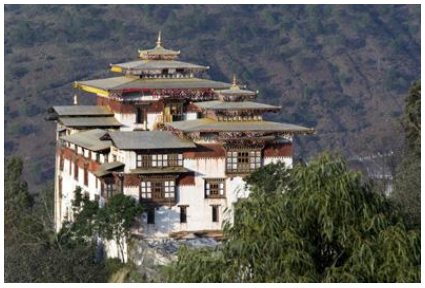
Weavers' Trail, Bhutan, India

Visit the weavers of Bhutan in the company of renowned textile artist Sue Lawty on a fascinating journey across the kingdom.



Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates



Holiday overview

Style	Walking
Accommodation	Hotels, Homestays
Grade	Gentle
Duration	21 days from London to London
Trekking / Walking days	Walks on: 7 days
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Sue Lawty
Land only	Joining in Delhi, India
Max altitude	3,750m/12,303ft, Thrumshing La, Day 12



Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available

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Group Departure Dates and Prices

Group departures

2027 Dates:

Thu 07 Oct – Wed 27 Oct With Thangbi Mewang Festival

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/weavers-trail-bhutan.

Single supplement options can also be found here.

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.

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.

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



Sue is one of Britain's finest artists. Alongside other mediums, Sue has worked with textiles all her life and has exhibited extensively across the world. She is a tutor and visiting lecturer and has travelled on 'weaving journeys' to Bhutan, Morocco, America, Australia, India, Nepal and Poland

Sue held a year long Residency at the V&A in London and has been awarded prestigious Artist Research Fellowships at both the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Washington DC and the Faculty of the Environment, University of Leeds. She was recently invited to take up a significant three month international artist residency in Stockholm.

Sue is an accomplished fell runner and mountain trekker and has led many successful trips for Mountain Kingdoms since she led our first Weavers' Trail in Bhutan in 1995, later also leading treks to Dolpo and Zanskar. More recently, in 2019, she returned to Bhutan to again lead our Weavers' Trail, and in 2022 and 2023 led the first departures of our Colours of India – Gujarat Textiles tour.

Your trip highlights

- Experience first-hand the unique textile traditions of Bhutan in the company of Sue Lawty, one of Britain's foremost textile artists
- Meet local weavers and learn about the rich Bhutanese culture of spinning, weaving and natural dying
- Visit small villages and stay in homestay accommodation to experience life with a Bhutanese family
- See the cultural highlights and enjoy walks in the beautiful Bhutanese countryside
- Join the revelries at a local Bhutanese festival

At a glance itinerary

Days 1-3	Fly to Delhi. Sightseeing. Fly to Paro in Bhutan. Sightseeing in and around Paro.
Day 4	Walk to visit Taktsang Monastery.
Day 5	Drive to Thimphu. Visit the Textile Museum, paper factory and Weekend Market.
Day 6	Visit giant Buddha statue above Thimphu. Drive to Punakha. Walk to Chimi Lhakhang and visit Punakha Dzong.
Day 7	Drive to Gangtey. Walk and visit Black-necked Crane Museum and short walk.
Day 8	Drive to Jakar with visits to Chandibji Chorten, Trongsa Dzong and weaving workshop en route.
Day 9	Attend the Thangbi Mewang Festival.
Day 10	Walk in Jakar area. Visit weaving centre and Wangduechhoeling Palace.
Days 11-12	Drive to near Ura and walk to village. Overnight in homestay. Drive to Autsho.
Days 13-15	Drive to Khoma weaving village. Observe pottery and weaving demonstrations. Walks and sightseeing around Khoma. Stay in homestay.
Days 16-17	Drive to Mongar via Tangmachu and Khaine Lakhang. Continue to Trashigang and visit dzong.
Day 18	Village walk. Visit Radi weaving village.
Day 19	Drive to Samdrup Jongkhar.
Days 20-21	Cross border into India and drive to Guwahati. Fly to Delhi. Overnight Delhi. Fly to UK.

Trip summary

At the eastern end of the mighty Himalaya lies the tiny Buddhist kingdom of Bhutan. This traditional nation, without doubt, produces the finest woven fabrics to be found in the Himalayan region. Weaving is an ancient art in Bhutan and its textiles are an integral part of its culture and heritage and are unique for their diversity and sophistication. With skills handed down from generation to generation and from family to family, weaving in Bhutan is today an art form that is representative of the very heart of the country.

Sue Lawty led our first 'Weavers Trail' in 1995 crossing the country from west to east. Our latest itinerary traces a similar route, travelling through the cultural heartlands to the lesser-known east of the country. On the way, there are visits to, among others, the raw silk 'bura' weavers in the remote village of Radi, the Kishuthara weavers of Lhuentse district and Khoma village and the ‘yathra ‘ weavers of Bumthang. In addition you will be introduced to other regional traditions of silk, cotton, wool and yak wool, and further crafts such as pottery and paper making, woodcarving and painting.

