

Wonders of Bhutan - ADWNG

10 days: Paro to Paro

What's Included

- National Geographic Journeys Exclusives: Meet a Buddhist Monk, Thimphu
- National Geographic Journeys Exclusives: Family Farm Meal, Gangtey Gonpa
- Arrival and departure transfer
- Visit the Rimpung Dzong
- Hike to Punakha Dzong monastery and fertility shrine
- Visit the town of Wangdue and walk to Khamsum Yueley Chorten shrine
- Visit the village of Khewa
- Hike to the monastery of Gangtey Goempa
- Walk across Phobjikha and Khewa valleys
- Visit the National Library, the Institute for Zorig Chusum (arts and crafts) and the Thimphu Chorten
- Hike to Kila Goempa nunnery
- Explore shrines and temples of the Haa Valley
- Visit the fortress of Drukgyal Dzong and hike to Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest)
- Visit Kyichu Lhakhang Temple
- All transport between destinations and to/from included activities

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and G Adventures. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

VALIDITY: Valid for all trips departing July 10th, 2015 and onwards

Itinerary

Day 1 Paro

Arrive at any time and transfer to hotel. Later, enjoy a welcome dinner and visit Rimpung Dzong, a school for monks, and take an orientation walk in the town.

In clear weather, the flight over the Himalayas offers magnificent views of the world's highest peaks as they give way to the lush green Paro valley. The first gift from Bhutan will be the cool, clean fresh air as you step off the plane. After clearing customs and visa control, we'll be met by our local CEO who will conduct our welcome meeting and orientation. Later, enjoy dinner and visit Rimpung Dzong, a school for monks, and take a walk through the town.

Approx. Altitude: Paro 2,300m

Arrival Day and Welcome Meeting

1h

The adventure begins tonight. Feel free to explore, but make sure you're back in time to meet the group. After introductions, your CEO will review the details of your tour.

Private Vehicle

Paro Airport - Paro 30m

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Rimpung Dzong Visit

Paro

Enjoy a visit to Rimpung Dzong, a large Buddhist monastery and fortress, as well as a school for monks. It houses the district monastic body and government administrative offices of the town of Paro.

Accommodation

Hotel Olathang (or similar)

Hotel

Meals included: Dinner

Day 2 Paro/Punakha

Drive to Punakha, crossing the Dochula Pass and enjoying stunning views of the Himalayas through flickering prayer flags.

After breakfast, drive through dense forests of blue pine, oak, and rhododendrons and enjoy views of the Himalayan range and the valley beyond. After a lunch stop, the road climbs steeply through a forest of pine and cedar, festooned with hanging lichen high up near Dochula pass at 3,050m (10,007 ft). After stopping here for tea and panoramic views of the Himalayan mountain range, we descend along a series of hairpin bends to the fertile valley of Punakha.

Approx. Altitude: Punakha Valley 1,300m

Private Vehicle

Paro - Punakha 7h-8h 180km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Accommodation

Meri Puensum Resort (or similar)

Resort

Meals included: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 3 Punakha

Enjoy a full day of exploration including a visit to Punakha Dzong, and hikes to Chime Lhakhang and Wangdue Phodrang. In the afternoon, hike through rice terraces and forests to Khamsum Yueleley Chorten.

Visit Punakha Dzong, winter seat of the Je Khenpo and the Monk Body, located between the rivers of the Mo (female) Chu and Pho (male) Chu. Drive to Lobeyesa and hike another 20 min to Chime Lhakhang, temple of the "Divine Madman," built in 1499. Today it is mostly visited by women, as it is known as a temple of fertility.

Walk back to the road and then drive a short distance to Wangdue for a visit to the Wangdue Phodrang. We'll continue on to the suspension bridge and hike through rice terraces, fields, and deep pine forest to Khamsum Yueleley Chorten, where the view is superb. Descend until we reach the suspension bridge and the return to the hotel.

Wangdue Phodrang is currently under reconstruction, depending on the status, we may or may not be able to visit.

