Bhutan Private Journey

THE WORLD'S LAST SHANGRI LA

WHEN TO GO

Late September to mid-May

For our Private Journey trips, you choose your own group and your preferred dates—there are no set departure dates. Private Journeys are available to groups as few as two people or as large as you like. While many guests choose to book this tour exactly as is, our Area Specialists can work with you to customize it to your wishes. Contact us for availability, questions, or to book your adventure!

Wilderness Travel

Bhutan Private Journey

ABOUT PRIVATE JOURNEYS

Wilderness Travel Private Journeys are designed for people who want to travel with their own small private group, but who still want to experience the same superb itinerary design, great accommodations, and signature quality of Wilderness Travel's escorted group trips. These Private Journeys allow you to choose your own dates and your traveling companions—and enjoy the WT touch on all aspects of the journey.

In the serene, secluded Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan, spirituality permeates every aspect of daily life, traditional festivals are living manifestations of a national faith, and the king decrees "Gross National Happiness" as the standard by which to measure the country's wealth. On this lodge-based Private Journey with your own private guide, hike to tiny villages of whitewashed homes, through magical forests, and up to mountainside chortens (shrines) bedecked with colorful prayer flags. Along the way from Thimphu, the capital, to the beautiful Paro and Punakha valleys, meet villagers, farmers, and red-robed monks, explore colorful markets, and marvel at the Shangri La setting of sublime fortress monasteries reigning over wooded valleys. Exciting optional add-ons include the opportunity to experience a traditional hot stone bath, get a reading by a Bhutanese astrologer, or visit a nunnery in the Punakha Valley.

Itinerary

Due to the limited availability of flights, guides, and accommodations, we strongly recommend you request your trip dates 6-12 months in advance, but we are happy to check closer dates as well.

Please Note: Make sure you arrange your travel plans to arrive in Bangkok at least one day before Day 1 of the itinerary. Overnight(s) are on your own in Bangkok.

DAY 1
BANGKOK / PARO (7,500′) / THIMPHU (7,600′)

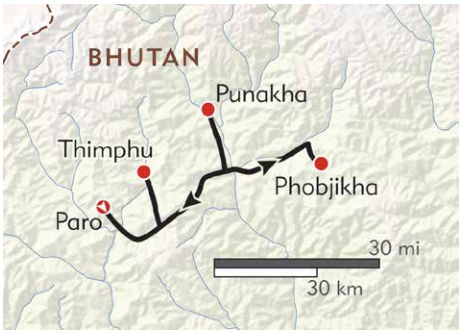
An early morning flight from Bangkok, Thailand, brings you to Bhutan's emerald-green Paro Valley, where shrines dot the landscape and graceful willow trees grow along the edge of the Paro River as it winds through fields and farmlands. On arrival, you are met for a drive to Thimphu, the capital. The drive contours lovely mountain roads through countryside of terraced rice fields and dense rhododendron and pine forests. En route, you'll see your first examples of Bhutan's remarkable traditional architecture, one of the country's unique cultural treasures. Even the most remote village farmhouses are hand-crafted using the same ancient methods used to create Bhutan's religious fortress-dzongs. Along the way, you'll stop at the Iron Bridge, a large chain bridge built in the 15th century laced with prayer flags leading to Tachog Lhakhang. After arrival in Thimphu and lunch at a local restaurant, you will visit the beautiful Giant Buddha statue, perched on a hilltop overlooking the valley. This evening, enjoy a Welcome Dinner at your hotel. Overnight at hotel in Thimpu...LD
Driving Details: Approximately 1 hour

Classic Accommodation: City Hotel or The Capital Hotel
Optional Upgrade: Le Meridien or Hotel Druk
See Lodging section of this itinerary for description and photos.

DAY 2
THIMPHU / CHERI MONASTERY

A short hike through a beautiful forest of oaks brings you up to Cheri Monastery, a 17th century monastery and Buddhist university where you'll see monks studying and carrying out their daily rituals. Later, head to Sangay Gang, where there is a sanctuary for the cattle-sized animal called the takin, the national animal of Bhutan. These rare Himalayan creatures resemble miniature American bison, standing about five feet high with large heads and front quarters. Later, you will have an optional astrological reading. Overnight at hotel...BLD
Hiking Details: Approximately 2 hours, 2.5 miles, 1,200 feet ascent/descent; Maximum Altitude: 9,600 feet

Thimphu: Thimphu was a wooded farming valley up until 1961, when it became Bhutan's official national capital. The massive Tashicho Dzong, about 700 years old, was carefully renovated in the 1960s by the late King Jigme Dorji