This unique trip has been designed to combine first hand experiences of weaving, visits to weavers in their own homes and to the important textiles centres of the kingdom. You will have opportunity to see all the processes involved in producing textiles, dyeing, spinning and weaving as well as the different uses for these textiles, such as in day to day wear of Bhutanese men and women and the rich textiles used for festival attire and religious costumes. This in-depth, specialist tour weaves together a colourful tapestry of textiles, history, rich cultural heritage and stunning landscapes. In addition you will visit some of the most iconic temples, monasteries and dzongs of the kingdom including beautiful Punakha Dzong and iconic Taktsang Monastery and you will have the opportunity to take some lovely walks through picturesque countryside and to more isolated villages. An additional attraction is the opportunity to stay with local families in Khoma Village and Ura where you will learn about day-to-day life in rural Bhutan. You will also enjoy a day at a colourful festival - a real highlight of any trip to the Thunder Dragon Kingdom.

Your trip itinerary

Day 1: Fly London to Delhi.

Fly overnight from London to Delhi.

Overnight: In flight

Day 2: Arrive Delhi. Group transfer to hotel. Visit Delhi Crafts Museum.

On arrival in Delhi you will be transferred to your hotel located close to Delhi airport.
In the afternoon, if your flight schedule allows, you will have a trip to the Delhi Crafts Museum where artisans demonstrate traditional embroidery, weaving, carving and pottery making - a fantastic place to get an introduction to the textiles of India.

Overnight: Lemon Tree Premier Hotel, Delhi Airport (Meals: B)

Day 3: Fly to Paro. Sightseeing in the Paro Valley including the National Museum and Samden Weaving Unit.

After breakfast you will transfer to the airport for your flight to Paro in Bhutan. You will meet your guide on arrival and head off for some sightseeing in Paro and its surrounding valley. The beautiful Paro Valley has always had a great strategic importance for Bhutan and was historically an important staging post on the trade routes with Tibet. The spectacular Paro Dzong, situated on a rocky outcrop above the Paro Chu and with views down both sides of the valley was historically one of Bhutan's strongest and most strategic fortresses. Before the rebuilding of the Tashichhodzong in Thimphu, it was also the seat of Bhutan's National Assembly.

You may begin your time in Paro with a visit the ancient and beautiful temple of Kyichu Lakhang which was 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. You will also visit the ancient watchtower or Ta Dzong which houses the Bhutan National Museum and has a fantastic collection of Bhutanese treasures with displays including depictions of some of the wide range of Bhutan's history and culture and an impressive collection of ancient thangkas featuring Bhutan's important saints and teachers. You will also find some fearsome festival masks, a collection of religious statues, some early stone carvings and the original 14th century iron links from the nearby Tamchhog Bridge. Later you will drop into the Samden Weaving Unit which houses a small weaving area and a handicraft shop. The owner, Mrs Choki, happens to be the mother of a famous Bhutanese actress, Tandin Bidha. For the remainder of the day you can explore Paro town.

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

Day 4: Walk to Taktsang Monastery – the Tiger's Nest. Time at leisure.



A short drive beyond Paro town takes you to the trail head for the walk up to the famous Tiger's Nest, Taktsang Monastery. 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 1½-2 hours, 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 Taktsang, and those who prefer not to climb any further can relax here whilst others continue on. If there is a particular religious gathering or VIP visit in progress, you will not be able to enter the monastery but the further half an hour's ascent is well worth it in any case, as it brings you to another viewpoint directly across from Taktsang. If you are able to make a visit, the final section of the walk takes you from here steeply down 100m/330ft into the gorge that separates you from the monastery and then climbs back up again to reach the monastery gate.

The rest of the day is free for you to rest at your hotel or do a little exploration on your own.

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

Day 5: Drive to Thimphu – 1-1½ hours. Visit the Textile Museum, the paper factory and the Weekend Market.

This morning you will drive to Thimphu. En route you will stop to visit Tamchhog Lhakang. This temple was built in the 14th century by the son of the very famous 'Iron Bridge' builder, Thangthong Gyalpo. You cross one of the eight bridges he built in Bhutan to reach the temple. It is an easy 15 minute walk from the road and has the immediate effect of transporting you back into the atmosphere of ancient Bhutan. Driving on to Thimphu you will see that it has an attractive valley location and is relatively small for a capital city, although it has grown greatly in recent years.

First stop in town is the Textile Museum, which gives a good overview of Bhutan's textiles and weaving methods which differ quite substantially from region to region. Exhibits introduce the major weaving techniques, styles of local dress and textiles made by both women and men. Then you will see a traditional Bhutanese craft with a visit to the handmade paper workshop to observe the processes involved in making paper. The paper made here is based on materials unique to the Himalaya, the bark of the Daphne Papyri, which is found at altitudes of 3,000 feet and above, the bark of the Edgeworthia Papyri and various additional ingredients like flowers and leaves which add textures and patterns. There are some nice items made from handmade paper for sale here.

