

# EXPLORE!

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## Walking in Bhutan

BHUTAN, NEPAL - TRIP CODE WBHU

WALKING AND TREKKING

### Why book this trip?

Explore the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan on a variety of hikes that take us through peaceful villages encountering rural life. Visit some of the country's most spectacular dzongs and monasteries including the fabled Taktsang 'Tiger's Nest' - perched high up on a cliff face.

- **Phobjika** - Beautiful valley where black cranes come to nest
- **Festivals** - Departures planned to coincide with colourful monastic festivals
- **Everest views** - Unrivalled Himalaya views on the Kathmandu to Paro flight



**INCLUDED MEALS**  
Breakfast: 10  
Lunch: 8  
Dinner: 8



**TRIP STAFF**  
Explore Tour  
Leader  
Driver(s)  
Explore  
Representative  
Local Guide(s)



**TRANSPORT**  
Bus  
Flight



**ACCOMMODATION**  
10 nights  
comfortable hotel



**WALKING GRADE:**  
Easy To  
Moderate



**GROUP SIZE:**  
10 - 16

## Itinerary

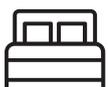
Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

### DAY 1 - Trip starts in the Nepali capital Kathmandu

The trip starts today in the Nepali capital Kathmandu. There are no planned included activities today and you can arrive at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Kathmandu Tribhuvan International Airport (KTM). You should allow at least 45 minutes to reach our hotel in central Kathmandu as traffic congestion in city can be bad.

Your time in Kathmandu is unaccompanied and you will meet your Bhutanese Leader on arrival in Paro on day two of the holiday. A Nepali representative will meet with everyone today at 6pm to brief you on the essentials for your stay in Kathmandu and timings for the journey to the airport tomorrow morning. Should you miss this meeting, please refer to the hotel noticeboard for further information.

Depending on the arrival time of your flight, should you wish to explore, our hotel is located a short walk from the lively Thamel area. Home to a multitude of outdoor gear, souvenir shops, great bookshops and a huge variety of restaurants, it's a fun place to wander. Alternatively, if you'd like to explore further afield you could head to either the Boudhanath or Swayambunath temples (ask the hotel to arrange a taxi for you) where you can mingle among the many Buddhist pilgrims.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
Hotel Ambassador (or similar)

**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

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## **DAY 2 - Fly to Paro in Bhutan; museum visit and hike to Zuri Dzong**

We fly to Paro in Bhutan this morning on what must be one of the world's most spectacular mountain flights. If you sit on the left-hand side of the plane you'll be treated to breathtaking views of five of the eight 8000m plus peaks of the Himalaya including Everest, Lhotse and Kanchenjunga. Beautifully set amidst the wooded valleys of Western Bhutan, Paro lies along the banks of Paro Chu River, overlooking terraced farmland, and is home to some of the largest and oldest of Bhutan's majestic dzongs - fabulous buildings that serve as the political, religious and military centres of their regions.

On arrival we will be met by our Bhutanese tour leader and transfer the short distance to our hotel for some lunch. All of the meals in Bhutan are included in the price of the holiday and each day we'll have the chance to sample a variety of traditional specialities including various dishes made with cheese such as the staple dish of ema datshi, chillies and cheese.

In the afternoon we head out on our first walk of the trip, a gentle ramble on the eastern side of the valley from the Ta Dzong, (the National Museum of Bhutan) to Zuri Dzong. We'll visit the museum before setting out. It houses over 3,000 works of Bhutanese art, covering more than 1,500 years of Bhutan's cultural heritage. Zuri Dzong, a former fortress, now a temple complex, dates back to the 14th century and houses temples to the local protective deities. It is home to hermits and scholars specializing in indigenous medicine. Our walk ends at the cantilever bridge across the River Paro Chu.

In the evening we'll pay a visit to the 7th century Kyichu Lhakhang temple where we can offer butter lamps dedicated to the souls of departed loved ones and for the benefit of all sentient beings, a practice followed by all Bhutanese before embarking on a journey.