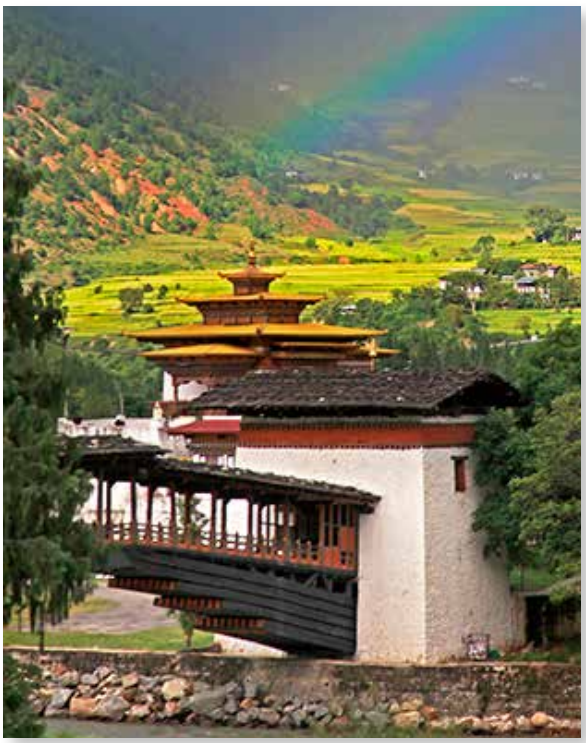
TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

Length: 9 days
Arrive: Paro, Bhutan
Depart: Paro, Bhutan
Lodging: 8 nights hotels and lodges
Meals: All meals included (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
Activity: Cultural Adventures, Hiking / Trekking
Trip Level: 1 2 ③ 4 5 6
Moderate to steep trails, 3 hours a day, altitudes averaging 7,000-10,000 feet

HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience a mystical Himalayan kingdom
- Magical Taktsang, Bhutan's legendary cliff-perched monastery
- Meet Bhutanese villagers, explore colorful markets
- Optional activities include a traditional hot stone bath, a reading by a Bhutanese astrologer, and a visit to a nunnery set over the stunning Punakha Valley

Itinerary



Wangchuk to house the royal and main government offices. It is also the summer residence of the Je Khempo, Bhutan's chief abbot. King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk was the main architect of modern Bhutan. He died in 1972 and was succeeded by his son, Jigme Singye Wangchuk, who was 17 at the time. He abdicated the throne in 2006, as Bhutan changed to a constitutional monarchy, and his son, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck (then 28), was crowned king and became the head of state in November 2008.

DAY 3
COUNTRYSIDE HIKE / PHOBJIKHA (9,800′)

Boarding vehicles, drive to the Phobjikha Valley, on the western slope of the Black Mountains in eastern Bhutan. Along the way, cross the Dochu La (10,000'), whose summit is festooned with fluttering prayer flags and more than 100 chortens (stupas) dedicated to Bhutan's continued peace and happiness. From the pass, hike through a mixed forest of spruce, rhododendron, hemlock, oak, pine, and juniper to isolated Lungchuzekha Monastery (11,800'), surrounded by prayer flags. On a clear day, you can enjoy good views of the Bhutan Himalaya. Return to the Dochu La, board waiting vehicles, and continue to the Phobjikha Valley. Overnight at Yue Loki Guest House...BLD

Hiking Details: Approximately 4 hours, 5.3 miles, 1,800 feet ascent/descent, Maximum Altitude: 11,800 feet

Driving Details: Approximately 3 hours

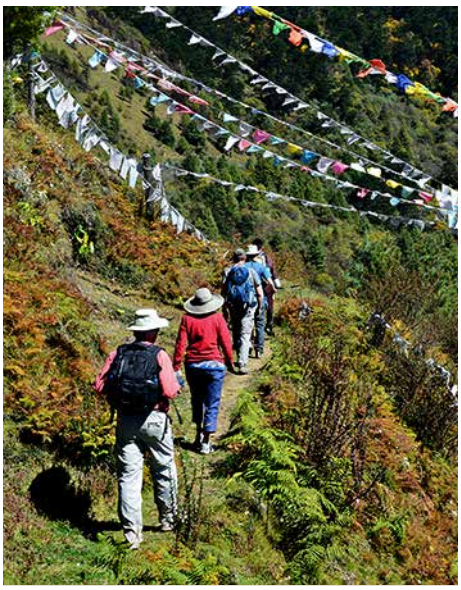
DAY 4
PHOBJIKHA (9,800′) / GANGTEY MONASTERY

With its alpine setting in the absolute heart of Bhutan, the beautiful Phobjikha Valley is a high-altitude glacial valley featuring mixed forests of pine and rhododendron, with brushy grasslands on the valley floor. In the winter, a flock of 200-300 black-necked cranes (Grus nigricollis) migrates to this valley from Tibet to spend the winter foraging in the valley. The cranes are considered harbingers of good luck and have long been respected by the residents of the valley. Their arrival signals the villagers that it's time to pack up and move down to lower, warmer climes (the valley is snowed in during the winter months). Hike from the lodge along a nature trail to the gold-roofed Gangtey Monastery, which sits on a prominent hilltop in the valley, or visit a local farmhouse. Later, visit the Crane Foundation Center, a museum and information center on the black cranes. Today, you will also have the option of a hot stone bath at a local farmhouse, a traditional therapeutic treatment in Bhutan. Overnight at Yue Loki Guest House...BLD

