Nepal & Bhutan Explorer

Uncover the cultural and scenic highlights of these two extraordinary Himalayan nations.

Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

Holiday overview

Style	Tour
Accommodation	Hotels
Grade	Tour
Duration	15 days from London to London
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Local Leader Nepal And Bhutan
Land only	Joining in Kathmandu, Nepal
Max altitude	3,120m/10,236ft, Taktsang Monastery, Day 12

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available

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Last updated: 23 June 2026

Group Departure Dates and Prices

Group departures

2026 Dates:

Sat 14 Mar – Sat 28 Mar
Sat 10 Oct – Sat 24 Oct

2027 Dates:

Sat 27 Mar – Sat 10 Apr
Sat 09 Oct – Sat 23 Oct

Group prices
Visit the holiday page of our website for up-to-date land only and flight inclusive prices for all group departure dates https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/holiday/nepal-bhutan-explorer.

Single supplement options can also be found here.

Will the trip run?
This trip is guaranteed to run for 4 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly – we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

No Surcharge Guarantee
The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

Insurance
We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

Private Departures
We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

Tailor Made service
We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday.

If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

Your guide

Nepal
Whether it's a cultural tour, gentle walking holiday or strenuous trek, our holidays in Nepal are led by professionally trained English speaking leaders. They have an intimate and expert knowledge of the history, culture and nature of Nepal and will make your trip a memorable experience.

Bhutan
You will have an English-speaking Bhutanese guide. Mountain Kingdoms have been working with the same partner in Bhutan since 1986. Their guides are some of the best in the Kingdom. They speak fluent English, as this is taught in all Bhutanese schools, and are fully qualified guides. The Tourism Authority of Bhutan insists that a Bhutanese trek or tour leader must pass his/her guiding exams in Thimphu before accompanying groups of foreign visitors.

Your trip highlights

- Explore the artistic and cultural heritage of ancient Kathmandu
- Explore Bandipur, a beautifully preserved village, and enjoy the classic Newari architecture.
- Enjoy time in scenic Pokhara with a boat ride on the lake
- Enjoy stunning views of the Himalayan giants
- Visit all the key cultural sights in western Bhutan, including iconic Taktsang Monastery
- Stay at comfortable hotels throughout

At a glance itinerary

Days 1-2	Fly to Kathmandu.
Day 3	Sightseeing in Kathmandu.
Days 4-5	Drive to Bandipur, explore village. Drive to Pokhara boat ride on lake.
Days 6-7	In Pokhara. Sightseeing. Fly Kathmandu and overnight in Dhulikhel.
Days 8-9	Fly Kathmandu to Paro. Drive Thimphu and sightseeing in Thimphu.
Day 10	Visit Punakha Dzong. Walk to Chimi Lakhang. Return to Thimphu.
Days 11-12	Drive to Paro, sightseeing in Paro Valley and visit Taktsang.
Days 13-15	Fly to Kathmandu. Time at leisure. Fly to London.

Trip summary

This great tour brings you some of the highlights of these two wonderful but contrasting Himalayan countries. Nepal has a laid back and chaotic charm which has made it a favourite with travellers and trekkers alike since the hippy era, while its wonderful mountains, vibrant culture and friendly people mean that for many people that once-in-a-lifetime visit' has proved to be just the first of many. Bhutan has a quieter attraction but its unspoilt mountain scenery, living Buddhist culture and the wonderful architecture of its fabulous dzongs have made it always a great favourite with our clients.

In Nepal, after a day taking in the key sights of Kathmandu, you visit Bandipur, a typical and pretty Newari village that offers an authentic taste of everyday life. Next you travel to picturesque Pokhara, set on the shores of lake Phewa Tal and famous for its stupendous views of the Annapurna range. You have ample time for sightseeing here and to take a boat ride across the tranquil waters of the lake. You also visit Dhulikhel, perched on the rim of the Kathmandu Valley, from where there is a vast panorama of mountains to enjoy stretching all the way to Everest.

From Nepal you fly east, passing Everest. You will feel the change in tempo as soon as you land at Paro airport. Arrival is delightfully unhurried and you will be greeted by smiling immigration and customs officials wearing the robes of Bhutanese national dress. The Paro valley, where you land, is green and forested and you will immediately be struck by the distinctive architecture of farm houses. Firstly you will drive to Thimphu, Bhutan's capital, and will find it to be much less frenetic than Kathmandu. After time to explore in Thimphu you will travel over a high pass to visit the lush Punakha valley with its stunning dzong, situated in a scenic location at the confluence of two rivers. After visiting Punakha Dzong and the Chimi Lakhang temple you will return to Paro, where you will walk up to visit Taktsang, the famous Tigers Nest monastery, a highlight of any trip to Bhutan. Finally you return to busy Kathmandu for your flight home.

Your trip itinerary

Day 1: Depart London.

Fly overnight from London to Kathmandu.

Overnight: In flight

Day 2: Arrive Kathmandu, 1,400m/4,593ft. Group transfer to hotel.

