

Chomolhari Basecamp and the Bonte La

Trip Code: CHO

Version: CHOF Chomolhari Basecamp and the Bonte La Chomolhari Basecamp - Chomolhari Festival



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



CHALLENGING



HIGHLIGHTS

- An unforgettable circuit through the snow-capped peaks of the Bhutan Himalaya
- Spend a day at basecamp, with the option to see the sunrise over Chomolhari
- Trek past the azure waters of the Tsho Phu lakes and cross the Bonte La (4890m)
- Explore Kathmandu and Paro, and visit the Tiger's Nest monastery
- Time your holiday to see the Chomolhari Mountain Festival

AT A GLANCE

- 9 days trekking
- 3 days sightseeing
- Max altitude - 4890m
- Join at Kathmandu

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- All meals included
- 8 nights Camping
- 4 nights Hotel

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

Introduction

This spectacular circuit trek will take us all the way to Bhutan's Chomolhari Base Camp and across 3 high passes in under 2 weeks, what's more we've also time for sightseeing in bustling Kathmandu and idyllic Paro, famous for the dramatic, cliff-side Taktsang Monastery.

Arriving into Paro from Kathmandu, Nepal, our stunning trek takes us north of Paro, deep into the valley of the Paro Chu. This quiet valley provides a passage between the Himalayan foothills and the towering white peaks on the border with Tibet.

Our route follows the river upstream for 3 days to the meadows at Jangothang, the basecamp for Chomolhari (7326m), a sacred peak on the border of Bhutan and Tibet, which is revered by Buddhists, who believe it is the home of one of the five goddesses (Jomo), who were bound under oath by Guru Rinpoche to protect the land and the local people.

After a day for exploration and acclimatisation above this camp, we turn away from the valley trail and climb to the picturesque Tsho Phu lakes. From here, we ascend to cross the airy Bonte La (4890m), where we'll enjoy some increasingly impressive views of Chomolhari and the imposing spire of Jitchu Drake. Now at high level, we trek via hidden valleys and along scenic ridges to reach our stunning campsite on the yak pastures of Thongbu, before descending on herders' trails Shana. Very few trekking groups complete this superb circuit, which is one of the best short treks in Bhutan.

Hermit's Cave

Unique to KE is the acclimatisation trek up to visit the Hermit's Cave, just prior to arriving at Chomolhari Basecamp. Not only is this a culturally interesting visit to an area rarely visited by trekkers, it is also a fantastic aid to acclimatisation that will help prepare you for the rest of your [trekking holiday](#).

BOOK EARLY for BHUTAN! With only two airlines operating flights into Paro from Kathmandu, seats are limited and in high demand. Book early to guarantee your place on your chosen departure. We strongly advise booking a year in advance where possible.

Is this holiday for you?

This route presents a great variety of landscape types; ranging from fertile and intensively terraced farmland, through some of the finest mixed forest in the world, to open, alpine pastureland and high mountain valleys and passes.

Trekking conditions are reasonably straightforward, since the trail has been well prepared for the ponies or yaks. There are no glaciers to negotiate and the passes that we cross should not be heavily snow covered. There are some rugged sections where extra care needs to be taken and at lower elevations, the trail can be muddy in places.

The trekking is sustained and involves some long, strenuous, days (up to 9hrs) and the crossing of three passes over 4000 metres, including the Bonte La at 4890 metres. A good level of fitness is essential.

Itinerary

Version: CHOF Chomolhari Basecamp and the Bonte La Chomolhari Basecamp - Chomolhari Festival

DAY 1

Arrive Kathmandu. Transfers from Kathmandu Airport to the group hotel are provided.

The holiday starts at the group hotel in Kathmandu. Transfers from Kathmandu Airport are provided. The rest of the day is free to relax or for independent sightseeing. We have also arranged for dinner in the hotel tonight, which you can take at your own leisure.

Meals: **D**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 2

Fly to Paro in the Kingdom of Bhutan. Meet our Tour Leader and transfer to hotel.

The group will meet in the lobby of the hotel. We transfer together back to airport in time to check in for the flight to Paro.

