers venture here. Our drive takes us through the heart of Jigme Dorji National Park, home to some of the country's most pristine forest and rare, reclusive wildlife.

**Accommodation:** Dhumra Hotel, Punakha

**Meals:** B, L, D

## DAY 5: Khamsung Yuley Namgyel Temple

**Activity overview:** Cultural touring & hiking

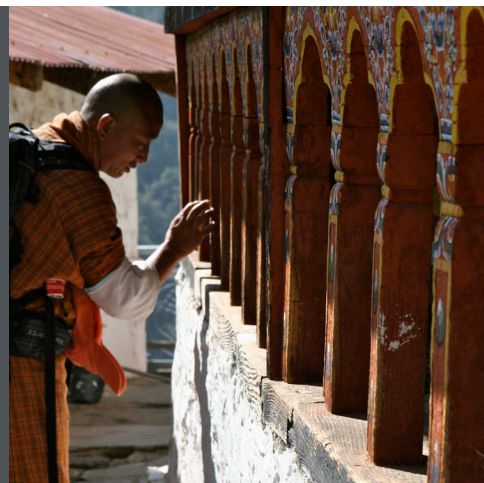
**Activity level:** Easy to moderate, 656' elevation gain  
(highest elevation: 4,921')

**Activity length:** 3-4 hours

Following breakfast and a drive through the Punakha Valley, we begin our hike by first ascending a series of switchbacks to the Khamsung Yuley Namgyel Temple. From this modern

## THE BOUNDLESS JOURNEYS DIFFERENCE

*Vajrayana Buddhism is the state religion of Bhutan, and Buddhists comprise more than two-thirds of the population. Monasteries and convents are common in Bhutan, and we have the opportunity to visit both while on this journey. Over a cup of tea, chat with the young monks at a monastery in Punakha to learn about their studies, their meditation practices, and the daily religious rituals which comprise their monastic life.*



temple, we are afforded grand views of the Mo Chu River Valley below. We descend along a well-worn path through terraced rice fields and small villages.

We continue our walk to the Punakha Dzong. Constructed in 1637, this was the second of Bhutan's dzongs and served for many years as the seat of the government. Today it is the home to Bhutan's spiritual leader, the Chief Abbot Je Khempo, who resides here with 1,000 monks during the winter months because of Punakha's moderate climate thanks to its relatively low altitude by Himalayan standards (4,000'). From this spectacular dzong, we see Khamsung Yuley Namgyel Temple perched on a distance hillside.

Following our hike, we visit the Nalanda Buddhist Institute for a special opportunity to meet and chat with the young resident monks there. Those seeking further immersion may opt to stay overnight at the monastery. Guests will join the monks in their evening and early morning rituals and connect to Buddhism and a way of life few experience.

**Accommodation:** Dhumra Hotel, Punakha or optional overnight monastery stay

**Meals:** B, L, D

### DAY 6: Gyatshothang Farmhouse

**Activity overview:** Cultural touring

**Activity level:** Easy

**Activity length:** 3-4 hours

**Drive time:** 3-4 hours\*

Before returning to Paro, we head to the Gyatshothang Farmhouse, a small working farm, for a glimpse of Bhutan's agrarian past. We are treated to a tour of the grounds by

the owner, Aum Karma Yangchen, who tends to the land much like her ancestors did, growing produce and making cheese and butter from her milking cows. She also guides us in a cooking class, as we learn to make some classic Bhutanese dishes using ingredients picked fresh from Aum Karma's fields.

We bid the charming Punakha Valley farewell and drive west to Paro. If time allows, we may stop at the former Pangrizampa Monastery, now home to the College of Bhutanese Astrology.

Before dinner, we can enjoy an optional yoga class to recharge, rejuvenate, and stretch after today's drive.

**Accommodation:** Naksel Boutique Hotel, Paro

**Meals:** B, L, D

### DAY 7: Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) Monastery

**Activity overview:** Hiking & cultural touring

**Activity level:** Moderate to strenuous, 1,650' elevation gain/loss (highest elevation: 10,171') with stone steps

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

Today, we enjoy 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. We begin on the valley floor and climb steadily on a wide 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 the Bhutanese believe a high lama was born—all reminders that for many, this is not just a hike, but a spiritual pilgrimage.





*"I really had a great time! Our guides, Sangay and Manraj, were amazing and made the trip unforgettable. By the end of the trip I stopped thinking of them as guides and considered them friends. I was very impressed with their knowledge, professionalism, friendliness, and generosity."*

*— S.I, Harsens Island, MI*

As we near the monastery, we stop at a teahouse for refreshments and to take in our first up-close view of Taktsang. From here, our trail levels out for a short while before we descend on steps, cross a bridge, and arrive at 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. Entry into the monastery feels like stepping back in time, and we visit several shrines that comprise the complex as our guide points out features and explains the significance of the site.

We return to the valley floor for a trailside picnic lunch before heading back to our hotel. Our afternoon is free to unwind and relax after our hike. You may decide to try a traditional Bhutanese hot stone bath or perhaps stroll the Paro market before dinner.

