

Festivals of Bhutan

Trip Code: BDT

Version: Festivals of Bhutan - Thimphu and Thangbi Mani



CULTURE



GUIDED GROUP



LEISURELY



HIGHLIGHTS

- Join the festivities at one of Bhutan's colourful festivals or 'tshechu'
- Visit the gravity-defying 'Tiger's Nest' Monastery in the Paro Valley
- Stay in the Phobjika Valley, winter home of the rare Black Necked Crane
- BDT.2 now includes both Thimphu and Thangbi Mani festivals

AT A GLANCE

- 10 days touring and sightseeing
- Max altitude - 3600 metres
- Join at Kathmandu

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- All meals included
- 9 nights Hotel
- 3 nights Lodge

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

This is the ultimate cultural journey through the Kingdom of Bhutan, crafted from KE's 30 years' experience of travelling in the 'Land of the Thunder Dragon'. The itinerary is designed to make sure you see all of the most iconic sights, from Paro as far east as Jakar and the Bumthang Valley. Timed to coincide with one of Bhutan's colourful festivals or 'tsechus', each of the itineraries is slightly different.

Travelling via Kathmandu, the adventure begins with a flight along the Himalaya to Paro. We then drive eastwards with a stop-off for sightseeing in Thimphu and a 2-day visit to Gantey in the Phobjika Valley, the overwinter home of the rare and endangered black-necked cranes. Moving on to Jakar at the heart of Bhutan, we'll spend time in the Bumthang valleys, famous for their unspoilt beauty and for a number of important monasteries. Here we will also enjoy an excursion to the remote Tang Valley, where we can witness an elaborate drum ceremony at the Pemachiling Nunnery. Leaving Bumthang, we make our way back towards the west on one of the world's most scenic roads. Crossing high passes bedecked with multicoloured prayer flags and in the company of grazing yaks, we can enjoy panoramic views of the snow-capped Himalaya. En route, we will stop overnight at Punakha where the impressive Punakha Dzong once served as the winter capital. Returning to Paro, we have included an archery demonstration and we will also stretch our legs with a walk up to the incredible cliff-hanging Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) Monastery, before flying back to Kathmandu.

Please note that the dates of Bhutanese festivals are tentative and can be changed at any time.

Use the 'Change Version' drop-down on the itinerary page for day-to-day information about each of the departures.

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?

Though this is principally a cultural touring holiday, some of the most extraordinary sights in Bhutan, like the Tigers' Nest monastery, can only be accessed on foot and therefore you will want to be in reasonable physical shape to get the most out of your holiday - this is the Himalaya after all! As this is a comprehensive tour of Bhutan's special places and iconic sights, there is by necessity some time spent on the road and you should be prepared for this. Our 2024 itineraries drive to and from the central district of Bumthang (and we added a day to allow this). Unpredictable flight schedules meant that we

could no longer include the outward journey to Bumthang by plane. Our drive back to Paro is carefully staged to maximise the time spent in each place we visit. During the road journeys there will be plenty of time to visit the key places of interest along the way, and to make the most of photo opportunities!

Itinerary

Version: Festivals of Bhutan - Thimphu and Thangbi Mani

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. Transfer to Thimphu and afternoon at the Thimphu 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, 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 on the short and scenic transfer to the Bhutanese capital of Thimphu. After lunch at the hotel, we will have the chance to visit the Thimphu Festival which is held at the imposing Tasichoedzong.

FESTIVAL VISIT - today we will visit the Thimphu Festival.

No single event captures the enduring Bhutanese culture better than the colourful religious festivals (or tsechus) which honour the great deeds of Guru Rinpoche, the 8th Century figure widely revered across the region as the 'Second Buddha', as well as other saints. The festivals consist of a series of prayers and ritual dances performed by monks and lay people in spectacular masks and costumes to a cacophony of drums, horns and cymbals.

Meals: **BLD**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 3

Drive to Gangtey (3100m) in the Phobjikha Valley.