Private Vehicle

Punakha 6h

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Punakha Dzong Visit

Punakha

Visit Punakha Dzong, the winter seat of the Je Khenpo and the Monk Body, remarkably located between the rivers of the Mo (female) Chu and Pho (male) Chu. It is the second oldest and second largest dzong (fortress) in Bhutan and one of its most majestic structures, housing many sacred relics. It is also the winter capital of the Je Khenpo (chief abbot).

Chime Lhakhang Visit

Punakha30m-1h

Take a short hike to Chime Lhakhang, temple of the "Divine Madman." Built in 1499, it is mainly visited today by women as it is known as the temple of fertility.

Wangdue Phodrang Visit

Wangdue Phodrang

Visit Wangdue, one of the major towns and district headquarters of Western Bhutan. We make a short stop here and visit the Wangdue Phodrang dzong.

Hike and visit Khamsum Yueley Chorten

Punakha2h-3h

Cross the suspension bridge and then hike to Khamsum Yueley Chorten. Enjoy hike through rice terraces, farms, and deep pine forest until we reach the stupa, which was consecrated in December 1999. Take a moment to breathe and admire the view, it's superb.

Accommodation

Meri Puensum Resort (or similar)

Resort

Meals included: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 4 Punakha/Gangtey Gonpa

Travel to Gangtey, visiting the village of Khewa en route. This evening, visit a local family's farm for a cooking demonstration and home cooked dinner.

Approx. Altitude: Gangtey Valley 2,900m

Private Vehicle

Punakha - Gangtey Gonpa3h-4h78km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Khewa Village Visit

Gangtey Gonpa

Enjoy a short visit to the rural village of Khewa, where their main production is potato farming and dairy products. Get a taste of Bhutanese village life.

National Geographic Journeys Exclusives: Family Farm Meal

Visit a family farmhouse in Gangtey Valley for a cooking demonstration and traditional meal. As Bhutanese food is usually hot and spicy, we learn how to make ama datshi (chili cheese), one of the most popular dishes in Bhutanese cooking. Enjoy this simple but tasty meal and conversation with local people, who are always happy to welcome visitors.

Accommodation

Hotel Dewachen (or similar)

Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 5 Gangtey Gonpa

Walk to the monastery of Gangtey Goempa, known to hold the most sacred relics in Bhutan. After walk across Phobjikha Valley to Khewa Valley, where we'll visit an old temple and make an offering.

The valley is also a centre for crane observation run by the RSPN (Royal Society for the Protection of Nature), an NGO striving to protect Bhutan's environment, flora, and fauna. At certain times of the year, it is possible to spot these magnificent birds.

Private Vehicle

Gangtey Gonpa

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Gangtey Goempa Monastery Visit

Gangtey Gonpa

Enjoy a visit to the monastery of Gangtey Goempa, built in the 16th century and renovated and consecrated in 2008. Be sure to check out the amazing relics inside -- they're said to be the most sacred in all of Bhutan. The architectural design is impressive, too.

Phobjikha and Khewa Valley Hike

Gangtey Gonpa 2h-3h

Enjoy a walk across Phobjikha Valley and into the Khewa Valley, where we visit an old temple and offer a (compulsory) donation - a necessity to keep the monastery running.

Accommodation

Hotel Dewachen (or similar)

Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 6 Gangtey Gonpa/Thimphu

Drive to the capital to visit the National Library, Memorial Chorten, and the Institute for Zorig Chusum, an arts and crafts school where we can watch students practicing traditional arts such as woodworking, painting, and ceramics. Meet with a Buddhist monk and scholar to discuss Buddhist beliefs and way of life, as well as values in Bhutan.

Approx. Altitude: Thimpu 2,300m

Private Vehicle

Gangtey Gonpa - Thimphu 3h-4h

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

National Library Visit

Thimphu

Located in the cultural centre of Thimphu, the National Library is scriptural repository and research facility dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the rich literary, cultural and religious heritage of Bhutan. Explore the scripture and document collection, a national treasure and a key source for Bhutanese history, religion, medicine, arts, and culture.

