

Bhutan & Nepal | HIMALAYAN KINGDOMS HIKING

CULTURAL HIKING ADVENTURE | 13 DAYS



March 28-April 9, 2021
October 11-23, 2021
November 3-15, 2021

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 & Nepal | HIMALAYAN KINGDOMS HIKING

Thank you for your interest in this fantastic journey to Bhutan & Nepal. 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

This active journey combines the highlights of western Bhutan, with a five-day trek through the foothills of the Annapurna Mountains of Nepal.

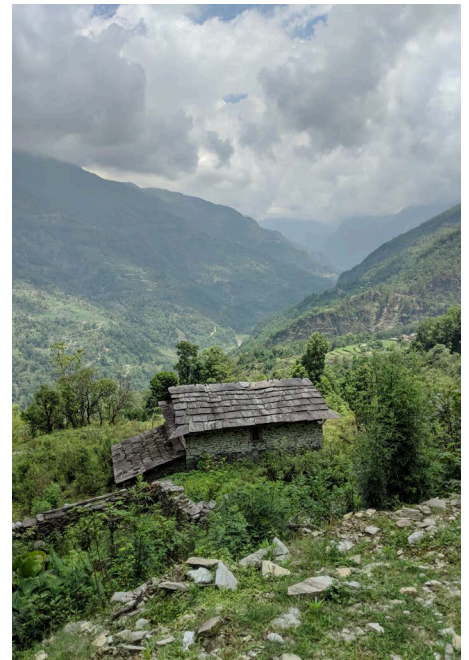
While in Bhutan, we explore this ancient kingdom and discover its striking scenery and unique culture. Bhutan is a place that has for centuries remained blissfully untouched by the rest of the world, with its landscape remaining pristine and its traditional architecture well-preserved. Bhutan’s culture is also well-preserved—the Bhutanese people are warm and gracious, and spirituality is still sacred here.

In Nepal, our lodge and porter-supported trek is done in style and comfort traditionally unavailable while trekking in Nepal. Each day we are greeted by epic mountain scenery, terraced hillsides, lush forest, and friendly villagers. Our route follows traditional trade routes through valleys and passes of the stunning Annapurna region. An optional scenic flight past Mount Everest can be arranged and is the perfect way to conclude one’s journey amid the world’s highest mountains.

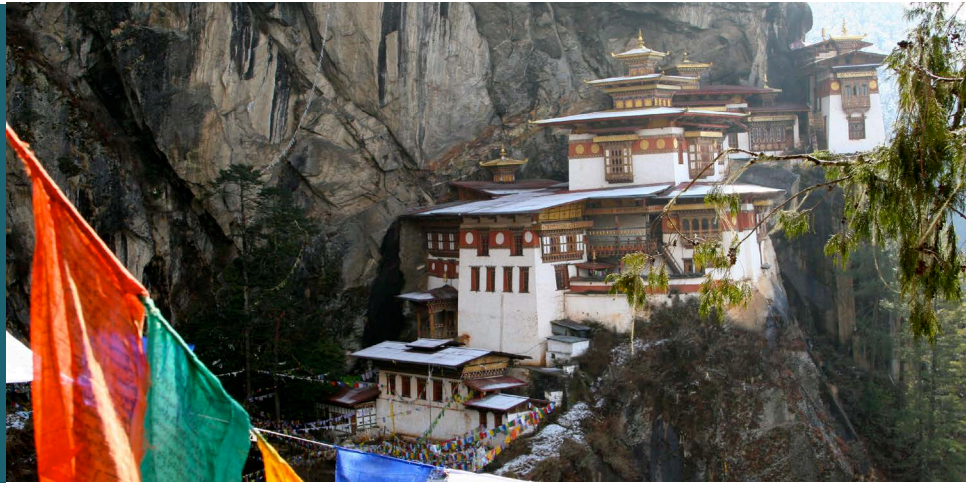
HIGHLIGHTS

- Share tea and conversation with young monks at a local monastery and learn about Bhutanese monastic life
- Hike to the iconic cliffside Paro Taktsang, also known as Tiger’s Nest Monastery
- Trek among Nepal’s dramatic scenery of spectacular river valleys, snow-capped sacred mountains, terraced rice fields, and rural villages
- A spectacular scenic flight across the Himalayan range, passing the world’s tallest peaks, including Mount Everest

