

bhutan dragon kingdom



trip highlights

Trek along the ancient Druk Path in the company of an expert guide and crew

Absorb the sweeping views of the sacred Chomolhari Peak (7326m)

Climb high above the Paro Valley to Taktsang 'Tiger's Nest' Monastery

Discover the monasteries and market places of the capital, Thimphu



Trip Duration	11 days	Trip Code: BDK
Grade	Introductory to Moderate	
Activities	Trekking	
Summary	11 day trip, 7 day trek, 4 nights hotels, 6 nights camping	

welcome to World Expeditions

Thank you for your interest in our Bhutan Dragon Kingdom trip. At World Expeditions we are passionate about our off the beaten track experiences as they provide our travellers with the thrill of coming face to face with untouched cultures as well as wilderness regions of great natural beauty. We are committed to ensuring that our unique itineraries are well researched, affordable and tailored for the enjoyment of small groups or individuals - philosophies that have been at our core since 1975 when we began operating adventure holidays. Our itineraries will give you the very best travel experience, designed by people with incredible local knowledge who share our vision of authentic exchange and real exploration with a responsible tourism approach. Whether you like your adventures to include trekking, touring, cycling, mountaineering, kayaking or cruising World Expeditions can make it happen for you. We hope you will join us for a life changing experience!!

why travel with World Expeditions?

When planning travel to a remote and challenging destination, many factors need to be considered. World Expeditions have been pioneering treks in the Himalaya since 1975. Our extra attention to detail and seamless operations on the ground ensure that you will have a memorable trekking experience. All our treks in Bhutan are accompanied by an experienced local leader who is highly trained in remote first aid, as well as knowledgeable crew that share a passion for the region in which they work, and a desire to share it with you. We take every precaution to ensure smooth logistics. We use comfortable 3 star accommodation in hand picked hotels, and well maintained, good quality camping equipment on trek. The highest standards of hygiene are strictly maintained, and our cooks will surprise you with a varied menu that's sure to please at the conclusion of each trekking day. World Expeditions are also the only company to provide food for our porters on trek. Most importantly, our adventures have always sought to benefit the local peoples we interact with, safeguard the ecosystems we explore and contribute to the sustainability of travel in the regions we experience.

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trip cost

Joining Paro from: \$3299

All prices are per person

options & supplements

Single Supplement Hotel only: \$90

Single Supplement Tent only: \$140

Single Supplement: \$230

World Expeditions does not require single travellers to pay a surcharge for travelling alone. We will arrange for you to share accommodation with another traveller of the same gender and if we can not match you up we will provide a single room at no extra charge. If you prefer not to share a single supplement is payable to guarantee your own room. The cost of the single supplement is listed above.

For competitive airfares and stopover ideas to join this adventure, contact our expert staff today to receive a detailed quote.

just4u

Want a private trip?

Book this trip as a private departure just for you and your group on your chosen date. Contact us for conditions, costs and availability.

the trip

We combine an exceptional trek with time to explore the cultural heritage of Bhutan. In the company of our local guides we follow trails that lead high above the Paro and Thimphu valleys to gain unrivalled views of the Himalayan peaks that define the borderlands of Bhutan and Tibet. There is also ample opportunity to delight in the pristine forests of conifer, oak and rhododendrons as well as encountering yak herders as they establish their summer encampments. In Paro and Thimphu we wander the markets and appreciate the location of the monasteries and forts that reflect the deep cultural heritage of this remarkable Buddhist kingdom.

at a glance

DAY 1	ARRIVE PARO
DAY 2	PARO VALLEY, TAKSTANG MONASTERY (3100M) & NATIONAL MUSEUM
DAY 3	COMMENCE TREK TO CAMP (APPROX 2 TO 3 HRS).
DAY 4	TREK TO JILLI DZONG (APPROX 2 TO 3 HOURS)
DAY 5	JILLI DZONG TO JANGCHU LAKHA (APPROX 4HRS)
DAY 6	JANGCHU LAKHA TO JIMILANG TSHO (APPROX 5 TO 6 HRS)
DAY 7	JIMILANG TSHO TO SIMKOTA TSHO (APPROX 5HRS)
DAY 8	SIMKOTA TSHO TO PHAJODING (APPROX 4 TO 5 HRS)
DAY 9	PHAJODING TO THIMPHU (3 HRS)
DAY 10	IN THIMPHU, TRANSFER TO PARO
DAY 11	TRIP CONCLUDES

