

Highlights of Bhutan in Style

Traditional villages, a vibrant festival and the best of Bhutan's cultural treasures, with sumptuous accommodation throughout.



Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

Holiday overview

Style	Tour
Accommodation	Hotels
Grade	Tour
Duration	13 days from London to London
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Local Leader Bhutan
Land only	Joining in Kathmandu, Nepal
Max altitude	3,116m/10,223ft, Dochu La, Day 5

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available



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Departures

Group departures

2021 Dates:

Fri 10 Sep - Wed 22 Sep

Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

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, who will have first-hand experience of the destination/s you want to visit. 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



You will have an English-speaking Bhutanese guide to lead your trip. Mountain Kingdoms have been working with the same partner in Bhutan since 1986 and their guides are some of the best in the Kingdom. They speak good 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. Guides receive regular 'top-up' training and 15 of our regular leaders have completed an extended training course run by Mountain Kingdoms in Bhutan.

Your trip highlights

- Stay in first-rate hotel accommodation throughout such as stunning Uma Punakha
- Explore Bhutan's key cultural sights including the Tiger's Nest Monastery and Punakha Dzong
- Join the festivities at the impressive Thimphu Tsechu (festival)
- Enjoy a guided tour of some of Kathmandu's main heritage sites and stay at the stylish Heritage Hotel in Bhaktapur

At a glance itinerary

Day 1-3	Fly to Kathmandu and drive to Bhaktapur. Sightseeing in Kathmandu Valley.
Day 4	Fly to Paro. Afternoon activities.
Day 5-6	Drive to Punakha. Visit Chimi Lakhang and Punakha Dzong. Visit Talo and Nobgang.
Day 7-8	Drive to Thimphu. Attend Thimphu Tsechu and sightseeing in Thimphu.
Day 9-10	Drive to Paro. Sightseeing in Paro and visit Taktsang.
Days 11-13	Fly to Kathmandu. Sightseeing. Fly to London.

Trip summary

Treat yourself to something really special as you tour the cultural attractions of the Thunder Dragon Kingdom from the indulgent comfort of some of the most stylish hotels in Paro, Punakha and Thimphu.

Your journey through picturesque western Bhutan is one of compelling contrasts and is the perfect introduction to the Thunder Dragon Kingdom. You visit the imposing monastery-fortresses of Punakha and Paro Dzong; take a walk up to Bhutan's most iconic sight - spectacular Taktsang Monastery, and discover out-the-way villages where you will meet the locals and have the opportunity to try your hand at some traditional Bhutanese pastimes. Anyone for archery? You will explore picturesque monasteries, thriving towns and fascinating museums, and also visit artisan workshops where you can see craftsmen and women demonstrating their time-honoured skills. And, for the icing on the cake, you can join the festivities at the flamboyant Thimphu Tsechu - one of Bhutan's most important and impressive festivals.

Each night you will relax in a first class hotel providing the highest standards of comfort and service, whilst reflecting the authentic architecture and heritage of Bhutan.

Before and after your time in Bhutan you will also explore the ancient cities of the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal.

Your trip itinerary

Day 1: Depart London.

Depart London on your overnight flight to Kathmandu.

Overnight: In flight

Day 2: Arrive Kathmandu. Drive to Bhaktapur.

On arrival in Kathmandu you will drive the short distance to the city of Bhaktapur to your first hotel. If there is time you might take a walk to explore some of the fascinating streets of this lovely old city.

Bhaktapur is one of three major cities built in the Kathmandu Valley by the old Malla kings who ruled the valley hundreds of years ago. The city is a repository of traditional Nepalese architecture and local Newari craftsmanship where you will find ancient Hindu temples, Buddhist stupas, crumbling shrines, picturesque Rana palaces and crowded bazaars. Many of the buildings in Bhaktapur have their origins in the 15th century and the side streets, being mostly brick paved, still have a really medieval feel to them. It is still very much a lived in city, and with much of it being closed to traffic, walking around is a real pleasure and you will get a feeling for how things must have been in medieval times. Bhaktapur is quieter than Kathmandu city and still has quite a rural feel to it. The local people are still predominantly farmers and the town is famous for its home-made yoghurt as well as for its pottery made from the local red clay - you can see the production going on in the so-called 'pottery square' and other side streets.