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TOUR OVERVIEW



THE BASICS

Duration:	13-day trip
Accommodations:	6 nights in classic/deluxe hotels and 4 nights in mountain lodges
Tour start:	Paro, Bhutan
Tour end:	Kathmandu, Nepal
Trip rating:	1 2 3 4 5 EasyStrenuous (See page 14 for more details)
Land cost:	\$6,195 per person
Single Supplement:	First solo traveler to reserve: \$295* Additional solo travelers: \$795 <i>*Must reserve at least 120 days prior</i>
Internal Airfare	\$795 per person (subject to change) (Bangkok to Paro; Paro to Kathmandu)
Everest Flight (optional)	\$250 per person



WHAT'S INCLUDED

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 those for your guides, which are at your discretion
- Explorers Club savings on your next scheduled, small-group trip (conditions apply)

International airfare is not included. Please contact your local travel agency or the airlines directly to make any international travel arrangements. If you would like assistance, please contact us for a referral to our partners who will best fit your needs. Boundless Journeys will purchase your airline tickets from Bangkok to Bhutan and from Bhutan to Kathmandu.



ITINERARY AT-A-GLANCE

DAY 1

Arrive at the airport in Paro, Bhutan. Transfer to the capital city of Thimphu to explore some of 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.

DAY 3

Drive from Thimphu to Punakha. Visit the Chime Lhakang Temple and 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 spend some time at the Nalanda Buddhist Institute learning about the lives of the young monks who reside there.

DAY 5

Drive from Punakha to Paro. Visit the "twin temples" Kyichu Lhakhang and possibly the National Museum and Rinpung Dzong, depending upon timing.

DAY 6

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

DAY 7

Fly from Paro to Pokhara via Kathmandu.

DAYS 8-11

Lodge to lodge trekking in the Annapurna foothills stopping in the villages of Lamakhet, Ghandruk, Landruk, and Dhampus to relax in mountain lodges.

DAY 12

Trek from Dhampus to Pokhara. Fly from Pokhara to Kathmandu.

DAY 13

Optional scenic Everest flight. Depart Kathmandu or extend your stay in Nepal.

THE JOURNEY



DAY 1: Arrival in Bhutan

Activity overview: Cultural touring & walking/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 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: Hotel Druk, Thimphu, Bhutan

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 2: Cheri Gompa and Choki School of Arts

Activity overview: Cultural touring & hiking on paths

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.

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, Bhutan

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 3: Temple of the Divine Madman

Activity overview: Cultural touring & walking on paths

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

Activity length: 1-2 hours

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. 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 Hotel, Punakha, Bhutan

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 4: Khamsung Yuley Namgyel Temple

Activity overview: Cultural touring & hiking on paths

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 Himalayan standards (4,000’). From this spectacular dzong we can look back to see the Khamsung Yuley Namgyel

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.



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 Hotel, Punakha, Bhutan

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 5: Paro Dzong & National Museum

Activity overview: Cultural touring & walking

Activity level: Easy

Activity length: 1-2 hours

Drive time: approximately 4 hours*

We return by road to Paro, catching another glimpse of the mighty Himalayas over the Dochula Pass. Upon our arrival in Paro, we visit Kyichu Lhakhang. Kyichu Lhakhang, meaning “twin temples,” is believed to have been built in 659 AD by King Songtsen of Tibet and reflects the introduction of Buddhism to Bhutan. The temple is one of 108 that were built throughout the Himalayas in one day in an effort to subdue a mighty ogres; it is still believed to hold her left foot in place.

We then make our way by vehicle to the National Museum (*closed on government holidays*). The museum's collection includes ancient artifacts, weapons, antique thangkhas (painted or embroidered religious pictures), textiles, and stamps.

Finally, we head (either by foot or vehicle, depending on timing) to the valley's magnificent Rinpung Dzong. If we are fortunate, we may have the opportunity to explore within the dzong's mighty walls. However, if the Administrative Body is in session, we must admire it from the outside.