Today's three kilometre leisurely walk is over flat terrain and is expected to take around two hours.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Janka Resort (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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## **DAY 3 - Drive across the Dochu La (3,100m); hike on the Divine Madman's trail**

Departing Paro this morning we turn east, taking the mountain roads that head through the beautiful landscapes of the Black Mountains and across the high Dochu La Pass (3,100m). Our journey takes us across a landscape blanketed in rice terraces and scattered villages and, as we climb up towards the heights of Dochu La, the road becomes festooned with colourful prayer flags. On a clear day this meandering highway offers some breathtaking views across the Bhutan Himalayas towards the towering peak of Gangkhar Punsum (7,541m), the highest mountain in the country. Descending from the pass the landscape changes; from forests of pine and oak, through rhododendron, alder and cypress, to turn more tropical as we approach the valley floor.

The first part of today's hike takes us from the terraces at Thinleygang, where we enjoy a picnic lunch, to just below the Wolokha nunnery in the Punakha Valley. We walk on the so-called Divine Madman's trail, named after Lama Drukpa Kuenley, a revered and decidedly controversial saint who is believed to have subdued the demoness of the Dochu La. Drukpa Kuenley's teachings went against the normal Buddhist conventions. He believed that the rigid doctrines of the day were isolating the priests from the ordinary people, so he set out to break down these barriers by deliberate provocation by, in his own words, using '...fair and foul words for mantras'.

The trail leads through a tropical forest of chirping birds, diverse plants and trees with scenic views of the valley and the river. In days gone by this trail was used by the Central Monastic Body while migrating to their summer and winter residences in Thimphu and Punakha respectively. The trail passes through Chandana, a typical Bhutanese village where legend has it that a house was hit by an arrow fired by the Mad Monk that came flying all the way from Tibet.

After enjoying a short break at the end of the trail, we visit the 15th century Chimi Lhakhang temple, dedicated to Drukpa Kuenley. The walk across the fields to the temple starts at the village of Sopsokha where you'll see brightly painted phallus's adorning the side of the houses. Chimi Lhakhang is also known as the fertility temple; women who are having trouble conceiving come here to pray and receive the resident lama's blessings, which he punctuates by tapping the women on the head with a wooden phallus!

Today's five-and-half kilometre hike on the Divine Madman trail is expected to take around two-and-half to three hours with a total ascent of 557 metres. The two kilometre walk to Chimi Lhakhang will take around an hour with a total ascent and descent of 20 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Zhingkham Resort (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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#### DAY 4 - Visit Punakha Dzong; walk through fields to Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Stupa

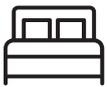
This morning we take a short drive to the village of Hebisa and set out for the beautiful Khamsum Yulley

Namgyal Stupa, a jewel-like structure that can be seen poking through the trees beyond the river. It is dedicated to the current king and was built by his mother. There are several levels to this pagoda-like structure, each of which is densely packed with protector deities. The trail to the stupa is gradual and takes us past rice paddies and fields of chillies where we will see farmers at work.

Returning to Punakha we visit the impressive Punakha Dzong. Built on a sandbank at the confluence of the Phochu and Mochu rivers, the dzong was once the seat of the Bhutanese government, but today it's the winter retreat of the Chief Abbot of Bhutan. A superb example of Bhutanese monastic architecture, the dzong presents us with a collection of tiered halls, inner courtyards and golden spires that have managed to survive numerous fires, floods and earthquakes over the intervening centuries.

The remainder of the afternoon is free to relax or wander further in the town.

Today's three kilometre walk is expected to take around two hours with a total ascent and descent of 240 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Zhingkham Resort (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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## **DAY 5 - Hike from Longtey to the stunning glacial valley of Phobjika**

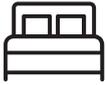
Today we depart for the beautiful glacial valley of Phobjika. The drive is stunning; as we ascend towards the Pele Pass, the vegetation changes, from the cacti growing in the warm valley of Punakha to the mixed conifer and rhododendron forest of Phobjika. The valley is home to Bhutan's black-necked cranes, now an endangered species. Conservation efforts by Bhutan and the World Wildlife Fund have been able to create a safe haven for these stunningly beautiful birds, which flock to the region's marshy wetlands in winter for roosting (mid-October to early March).