Overnight: Heritage Hotel, Bhaktapur

Day 3: Sightseeing in Bhaktapur, Kathmandu and Patan.

After breakfast you will have a tour of Bhaktapur. This city is a real cultural gem. Built by the Malla kings, who reigned up until the 18th century, Bhaktapur has many outstanding examples of the exceptional architecture and craftsmanship of the local Newari ethnic group. You will see fine palaces and temples with gilded roofs, open courtyards and elaborate windows carved in wood. The main focus for the town is the central Durbar Square where many of the finest buildings are found, including the famous palace of 55 windows which shows some of the best examples of elaborately carved windows and doors. The city is a centre for craftsmanship and teachings. After the tour you will have lunch in Bhaktapur.



Later you will have some sightseeing in Kathmandu's historic Durbar Square, with its many superb ancient temples and palaces including the Hanuman Dhoka (the old Royal Palace) and the palace of the Kumari, the so called 'Living Goddess', where you may catch sight of the goddess looking down at you from one of the carved windows of the palace. You will also see many other wonderful masterpieces of Newari architecture and wood carving.

You will then travel on to Patan, the third of the ancient Malla cities of the Kathmandu Valley. Patan is another showpiece of Newari architecture with its own spectacular Durbar Square, palaces and temples. It also has a good museum housed in an old Malla palace where there are excellent displays of the traditional crafts for which the craftsmen of Patan are famous, including, cast bronzes and gilt copper repousse work. After your sightseeing you will return to your hotel in Bhaktapur.

Overnight: Heritage Hotel, Bhaktapur (Meals: B L)

Day 4: Fly to Paro. Visit local family and try traditional activities.

After breakfast you travel to the airport for the short flight up to Bhutan. On a clear day the panoramic views of the Himalaya are sensational, including Everest, but particularly exciting is the approach through the Bhutanese foothills and the landing at the tiny airstrip of Paro. If possible try to sit on the left hand side of the plane for the most spectacular views. On arrival you will pass through customs and immigration and will be met by your guide. You will then drive to your hotel.

The Paro Valley has had great strategic importance in the history of Bhutan and was in the past an important staging post on the trade routes with Tibet. 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 Tashidozong in Thimphu it was also the seat of Bhutan's National Assembly.



You will have the opportunity in the afternoon for an introduction to the Bhutanese way of life. You will visit a local family farm in the Paro Valley where you will be able to see some of the typical architecture of the valley and local farming methods. You might have a go at some traditional Bhutanese activities, such as taking a cookery lesson to learn how typical local food is prepared, or try your hand at archery, a favourite Bhutanese pastime. If none of these appeal you could choose to experience a Bhutanese 'hot stone bath'.

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

Day 5: Drive to Punakha, 1,242m/4,075 - 3½ hours. Visit Chimi Lhakhang and Punakha Dzong.

Firstly after driving for about an hour you will by-pass the turn off to the capital, Thimphu, and climb to cross the Dochu La Pass, a pass at 3,048m/10,000ft, a spot marked by 108 chortens. Here, weather permitting, you will have a magnificent mountain vista. On clear days there are fabulous views of the eastern Himalaya - but this is a beautiful spot even on misty days. You then drive down through incredibly beautiful, varied forest to arrive in the lush Punakha Valley.

Before driving on to your hotel you will pay a visit to Chimi Lhakhang, taking a short walk across the paddy fields to visit this delightful small temple built by Drukpa Kunley. Known as '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 Lhakhang is especially popular with women who come here to pray for children. The temple is characterised by its many phallic symbols.