Accommodation: Raven's Nest Hotel, Paro, Bhutan

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 6: Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) Monastery

Activity overview: Cultural touring & hiking on trails

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

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. 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 to a bridge that eventually leads 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



"This was a life changing trip for us. Combining both countries, which are very different made the experience very unique. Every day we were blessed with clear blue skies so we were able to see the peaks of the Himalayas. Our guides said this was good karma. The most meaningful part of the journey was the people. These experiences gave us a realization of what should be important in our lives."

- M.O., Evanston, IL

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 unwind and relax after our hike, or you may stroll the Paro market before dinner.

Accommodation: Raven's Nest Hotel, Paro, Bhutan

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 7: Fly from Paro to Pokhara

An early morning departure from Paro brings us to Kathmandu, where we begin the second half of our epic journey. Upon landing in Kathmandu, we are met by our guide and then transferred to the domestic airport for our flight to Pokhara (3,080'), the rural capital of western Nepal. *Your guide will have your tickets for this flight.*

Pokhara is one of the most popular destinations in the country, and for good reason. It is an ideal place to view the snow-capped Annapurna range and the starting point for many trekking expeditions into the mountains.

Our evening is spent in comfort at the Temple Tree Resort, whose rooms are filled with ethnic touches evoking the deep cultural heritage of the area. The resort is a relaxing oasis with spacious landscaped gardens and a swimming pool, while still being conveniently located within walking distance of downtown Pokhara's many shops and restaurants.

Accommodation: Temple Tree Resort, Pokhara, Nepal

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 8: Pokhara to Lamakhet

Activity overview: Hiking on trails

Activity level: Moderate with 1,540' elevation gain and 1,150' elevation loss (highest elevation: 3,470')

Activity length: 3-4 hours (4.4 miles)

Drive time: approximately 1 hour*

Following a hearty breakfast, we depart with our trekking guide and porters to begin our hiking adventure among the foothills of the mighty Annapurna mountain range. Today's hike follows a ridge line in the lower foothills of the Annapurnas, with surrounding views of the Pokhara Valley. Early this afternoon, we descend into the Modi River valley, our home for the night (3,600'). The lodge has magnificent views of the sacred and still unclimbed Fishtail Mountain, or Machhapuchhre, as it is locally known. We enjoy lunch at the lodge, followed by an optional walk to the nearby village of Birethanti. Those who prefer can independently explore the river valley surrounding the lodge.

Accommodation: Sanctuary Lodge, Lamakhet, Nepal

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 9: Lamakhet to Ghandruk

Activity overview: Hiking on trails

Activity level: Moderate to strenuous with 3,000' elevation gain (highest elevation: 6,600')

Activity length: 5-6 hours (7 miles)

After breakfast we leave the lodge, walking through outlying farms following the Modi River Valley. Soon we begin to ascend out of the valley and up toward the mountains. We



take a relaxing pace, stopping for refreshments en route with spectacular views of the surrounding valleys. Our trail passes through small hamlets, terraced rice fields, and sub-tropical forests, giving us glimpses of life in the mountains. We arrive at Himalaya Lodge in Ghandruk (6,600') in time for a late lunch and have time this afternoon to enjoy the magnificent close-up views of the surrounding mountains.

Accommodation: Himalaya Lodge, Ghandruk, Nepal

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 10: Ghandruk to Landruk

Activity overview: Hiking

Activity level: Moderate with 3,000' elevation loss and 1,534' elevation gain (highest elevation: 6,600')

Activity length: about 4 hours (4 miles)

After enjoying a relaxing breakfast and the glorious views from our lodge, we start our trek to Landruk. En route, we explore the mountain village of Ghandruk, once a major recruitment centre for the famous Gurkha soldiers. The women of Ghandruk maintain a local industry of weaving traditional Nepalese rugs.

Today's trek involves a steep descent to the river valley, followed by a steep ascent up the other side of the valley, primarily hiking on stone steps. After leaving Ghandruk, the trail descends to the banks of the Modi River. Here, we arrive at the base of the cliffs where the famed honey hunters of Nepal climb on ropes to collect the honey from wild honeybees. We cross a suspension bridge to the opposite banks of the Modi, and continue for about an hour up a switchback trail to the village of Landruk. Landruk

affords more glorious views of the Annapurna Range as we enjoy our lunch.