On arrival in Kathmandu you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

Kathmandu is a wonderful mixture of the ancient alongside the modern - crowded bazaars still throng with colourful local people today as they have for hundreds of years while roads are crowded with cars, roaring motorbikes and buses belching out black smoke; ancient temples and crumbling shrines sit alongside modern offices, picturesque palaces slowly sag into dereliction while Buddhist stupas gaze over the bustling scene with their all seeing eyes. Meanwhile, in the tourist hub of Thamel you will find restaurants and bars, shops and internet cafés. Although this is a crowded, noisy and polluted city, it is also fascinating, friendly and vibrant.

Tonight, you may choose to eat at the hotel or you could head off into Thamel to one of the famous restaurants there such as Rum Doodle Restaurant, a place frequented by trekkers and climbers alike, with pride of place given to a board with the signatures of many Everest summiteers.

Overnight: Hotel Shanker or Similar, Kathmandu

Day 3: Sightseeing in Kathmandu.

Today you will have a full day sightseeing in Kathmandu.

In the morning you will visit Swayambhunath, also known as 'The Monkey Temple'. This fascinating temple is perched on a hilltop to the west of the city and is a site of pilgrimage for both Hindus and Buddhists. You'll then get an introduction to Thamel, a tourist hub and a great place to pick up some souvenirs or to enjoy a cup of tea and some people watching!

Later you will visit Patan, one of the historic cities of the Kathmandu Valley built by the Malla kings, an ancient royal dynasty of Nepal. Here there is a very fine Durbar square with temples and palaces. Patan has long been a centre for Newari craftsmen who are superbly skilled in woodcarving and working in bronze. A visit to the excellent museum in Patan will introduce you to many fine works by Newari artists and craftsmen, especially famed for producing fine bronze statuary by the lost wax method.

Later you will travel to Boudhanath where you will visit the ancient Buddhist stupa. Here pilgrims from all over the Indian subcontinent circle the stupa clockwise, turning prayer wheels as they pass. If you are there just before sunset, a pleasant way to end the day is watching the sun go down over the stupa from the rooftop terrace of a café, while sipping a cold beer.

Overnight: Hotel Shanker or Similar, Kathmandu (Meals: B)

Day 4: Drive to Bandipur, 1,030m/3,379ft. Explore village.

Today you will drive to the historic village of Bandipur, situated on a ridge in the Mahabharat range of hills, west of Kathmandu and south of the Annapurna range of mountains. Once a thriving Newari town on the trade route to India, Bandipur was left stranded when the main Pokhara to Kathmandu road was built far below in the valley. Nowadays Bandipur has found a new lease of life and is proud of its environmental credentials being twinned with Hydra, a Greek island, as well as a national park in Italy. The village has been carefully restored and pedestrianised, but at the same time a traditional lifestyle still continues. The locals are happy to see visitors, particularly because the village has benefited so much from visitors appreciating this careful restoration. There are just a few places to stay and money from tourism ventures is ploughed back into restoring the various temples and traditional houses in the town.

The village commands panoramic views of the Himalaya and on a clear day, from the village, you can see the whole Annapurna range, as well as peaks in Langtang to the east and Dhaulagiri in the west. It is a place where it is a pleasure to watch daily village life going on around you.

There are many easy and pretty village walks starting from your hotel in Bandipur bazaar. You could visit Siddha Cave (30 minutes) or hike to Ramkot village (2 hours), take a nature walk in the mixed Sal forest at Raniban east of the bazaar, or walk to Purano Kot, originally a fort, 20 minutes/500m west of the bazaar. There is a small temple containing some old statues and next to it a newly built temple. Local people believe that praying here during a drought to the god Mahadev will bring rain.

Overnight: Gaun Ghar Hotel or Similar, Bandipur (Meals: BLD)

Day 5: Drive to Pokhara, 1,400m/4,593ft. Sightseeing and boat ride on Phewa Tal lake.

Today you will drive to Pokhara, a journey of about three hours. You drive down from Bandipur village into the valley of the Marsyangdi River and then follow the main Kathmandu-Pokhara highway westwards through a lovely pastoral countryside of paddy fields and small villages. Arriving in Pokhara you will check into your hotel.

Pokhara is Nepal's second city and has the most lovely location on the banks of Lake Phewa Tal with the most amazing views north of the mountains of the Annapurna range. Along the rather brash lakeside area there are many hotels, internet cafes, bars and restaurants and countless shops and road side stalls for souvenir shopping.

In the afternoon you will leave this razzmatazz to take a boat ride on the lake where you will see local people going about their daily lives, fishing and bringing their animals down to the water's edge to drink or wallow. It is a very relaxing boat ride and gives you excellent views of the mountains and the surrounding countryside and the opportunity to stop off at a small temple set on an island, dedicated to the Hindu goddess Barahi and a famous religious and pilgrimage site.

In the evening you will be able to choose from a wide selection of restaurants to take dinner.

Overnight: Barahi Hotel or Similar, Pokhara (Meals: B)

Day 6: Sightseeing and time at leisure in Pokhara.