Shortly after the pass we reach the village of Longtey, the starting point for today's hike, which takes us through open pasture of shrub bamboo and then across the Pele La and into the Phobjika Valley. We descend steeply through areas of shrub bamboo past the Khumbu Gompa, a small meditation complex, to meet our vehicle in the village of Khumbu. It's a short drive from here to our guesthouse.

Today's seven kilometre walk is expected to take three-and-a-half hours with a total ascent of 523 metres and descent of 406 metres.

ACCOMMODATION NOTE: Due to the increased demand for accommodation in Phobjika during the Gangtey Festival period, hotels will not confirm single occupancy of twin/double rooms and there are very few actual single rooms. For the 26th September Gangtey festival departure only we therefore cannot guarantee single rooms for those booking the single room option and hence do not advertise the

single room option as being available for these two nights. On all other departure dates, single occupancy rooms will be available to those booking the single room option.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Dewachen Hotel - Phobjika (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

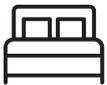
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### **DAY 6 - Walks in the Phobjika Valley; visit Black Crane Centre**

We visit Gangtey Monastery this morning before setting out from its long mani-wall (a wall built up from mantra-painted mani stones, a Buddhist offering) along a route known as the Gangtey Nature Trail hike. Heading down to a village of clustered Bhutanese houses among fields of potato and turnip, we'll then pass through forests of pine and dwarf bamboo before walking along a ridge into the Phobjikha Valley. We plan to call in at a farmhouse on the way and meet some of the local people going about their everyday lives. The medium of education in Bhutan is English and many people here are able to speak more than just a smattering.

After lunch we plan to visit the Phobjika Crane Information Centre to learn more about these birds, which are so loved by the local people, that a black-necked crane festival is held every year in November at Gangtey Monastery. There's an option to enjoy a further hike this afternoon from the village of Kingathang, that will take us on a route back to our hotel. Alternatively you can simply relax among these peaceful and beautiful surroundings.

This morning's three kilometre easy walk is expected to take around one-and-a-half hours with a total descent of 140 metres. The optional four kilometre afternoon hike is expected to take around one-and-a-half hours with an ascent of 150 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Dewachen Hotel - Phobjika (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 7 - Lawala ridgeline hike; optional walk from Samtengang village**

This morning, we embark on the Lawala Ridgeline hike beginning at the institute for higher learning.

Passing by the dormitories of the monks and assembly halls (one of them newly being built), we start off and climb immediately through sparse pinewood and then treeless meadow, passing by a few hermitages along the way. We may see some of the hermits as well as the occasional herders who use the trail. The path is faint in some places and it is steady climb. Views of the gentle glacial valley of Phobjikha unfold behind us. We climb a little higher before eventually meeting our vehicle at the Lawala Pass and continuing our drive to Wangdi.

For those who wish, there's an option of a second hike today en route to Wangdi between the villages of Samtengang and Chungsakha. Anyone looking for a more relaxing afternoon can continue with the bus on to Wangdi.

This morning's four-and-a-half kilometre walk is expected to take two-and-a-half hours with a total ascent of 530 metres. the optional afternoon hike is approximately five kilometres and expected to take around two hours with a total ascent of 100 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Kichu Resort (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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## **DAY 8 - Trek from Dochu La; drive to Thimpu the Bhutanese capital**

An early-morning departure takes us back across Dochu La from where we disembark for a hike to Lungchuzekha Monastery. It takes approximately two hours to reach the small monastery after which we descend via the villages of Trashigang and Hongtsho, another three or so hours of wonderful hiking. Our vehicles meet us where the trail crosses the road and we continue on to Thimphu. The Bhutanese capital occupies the wooded western banks of the Wang Chhu. Time allowing, we will walk along Thimphu's bustling streets, soaking up the rich atmosphere of this most unique of capitals, one that doesn't possess even a single traffic light.