The flight from Kathmandu to Bhutan is one of the most spectacular of all mountain flights. From the left side of the plane Everest, Makalu and Kangchenjunga, three of the world's highest mountains, are clearly visible. The total flying time is only 45 minutes and soon we are descending into the Paro Valley, enjoying the splendid views of alpine forests, small monasteries, temples and flat-roofed farmhouses. On arrival we will be met by our Tour Leader, who will accompany us to the hotel.

If the flight to Paro is in the morning, there may be time today to visit the National Museum housed in an ancient watchtower, high above the Paro Valley overlooking the Dzong.

Meals: **B D**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 3**Hike to the Taktsang (the Tiger's Nest) Monastery (3120m). Overnight Paro.**

This morning we hike up to one of the most important religious site in the entire Himalaya, the Tiger's Nest. The monastery has a most stunning location, perched on the ledge of a cliff 900m above the Paro Valley, and is only accessible on foot. Not just a cultural experience, this hike up to over 3000m will provide excellent acclimatisation ahead of our trek.

Around half way up the trail there is a classic viewpoint, looking across the gorge to the monastic buildings clinging to the cliff wall opposite. There is a small teahouse here where we can stop for a rest with a truly unforgettable view.

The final approach to the monastery takes us down to a sacred waterfall, surrounded by a thousand fluttering prayer flags, where every crack in the rock is crammed with tsa-tsas (small caskets containing the ashes of the dead), before climbing back up towards the monastery. If we are lucky we will be allowed inside to look at some of the chambers and altar rooms.






We return to Paro in the afternoon. Tonight we will want to repack our bags ready for beginning our trek in the morning. You may leave some items you won't need on the trek at the hotel.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 790M		Descent 790M		Time 5 hrs trekking		Distance 8KM
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DAY 4**Drive to Shana (2890m) to begin our trek. Hike to Thongbu Samba (3100m).**

From Paro we drive west for (30 mins) to the end of the surfaced road at the ruins of Drugyel Dzong (2530m). From here, we continue following a farm road for around an hour and a half, passing through small hamlets of houses built in traditional Bhutanese design. Arriving at Shana (2860m), we will be happy to stretch our legs. While our bags are loaded on the ponies, we will set off following a path beside the river and continue easily to our first night's camp at Thongbu Samba (3100m).

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 390M		Descent 170M		Time 2 - 3 hrs trekking		Distance 7KM
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DAY 5**Trek to Soi Thangka (3600m).**

We gain height slowly as we continue along the river through a mixed forest. The autumn colours of the leaves contrast with the Pale Spanish moss (old man's beard). After rain, the trail can be muddy and there

will possibly be slippery rocks to contend with. Our crew will be on hand to assist. The trail undulates as we make our way north and after crossing a bridge at 3560 metres, we make a short steep climb to reach a junction of two valleys, marked by a chorten. From near here, weather permitting, we can see Chomolhari at the head of the valley. Our trail stays on the west bank of the Paro Chu and our next camp at Soi Thangka is only a half an hour's walk away.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 770M		Descent 270M		Time 5 - 6 hrs trekking		Distance 11KM
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DAY 6

Trek to Jangothang (4100m) - Chomolhari Basecamp.

We continue our trek today on the cow herder's trail up to the small hamlet of Jumphu. From here, we re-join the main trekking trail to today's camp at Jangothang (Chomolhari Basecamp). We have lunch in a meadow at Tikithang, from where it is another hour until camp. Our camp tonight is next to a ruined dzong (4100m) beneath the huge east face of Chomolhari.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 560M		Descent 60M		Time 6 hrs trekking		Distance 13KM
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DAY 7

Jangothang and the Chomolhari Festival.