After breakfast at our hotel, we board our transport for the morning's drive eastwards on Bhutan's main highway, climbing across forested slopes to the Dochu La (3100m), marked by many prayer flags and an impressive collection of large chortens. A viewpoint just above the road offers one of the finest panoramas in the Eastern Himalaya, stretching out across Lunana to an array of snow-capped peaks including Gangkar Puensum (7570m) the world's highest unclimbed mountain. Dropping down into the Punakha Valley, we continue via the town of Wangdue Phodrang which has a commanding dzong on a spur above the river. The road then climbs up towards the Pele La and we turn off just before the pass to descend into the tranquil Phobjikha Valley with its well-tended fields and pine forests. In the centre of the valley, rising from a small ridge, stands Gangtey Gompa one of the oldest monasteries in Bhutan and one of a handful belonging to the Nyingmapa sect. The valley is famous as the winter home to the rare black-necked cranes which spend the summer in Tibet and cross the Himalaya to reach this small valley, usually arriving in late October or early November.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 4

A day to explore the Phobjikha Valley.

Gangtey and the Phobjikha Valley are special and this is a great place to spend a day, learning a little more about the way of life of the Bhutanese people. One of the highlights is the 16th century Gangtey Gompa, with its chanting monks, impressive paved courtyard and atmospheric central prayer hall, adorned with colourful murals and statues. We will also take the opportunity to do some exploring amongst the traditional houses, extensive farmland and pristine streams of this Shangri-La valley. There are lots of trails and together with our guide we will choose one that allows us to see the best of the valley. During the last of the year's departures, it is possible that the black-necked cranes may be in residence. At any time of the year there is an information centre dedicated to the birds and the natural history of the area that you can visit. We spend a second night at Gangtey.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Hotel



Time
2 - 3 hrs walking

DAY 5**Drive from Gangtey to Jakar in the district of Bumthang.**

Driving out of the valley, we meet the main west-east road just a couple of kilometres from the Pele La (3400m) which marks the boundary between Western and Central Bhutan. Twenty kilometres beyond the pass we enter the district of Trongsa and just a couple of kilometres further we can take a break at the picturesque Chendebji Chorten, built in the 18th century to subdue a demoness who was terrorising the area. Continuing the descent from the pass, we can now see ahead of us Trongsa Dzong, the largest monastery in Bhutan. Beyond Trongsa (2200m) the road climbs to cross the Yutong La (3400m) and a further, lesser pass before reaching the Bumthang valleys and our accommodation in Jakar. We arrive in Jakar in the early afternoon and check in at our charming lodge in this sleepy outpost, which boasts a few shops, a post office and a magnificent dzong.

Meals: **B L D**

**Accommodation**Lodge

DAY 6**Discover the remote Tang Valley. Visit Pemachiling Nunnery and Membar Tsho (Flaming Lake).**

After breakfast at the hotel, we drive for approximately one and half hours through pine forests to the Tang Ugyencholing Manor house which houses a museum of ancient traditional culture. From here we drive to Pemachiling nunnery where we can witness an elaborate drum ceremony performed by the nuns. We take our lunch here and some of the nuns will join us during our meal. After lunch we will visit the Membar Tsho (flaming lake), where the renowned Terton Pema Lingpa, is reputed to have discovered treasure from the lake in the late 15th century. Before returning to Jakar we will also visit the Zangtopelri - the celestial abode of Guru Rimpochey. In the evening we can take a stroll through downtown Jakar for some souvenir shopping or enjoy local coffee in one of the cafes.

Meals: **B L D**

**Accommodation**Lodge

DAY 7**The Bumthang Valley and the Thangbi Mani Festival**

After breakfast at the lodge, we set out on our walking tour of the Bumthang Valley - one of the most beautiful and sacred in Bhutan. The valley is wide, filled with fields and villagers busy with their day's

work. The guru Padmasambhava who introduced Buddhism to the region, meditated in many local caves in the Bumthang valley and each now has a temple or shrine associated with them. We start our exploration with a visit to the Jambey Lhakhang, one of the oldest temples in Bhutan, built in the 7th century by King Songtsen Gampo who pledged the building of 108 temples during his lifetime. This temple can only be visited by special permission which we obtain for our groups. Next we visit the 17th century Kurje Lhakhang, together with its splendid new monastic annex which has been built in traditional style. From Kurje, we cross a bridge over the rushing Chamkhar Chu (river) and walk through paddy fields to Tamshing. This temple complex was founded in 1501 by one of Bhutan's most famous saints, Pema Lingpa 'the treasure discoverer. We will also, of course, make time to visit the Thangbi Lhakhang to attend the festival.

