

# The Druk Path Trek

Trip Code: DRK

Version: DRKP The Druk Path Trek Druk Path - Paro Festival



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Follow an ancient route from Paro to Thimphu on a fully supported 5-day trek
- Camp beside mountain lakes and experience trekking in the Bhutan Himalaya
- See the world's largest seated golden Buddha and watch traditional Bhutanese archery
- Hike to the 'Tiger's Nest' monastery & visit the dzongs of Thimphu, Paro & Punakha
- Time your holiday to take part in one of Bhutan's iconic festivals

## AT A GLANCE

- 5 days trekking
- Max altitude - 4210m
- Join at Kathmandu

## ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

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

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

# Introduction

Combining a [short 5-day trek](#) along an ancient high-level route between Paro and Thimphu with visits to all of Bhutan's premier cultural sites, the Druk Path Trek is the perfect holiday for anyone looking for a complete and colourful experience in Bhutan: The Land of the Thunder Dragon. Offering a challenging but accessible short trek, through a pristine landscape, and a real taster of Bhutanese culture, this popular holiday provides an unforgettable introduction to the unique, welcoming and utterly fascinating Kingdom of Bhutan.

After flying to Paro from the Kathmandu, we will receive a warm welcome from our Bhutanese guides before setting off to hike to the gravity defying Taktsang 'Tiger's Nest' Monastery, one of the most iconic Buddhist sites in the entire Himalaya. Next, we begin our journey along the Druk Path where our first day of walking will take us from Paro up to a camp just below the Jeli La and its tiny hilltop dzong. During the succeeding 4 days, we trek above the tree-line and cross several passes, including the Phume La (4210m), before descending to Thimphu. En route, we camp beside clear mountain lakes and enjoy splendid panoramas of the snowy peaks on the border with Tibet, all whilst being taken great care of by our expert guides and our wonderful trek crew. Post trek we've time for sightseeing in Thimphu and in Punakha, including visits to the world's largest seated golden Buddha (Great Buddha Dordenma), the Temple of the Divine Mad Monk (Chimi Lhakhang) and the intricately decorated Punakha Dzong. We'll even take time out watch some archery.

**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 holiday is perfect for anyone looking for a mix of trekking and culture. On our 5 day/4 night trek you will be walking through a variety of landscapes; ranging from farmland, to scenic mountain passes, open meadow and some of the finest mixed forest in the world. This is a well-established route, which was once an important link between Paro and Thimphu and so has been used for generations by pack-animals leaving a well-defined path. You should be comfortable with walking for 5 or 6 hours each day with the occasional longer day and you will encounter some long ascents and/or descents on some days. Remember that you will be trekking at a moderately high altitude, which is more demanding than at lower elevations. Our hike up the Tiger's Nest at 3100 metres will also be great acclimatisation before starting the trek. This is a fully supported trek, and you will only be required to carry your day pack each

day. Our friendly camp crew will take care of all the camp chores, so you can relax, rest and enjoy the views.

# Itinerary

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Version: DRKP The Druk Path Trek Druk Path - Paro Festival

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## 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 where we meet our Tour Leader. Spend the rest of the day at the Paro Festival.**

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.

On arrival we will be met by our Tour Leader. There will be time to check in at our hotel, before heading to the dzong, where the festival will be in flow. There are a series of ritual dances on each day of the festival. They are divided into three categories: those that give moral instruction, those that drive away evil spirits and those that celebrate the Buddhist faith in its many guises. We can enjoy mingling with the throngs of Bhutanese families who travel from all around to join the celebrations, all dressed in their finest clothes. At the end of the day after the monks and dancers parade back into the dzong, we head back to our hotel in time for dinner. Overnight Paro.

Meals: **B L D**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel

## DAY 3

## Hike to the Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) Monastery. Afternoon at the Paro Festival. Overnight Paro.

This morning we will be up early to make the stunning hike up to the Tiger's Nest. The monastery's location is stunning, perched on the ledge of a cliff 900m above the Paro Valley. Not just a cultural experience, this hike up to over 3000m will provide some excellent acclimatisation. 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 located here where we can stop for a drink with a truly unforgettable view. The final approach 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. Leaving our bags and cameras at the gate we should hopefully be allowed to take a look around inside. As we explore amongst the various atmospheric chambers and altar rooms our guide will be on hand to explain all about the Buddhist rituals and iconography. We return to Paro in the afternoon. Where we can choose to revisit the festival ground or return to the hotel to rest.

