NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC | G Adventures
EXPEDITIONS
JOURNEYS

Last Updated: August 24, 2026

JOURNEYS: WONDERS OF BHUTAN

10 days, Paro to Paro

Trip code ADWNG

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Stories from a Buddhist Scholar, Thimphu
- Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Family Farm Meal, Gangtey Gonpa
- Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Lecture on Gross National Happiness, Thimphu
- Your Welcome Moment: Welcome Moment - Meet Your Expedition Leader and Group
- Arrival and departure transfer
- Sustainable Development Fees
- 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
- Black-Necked Crane Centre visit
- 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 Paro Rinpung Dzong and hike to Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest)
- Visit Kyichu Lhakhang Temple
- All transport between destinations and to/from included activities

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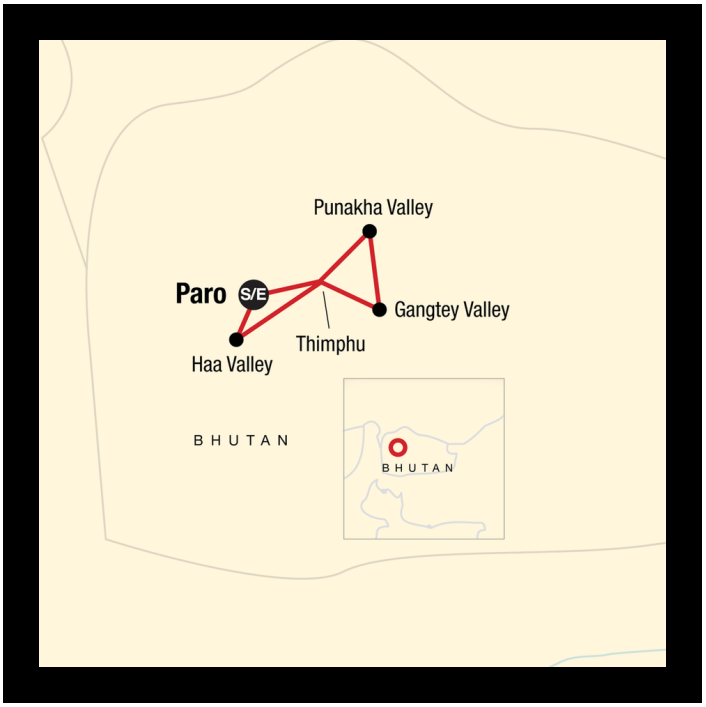
VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

VALIDITY: Valid for all trips departing February 25th, 2020 and onwards

ITINERARY



Itinerary Notes

There are new Health & Safety Protocols for National Geographic Journeys tours. Please see here for full details and up-to-date requirements as they may change.

NOTE: Accommodations vary per departure and are subject to change until tour start date; they are not final and should be used as examples only. Travellers may login to the G Adventures App to view accommodations specific to their departure.

Day 1 PARO/THIMPHU

Arrive at any time and transfer to Thimphu, Bhutan's capital. Time permitting, take a guided walk around 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, an arrival transfer will take you to Thimphu, where we'll be met by our local National Geographic Expedition Leader who will conduct a welcome meeting and orientation.

Approximate Altitude: Paro 2,300m

Meals included

Dinner

ACCOMMODATION

The Capital Hotel (or similar) Resort

TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle Paro – Thimphu 1h30m-2h

Board a private vehicle and transfer from Paro to Thimphu.

ACTIVITY

Your opportunity to meet your National Geographic Expedition Leader and fellow travellers, and learn more about your tour. Opt to join the group for a local meal afterwards. Don't forget to see the notice in the lobby (or ask reception) for the official time and place to meet up with the group.

Day 2 THIMPHU/PUNAKHA

This morning, meet a Buddhist monk and scholar to discuss Buddhist beliefs and ways of life in Bhutan. Then drive to scenic Punakha, crossing the lofty Dochu La pass and enjoying stunning views of the Himalaya through flickering prayer flags. Settle into your hotel and drive to Lobesa after lunch. From here, hike up to Chimi Lhakhang, a 15th-century monastery dedicated to the Buddhist saint Drukpa Kunley, known as the "Divine Madman." Learn about his colourful, eccentric life, and witness women devotees who visit the monastery to receive blessings of fertility.

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

Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACCOMMODATION

Zen Punakha (or similar) Hotel

TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle Thimphu – Punākha 6h-7h

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

Chimi Lhakhang Visit Punākha 30m-1h

Take a short hike to Chimi 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.

ACTIVITY

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.