what's included

- 10 breakfasts, 10 lunches and 10 dinners
- airport transfers on Day 1 and Day 11
- English speaking local guide
- good quality accommodation in Paro / Thimphu
- the use of a World Expeditions trek pack which includes a quality sleeping bag, down or fibre fill jacket and insulated mat (valued at over US\$500)
- all group camping equipment
- private vehicle transport
- permits and entry fees and local guide in the National Park
- all park entrance fees and trekking permits
- animals to carry 20kgs personal equipment
- sightseeing and site entry fees as listed
- pre-departure Information Guide, with all you need to know for your trek
- souvenir World Expeditions kit bag
- Bhutan Government visa and sustainability fees

Local cash payments are becoming increasingly popular with many operators in the adventure travel industry. The policy seems to benefit the tour operators, more than the local economies or travellers, as it avoids local taxes and transfers the cost and risk of cash handling to travellers. In accordance with our Responsible Travel practices we have chosen a policy not to ask for such payments.

what's not included

- Bottled water
- Aerated and alcoholic drinks
- Items of a personal nature such as phone calls, laundry, etc.

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trip dates

2019 30 Mar - 09 Apr
07 Apr - 17 Apr
21 Sep - 01 Oct
28 Sep - 08 Oct

2020 28 Mar - 07 Apr
05 Apr - 15 Apr
19 Sep - 29 Sep
26 Sep - 06 Oct

important notes

Note: - Similar dates in 2021

fast facts

Countries Visited:

Bhutan

Visas:

Yes*

Vaccinations:

Please consult a travel vaccination specialist for up to date information

Private Groups:

Private group options are available for this trip*

Singles:

A single supplement is available for this trip*

Leader:

As well as an expert local guide there will also be a World Expeditions Leader accompanying your trek. All World Expeditions Leaders are highly trained in remote wilderness first aid and high altitude medicine.

Advice for people with limited mobility

This trip is not suitable for people with limited mobility.

Brochure Reference:

Himalaya and Indian Subcontinent

*Ask our staff for more information.

- Tips
- International airfares and departure taxes
- Travel Insurance

detailed itinerary

DAY 1 Arrive Paro

On arrival in Paro we clear Bhutan customs and immigration before being met by our Bhutan group leader. At our hotel our Bhutan guide will brief you on your stay in Bhutan before we take our first opportunity to explore the Paro bazaar.

meals: L,D

DAY 2 Paro Valley, Taktsang Monastery (3100m) & National Museum

Our sightseeing program in Paro includes a hike to Taktsang Monastery. The two to three hour ascent provides an excellent opportunity to acclimatise and to get the feel for your boots before commencing your trek. Taktsang Monastery - the site of the site of the famous Tiger's Nest Monastery which is one of the divine resting places of the Guru Rinpoche. The monastery was destroyed by fire a few years ago but the rebuilding is nearly complete thanks to various donations from European NGO's. After visiting Taktsang monastery, an unforgettable experience, we return to our hotel and, in the afternoon visit the Paro Dzong which is the monastic and administrative centre for South-West Bhutan. We also visit the original fort - the Ta Dzong that now houses the National Museum of Bhutan with excellent displays of all facets of the country's rich cultural history. Old costumes and battle dress, together with priceless jewellery and specimens of the kingdom's unique flora and fauna are included within the museum.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 3 Commence trek to camp (approx 2 to 3 hrs).

From our hotel our guides can point out the dzong which is visible from the valley. After a short drive to the Ta Dzong we commence our trek along a well defined trail through a series of small settlements where Tibetan refugees have established their homes since 1959. After two hours we reach a small clearing with an important mani wall (3050m) where we camp for the night.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 4 Trek to Jilli Dzong (approx 2 to 3 hours)

A short stage to assist acclimatisation. We ascend through a forest of blue pine and silver birch for a further two hours. Just above the treeline we reach an alpine glade and the Jilli La (3580m) and gain fine views back down the Paro Valley. It's a short distance onto camp in a beautiful sheltered clearing to the east of the pass (3490m).