Our arrival at Jangothang coincides with the first day of the 2-day Chomolhari Festival and we can greatly aid our acclimatisation by spending a rest day at this amazing place. We will, of course, be able to soak up the atmosphere of this unique annual event which provides an opportunity for villagers from lower down in the valley to celebrate their cultural identity. The festival also celebrates the existence of the snow leopard and there will be songs and dances in praise of this elusive creature. Traditional sports such as khuru (darts) and shot put, as well as yak riding will be on show. There will also be handicraft stalls and traditional Bhutanese foods on offer. We spend a second night at Jangothang.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping
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DAY 8**A day for rest and exploration at Jangothang.**

We spend another day at Jangothang to improve our acclimatisation ahead of the crossing of the Bonte La. We will take the opportunity to hike up the ridge behind the ruined dzong to a grassy summit at approximately 4500 metres, from where there is an incredible close-up view of Chomolhari. Green grass, grazing yaks, stunning mountain scenery - it doesn't come much better than this. For a spectacular view of Jitchu Drake closer to camp (even better at sunrise if you can get up sufficiently early), follow the river for 20 minutes to a lone house and here the mountain is presented before you. We spend a third night at the Jangothang camp.




Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 400M		Descent 400M		Time 3 hrs trekking		Distance 4KM
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DAY 9**Cross the Bonte La (4890m) and trek down into the Yaksa Valley (3800m).**

A long but spectacular day of trekking. Crossing the river on a simple bridge, we begin a steady climb on a zig zag trail over steep mountain side to reach the flower carpeted meadows of the hanging valley above. This is prime grazing country so there will usually be yaks scattered about and possibly blue sheep. A clear trail follows the shore of the two azure lakes of Tsho Phu. Beyond the second lake we start the climb to the Bonte La (4890m). The ascent is steep at first, crossing scree slopes, until we reach the upper part of the valley where there are sensational views back across the lakes which reflect Jichu Drake. From the upper valley the trail ascends more gradually to the summit of the pass. After taking in the views, which include the peaks of the Basingthang group, we begin the descent, which starts out steeply over loose ground but soon eases. We pass a huge cliff and splendid waterfall before entering the rich forests of the deep canyon-like Yaksa Valley. We make our camp in the valley bottom near the river at 3800m.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 850M		Descent 1050M		Time 7 - 9 hrs trekking		Distance 20KM
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DAY 10**Cross the Tagun La (4520m) and descend to Thongbu (4120m).**

We climb through forests of rhododendron, birch and oak to a meadow and mani wall. Here there is the option to make a 20 minute detour (uphill) to see Sey Dzong a three story monastery wedged into a

crack in a 300 metre high cliff and some 60 metres above the ground. Returning to the mani wall, we now drop down to cross the river and begin a climb through the forest and finally above the tree line to gain the Tagun La (4520m). There are yet more spectacular views of the Himalaya and a short scramble up the hills above the pass will reveal the distant outline of Kanchenjunga, third highest mountain in the world, and Makalu, the fifth. We can also look back to the Bonte La. From the pass we have a short descent to Thongbu. Located in yak pastures at 4120m.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 740M		Descent 420M		Time 4 - 5 hrs trekking		Distance 11KM
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DAY 11

Cross the Thombu La (4270m) to Shana (2890m). Drive back to Paro.

We begin by crossing the valley on a trail which can be boggy. On the other side we climb steadily though thick rhododendron forest to reach the Thombu La (4270m.). There are great views southeast to Djo Drake and on the Tibet-Bhutan border the relatively diminutive (in Himalayan terms) but impressive Drake Gang as well as a host of more distant big peaks on the border with Sikkim. From the pass we follow a high ridge with sensational views of snow-capped peaks. This is a highlight of the trek and we spend the best part of an hour walking the ridge, before we start our descent dropping steeply down for 2 - 3 hours, which can be tough on the knees. We complete the trek circuit, meeting our outward trail at Shana (2820m). Here, our vehicles will be waiting and we will transfer (2 hrs) back to Paro where we check into our hotel and enjoy a shower before sitting down to dinner.

Meals: **B L D**


	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 150M		Descent 1380M		Time 5 - 6 hrs trekking		Distance 15KM
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DAY 12

Morning flight to Kathmandu. Afternoon free for independent sightseeing.