It is well worth getting up early to see sunrise on the mountains, as the moment when the first flush of pink colours the peaks the view is truly stunning; you might ask the hotel reception to arrange an early morning call for you, so that you do not miss it.

Then you will have the day for sightseeing and relaxation in Pokhara. In the morning you will visit Pokhara museum as well as Devis Falls. Devis Falls is an interesting geological feature - take a look at the precipitous gorge and strange rock formations - there may not be any water flowing over the falls at all times of the year but this still makes an interesting visit. You could then continue across the road to the nearby Devis Falls Tibetan Settlement where you can see carpets being woven and the older ladies spinning and dyeing the wool for the carpets. Handicrafts are also for sale here and there are opportunities for some serious souvenir shopping.

You will have the afternoon free for relaxation or further exploration.

Overnight: Barahi Hotel or Similar, Pokhara (Meals: B)

Day 7: Fly to Kathmandu. Drive to Dhulikhel, 1,550m/5,085ft, afternoon at leisure.

After breakfast you will transfer to Pokhara airport to fly to Kathmandu, a flight of about 45 minutes. In Kathmandu you will be met and you will drive out to the small town of Dhulikhel, located some 30 km further east on the Kodari Highway, the road leading to the Tibetan border. Dhulikhel is set on the rim of the Kathmandu Valley at an altitude of 1,676m/5,500 ft and is famous for its fine mountain views. Your hotel, the Dhulikhel Mountain Resort, is a pleasant hotel set in lovely gardens and enjoying excellent views.

You will have the afternoon in Dhulikel. You might choose to relax in the gardens of the hotel with a cold beer or there are some pleasant walks in the countryside to visit some pretty villages nearby. Your guide will be able to make some suggestions. Alternatively you could walk up to the nearby ridge top for the fine views and later for a stunning sunset over the Himalaya - if the weather is clear you get views from Everest far away in the east as far as Annapurna far to the west.

Overnight: Dhulikhel Mountain Resort, Dhulikhel (Meals: BLD)

Day 8: Fly to Paro, 2,200m/7,218ft, Bhutan. Drive to Thimphu, 2,334m/7,657ft.

You will transfer to Kathmandu Airport for the short flight up to Bhutan. On a clear day the panoramic views of the Himalaya are sensational, including Everest and Kangchenjunga, but particularly exciting is the approach through the Bhutanese foothills and the landing, including a few steep turns to land at the tiny airstrip of Paro. Although you are at the mercy of the airline computer, if possible try to sit on the left hand side of the plane for the most spectacular views. In Paro you will be met by your Bhutanese guide and will drive to Thimphu (1½-2 hours). There should be time for some sightseeing in Thimphu depending on the flight schedule.

Thimphu has an attractive valley location and is relatively small for a capital city although it has grown greatly in recent years. There are many places of interest to visit there. Initially you might like to drive up to see the giant Buddha figure and enjoy the views over the town.

Overnight: Phuntso Pelri Hotel or Similar, Thimphu (Meals: BLD)

Day 9: Sightseeing in Thimphu. Visit Wangditse Monastery.

There are many places of interest to visit in Thimphu, including the Tashichhodzong (the main government buildings), the Textile Museum, the Heritage Museum, the late King's Memorial Chorten, the National Library, the School of Painting and the silversmiths and pottery workshops. The Government Handicrafts Emporium is possibly the best place to look for local handicrafts especially if you are looking to buy national dress. It is interesting to visit the handmade paper workshop to see paper being made. Some nice items made from handmade paper are for sale there. You could also visit the Post Office to buy some of Bhutan's very attractive stamps. They also have good t-shirts on sale there.

Later you will drive up to Sangaygang next to the Bhutan First Broadcasting Service tower, located in the North West of Thimphu. It is only about a mile drive up to the tower so if you feel like you would like to burn a bit more energy you can always walk up instead. From the tower you will have great views over Thimphu Dzong and the Thimphu Valley as you start your walk contouring the beautiful hills to visit Wangditse Gompa. This walk should take around 1.5 hours. You will have time to visit the gompa before you walk down for another 30 minutes to reach Dechen Phodrang Monastery. This monastery houses around 450 student monks enrolled in a 8 year course and is also home to some fantastic UNESCO monitored 12th century paintings. You will then meet your vehicle and be driven back to Thimphu.

Overnight: Phuntso Pelri Hotel or Similar, Thimphu (Meals: BLD)

Day 10: Drive to Punakha, 1,242m/4,075ft. Visit Punakha Dzong and walk to Chimi Lakhang.

After breakfast you will drive east to Punakha about a 3 hour drive. Leaving Thimphu you climb to cross the Dochu La Pass, 3,048m/10,000ft, a spot marked by 108 chortens. Here, weather permitting you may take in a magnificent mountain vista. On clear days there are fabulous views of the eastern Himalaya. This is a very atmospheric spot even on misty days. You then drive down through varied forest into the lush Punakha Valley.