In the afternoon we visit the nearby Jilli Dzong, an impressive fort cum monastery with panoramic views. In the vicinity of the Dzong there are many prayer flags hung from commemorative poles that reflect the ancient Buddhist beliefs that extend across the ridge tops of Bhutan.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 5 Jilli Dzong to Jangchu Lakha (approx 4hrs)

We continue along the wooded crest high above the Paro Valley through conifer and rhododendron forest while numerous orchids, ferns and wildflowers line the trail. To the north you may glimpse the snow capped peak of Chomlohari. On this stage we also pass through a number of yak herders settlements who, like their counterparts

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thoughtful travel

The natural environments that you'll travel through are fragile; the cultures and traditions precious and often the communities we pass through are reliant on tourism. It is our responsibility as visitors to minimise the impact of our presence, protect what is precious and where we can leave a positive impact. Learn how you can do this by downloading the Thoughtful Traveller booklet from our website.

trip grading Introductory to Moderate

These trips involve trekking, walking, cycling, rafting or kayaking for up to five or six hours a day at a slow but steady pace and should never be misinterpreted to mean they are easy trips. You will need a reasonable level of fitness and good health. Suggested preparation: 30 minutes of aerobic type exercise, (either cycling or jogging) three times a week for three months leading up to your trip. For trekking, hill walking with a daypack in variable weather conditions is also recommended. For a cycling adventure, road cycling twice a week for three months prior to departure is recommended.

adventure travel

By its very nature adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected. In remote and developing countries do not expect standards you are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable and itineraries may be altered. To get the most out of your adventure it is important that you are flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise. If you are uncertain about your suitability for this trip we recommend that you speak with your consultant or travel agent.

in Southern Tibet, live in woven yak wool tents throughout the summer months. Our camp at Jangchu Lakha (3780m) is in a fine location overlooking the intermediary valley between the Paro and Thimphu valleys.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 6 Jangchu Lakha to Jimilang Tsho (approx 5 to 6 hrs)

Another spectacular day as we continue north along an alpine ridge. En route we cross a series of small passes in the vicinity of 4050m with each marked by a stone memorial and an abundance of prayer flags. From the passes there are also fine views of many of the peaks that form the border with Tibet. From our lunch spot we can appreciate the location of our campsite on the shores of the Jimilang Tsho. To reach the lake involves a long and gradual descent taking an hour or so, at first across alpine meadows and then through rhododendron and conifer forest to this wonderful campsite.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 7 Jimilang Tsho to Simkota Tsho (approx 5hrs)

From the lake the trail ascends through rhododendron forest before traversing a series of grazing meadows. It takes around three hours to reach the secluded encampment of Janye Tsho (3950 metres) and a fine place for a break. Thereafter the profile of the trail continues with short ascents and descents to reach the campsite above Simkota Tsho (4050 metres). From the campsite you can appreciate Jilli Dzong and the ridge-line you trekked along a few days earlier.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 8 Simkota Tsho to Phajoding (approx 4 to 5 hrs)

On our final day along the ridges we head over a series of small passes leading towards the Thimphu Valley. En route we pass a number of yak herders settlements and alpine lakes before reaching the Phume La (4200m) from where we appreciate the vast sprawl of the Thimphu Valley. We continue our descent to a campsite near Phajoding Goemba (3650m). This is a beautiful Buddhist monastery and an important pilgrimage site for the Bhutanese people.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 9 Phajoding to Thimphu (3 hrs)

From Phajoding the trail descends steeply, passing through mixed forest for a couple of hours before following the valley floor to the Youth centre (2580m). From the roadhead, we drive to our hotel in Thimphu. After lunch we commence our sightseeing program of Bhutan's capital. The town is by no means large and is easily explored on foot. The main Secretariat building, the Tashichho Dzong is the most prominent building consisting of the main Secretariat, the National Assembly Hall, the Office of the King and the Throne Room. It's remarkable 13th century construction is in traditional Bhutanese style without the use of nails or metal of any kind. We also visit the large Stupa dedicated to the late King HM. Jimge Dorji Wangchuk, regarded as the founder of modern day Bhutan. Then there is the Handicraft Emporium with famous weaving, woodcarvings and paintings while the Post Office sells Bhutan's world-renowned stamps.

meals: B,L,D

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important note

These trip notes represent the most current information for this itinerary, and may supersede any information in the current brochure, including but not limited to the itinerary and price. The itinerary should be seen as a guide only. This itinerary may change at any time due to inclement weather, forces of nature and other circumstances beyond our control.