Hiking Details: 45 minutes, 1.25 miles, 200 feet ascent/descent

Driving Details: 3.5-4 hours

Itinerary



DAY 5
PELE LA PASS HIKE / PUNAKHA

A short drive brings you to Pele La Pass (11,220'), one of Bhutan's highest and traditionally considered the boundary between west and central Bhutan. You may see local craftspeople selling fine yak-hair products at the roadside here. From the pass, you'll set off on the Trans Bhutan Trail, which descends to the meadows of Longtey village (be sure to keep an eye out for the remote yak herder camps that can be seen scattered around the valley). You'll take a break in a traditional farmhouse in the village of Rukubji to enjoy a hot lunch, before visiting Rukubji's village lhakhang (temple), also known as Kuenzang Choling. It is believed that this temple was built some 300 years ago by a Lama named Tshendhen Duelwa. Unlike most temples, it is not built on a ridge with a view out over a valley, but rather on an extended plateau and close to two rivers. Legend has it that the Lama built the temple on top of the head of a snake-demoness that he subdued in the same location. After lunch, you'll drive to Punakha with the rest of the day at your leisure. You'll have the option to visit the Sangchen Dorji Lhuendrup nunnery, which overlooks the Punakha Valley. More than 100 nuns reside here, and inside the two-story temple a 14-foot bronze statue of Avalokiteshvara, Buddha of compassion and mercy, stands. It's a great place to meditate and catch a mesmerizing view of the Punakha Valley.
Overnight at hotel...BLD
Hiking Time: 2.5 to 3 hours. Driving time: 2.5 hours

Classic Accommodation: Hotel Sonamgang, Dharma Siddhi Homes, or Spirit Village Lodge
See Lodging section of this itinerary for description and photos.

Punakha: The winter capital was located here in part because Punakha is a warm, well-watered valley with a relatively low altitude of 4,100 feet, allowing for the production of two rice crops each year. Oranges, mangoes, bananas, and even pomegranates are grown here. In Punakha, you may see people from the remote village of Laya. The Layap, as they are known, are yak herders who make the three- or four-day walk to Punakha from their high altitude villages in the Gasa district to trade. Women of Laya are recognizable by their conical bamboo hats with a center spike of bamboo. Laya's men wear distinctive black woolen cloaks.

DAY 6
KHAMSUM YULEY NAMGAY CHORTEN / PUNAKHA DZONG

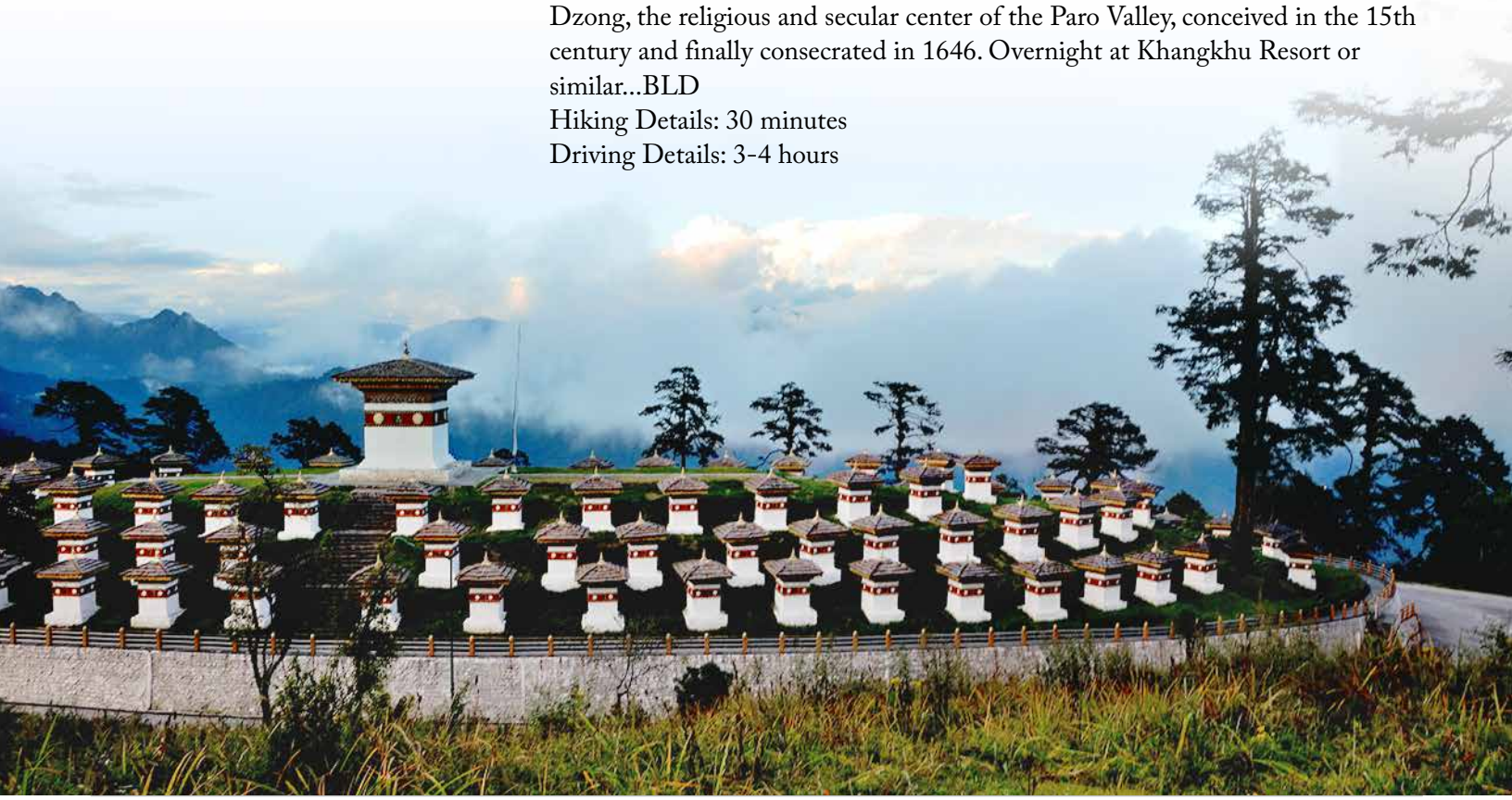
The little village of Nezigang is the starting point for a hike through cultivated fields and small villages, with a gradual climb to the Khamsum Yuley Namgay Chorten, a shrine recently built by the royal family. It is an amazingly elaborate structure with a rainbow of Guru Rimpoche images and superb views of the Punakha Valley. Hike back down and enjoy a hot picnic lunch near the riverside, then follow ancient trails amid whitewashed farmhouses to the architectural wonder of the 17th century Punakha Dzong, Bhutan's former

