

Bhutan

HIKING IN THE PEACEFUL KINGDOM

CULTURAL HIKING ADVENTURE | 12 DAYS



March 21-April 1, 2021

April 16-27, 2021*

September 27-October 8, 2021

October 15-26, 2021*

November 13-24, 2021*

*Festival departures

TRIP ITINERARY




Boundless
JOURNEYS

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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 | HIKING IN THE PEACEFUL KINGDOM

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

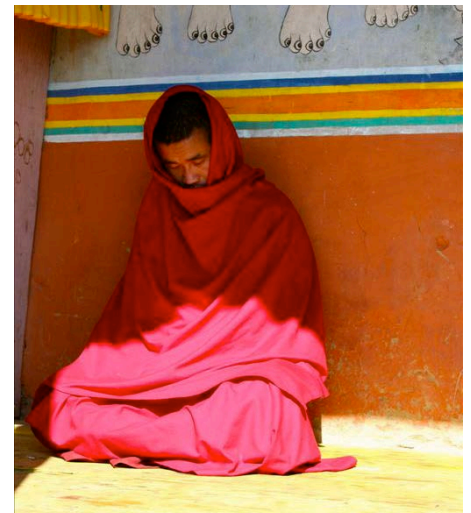
Along the lofty ridges of the Himalayas, cradled between Tibet and India, lies the Kingdom of Bhutan, a place that has for centuries remained blissfully untouched by the rest of the world. With few visitors entering the country, Bhutan appears frozen in time with its landscape remaining pristine and its traditional architecture well-preserved. Bhutan’s culture is also well-preserved—the Bhutanese people are warm and gracious, and spirituality is still sacred here.

On our journey appreciate Bhutan’s varied and dramatic scenery of beautiful river valleys, snow capped sacred mountains, and terraced rice fields. Meet welcoming locals while visiting Bhutan’s iconic dzongs, hike to remote gold-roofed temples and monasteries, and walk through peaceful villages in emerald valleys surrounded by a spectacular mountain backdrop.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Share tea and conversation with young monks at a local monastery and learn about Bhutanese monastic life
- Gain greater insight into Bhutanese culture by speaking with an expert on Bhutan’s unique Gross National Happiness concept
- Venture into the central Bumthang Valley, Bhutan’s cultural heartland.
- Hike to the iconic cliffside Paro Taktsang, also known as Tiger’s Nest Monastery

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TOUR OVERVIEW



THE BASICS

Duration:	12-day trip
Tour start/end:	Paro
Accommodations:	11 nights in boutique hotels
Trip rating:	1 2+ 3 4 5 Easy Strenuous (See page 13 for more information)
Land cost:	\$5,395 per person
Single Supplement:	First two solo travelers reserved: \$0* Additional solo travelers: \$475 <i>*Must reserve at least 120 days prior</i>
Internal Airfare:	\$995 per person** Bangkok to Paro; Paro to Bangkok
Domestic Flight	\$200 per person** Jakar to Paro (Day 9 depending on availability) <i>**Airfare prices are subject to change</i>



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, 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 to explore the city's many interesting sights.

DAY 2

Hike to the Cheri Gompa Monastery, visit the Choki School of Arts, and learn about Bhutan's Gross National Happiness concept from a local expert.

DAY 3

Drive from Thimphu to Punakha. Visit the Chime Lhakang Temple to learn about the unorthodox teachings of Bhutan's legendary Divine Madman.

DAY 4

Hike to the Khamsung Yuley Namgyel Temple, visit the Punakha Dzong, and visit the Nalanda Buddhist Institute to meet with the young monks who reside there.

DAY

5

Transfer from Punakha to Gangtey. Hike the scenic Longtey Hike in the Phobjikha Valley, where the revered black necked cranes reside during the winter months.

DAY 6

Enjoy an easy hike along the Gangtey Nature Trail before driving to the beautiful Bumthang Valley.

DAY 7

Experience the beauty and nature of the Bumthang Valley by partaking in the Pasaling Gompa Hike.

DAY 8

Explore the Tang Valley with an excursion to the Ugyen Choling estate and a visit to Tang Mebartsho (Burning Lake), a sacred place in Bhutanese folklore.

DAY 9

Transfer from Jakar to Paro (either by plane or overland depending upon flight availability).

DAY 10

Hike up to the iconic, cliffside Paro Taktsang, also known as Tiger's Nest Monastery.