Memorial Chorten Visit

Thimphu

The chorten is one of the most prominent religious structures in Thimphu, and for local Bhutanese it is a popular part of their daily prayers. Watch locals walk around the Chorten, spinning the prayer wheels and meditating in this lovely and peaceful spot.

Institute for Zorig Chusum Visit

Thimphu

Enjoy a visit to the Institute for Zorig Chusum, an arts and craft school that's a highlight for those interested in Asian art. The institute was established in 1971 to ensure the continuity of Bhutanese traditional arts. Students study here for 4-6 yrs in various mediums. Explore the institute opt to purchase arts and crafts from the shop.

Free Time

Thimphu

Today you can opt to shop at the art school and throughout the capital. Be sure to visit the post office to have personalized stamps made with your picture.

National Geographic Journeys Exclusives: Meet a Buddhist Monk

Meet with a Buddhist monk and scholar in the scenic capital city of Thimphu. Hear him talk about his daily life and Buddhism in general, and gain insight into this tiny kingdom where happiness is the common goal.

Accommodation

Bhutan Suites (or similar)

Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 7 Thimphu/Haa Dzongkhag

Drive to the Haa Valley, one of the most remote and sacred valleys in Bhutan, via the Chelela Pass. En route, hike to Kila Goempa Nunnery, which clings to a rocky cliff. Drive to the valley and visit Lhakhang Nagpo (Black Temple), and Lhakhang Karpo (White Temple).

Approx. Altitude: Haa Valley 2,600m

Private Vehicle

Thimphu - Haa Dzongkhag 6h-8h

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Kila Goempa Nunnery Hike

Haa Dzongkhag 2h-3h

Hike through the deep forest of pine trees and rhododendrons to Kila Goempa nunnery (approx 2.5 hrs). It seems to cling to a rocky cliff and houses around 60-70 nuns. This is a moderate level hike through stunningly beautiful scenery.

Haa Valley Temples and shrines

Haa Dzongkhag

Explore beautiful Bhutanese temples and shrines in Haa town including, the Lhakhang Nakpo (Black temple) and Lhakhang Karpo (White Temple).

Accommodation

Rigsum Resort (or similar)

Resort

Meals included: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 8 Haa Dzongkhag/Paro

Return to Paro and visit the ruins of the Drukgyal Dzong fortress.

Approx. Altitude: Paro 701m (2,300 ft)

Private Vehicle

Haa Dzongkhag - Paro 2h-3h 65km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Drukgyal Dzong Visit

Paro

Drive the winding road to Drukgyal Dzong, a ruined fortress that once defended this valley from Tibetan invasions. In the early 1950s, Drukgyal Dzong was almost completely destroyed by fire.

Accommodation

Hotel Olathang (or similar)

Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 9 Paro

Embark on a vigorous hike up to the Taktsang monastery (Tiger's Nest), the most venerated pilgrim site of the Himalayan world. The view is absolutely stunning, with the monastery clinging to a cliff face towering 2,953m above the valley. Later, visit Kyichu Lhakhang Temple and the local archery grounds.

Due to the altitude this climb can be tough. Be prepared to spend about 5 1/2 hours to get up and down with stops, including lunch. Remember to stay hydrated and take your time.

The hike is gradual and uphill and takes about 2 hrs to reach the first stop at the cafeteria where you can enjoy views of the monastery. If you choose, you can stop here and wait for the group who choose to continue up to the Monastery.

Private Vehicle

Paro

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) Monastery Hike

Paro 5h-5h30m

Hike up to the Taktsang monastery (Tiger's Nest); containing 13 holy relics, it's considered one of the most venerated pilgrim sites of the Himalayan world. It is also where Guru Padmasambhava is said to have landed on the back of a tigress in the 8th century. Take in the stunning views en route and the incredible vista from this monastery, which clings to the rock towering 2,953m above the valley.

Kyichu Lhakhang Temple Visit

Paro

Enjoy a visit to one of Bhutan's oldest and most beautiful temples. Built in the 7th century, Kyichu Lhakhang Temple boasts stunning art work inside and throughout the courtyards.