Itinerary

winter capital. The Punakha Dzong was built in 1637 at the confluence of the Mo Chu and Po Chu ("mother" and "father" rivers) by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, who unified Bhutan in the 1630s and established the distinct Bhutanese culture separate from the Tibetan one from which it is derived. This vast, labyrinthine dzong has played a pivotal role in Bhutan's history. The official name of the dzong is Druk Pungthang Decchen Phodrang, which translates to "the palace of great happiness." Today it is the winter home of the Je Khempo, the head abbot of Bhutan, who in winter resides here with a retinue of 1,000 monks. Overnight at hotel...BLD
Approximate Hiking Time: 1-2 hours, 2 miles, 700 feet ascent/descent

DAY 7
CHIMI LHAKHANG / PARO

A half-hour walk through mustard fields brings you to Chimi Lhakhang (lhakhang means temple), a monastery and fertility temple dedicated to Lama Drukpa Kuenley, a Tibetan Buddhist saint known popularly in Bhutan as "the divine madman" and considered a folk hero for his unconventional ways. Drukpa Kuenley originally built a chorten on the site in the 14th century. The newer temple, flanked by nearly 100 tall prayer flags, sits atop a picturesque hill. It has long been a pilgrimage site for childless couples. After the visit, head to Paro, recrossing the magnificent Dochu La. After lunch in Paro, explore the National Museum, housed in the round, multi-storied Ta Dzong, built in 1775. The museum's collection includes ancient artifacts, weapons, and stamps, and an incredible collection of silver teaware. The Ta Dzong was once the watchtower for the massive Paro Dzong. From the Ta Dzong, walk to the nearby Paro Dzong, the religious and secular center of the Paro Valley, conceived in the 15th century and finally consecrated in 1646. Overnight at Khangkhu Resort or similar...BLD
Hiking Details: 30 minutes
Driving Details: 3-4 hours



Itinerary

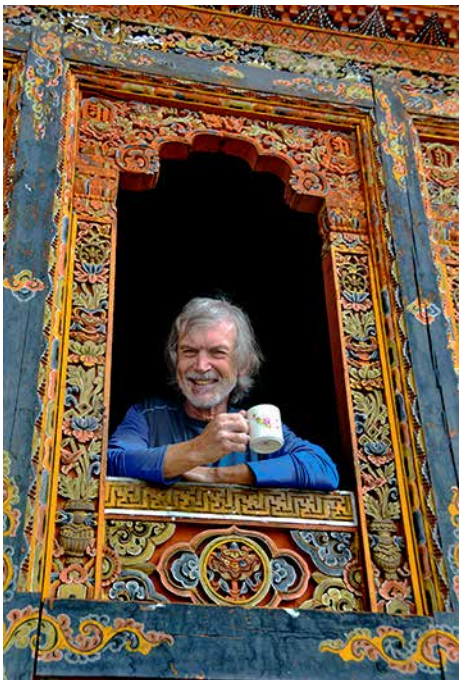
Classic Accommodation: Khangkhu Resort or Paro Eco Lodge
Optional Paro Hotel Upgrade: Naksel Boutique Hotel and Spa or Zhiwaling Hotel
See Lodging section of this itinerary for description and photos.