Your last stop is at the Weekend Market where you will find numerous stalls crammed along both banks of the Wang Chhu. Stallholders arrive from throughout the region on Thursday and Friday and remain until Sunday night. On one side are mainly food stalls including pungent spices, strings of datse (cheese), meats, nuts, tea, fruits, grains. On the other bank are handicrafts so you may be able to pick up an early souvenir.

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

Day 6: Visit giant Buddha statue. Drive to Punakha – 3 hours via the Dochu La Pass. Visit Chimi Lhakhang and Punakha Dzong.



Before leaving Thimphu you will drive up to see the giant Buddha statue,which you will have seen from below, perched high above the town. It is a very impressive sight close-up and there are far-reaching views across Thimphu from its lofty position.

Driving out of 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 from here, but this is a beautiful spot even on misty days. You then drive down through varied forest into the lush Punakha Valley.

You will have chance to stretch your legs when you arrive in the valley with a short walk to Chimi Lhakhang. This ancient temple was one of 108 temples built by an important early Tibetan king, Songsten, Gampo, in an attempt to pin down the Bon demon who was thought to hover over the whole of Tibet. Returning to your vehicle, you then drive into Punakha town to visit its famously picturesque dzong, 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 now been beautifully renovated and is a real showcase for Bhutanese craftsmanship and painting.

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

Day 7: Drive to Gangtey – 3-3½ hours. Walk in the valley. Visit Gangtey Dzong and the Black-necked Crane Information Centre.

After breakfast you make the journey to Gangtey. Leaving Punakha you drive down the valley to the town of Wangdiphodrang, whose massive and important dzong has undergone restoration after a fire in 2012. You drive through the few houses which mark the former township of Wangdi and then drive up the beautiful, wooded valley of the Dang Chu into Gangtey. Also known as Phobjikha, Gangtey is a beautiful glacial valley, wide, wooded and unspoilt. It is particularly famous as a major wintering ground for Black-necked Cranes, which arrive here late October and stay until early spring before heading back to their breeding grounds in Siberia.

In addition to its natural wonders, the valley boasts some intriguing myths and legends surrounding local events and places, including tales about two different types of yeti, a large one and a small variety, as well as many other interesting tales. A number of different walks are possible here and your guide will suggest a suitable one for your group. After your walk you will visit Gangtey Dzong and then on to the Black-necked crane Information

Centre. The centre has many interesting displays about the cranes and their cultural and religious significance to the local people. Finally, you will enjoy another walk in the village near your hotel.

Overnight: Yo Lo Koe Lodge, Gakiling Guest House or Similar (Meals: BLD)

Day 8: Drive to Jakar across the Pele La - 5 hours. Stop at Chandibji Chorten, Trongsa Dzong and a weaving workshop in Zugney on the way.

Today you make the drive from Gangtey to Jakar. It's a long drive but full of scenic and cultural interest with several opportunities to stop and enjoy the sights. First comes the Pele La Pass, 3,300m/10,825ft, where you will hopefully have some fine mountain views. Next stop is Chandibji Chorten which you'll see is decorated in a similar manner to Swayambanuth Temple in Kathmandu although on a much smaller scale.

Continuing on the road east, you will see Trongsa's splendid Dzong long before you reach it because the road takes you up a long side valley before eventually turning back towards Trongsa. The ancestral home of Bhutan's royal family, Trongsa is an exceptionally dramatic dzong set high above the roaring Mangde Chhu. Its strategic location meant that it was also one of the most important dzongs in the country. After a short visit you carry on, past Trongsa and across the Yotong La, to reach the village of Zugney. The village is a famous centre for weaving and you will attend a workshop to see the industry that is an integral part of Bhutanese society. It is said that every home here is equipped with a loom for weaving and young girls are proficient in the craft before they reach the age of twenty. From Zugney you finish the drive to Jakar, in the cultural heartland of Bhutan.

Overnight: Mountain Lodge Resort, Jakar (Meals: BLD)

Day 9: Attend the Thangbi Mewang Festival.

Today you will attend the Thangbi Mewang Festival which takes place in the courtyard of Thangbi Lhakhang in Bumthang's Chokhor Valley, just a short drive from Jakar.



As with other Bhutanese Buddhist festivals you will see sacred masked dances, or chams, which enact spiritual legends and folklore. The main highlight of the Thangbi Mewang Festival is the fire blessing ceremony, performed on the first evening. Lay monks carry out purification rituals around a fire, and festival goers can cleanse themselves of sin and protect themselves from misfortune for the coming year, by jumping over the flames three times.

