

# Travelling to Bhutan

## Planning Your Trip

A long lead in time is required if you wish to secure the dates that you want especially over Festival periods; more if you can.

6 months is not an unrealistic lead in time.

Know when you want to be in Bhutan (arrival and departure dates).

Work your travel dates back from that (see Buffer Time).

Consult the Drukair website for available flights. [www.drukair.com.bt](http://www.drukair.com.bt)

Consult Travel and Trek for availability and confirmation of costs.

You can only travel to and within Bhutan using a recognised Agent; you cannot organise it yourself.

To get to Bhutan, you can either fly, drive or a mixture of the two.

There are now three official road crossings (all on the southern Bhutanese border with India) making access to the more remote eastern side of Bhutan easier.

The Bhutanese Government monitors visitors into and out of Bhutan; they do not restrict.

You are strongly recommended to engage with us at an early stage of your trip planning to take advice of dates and the number of nights that you intend to stay in Bhutan.

Drukair does not fly into Bhutan on a daily basis from each of the cities that it serves (Bangkok is the exception).

A 6 month lead in time is reasonable if you wish to secure the dates that you want especially over Festival periods; more if you can.

Travel and Trek has extensive experience of organising and adjusting your itinerary to take all of this into account.

On entry into Bhutan, you will be met by your Guide who will escort you everywhere. He will be with you until you depart.

## Drukair

Drukair is Bhutan's National airline and the main carrier into Bhutan.

Clients can now book flights with the airline directly on line. This has the advantage of getting an instant confirmation of flights allowing you to book associated international flights straight away.

With the exception of Bangkok, Drukair does not fly to every city every day and therefore you need to be aware of its schedule to fit in with your plans. It's schedule can be downloaded from the Drukair website.

Drukair can change its schedule and routings without notice (see Buffer Time).

## Factor in a Buffer Time

We strongly recommend that you factor in at least a spare day/night (buffer time) on the end of your stay in Bhutan to counter any changes or delays in your departure (only if departing by air).

## Driving

It is possible to drive into Bhutan from India. The most well established and used crossing is at Puntesholding, 5hrs driving south of either Paro or the capital Thimphu. The other two crossings are not so well used due to the distance from airports.

Puntesholing is approx 4hrs from the Indian airport of Bagdogra (or Bhadrapur in Nepal (they are just across the border from each other)), from which you can fly to Kolkata or Kathmandu.

You can also drive up through West Bengal to Darjeeling and or Sikkim thereby making what can be a good circuit.

Travel and Trek can design an itinerary that combines Bhutan, India and/or Nepal.

## Paro Airport

Paro is Bhutan's only international airport and is located in a mountainous area with unpredictable weather. The aircraft routinely have to make sharp banking turns on the approach to landing or shortly after take off.

It is subject to Visual Flight Rules (VFR).

This means that if the pilot has no clear vision of the local mountain tops, he will not take off or land. Delays are therefore always possible.

We therefore recommend that you factor in a night in Kathmandu for example (or other city) rather than risk missing a costly international flight to the UK. See Buffer Time.

# Bhutan's Pricing Policy

## To Work Out Your Holiday Cost

Simply multiply the number of nights in Bhutan by the appropriate nightly fee.

Add the Drukair flight costs.

Add the Tourist visa and Tourist Development fee.

## How To Book

Complete the booking form (downloadable from the website) and return it with a deposit of US\$300pp. (equivalent £UK).

Booking forms can be completed electronically and returned as an attachment to an e-mail.

Details of payment options are on the booking form.

Balance payments are due 10 weeks prior to departure.

Bhutan's pricing policy is set by the Bhutanese Govt; not by Agents.

It was originally set to restrict the number of tourists coming into the country and it has worked.

Prices have remained static for a number of years, mainly due to the global economic downturn of late. In June 2011, the Govt decided to raise its prices effective 1st Jan 2012 and they are shown below.

For your all inclusive stay in Bhutan, the Bhutanese Govt charges a flat rate fee per person per night (pppn) regardless of what you are doing in Bhutan.

It should be made clear that a lone traveller joining two other people (or more) for the entire time in Bhutan would constitute a group of 3 and therefore the \$250 fee would apply to all assuming the group travelled in the appropriate months.

A reduction of \$18 pppn is given on stays of longer than 9 nights. It applies to the 10th night onwards.

35% of the fees quoted above go directly to the Bhutanese Govt, which pays for free medical care and education for the entire country. The remainder of the fee goes to the Company in Bhutan providing the service to you.

Why are the prices for Bhutan shown in US\$ and not UK£?

Despite the fact that Bhutan has its own currency (Ngultrum), it quotes US\$ to foreign visitors.

Regardless of what the exchange rates are doing, whatever your fee amounts to for your trip to Bhutan (in US\$), that figure must arrive in the bank in Bhutan.

If you see a figure being quoted in UK£, the company charging that figure has got to offset the potential exchange rate fluctuation and will therefore likely be charging you a higher rate than necessary. By showing you the US\$ figure, you know precisely what you need to pay; it is the cheapest and most transparent method.

We will charge you the appropriate US\$ rate each time a transaction is made to us.

## Bhutan's Nightly Rates:

All figures are US\$ and are effective for all trips commencing on or after 1st Jan 2012:

Commencing in Jan, Feb, Jun, Jul, Aug and Dec:

\$250 for a single person travelling alone  
 \$240 pppn if the group consists of 2 people  
 \$220 pppn if the group consists of 3 people or more

Commencing Mar, Apr, May, Sep, Oct, Nov

\$280 for a single person travelling alone  
 \$270 pppn if the group consists of 2 people  
 \$250 pppn if the group consists of 3 people or more

## Other Fees

In addition to the nightly fee, these charges will also apply:

Tourist visa - US\$20 pp  
 Tourist Development fee - US\$3 pp

We can either include the Drukair flight costs with the booking (if we book them for you) or you can book direct with the airline.