Later you will visit the fabulous Punakha Dzong, one of the most spectacular and important buildings in the kingdom. It is situated in a picturesque spot at the confluence of two rivers and is reached over a lovely traditional covered bridge. 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. You are normally allowed into the dzong unless there are VIPs visiting.

Overnight: Uma Punakha or Similar, Punakha (Meals: BLD)

Day 6: In the Punakha Valley.

Today you drive up into the hills above Punakha to visit the attractive village of Talo, 2,800m/9186ft, renowned as a charming and well-kept village. First you will drive up to the fine gumpa, built above the village and worth a visit for the spectacular views. After visiting the gumpa you walk down through the village and see traditional village life going on. The beautiful farm houses of the village have their own flower gardens, and corn and vegetables are grown in abundance. It's all very delightful. You come out back onto the road and may then either walk down through woods and fields or drive down to the village of Nobgang. This village was the birthplace of the four girls who, in 1979, married King Jigme Singye Wangchuck to become his four queens. After the King's abdication they became Bhutan's Queen Mothers. The Nobgang gompas are sponsored by their family. The two villages of Talo and Nobgang have a longstanding rivalry in archery. You will then drive back down to the Punakha Valley and have the afternoon at leisure.

Overnight: Uma Punakha or Similar, Punakha (Meals: BLD)

Day 7: Drive to Thimphu, 2,230m/7,612ft - 2½ hours. Sightseeing in Thimphu. Afternoon visit to Wangditse Monastery.

After breakfast you will drive back over the Dochu La to Thimphu. Thimphu has an attractive valley location and is relatively small for a capital city but it has expanded in recent years. There are many places of interest to visit and initially, before checking in to your hotel, you might drive up to the giant Buddha statue to enjoy the splendid views out over the town. Later you will visit 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. The handmade paper workshop is a very interesting visit to see the paper being made. 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 often have good t-shirts available to buy there.

In the afternoon 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 there are great views over Thimphu Dzong and the Thimphu valley. You will then have a walk, contouring the beautiful hills to visit Wangditse Gumpa. This walk should take around 1½ hours. You will have time to visit the gumpa before you walk down for another 30 minutes to reach Dechen Phodrang Monastery, a monastery which houses around 450 student monks enrolled in an 8 year course. The monastery is also home to some fantastic UNESCO monitored 12th century paintings.

Overnight: Druk Hotel or Similar, Thimphu (Meals: BLD)

Day 8: Attend Thimphu Tsechu.

This morning you will attend the Thimphu Tsechu. This is one of the most important set-piece festivals of the year and is massively impressive. It is held in the inner courtyards of the main monastery fortress, the Tashichhodzong. Such festivals are important cultural and religious events and are also a chance for the local people to attain merit but as importantly to socialise and have fun. Beware the very naughty clowns who spend a lot of their time teasing the crowd (and the dancers)! The Black Hat Dancers and all the other colourful ceremonies are thought to dispel the evil spirits that have accumulated over the ground during the previous year. Archery is also important to the Bhutanese and if there is a competition going on you may have the opportunity to visit. These are great fun as the opposing teams take every opportunity to barrack each other.



You will have the afternoon at leisure in Thimphu, possibly visiting the Takin Reserve to see Asia's strangest looking animal.

Overnight: Druk Hotel or Similar, Thimphu (Meals: BLD)

Day 9: Drive to Paro - 1½ hours. Visit Kyichu Lakhang and Dzong Drakha.

After breakfast you will drive back to Paro. You will then have time for some sightseeing in Paro.

Before lunch you may visit Kyichu Lakhang. This temple is one of the oldest and most beautiful temples in Bhutan. It was one of 108 temples built by Songtsen Gampo, an important early Tibetan king. Its purpose was to subdue a Bon demon that was thought to hover over the whole of Tibet and was obstructing the spread of Buddhism. Kyichu Lakhang is said to pin down the left foot of the demon.