Local Archery Grounds Visit

Paro

As Bhutan's national sport, a visit to a local archery ground is a must. Watch locals practice or compete with unbelievable accuracy and precision as they hit distant targets.

Accommodation

Hotel Olathang (or similar)

Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 10 Paro

Depart at any time. Airport transfer included.

Private Vehicle

Paro - Paro Airport 30m

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Meals included: Breakfast

What's Included

Arrival and departure transfer. Visit the Rimpung Dzong. Hike to Punakha Dzong monastery and fertility shrine. Visit the town of Wangdue and walk to Khamsum Yuele Chorten shrine. Visit the village of Khewa. Lunch and cooking demonstration at a family farm. Walk to the monastery of Gangtey Goempa. Walk across Phobjikha and Khewa valleys. Visit the National Library, the Institute for Zorig Chusum (arts and crafts) and the Thimphu Chorten. Lecture on Buddhist culture. Hike to Kila Goempa nunnery. Explore shrines and temples of the Haa Valley. Visit the fortress of Drukgyal Dzong and hike to Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest). Visit Kyichu Lhakhang Temple. All transport between destinations and to/from included activities.

Highlights

Visit one of the most remote countries in the world, enjoy a meeting and lecture with a monk about Buddhist culture in Bhutan, learn how to cook ema datshi (chili cheese) with a local farm family, hike along peaceful nature trails and thrilling cliffs, experience the pristine and peaceful nature of the "Dragon Kingdom"

Dossier Disclaimer

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Itinerary Disclaimer

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

Important Notes

1. CAMERAS

Please note there may be times during your visit to Bhutan when the use of video and/or still cameras may be inappropriate. Local people may consider that filming is too intrusive and in these circumstances we will request that you do not film. At all times be aware and sensitive to the impact of photography and seek permission before taking photographs of people and respect their wishes if they refuse.

2. HIKING AND WALKING

Please note that there is a lot of walking and light hiking on this trip and some of it at higher altitudes. Please ensure you are in decent physical condition and able to walk for extended periods of time.

3. EARPLUGS

Bhutan, being a Buddhist country believes in ahimsa so the barking of dogs (and there are a lot of them) at night can be annoying. It's advisable to bring earplugs. If you are able to travel with a lot of patience and a good sense of humour, then we know that you - like all of us - will be captivated by what Bhutan has to offer.

4. CLOTHING

The prime requirement for clothes you bring on Bhutan trip is that they are comfortable and appropriate to the weather conditions that you are likely to meet. For protection against cold, particularly at night, a number of relatively thin layers is better than a few thick ones. Thermal underclothes, being small and light, can be very useful. Bhutan is very conservative and you should dress accordingly. As a general guideline, shoulders and knees should be covered at all times. The wearing of shorts is not allowed as it will restrict your entry into buildings of a religious nature and family homes. A water and windproof jacket, a hat and sunscreen are essential.

Group Leader Description

All G Adventures group trips are accompanied by one of our Chief Experience Officers (CEO). The aim of the CEO is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting - we think it's the best of both worlds.

Group Size Notes

Max 15, Avg 10.

Meals

Most meals in Bhutan are included in the cost of the trip - some are in the accommodation where it is the best quality/availability option. Most meals are served buffet-style with a selection of traditional Bhutanese food, some western-style (often pasta) as well as some Chinese. Fresh local vegetables are in abundance and while Bhutan is almost mostly vegetarian, there usually is one meat dish available (on some occasions, there can be shortages, as all meat is imported from India).

Transport

Private vehicle, walking, hiking.

About our Transportation

Traveling by road in Bhutan is certainly not what people are used to in Western countries. The roads in the mountains might not be the best but our drivers always keep the safety of the passengers first. Most roads consist of a series of switchbacks going up and back down mountain passes and can be quite bumpy. If you do suffer from motion sickness, we recommend you bring medication for the drives.

Solo Travellers

We believe single travellers should not have to pay more to travel so our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers joining group trips are paired in twin or multi-share accommodation with someone of the same sex for the duration of the trip. Some of our Independent trips are designed differently and single travellers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price.

Accommodation

Hotel/lodges (9 nts).