In Punakha you will visit the fabulous Punakha Dzong, one of the most spectacular and important dzongs in the kingdom. The dzong is situated at the confluence of two rivers. In 1994 there was a major flood in the town which caused a lot of damage to the dzong but it has been beautifully renovated and is a real showcase for Bhutanese craftsmanship and painting. You are normally allowed into the dzong unless there are VIPs visiting.

You will also visit Chimi Lakhang, a temple built by Drukpa Kunley. Known as the The Divine Madman', Drukpa Kunley was a 15th century Bhutanese lama and is Bhutan's most popular saint and one of the most important figures in Bhutanese folklore. Despite the apparent conservatism of the Bhutanese people, Drukpa Kunley with his unconventional views on sex is a great favourite throughout the country. Chimi Lakhang is especially popular with women who come here to pray for children. The lakhang is reached by a short walk across the paddy fields and this short excursion takes about 45 minutes each way. Afte the walk you will return to your hotel.

Overnight: Zhingkham Resort or Damchen Resort or Similar, Punakha (Meals: BLD)

Day 11: Sightseeing in Paro Valley.

Today you will drive to Paro and spend the afternoon sightseeing in the Paro valley. Firstly you could drive up the valley to Drukyel Dzong, the impressive ruins of a fortress and monastery which burnt down in the last century. On a clear day you get views of Mount Chomolhari from here. Returning towards Paro you visit the ancient temple of Kyichu Lakhang, one of 108 temples built by Songtsen Gampo an important early Tibetan king, to pin down the Bon demon who was thought to hover over the whole of Tibet. Back in town you may visit the Ta Dzong. This 17th century circular watchtower is home to Bhutan's National Museum. Having undergone a major renovation, the museum showcases a wealth of Bhutan's most significant cultural and artistic treasures. The nearby spectacular Paro Dzong is also worth a visit, as is the typical cantilever bridge below the dzong.

Overnight: Hotel Olathang or Similar, Paro (Meals: BLD)

Day 12: Visit Taktsang Monastery, 3,120m/10,236ft. Afternoon sightseeing in Paro Valley.

Today you will walk up to the famous Tiger's Nest, Taktsang Monastery - a fitting climax to your visit to Bhutan. The monastery is perched some 600m/2,000ft up on a cliff overlooking the valley and was said to be where the legendary Indian saint, Guru Padma Sambhava, flew from Tibet on the back of a tiger to defeat five demons who were opposing the spread of Buddhism in Bhutan. It's a steep uphill walk through woods of about 1½-2hrs to reach a tea house (an ascent of 340m/1,115ft). Apart from offering welcome refreshment this tea house is one of the principle viewpoints of the monastery, and those who prefer not to climb any further can relax here whilst others continue upwards. Even if you are not going as far as the actual monastery it is worth climbing a further half hour to some prayer flags and a viewpoint directly across from the monastery. If there is a particular religious gathering or VIP visit in progress you will not be able to enter the monastery but if this is allowed the final section of the walk takes you from here steeply down approximately 100m/330ft into the gorge that separates you from the monastery and then climbs steeply back up again to reach the monastery gate - Taktsang was built to be isolated! You return down the same way to where your vehicle will be waiting. The full walk to the monastery and back involves approximately 740m/2,440ft of ascent and takes about four hours.

In the afternoon you may complete any sightseeing you did not do yesterday or you may relax at your hotel. Perhaps take a hot stone bath - a revitalising Bhutanese tradition!

Overnight: Hotel Olathang or Similar, Paro (Meals: BLD)

Day 13: Fly to Kathmandu.

You will transfer to the airport where you will say goodbye to your Bhutanese guide and driver. You will then fly to Kathmandu with a further opportunity to see the peaks of the high Himalaya including Everest and Kangchenjunga (if conditions are clear). You will then drive to your hotel and have the rest of the day at leisure.

Overnight: Hotel Shanker or Similar, Kathmandu (Meals: B)

Day 14: Time at leisure. Transfer to airport and depart Kathmandu.

You will have time at leisure in Kathmandu today when you may do some sightseeing, shopping or simply relax at your hotel. Later there will be a group transfer to the airport for your overnight flight to London.

Overnight: In flight (Meals: B)

Day 15: Arrive London.

Our grading system

Nepal & Bhutan Explorer is graded as a Tour, as described below.

Tours
Tours may include any of the following activities: sightseeing, visiting local villages, exploring temples, game viewing, birdwatching, husky sledding, mountain flights, city tours and dramatic journeys by road, rail, or river. Occasionally there will be short, gentle walks so that you can properly explore the cultural sites you are visiting.

Trip altitude

Important - please be aware that this trip involves travel at altitude. Whilst all our itineraries are carefully designed to optimise acclimatisation to high altitudes, participants on this trip are likely to experience some symptoms of being at altitude. The Dossier pack we provide when you book your holiday includes comprehensive advice on safe travel at altitude. If you require further information or advice on travel at altitude prior to booking please contact the office to speak to an experienced member of our team. Alternatively we recommend www.medex.org.uk as a good source of information.