We have an early transfer to Paro Airport for the morning flight to Kathmandu. The flight takes only 45 minutes and on arrival we transfer to our comfortable hotel. The remainder of the day is free to explore the city or for shopping in the bazaars. An evening meal is included at the hotel, for those that wish to dine together, or you are free to head out into Thamel independently to a restaurant of your choice.

Meals: **B D**

	Accommodation Hotel
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DAY 13**Departure day. Transfers to Kathmandu Airport are provided.**

The holiday ends after breakfast. Transfers to Kathmandu airport are provided. If you would like to spend more time exploring Nepal, why not pre-book a full day-tour of the Kathmandu Valley, or a multi-day excursion to a wildlife reserve in Chitwan National Park. Contact the KE Team for more details.

Meals: **B**

Extensions

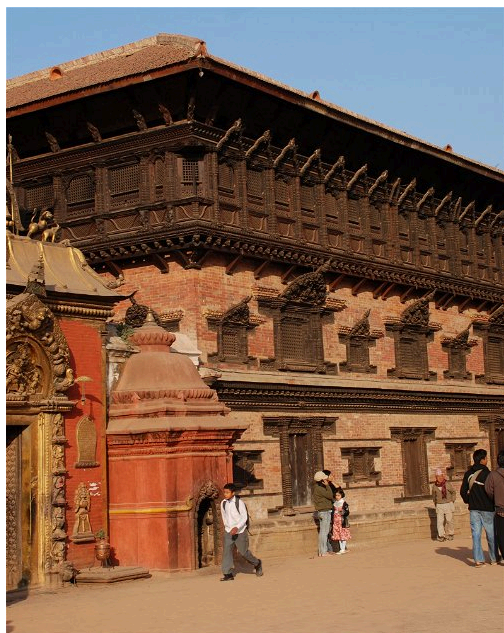
When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.



Chitwan Jungle Extension

The jungles of southern Nepal are an interesting counterpoint to trekking in the foothills or the high Himalaya. Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge provides a relaxing and comfortable base for a wildlife safari and cultural village experience. During two days of wildlife viewing in the Chitwan National Park 'buffer zone' - the interface area between visitors and the animals that live at Chitwan - you will be accompanied by expert guides on safaris by jeep by boat and on foot.

3 days from
US\$1,545 per person



Kathmandu Tour - Nagarkot and Bhaktapur

The Kathmandu Valley contains the cities of Patan, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu itself, all of which were once independent kingdoms. An exploration of the valley's historic and cultural sights is an excellent way to begin or end your adventure in Nepal. Highlights of this tour includes a very early drive up to Nagarkot on the Kathmandu Valley rim, the perfect place to watch a Himalayan sunrise. This is followed by a tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bhaktapur, renowned for its temples and traditional buildings.

1 day from
US\$175 per person

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader plus support crew
- Bhutan visa fee
- Flights between Kathmandu and Paro
- All transfers and land transport involved in the itinerary
- All accommodation as described
- All meals
- Once on trek a full service including food and all equipment
- 'Thermarest' inflatable camping mats whilst camping
- FREE Sleeping bag and down jacket hire is available for this holiday on request
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What's not Included

- Travel Insurance
- Nepalese visa costs
- Tips for drivers and trek staff
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The holiday starts at the group hotel in Kathmandu.

Airport transfers are provided for all clients arriving Kathmandu on Day 1 and departing on the last day of the Land Only itinerary and all clients with additional nights booked through KE.

Hotel contact details and an emergency telephone number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All meals are included in the holiday price, with the exception on lunches in Kathmandu.

Food & Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

The Bhutanese love chillies; red, green, raw, cooked and flavouring their condiments – fans of spicy food will be in their element in Bhutan! Don't panic if spicy food is not for you, all the hotels and restaurants in Thimpu and Paro offer a range of delicious dishes suitable for all tastes. Breakfasts whilst in hotels will consist of choice of cereal or muesli, eggs, toast, beans, sausage or bacon with tea, coffee and juices.