During the festival you will see many locals, dressed in their best finest outfits, enjoying both the religious and social occasion. It is an excellent chance to see many beautiful, handwoven fabrics being worn.

Overnight: Mountain Lodge Resort, Jakar (Meals: BLD)

Day 10: Morning 'temple walk' in the valley. Visits to Dorjibi Community Weaving Centre and Wangduechhoeling Palace.

There are several temples in the Jakar valley which you will explore on a gentle walk. Nearest to your hotel is the Jambay Lhakhang, one of the country's oldest temples, built in the mid-7th century. Look out for the set of three steps in the main temple. The first step, now hidden below floor level, is said to represent the time of the past or 'historical' Buddha, the second, very well worn, step represents the present Buddha, whilst the third step above, is said to represent the age of the future Buddha. The point at which the second step is worn down to ground level is held to be the time when the world as we currently know it will end. From Jambay Lhakhang you may walk along a farm track for 30 minutes to reach Kurjey Lhakhang, a series of three large temples. The oldest of the temples here houses a rock indented with the body shape of Guru Rinpoche, whilst the most recent dates back just 30 years and was built by the Queen Mother, Ashi Kesang Wangchuck.

Once your walk is finished you will head off to the Dorjibi Community Weaving Centre near Bumthang. The centre was created to empower local women from the nearby villages in particular Dawathang, Pangrey and Dorjibi. In doing so they hope to create self sufficiency and an income for their families, where agriculture could not. It's also a means to help keep the tradition of weaving alive. They mostly weave Yathra (woolen fabrics) on Bhutanese looms producing jackets, bedding and other items.

You finish the day with a visit to the oldest palace in Bhutan - Wanduechhoeling. It was built in 1857 as the principal residence of the first king of Bhutan, Ugyen Wangchuck and has recently been restored and converted into a museum. The museum houses numerous treasures including rare manuscripts and a sacred shrine.

Overnight: Mountain Lodge Resort, Jakar (Meals: BLD)

Day 11: Drive to Ura. Walk down from the pass to Ura Village - 1.5 hours.



This morning you will drive out of Jakar Valley for 2-3 hours until you eventually reach a high pass above the village of Ura. This is the Ura La (also called the Shertung La) at 3,573m/11,722ft. From here, on a clear day, there are fantastic views of Bhutan's highest mountain, Gangkar Punsum, 7,550m/24,770ft.

You leave your vehicle at the pass and walk down to Ura Village, a pleasant walk through a lovely forest. When you arrive in the extremely picturesque village, you will visit the small village gompa, dedicated to Guru Rimpoche, and will then stroll through the medieval looking streets to reach the Bangpa Heritage Farmstay, a large traditional farmhouse offering comfortable if simple accommodation.

Overnight: Bangpa Heritage Homestay, Ura (Meals: BLD)

Day 12: Drive to Autsho across the Thrumshing La Pass, 3,750m/12,303ft – 7-8 hours.

Today you drive to Autsho. This is a long but stunning drive of many startling contrasts, crossing one of the highest road passes in Bhutan and passing through alpine scenery and sub-tropical forest and travelling one of the most dramatic and spectacular roads in the kingdom. Leaving Ura to rejoin the main highway, you enter the alpine landscapes of the Thrumshing La National Park, passing beneath overhanging cliffs to reach the Thrumshing La Pass, 3,750m/12,303ft, in about one hour. This is the highest point of your trip and, on a clear day, you may be able to see Bhutan's highest peak, Gangkar Punsum. From the pass the road starts its descent, in places hacked into the cliffs, with numerous streams and waterfalls crashing down. Leaving the national park the road emerges into the upper part of the Yong Khola into dense forest, where the scenery becomes lush and sub-tropical with huge trees, bamboos and ferns. This wilderness is one of the prime birdwatching areas in Bhutan. From the forest the road continues to descend through cultivated terraces to arrive at Kuri Zampa bridge, the lowest point of the drive at 570m/1,970ft, an astonishing descent of 3,200m/10,500ft from the pass. From the bridge, the road climbs up for a further hour through pine forests and cultivated fields to reach Mongar and it is then another hour or so north to reach Autsho.

Overnight: The Phayul Resort or Similar, Autsho (Meals: BLD)

Day 13: Visit Namdroling Goenzin Dratshang Monastery. Drive to homestay at Khoma weaving village. Short hike to Sangwai Dadrung.

You begin the day with a visit to Namdroling Goenzin Dratshang Monastery in Autsho. The monastery was built in 2006 under the supervision of Yab Rigzin Dorje. It is home to over one hundred monks who study and take part in frequent ritual ceremonies,

From the monastery you drive on to Khoma village where you will be spending the next three nights. Khoma village is famous for its intricate woven cloth called kishuthara and is said to be the birthplace of Bhutan's traditional weaving culture.