After lunch you drive up to visit Dzong Drakha, a beautiful cliff temple situated just off the road leading up to the Cheli La pass. This is a beautiful spot and the views over the Paro Valley are stunning.

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

Day 10: Walk to Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest). Visit Paro Museum and Dzong.

You will drive a little further up the valley to 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 1½-2hrs, 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 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. You will have lunch at a tea house during your walk to Taktsang, probably at the viewpoint overlooking the monastery.

Please note that if you prefer not to make the walk up to Taktsang your driver will be able to take you instead further along the valley to visit Drukgyel Dzong. Nearby there is an excellent viewpoint for the summit of Mount Chomolhari, which at 7,313m/23,997ft, is the second highest peak in Bhutan.

After descending from Taktsang you will return to Paro and visit the town's interesting Museum and spectacular Paro Dzong.

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

Day 11: Fly to Kathmandu. Time at leisure.

You will transfer to Paro Airport where you will say goodbye to your guide and driver. You then check in for your flight, normally in the early morning. Your flight takes you out and over the Bhutanese mountains and past Kangchenjunga, Makalu and Everest (the latter is quite distant on this flight), finally dropping down into the Kathmandu valley. You will be met and transferred to the Heritage Hotel in Bhaktapur, after which you will have time to relax or for shopping or sightseeing.

Overnight: Heritage Hotel, Bhaktapur (Meals: B)

Day 12: Sightseeing in Kathmandu. Transfer to airport and depart for London.

Today you will enjoy your final sightseeing. Firstly you will drive to Pashupatinath a complex of Hindu temple buildings located not far from Dwarika's Hotel on the banks of the sacred Bagmati River. Here are found Kathmandu's main cremation ghats on the river banks as well as the most important Shiva temple in Nepal. You will then drive the short distance to Boudhanath where you will visit the ancient Buddhist stupa there. Pilgrims from all over the Indian subcontinent flock to Boudhanath to go round the stupa in a clockwise direction, turning prayer wheels as they pass.

You then return to your hotel at Bhaktapur until you are transferred to the airport for your overnight flight back to London.

Overnight: In flight (Meals: B)

Day 13: Arrive London.



Our grading system

Highlights of Bhutan in Style 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.

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.

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:

- ✓ An English-speaking qualified Bhutanese tour leader
- ✓ An English-speaking guide in Kathmandu
- ✓ Flights between Kathmandu and Paro and hotel/airport transfers
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK (upgrades available) & UK Departure Tax (flight inclusive only)
- ✓ Single, timed group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicles
- ✓ Bhutan visa and Bhutan departure tax
- ✓ Premium hotel accommodation in Kathmandu on a twin share, bed and breakfast basis
- ✓ Top quality hotels (5 and 4 star) in Bhutan on twin share, full board basis
- ✓ Sightseeing where specified
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)
- ✓ A free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle
- ✓ The opportunity to attend one of our pre trip meets in the Cotswolds

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
- ✗ Visa fees for Nepal
- ✗ Lunch and evening meals in Kathmandu
- ✗ Optional trips and excursions
- ✗ Tips

Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

For our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag (these are required for certain treks), there is the choice of receiving either a free Water-to-Go bottle or a free Mountain Kingdoms fleece. If you are not eligible for a free bottle, you will still be able to buy a special Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit [For further information about our campaign visit https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign](https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign).

Your accommodation

We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in this itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is unavailable we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.

Hotels in Bhutan

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:



Heritage Hotel, Bhaktapur

Situated just a few minutes walk from the historic heart of the once royal city of Bhaktapur, the handsome Heritage hotel reflects the rich artistic traditions of the Kathmandu Valley. Built from reclaimed materials from ancient palaces and residences, and fitted out with antiques and hand-carved furnishings, it offers an authentic taste of Nepali culture, but without sacrificing modern-day comforts. Well-appointed rooms come with big bathrooms, Wi-Fi and lots of homely touches and the hotel has its own bar, fine dining restaurant and al fresco eatery.



