

## A Classic Cultural Tour of Bhutan

From a cultural point of view, Bhutan is a very unique country.

Just to view their spartan way of life is an experience. To quote the Lonely Planet Guide *'Bhutan is not an ordinary place. It has one foot in the past and one in the future'*.

This classic 5 night/6 day tour we believe is sufficient for the average traveller to experience Bhutan. It visits the four main towns in western Bhutan; Paro, Thimphu, Punakha and Wangdi.

Longer tours can be arranged if you have a specific interest or wish to add a trek or indeed include a Festival too.

Bhutan is almost totally Buddhist and therefore has a plethora of impressive monasteries (called Dzongs), including the inspiring Taksang (Tigers Nest, pictured right).

On your arrival in Bhutan, you will be met by your Guide and he will escort you and be at your service throughout your time there.

Whilst the itinerary has a written set format, it is extremely flexible and a number of factors may affect the order in which they are visited and indeed other activities may be introduced. For example, the Bhutanese are a Nation of archery lovers and whilst competitions cannot be forecast in advance, you may take the opportunity to stop and watch one if the chance arises.

During your visit of the four towns above, you will see: the Tigers Nest monastery, the Dzong's of Paro, Thimphu, Punakha and Wangdi (all very different but equally impressive), the National Museum (Watch Tower), a school, a nunnery, the National Library, some State buildings, the Takin Reserve (the Takin is the National animal) and Radio Tower and also have the chance to just stroll around the towns. There are also many craft shops such as the Thangka paintings.

Today, the Dzongs are used as Administrative centres for their respective Districts. They are also the focus for the colourful annual Festivals.

During all of this, you will have your own comfortable vehicle, a driver and be staying in comfortable hotels.

In general terms, you will eat meals in your hotels but there will be times when your Guide will take you out into classic Bhutanese restaurants. Lunch is normally taken in local restaurants. Don't forget that all food is an inclusive part of the trip (see page 3 for details).



*Bhutan is a Nation of enthusiastic archers*

### Trip Profile

Trip length: 15 - 18 days

Nights in Bhutan: 5

Fully inclusive price

Highlights unique and traditional Bhutanese life.

Tigers Nest Monastery

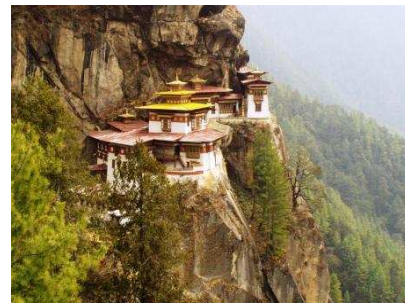
Comfortable vehicles

Comfortable hotels

Fully escorted

For costs and dates, see page 2

**For full details on getting to Bhutan, you are strongly advised to visit the 'Getting to**



*The Tigers Nest Monastery (above) is an icon of Bhutan*

The opportunity to try a traditional hot stone bath is also there; be sure to talk to your Guide early on the trip. Your Guide will be delighted to take you off the beaten track to see something specific.

For those that want a longer trip, you can arrange to stay on a 'farmstay' with a local families. Your Guide will still be with you. These families have agreed to this so you will made most welcome; it is a wonderful experience.

## A Cultural Tour

This 5-night stay is enough time to explore western Bhutan; the impressive monasteries (including the Tigers Nest), additional Dzongs, the traditional crafts, perhaps watch some archery, marvel at the Himalayan scenery and rural countryside as you drive from Paro to Thimphu and across a high Pass to Punakha.