Meals: **B L D**

	<b>Accommodation</b> Hotel		<b>Ascent</b> 790M		<b>Descent</b> 790M		<b>Time</b> 5 hrs trekking		<b>Distance</b> 8KM
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## DAY 4

## Early morning at the Paro Festival to attend the unfurling of the Throngdrel. Visit Paro Dzong (2300m) and trek across the Jili La (3490m).

This morning we will be up early to return to the festival ground to witness the unfurling of the Throngdrel, a giant applique thangka depicting a seated guru Rinpoche; a truly unique spectacle, which only happens once a year. We then head to the dzong, where we can go inside and take a look around. We then drive a little higher up to Ta Dzong, the old watch tower, which now houses the Bhutanese National Museum. We will have a quick tour of the museum, which is home to lots of ceremonial masks and costumes used at festivals, before setting off on trek. We drive further up the track to around 2800m, where our trek crew and horses will be waiting, and begin trekking. It is a steady climb through forest up to the Jili La, a pass at around 3490m, from where we can see Jili Dzong. We camp just below the pass.

Meals: **B L D**

	<b>Accommodation</b> Camping		<b>Ascent</b> 750M		<b>Descent</b> 30M		<b>Time</b> 4 - 5 hrs trekking		<b>Distance</b> 7KM
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## DAY 5

## Trek to Rawana (3890m). Camp.

We follow the ridge back up to Jili Dzong, which in ancient times was one of the shelters on the main route between Paro and Thimphu. There only a few monks in residence here now and hopefully we will be permitted to take a look around inside. Outside the Dzong is a great place for a photo opportunity amongst the fluttering prayer flags. We continue along an undulating trail, crossing several spurs and descending down through thick forest and across open meadows above the tree line and we will stop for a good break and a hot lunch in one of these meadows. We will reach our second camp (3890m), in a meadow along the ridge, in the mid-afternoon. If clear there are some great views down into the valley.

Meals: **B L D**

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	<b>Accommodation</b> Camping		<b>Ascent</b> 600M		<b>Descent</b> 220M		<b>Time</b> 6 hrs trekking		<b>Distance</b> 10KM
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### DAY 6

## Trek over the Jangchu La (4190m), descend to camp at Jimilangtso Lake (3860m). Camp.

A longer hike today but a delightful day's walking, first through coniferous forests, then rhododendron forest and finally through more open country and fields of wild onions, some of which our cooks will crop for tonight's dinner. We reach the Jangchu la (4190m) from where we have a sensational view of the valleys below and weather permitting, of the distant It is a good hike today and a delightful day's walking, we begin following the path up through coniferous forest and dwarf rhododendrons and finally through more open countryside. We reach the Jangchu la (4190m) from where we have a sensational view of the valleys below and weather permitting, of the distant Himalayan peaks. We can also see today's journey's end below us at Jimilangtso Lake (Sand Ox Lake). There is a trail junction here with a well beaten path leading into the mountains and over passes to the dzong at Lingshi. Our trail however, descends down to the lake at 3860m. Legend has it that this lake is home to a mystical ox and local farmers still bring their cows to the lake in the hope that they can produce the strong and valuable offspring of such a creature. We camp on the shores of the lake.

Meals: **B L D**

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	<b>Accommodation</b> Camping		<b>Ascent</b> 520M		<b>Descent</b> 520M		<b>Time</b> 6 - 7 hrs trekking		<b>Distance</b> 9KM
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### DAY 7





## From Jimilangtso Lake via Janye Tsho and Simkotra Tsho to Labana (4130m). Camp.

Today's hike is on good trail with a small pass to cross. This morning a steady climb and traverse takes us up to another small lake called Janeytsho. The trail takes us through more dwarf Rhododendron trees, which are very common at these altitudes. In spring, these dwarf trees will be in full bloom adding colour



to the already spectacular landscape. We continue up to the larger Simkotra Lake before we reach a saddle at 4180m, below some rocky peaks. Yak herders camps and encounters with yaks are common. The yak herders move their camps regularly along with the herd, a tradition that has been practiced for generations. We are now at a height where the yak herders collect the parasitic Cordyceps fungus, which is widely used in traditional medicine; only the yak herders are permitted to collect and sell these rare fungi. Descending from a small pass we eventually arriving into our camp Labana (4130m). Labana means 'in between two passes' and from camp we can see the Phume La, which we will cross tomorrow; at 4210m this will be the high point of our trek.