My Own Room

Please note that if you have booked the "My Own Room" option for this tour, you will receive your own single room for all night stops

About Accommodation

Hotels/Lodges and guest houses are used in Bhutan - these can vary in terms of service and efficiency, but offer quaint, local charm and flavour. In many instances they might not be like what you are used to back home. Accommodation is generally located in rural areas or outside town centres - they are traditional in architecture, style and its services to the guest. Electricity, wifi and water can often be sporadic and in some locations, wood stoves may be used.

Joining Hotel

For details of your joining hotel please refer to your tour voucher, G Account, the G Adventures App or contact your travel agent.

Joining Instructions

An arrival transfer is included when you arrive on Day 1, or if you arrive up to three days prior provided that you have booked your pre-accommodation through National Geographic Journeys in our joining hotel. Due to customer experience and quality considerations, all services related to the tour must be continuous.

Our driver will be waiting for you with a National Geographic Journeys sign with your name on it, and they will be waiting for you outside the luggage hall. There most likely will be many signs, so please check carefully for your name.

Please note that Day 1 is an arrival day and no activities have been planned, so you may arrive at any time. Similarly the last day is a departure day in which no activities are planned.

Your CEO will contact you at the hotel on Day 1 and make sure you are settled comfortably. If you arrive late, they will leave you a message detailing what time and where you should meet the next morning. Your CEO will organize a short meeting soon after arrival, during which you will meet other tour participants and receive information about general and specific aspects of the trip.

Arrival Complications

We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your group trip as scheduled, as soon as possible please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your CEO. If this is

unsuccessful, please refer to our Emergency Contact. If your included airport transfer has not arrived within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, please make contact with our representative. We then recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel, following the Joining Instructions. Please contact your travel agent on your return for a refund of the transfer cost if this occurs.

Emergency Contact

Should you need to contact us during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call either the G Adventures Local Representative (if one is listed below) or our G Adventures Local Office. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so they may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

AIRPORT TRANSFER

If you have purchased an arrival through G Adventures or if an arrival transfer is included in the cost of your tour, please note that:

Your arrival transfer has been arranged based on flight information provided to us. If you are advised of a flight schedule change within 48 hours of your scheduled arrival time, we will do our best to rearrange your arrival transfer however we cannot guarantee this. If your arrival transfer does not arrive within 30 minutes after you have exited the arrivals area please take a taxi to your start point hotel.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

G Adventures Local Office (Delhi)

G Adventures South Asia Manager, Rishab (Delhi, India)

Emergency number:

From outside of India: +91 99 7179 5447

From within Delhi: 99 7179 5447

From within India, but outside Delhi: 099 7179 5447

G Adventures Office Bangkok, Thailand

During Office hours (Weekdays, 9am-5pm Local Time): +66-02-3815574

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office, please call the numbers listed below, which will connect you directly with our 24 hour Sales team, who will happily assist you.

Toll-free, North America only: 1 888 800 4100

Calls from UK: 0344 272 0000

Calls from Germany: 0800 365 1000

Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618

Calls from New Zealand: 0800 333 307

Outside North America, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

What to Take

We suggest that you pack as lightly as possible as you are expected to carry your own luggage. As a rule we try not to have to walk more than 15-20 minutes with your bags which is why we recommend keeping the weight of your bags between 10-15kg/22-30lb. Most travellers carry a backpack or rolling bag of small to medium size (no XXL ones please!). You will also need a day pack/bag to carry water, cameras and other electronics like ipods and mobile phones.