FESTIVAL VISIT - today we will attend the Thangbi Mani Festival.

No single event captures the enduring Bhutanese culture better than the colourful religious festivals (or tsechus) which honour the great deeds of Guru Rinpoche, the 8th Century figure widely revered across the region as the 'Second Buddha', as well as other saints. The festivals consist of a series of prayers and ritual dances performed by monks and lay people in spectacular masks and costumes to a cacophony of drums, horns and cymbals.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Lodge



Time
3 - 4 hrs walking

DAY 8

Return drive from Jakar to Punakha (1240m).

From Jakar we follow the winding road through the folds of the Himalayan foothills, crossing the Yotong La (3600m) to reach Trongsa Sherubling after approximately 2.5 hours. We stop here to visit the 17th century Dzong, one of Bhutan's most impressive. Continuing our journey westwards, we leave the heavily cultivated valley of the Mangde Chu as the road climbs steadily up into the hills. The scenery is breathtaking as we travel through the Himalayan foothills, first passing through forests of tall pines, then an 'alpine' zone of rhododendrons and dwarf bamboo. The high point of the day is the Pele La (3420) marked with a chorten and numerous prayer flags strung across the road. Given good weather the views from here are excellent, stretching over the Black Mountains to the distant snow-capped Himalaya. It is not uncommon to encounter grazing yaks by the roadside here. Having taken in the views once again, we make the long descent via Wangdue Phodrang to our hotel accommodation in Punakha (1240m). Free time in the late afternoon.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 9
Visit Chimi Lhakhang (the temple of the Divine Madman) and Punakha Dzong.

We have a day to explore the very scenic Punakha Valley. We can, of course, visit Punakha Dzong and there is also the option to visit the yellow roofed Chimi Lhakhang temple. This involves a 20 - 30 minute walk across rice fields and a short climb up to the temple which is dedicated to the 15th century, Drukpa Kuenley, known as the divine madman. The temple was constructed in 1499 in honour of Drukpa Kuenley after the lama defeated a demon who lived on the nearby Dochu La. The temple is a popular pilgrimage place for local women to receive blessings of fertility and to select their future baby's name by choosing a bamboo tile. Punakha Dzong, strategically sited at the confluence of the Po and Mo (father and mother) rivers, was built in 1637 by Zhabdrung. This impressive monastery guards the entrance to the Punakha Valley. Punkaha was the capital of Bhutan until 1955 and is the winter residence of the Je Khenpo (head religious abbot) of Bhutan and most of the senior monks from Thimphu. The imposing appearance of the Dzong from all angles lends itself to photography and depending on what events are taking place at the time of our visit, we may be able to look inside also. We spend a second night at our Punakha accommodation.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Hotel



Time
1 hr optional walking

DAY 10
Drive to Paro. Afternoon sightseeing in the Paro Valley and archery demonstration at a local farmhouse.

Leaving the Punakha Valley we rejoin Bhutan's main east-west highway and climb up to recross the Dochu La. From the heights of the Dochu La the road winds down through some magnificent temperate forest, with an abundance of rhododendron and magnolia. We pass by Hongsto, an ancient village founded in 1525 by the 14th Drukpa hierarchy of Tibet and reach Paro after a total of around 4 hours driving. After lunch we can visit the National Museum which is housed in an ancient watchtower, high above the Paro Valley overlooking Paro Dzong. We will also take the opportunity go to a local farmhouse to watch an archery demonstration. More than just a sport, archery is the national pastime in Bhutan and the people here take the game very seriously.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 11

Hike to the Taktsang Lhakhang, the Tiger's Nest.