You can expect to be fed very well during the trekking section of your holiday. Our trekking chefs are old hands at managing camps and meals whilst in the mountains. A senior trek cook and camp manager must have a minimum of five years of training and experience to qualify for the post! Our cooks have undergone training both on Bhutanese and continental dishes and can expect to be served a wide variety of delicious food on trek. Breakfast and dinner will be taken at the camp sites, whilst lunches will generally be carried on ponies and served mid-way on the trekking route for the day. Tea and hot drinks will be provided throughout the day and you will also usually also get a wakeup call from the camp crew with a nice cup of hot *Chai*! Whilst on trek drinking water will be purified by boiling and will be provided regularly.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Accommodation

This holiday includes 2 nights in Kathmandu, one en route to Bhutan and one on the return journey. In Kathmandu we use a comfortable, centrally located hotel. In Bhutan, we will also use comfortable and well-located hotels throughout.

Whilst on trek there are 8 nights full service camping where you will enjoy a full-service from our friendly camp team. You will sleep in hardy 2 man dome tents and inflatable Thermarest mattresses are provided.

All the camp equipment and luggage will be transported between camps by ponies or yaks, you need only carry your day packs. Our team will erect and dismantle the tents for you, cook, and take care of all the camp chores.

During walking days, having stayed behind to collapse camp, it is usual for the team and the pack animals to overtake us during the day and we will usually arrive into camp to find it already established, with our personal bags already placed into our pre-assigned tents and the kettle on!

In camp, as well as the tents used for sleeping, there will also be a mess tent, with chairs and tables, where the group will dine (and socialise into the evening), a toilet tent and even a shower tent where a bucket of hot water can be provided for you to wash with. Hot water on bowls for washing will also be provided to you in the mornings and when you arrive at the camp each day. On cold nights we'll even provide hot water bags/bottles when it is time for you to retreat to your tents for the evening.

All accommodation is on a twin share basis. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired with another single traveller of the same sex. Single rooms and/or single tents are available for a supplementary cost. If you are planning to extend your holiday, additional nights in Kathmandu are available on request.

Internal flights

Flights to Bhutan

It is possible to fly to Bhutan from Kathmandu, Delhi, Bangkok and Singapore, as well as from Dhaka and several regional airports in India. Our preferred port of transit for this holiday is Kathmandu, which has daily flights to Paro and a good tourism infrastructure. In addition, Nepal visas are easily obtained on arrival and are relatively inexpensive. Druk Air and Bhutan Airlines are the only airlines operating flights to Bhutan and seats can be limited, particularly around the time of the major festivals. Early booking is essential. It is not always possible to confirm seats immediately and it is not uncommon for passengers to be 'waitlisted' for several weeks until their booking clears. In rare circumstances, it may be necessary to route our groups or individual clients through an alternative airport if waiting lists are not cleared in good time.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be met and escorted in Kathmandu by a local KE representative. Once in Bhutan the group will be accompanied throughout by a professional and qualified tour leader. During the trek the tour leader will be assisted by local guides and a full trek crew including cooks, baggage animals and their handlers.

Altitude

This holiday involves going to very high altitude. During the course of your trip you will be spending at least one night above 4000 metres and/or trekking to 5000 metres or above. This is not something that you should worry about; the human body is quite capable of adapting to a very wide range of altitudes, but it is important that we follow some simple rules in order to acclimatise successfully. Before coming on this holiday you should read the advice on [trekking at high altitude](#). Unless you have previous experience of trekking above 4000 metres you should consult one of our trekking experts before embarking on this holiday. On this trip we carry a portable altitude chamber (PAC-bag) and/or bottled oxygen for use in emergencies.

Spending Money

Approximately £250 (or equivalent in Euros, US dollars etc.) should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses including porter and trek crew tips, drinks, snacks etc. We recommend that you carry your travel money in the form of cash, since you will exchange the majority of this on arrival (into Nepalese rupees in Kathmandu, and Bhutanese Ngultrum at Paro Airport). Sterling, US Dollars and Euros are equally acceptable for exchange in Nepal and in Bhutan. You can withdraw cash from ATMs in Kathmandu. In Bhutan money can be easily exchanged but you cannot rely on withdrawing money from ATMs.

Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is the accepted way of saying thank you for good service.