Please note: Departure date attending Dechenphug festival in Thimphu will head straight to Thimphu this morning and not stop for the hike en route. A shorter hiking option from Thimphu will be available after the festival.

Today's walk is expected to take five-and-a-half hours with a total ascent of 530 metres and descent of 100 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel River View (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 9 - Trek through the forest to Taktsang 'Tiger's Nest' Monastery

We leave Thimpu behind and head back towards Paro and our final hike of the trip, the trek up to the fabulous Taktsang Monastery. One of the most revered spiritual sites in the country, it is precariously located on a cliff face some 900 metres above the Paro Valley. The name translates as 'Tiger's Nest' and local legend recounts how Guru Rinpoche, who founded the Drukpa Sect and brought Buddhism to Bhutan, flew here on the back of a tiger and founded the monastery on the site of a cave where he spent a few months deep in meditation. The hike up to the monastery follows a path that cuts through oak and pine forests. After about an hour, we reach a small teahouse with wonderful views of the monastery; a great place to take a rest. After another hour we emerge by a chorten with amazing views of the monastery and surrounding area. The final stretch climbs down, and then back up 700 steps, crossing a gorge laced with prayer flags, to arrive at this incredible destination. We can take a look inside the monastery but we are not permitted to enter the actual cave where Guru Rinpoche is said to have meditated.

Upon returning to Paro, there should be time to relax at the hotel or do some last-minute exploring in the town.

Today's 13 kilometre hike is expected to take five-and-a-half hours with a total ascent and descent of 600 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Janka Resort (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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## DAY 10 - Fly to Kathmandu; explore the Old City on foot

Today we fly back to Nepal with the chance to enjoy the amazing views of the high Himalaya once again. We plan to head out with a local guide on a walking tour around Old Kathmandu, taking in Durbar Square and its collection of ornate palaces, courtyards and temples and we'll also wander in the Asan Bazaar area.

The rest of the day has been left free for further sightseeing and perhaps some shopping. You might like to spend it visiting the almost perfectly preserved Newari town of Bhaktapur in the eastern corner of the Kathmandu Valley. Also known as Bhadgaun or the City of the Devotees, Bhaktapur evokes the feel of a medieval village, a snapshot of a time when the city lay along the prosperous trade routes between Tibet, China and India. The ancient centre of the town is a dazzling collection of temples, palaces and monasteries that have earned it a place on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites. Wandering through the streets of the city you can see artisans going about their crafts much as they have for generations. Potters throw clay on traditional wooden wheels, jewellers and artists go about their daily business. Another alternative for this afternoon is a trip up to the nearby the hilltop temple of Swayambunath, the captivating 'Monkey Temple', whose all-seeing Buddha eyes gaze out across the Kathmandu Valley. The temple is aptly named and the cheeky monkeys that inhabit its ancient walls are not averse to trying to relieve passers by of food, bags and cameras, so be warned.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Ambassador (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 11 - Trip ends in Kathmandu

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Kathmandu.

There are no activities planned for today, so you are free to depart at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day, luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to depart from Kathmandu Tribhuvan International Airport (KTM).



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

# Trip information

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## Country information

### Bhutan

#### Climate

The best weather lasts from September (after the monsoon) through to Jun and the mountains are best admired, with greater air clarity in the autumn. Spring (mid Mar-May) is cool & often stormy. Autumn is from Oct to mid Nov with clear skies, warm days & cool (sometimes cold) nights. As in any high mountain area it can rain, hail or snow at any time of year.

| Time difference to GMT | Plugs       | Religion                                      |
|------------------------|-------------|---|
| +6                     | 2 Pin Round | Lamaistic Buddhist, Indian/Nepalese Hinduism. |

#### Language

Dzongkha, plus various Nepalese and Tibetan dialects.