Checklist

Cold Weather:

- * Long-sleeved shirts or sweater
- * Scarf
- * Warm gloves
- * Warm hat
- * Warm layers

Conservative Dress:

- * Modest clothing that covers knees and shoulders (Long pants, long skirts, shirts that cover shoulders)
- * Shawl or scarf (for temple visits)

Documents:

- * Flight info (required) (Printouts of e-tickets may be required at the border)
- * Insurance info (required) (With photocopies)
- * Passport (required) (With photocopies)
- * Required visas or vaccination certificates (required) (With photocopies)
- * Vouchers and pre-departure information (required)

Essentials:

- * Binoculars (optional)
- * Camera (With extra memory cards and batteries)
- * Cash, credit and debit cards
- * Day pack (Used for daily excursions or short overnights)
- * Ear plugs
- * First-aid kit (should contain lip balm with sunscreen, sunscreen, whistle, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, bandaids/plasters, tape, anti-histamines, antibacterial gel/wipes, antiseptic cream, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, rehydration powder, water purification tablets or drops, insect repellent, sewing kit, extra prescription drugs you may be taking)
- * Flashlight/torch (Headlamps are ideal)
- * Fleece top/sweater
- * Footwear
- * Hat
- * Locks for bags
- * Long pants/jeans
- * Moneybelt
- * Outlet adapter
- * Personal entertainment (Reading and writing materials, cards, music player, etc.)
- * Reusable water bottle
- * Shirts/t-shirts
- * Sleepwear
- * Small travel towel
- * Sunglasses
- * Toiletries (Preferably biodegradable)
- * Watch and alarm clock
- * Waterproof backpack cover
- * Windproof rain jacket

Light Hiking:

- * Hiking boots/sturdy walking shoes
- * Hiking pants (Convertible/Zip-off and quick dry recommended)

Smart Dress:

- * Smart outfit (For evenings out)

Warm Weather:

- * Sandals/flip-flops
- * Shorts/skirts (Longer shorts/skirts are recommended)
- * Sun hat/bandana

Note: During the colder months (Oct-Apr) the mountains can be very cold, so please make sure you pack warm clothes.

Laundry

Laundry facilities are offered by some of our hotels for a charge. There will be times when you may want to or have to do your own laundry so we suggest you bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap.

Visas

For Bhutan, National Geographic Journeys will arrange the visa for you. The cost of the visa is included in the tour price. The Bhutanese visa is issued to your passport on arrival, on submission of 2 passport sized photographs.

In order to arrange the Bhutan visa, you must provide National Geographic Journeys with the following:

- Scanned colour passport copy
- Arrival and Departure flight details for Paro

These details need to be submitted to us 35-40 days before departure.

We will then arrange the Bhutanese visa for you. A visa letter will be forwarded to you 7-10 days before departure. We cannot get the visa letter issued any sooner. Please print out the visa letter, you will be required to show this before boarding your flight to Paro.

Important: If you are planning to extend your stay in Bhutan, pre- and post-tour accommodation must be booked through National Geographic Journeys in order for us to issue a valid visa for the duration of your stay.

If arriving and departing Paro from India, please note that the Indian government has recently made some changes to visa regulation due to misuse of the Tourist visa. We encourage all passengers to contact the Indian consulate or embassy in their home country to get up to date information on entry requirements. This is especially important for those that are planning on entering India multiple times in a two month period.

Foreigners holding a Indian Tourist Visas, who after initial entry into India plan to visit neighboring Nepal, Bhutan or Sri Lanka and then re-enter into India within 2 months need to get special authorization.

Spending Money

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

Money Exchange

There are ATMs in larger cities in Bhutan, and they will accept only Mastercard or Visa. As well, credit card can be used at larger hotels and shops but please note most places charge from 3-5% fees to use cards. The Ngultrum (local currency) is valueless outside of Bhutan so make sure that you change back all excess Bhutanese currency before you leave. It is possible to use Indian Rupees in Bhutan.

Emergency Fund

Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD \$200 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

Tipping

It is customary in Asia to tip service providers such as waiters, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. Tipping is expected - though not compulsory - and shows an expression of satisfaction with the people who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use. You may do this individually, or your CEO will offer to collect the money and tip as a group. Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from USD1-2 per person per day depending on the quality and length of the service; ask your CEO for specific recommendations based on the circumstances and culture. Also at the end of each trip if you felt your G Adventures CEO did an outstanding job, tipping is appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference; however as a guideline USD20-30 per person, per week can be used.

Optional Activities

We suggest you bring along USD80 for additional sightseeing.