What the price includes

Mountain Kingdoms aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

What's included:

- ✓ 12 x Breakfasts, 7 x lunches, 7 x dinners
- ✓ 4* hotel in Kathmandu
- ✓ Good quality hotels throughout
- ✓ All flights between Kathmandu and Paro and domestic airport transfers
- ✓ Bhutan visa fees and tourist taxes
- ✓ Experienced English-speaking guides
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicles
- ✓ All sightseeing as detailed in the itinerary
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK & UK Departure Tax (flight inclusive only)
- ✓ Single timed, group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)
- ✓ A free Mountain Kingdoms gilet

Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

What's not included:

- × Travel insurance
- × Nepal visa fees
- × Lunch and evening meals in Kathmandu and Pokhara
- × Locally paid bar bills and laundry
- × Optional trips
- × Tips

Your accommodation

Nepal hotels
In Nepal we will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.

Bhutan hotels
Please note that there is generally a shortage of hotel/lodge accommodation in Bhutan, especially outside Paro and Thimphu. Although we pre-book rooms as far in advance as possible, anything can happen and probably will, e.g. if the royal family suddenly has a visiting delegation, accommodation may be changed at short notice. Additionally, during peak seasons, it can sometimes be very difficult to secure not only the hotels/lodges we want, but also the single rooms we might need. In these circumstances singles may occasionally be asked to share but in such cases we refund any single room supplements that might apply. Given these conditions we will make every effort to secure any of the following hotels:

Hotel Shanker or Similar, Kathmandu
The Shanker is a 4* heritage hotel situated just a 10-15 minute walk from the tourist area of Thamel. It has an outdoor swimming pool, a spa and a lovely garden, plus a choice of restaurants and bars. Rooms are large, elegant and well-equipped. The hotel is a converted royal palace with a fascinating history which in recent years has undergone a thorough and tasteful renovation.

Gaun Ghar Hotel or Similar, Bandipur
A restored village house of 14 en suite rooms in boutique style. Perhaps it was a Newari trader's house in the days when Bandipur was an important stop on the Indian/Tibetan trade route. It is tastefully decorated and the owners are keen to be eco-friendly.

Barahi Hotel or Similar, Pokhara
Only a five minute walk to the Phewa Tal Lake front and the nearby bars and cafes, the Barahi enjoys an enviable location and good facilities. It has a landscaped outdoor pool and an all-day restaurant serving a range of Nepali and international dishes. Rooms are light and well-proportioned and come with a balcony, tea/coffee making facilities, mini bars and free Wi-Fi.

Dhulikhel Mountain Resort, Dhulikhel
The resort rests on 20 acres of beautifully landscaped gardens and is back-dropped by a panorama of the Himalaya. Designed with an ethnic theme, the attractive cottages are made from red brick with thatch roofs to reflect the traditional architecture of the region. The resort serves good food and has a spa.

Phuntso Pelri Hotel or Similar, Thimphu
Despite its somewhat dark entrance hall, this new hotel is very well appointed, with custom made Bhutanese wooden furniture and good sized rooms. During busy periods, especially during festivals, we may use the Jomolhari Hotel, the Kisa Hotel, Hotel Gakyil, Hotel Osel or the Amodhara Hotel. These are amongst the best tourist class hotels in Thimphu.

Zhingkham Resort or Damchen Resort or Similar, Punakha

Overlooking Punakha Dzong, the Zhingkham Resort is one of the best hotels in Punakha. The well-proportioned, stylish rooms come complete with free Wi-Fi, minibars and coffee/tea making facilities as well as delightful views of the surrounding hills and countryside.

The Damchen Resort is a newly renovated hotel sitting on the banks of the river in the Punakha valley. Rooms are clean and bright with wooden furniture and nice decorative touches. The hotel is a short, level walk from the small town of Khuruthang.

Hotel Olathang or Similar, Paro

Olathang Hotel. Originally built for the coronation of the 4th King in 1974, this attractive hotel stands on a hill overlooking Paro town. Accommodation is spread between the main building and a number of cottages in the grounds. Bedrooms are of a good standard, the staff are friendly and decoration and furnishings are of typical Bhutanese style. We have always found the food to be of a high quality.

Meal arrangements

Bed and breakfast in Kathmandu and Pokhara, all meals elsewhere. 12 x breakfasts, 7 x lunches, 7 x dinners.