The weavers here produce some of Bhutan's most sought after and expensive kishuthara textiles. Women throughout the kingdom wear kishuthara on special occasions such as wedding and at festivals.
Having arrived at the homestay, and no doubt been given tea and other refreshments, you will finish the day with a short hike to Sangwai Dadrung. This sacred site is a cave beneath a large rock entrance and your guide will tell you all about the legend surrounding it.

Overnight: Khoma Village Homestay (Meals: BLD)

Day 14: Short drive to Gonpa Karpo. Observe weaving demonstrations. Walk back to Khoma.

After breakfast you make the short drive up to Gonpa Kharpo Lhakhang, located on a ridge overlooking Lhuntse, and the centre of another area famous for its weaving. Whilst in the area this morning you will see some of the local weavers at work.

Later you will walk back to Khoma and spend some time looking around the village.

Overnight: Khoma Village Homestay (Meals: BLD)

Day 15: Drive to visit Lhuentse Dzong and town including a pottery. Time at leisure.



Just a few miles southwest of Khoma is Lhuentse best known for its spectacular dzong. It sits fair and square on top of a steep hill, rising from the valley floor and commanding an impregnable position. It is the ancestral home of the kings of Bhutan and was originally established by Pema Lingpa's son, Kuenga Wanpo in 1543. The present Royal family trace their lineage directly to the important saint of Pema Lingpa.

A small township straggles the mountainside below the dzong and here you will visit a pottery before returning to Khoma. The rest of the day is at leisure.

Overnight: Khoma Village Homestay (Meals: BLD)

Day 16: Drive to Tangmachu village to see Guru Rinpoche statue. Continue to Khaine Lhakhang and visit temple. Drive to Mongar.

You say farewell to your hosts after breakfast and drive to Tangchmachu. This is a small village and really quite remote, but is nevertheless the site of the largest statue of Guru Rinpoche (height: 173ft). The statue was constructed by men instead of machines at the instigation of the venerable Khenpo Karpo Rinpoche. Its purpose is to bring peace and prosperity to the world and for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Having admired the statue you return down a zig-zagging road to Khaine Lhkhang. This is an incredibly important small temple, one of 108 built by King Songtsen Gampo in AD 659. It is said that three statues flew from here of their own accord to a temple in one of the main valleys of Bumthang. You can park at one end of the village and walk along paths to the temple.

From the lhakhang you return to your vehicle and drive to the town of Mongar where you spend the night.

Overnight: Hotel Wangchuk or Druk Zhongar or Druk Zom, Mongar (Meals: BLD)

Day 17: Drive to Trashigang with walks en route. Explore Trashigang.

You travel further east today as you leave Mongar and drive to the town of Trashigang. En route, there are a couple of options for walks through the picturesque countryside.

Once you arrive in Trashigang you will have time to explore with your guide. The town is the largest in eastern Bhutan and is quite attractive with its pretty painted houses and colourful bougainvillea and geraniums. The town is clustered round a small central plaza with a large prayer wheel, a bank, some shops, bars and cafes. You may find ad-hoc market stalls set up in the town as it is the main marketplace for the people of the area. Below the plaza is the spectacular Trashigang Dzong, set on a spur high above the valley.

This dzong was built in the 17th century to guard against Tibetan invaders and was one of the most strategically important in the country. It is now the administrative seat for the district as well as a religious centre.

Overnight: Druk Deothjung Resort or Lingkhar Lodge, Trashigang (Meals: BLD)

Day 18: Drive to Radi via Rangjung. Visit weavers in their homes at Radi.



This morning you will drive east on small roads to Radi, you will pass through Rangjung, a prominent religious centre in the east with several Buddhist monasteries.

From Rangjung it is just a few more miles to reach Radi. Sometimes called 'the rice bowl of the east' you will notice the many verdant terraced rice fields that supply much of the grain to the eastern part of Bhutan. Along with its rice production, the villages around this area are famous for their weaving which is the main activity and source of income in the non-agricultural season. In Radi you will visit weavers and village homes to see the raw silk textile weaving known as 'Bura' and also 'Aikpur'. You will also enjoy a demonstration of natural dyeing.

At the end of the day you will make the return journey to your hotel in Trashigang.

Overnight: Druk Deothjung Resort or Lingkhar Lodge, Trashigang (Meals: BLD)

Day 19: Drive to Samdrup Jongkhar – 7-8 hours.

It is a long drive to Samdrup Jongkhar but it's a very scenic journey. After leaving Trashigang, you pass through Sherubtse and the campus of the country's premier University College before you climb to the Yongphu La Pass, 2,190m/7,185ft, offering a final glimpse of the Himalaya. Continuing, down from the pass you next reach Khaling, where another weaving centre is located.