DAY 8
TAKTSANG MONASTERY (10,200′) / PARO VALLEY

Today, hike up through pine forests festooned with Spanish moss to reach the striking monastic retreat of Taktsang, the "Tiger's Nest," built into a sheer cliff face high above the Paro Valley. This is the most famous temple in Bhutan and one of the most venerated pilgrim sites of the Himalayan world. Padmasambhava (Guru Rimpoche), the great 8th century Buddhist saint and teacher, is thought to have landed at this spot after flying over the mountains from Tibet on the back of a tigress, thus bringing the teachings of Buddhism to Bhutan. The primary temple was built around Padmasambhava's meditation cave in 1684. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant or en route at a teahouse midway with fantastic views of the monastery. Back in Paro, explore the town on a guided walk and visit the local bazaar. Overnight in Paro...BLD
Approximate Hiking Time: 3-4 hours, 4.5 miles, 2,200 feet ascent/descent

DAY 9
DEPART

Transfer to Paro Airport and fly to Bangkok for homeward flights. Flights typically arrive in Bangkok between 1:30 pm and 6:30 pm…B



Travel times vary depending upon local conditions, and the itinerary may change while you are in Bhutan due to government regulations and local climate conditions. Itinerary and hotel changes are not uncommon in Bhutan, so we appreciate your understanding and flexibility.

Trip Cost, Payment & Insurance

TRIP COST

Prices are per person, based on double occupancy

2026

$4,895 (4-6 members)
$5,095 (2-3 members)
Single supplement: $430
Internal airfare: $1,100 (subject to change)
Bhutan Visa Fee (WT acquires visa for you): $40
Optional Hot Stone Bath: $40
Optional Astrology Reading: $100

2027

$4,995 (4-6 members)
$5,195 (2-3 members)
Single supplement: $430
Internal airfare: $1,300 (subject to change)
Bhutan Visa Fee (WT acquires visa for you): $40
Optional Hot Stone Bath: $50
Optional Astrology Reading: $100

Prices are based on double occupancy and not guaranteed until services are confirmed.

Make it Your Trip!

The prices above are for the ready-to-book adventure outlined in this Detailed Itinerary, a popular option that has been handcrafted by our Area Specialists to include the best of every destination. While many travelers choose to book this tour as is, our Area Specialists are also happy to work with you to customize this Private Journey to suit your specific interests and style of travel. We can arrange for longer or shorter stays, or add an extension to additional places of interest. We can even add special activities or customize excursions depending on your interests. We invite you to contact us to discuss your options!

*Special Note: The Uma Paro upgrade is subject to stricter deposit and cancellation requirements. At the time of booking, we will collect full payment for your Uma upgrade. If, for any reason, you should have to cancel your Uma upgrade, you will incur a 50% penalty up until 90 days prior to departure. Within 90 days, the Uma upgrade payment is non-refundable.

TRIP COST INCLUDES

- Expert leadership of a local guide and driver
- Accommodations in hotels and lodges
- All meals included (unless staying at hotel upgrades)
- A glass of local beer or wine with dinner
- All ground transportation from meeting until departure
- All activities as indicated in Detailed Itinerary
- All government taxes and fees (including Sustainable Development Fee)

TRIP COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

- Travel to and from the arrival and departure location as indicated in Detailed Itinerary
- Additional hotel nights outside the trip's scheduled dates
- Optional gratuities for guide, driver, restaurant services, porterage and baggage handling
- Emergency medical evacuation insurance (required)
- Other expenses of a personal nature (alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.)
- Any activities and services described as an upgrade or optional

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation: $1,000
90 days prior to departure: Balance

CANCELLATION AND TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Minimum fee: $1,000 per person
61-90 days prior to departure: 25% of trip cost
46-60 days prior to departure: 50% of trip cost
45 days or less: 100% of trip cost
*Please note that this differs from our regular catalog departures.

SIGNING UP FOR A TRIP

Early reservations are recommended since accommodations often sell out far in advance.
Please call 1-800-368-2794 and ask for our Africa Manager or email asia@wildernesstravel.com with any questions that you may have about this trip. To reserve your Private Journey, we will need to know your preferred dates of travel. We will then check availability and send you a proposed itinerary with exact pricing for your adventure. We can typically hold a provisional booking for one week. At that time, we must collect your initial deposit or accommodations will be released.

MANDATORY EMERGENCY EVACUATION INSURANCE

Please note: Insurance for emergency medical evacuation is required for this trip. Wilderness Travel offers a comprehensive Travel Protection Plan through Travelex Insurance that meets this requirement. For more details, visit our website: www.wildernesstravel.com/insurance. Alternatively, you can purchase a different policy on your own, as long as it includes emergency medical evacuation coverage of at least $250,000 per person. You can compare various options at www.insuremytrip.com.