Meals: **B L D**

	<b>Accommodation</b> Camping		<b>Ascent</b> 400M		<b>Descent</b> 175M		<b>Time</b> 7 - 8 hrs trekking		<b>Distance</b> 12KM
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## DAY 8

### Over the Phume La (4210m) and via Phajoding Monastery (3960m) to Thimphu. Overnight Thimphu.

Today we must first make the short climb to cross the Phume La (4210m) with its unmistakable stone cairn decorated with colourful prayer flags. In clear weather we are rewarded with a splendid Himalayan panorama including Gangar Puensum, the world's highest unclimbed mountain. We will also soon have a bird's eye view of Thimphu, which is now directly below us. We first descend to the Phajoding monastery (3960m) and from there down through a forest of blue pine to the road where our vehicle will be waiting to take us the last mile or so into Thimphu. The afternoon is free for sightseeing and for shopping in Thimphu. There is a variety of crafts and garments for sale and also highly decorative postage stamps for which Bhutan is quite famous. Thimphu is famous for being the only capital city in the world with no traffic lights. What little traffic there is here is still directed manually by a police officer, known as 'The Dancing Policeman'.

Meals: **B L D**

	<b>Accommodation</b> Hotel		<b>Ascent</b> 100M		<b>Descent</b> 1410M		<b>Time</b> 5 hrs trekking		<b>Distance</b> 10KM
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## DAY 9

### Sightseeing in Thimphu. Drive to Punakha. Overnight Punakha.

We spend the morning sightseeing in Thimphu before we set off on the exciting 3hr drive to Punakha. There is much to see in Thimphu and we will try to include as much as possible! We will certainly visit the Great Buddha Dordenma, the world's largest seated golden Buddha and also the textile museum where we can see some amazing examples of intricately woven costumes from all over Bhutan and watch some of the weavers in action. As we pass the archery ground we will look to see if there is an archery

competition taking place. Archery is Bhutan's national sport and is taken extremely seriously. The rules of archery in Bhutan are unlike those in other countries. Here arrows must be fired an impressive 140m to hit an extremely small target. Each hit, or miss, is accompanied by dance and celebration or by great teasing and derision respectively. Archery is omnipresent in Bhutan and if we are not able to witness a match here, then we should definitely have another opportunity either in Punakha, Paro or when we pass back through Thimphu tomorrow. We have lunch in Thimphu before setting off on the 3hr drive to Punakha, the winter capital of Bhutan. The drive will take us across the Dochu La (3000m), the highest road pass in Bhutan. Arriving in Punakha we can expect warmer temperatures and a change of scenery towards fertile farmland, fruit trees and rice paddies. We check into our hotel and have a little time to relax before dinner.

Meals: **B L D**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel

## DAY 10

### Sightseeing in Punakha. Drive to Paro.

This morning we head out to explore Punakha. We begin by taking the short walk through the rice paddies to visit Chimi L'hakhang, the Temple of the Divine Mad Monk. This small temple is built beside a Bodhi tree and is surrounded by prayer wheels. The Mad Monk, or Drukpa Kunley, is a highly revered 15th lama. He is known for his controversial approach to teaching, which involved womanising, drinking and singing bawdy rhymes. Afterwards we visit Punakha Dzong, which provides the winter home for over 1000 monks. The Dzong is one of Bhutan's most impressive buildings; it was here that the first king was crowned in 1907 and also where the current, and fifth, King first donned the Raven Crown. Particularly impressive is the pillared hall, which is decorated with art work depicting the most important scenes from the life of the Buddha and presided over by impressive giant gilded statues of Buddha, Guru Rinpoche and Zhabdrung Rinpoche (or Bluebeard). After lunch we make the return drive across the Dochu La and on to Paro. As this evening will be our last in Bhutan and we will celebrate by sampling some excellent Bhutanese cuisine and taking on last look at Paro Dzong which is lit from below to spectacular effect in the evenings.