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### Nepal

#### Climate

Temperatures in the lower altitude regions are extremely pleasant. At Pokhara variations in temperature are very limited: from the coldest recorded of 8°C (46°F) to the highest of 31°C (88°F). The mountains are best admired, with greater air clarity, from October to January, while from February to May the skies may be hazy. Monsoon rains are strongest in June, July and August. The coldest months are December and January.

| Time difference to GMT | Plugs       | Religion | Language |
|------------------------|-------------|----------|----------|
| +5.45                  | 2 Pin Round | Hinduism | Nepali   |

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## Budgeting and packing

### Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

From Kathmandu:-

- Medieval Newari City of Bhaktapur by taxi - US\$ 35 (minimum 4 people)
- Swayambunath 'Monkey' Temple by taxi - US\$ 20 (minimum 4 people)

## Clothing

Take light and comfortable clothing that can be layered according to the temperature. While you are walking, daytime temperatures will generally be mild. However it can be chilly in the evenings, particularly between November and February, and at those times you will need warm weather clothing including a warm hat and gloves. Clothes should be casual and practical but to avoid giving offence to local people you may need to cover legs, heads and arms. Shorts and leggings are not appropriate. For festival visits, you will need a collared long sleeved shirt (men), long trousers and closed shoes.

- Breathable wind and waterproof jacket and waterproof trousers
- T-shirts
- Long sleeved tops
- Sunhat
- Long trousers
- Shorts (if you prefer to walk in them)
- Midlayer Fleece/pullover
- Socks
- Scarf or buff can be useful

## Footwear

We recommend you bring lightweight walking boots with ankle support, make sure that your boots are worn-in and comfortable before the start of the trip. Also trainers or sandals for relaxing and general wear. We suggest that on international flights you either carry your walking boots in your hand luggage or wear them - should your luggage be lost or delayed, your own boots are the one thing that will be irreplaceable.

## Luggage

20kg

### Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack.

## Equipment

- Walking poles (if you normally use them)
- Sunglasses
- Sun cream
- Small torch
- Personal first aid kit - on each walk a first aid kit is carried but you should have your own blister kit, supply of plasters, aspirin and other essentials.
- Insect repellent
- Reusable water bottle (minimum 1 litre) - Get 15% discount on a Water-to-Go bottle (which filters any water so that it's safe for drinking) [www.explore.co.uk/about-us/responsible-travel/water-to-go-discount-with-explore](http://www.explore.co.uk/about-us/responsible-travel/water-to-go-discount-with-explore)
- Lunch box/Tupperware (useful for picnic lunches)

# Tipping

## Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

## Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided.

Accordingly you should allow approximately £30 for gratuities for local staff.

## Bhutan

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

| Lunch price | Dinner price | Beer price | Water price |
|-------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| £7          | £10          | £2         | £1          |

### Foreign Exchange

| Local currency | Recommended Currency For Exchange | Where To Exchange                 |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Ngultrum       | USD and GBP                       | Your Tour leader will advise you. |

### ATM Availability

You may occasionally find cash machines but they are very unreliable - do not rely on plastic!

### Credit Card Acceptance

Very limited. There is a 5% surcharge for using them at places where the facility is available.

### Travellers Cheques

Very limited opportunities to exchange.

## Nepal

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

| Lunch price | Dinner price | Beer price | Water price |
|-------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| £7          | £10          | £3         | £0.3        |

### Foreign Exchange

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Local currency</b><br>Nepali Rupee. | <b>Recommended Currency For Exchange</b><br>US\$ or GBP. | <b>Where To Exchange</b><br>In major cities and towns |
|--|--|---|

#### **ATM Availability**

Although you may occasionally find cash machines these are very unreliable - do not rely on plastic!

#### **Credit Card Acceptance**

Credit cards are not generally accepted except in larger establishments in Kathmandu.

#### **Travellers Cheques**

Travellers cheques are not accepted as a valid mode of payment in Nepal.