Day 3

PUNAKHA

Enjoy a full day of exploration in Punakha, the old capital of Bhutan. Visit the magnificent Punakha Dzong, or fortress, situated at the confluence of two important rivers. Drive to the Sangchhen Dorji Lhuendrup nunnery, a meditation and training center for Buddhist nuns. Then drive to Wangdue Phodrang to discover the town's dzong. In the afternoon, weave your way through rice terraces and pine forests to Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten, a cheerful temple perched on a picturesque mountain ridge overlooking the Punakha Valley.

Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACCOMMODATION

Zen Punakha (or similar) Hotel

TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle Punākha – Chendebi

Enjoy the scenery of you private vehicle towards Pelela, where you will rejoin the Trans Bhutan Trail to hike the rest of the way to Chendebi.

Punakha Dzong Visit Punākha

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). Built by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in around 1637. Arguably, it is the most beautiful Dzong in the country. The Dzong guards Bhutan's most treasured relic, the Rangjung Kharsapani, an image of Chenresig kept away from the public in the utse (tower). It has survived Tibetan invasions, numerous fires, floods and a glacial lake burst. The Dzong served as the capital and seat of the Bhutanese Government until the early 1950s; and the coronation of the His Majesty the First Druk, Gyalpo Ugyen Wangchuck, took place here.

Sangchhen Dorji Lhuendrup Nunnery Punākha

Enjoy a drive and visit to the Sangchhen Dorji Lhuendrup Nunnery and Temple complex. Perched on a ridge amid pine trees and overlooking the 3 Valleys of Toebesa, Punakha and Wangdi Phodrang, the

complex is a meditation and traditional arts training center for nuns. Enjoy the peace and quiet and learn about the nunnery which was established by the Royal Grandfather.

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 Punākha 2h-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.

Day 4

PUNAKHA/GANGTEY

Travel to the Gangtey Valley—also called Phobjikha Valley—the winter habitat of rare black-necked cranes. If your trip falls between October and February, you'll have a chance to visit the information center of the Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN) to learn about these graceful, vulnerable birds, which migrate from Tibet to Bhutan every year.

Approx. Altitude: Gangtey Valley 2,900m

Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACCOMMODATION

ABC Eco Lodge (or similar) Lodge

TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle Punākha – Gangtey Gonpa 3h-4h 78km

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

Black-Necked Crane Centre Visit Gangtey Gonpa

Visit the Royal Society for Protection of Nature's (RSPN) Black-Necked Crane Centre. Learn more about these birds and their environment. Please note that birds are in abundance only during the migration season, between October and February.

Day 5 GANGTEY

Set out to discover the stunning Gangtey Goempa, one of the oldest Nyingma monasteries in Bhutan. This 17th-century temple recently underwent an elaborate renovation. Afterward, we'll walk across Phobjikha Valley to Khewa Valley, stopping at an old temple on the way to make an offering. This evening, explore Khewa village and enjoy a cooking demonstration and delicious home-cooked dinner at a family farmhouse.

Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACCOMMODATION

ABC Eco Lodge (or similar) Lodge

TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

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.

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.

ACTIVITY

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.

Day 6 GANGTEY/THIMPHU

Return to Thimpu and take in the golden splendour of the Buddha Dordenma, a massive Buddha statue that graces a hill overlooking the city. Visit the National Institute for Zorig Chusum, an arts and crafts school where we can watch students practicing traditional arts such as woodworking, painting, and ceramics. Later, enjoy a talk on Gross National Happiness, an index used by the Bhutanese to measure the nation's progress.

Please note that on occasion the Institute for Zorig Chusum art school is closed due to school breaks and holidays. If it is not open on the day of your visit, another activity will be arranged.

Approx. Altitude: Thimpu 2,300m

Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACCOMMODATION

The Capital Hotel (or similar) Resort

TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle Gangtey Gonpa – Thimphu 3h-4h

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

Buddha Point Visit Thimphu

Buddha Point is home to Thimphu's most recognized landmark, the Buddha Dordenma. Guarding the entry to the Thimphu valley, this 51-meter (167ft) gilded bronze statue is filled with 125,000 miniature statues and sits atop a three-storey base housing a chapel and thousands of donated statuettes. The statue was commissioned to mark His Majesty the Fourth King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck's 60th birthday and was originally made in China before being transported to Thimphu in pieces.

The massive Buddha statue in Thimphu made of bronze and gold. Take lots of pictures - it's beautiful!

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.

ACTIVITY

Listen to one of the division heads or senior researchers at the government organization, Center for Bhutan Studies and GNH Research, give a lecture about the measurement that seeks a balanced approach to development, harmonizing material and non-material values.