It is a further four to five hours drive from here to Samdrup Jongkhar across the Kharung La at 2,350m/7,710ft - the highest point left on your trip. As you get closer to the border, you will enjoy wonderful views of forested hills and valleys rolling away to the foothills and the Indian plains of Assam State. You can often see Langur monkeys, kingfishers, eagles and other brightly coloured birds along the roadside. The Indian-like border town of Samdrup Jongkhar is literally at the very foot of the Bhutanese foothills and is quite subtropical.

Remember to keep your passport on you today as you may need to show it as you enter the town of Samdrup Jongkhar.

Overnight: Norbu Khangsar Resort or Similar, Samdrup Jongkhar (Meals: BLD)

Day 20: Drive to Guwahati – 3 hours. Fly to Delhi and transfer to hotel.

You cross the Indian border this morning and then drive to reach the airport at Guwahati to catch your flight to Delhi. On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

Overnight: Lemon Tree Premier Hotel, Delhi Airport (Meals: B)

Day 21: Group transfer to airport. Fly to London.

After breakfast you will be transferred to the airport for your flight home. **(Meals: B)**

Our grading system

Weavers' Trail, Bhutan is graded as a Gentle walking holiday, as described below.

Gentle
Trips within this grade typically mix sightseeing with easy-paced half and/or full day walks. On these trips, walks will be on relatively low altitude trails, for a duration of around 4-6 hours. On all of our Gentle graded trips, some ascent and descent should be anticipated, and there may occasionally be a longer walking day. Holidays within this grade generally use hotels and comfortable lodges although a few do have some nights camping.

These holidays are suitable for people who enjoy easy-paced walks in the British countryside or exploring on foot rather than in a vehicle.

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:

- ✓ 20 x breakfasts, 17 x lunches, 17 x dinners
- ✓ In Bhutan, good standard hotel accommodation in main towns and best available hotels in outlying towns, on twin-share, full board basis
- ✓ Good standard hotel accommodation in Delhi on a twin-share, breakfast only basis
- ✓ The services of Sue Lawty as trip leader
- ✓ Local Bhutanese English-speaking guide and driver to accompany group throughout.
- ✓ Bhutan visa and Bhutan departure tax
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicle
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK and 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)

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
- × India visa fees
- × Lunch and dinner in Delhi
- × Tips

Your accommodation

Difficulties with 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.

Also please be aware that the standard of accommodation in the east is not as high as for hotels in the west of the country.

Given these conditions we will make every effort to secure the hotels below, but if our first choice is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.



Lemon Tree Premier Hotel, Delhi Airport

The Lemon Tree Premier offers good facilities and a high level of comfort only 4km from Delhi's international airport. Rooms are bright and spacious with tea/coffee makers, mini bars and free Wi-Fi. The hotel has a spa, pool, cafe, pan-Asian restaurant and trendy bar.



Olathang Cottages or Similar, Paro

This charming boutique style property sits on a hillside quite separate to, and above the Olathang - the famous first hotel ever to be built in the kingdom. Olathang Cottages has a delightful garden which has been developed by the owner's wife. It commands panoramic views of the Paro Valley, and has a quieter more secluded feel. The bedrooms are all en suite and spacious. Traditional paintwork is much in evidence and there is a feeling that you are staying in an elaborate log cabin.



Phuntso Pelri Hotel or Similar, Thimphu

Despite its somewhat dark entrance hall, this 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 Similar, Punakha

Overlooking Punakha Dzong, the Zhingkham Resort is one of the best 3* hotels in Punakha. The well-proportioned, stylish rooms come complete with free Wi-Fi, minibars and coffee/tea making facilities as well as balconies giving picture-perfect views of the dzong and the surrounding hills and countryside.



Yo Lo Koe Lodge, Gakiling Guest House or Similar

Both the Yo Lo Koe Lodge and Gakiling Lodge are situated in Gangtey and have been recently updated. They offer relatively simple but comfortable accommodation, and are built in local style with cosy rooms using a lot of wood panelling and with attached bathrooms. Food is plentiful and good.



Mountain Lodge Resort, Jakar

The Mountain Lodge is situated around 1km from Jakar townand is one of the oldest, family-run hotels in the Bumthang Valley. The lodge has hot stone baths, outdoor seating areas and its own restaurant serving regional, seasonal dishes. Rooms are spacious with natural wood panelling, rain showers and plush beds. They are heated in the traditional way by a bukhari (wood-fired stove).



Bangpa Heritage Homestay, Ura

Bangpa Heritage Homestay is a large, historic, traditional farmhouse located in the centre of the medieval looking village of Ura. The family of this house are considered one of the "noble religious families" (lam chojé), of the region. The house offers comfortable accommodation and excellent food, including fresh bread, as well as Indoor bathrooms with hot water shower and western style toilets.