As a rough guide we suggest that each group member contributes US\$190 (in local currency equivalent) to a group tipping pool, around \$20 per person of this should go into a kitty for drivers, hotel porters and waiters (you can give this to your tour leader who will make sure it is distributed fairly).

Normally the trek staff (assistant guides, cook, ponymen etc...) are given their tips at the end of the trek. Your Bhutanese tour leader will advise the group on an appropriate level of tipping for each crew member. Most groups will mark the end of their trek by handing out the tips with a bit of a ceremony on the last evening.

A tip for your main Bhutanese tour leader is not included in the above. As a group you may want to make a separate collection to tip your tour leader separately during dinner on your final evening in Bhutan.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage, which should be a soft duffel bag, and a daypack. Your bag on trek will be carried by pack animals and should not weigh more than 15kg. It is possible to leave extra baggage at the hotel in Kathmandu and also in Paro. Baggage left in Paro will meet you at your first hotel post trek. Checked baggage allowance for the flight from Kathmandu to Paro is 30kg. For other international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

Visa Nepal

All nationalities require a visa. The visa process is partly automated and the fee is \$30 for 15 days, \$50 for 30 days, \$125 for 90 days. The visa is FREE for children under 10 years. The visa allows multiple re-entry. Payment must be made in cash and USD, GBP or Euros are accepted.

Part of this on-arrival visa process involves filling in a 'Tourist Visa Application Form' and you can simplify the procedure at Kathmandu Airport by filling this form in online (**within 15 days of travelling**) at [this link](#). This generates a receipt which you present (hard copy or saved on your phone) on arrival. This should allow you to go straight to the cashier to pay for your visa and has the potential to save you time in the visa queue.

Whilst these are not now needed for the visa process, we recommend that you travel with at least 2 spare passport photographs.

If you are travelling via India (Delhi or Calcutta) to your destination you may also require a visa for India. This may apply even if you are not leaving the airport unless your baggage has been checked all the way through to your destination. Generally, if you use the same carrier for both legs of your journey, you will not need an India Visa. Please download the detailed information document: [Visa PDF India](#).

Visa Bhutan

All nationalities require a visa. KE will apply for the visa for you and the visa fee is included in your holiday cost.

Please note that this will be a group visa and will list the names, date of birth and passport details for all members of the group. A copy of this visa will be issued to each member of the group in Kathmandu prior to your check-in for the flight to Paro in Bhutan and your passport will be stamped on arrival in Paro.

We require a copy of the information page of your passport in order to make the arrangements for your Bhutan Visa. A colour scan must be emailed or posted to us at the earliest opportunity.

Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

Dengue fever is a known risk in places visited. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you [take precautions to avoid mosquito bites](#).

Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid.

Malarial prophylaxis is not usually required for trips in the mountains, however if you are visiting rural and remote low lying areas then they might be necessary.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

Currency

The unit of currency in Nepal is the Nepalese Rupee.

The unit of currency in Bhutan is the Bhutanese Ngultrum.

Preparing for your Holiday

Getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience.

You should be aerobically fit and comfortable with walking up to 7 hours for consecutive days. Hill walking, with a good amount of ascent and descent, is the best training. Running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardiovascular fitness and stamina.

There is little you can do to prepare for the altitude but if you have an excellent level of fitness this can help.

Climate

In general the climate of Bhutan is colder and damper than one would expect to find in the Himalaya of India or Nepal. The monsoon usually arrives in June, and lasts until early September, bringing with it the heavy rainfall which is responsible for the lush vegetation which carpets much of Bhutan. March and April, as well as late September through to November are the best months to visit Bhutan. Pre-monsoon the weather is generally very good, with bright, sunny mornings and sometimes a moderate build up of cloud in the afternoons. Post-monsoon the weather is normally bright and clear. Day-time highs of around 20°C can be expected at altitudes around 2000 metres, whilst at our highest camps the maximum daytime temperature will be 10°C to 15°C. At night-time, the temperature will fall below freezing at our highest camps. Although prolonged periods of bad weather are not common outside of the monsoon season, mountains do create their own weather and short-lived periods of rain or snow can never be completely ruled out.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- Bhutan. A Trekker's guide. Bart Jordans. Cicerone.
- Bhutan. Lonely Planet Guide.
- Bhutan. Insight Guides
- Bhutan: Land of the Thunder Dragon. Owen Edmunds