Day 7 THIMPHU/HAA

This morning, visit the National Memorial Chorten, one of Thimpu's most recognizable landmarks and a focal point of daily spiritual life. Then venture off the beaten path towards the remote Haa Valley, stopping for a night in charming Haa town. Explore Lhakhang Nagpo, the "black temple," and Lhakhang Karpo, the "white temple"—two ancient Buddhist shrines which are said to be among the 108 temples built in one day by the seventh century Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo.

Approx. Altitude: Haa Valley 2,600m

Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACCOMMODATION

Haa Heritage Hotel (or similar) Hotel

TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle Thimphu - Haa Dzongkhag 6h-8h

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

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).

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.

Day 8

HAA/PARO

Drive into picturesque Haa Valley by way of the dramatic Chele La pass, one of the highest mountain roads in Bhutan. Hike through thick pine forests to the Kila nunnery, which clings to a rocky cliff. Later, return to Paro and visit Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the country's oldest and most beautiful temples. Then head to a local archery ground to watch locals practice Bhutan's national sport.

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

Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACCOMMODATION

Resort Thim Dorji (or similar) Resort

TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle Haa Dzongkhag – Paro 2h-3h 65km

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 50 nuns. This is a moderate level hike through stunningly beautiful scenery.

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.

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.

Day 9 PARO

Today, we embark on a vigorous hike to Bhutan's most iconic and revered site: the Taktsang Lhakhang or Tiger's Nest Monastery, perched high above the Paro Valley. Visible from afar, this architectural masterpiece straddles a vertical granite cliff 2,000 feet above the valley floor. Later, drive the winding road to Rinpung Dzong, a 600 year old fortress which was restored to it's former glory in the 1950's.

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 gradually 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.

Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACCOMMODATION

Resort Thim Dorji (or similar) Resort

TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle Paro

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

Hike to Tiger's Nest Paro 6h 7km

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.

The group will hike from 2400m elevation and reach 3100m at the Taktsang Monastery before returning back to 2400m in the same day. The climb should take around 6 hours for a total distance of 7 km.

Paro Rinpung Dzong Visit Paro

Visit Paro Rinpung Dzong, which means 'Fortress on a Heap of Jewels". The original construction of this dzong is believed to have been completed in 1458 and it was restored to its present glory by His Majesty the Third of Bhutan, King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, to mark his royal wedding in 1951.

Day 10 PARO

Depart at any time. Airport transfer is included. While at the airport, opt to experience a cultural art class at the social enterprise, VAST, a G Adventures-supported studio.

Meals included

Breakfast

TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle Paro – Paro Airport 30m

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

Optional Activities - Day 10

VAST Airport Experience Paro Airport

Turn waiting at the airport into an art class! Visit the hands-on art experience at VAST (Voluntary Artists' Studio Thimphu) Happy Brush Activity Corner in the Paro Airport. The initiative works to nurture the artistic potential of Bhutanese youth by involving youth in community service, while empowering them to explore art as a viable and fulfilling career path. Through different hands-on activities, like painting a traditional mask featured in the festivals and folklore of Bhutan.

What's included

- Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Stories from a Buddhist Scholar, Thimphu
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- Visit Kyichu Lhakhang Temple
- All transport between destinations and to/from included activities

What are the main highlights of this trip?

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"

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Is there a disclaimer I should read before booking this trip?

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Is there a travel disclaimer for my itinerary I should review before booking this trip?

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.

Are there Itinerary notes?

There are new Health & Safety Protocols for National Geographic Journeys tours. Please see here for full details and up-to-date requirements as they may change.

What important notes should I be aware of before the trip?

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.

5. FLIGHT

Your arrival and departure flights into/out of Paro, Bhutan, must be booked by you online. Please visit the following airline websites to do so:

Druk Air
http://www.drukair.com.bt/

Bhutan Airlines
http://www.bhutanairlines.bt/

Flights can be booked from: Bangkok, Kathmandu, Delhi or Kolkata (please check Visa requirements if flying via India). Once your flights are booked, contact your G Adventures agent, who will be happy to assist in booking your International connections.

6. EXTRA NIGHTS

If you are planning to extend your stay in Bhutan, pre or post-tour accommodation MUST be booked through G Adventures in order for us to issue a valid visa for the duration of your stay. These extra nights will include a guide and meals in addition to the accommodation.

7. LUGGAGE

Please note that if you have extra luggage or bags you do not wish to bring along for the entire trip you will be able to leave them at the joining hotel and retrieve them at the finishing hotel when the trip ends.