DAY 11

Take in panoramic views of distant mountain peaks and the Haa Valley below from Chele La Pass. Hike from this scenic pass to Kila Gompa nunnery. In the evening enjoy a final farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

DAY 12

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 Paro

Activity overview: Walking & cultural touring

Activity level: Easy

Activity length: 1-2 hours

Drive time: approximately 1 hour*

Our flight into Bhutan provides spectacular views of the country's landscape as we approach the airport in the Paro Valley. The valley is a green bowl surrounded by jagged Himalayan Mountains 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 one of the most scenic valleys in Bhutan. Paro is believed to be one of the first valleys to have received the imprint of Buddhism.

We meet our guide and driver and transfer to Thimphu, Bhutan's largest city and 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 city in the world without a traffic light.

Our itinerary today is dependent on flight arrival times, and guests may be able to partake in all or some of the following activities:

Our exploration takes us to many of Thimphu's interesting sites. If time allows, we may visit the National Textile Museum, the Heritage Museum, or the giant, golden Dordenma Buddha statue perched on a hillside above town, giving us some excellent views of the Thimphu Valley

below. *(Please note that museums are closed on weekends and national holidays)*

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

Accommodation: Druk Hotel, Thimphu

Meals: L, D

DAY 2: Cheri Gompa & the Choki School of Arts

Activity overview: Hiking on trails & cultural touring

Activity level: Easy to moderate with 1,300' elevation gain and loss (highest elevation: 9,186')

Activity length: about 2 hours (3 miles)

This morning, a short drive through the countryside surrounding Thimphu brings us to the Jigme Dorji Wildlife Sanctuary, the largest protected area in the country. The area is home to several endangered species, including the takin, snow leopard, blue sheep, tiger, red panda, and the Himalayan black bear. More than 300 species of birds have been catalogued within the region.

Our walk begins from the small village of Dodena. We cross a covered bridge over the Wang Chhu River and climb steadily to Cheri Gompa, a small monastery perched on the hill with a view of the Thimphu Valley. Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal built this monastery in 1620, and this is where the first community of monks in Bhutan was established. The monastery is considered very sacred, as it contains the ashes of Tempa Nima, the father of the first Shabdrung of Bhutan, and beautiful frescoes of Buddhist saints.

After our visit to the monastery, we descend on the same route, keeping our eyes open for the goral (wild goat) that



“The entire trip exceeded my high expectations of visiting Bhutan. Our guides were superb with knowledge, warmth, and humor. An atmosphere of camaraderie was established immediately between fellow guests, leading to an even more delightful experience.”

- J.C. Aspen, CO



are often spotted on the cliffs nearby. Back at the village of Dodena, we drive to Cabesa, home of the Choki School of Arts (*closed on weekends and holidays*). The Choki School provides free, skills-related education in the traditional arts and crafts of Bhutan to Bhutanese children who are unable to complete their formal education.

This evening before dinner, we will enjoy a Bhutanese cultural teaching delivered by a local expert. This allows us the opportunity to learn more about Bhutan’s unique culture and its remarkable Gross National Happiness concept.

Accommodation: Hotel Druk, Thimphu

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 3: Temple of Divine Madman

Activity overview: Walking & cultural touring

Activity level: Easy with 131’ elevation gain (highest elevation: 4,921’)

Activity length: 1-2 hours

Drive time: approximately 3 hours*

This morning after an early breakfast, we say goodbye to Thimphu and transfer to the Punakha Valley, our home for the next two nights. The road to Punakha crosses the Dochula Pass (10,230’), offering a great view of the eastern Himalayan mountains. From the pass, our road descends through magnificent pine and rhododendron forests, and wanders through some of Bhutan’s most picturesque countryside.

On the road to Punakha, we stop in a small village where a short walk brings us to Chime Lhakang, a temple dedicated to the Lama Drukpa Kunley. Drukpa Kunley is one of

Bhutan’s favorite saints and is more commonly known as the “Divine Madman.” He traveled throughout Bhutan and Tibet using songs, humor, and outrageous behavior to dramatize his teachings, believing that the stiffness of the clergy and social conventions were keeping people from learning true Buddhism. This site is still believed to hold fertility powers for women wanting to conceive.

Accommodation: Dhumra Farm Resort, Punakha

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 4: Khamsung Yuley Namgyel Temple

Activity overview: Hiking & cultural touring

Activity level: Easy to moderate with 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 temple, we are afforded grand views of the Mo Chu River Valley below. We then descend from the temple and follow a well-worn path down the valley through rice fields and small villages. Along the way we are rewarded with stunning views—the terraced rice paddies providing an exotic backdrop to the river below.