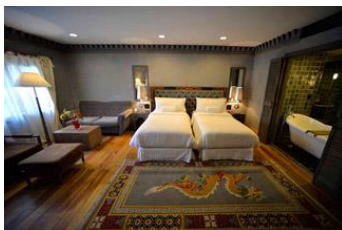
Hotel Zhiwaling or Similar, Paro

The 5* Hotel Zhiwaling is situated in a peaceful area not far from Paro town. It was built to resemble a dzong with intricate wood carving and hand-painted decoration. The attractive rooms are located in the main building or in cottages set in beautifully landscaped gardens. They all offer modern amenities and far-reaching views across the Paro Valley. The Zhiwaling has a spa, outdoor hot stone bath, fine restaurant, yoga classes, temple and even a greenhouse showcasing rare Himalayan plants.



Uma Punakha or Similar, Punakha

Like its sister property, Uma Paro, Uma Punakha is a luxury boutique resort set in a beautiful location delivering 5* comfort and style. It is nestled amidst terraced rice fields beside the Mo Chhu River and all its eleven luxurious rooms have floor to ceiling windows framing the sweeping views. Service is faultless and the hotel offers fine dining as well as a small spa where you can enjoy a hot stone bath overlooking the valley.



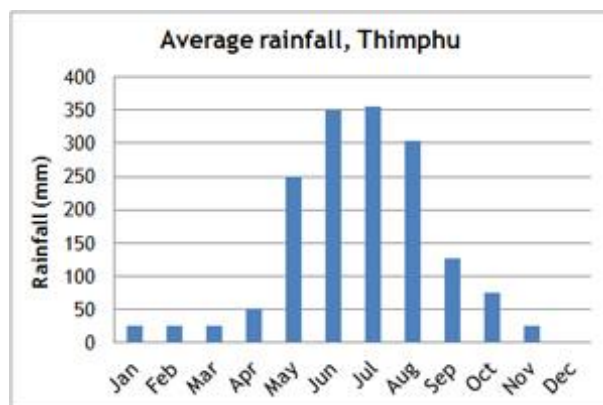
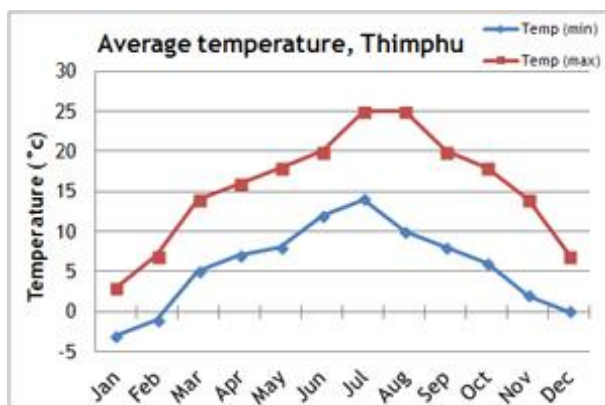
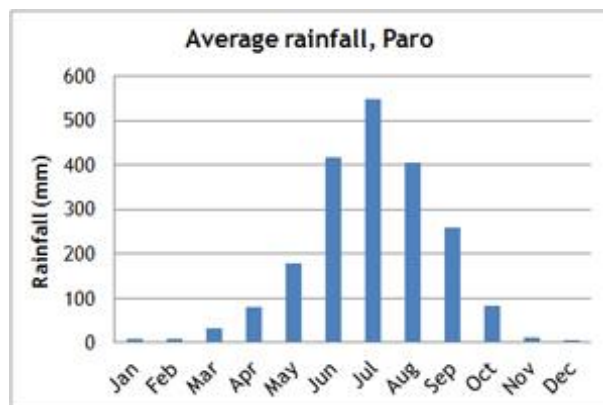
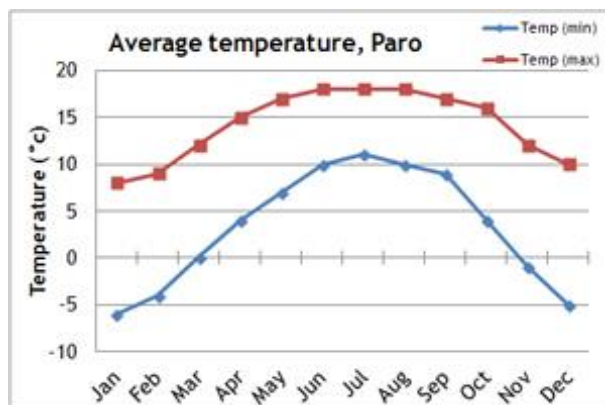
Druk Hotel or Similar, Thimphu