Following our meal, you may choose to explore Landruk before settling into La Bee Lodge and enjoying a well-deserved rest.

Accommodation: La Bee Lodge, Landruk, Nepal

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 11: Landruk to Dhampus

Activity Overview: Hiking

Activity level: Moderate with 1,065' elevation gain and 1,195' elevation loss (highest elevation: 6,889')

Activity length: 5-6 hours (7.5 miles)

This morning, our trail enters a sub-tropical forest full of magnificent flora, including tree orchids, rhododendrons, and magnolias. After approximately an hour, we pass the village of Tolka, continuing our ascent to a ridge and arrive at the village of Pothana, where Tibetan traders live and sell their souvenirs. Here, we stop for lunch before continuing the rest of the way to Basanta Lodge, our home for tonight. Later this afternoon, we have the option to hike to the old village of Dhampus (4,920') or remain at the lodge, where sweeping views of the entire Annapurna Range are ours to enjoy.

Accommodation: Basanta Lodge, Dhampus, Nepal

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 12: Dhampus to Pokhara

Activity Overview: Hiking on trails

Activity level: Easy to Moderate with 1,950' elevation loss (highest elevation: 4,920')

Activity length: about 2 hours (1.6 miles)

Drive time: approximately 1 hour*

The trekking portion of our journey ends this morning. We depart along the ridge, descending through wooded hillsides and terraced farmland to the valley floor. We meet our vehicle for the drive to Pokhara and our flight to Kathmandu.

Upon arriving in Kathmandu, we transfer to the five-star Dwarika's Heritage Hotel. This afternoon we have the option to venture to Patan Durbar Square, Boudhanath Stupa, or Pashupatinath Temple, each significant sites for Buddhists and Hindus residing in the city. We conclude our day enjoying a celebratory dinner at a favorite restaurant in Thamel or at one of Dwarika's world-renowned restaurants, bidding a final farewell to Nepal.

Accommodation: Dwarika's, Kathmandu, Nepal

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 13: Departure from Kathmandu

Mt. Everest Flight (optional)

After an early breakfast, we have the opportunity to experience one of the most spectacular mountain flights in the world. This optional flight (not included in the tour cost) departs Kathmandu and flies east along the Himalayas, giving us eye-level views of some of the highest peaks on earth, including Mount Everest. After the flight, we return to the hotel where we pack up our belongings before transferring to the airport for our homeward journey.

Meals: B

**Driving time is estimated without stops. The total transfer time may be longer when taking rest stops, road construction or other unforeseen delays into account.*

MOUNT EVEREST FLIGHT

You may enjoy some distance mountain views on your flight from Bhutan to Nepal, but should you be interested in getting a closer look, you can reserve a spot on a 1 hour scenic mountain flight for \$250 USD per person.

This flight may be scheduled on the morning of the last day before your departing international flight, if time allows. International departure flights should be scheduled **no earlier than 2:00 p.m.** to allow enough time for the scenic mountain flight. Alternatively, this flight can be arranged on post-tour days if you are spending additional time in Kathmandu. Please keep in mind that your scenic mountain flight is dependent upon the weather and may be delayed or cancelled.

If you are interested, please contact Kristen Bernarsky, the destination manager for this trip, by emailing kristen@boundlessjourneys.com or calling 800-941-8010.

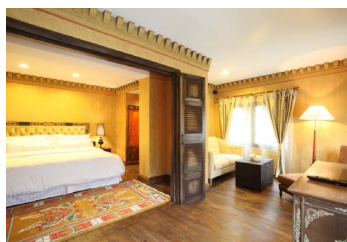
PLEASE NOTE: *This is a typical itinerary, and actual activities may vary to take advantage of weather conditions, local events and to allow serendipity to play a hand in your experience. Accommodations are as outlined in the itinerary, although we reserve the right to change these should the need arise.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

ACCOMMODATIONS

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 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.

We stay at deluxe hotels in Kathmandu and Pokhara, and during the trekking portion of our trip, we are in mountain lodges, which are the very best accommodations on the Annapurna circuit. The lodges are simple and rustic but fit well with the environment. They have private bathrooms, two twin beds in each room (which can be pushed together upon request), and electricity.

If you prefer to stay in luxury hotels, please contact us to discuss a private journey.