DAY 10 In Thimphu, transfer to Paro

In the morning we complete our sightseeing in and after lunch we complete the two-hour drive back to Paro.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 11 Trip concludes

Morning transfer to Paro Airport for your onward flight.

meals: B

This itinerary is subject to change with any change in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.

country information

Bhutan is a small, independent Buddhist kingdom situated on the eastern side of the Himalaya about 300km long by 150kms wide. It is bordered with India, (Sikkim, Assam, West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh), China (Tibet) and Bangladesh. Virtually the entire country is mountainous, ranging in elevation from 100m in the south to the 7544m Kulha Gangri peak on the northern border. It receives more rainfall than any other Himalayan region, and on average half to two metres of precipitation falls annually in the foothills and mountains. This ensures a lush and diverse flora from small orchids to enormous conifers and rhododendrons, and the country's small population (approx 600,000), their religious beliefs as practising Buddhists, and a protective government has allowed the wilderness to be well preserved. There are hundreds of unique species of plants and animals to be found here. Most of the people of Bhutan originate from the north (Tibet) and practise a Buddhism similar to that region yet it has its own unique beliefs and practises. It is officially called Drukpa Kagyu, and includes practising their faith and traditions of art, dance, drama and various crafts including weaving, carpentry, metalwork and painting. It is obvious that the culture and history is rich in Bhutan, and the foresight of the late King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck who is succeeded by his son, King Jigme Singye Wangchuck to develop and maintain a program that is for the betterment of the people and the land rather than a quick financial return, is an encouraging sign to a sound future.

climate

Bhutan, like Eastern Nepal, comes under the influence of the Indian monsoon which precludes trekking throughout the summer months from the end of May till the middle of September. The ideal time to trek in Bhutan is therefore either pre-monsoon from mid March when the snow begins to melt off the high passes until the end of May. Post-monsoon October through to mid November are ideal. Temperatures on the treks can vary considerably. On any one trek the temperature may vary from 20C during the day to -10C when the occasional storm breaks over the high passes. You will be pleased that you have been provided with good down jackets, sleeping bags and two-person tents that we send to Bhutan from our operational base in Kathmandu.

a typical day

You will be woken with a cup of tea brought to your tent around 6:30am, followed by a small bowl of warm water for washing. Before breakfast you pack your gear into your kit bag which is then taken by the pack-animals or porters and will not be available to you until you reach camp that afternoon. After a wholesome breakfast we are usually on the trail between 7.30 – 8am, depending upon the duration and nature of the day's walk. We will walk for around 3-4 hours and then generally break for lunch for about 1 hour. Some of our staff will walk ahead and select a suitable place to stop. The afternoon walk is generally a little shorter and camp is usually reached by around 3.30 - 4.30 pm. Once we have reached camp and the kitchen is set up, afternoon tea will be prepared. From then until dinner there is time to rest or explore the

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surrounding area. Dinner is usually served between 6-7 pm. Remember to bring your headlamp and your water bottles to the dining tent so they can be filled with boiling water. Trekking evenings afford some of the best memories of your trek, whether it is talking, playing cards, chatting with the crew or joining in some singing and dancing with the local people. Much of the enjoyment of an expedition is in the journey itself.

dietary requirements

Provided we are advised in advance of your departure we are able to cater for vegetarian diets and can assist with medically recommended diets (allergies and intolerances). Please ensure you discuss your requirements with us well in advance (at least 1 month prior to your trip) to determine whether we can cater to such dietary requirements on your chosen adventure. Please note that options are likely to be limited in very remote locations or alternatives may be more expensive or unavailable. There may be times when those with special requirements may need to provide their own food. We are unable to guarantee a peanut-free or allergen-free trip, and therefore, we strongly encourage that travellers with life-threatening or severe allergies take all necessary medical precautions to prepare for the possibility of exposure. Passengers must travel with all necessary medications for food allergies and be capable of self-administering these medications.

pre and post tour accommodation

In Bhutan a group is considered to be three (3) people or more travelling together. We recommended that you arrive in Bhutan with the rest of the group, on the flights arranged by us. Pre and post tour accommodation is available. Please contact your reservations consultant for assistance.