8. ACCOMMODATION NOTE:
Please be aware that properties we stay in with only two stories may not have elevators installed and climbing the stairs with your luggage will be necessary.

What is the role of the group leader during this trip?

All G Adventures group trips are accompanied by one of our National Geographic Expedition Leader throughout. The aim of the Expedition Leaders 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.

What is the maximum and typical number of participants on this tour?

Max 15, Avg 10.

What meals are included in this trip?

9 breakfasts, 8 lunches, 9 dinners

What are the meals like on this trip?

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).

What are the modes of transportation on my trip?

Private vehicle, walking, hiking.

How will we travel between destinations?

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.

Is there an extra cost for travelling solo?

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.

Where will we stay during the trip?

Hotel/lodges – 9 nts.

If I choose to purchase My Own Room, are there any exceptions during the trip?

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

What should I expect from the accommodations on this trip?

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.

What are the joining instructions?

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

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 on this day.

Upon arrival to your Joining Hotel (note that check-in time will be in the afternoon), look for a note or bulletin board in the reception with a note from your Expedition Leader. This note will give the details of your Welcome Meeting on day 1 (usually between 5pm and 7pm), where you will get a chance to meet your Expedition Leader and other travellers, as well as learn more about how the tour will run. If you don't see a note, please ask reception for details!

If you are arriving later and will miss the Welcome Meeting, your Expedition Leader will leave a note at reception for you with any information you may need, and with morning instructions for the next day.

What should I do if I can't find my airport transfer or experience arrival issues?

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 Expedition Leader. 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.

Who do I contact for arrival issues or in the event of an emergency?

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 or flight cancellation within 48 hours of your scheduled arrival time, please call the emergency contact number to advise of your new arrival flight information. If you do not, we will not be able to rearrange your arrival transfer and you will need to make your own way to the starting hotel at your own expense. 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 Representative (Bhutan):
Ms Wangchuk Dem - (Primary Contact)
From outside of Bhutan: +975 17 747 428
From within Bhutan: 17 747 428

G Adventures South Asia Manager, Sorab Jassawalla (Delhi, India)
From outside of India: +91 88 5180 6614
From within India: 88 5180 6614

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 Sales team who will happily assist you. Hours of operation by region can be found here.

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 are the packing guidelines and luggage restrictions?

We suggest that you pack as lightly as possible as your are expected to carry your own luggage. As a rule we try not to have to walk more than 15-20 mintues 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.

What should I pack for this trip?

Cold Weather:

- Long-sleeved shirts or sweater
- Scarf
- Warm gloves
- Warm hat
- Warm layers
- Warm waterproof jacket

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)
- Vouchers and pre-departure information (required)
- Visas or vaccination certificates (With photocopies)

Essentials:

- Toiletries (required) (Shampoo, bodywash, soap, etc.)
- 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
- Headphones (Noise-cancelling recommended)
- 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
- Swimwear
- Watch and alarm clock
- Waterproof backpack cover
- Windproof rain jacket

Health & Safety:

- Face masks (Clients will be only be required to wear a face mask where it is mandated by local regulations.)
- Hand sanitizer
- Pen (Please bring your own pen for filling out documents.)

Light Hiking:

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

Smart Dress:

- Smart outfit (For evenings out)

Warm Weather:

- Sandals/flip-flops
- Shorts/skirts (Longer shorts/ skirts are recommended)
- Sturdy water shoes/sandals
- Sun hat/bandana
- Swimwear Note: During the colder months (Oct-Apr) the mountains can be very cold, so please make sure you pack warm clothes.

Where can I do my laundry on this trip?

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.

What are the visas and entry requirements for my trip?

All countries require a valid passport (with a minimum 6 months validity). Contact your local embassy or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent. It is your own responsibility to have the correct travel documentation. Visa requirements for your trip will vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as far as possible, but rules do change and sometimes without warning. While we provide the following information in good faith, it is vital that you check the information yourself and understand that you are fully responsible for your own visa requirements.

Visa information specific to your destination and nationality can be found in our Important Pre-Departure Information page here

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, please click on the following link for information and application form

These details need to be submitted to us 35-60 days before your entry into Bhutan.

We will then arrange the Bhutanese visa for you. The visa letter will be forwarded to you 2-5 business days before departure. We cannot get the visa letter issued any sooner, as it is issued by the Bhutanese government. 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.
As of February 2026, all non-Indian nationals entering India by air, land or sea must complete the e-Arrival Card online before arrival. Register within 3 days of arrival.
For more information and to complete the e-Arrival Card, we kindly request the you visit the Indian Immigration page.