After breakfast we will make an excursion to Taktsang Lhakhang, the Tiger's Nest, one of the most recognised and important religious sites in the entire Himalaya. This iconic monastery clinging to a vertical granite cliff 2000 feet above the valley floor, dates from 1692 and was built around the cave where the Guru Rinpoche was said to have meditated for 3 years, 3 months, 3 weeks, 3 days and 3 hours. According to legend the Rinpoche arrived at this spot in the wrathful form of Guru Dorji Droloe on the back of a flying tiger and subdued the evil spirits of the region which then became protectors of the dharma. One in particular called Singye Samdrup is recognized as the principal guardian of Taktsang. The Tiger's Nest is only accessible on foot. Arriving at the trailhead we follow an uphill path and after one hour, we reach a small teahouse with a fantastic views of the monastery which is directly opposite on the other side of a gorge. In a further half-hour of climbing the path leads to the temple itself and depending on events taking place there it may be possible to look inside although it is not always possible to do so. For those that do not wish to go to all the way to the temple, the teahouse is the perfect place to sit and relax and admire one of the most amazing views you will ever encounter.

Meals: **B L D**


 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 790M	 Descent 790M	 Time 4 - 5 hrs walking	 Distance 8KM
---	---	--	--	--

DAY 12

Fly 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

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**

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Bhutan visa fee
- Flights between Kathmandu and Paro
- All transfers and land transport involved in the itinerary
- All accommodation as described
- All meals
- FREE down jacket hire is available for this holiday on request

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Nepalese visa costs
- Tips for drivers and trek staff
- Miscellaneous expenses - beer 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.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for 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 meals 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.

Food & Water

Drinking 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.

Typically the food in Bhutan is not very spicy, though the Bhutanese do themselves eat a lot of chillies both raw and cooked. Hotels throughout Bhutan generally offer a range of dishes including those designed for the western palette. All meals are included in the trip price.

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 use the best available standard of hotel and lodge accommodation at Paro, Thimphu, Jakar, Gantey and Punakha.

All rooms are en suite throughout. Accommodation is twin share. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired up with another traveller of the same sex. Single rooms are available for a supplementary cost. If you are planning to extend your holiday, additional nights in Kathmandu are available on request.

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.

Altitude

This holiday involves going to moderately high altitude. During the course of your trip you will reach altitudes in excess of 2500 metres. Most people will have no difficulty with this level of altitude but before coming on the holiday, we recommend you 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.

Spending Money

Approximately £150 - £200 should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses including drinks and the £40 - £50 you can expect to pay in tips to local staff. There are some quite interesting souvenirs to be bought in Kathmandu and in Bhutan. The Nepalese unit of currency is the Rupee and Bhutan's is the ngultrum which is tied to the value of the Indian rupee. It is not necessary to purchase Nepalese or Bhutanese currency before you travel. You will need very little Nepalese currency during your outward transit through Kathmandu and you can change a small amount at the airport or in your hotel for drinks etc.. You will be able to obtain your Bhutanese currency on arrival at the airport in Paro. Sterling and US dollars are readily exchanged in Nepal and in Bhutan. Credit cards can be used to purchase many goods in Kathmandu and larger towns in Bhutan and are particularly useful for expensive souvenirs. It is possible to withdraw cash (rupees only) from cash machines in Kathmandu using credit and debit cards.

Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is the accepted way of saying thank you for good service and the amount that you choose to contribute is up to you.

Although the appropriate level of tipping can vary with group size and the number of local staff, we suggest as a general guide that each group member contributes US\$120 (in local currency).

Approximately \$20 of this should go into a kitty for hotel porters and waiters (if you give this to your tour leader at the start of the tour, he or she will make sure it is distributed fairly).

The remainder should be divided between the staff (drivers, assistant guides etc...) 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 trip 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 and a daypack. It is possible to leave extra baggage at the hotel in Kathmandu and also in Paro. 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 the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status 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.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates (see *Health & Vaccinations below*), **and visas for your holiday**. Please ensure that you check the [FCDO](#) for the latest advice for **each country visited** before travel.

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.

Please Note - FNMIS App Requirement

Travellers to Nepal are now required to download an app to their phone to comply with the Foreign Nationals Management Information System (FNMIS). The app will be scanned wherever passport details are normally shared (such as hotels, airline arrival and check-in and trekking checkpoints). The aim of the system is to streamline service delivery and to enhance the safety of foreign nationals travelling in Nepal. FNMIS does not collect any personal data beyond what is already obtained through existing procedures.

These are the app download links:

- iOS: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/department-of-immigration/id6749536250>
- Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.govnp.doi>

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.