Health

Please note inoculations may be required for the country visited. It is your responsibility to consult with your travel doctor for up to date medical travel information well before departure.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information well before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit and hand sanitizers / antibacterial wipes as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that sometimes we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities, and for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of

drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc. In Asia pharmacies tend to stock the same western drugs as you get at home but they are usually produced locally so please bring the full drug name with you when trying to purchase a prescription drug. When selecting your trip please carefully read the brochure and itinerary and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please refer to the Physical and Culture Shock ratings for trip specific information. G Adventures reserves the right to exclude any traveller from all or part of a trip without refund if in the reasonable opinion of our CEO they are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group.

Safety and Security

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage. When travelling on a group trip, please note that your CEO has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Your CEO will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your CEO will assist you with options available in a given location please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

Protests and Demonstrations- Protests and demonstrations, even those that are well intended, have the potential to turn violent with no warning. Counter protests can also turn violent. Action by security forces to disperse demonstrators and protesters may occur at any time. If you are in an area where demonstrators or protesters are gathering, avoid the temptation of staying for a good photo opportunity and leave the area immediately.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards) have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).

Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk.

We take all prudent measures in relation to your safety. For ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling, please visit:

www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/

Medical Form

Our small group adventures bring together people of all ages. It is very important you are aware that, as a minimum, an average level of fitness and mobility' is required to undertake our easiest programs. Travellers must be able to walk without the aid of another person, climb 3-4 flights of stairs, step on and off small boats, and carry their own luggage at a minimum. Travellers with a pre-existing medical condition are required to complete a short medical questionnaire, which must be signed by their physician. This is to ensure that travellers have the necessary fitness and mobility to comfortably complete their chosen trip. While our CEOs work hard to ensure that all our travellers are catered for equally, it is not their responsibility to help individuals who cannot complete the day's activities unaided. Please refer to the physical ratings in this Trip Details document for more information.

The medical questionnaire can be found online at:

www.gadventures.com/medical-form.

A Couple of Rules

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel

any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your CEO, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy please bear in mind that all clients must have medical coverage and that we require a minimum coverage of USD 200,000 for repatriation and emergency rescue. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. If you have credit card insurance we require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

Planeterra-The G Adventures Foundation

Through our commitment to responsible tourism we have developed the Planeterra Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of people and communities around the world through support of international charities, local organizations and community projects in the places that we visit on our tours. G Adventures matches all individual donations and pays all administration costs, which means that 100% of each donation is doubled and goes directly to support our projects. For more information about Planeterra and the projects we support, or to make a donation, please visit www.planeterra.org

Planeterra Dollar-A-Day Program

Our Dollar-A-Day Program provides travellers with the opportunity to help us give back to the people and places visited on our tours by donating one dollar per day for the duration of their tour. 100% of these proceeds will go directly to support our G Adventures for Good projects.

To participate in this program please indicate at the time of booking that you would like to participate in G Adventures' Dollar-A-Day program, either by clicking the check box online, or by advising your G Adventures specialist or travel agent. (Note: Donation will be charged in the currency of your booking)

Local Dress

Many Bhutanese people still wear traditional clothes and dress modestly.

Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us that we'll give you 5% off the price of your next G Adventures trip if your feedback is completed on-line within 30 days of finishing your trip. Your tour evaluation will be e-mailed to you 24 hours after the conclusion of your trip. If you do not receive the tour evaluation link in the days after your tour has finished, please drop us a line at customerservice@gadventures.com and we will send it on to you.

Newsletter

Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from G Adventures, subscribe at www.gadventures.com/newsletters/

Stay current on how our company invests in our global community through our foundation - Planeterra. Sign up for [Planeterra's monthly news](#) to learn more about how to give back and support the people and places we love to visit.

Travel Forum - The Watering Hole

Be sure to stop by [The Watering Hole](#), our adventure travel forum. If you're interested in meeting others booked on your upcoming trip, check out the [Departure Lounge](#) section of our forum and introduce yourself. Otherwise, just drop in at anytime to share some travel tips, ask questions, meet other travellers and quench your thirst for travel. Our forum is located at wateringhole.gadventures.com.