This four star property is one of Thimphu's longest established hotels and has recently been renovated to give it a stylish and modern feel as well as good facilities. It is conveniently located in the centre of Thimphu and has well-appointed rooms and a spa.

Meal arrangements

Bed and breakfast in Kathmandu plus lunch on Day 3. All meals in Bhutan.

Climate information



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.

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.



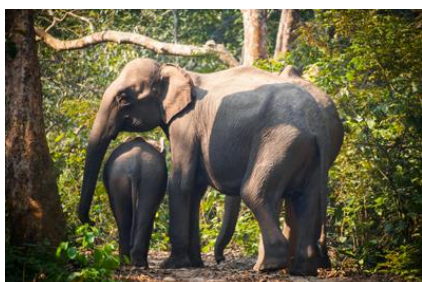
Additional accommodation in Nepal

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.



Lumbini, Nepal

Enjoy a three day extension to the birthplace of Buddha, one of the most important Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the world. Take the short flight from Kathmandu, and spend two nights in a comfortable 3* hotel, just steps from the Lumbini temple complex, with a full day to explore the fascinating UNESCO World Heritage Site in the company of an expert local guide.



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.



Bumthang Extension

A five night extension taking in the key sights of the cultural heartland of Bhutan. The Bumthang region is a centre for Bhutanese weaving and is home to some of the country's most spectacular temples and fortresses. It is also very scenic and offers ample opportunities for walks along its four main valleys.



Bumdra Trek

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?

- This first class cultural tour of the Kingdom of Bhutan is unique to Mountain Kingdoms with plenty of time allowed to enjoy the many highlights that the country has to offer.
- We use premium quality hotels in both Kathmandu and Bhutan that offer the very best character, comfort and facilities.
- Each departure is tied into a Bhutanese festival. They are highly atmospheric, interesting, colourful and exciting events.
- We have been pioneering holidays in Bhutan for over 30 years. Our M.D. Steve Berry, is one of the leading authorities on Bhutan in the travel industry and has written two books about his experiences in the Thunder Dragon Kingdom.
- Many members of the Mountain Kingdoms team have travelled extensively in Bhutan. If you have any questions about any aspect of this holiday please don't hesitate to give us a call on 01453 844400 or email info@mountainkingdoms.com.
- 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 groups.
- We offer a flexible service and can extend your holiday with extra hotel nights, upgrades and exciting activities.
- 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.
- We are an IATA accredited agent and work directly with some of the world's major airlines. 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 Manager, April, for flight options, quotes and further information.

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 we say



Bhutan is one of the most intriguing and unique countries you are ever likely to visit. The architecture, festivals, people and their way of life are a joy to experience. And, to do so whilst staying in such fabulous accommodation is just a bonus.

- Seraphina, Reservations Manager, Mountain Kingdoms

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 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 CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit www.tourismdeclares.com

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance 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

Already doing:

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

Will do:

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

Reducing Carbon Emissions

Already doing:

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

Will do:

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.