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

You must have at least two blank passport pages available for each country you will visit on your tour. These are required for entry & exit stamps.

What should I consider when planning my personal expenses and discretionary spending for this itinerary?

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.

What should I know about currency, credit cards, and exchanging money while on this tour?

Bhutan is essentially a cash-based economy, so you will need ngultrum (local currency) for any expenses (drinks, souvenirs, optional activities, etc.). You should not rely on using your ATM card or credit cards in Bhutan. Bring additional cash (USD is best) and exchange that at the airport so you have local currency from the beginning, as it is not always possible to find an ATM or exchange. The local currency is valueless outside of Bhutan so make sure that you change back all excess Bhutanese currency before you leave.

What emergency funds do I need access to on this trip?

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!

What are the tipping guidelines for this trip?

It is customary in Bhutan 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 Expedition Leader will offer to collect the money and tip as a group. Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from $4-5 USD per person per day depending on the quality and length of the service; ask your Expedition Leader for specific recommendations based on the circumstances and culture.

Also at the end of each trip if you felt your National Geographic Expedition Leader did an outstanding job, tipping is appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference; however as a guideline $10-15 per person, per day can be used.

What activities are optional on this trip?

Paro Airport

- VAST Airport Experience

Are there any health considerations I should know before travelling?

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 Expedition Leader they are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group.

What general safety tips and free-time guidelines should I follow?

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 Expedition Leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Your Expedition Leader 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 Expedition Leader 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 Expedition Leaders 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/

What are the mandatory group rules regarding laws and behaviour?

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 Expedition Leaders have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

What are the mandatory travel insurance requirements for this trip?

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 Expedition Leader, 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.

What is Planeterra?

Planeterra International Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to turning travel into impact by helping local communities earn an income from tourism. Planeterra connects underserved local communities to the benefits of tourism by developing and supporting small community-owned businesses. These businesses support Indigenous people, empower women, grant youth access to employment opportunities, and protect the environment. Planeterra also works to ensure these businesses have a thriving customer base by integrating their projects into G Adventures' itineraries globally.
G Adventures is Planeterra's largest corporate donor, covering all operating costs, so 100% of your donation will bring opportunity to people in need.

G Adventures Dollar-a-day Program - Make Every Day Count - Turn your travel into impact with Planeterra Foundation.

Did you know? Most communities around the world do not benefit from tourism. Give back to the places you visit on your travels by creating opportunities for local people to earn an income, and protect the environment.

Make every day count by donating $1/day for the length of your trip, and join us in empowering the communities you will visit when you travel. 100% of your donation goes directly to Planeterra projects.

How should I dress to respect local customs during the tour?

Many Bhutanese people still wear traditional clothes and dress modestly.

How can I share feedback about my trip experience?

Earn 5% off your next G Adventures Tour (up to $100 USD)*

After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us and to thank you for your time, we are pleased to offer a 5% discount (up to a maximum of $100 USD) off your next G Adventures holiday. All you need to do is submit the form within 4 weeks of the completion of your tour, and you'll be able to join the thousands of travellers who have taken 2, 3, 4 or even 10 or more tours with us!

Discount cannot be combined with other offers or applied to 'Independent' style trips. Maximum discount value is $100 USD (or equivalent currency). Valid for new bookings only. G Adventures reserves the right to withdraw or modify this offer at any time without notice. Limited to one discount per person.

Does G Adventures have an email newsletter I can subscribe to?

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.

What are the age restrictions for this trip?

You must be 18 to travel unaccompanied on a G Adventures tour. For minors travelling with a guardian over 21 years old, the minimum age is 12.

Are international flights included in this trip?

No, international flights are generally not included in the price of your tour.

However, on some combo tours travelling between two different countries, international flights are included as part of the itinerary and price of the tour. Please speak to your National Geographic Signature Specialist or booking agent for further details.

In addition, check-in times and baggage allowances/restrictions vary by airline and can change at any time. For the most up-to-date information for your flight, please contact your airline. We recommend checking in online in advance to avoid potential delays at the airport.

What should LGBTQ+ travellers know about safety and travel considerations on this trip?

The safety and well-being of all of our travelers is a priority at G Adventures and that includes our travelers who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. We recognize that there are specific concerns and questions you may have about your adventure in terms of safety and security. We encourage you to visit our LGBTQ+ page for useful resources to ensure you feel safe and comfortable throughout the duration of your trip. The Equaldex tool linked on this page can be of particular help when deciding where you may want to visit next.

Dossier Disclaimer

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 the operator. 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.

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.