This evening, we celebrate our journey and what we have learned from this amazing country and its warm and welcoming people.

**Accommodation:** Naksel Boutique Hotel, Paro

**Meals:** B, L, D

## DAY 8: Departure from Paro

We are transferred to the airport in time for our departing flight as we begin our journey home or continue to other exciting destinations.

**Meals:** B

*\*Driving times are best estimates. The total transfer time is longer when taking rest stops, encountering road construction, or other possible delays occur.*

# ACCOMMODATIONS

This itinerary consists of standard hotel options available in Bhutan. Although the hotels in Bhutan cannot be compared to international standards, they are comfortable and offer all necessary facilities. We believe that any inconveniences due to these modest accommodations are far outweighed by the unforgettable experience of visiting Bhutan. *If you prefer to stay in luxury hotels, please contact us to discuss a private journey.*



## NIGHTS 1 & 2

### Zhiwa Ling Ascent

Thimphu

Tel: +975 2 336486 | Email: [info@zhiwalingascent.com](mailto:info@zhiwalingascent.com)

Located outside the city center on 25 acres bordering the Motithang Takin Preserve, Zhiwa Ling Ascent is a retreat from the hustle and bustle and welcomes guests to relax in a park-like setting with panoramic views of the countryside. The hotel's spacious rooms were designed to maximize natural light and the superb scenery. Guests may enjoy a juice bar, massage, and yoga.



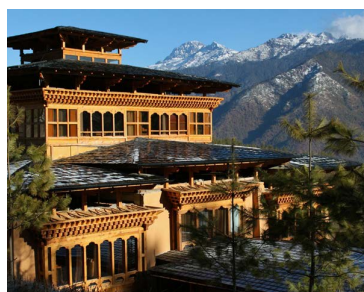
## NIGHTS 3-5

### Dhumra Farm Resort

Punakha

Tel: +975 7117488 | Email: [dhumrafarm@gmail.com](mailto:dhumrafarm@gmail.com)

Nestled amidst the green hills with an enviable view of the Punakha Dzong, Dhumra Farm Resort has been built with nature in mind, from the local building materials to the farm's organic produce cooked in the traditional earthen oven. This small, boutique hotel is committed to providing guests with an extraordinary and authentic Bhutanese experience.



## NIGHTS 6 & 7

### Naksel Boutique Hotel

Paro

Tel: +975 8272992 | Email: [reservations@naksel.com](mailto:reservations@naksel.com)

Naksel is an eco-friendly, community-based property--its traditional windows, mud-bricks, framework, and furniture were crafted in nearby Ngoba Village. Rooms feature in-floor heating and ensuite bathrooms, and guests may enjoy the onsite a restaurant, bar, and cozy coffee house.

*Due to the unique tourism policy in Bhutan, hotels are subject to change. The listed accommodations will most likely be what we can expect, but may alter due to availability.*

# WHAT TO EXPECT



## TRIP RATING

Boundless Journeys trips are designed for energetic and flexible individuals who like to be active, have a spirit of adventure, and a positive attitude. This trip is rated 2, easy to moderate, on a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being the most strenuous). The walks and hikes on this trip are easy to moderate, generally from 2-5 hours in length, with minimal vehicle support. Some of the hikes will involve some steep ascents and descents, however the terrain is not technical. A few days involve drives on narrow, winding roads.

## 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 easy to moderate aerobic activities (such as walking, 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 Thimphu, which is situated at 7,500 feet, in the foothills of the Himalayas. After our first two nights in Thimphu, we move to Punakha, which offers a relatively low elevation of approximately 4,300'. Our final nights are spent in Paro at approximately 7,300'. Our walks and hikes will take place at elevations from 4,300' to a little over 10,000'. We 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 at night 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 contain accurate temperatures for Bhutan. For the most reliable information, we recommend visiting [www.weatherbase.com](http://www.weatherbase.com).

AVERAGE TEMPERATURE °F (HIGH/LOW)					
	MAR	APR	SEPT	OCT	NOV
Paro	58/33	64/40	74/53	66/45	57/34
Punakha	70/49	76/53	86/69	82/66	72/55
Thimphu	62/39	68/45	74/59	71/51	64/41

## 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 in 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, 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 ongoing road-widening construction on the national highway from Thimphu to Samdrubjongkhar, you can expect some delays and rough roads. 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). Though a Tibetan specialty, *momos* 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.

While 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 is basic and does not offer the variety and quality that we may be accustomed to at home. 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.travelersagainstoplastic.org](http://www.travelersagainstoplastic.org).

## TRANSPORTATION

All on-tour transportation is provided in private, air-conditioned, passenger vans.

# OUR GUIDES

## 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, providing them with a deep appreciation of his country and culture.



### **Kinley Tshering**

Kinley (or Kelly, as he is known among his Bhutanese coworkers) joined our local staff of guides after completing extensive training in 2006, and has led many tours for Boundless Journeys, becoming a favorite among our guests. Very friendly and down to earth, Kinley is extremely knowledgeable and always determined to make your trip special.



# 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](http://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 [travelersagainstplastic.org](http://travelersagainstplastic.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.