Maps

Bhutan Himalaya. 1:390,000 Nepa Maps (Himalayan Maphouse)

This map gives a general overview of the main trekking routes. Relief is indicated by shading and selected altitudes of peaks and passes. Highways, main roads, minor roads, and trekking routes are marked. Symbols denote campsites, post offices, dzongs, monuments, places of interest etc. The map is indexed for place names, dzongs, passes and peaks. Inside the map cover are printed some geographical notes on the country and driving and trekking times between selected locations.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

Please try to keep the weight of your trek bag to a minimum. See the 'baggage allowance' section for further details.

The packed weight of your kit bag while trekking should be no more than 15 kgs.

You SHOULD bring the following items:

- Sleeping bag (comfort rating -15°C)*
- Warm jacket (down)*
- Hiking boots
- Socks
- Trekking trousers
- Waterproof overtrousers

- Baselayer shirts
- Casual shirt and/or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Smart clothes and shoes (if your trip includes visiting a festival)
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses
- Thermal gloves
- Warm and waterproof gloves or mittens
- Daypack 30 litres.
- Headtorch and batteries
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottles 1 Litre x2 (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Small towel
- Selection of dry bags (to keep kitbag contents dry)

- Basic First Aid Kit including: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), altitude (Diamox), painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite). Glucose tablets and multi-vitamin tablets are also a good idea.

The following items are optional:

- Trekking poles
- Gaiters (highly recommended due to muddy conditions)
- Trainers or similar
- Spare laces
- Baselayer – thermal leggings
- Shorts
- Scarf or buff
- Sleeping bag liner
- Swimwear (for the hotel pool in Kathmandu)
- Travel clothes
- Insect repellent – (75 – 100% DEET)
- Pen-knife (note: always pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit – (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Camera
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Notes

*FREE sleeping bag and down jacket hire is included in your KE holiday booking upon request.

Please make all requests at least 6 weeks prior to the trip departure date. Note all hire / rental equipment is issued in Bhutan. Please remember to allow room in your trek bag for these items.

'Thermarest' inflatable camping mats are provided whilst camping.

FESTIVAL DRESS CODE

The Bhutanese always come dressed in their finest clothing for a festival and so you may want to bring a smarter set of clothes with you to use on the days you are attending the festivals. Long sleeves and long trousers are best, women might want to bring a scarf. Dirty boots or open toed sandals should be avoided where possible. Hats and umbrellas should be avoided.

FESTIVAL ETIQUETTE

Bhutan's Tshechus (festivals) are religious events and the festival grounds are purified and consecrated by lamas. The dancers are in a state of meditation, they believe that they transform themselves into the deities they represent on the dance ground, generating a spiritual power, which purifies, enlightens and blesses the spectators. Out of respect, whilst watching the dances, you should not eat, drink, talk or laugh loudly at inappropriate times. You should not use flash photography and please be respectful when photographing dancers or onlookers. The festivals are not tourist attractions, they are manifestations of religious traditions thousands of year's old, which we are fortunate to be able to witness.

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers.
[-> Find out more](#)

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for joining at the hotel in Kathmandu. Transfers from Tribhuvan International (Kathmandu) Airport to/from the group hotel are provided on the first and last day of the holiday.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Kathmandu. Outbound flights will usually depart from the UK in the evening, arriving mid afternoon the following day (day 1 of the itinerary). Return flights will depart Kathmandu usually in the morning of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK later the same day.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

If you would like the chance to visit one of Bhutan's spectacular festivals, then be sure to check out our special Chomolhari Basecamp Trek departures, which coincides with the Chomolhari Mountain festival. Your Bhutan visa fees, all meals, and return flights from Kathmandu to Paro are included, and there's even FREE sleeping bag and down jacket hire available too.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 19/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change