After enjoying a picnic lunch along the river, we continue our walk to the Punakha Dzong. Constructed in 1637, it is the second oldest dzong in the country and for many years it served 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 due to Punakha’s relatively low altitude by

A BOUNDLESS MOMENT IN BHUTAN...

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.



Himalayan standards (4,000'). From this spectacular dzong we can look back to see the Khamsung Yuley Namgyel Temple perched on the hillside far in the distance. A short walk from the dzong takes us back to the road where we meet our driver and return to our hotel.

Following our hike, we have the special opportunity to visit the Nalanda Buddhist Institute, just outside of Punakha. There we meet the resident monks and learn about their lives. *Please note that this may take place in the morning, depending on the monastery's schedule for the day.*

Accommodation: Dhumra Farm Resort, Punakha

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 5: Longtey Hike in Phobjikha Valley

Activity overview: Hiking & cultural touring

Activity level: Moderate with 1,312' elevation gain (highest elevation: 12,139')

Activity length: 3-4 hours

Drive time: approximately 3-4 hours*

After breakfast, we depart Punakha, with our drive taking us up a winding mountain road through oak and rhododendron forest, and over a high pass down into the Phobjikha Valley, surely one of the loveliest high altitude valleys in Bhutan (approximately 9840'). Phobjikha is one of Bhutan's few glacial valleys, and is the chosen winter home of black-necked cranes, migrating from the Tibetan plateau.

We begin our hike to Longtey village at the Gangtey Gompa, passing through Kumbu village and then ascending steadily from the valley floor. Upon reaching our first pass, we stop

for some impressive views of Gangtey Gompa and the Phobjikha valley below.

On our descent, we hike through old-growth rhododendron forest while soaking up the beauty of these majestic trees. Eventually the trail leads into a sweeping valley where yaks graze during the winter months. We conclude our hike passing through some bamboo as we enter Longtey village.

Please note that the hike on this day may be altered depending on possible driving delays due to road construction/closures.

Accommodation: Hotel Dewachen, Gangtey

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 6: Gangtey Nature Trail Hike

Activity overview: Hiking & cultural touring

Activity level: Easy with 656' elevation gain (highest elevation: 9,843')

Activity length: around 1.5 hours

Drive time: approximately 5-6 hours*

Today, we stretch our legs on the Gangtey Nature Trail before beginning our drive to the Bumthang Valley. This easy hike starts from the mani stone wall (sacred stone walls with Buddhist prayers etched into them) to the north of the Gangtey Gompa and ends in Khewa Lhakhang. We meander through pine and bamboo forests, and gain excellent views of the remote Phobjikha valley, where we may catch a glimpse of black neck cranes (during the winter months). We also may visit the Gangtey Gompa Monastery, the only Nyingmapa monastery in western Bhutan.



"A once in a lifetime experience to the most amazingly beautiful country with the gentlest people with the biggest smiles!"

-J.D., Victoria, AU



The Bumthang region encompasses four major valleys: Choskhor, Tang, Ura, and Chhume. The dzongs and notable temples are in the large Choskhor Valley, commonly referred to as the Bumthang Valley. Different from most other valleys in Bhutan, Bumthang is broad and ideal for walkers and hikers. There are numerous Buddhist monasteries and pilgrimage sites to explore, making it the cultural and historic center of the country, and almost every little valley or hill has its own myths and legends.

While in Bumthang, we visit many of the valley's significant sites. Among them is Kurje Lhakhang, where Guru Rimpoche came in the 8th century to settle issues with feuding local rulers. With a flash of his magic, the guru resolved the conflict and converted everyone to Buddhism, leaving his body imprint on the rock for which Kurje Lhakhang is named. The Kurje Lhakhang temple complex is made up of three buildings, and the body imprint of the guru can be seen in the first and oldest of the temples, built in 1652.

Please note that the hike on this day may be altered depending on possible driving delays due to road construction/closures.

Accommodation: Bhutan Mountain, Lodge Jakar
Meals: B, L, D

DAY 7: Pasaling Gompa Hike

Activity overview: Hiking & cultural touring
Activity level: Moderate to strenuous with 1,187' of elevation gain and loss (highest elevation: 11,576')
Activity length: approximately 3 hrs (6 miles)

Today's hike begins with a gradual climb through blue pine forest, where along the way, we visit a Pasaling Gompa

which overlooks the beautiful valley of Bumthang. Along the route, we are granted breathtaking views of the valley

Following a picnic lunch, we embark on a hike from Kurje temple. The trail leads over a suspension bridge and towards Choekhortoe village and the Tamshing area, where we visit the Dorjibi weaving centre. We enjoy passing through the pastoral landscape consisting of farmer's fields and farmhouses. We are greeted by the villagers working their daily routine in the fields.