Flight arrangements

Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

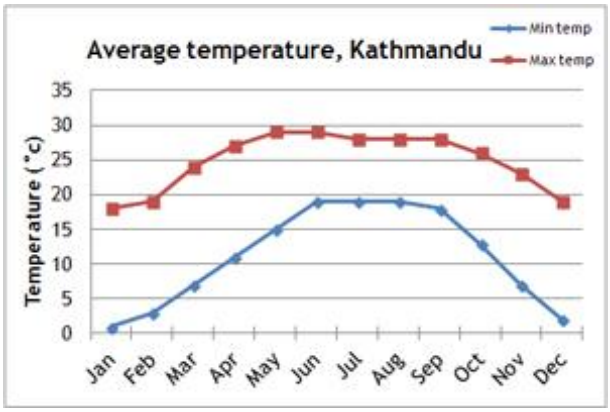
Further information

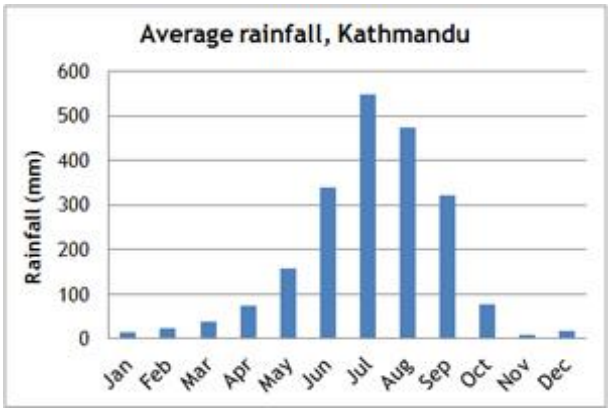
When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

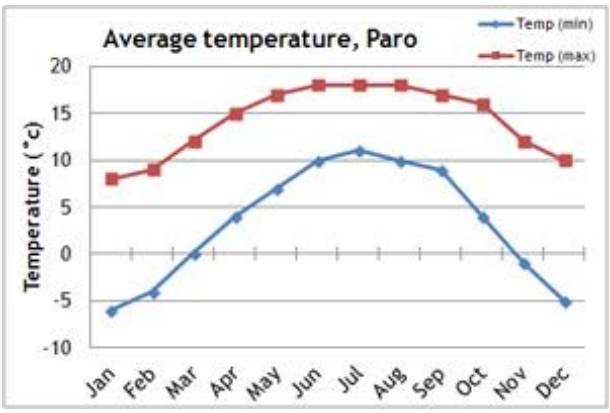
The nature of adventure travel

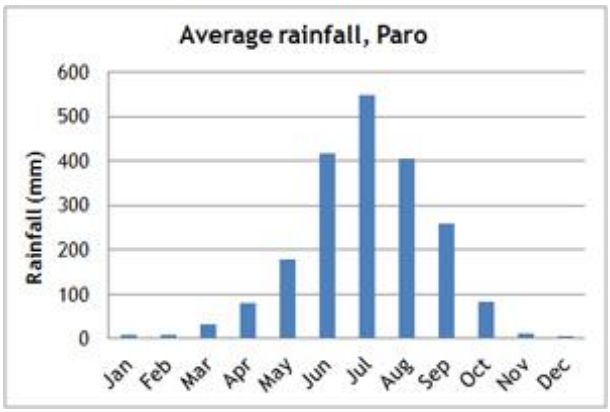
Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

Climate information









Extensions

Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at www.mountainkingdoms.com.

Hotel upgrades and extra nights in Bhutan

If you would like to upgrade your hotel during your holiday take a look at our selection of luxury properties in Bhutan such as Uma Paro or the Taj Tashi in Thimphu, you can download a leaflet from our website detailing all hotel options. We can also add additional nights in Bhutan at the start or end of your trip.

Additional accommodation in Nepal

If you would like to extend your stay in Nepal, you can add extra nights at your group tour accommodation or choose from our range of distinctive properties in Pokhara and the Kathmandu area. We can offer luxury resorts, heritage hotels, tranquil lodges and characterful cottages. Our selection includes Dwarika's Resort at Dhulikhel, Pavilions Himalaya at Pokhara, Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge and Shivapuri Heights Cottage. Individual extension leaflets for all these options can be downloaded from our website or requested from our office.

Kathmandu Valley sightseeing excursions

We can arrange half day or full day sightseeing tours taking you to the key cultural attractions of central Kathmandu or the Kathmandu Valley including the World Heritage Sites of Bhaktapur and Patan. Your tour will be led by an English speaking guide and you will have a private vehicle and driver.

Wildlife extensions in Nepal - Chitwan, Bardia & Koshi Tappu

Visit Chitwan or Bardia National Parks home to a rich variety of birds and animals including elephant, rhinos, leopard and Bengal tiger. Stay in a comfortable lodge and enjoy a range of wildlife viewing activities. Alternatively visit the renowned Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve - one of the finest birdwatching and wildlife areas in all Asia.

Royal Manas National Park, Bhutan

Extend your stay in Bhutan with an extension to the Royal Manas National park, a wonderful birder's paradise close to the Indian border. Our extension package gives you three full days to explore the park and surrounding area, and you will be accompanied throughout by a specialist bird and wildlife guide. We also include all meals, private transport to/from Paro, and hotel accommodation close to the park.

Bumdra Trek, Bhutan

Add an overnight trek to your Bhutan holiday. Follow a trail from Paro to the Bumdra Monastery, high above the Paro Valley then descend to Taktsang Monastery by a little trekked path. Enjoy high mountain views and spend a night camping below beautiful Bumdra Monastery. The fully supported trek includes a guide, trek crew, all camping equipment.

Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

- Based on over 30 years of experience taking clients to the Himalaya, this specially designed tour takes you to the heart of both Nepal and Bhutan with visits to the must-see sights in both destinations.
- The holiday is well-paced with an excellent balance of sightseeing, time at leisure and travel.
- Your tour will be led by professional, English-speaking guides who will be delighted to share their expert knowledge of the history, culture and nature of their home country.
- We use 4* hotels in Kathmandu and Pokhara together with good quality, tourist hotels in Bhutan.
- Flights between Kathmandu and Paro, as well as Bhutanese visa fees, are included in the cost of the holiday.
- Our maximum group size is 12 for this trip. This provides for a genuine small group travel experience and helps reduce the negative aspects often associated with larger tour groups.
- We have a wealth of Himalayan experience in the company, many of our staff have visited Nepal and Bhutan and love both countries. If you have any questions about any aspect of this holiday please don't hesitate to give us a call, on 01453 844400.
- We offer a flexible service and can extend your holiday with extra hotel nights, upgrades and other exciting activities.
- If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights team for flight options, quotes and further information.
- As part of our responsible tourism commitment, we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: www.mountainkingdoms.com or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.

What our clients say

What we enjoyed was the amazing scenery combined with the happy friendly people of Nepal and Bhutan. Our guides were excellent, extremely knowledgeable, friendly and punctual.
-Mr & Mrs M, Oxfordshire

Being able to travel to Nepal and Bhutan without a worry as everything was arranged so efficiently. Tour leaders were excellent and listened to us if we wanted to do other things than the ones planned. I would definitely book with you again.I was very impressed by the efficiency of all the staff involved in organising and leading my trip. Well done Mountain Kingdoms.
-Ms C, London

Everything was so well organised down to the last detail. Most of the hotels were fantastic with either lovely gardens and/ or stunning views of the Himalayas.We liked the fact that we didn't have to worry about anything and therefore just enjoy the trip. Everything including the mini buses were very comfortable and the food was very good. Both guides looked after us extremely well. Both were very professional, always on time and able to answer any questions we put to them.
-Ms B-P, Oxfordshire

This holiday exceeded expectations. Everything was organised really well. We didn't have to worry about anything - just enjoy the holiday. The hotels were really comfortable and most had beautiful gardens and/or stunning views of the mountains. Both guides were so professional, knowledgeable and lots of fun. Loved the contrast between the two countries. The flight into Bhutan with views of Everest were phenomenal and the beauty, nature and scenery of both countries is something we will always remember. Thank you Mountain Kingdoms for giving us the trip of a lifetime although we will probably go back!!
-Ms B, Surrey

I have to say that I loved every minute of this tour.Nepal and Bhutan were so different to anywhere I have ever been. The Stupas and Monasteries and Dzongs were fascinating. I loved the Monkey Temple in Nepal and we also did a walk to the biggest cave in Nepal. Loved that. The Tigers Nest hike was the highlight for me. Seeing Everest and the Himalayas from the plane was also brilliant! The Guides in both Nepal and Bhutan were excellent as was the accommodation. Loved it all!
-Joan Lucey, Ireland

I'd wanted to do this trip for several years and it was definitely worth the wait. Bhutan in particular made a huge impact on me and left me struggling to find the words to explain why! It is like nowhere else - the peace, calmness, people, colours, culture, history, traditions and incredible natural beauty. I loved visiting the beautiful temples and learning about Buddhist culture and practices. The whole trip was perfectly paced with great guides and drivers, who worked tirelessly to ensure we had the best time. And shared their knowledge and pride generously, and with great patience and humour. I will definitely be returning to explore some more!
-Karen Russell

Mountain Kingdoms – distinctly different

Truly independent

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

Complete financial security

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

No Surcharge Guarantee

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

Award winning Responsible Tourism

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at www.mountainkingdoms.com.

Genuine small group travel

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

Loyalty Discount

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

Booking your holiday – it couldn't be easier

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to a hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

Comprehensive information

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT

For almost four decades, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now have trips to all corners of the globe but are conscious that our holidays can have a detrimental impact on the world around us and want to do all we can to reduce that.

We have focused our main responsible tourism efforts on reducing the carbon emissions produced by our holidays, and counterbalancing this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole.

Carbon offsetting

Since 2007, we have donated a percentage of our client and staff flight costs to the Ecoan tree planting project in Peru. Ecoan are a trusted local NGO who use the funds directly to purchase seedling trees with the long-term goal of restoring 2.5 million acres of Andean land.