Your individual visas will be issued to you in Kathmandu prior to your check-in for the flight to Paro in Bhutan and your passport will be stamped on arrival in Paro.

To make the arrangements for your Bhutan Visa we need:

- 1). A clear and complete colour scan of the information page of your passport.
- 2). A colour scan of a recent passport style photo. Portrait orientation on a white background – with eyes open and forehead and ears clearly visible.

Please email these scans to us at the earliest opportunity.

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations:

You should be up to date with the routine vaccinations recommended in the UK for overseas travel.

You must also contact your doctor or travel clinic to check if there are specific vaccinations or other preventive measures that you need for the area you are visiting, in good time before you are due to depart.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dental check-up.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates.

Please check the [FCDO](#) and [Travel Health Pro](#). For all of your intended destinations for up-to-date advice.

Severe Allergies:

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.

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.

Climate

The best time to visit Bhutan is in the period before and after the Indian Monsoon which brings heavy rain to the foothills of Bhutan. The pre-monsoon months of March and April are the best for seeing the colourful blooms at lower altitudes, particularly the rhododendron. The post-monsoon months of October and November usually offer the clearest skies for views of the Himalaya. During both pre- and post- monsoon, the weather in Bhutan is normally bright and clear in the mornings with possible cloud building through the day. Day-time highs of around 20°C can be expected at altitudes around 2000 metres, whilst at the high points of the trip the maximum daytime temperature will be around 15°C. At night it can be quite chilly and in some places the temperature will drop to a few degrees above 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 before 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 directly 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. (Odyssey Illustrated Guide). Pommaret.
- Bhutan. (Lonely Planet Guide).
- Bhutan, Land of the Thunder Dragon. Edmunds.

Maps

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

This map gives a general overview of Bhutan. Relief is indicated by shading and selected altitudes of peaks and passes. Highways, main roads, minor roads, and trekking routes are marked. Symbols denote 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 or walking times between selected locations.

Private Groups Information

Make this KE Adventure holiday your own!

- Do our normal group departure dates not fit?
- Would you prefer to travel with just friends and/or family?
- Are you looking to organise a trip for your local walking, biking or mountaineering club?

It's really easy to make a trip your own. Simply select from our full range of adventure holidays and choose the dates that work for you and your group.

We are experts in creating holidays for groups of friends, families, charities and clubs. Our personal service means you'll be fully involved as we make the arrangements for your perfect adventure holiday.

Independence with Security

Travelling as a KE Private Group allows you more flexibility and choice, but still with the peace of mind that everything is pre-planned and arranged for your group by a reputable adventure travel company.

To take your first step to an amazing adventure with your friends and family complete the private group enquiry form, or call our **Sales Experts on: 017687 73966**

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 baggage to a minimum. See the 'baggage allowance' section for further details.

You should bring the following items:

- Comfortable walking shoes
- Trousers
- T-shirts and casual shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Warm jacket (down)*
- Sunhat
- Sunglasses
- Headlamp or torch
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottle
- Water purification tablets
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Small daypack 20 litres

- Basic First Aid Kit including; antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium) painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE OPTIONAL:

- Shorts
- Scarf or buff
- Swimwear (for hotel pool)
- Travel clothes
- Camera
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Notes

*FREE 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 issues in Bhutan. Please remember to allow room in your luggage for these items.

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.

Land Only Information

Please refer to the 'Joining Arrangements & Transfers' within Holiday Information for further details.

Flights and other transport to your destination should not be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

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

Limited seats are available at the advertised flight price, please book as early as you can. If we are unable to secure seats at the price shown, or you have requested regional departures and/or upgrades, we will provide you with an alternative quote. It is likely that flight payment will be in advance of your final holiday balance. Booking a flight inclusive package means you will benefit from full financial protection, eases your holiday planning, and leaves us to deal with airlines and schedule changes. If you book flights through KE Adventure Travel we will [offset the carbon of your flight](#).

Regional departures and/or alternative carriers are available on request.

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

Your Bhutan visa fees, all meals, and return flights from Kathmandu to Paro are included, and there's even FREE down jacket hire available too.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 16/06/2026 and the trip is subject to change