The Phayul Resort or Similar, Autsho

Accommodation in Lhuntse is rather limited. If accommodation is available in Lhuntse you will stay there, if not you will stay at the Phayul Resort, a small, simple but pleasant lodge located between Lhuntse and Mongar. Rooms are comfortable and have attached facilities.



Khoma Village Homestay

For a truly authentic glimpse of Bhutanese rural life, spend a night or two in a homestay. Accredited by the Bhutanese Tourist Council, there are several homestay options in rural locations including Gangtey Valley, Paro Valley and Haa. Facilities may be simple but they all have bags of character. Meals, in some cases, can be taken with the family, and the food is delicious. Electricity is available in some of the homestays and all will provide hot water for washing. There may even be the chance to enjoy a hot stone bath, try your hand at archery, learn to cook like a local or take a tour of the family farm. Please note that if we have a full group, we may use two homestay properties.



Hotel Wangchuk or Druk Zhongar or Druk Zom, Mongar

This is quite a large modern hotel, looking out over the town and surrounding countryside. Rooms are large and comfortable and the restaurant serves very good food. If rooms are not available at the Wangchuk there are two other very pleasant hotels located nearby, the Druk Zonghar and the Druk Zom, both of which have good rooms and all facilities.



Druk Deothjung Resort or Lingkhar Lodge, Trashigang

Druk Deothjung is a stunning new lodge situated a few kilometres outside Trashigang in a lovely rural location. It has stylish rooms and a good restaurant. If space is not available here you will stay at the Lingkhar Lodge, a pleasant, small hotel 20 minutes' drive from Tashigang town.



Norbu Khangsar Resort or Similar, Samdrup Jongkhar

The Norbu Khangsar enjoys a scenic location close to the border town of Samdrup Jongkhar. The large guest rooms have modern bathrooms, tea/coffee makers and Wi-Fi. The resort has a bar and an airy on-site restaurant serving a range of cuisines.

Meal arrangements

20 x breakfasts, 17 x lunches, 17 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.

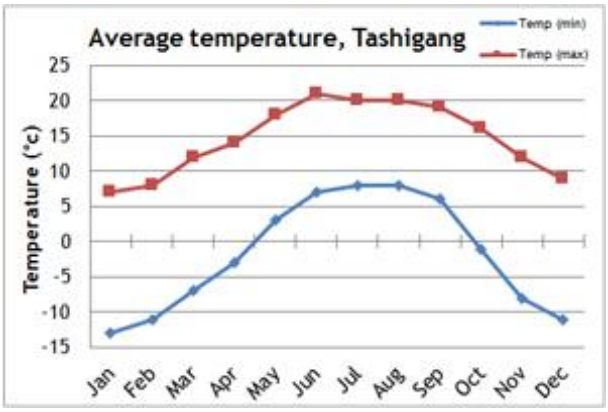
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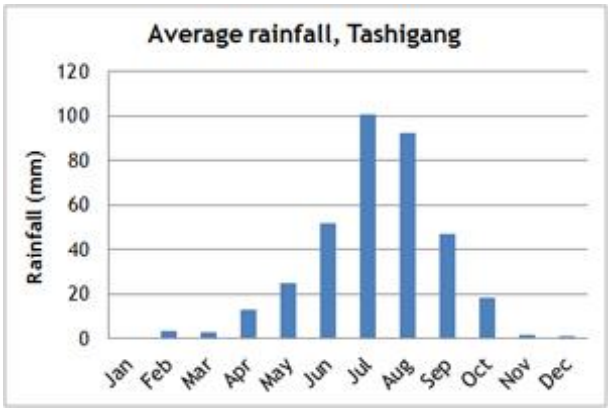
When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

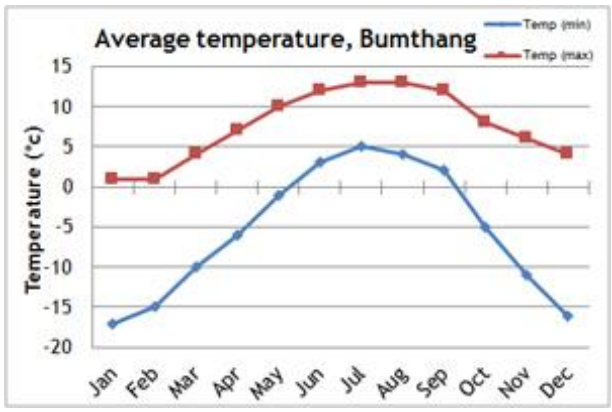
The nature of adventure travel

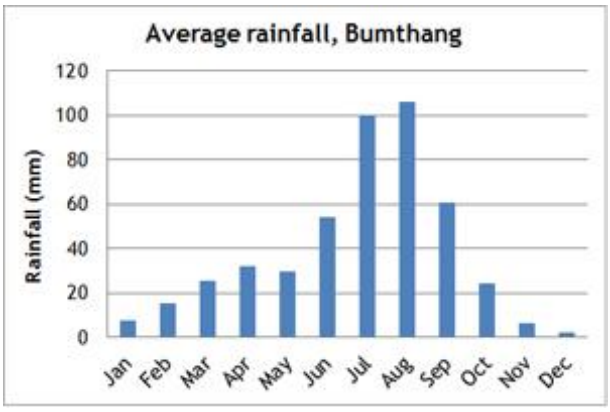
Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather 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.