NIGHTS 1, 2

Hotel Druk

Thimphu, Bhutan

Tel: +975 2 32296

Email: druk.thimphu@drukhotels.com



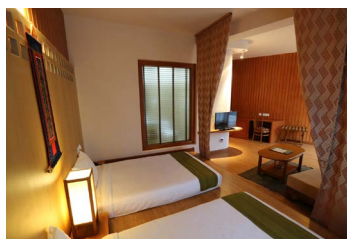
NIGHTS 3, 4

Dhumra Hotel

Punakha, Bhutan

Tel: +975 7117488

Email: dhumrafarm@gmail.com



NIGHTS 5, 6

Raven's Nest Hotel

Paro, Bhutan

Tel: +975 8 270244/45/46/47

Email: ravensnestbt@gmail.com



NIGHT 7

Temple Tree Resort

Pokhara, Nepal

Tel: +977 61 465 819

Email: info@templetree.com



NIGHT 8

Sanctuary Lodge (3600')

Lamakhet, Nepal; Annapurna Trekking Route

Its remote location next to a mountain river provides tranquility. The rooms are simple, but with private baths and feature touches of local style.



NIGHT 9

Himalaya Lodge (6600')

Ghandruk, Nepal; Annapurna Trekking Route

Located at the highest point of the tour (6,400 ft), this former mountain home is perched over the ancient village of Ghandruk. The Annapurna Range is within view of all rooms, which are simply decorated and have private baths.



NIGHT 10

La Bee Lodge (5,415')

Landruk, Nepal; Annapurna Trekking Route

La Bee Lodge is located in Landruk, a typical village of the Gurung community who are also known as the famous Gurkhas. La Bee has 12 rooms featuring local designs and views of the Annapurna range.



NIGHT 11

Basanta Lodge (4920')

Dhampus, Nepal; Annapurna Trekking Route

From this comfortable lodge, there are sweeping views to be enjoyed of the entire Annapurna Range. All rooms have private baths.



NIGHT 12

Dwarikas

Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: +977 1 4479488/4470770

Email: info@dwarikas.com

Dwarikas is a 5-star Heritage Hotel, espousing Newari-style architecture and Nepalese charm and hospitality.

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. Himalayan Kingdoms Hiking is rated 3, moderate, on a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being the most strenuous). The walks and hikes for the first part of this trip are easy to moderate day hikes, generally from 2-5 hours in length with minimal vehicle support. During the Nepal trekking portion of the trip (days 8-12), hikes are moderate to strenuous, from 3-6 hours in length with no vehicle support. A few days include hiking up and down stone steps. Elevation gains and losses vary from approximately 500'-3,000' in one day. A few days involve long drives on narrow, bumpy, 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.

OUR TREK IN NEPAL

Our trekking route is moderate, and we follow a leisurely pace. The route in the foothills of the Annapurnas is carefully planned to take advantage of amazing mountain scenery

and charming lodges. Each morning after breakfast we set out at about 8:30 a.m., stopping mid-morning for tea, and then continuing on until our midday stop for lunch. The trails are generally in good condition and many are made from inlaid stones, including steep steps at times.

Time spent on the trail averages 3-6 hours per day, with plenty of time to stop along the way. Porters carry our luggage, and all you need to carry is a daypack with extra layers, your camera, water, and lunch (when having a picnic lunch).

THE ALTITUDE

We move at a comfortable hiking 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.

BHUTAN

The Bhutan portion of our adventure begins in Thimphu (7,500') before moving to the Punakha Valley (4,300'), and concluding in Paro (7,300'). Our walks and hikes in Bhutan take place at elevations from 4,300' to a little over 10,000'. Our drive over Dochu La Pass takes us to an elevation of 10,230', and our hike up to Tiger's Nest reaches approximately 10,240'.

NEPAL

In spite of being among the highest peaks in the world, we will not be trekking at high elevations in Nepal. Kathmandu is located at 4,500', Pokhara at about 3,080', and during the trek elevations range from 3,000' to 6,600'.

WEATHER

The mountainous areas of Bhutan and Nepal 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 flowers are in bloom during this time. The harvest season is October and November. December through February are clear and cold and can be below freezing at night, especially in the higher elevations. The monsoon season generally occurs June through August, and it is not recommended to travel to Bhutan and Nepal at this time of the year.