Extensions

To help you make the most of your adventure, we've created several exciting trip extensions. For detailed information, including full itineraries and complete pricing, please visit our *Bhutan Private Journey* webpage and click on "Extend Your Trip:" www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/bhutan-private-guided-tour/

TEMPLES OF ANGKOR EXTENSION

With the haunting remains of temples and shrines scattered across a tropical landscape, Angkor is a lasting monument to the glory of a bygone Khmer civilization and one of the wonders of the modern world. With a private guide, discover majestic temples adorned with intricate bas-reliefs or entwined by encroaching vegetation, climb up towers for sunset views of the countryside, contemplate the past as you pause beside huge moats and man-made lakes, and pass through imposing gateways decorated with colossal sculptured Buddha images.
4 days. From $1,495.

BANGKOK EXTENSION

Discover the wealth of beautiful cultural monuments of Bangkok, one of Asia's most exciting cities. With a private guide, journey by private longtail boat through the winding klongs (waterways) of the Chao Phraya River, then spend the day visiting the city's ornate and beautiful sites, including Wat Arun, Bangkok's most well-known landmark, the dazzling Grand Palace, the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, the enormous gold-plated Reclining Buddha, and the vibrant market at Pak Klong Talad, where a vast variety of orchids and colorful flowers are sold.
4 days. From $1,595.

LAOS: LUANG PRABANG EXTENSION

Savor the delights of Laos, with its gilded temples, French-Indochinese architecture, and traditional Buddhist culture. Our extension visits the enchanting town of Luang Prabang, the heart and soul of the old Lao kingdom, a place to enjoy tranquil rural rhythms and a dramatic setting on the Mekong.
3 days. From $1,195.

Arrival & Departure

ARRIVAL & MEETING PLACE

Bangkok, Thailand

Suggested Airport: Suvarnabhumi Airport (BKK)
Suggested Date & Time: At least one day prior to Day 1

Meeting Place: Your trip begins in Paro, Bhutan. However, you must arrive in Bangkok at least one day prior to Day 1, due to the timing of the Bangkok/Paro group flight (Wilderness Travel will book this flight for all trip members as part of the "internal airfare"). Please note that overnights in Bangkok are on your own (at additional cost).

On Day 1, the Bangkok/Paro flight usually departs very early in the morning, between 4:30 am and 7:30 am (subject to change). You will meet your local guide upon arrival at the Paro International Airport (they will not be with you in Bangkok). They will be waiting outside of the customs area, holding a Wilderness Travel sign.

DEPARTURE

Bangkok, Thailand

Suggested Airport: Suvarnabhumi Airport (BKK)
Suggested Date & Time: Spend the night in Bangkok on Day 9, and depart anytime the next day (or later, if you would like to extend your time in Bangkok)

On Day 9 (the last day of your trip), you will be transferred to the Paro International Airport for the Paro/Bangkok flight. Wilderness Travel will also book this flight for all trip members as part of the "internal airfare."

This Paro/Bangkok flight typically arrives in Bangkok between 1:00 pm and 5:30 pm, although it is prone to delays and changes, even at the last minute. Because the timing of this flight can change, you should spend the night in Bangkok on Day 9, departing anytime the next day (or later, if you would like to extend your time in Bangkok). Overnights in Bangkok are on your own (at additional cost).

INTERNAL AIR TRAVEL

Please note that these Druk or Bhutan Air flights often stop en route in India. You will not need to get off the plane, but other passengers may join or depart the aircraft.

We ask for your patience regarding Druk or Bhutan Air flights, as the military's priority usage of aircraft, adverse weather conditions, booking problems, and other factors beyond our control, often result in a group not flying as scheduled. Bhutan is a developing country where western ideas of efficiency do not always operate, so we ask that you try to "go with the flow" if any unexpected delays occur.

INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL

You are responsible for making your own arrangements for flights to and from Bangkok, Thailand. There are many air carriers servicing Bangkok and thus many flight options.

There are many online consolidators for booking travel, but for more personal help arranging air transport, you can contact Exito Travel at 970-818-8459 in the US or Canada They are very adept at putting flight itineraries together, to even the most far-flung places. More information can be found on Exito's website at www.exitotravel.com.

Depending on your routing, it is necessary to depart from the US two or possibly three days prior to Day 1 of the trip itinerary. The name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly, and your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US.

Please do not purchase your tickets until you are confirmed on the trip. Once your tickets have been purchased, please send us a copy of your airline schedule. It is your responsibility to ensure your flight times coordinate with the arrival and departure logistics for this trip.

Lodging

DAYS 1 TO 2 (2 NIGHTS): THIMPHU, BHUTAN

In Thimphu we stay at one of the following properties based on availability and choice of accommodation:

CITY HOTEL

This centrally located hotel is set within a short walk to the Thimphu market and is a great base for exploring the area. The hotel offers clean and spacious guestrooms with modern bathrooms as well as views of the countryside or mountains. Free Wi-Fi is available throughout the hotel and there is a nice lounge bar on the second floor to relax and enjoy a drink.