We reach Tamshing Lhakhang and have a perfect view of Kurje Lhakhang on the opposite hill where we began.

Accommodation: Bhutan Mountain, Lodge Jakar
Meals: B, L, D

DAY 8: Excursion to Tang Valley

Activity overview: Hiking & cultural touring
Activity level: Easy
Activity length: 1-2 hours
Drive time: approximately 2 hours*

Today, we explore the Bumthang district further with an excursion to the stunningly beautiful Tang Valley. This seldom visited valley offers a treat; revealing some off the beaten track monasteries and the fascinating cultural museum at Ugyen Choling. A fairly short hike takes us up to this well maintained estate and its cultural treasures inside. Along the way we stop for a traditional farmhouse lunch (*this may take place on a different day depending on the schedules and availability of local families*).

We then visit Tang Mebartsho (Burning Lake), where a famous reincarnated lama, Terton Pema Lingpa, is supposed to have discovered a religious treasure in the

THE BOUNDLESS JOURNEYS DIFFERENCE

Our Peaceful Kingdom journey takes us to the Bumthang Valley, a less-visited part of central Bhutan, distinct from western Bhutan both culturally and geographically. Here, one really senses the remote isolation that Bhutanese people have lived in for centuries.



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 9: Transfer to Paro

Activity overview: 12-hour transfer by road* or 30 min flight

We return to western Bhutan by flight (if available) or retrace our route overland to Paro, where our journey began. For those driving, there will be plenty of time to stretch our legs along the way, including stops for both tea breaks and lunch. We have another chance for some spectacular views of the Himalayas as we drive over the Dochu La and Yotung La passes. Following a Bhutanese tradition, we will have the opportunity to spread our own prayer flags at the top of one of these passes, granting us blessings for a long life.

For those flying to Paro, you will be met by one of our guides upon your arrival at the airport and will have the day at your leisure. Our group reunites this evening, and we may stretch our legs with a stroll through the market before enjoying dinner together.

Accommodation: Raven's Nest Hotel, Paro

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 10: Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) Monastery

Activity overview: Hiking & cultural touring

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

Activity length: 4-5 hours (4.5 miles)

This morning, 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. Our 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. Entry into the monastery feels like stepping back in time and 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.



"Thank you Boundless Journeys for assuring our Bhutan experience to be an excellent adventure! We were well cared for every step of the trip and the local guides were more than generous with their knowledge of their beautiful country and culture of Bhutan!"

-J.M., Kamas, UT

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 unwind and relax after our hike. There will be an option to stroll the Paro market, or you can simply rest at the hotel before dinner.

Accommodation: Raven's Nest Hotel, Paro

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 11: Chele La Pass to Kila Gompa

Activity overview: Hiking & cultural touring

Activity level: Moderate with 1,300' elevation loss (highest elevation: 12,500')

Activity length: 2-3 hours

Drive time: approximately 3 hours*

The day's adventure starts early as we set out on a road that climbs almost 5,000' above the valley floor to Chele La Pass (12,500'). Towards the end of our scenic hour and a half drive, we emerge from the blue pine and rhododendron forest into windswept highlands favored by yaks. Here, we'll enjoy a view of Himalayan wildflowers, with fields of azaleas, edelweiss, and even the famous blue poppy at certain times of the year. If the weather is clear, we'll enjoy glimpses of some of Bhutan's highest peaks. Upon reaching the pass, western Bhutan appears before us, with its unspoiled Haa Valley, the mountains of Sikkim to the west, Mt. Chomolhari and Tibet to the north, and the patchwork fields of the Paro Valley to the east.

Leaving the prayer flag-swathed col and our vehicle behind, we strike off along the ridge, passing through meadows, before re-entering forests of larch, spruce, hemlock, fir and rhododendron. After about two hours, we see the

Kila Gompa, seemingly suspended in rock crags. Home to approximately 30 nuns, it has served as a retreat for meditation since the 9th century. Kila means "spiritual dagger," and a visit to the temple is often thought to tame the negative emotions of anger, ignorance, and greed.

Following our visit and picnic lunch, we descend on a dirt road that winds through conifers and rhododendrons. We arrive at our private vehicle to return to Paro. Along the way, if time allows, we'll enjoy a short detour to Dzongdrakha Gompa and its stupa. This rocky aerie is the site of the annual local Paro dromoche (masked dances), the precursor to the grander Paro Tsechu, or festival. Here, we may also have the opportunity to see some local residents: grey langur monkeys.