AVERAGE TEMPERATURE °F (HIGH/LOW)			
	APR	OCT	NOV
Thimphu*	68/45	71/50	64/41
Paro	64/40	66/45	57/34
Punakha**	76/53	82/66	72/51
Pokhara***	78/68	78/62	69/49
Kathmandu	77/57	74/59	68/49

*highest elevation ** lowest elevation

*** Expect temperatures to drop by 5°-20° as you ascend into the mountains

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.

GETTING TO BHUTAN & NEPAL

Guests are responsible for arranging their own international flights, flying into Bangkok and departing from Kathmandu. We handle your flight arrangements from Bangkok to Bhutan and Bhutan to Kathmandu. We recommend flying to Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport (BKK) because it is a major international hub with several airlines flying in and out of it regularly. 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 the internal airfare. 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.

FOOD & WATER

The general rule for food when traveling to developing countries is "wash it, cook it, peel it, or forget it." The well-run hotels where we stay and the restaurants where we eat prepare foods in a sanitary manner, using distilled water to wash vegetables, and iodine to kill any bacteria. Avoid fresh salads. You should drink bottled water and avoid ice cubes. Never drink water from a tap and use only bottled/purified water for brushing your teeth. Many people experience a slightly upset stomach while traveling, and we recommend bringing an over-the-counter stomach aid.

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.

A BOUNDLESS MOMENT IN NEPAL...

Red and black printed cushions line the low-backed chairs of our table; oversized painted masks adorn the walls; and the place settings glitter with crystal, colorful fanned napkins, and silver drinking goblets. Then comes the food: tender, momo mutton dumplings, sweet mushroom soup in golden bowls, six different curries, ginger-garlic pickles, buck-wheat pancakes and airy semolina pudding. There are 22 courses in all and, as promised, Krishnarpan lives up to its reputation—an ancient Nepalese feast, fit for the modern age.



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.

CUISINE

BHUTAN

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. *Emá 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* are a staple of Bhutanese cuisine. Chicken, pork, and 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. Travelers to Bhutan should keep an open mind and not have high cuisine expectations, and you will not be disappointed.

NEPAL

Nepalese cuisine, much like that in Bhutan, is not well known in the rest of the world. While the food in Nepal is plentiful, healthy, and flavorful, it is not the reason anyone should plan a trip to this country. Kathmandu has a surprising variety of restaurants serving many types of international cuisine. Remember that Nepal is a relaxed culture and service is usually much slower than Westerners are used to. Outside of the cities, the food is primarily a combination of Nepalese (which has a large Indian influence) and Tibetan. Rice, lentils, and vegetables are staples, with a variety of meats, which are used somewhat sparingly. Tasty soups, fried breads, and steamed dumplings filled with meat or vegetables are among the local favorites.

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.

DEVELOPMENT IN BHUTAN

Although visiting Bhutan, in many ways, is like stepping back in time and has been a longtime favorite of Boundless



“Both Bhutan and Nepal guides were the two best guides I have ever had the pleasure of meeting and experiencing. Sangay was our guide in Bhutan and his love of his country and knowledge about the country and the cultural and religious foundation were outstanding. On the Nepal portion of the trip, Man Raj was also very knowledgeable and also made every effort to go the extra mile to make our trip more enjoyable.”

- N.R., Windmere, FL

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.

TRANSPORTATION

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

OUR BHUTAN & NEPAL 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, providing them with a deep appreciation of his country and culture.



MADHAV LAMA

Madhav's family and forefathers are from the hills surrounding the Kathmandu Valley. After completing his schooling, he began leading treks and has since worked his way up to guiding in the Annapurna region. Madhav has traveled extensively around his beloved country and enjoys sharing his knowledge with guests. His friendly attitude, attention to organization, prioritization of safety, and wealth of local information make him not only a spectacular Tour Leader but a great traveling companion as well.

TRIP EXTENSION

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

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
EasyStrenuous
Land cost: \$1,495 per person
Single Supplement: \$565



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 . . .

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

PREFER A PRIVATE TRIP?

Ask about our Bhutan & Nepal Custom Tours.

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

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 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.