THE CAPITAL HOTEL

This family-owned boutique hotel is one of Thimphu's newest accommodations and has a fantastic location with views of the surrounding mountains. Guests are welcomed through ornate Bhutanese doors, and hotel rooms are spacious and airy, with plush bedding, a small sitting area, and clean bathrooms with showers. There is a nice spa to relax after a day of exploring as well as a bar and rooftop terrace to sip a drink.

LE MÉRIDIEN HOTEL (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

Opened in 2014, Le Meridien's brilliant white building capped with a vibrant red roof and orange-trimmed windows reveals a modern twist on traditional Bhutanese architecture. Guestrooms are spacious and have wonderful views of Thimphu's tranquil mountains nearby, and the hotel is close to small shops and markets—the perfect location to immerse yourself in the timeless environment. Le Meridien also has an indoor pool to unwind after an exploratory day in the "Land of the Thunder Dragon."

HOTEL DRUK THIMPHU (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

Located right in the middle of Thimphu overlooking Clocktower Square, the Hotel Druk was one of Bhutan's original guest hotels, built in 1974. It has been recently updated and revamped to offer spacious and well-appointed guestrooms with claw-foot bathtubs and central heating and air conditioning. The staff is helpful and the cozy bar, with its fireplace, is a nice place to relax. Thimphu's many shops and markets are just steps away.

Lodging

DAYS 3 TO 4 (2 NIGHTS): PHOBJIKHA VALLEY, BHUTAN

YUE LOKI GUEST HOUSE

This small, rustic country lodge with its classic Bhutanese architecture is set in a wonderfully remote location in one of Bhutan's most pristine valleys. The rooms are simple, clean, and comfortable, with private bathrooms and showers. Please note that the electricity is generator-powered, available in the mornings and evenings. The staff can prepare a hot-water bottle to warm up your bed at night, a pleasant treat during Bhutan's chilly evenings.

DAYS 5 TO 6 (2 NIGHTS): PUNAKHA VALLEY, BHUTAN

In Punakha we stay at one of the following properties based on availability and choice of accommodation:

DHARMA SIDDHI HOMES

Tranquility meets elegance at this beautiful lodge, set high on a hillside in Punakha with stunning views of Punakha Dzong. The hospitality here is friendly and warm, and the staff takes great pride in offering an authentic farm-to-table dining experience, with mostly organic produce from the home's own garden. Six guest rooms are spacious and comfortable, and there is a nice garden and outdoor spaces to explore.

HOTEL SONAMGANG

Overlooking the town of Punakha and the Puna Tsang Chu River, Hotel Sonamgang has simple, pleasant rooms. There is a small outdoor swimming pool, and a terrace where you can enjoy the expansive views, as well as a comfortable indoor lounge area.

SPIRIT VILLAGE LODGE

Set on a ridge, Spirit Village Lodge offers magnificent views of Punakha Dzong from its large dining room. Clean and spacious guest rooms feature a private bathroom and TV. While here, take time to relax in the bar or walk in the garden.

Lodging

DAYS 7 TO 8 (2 NIGHTS): PARO, BHUTAN

In Paro we stay at one of the following properties based on availability and choice of accommodation:

KHANGKHU RESORT

About a 10-minute drive outside of Paro, the Khangkhu has twin-bedded rooms with en suite bathrooms. The hotel offers good views of the Paro Dzong and Ta Dzong (the National Museum) against a backdrop of mountains.

PARO ECO LODGE

Tucked away in picturesque Nemjo village of the enchanting Paro Valley, the Paro Eco Lodge is built in traditional Bhutanese style using sustainable materials, and it offers stunning views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. The lodge has 21 spacious rooms, each with large windows and private balconies or terraces. All guest rooms are decorated with traditional Bhutanese textiles and artifacts. The lodge also has a restaurant as well as a bar that offers a variety of local and international drinks. If you have time, take a walk through the paddy fields of Nemjo village or along the Paro Chhu river.

ZHIWALING HOTEL (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

Located on 10 acres in a serene setting in the green Paro Valley, the deluxe Zhiwa Ling is a wonderful example of traditional Bhutanese architecture, every bit of it hand-carved in Bhutan by local craftsmen. The guest rooms are airy and large, with balconies opening onto views of world-famous Taktsang Monastery. At the hotel's Menlha Spa, enjoy a sauna or a Bhutanese-style massage, perfect after a long day's hike, while the tea room offers local safflower and cinnamon herb teas. The hotel has two restaurants, plus the Mad Monk bar, a great spot for winding down. The Zhiwa Ling has appeared on Conde Nast Traveler's annual "Gold List."

NAKSEL BOUTIQUE HOTEL AND SPA (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

Located across the valley from Tiger's Nest monastery and built on the side of a hill overlooking Paro, Naskel Boutique Hotel and Spa is a tranquil retreat in the forest–the name "Naskel" actually means forest in Dzongka. The main lodge and surrounding rooms are set on six acres of apple orchards. Furnishings and decorations are sourced locally and the hotel has a beautifully designed spa if you wish to book a massage or hot stone bath.