Kaziranga National Park extension

The Kaziranga National Park is located east of Guahati which you visit at the end of the trip so it is possible to add on a trip to Kaziranga at the end of your Bhutan holiday. Kaziranga is a world heritage site, situated on the edge of the Eastern Himalaya biodiversity hotspot. It offers an amazing diversity of the landscape and wildlife. The large numbers of one-horned rhino are a particular attraction of Kaziranga.



Additional accommodation in Delhi

If you would like to stay longer in Delhi we can arrange additional nights and upgrades from our selection of first rate hotels such as the Oberoi Maidens in the city or Claridges Hotel in New Delhi.

Agra, the Taj Mahal and Jaipur

We offer various extensions to Agra, from a one-day visit to see the majestic Taj Mahal to a six-day trip to visit both the Taj and the Amber Fort at Jaipur. All options travel to Agra on the Shatabdi Express and include the services of an English speaking guide, sightseeing and private transport.



Ranthambore or Corbett National Park

In both Ranthambore and Corbett, northern India has two superb national parks. Both have a diverse range of habitats and are home to a fantastic variety of wildlife including large populations of tigers as well as elephants, leopard, bears and monkeys. Both parks are also renowned for the number and diversity of birds they attract. We can arrange a three night stay at a jungle camp at either Ranthambore or Corbett from where you can enjoy many wildlife watching activities such as nature walks, safaris and bird watching.

Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

- This itinerary is unique to Mountain Kingdoms. It has been carefully designed to provide the ideal balance between meeting weavers and other craftspeople, taking gentle walks, sightseeing and enjoying time to simply relax.
- Sue Lawty is an unrivalled expert on textiles and is well qualified to give you a fantastic insight into Bhutanese textiles, weaving techniques and other crafts of the kingdom.
- You will explore the spectacular and little visited hill-top towns and temples of east Bhutan as well as the better known west of the country.
- Four nights in Bhutanese farmhouse homestays will give you a more personal and authentic insight into Bhutanese home-life and customs.
- Time at a local festival has been included for the complete Bhutan experience.
- Visits to the most important cultural attractions of the Thunder Dragon Kingdom are included such as Taktsang monastery (Tiger's Nest), Punakha Dzong and Trashigang Dzong.
- We have been working with our partners in Bhutan for many years. Their knowledge, experience and attention to detail means you can be assured of a very high quality holiday.
- We offer a flexible service and you can extend your holiday with extra hotel nights, upgrades and activities.
- Our maximum group size is 12 for this trip. This provides for a genuine small group travel experience and helps reduce the negative aspects associated with larger groups.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', 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



Bhutan was full of amazing moments, and we found ourselves in so many situations where we couldn't quite believe we were there: seeing the start of a 5-day religious teaching festival; the monks' graduation at Autsho; having a private guided tour of the not-yet-open palace turned museum full of treasures at Jakar; meeting the maker of the award-winning, incredible Kira; finding the temple mural painters; and so many more. And this was all on top of our busy itinerary, experiencing culture, weaving and dyeing, Buddhist temples and amazing walks and drives.
-Jackie Fryer, UK



It was fantastic and I am still processing all that we did and experienced. Bhutan is a wonderful country and lovely lovely people...It's so hard to pick out anything in isolation - myriads of magical moments in truth and so many times I knew were so special even as I lived them. I count myself very blessed to have been there and done that - I know I was at times just blissfully happy.
-Lizzie, London



A huge 'thank you' for an absolutely fantastic trip to Bhutan. It really did exceed my expectations and in so many ways! It's taken time to even start to process all the varied elements of what we saw and experienced. I'm finding that trying to explain the actual feeling of being in Bhutan to others is almost impossible, it felt so unique...A truly magical trip!
Pat, London



It was an amazing trip, and will take me time to consolidate it all in my memory. For me, the main highlight was seeing the women in Khoma and Radi doing their unbelievably intricate Kushithara weaving, and meeting the prize winners. And being so lucky to have Tsering as our guide, there wasn't a single question that he didn't know the answer to.
-Sarah Cooke, Nottingham

I was surprised by the high standard of most of the hotels. The office staff were very helpful especially with my phone calls and All the pre-trip info was excellent and very helpful.
-Mrs P P, West Yorks

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.