what you carry

In your daypack you will need to carry extra warm clothing (depending on the altitude, location and weather), a rainjacket, water bottle, camera, valuables and personal items such as sunscreen, lip-eze etc. Porters carry all group gear and your trek pack.

equipment required

Specialist gear required include walking boots and day pack (a comprehensive gear list is provided in the pre-departure information provided on booking).

special visa requirements

The visa process for Bhutan requires you to provide us with a scanned colour copy of your passport as we require your full passport details (full name as it appears in your passport, nationality, date of birth, passport number, date of issue and expiry date, and occupation) at least 30 days before your arrival in Bhutan. Following the processing of your visa clearance we will provide you with a clearance number to enable you to board the plane from your respective airport; you will then receive a stamped visa upon arrival at Paro airport. You must carry the visa approval letter with you and you will be required to show this when checking in for your DRUK flight into Paro.

NOTE:- Please be aware that it is very usual that we do not receive visa clearance numbers from the Bhutanese government until the week of travel, sometimes 2 or 3 days before departure date. If you have already left on your travels prior to receiving the visa clearance number, then the visa number will be emailed to you shortly before departure date. Please ensure that we have your correct and up-to-date email and contact details.

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vehicles & safety

During the course of your trip, we will use a variety of vehicles, all of which are fit for purpose and the conditions encountered. It should be noted that laws governing transportation safety may differ from those in your home country and whilst wherever possible, vehicles with seatbelts are provided, on occasion some vehicles may not have seat belts fitted.

visas

The cost of your Bhutan visa is included in your trip cost. The visa process for Bhutan requires you to provide us with a scanned colour copy of your passport as we require your full passport details (full name as it appears in your passport, nationality, date of birth, passport number, date of issue and expiry date, and occupation) at least 30 days before your arrival in Bhutan. Following the processing of your visa clearance we will provide you with a clearance number to enable you to board the plane from your respective airport; you will then receive a stamped visa upon arrival at Paro airport. You must carry the visa approval letter with you and you will be required to show this when checking in for your DRUK flight into Paro.

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If you are doing more than one tour in Bhutan you may be required to extend your visa, this will be done for you while you are in Bhutan.

Please bear in mind that visas may be required for countries you are visiting en route or transiting through on the way to your destination. It is important that you check the requirements of all countries you will visit. Visa costs and requirements do change regularly so we suggest you check with your travel agent or World Expeditions reservations consultant. It is your responsibility to obtain all necessary visas.

info nights

World Expeditions invites you to attend our inspiring adventure travel information nights. These special evenings are designed to inform and entertain and are hosted by our most experienced and passionate adventure travellers and mountaineers. Ask our staff for a info night schedule or register on our website - www.worldexpeditions.com. Shows can fill early so it is important to register your attendance so we know to save a seat, or two!

private groups

The adventures featured in our brochures, and on our website, are just a starting point for many of our private group travellers. Working closely with our Groups Department we can organise custom designed itineraries for groups of friends, clubs, charity's, schools or even work colleagues. Our team will assist you with all aspects of your private group adventure from itinerary design to group flights. Contact our team today.

subscribe to our e-newsletter

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Share the love

Use the hashtag #WorldExpeditions on your best travel photos and videos to be featured.

trip availability

If this trip seems right for you then we encourage you to call us now to check availability. There are many reasons why you may not be able to join your desired departure and limited space on our small group departures is just one of them. Bhutan is a heavily restricted destination. The Bhutanese Airline Druk, is the only airline that services Paro International airport. Flights operate daily in high season but seats are extremely limited. The demand for these services is increasing each year making it difficult to join a trip last minute. To ensure we can assist you onto your adventure of a lifetime we ask that you check your trip availability with our team at your earliest convenience.

how to book

To book a World Expeditions trip, you will need to complete a booking form and pay a non refundable deposit which you can do by using our online booking function for most trips, or if you prefer, download a booking form from the website and return to us by fax, or mail your booking form and deposit to your nearest World Expeditions office or travel agent. We can also help you with any additional arrangements that you require, such as competitive airfares to get you to your destination, stopovers, pre or post trip accommodation or any additional tours that you wish to take in conjunction with the main World Expeditions trip.