This evening, we celebrate our journey through this amazing kingdom, and the kind welcome we have received from the generous people of Bhutan.

Accommodation: Raven's Nest Hotel, Paro

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 12: Departure from Paro

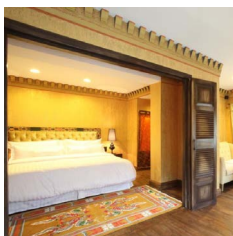
We are transferred to the airport for an early morning departure from Paro. From here we say farewell before our journey home, or continue on to other exciting destinations.

Meals: B

**Drive times are estimated based on actual time driving. The total transfer time is longer when taking rest stops, road construction or other possible delays into account.*

ACCOMMODATIONS

This itinerary includes a combination of the standard and deluxe hotel options available in Bhutan. Although the hotels in Bhutan cannot be compared to international standards, they are clean, 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.*



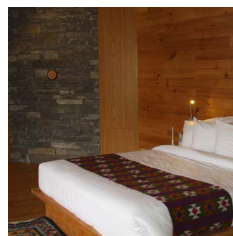
NIGHTS 1,2

Hotel Druk

Thimphu

Tel: +975 2 32296

Email: druk.thimphu@drukhotels.com



NIGHTS 6,7,8

Bhutan Mountain Lodge

Jakar

Tel: +975 3 631255

Email: bhutanmountainresort.com



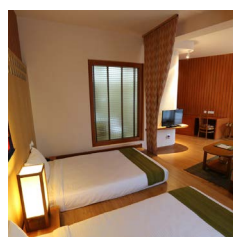
NIGHTS 3,4

Dhumra Farm Resort

Punakha

Tel: +975 7117488

Email: dhumrafarm@gmail.com



NIGHTS 9,10,11

Raven's Nest Hotel

Paro

Tel: +975 8 270244/45/46

Email: ravensnestbt@gmail.com



NIGHT 5

Hotel Dewachen

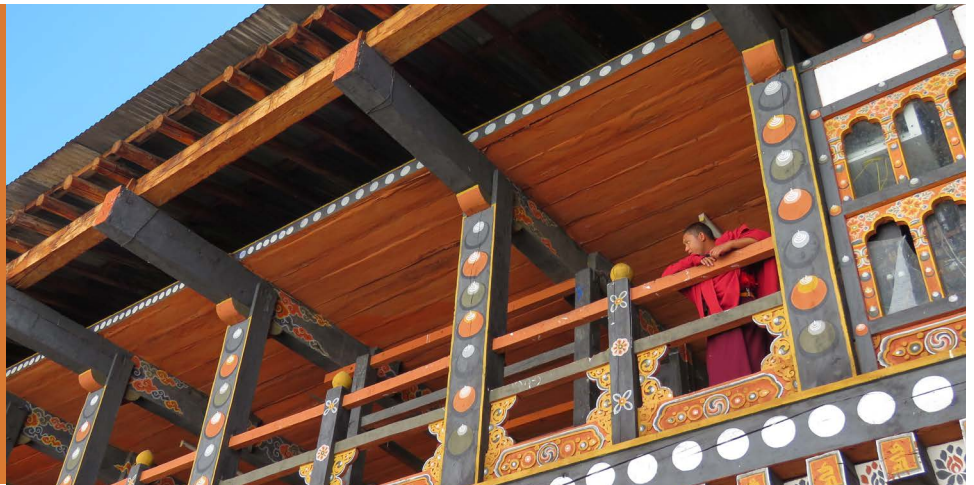
Gangtey

Tel: +975 17 16 2204

Email: dewachenhotel1@gmail.com

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 and have a spirit of adventure and a positive attitude. Hiking in the Peaceful Kingdom 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 day hikes. Hikes generally are from 2-5 hours in length with minimal vehicle support. A few days involve some long 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, we move to the Punakha Valley which offers a relatively low elevation of approximately 4,300'. Our third hotel, in the Phobjikha Valley is located at about 9,500', our fourth hotel in the Bumthang Valley, is located at about 8,500', and our fifth hotel in Paro is at approximately 7,300'. Our walks and hikes will take place at elevations from 4,300' to

a little over 12,000'. Our drive to Chele La Pass will take us to our highest elevation at 12,467'. 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 beautiful 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.

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
Jakar	66/39	65/39	71/54	67/42	61/31
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, 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.

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.travelersagainstplastic.org.

TRANSPORTATION

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

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.

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.

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. Our travel experts look forward to helping you select the perfect adventure.

VISIT US ONLINE

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 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.

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.