These are our signature accommodations for this trip. Although it is highly unlikely, we may make substitutions when necessary. To see more photos and descriptions, please visit our *Bhutan Private Journey* webpage and click on "Accommodations."

What to Expect

WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

This trip is rated **Level 3, Moderate,** according to our trip grading system. The hikes are moderate and suitable for people in good shape who enjoy mountain hiking. The longest hike is about three hours.

Please note that travel times vary depending upon local conditions, and the itinerary may change while you are in Bhutan due to government regulations and local climate conditions.

Average Hiking Day

- 3-4 miles
- 2-3 hours
- 1,000' ascent/descent

TERRAIN

Although you carry only a daypack, there are some steep ascents and descents, and the hikes are at moderate altitude, which can make them feel strenuous.

GETTING IN SHAPE

For your own enjoyment, we recommend that you make a special effort to be in good physical condition for the journey.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Most of the accommodations in Bhutan are somewhat rustic but very charming, and we've chosen some of the country's most well situated hotels/lodges for this journey. Please note that most hotel rooms are twin-bedded. Optional upgrades are available. All are luxurious, stylish 5-star retreats featuring beautifully appointed rooms decorated with traditional Bhutanese arts and crafts, and relaxing spa facilities with Asian-inspired therapies.

CUISINE

Meals are included as noted in the detailed itinerary (dinners are not included at upgraded hotels unless prearranged). Generally, you will eat breakfast on your own at the lodge before meeting your guide for the day's activities. Your guides may join you for some lunches and dinners, depending on the schedule and your preference. Please be aware that many hotels/lodges in Bhutan provide simple buffets at lunch and dinner. The cuisine in Bhutan is generally based on basic rice with stir-fry and stew options. If you have any dietary restrictions, be sure to advise us on your application form.

WEATHER

The spring and fall seasons are the most popular times to visit the Kingdom. Bhutan's climate varies enormously and like much of your adventure in the Himalayas it will be quite unpredictable. Spring and fall temperatures in the Thimphu and Paro valleys range from 60 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit but colder spells are not unusual. Winter daytime temperatures in the valleys average 60 degrees Fahrenheit during clear winter days but drop well below freezing during the night. Mid-December to early January can be a beautifully clear and dry time in western Bhutan. Light snow will often dust Thimphu and Paro in winter, and occasionally there will be heavy snowstorms. Punakha and the central valleys are lower in elevation and tend to be a few degrees warmer. The autumn season, late September through November, is usually very mild and clear. While fall colors surround and embrace your senses, the sky is often at its clearest, affording magnificent views of the Himalaya range.

PRIVATE JOURNEY GUIDED SERVICES

You will be accompanied by a Bhutanese guide and driver throughout your entire journey.

Additional Information

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TRIP

Adventure travel often involves exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, or activities you may not have participated in previously. We work hard to help you choose the right trip for you, paying attention to your individual interests, abilities, and needs. If you have questions about the level of comfort or any of the activities described in this itinerary, please call Wilderness Travel at 1-800-368-2794 and ask for the Asia Manager or email us at asia@wildernesstravel.com.

REFERENCES

We'd be happy to put you in touch with a past client that has traveled with us on this or a similar trip.

TOUCAN CLUB

Please note that Toucan Club discounts do not apply for our Private Journeys. However, your participation on these trips will count toward your Toucan discount on future departures of Wilderness Travel's regular expeditions. For more information regarding our Toucan Club bonus program, please visit our website at www.wildernesstravel.com/resources/toucan-club/.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At www.wildernesstravel.com, you can find out about added departures, last-minute deals, and special WT Expeditions that aren't listed in our catalog. You can also access a complete library of our detailed itineraries and browse the customized reading guides for each of our adventures.

WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:

World's Best Tour Operators: *Travel + Leisure*, 2025, 12-time winner
Best Travel Specialists in the World: *Conde Nast Traveler*, 2025, 5-time winner
Best Wildlife, Hiking & Walking Trips: *AFAR Magazine*, 3 years in a row
Best Adventure Travel Companies: *USA Today*
Trip of the Year: *Outside Magazine*, 9-time winner
50 Tours of a Lifetime: *National Geographic Traveler*, 9 years in a row
Best Adventure Travel Companies: *National Geographic Adventure,* 3-time winner

Please be advised that California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund under the California Seller of Travel Law that took effect January 1, 1996. This fund is designed to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices by discount airfare ticket sellers or air charter operators. Unfortunately, this law does not cover non-California residents and, even in the case of California residents, it does not cover any foreign travel where the foreign "providers of transportation or travel services" are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (compliance being defined as registered as a Seller of Travel in California and a participant in the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund). Thus none of Wilderness Travel's tours qualify and we are required by law to advise each client that they are not covered by the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account. California Seller of Travel #100769640

While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of events; it is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. This trip is subject to the Limitation of Liability and all the terms and conditions as detailed in the General Information section of the Wilderness Travel Catalog.

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