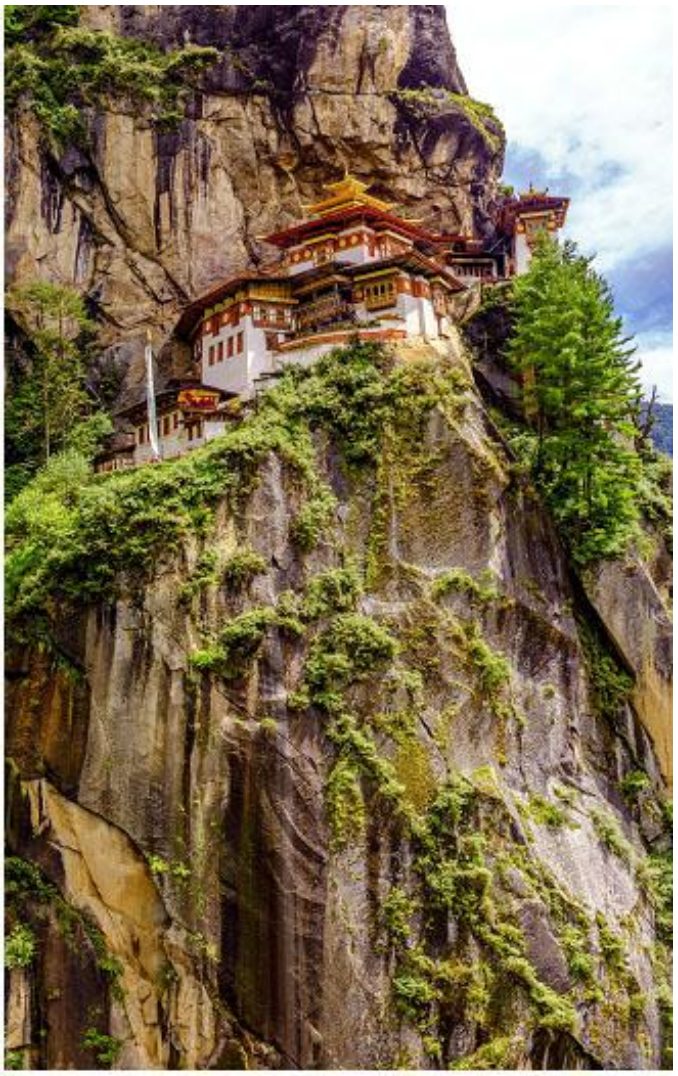
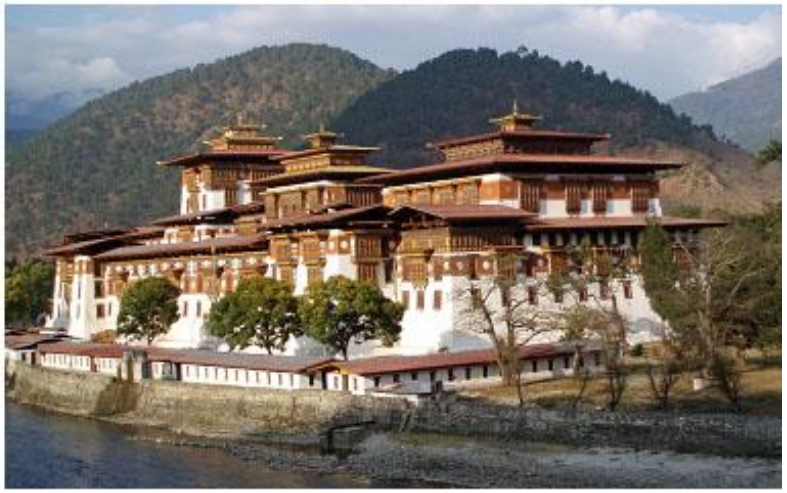
Ecoan maintains over 100 tree nurseries across Peru where their tree saplings are grown and then transported to planting sites during the rainy season. They use native trees such as the Polylepis, as these can survive at high altitudes. As well as sequestering carbon, they help protect against soil erosion, landslides and the effects of extreme weather on local crops. As such, they are enormously beneficial to the economic well-being of the surrounding communities. This is very much a community-led conservation project, with the local Quechuan people coming together to plant tens of thousands of saplings in the Andean highlands where they live. During the annual Queuña Raymi (tree festival), over 150,000 native trees can be planted in a single day!

For every person booking a long-haul, flight inclusive holiday with us, Ecoan can purchase and plant 20 trees in Peru, and for short-haul flights, 7 trees. Typically, we send over $7,000 per year to Ecoan, which is over 7,000 trees.

Reducing carbon emissions

- ✓ We offer the majority of our clients a free, filtered Water-to-Go bottle to help reduce the need for single-use plastic bottles during their travels.
- ✓ We predominantly use locally-owned hotels and guesthouses rather than multinational chains. In some of our destinations, such as Bhutan, we use homestays. Not only does this type of small-sized, locally-owned accommodation have a much-reduced carbon footprint, but it also helps support communities.
- ✓ We evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel-efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, choose direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We have stopped offering unnecessary optional flights, such as Everest sightseeing. We try to minimise internal flights where possible.
- ✓ We recycle as much of our office waste as possible and have introduced a client portal to reduce paperwork and to make it easier for clients to manage their trips online.

Wider commitment to responsible and sustainable tourism

- ✓ We are signatories to the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside other like-minded travel companies to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.
- ✓ We will continue to support several charities with whom we have a long-standing relationship, such as Shiva Charity in Nepal.

Over the years, we have given sizeable payments to emergency relief when a disaster has occurred in the countries we operate in. We always try to ensure that these funds go directly to those who need them most to help rebuild their lives.