Days	Bhutan Nights	Event	Remarks
1		<b>Depart London</b>	
2		<b>Arrive Kathmandu</b> Transfer to hotel (25 mins). Evening free to explore Thamel	Travel and Trek is associated with three specific hotels, all perfectly placed in the heart of the buzzing Thamel district of the City. Arrangements can be made, including private transfers or you are free to make your own arrangements. 5* hotels can also be arranged.  Why not dine in one of the many unique and exciting restaurants all within minutes of your hotel
3		<b>Free day</b> to explore Kathmandu Evening free	Advice can be provided on where to go and what to see and costs.  You can cut this day completely and choose to fly straight to Bhutan.
4	1	Transfer to Kathmandu international airport for your <b>flight to Bhutan</b> .  Met by Travel and Trek Guide at the airport.  After lunch, you will drive straight to Thimphu and conduct some sightseeing there if time permits. The evening is at leisure to stroll around the town.	Superb Airbus flight on Druk Air, which will fly straight past Everest, Lhotse, Makalu and Kanchenjunga (4 of the biggest mountains in the world).  Try to sit on the left side of the aircraft! Your Bhutanese guide will escort you throughout your time in Bhutan.
5	2	This day is dedicated to the Thimphu area.  In the evening you will drive across the Dochula Pass (over 3000m) and to Punakha where you will stay the night.	Thimphu is home to the Bhutanese Royal family.  It takes approx 3 hrs to drive to Punakha.
6	3	<b>Punakha.</b> Visit the Punakha Dzong, once the capital of Bhutan (until 1955). This impressive building has survived four big fires and an earthquake, which destroyed many historic documents. It is now, as with many Dzongs, the administrative centre for the District.  In the afternoon, visit Wangdi and the local market there.  Drive back to Thimphu.	This valley, due to climatic conditions is quite lush compared to Thimphu and Paro.
7	4	Drive back to Paro to visit the 'Watch Tower', now the National Museum. It also sits next to the Rinpung Dzong.  Explore the rest of Paro or relax.	Overnight Paro.
8	5	<b>Paro.</b> Witness a local school assembly where children sing the National Anthem.  The afternoon is spent getting to and visiting the Tigers Nest monastery.	The Tigers Nest monastery is a good half 90 min—2 hr walk up hill, some of it steep. There is also an exposed section for vertigo sufferers. There is however, a café half way up where you can stop and admire it from there.  At some point today, you can fit in a hot stone bath if you wish.
9		<b>Paro - Kathmandu,</b> Say goodbye to your guide as you board your return flight to Kathmandu.	
10		<b>Day for either rest or further exploration.</b> Kathmandu is a great place to chill out in the plethora of cafes or shop 'till you drop along the seemingly endless supply of shops.	You could feasibly depart for UK on this day.
11		<b>Day at leisure,</b> morning or early evening departure	A morning departure will arrive UK same day.
12		<b>Arrival in London</b>	An evening departure on Day 11 will arrive UK early AM Day 12

### Notes:

Day 3 can be taken out of this itinerary as can Day 10.

**Dates:** See website for specific dates but this trip can be run at any time of the year for any number of people.

**Cost:** \$1462, broken down as:

5 nights in Bhutan	\$1000 (Assumes that there are a min of 3 in the group)
Return Druk Air flights, economy (KTM – PARO)	\$442 (current price)
Tourist Visa	\$20

Travel and Trek can assist you with accommodation and airport pick ups in Kathmandu and Delhi.

**Summary of Inclusion and Exclusions:**

## Included:

- International return airfare into Bhutan from Kathmandu
- All hotel accommodation (good standard), regardless of how many nights on a twin share basis\*
- All ground transport (from pick up at the airport to return to airport)
- All meals
- Mineral water (bottled) when out and about (ie not in hotels).
- The services of your Bhutanese Guide, full time.
- Fees to monuments, monasteries, etc...
- Tourist visa fee

## Not included:

- International flights from UK to the access city
- Accommodation/food/transport in your chosen access city. Travel and Trek will gladly organise your transit through Kathmandu and/or Delhi
- Local trek staff gratuities

\* If you request sole occupation of a room, \$15 per night in Bhutan. If you are a sole traveller and do not request it and you are allocated a room on your own, there will be no charge.

**For full details on getting to Bhutan, flight routes and Bhutan's pricing policy, please visit the 'Getting to Bhutan' webpage on the Travel and Trek website (the information is downloadable).**

**CONTACT DETAILS**

The Bungalow, 42 Hough Road, Barkston, GRANTHAM NG32 2NS  
Phone/Fax: 01400 250770, Mobile: 07725 943108  
E-mail: [terrycrosby@travelandtrek.com](mailto:terrycrosby@travelandtrek.com)