Meals: **B L D**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel



**Time**  
4 - 5hrs walking

## DAY 11

### 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 L D**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel

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## DAY 12

### **Departure day. Transfers to Kathmandu Airport are provided.**

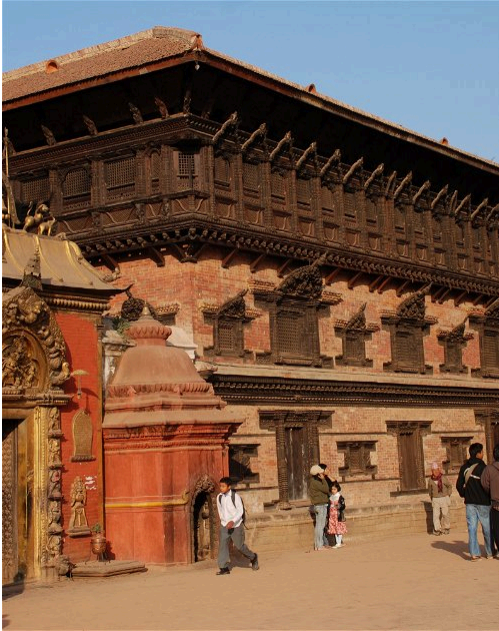
The holiday ends after breakfast. Transfers to Kathmandu airport are provided. If you would like to spend more time exploring Nepal, why not pre-book a full day-tour of the Kathmandu Valley, or a multi-day excursion to a wildlife reserve in Chitwan National Park. Contact the KE Team for more details.

Meals: **B**

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# 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.



## 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



## 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

# 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
- Full service camping on trek including all camping equipment
- 'Thermarest' inflatable camping mats whilst camping
- FREE Sleeping bag and down jacket hire is available for this holiday on request

## What's not Included

- Travel Insurance
- Nepalese visa costs
- Tips for porters and other 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.

## 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 4 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 high altitude. During the course of your trip you will reach altitudes in excess of 3500 metres. 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](#). You can also talk to one of our trekking experts if you have any concerns about altitude. On this trip we carry a portable altitude chamber (PAC-bag) and/or bottled oxygen for use in emergencies.

## Spending Money

Approximately \$200 - \$250 should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses including porter and trek crew tips and soft drinks 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 and US Dollars are equally acceptable in Nepal and in Bhutan. If you are intending to buy expensive souvenirs, you should budget accordingly (credit cards can be useful in this respect). You can withdraw cash from ATM's in Kathmandu. In Bhutan money can be easily exchanged but you cannot rely on withdrawing money from ATM's.

## 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\$150 (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

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## 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.

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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 6 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.

## 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 later September through to December 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. Day-time highs of around 20°C can be expected at altitudes around 2000 metres with average daytime temperatures at 3000 metres around 10 to 15°C. Night-time temperatures at any time can reach or dip below freezing.

## 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](http://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](http://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 Press.
- Bhutan. (Lonely Planet Guide). Stan Armington.
- Bhutan, Land of the Thunder Dragon. Owen Edmunds.

## Maps

### **Bhutan Himalaya. 1:380 000. ITMB Publishing**

Indexed general road map with street plans of Thimpu and Paro.

## 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

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## 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 15kg.

You SHOULD bring the following items:

- Sleeping bag (comfort rating to -10°C)\*
- Warm jacket (down)\*
- Hiking boots
- Trekking trousers
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Baselayer shirts
- Casual shirt and/or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Smart clothes and shoes (if your holiday includes visiting a festival)
- Waterproof jacket
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses
- Gloves or mittens

- 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 bag contents dry)
- Daypack 30 litres

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:**

- Training shoes or similar for camp use
- Spare laces
- Shorts
- Baselayer – thermal leggings
- Sleeping bag liner
- Scarf or buff



- Swimwear (for the hotel pool in Kathmandu)
- Travel clothes
- Trekking poles
- Gaiters (highly recommended due to muddy conditions)
- Insect repellent - (DEET)
- Camera
- Pen-knife (remember to pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- 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.

Foam camping mats (approx. 5cms thick) are provided whilst camping.

## FESTIVAL DRESS CODE

The Bhutanese wear their finest clothing at festivals and 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

Led by our experienced and passionate local guides, this itinerary is the perfect combination of culture and adventure, allowing you to experience trekking in the Bhutan Himalaya whilst being immersed in the history, culture and traditions which make this tiny kingdom so magical. 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