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## **Transport, Accommodation & Meals**

### **Transport Information**

Bus, Flight

### **Accommodation notes**

Monastic Festivals

The dates of this trip have been planned to provide you with the opportunity of witnessing one of Bhutan's colourful monastic festivals. To commemorate the arrival of Buddhism, each of Bhutan's 20 dzongkhags (districts), hold their own annual festival at their local monastery. People from surrounding villages gather together for a series of costumed dances accompanied by the clash of cymbals and meditative beat of drums.

Walks scheduled on the day of the festival may be moved or shortened to sufficient time at the festival.

WBHU 26SEP20 - This departure will visit the monastic festival at Gangtey Monastery while staying in the Phobjika Valley on day 6. Due to the high demand for accommodation in Phobjika during this period, hotels will not confirm single occupancy of twin/double rooms and there are very few actual single rooms. We therefore cannot guarantee single rooms for those booking the single room option and hence do not advertise the single room option as being available for these two nights.

WBHU19OCT20 - This departure will visit the Dechenphug monastic festival at Thimpu Monastery while staying in Thimpu on day 8.

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## **Essential Information**

### **Government Travel Safety Advice**

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and

customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

### **Under 18 immigration guidance**

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

### **Price Guarantee**

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

### **Visa and Passport Information**

Nepal: An entry visa is required by UK, New Zealand, Australian, US & Canadian citizens and can be obtained on arrival at Kathmandu Airport and various international border crossings between Nepal and its neighbouring countries. This currently costs 30USD for a 15 day visa, 50USD for a 30 day visa and 125USD for a 90 day visa. All visas are issued as multiple entry visas and are valid from the date they are issued. There have been reports of lengthy delays when completing the form to obtain the visa at the airport, especially during peak times. We therefore recommend that you fill in the visa information prior to arrival using the following link: <http://online.nepalimmigration.gov.np/>. This will produce a receipt with a barcode, which you will need to print off and produce on arrival to obtain the visa. Please note if you are filling in the form before you arrive, please do so only within 15 days of arrival as application forms are only stored for a maximum of 15 days.

Whether you are filling in the form on arrival or before, a passport-sized photograph for immigration is required along with the exact cash. Payment must be made in cash, UK sterling and US dollars are both accepted.

If you are ineligible for the visa on arrival or wish to obtain a visa before you travel, please refer to your nearest Nepal embassy.

Bhutan: A visa for Bhutan will be arranged locally. In order to do this please forward a scanned colour copy of your passport to Explore at least 8 weeks before your departure. Your visa is included in the tour cost.

Passengers with dual or multiple passports must ensure that they use the same passport for entry to all countries on this trip.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

## Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

## Transfers

Find out more about [Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions](#) before you book.

### Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

### Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

## Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them here.

### **Flight Information**

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### **Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore**

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

### **Maximum altitude (m)**

3100

## **Bhutan**

### **Vaccinations**

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, tetanus, infectious hepatitis, typhoid and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria (eg. Paludrine, Chloroquine, Mefloquine etc.) Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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## **Nepal**

### **Vaccinations**

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, infectious hepatitis, typhoid, tetanus, polio and Japanese encephalitis. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Although not compulsory, travellers may wish to take immunisation against meningococcal meningitis. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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## **Walking and Trekking information**

## DAILY DISTANCES

|       |           |          |
|-------|-----------|----------|
| Day 2 | 3km       | 2hrs     |
| Day 3 | 7.5km     | 4hrs     |
| Day 4 | 3km       | 2hrs     |
| Day 5 | 6km       | 3.5hrs   |
| Day 6 | 7km       | 3hrs     |
| Day 7 | 4.5km 5km | 2.5/2hrs |
| Day 8 | 3.5km     | 3.5hrs   |
| Day 9 | 13km      | 5.5hrs   |

 Optional Walks

### Walking grade

Easy to moderate

### Trek details

We hike on 8 days for between 2 and 5.5 hours. Hikes vary from Easy grade walks along the valley floors with little or no ascent/descent to Moderate grade walks along trails higher in the mountains with a more challenging gradient.

### Max walking altitude (m)

3100

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### Additional Information



## Reviews



**AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS**