BIRDING AND CULTURAL TOUR IN THE
HIMALAYAN KINGDOM OF BHUTAN

Trip date: November 4 – 16, 2019
Cultural and Annual Black-necked Crane Festival in the Himalayan Kingdom of BHUTAN

4th – 19th November 2019

Tour Fact Sheet
Duration: 14 nights in Bhutan
Guide: Mongolia Quest tour manager and a Bhutanese national guide
Group Size: Maximum 12 people
Accommodation: 14 nights in good standard hotels
Altitudes: 150m/492ft – 3,822m/12,539ft.
Tour Pace and Walking: Moderate
Expected Climate: From warm tropical to temperate and colder at higher altitudes.
Attractions: The Crane Festival, the iconic Tiger’s Nest Monastery, architectural gems of Punakha and Trongsa Dzongs and the heritage museums of Paro, Thimphu and Trongsa. The amazing wildlife, flora and fauna in an ancient, pristine landscape set against a backdrop of the snow-capped Himalayan Peaks, a chance to spend time with the people, to travel through Bhutan where few visitors have ventured with photographic excellence throughout the journey.

Synopsis
Bhutan’s culture and heritage is full of mystic, shrouded in the mist of time. This itinerary offers a unique opportunity to glimpse the past and see how it remains entwined in every day life. We will walk in the beautiful landscape, hike to monasteries clinging to the cliff-face, explore the pristine forests looking for rare and endangered birds and mammal, visit dzong’s and be amazed how such buildings still stand without mortar or nails, understand a little of the history of Bhutan in the Ta Dzongs and museums and witness the heritage of this magical kingdom where ‘Gross National Happiness’ is ever present!
Route Map

Brief Itinerary

Day 01. Upon arrival in Bangkok transfer to a centrally located hotel in Bangkok. In the evening, meet your rest of the group for a briefing. Dinner is independent. Overnight at hotel. (Hotel Bangkok)

Day 02: Flight into Paro from Bangkok. Visit Ta Dzong, the national museum.

Day 03: Paro to Thimphu, (55 km, 1.30 hrs), visit the Memorial Chorten (stupa) and visit the 13 arts school.

Day 04: Cultural visits in Thimphu to include the Weekend Market and Buddha Point.

Day 05: Thimphu to Punakha (70kms, 3 hrs), stopping over at Dochu La and Chemmi Lhakhang.

Day 06: Cultural visits in Punakha.

Day 07: Punakha to Phobjikha (85kms, 3.5 hrs), stopping along Nobding for wildlife and nature.

Day 08: Attend the Annual Crane Festival and walk the glaciated valley of Phobjikha.

Day 09: Phobjikha to Tangsibji (58kms, 2 hrs), visit Tangsibji village.

Day 10: Tangsibji to Trongsa (23kms 1 hr), visit Tangsibji village in the morning.

Day 11: Trongsa to Bumthang (69kms, 3 hrs).

Day 12: Cultural visits in Bumthang.

Day 13: Flight from Bumthang to Paro (25mins) and cultural visits in Paro.

Day 14: Hike up to Tigers Nest monastery (5 hrs return hike).

Day 15: Paro to Chele La excursion for high altitude birding and amazing views across snow-topped Jhomolhari. Returning to Paro for cultural program and farewell dinner.

Day 16: Flight from Paro to Bangkok for onward connection.
Detailed Itinerary

Day 1: Flight into Paro from Bangkok and visit Ta Dzong (national museum).
On your flight into Bhutan you will have breathtaking views of the High Himalayan peaks adding to the excitement of a holiday in this remote kingdom. At Paro airport, after clearing customs and immigration you will be met by your guide. Emerging into a new landscape, breathing the pristine air, excitement mounts as you board the vehicles and your adventure really begins. Your guide will take you to your hotel and after coffee we will drive to the Ta Dzong (watchtower). The strategically positioned Ta Dzong has incredible views down the Paro valley. Built in as a circular structure helping it withstand attack; now houses the National Museum with many interesting antiquities: guns, shields, armory, spectacular ancient thangkas (painted and/or appliquéd religious scrolls) as well as more personal items and incredibly elaborate stamps. After visiting the museum we will drive to the quaint town of Paro for some free time before returning to our hotel.
NIGHT: Hotel Olathang or similar, Paro (2,300m).

Day 2: Paro to Thimphu, (55 km, 1.30 hrs). Visit Memorial Chorten, 13 Arts School, Textile Museum and the Institute of Traditional Medicine.
Today we will drive east towards Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan. The drive takes about an hour and half on well-maintained roads, through the beautiful Paro valley, following the willow fringed Paro and Thim Chhu (river).
In Thimphu we will stop at the Memorial Chorten. This stupa was built in 1974 in the memory of Bhutan’s third King, His Late Majesty, King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, who is popularly regarded as father of modern Bhutan. The paintings and statues inside the monument provide a deep insight into Buddhist philosophy. Once again this Chorten was constructed as a monument to peace throughout the world. From here we will visit the Zorig Chusum, Institute of the Thirteen Religious Arts, where we have made arrangements for you to try hand blocking silken material for blessings on the journey, then some free time to see the students working on their specialty arts during their 8 year intensive courses which include: painting, sculpting, weaving and needlework, Bhutanese arts and crafts are deeply rooted in Buddhist philosophy and are therefore extremely decorative and symbolic. The creation of art is mainly used to convey spiritual values, while new art is created to replace the old; reflecting the Bhutanese understanding of material impermanence. As time allows we can visit the Textile Museum and the Institute of Traditional Medicine.
NIGHT: Hotel Riverview or similar, Thimphu, (2,300m).

Day 3: Cultural visits in Thimphu.
This morning we will drive to Kuensel Phodrang Nature Park, (943 acres), where the Buddha Dordenma is situated within the ruins of Kuensel Phodrang, surrounded by the forests and overlooking the southern approach to the Thimphu Valley, from where there are magnificent panoramic view of the valley below with excellent photographic opportunities. The statue fulfils an
ancient prophecy dating back to the 8th century and is said the statue will emanate an aura of peace and happiness throughout the world. Made of bronze and gilded in gold with space inside to house seventeen storeys of different Lhakhangs and many thousands of statues; at 51metres high, it is one of the world’s largest Buddhas. From here we will continue to the weekend market, where people from the region will come to sell their produce. The handicraft section is delightful array of masks, hand-made jewellery with turquoise, amber and pearls set in silver, folds of magnificent, hand-loomed materials in a rainbow of colours and beautiful hand-lathed wooden bowls and goblets. Wander through the vegetable section and see the incredible variety and superb quality of the fruit and vegetables as well as the vast selection of chilies! But perhaps, best of all, are the people themselves. It is such a colourful and interesting place, where you will once again find many photographic opportunities. After lunch at a restaurant we will visit the postal museum for those beautiful Bhutanese stamps, followed by the bank (not cultural but perhaps a necessity!) and finally, the paper making and incense work-shops. On the way back to our hotel we will stop by Changlemethang Stadium, the national archery ground where we will be able to see the Bhutanese practicing their archery skills!

NIGHT: Hotel Riverview or similar, Thimphu, (2,300).

Day 4: Thimphu to Punakha (70kms, 3 hrs).
This morning we will drive further east to the milder and warmer climate of Punakha. It is a three hour journey that climbs through apple orchards and forests of blue pine before reaching the high pass at Dochu La (3116m). This is an awe-inspiring sight: the road is festooned with prayer flags and 108 chortens, celebrating the safe return of the fourth king from a threatened invasion. Just a kilometer from the pass is a cafe where we will have some hot tea or coffee and you can spend time looking at the Bhutanese Himalayas from this vantage point. Soon it will be time to continue down through the sub-tropical forests around Punakha where there are cactus, poinsettia and banana plants, finally through the green terraced fields of Punakha. Here we will take a break and have a gentle walk through the paddy fields to the temple of Chemmi Lhakhang; perhaps in time to hear the monks at prayer. This is a gentle and atmospheric temple, with lovely murals and young monks who –unless at prayer, take every opportunity to chat to their visitors. 20 minutes drive from the temple is our hotel for the night.

NIGHT: Meri Puensum Resort or similar, Punakha, (1,300m).

Day 5: Cultural visits in Punakha.
Today we will visit the magnificent Punakha Dzong which functions as winter residence for Central monastic body. The Punakha Dzong was built in 1637 and situated spectacularly on a promontory at the confluence of the Mo (mother) and Pho (father) Chhu (river), which then becomes the Puna Tsang Chhu and eventually joins the Brahmaputra. Punakha Dzong is known as the “Palace of Great Happiness” and considered to be one of the most beautiful Dzongs in Bhutan with its towering whitewashed walls, their gold and red bands demarking civil from religious areas; the black wooden window frames and huge, finely carved doors. Inside the dzong we will spend time in the Kuenrey
Lhakhang, a beautiful temple housing the 'hundred-pillar' assembly hall with exceptional murals depicting the life of Buddha, enormous 18th century golden statues of the Buddha, Guru Rinpoche and the Zhabdrung. But perhaps the most surprising and beautiful of all is the high ceiling, exquisitely painted with hundreds of dragons.

In the afternoon we will take a short drive along the Pho Chhu valley in search of the rare and critically endangered **White-bellied Heron** which is also perhaps the rarest bird in Bhutan.

**NIGHT: Meri Puensum Resort or similar, Punakha, (1,300m).**

**Day 6: Punakha to Phobjikha the valley of the Black Necked Cranes (78kms, 3.5 hrs).**

Our journey today continues east through beautiful oak and rhododendron forests, to Phobjikha valley on the western slopes of the Back Mountain National Park. Just before we enter **Phobjikha valley** we pass through the **village of Gangtey**. The road from Gangtey continues through fields of potato crops, down to the valley floor and our hotel in its amazing setting from which there are wide valley views. Phobjikha is the biggest wetland in the country, covering an area of 2,227 hectares and where approximately 270 globally endangered, **Black-necked Cranes** arrive each winter to feed in the farmlands and the dwarf bamboo thickets that cover the valley floor. Walking in this the wide glaciated valley, will give you an insight into the rural lifestyle of the farmers and, as the endangered Black-necked Cranes fly overhead it is truly a spectacular event; one we feel will remain with you for a very long time. The people of the valley believe that these magnificent birds are an auspicious sign and wait their arrival in late October from their breeding grounds on the Qinghai - Tibetan Plateau in China, for the blessings they will bring.

Following registration in our hotel we will visit the Royal Society for Protection of Nature’s (RSPN) Black-Necked Crane Information Centre, which has informative displays about the cranes and the valley environment. Here there are powerful spotting scopes for you to use and perhaps check what you see with the pamphlet ‘Field Guide to Crane Behaviour’. The center also has a library, there are 15min documentary videos shown at set intervals (Nu 200) and a handicraft shop. As time permits we will walk in the valley to have a closer look at the cranes before they return to their roosting nests.

**NIGHT: Gakling Guesthouse or similar, Phobjikha, (2,800m).**

**Day 7: Attend the Annual Black-necked crane festival at Gangtey Monastery.** This morning we visit Gangtey monastery for the magnificent Black-necked Crane Festival; introduced in 1998 by the RSPN. Phobjikha is the most significant wetland in Bhutan and as such it is the most significant over-wintering ground for the Black-neck Cranes. However, this valley is also home to around 500 subsistence farmers, who although known for their traditional respect for all sentient beings, also wish for economic development. In order to combine these two elements, the RSPN together with members of the village, the body of monks and local businessmen, developed the Black-necked Crane Festival as an integral part of the Eco-tourism/Community based sustainable tourism program. Bhutanese Festivals or Tshechus are held in villages and towns throughout the year. These are happy social events, a riot of colour with quite spectacular dancing. People dress in their finest
clothes and gather in the courtyards of temples or Dzongs, in order to participate in the ceremonies and watch religious dances performed in honour of Guru Rinpoche and his incredible deeds. Here in Phobjikha, this is a very important occasion as the people who live in the valley wish to show their gratitude to the Cranes and further their knowledge on environmental conservation for both themselves and the Cranes. The Festival Dances we will see are both traditional and can be traced back to the Pema Lingpa in the fifteenth century, as well as new dances based on the theme of Black-neck Cranes specially created for this auspicious occasion. They are performed by young monks and lay men who, dressed in brightly coloured gowns (often hand loomed silks), and wearing different masks represent Buddhist deities, demons and animals, complete elaborate dances (Cham), representing the destruction of evil spirits, acknowledged in the Bhutanese faith as well as those depicting Black-neck Cranes.

There are Folk Dances performed by villagers (often women) who, in lines or circles move in intricate series of forward and backward steps, accompanied by graceful hand and arm actions. But perhaps the highlight of all is the environmental conservation themed stories and songs, sung by the school children. The Black-necked Crane Festival not only marks the arrival of these magnificent birds but also aims to generate awareness and understanding of the importance of conserving these rare and endangered birds. However, the success of the festival and its continuity depends entirely upon the support and contributions of the visitors and well wishers of conservation programs. By participating and enjoying the event, you will be helping to promote traditional respect for all sentient beings, while enabling economic development; by maintaining continued conservation stewardship.

After spending the morning at the festival, we will have a hot picnic lunch after which we will walk the glaciated valley of Phobjikha which will take us about 2 hrs.

NIGHT: Gakling Guesthouse or similar, Phobjikha, (2,800m).

Day 8: Phobjikha to Tangsibji (58kms, 2 hrs).
Returning through the pass at Lawa La at 3,390m, we stop to once again to enjoy the panoramic vistas before returning to our vehicles and continuing our drive down through beautiful oak and rhododendron forests to the valley of Rukubji and on to Nekhachu village, surrounded by fields of mustard, wheat, barley and potatoes before continuing our drive to Chendibji. Here we will spend some time to take photos of the stupa. The Nepalese styled Chorten, picturesquely situated alongside the river was built in 19th century by Lama Shida and is patterned after Swayambhunath in Kathmandu (Nepal). According to the legend, it was built to cover the remains of an evil spirit who was killed there.

From Chendibji the drive continues to pass through beautiful scenery to the village of Tangsibji and our guesthouse. We will spend the afternoon at the guesthouse from where are stunning views across the Black mountains. For those interested in birds can spend time around our guesthouse compound which supports over 40 species of birds.

NIGHT: Tangbi Guesthouse or similar, (1,900m).

Day 9: Tangsibji to Trongsa (23kms, 1 hr), cultural visits in Trongsa.
Leaving Tangsibji we head further east to Trongsa where we stop to visit Trongsa Dzong, built in
1648 and the seat of power over central and eastern Bhutan and both the first and second Kings of Bhutan ruled here; even today the King has to be invested as Trongsa Penlop (governor) prior to ascending the throne. The dzong is one of the largest in Bhutan and is considered to be an excellent example of Bhutanese architecture. Sitting on a steep ridge, high above the turbulent Mangde Chhu, it seems to hover in the early morning mist and cloud. It is an impressive sight, and inside the massive structure with its various assemblies of buildings added to over a period of time, it meanders down the contours of the ridge with a tangle of lanes and ancient stone steps that open into bright, sunshine filled courtyards of the many temples within the dzong.

The 17th century Ta Dzong, sits on the hill above the dzong it was built to protect; recently it has been converted into an excellent museum providing visitors with an insight into the significance of Trongsa in Bhutan’s history, as well as displays focusing on Buddhist art and royal memorabilia.

From the wide, sweeping terrace there are magnificent views of the valley and river far below. And so, after spending some time in the Dzong we will wander through the exhibitions offered in the Ta Dzong before returning to our hotel.

NIGHT: Yangkhil Resort or similar, (2,000m).

Day 10: Trongsa to Bumthang (69kms, 3 hrs).

The road winds steeply up the mountain ridges to Yotong La (3,425m). This is known as ‘Yak country’ and often small herds of these large animals can be seen grazing on the young bamboo shoots just below the pass. As with most of the passes in Bhutan, they are adorned with a Chorten for safe keeping and prayer flags, positioned in auspicious places where the breeze can take the blessings to the valleys below. Descending from Yotong La, we travel through forests of rhododendrons and past meadows of wild flowers that may just be coming into bloom as we enter the valley of Chummey.

Bumthang Dzongkhag comprises of four wide and scenic valleys: Chumme and Choekhor, where fields of buckwheat (which makes delicious pancakes), rice and potatoes are the main crops creating a serene landscape dotted with apple orchards and dairy farms; while the higher valleys of Tang and Ura are known for yak and sheep breeding. Clothing made from the skins of the animals can still be seen in some of the surrounding villages, but here in Chumme the wool from the flocks is woven into a fabric known as Yathra. We will stop at a weaving center and you will be able to see the spinning, dying and weaving of the wool. To form the intricacies of the pattern, the weavers apply supplementary threads to their work, which is a traditional method of weaving in Bhutan – should you wish it is possible for you to try your skill at this method of weaving!

Approaching Jakar, the principle town and administrative centre for the four valleys, we see its 16th century dzong - which is also known as the Castle of the White Bird, in part because of its fifty meter high Utse (central tower). The Dzong was constructed in 1549 by the Tibetan Lam Nagi and played an important role as the fortress of defence for the whole eastern Dzongkhags, later becoming the seat of the first king of Bhutan. We continue or drive into the busy little town of Jakar where we will
Day 11: Cultural visits in Bumthang.
Bumthang is considered to be the religious heartland of the Bhutan, so today we will begin our stay with a visit to some of the oldest and most beautiful temples and monasteries - Jampa Lhakhang (659), which is one of the oldest and most sacred monasteries in Bhutan. It was founded by Songtsen Gampo, a 7th century Tibetan King who was destined to build 108 temples known as Thadhul- Yangdhul (temples on and across the Tibetan border) in a day, in order to subdue the demoness that was residing and believed to have been built on the same day as Kychu Lhakhang in Paro. The various buildings within the complex house more than one hundred statues of the gods of Kalachakra (built in 1887 by the first king), relics of the future Buddha, Jowo Jampa (Maitreya) the derivative of the temple name, 1,000 butter lamps – a really beautiful sight, and the main chapel inside which are three steps representing the past (now covered with a wooden plank), present (at ground level) and future (top step). It is believed that when the present step sinks in to the ground, our world will end. During the month of October the annual festival of Jampa Lhakhang Drup is held in the grounds of the temple. The second visit of the day will be to the three temples of Kurjey Lhakhang, where it is believed that during the 8th century, Sindhu Raja invited Guru Rinpoche from Nepal to Bhutan to subdue some evil spirits that were plaguing the land. The Padma Sambhava came to Bumthang and meditated in a cave that resembled a pile of Dorjis (stylized thunderbolt used for Buddhist rituals). After subduing the evil spirits and demons, imprints of the Guru's body remained in the rock face - Kurjey, resulting in the temple's name. Kurjey Lhakhang is also the final resting place of the first three kings of Bhutan; the chortens in front of the temples are dedicated to them.
NIGHT: Hotel Peling or similar, Bumthang, (2,800m).

Day 12: Flight from Bumthang to Paro (25mins) and cultural visits in Paro.
This morning we will take the short flight from Bumthang to Paro. The 25 minute flight provides us with stunning views of the High Himalayan mountains.

In Paro we will visit the Rinpung Dzong, The Fortress of the Heap of Jewels which was featured in some scenes of the film ‘Little Buddha’ (1993). Built between 1644 and 1646 by the Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel, this 5 storey building has white-washed walls, magnificently carved and painted wooden doors and windows, which add to the sense of power and wealth required to build this fortress. Walking through the two guard houses we enter the courtyard where we can see the intricately carved central tower, considered to be one of the finest and most beautiful in Bhutan with separate buildings housing the monastic and administrative sections while the external walls have a most unusual mural of the 'Mystical Spiral.' From here we will follow the stone path down to the Paro Chhu and cross the Nyamai Zam - the wooden cantilevered bridge festooned with prayer flags, to our waiting vehicle and drive to one of the most important and oldest religious sites: Kyichu Lhakhang, built in 659 by King Songtsen Gompo of Tibet as one of the 108 such monasteries he had constructed to spread Buddhism across the land. The temple has many relics which date from
the 7th century, the oldest of which is the statue of Lord Buddha Sakyamuni. Over the years the temple has been added to and now in addition to the statue of Buddha, contains the impressive statues of: Chenrezig with 11 heads and 1,000 hands, Tara and the Guru Rinpoche. From here we will return to our hotel.

NIGHT: Hotel Olathang or similar, Paro (2,300m).

Day 13: Hike up to Tigers Nest monastery (5 hrs return hike).
We begin the day with a walk up to the famous **Tiger's Nest, Taksang Monastery**. Please note that it is possible to hire a pony for the journey up but not for the return. The monastery is perched some 600m 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. The Guru then mediated here for 3 years, 3 months, 3 days and 3 hours; monks that live here today also are expected to remain and meditate here for 3 years. To reach this cultural icon, it is a steep uphill walk through the dappled shade of the wooded slopes, for roughly 1½-2hrs, to reach a tea house (an ascent of 340m). Apart from offering welcome refreshment this tea house is one of the principle viewpoints of the monastery, and those who prefer not to climb any further can relax here whilst others continue on. However, the further half hour’s ascent above the tea house is well worth it, as it brings you to another viewpoint directly across from the monastery. The final section of the walk takes you from this second viewpoint steeply down 100m into the gorge that separates you from the monastery and then climbs back up again to reach the monastery gate - the monastery was designed to be isolated! However, the hike to this important Buddhist monastery is certainly worth every effort. The **monastery** has four main temples and several other buildings to house the body of monks who live there. Each separate building is painted white with golden roofs that glisten in the sunlight; all interconnected with steps carved into the rock itself and at each level balconies provide breath-taking views of the surrounding countryside. Inside, the temples are extremely impressive with gold-plated domes, flickering light that dances off golden images of Buddha, the paintings and the sculptures of the Bhutanese Saints. Perhaps the most impressive of all, is the Hall of One Thousand Buddhas which has been carved into the rock, with a large statue of a tiger - the respected symbol of Taksang and the legend that this location which was chosen by the Tigress who brought the Padma Sambhava to the country. Returning to the teahouse we will stop for lunch and one last opportunity for photographs of this iconic image before continuing down to the approach road where our vehicle will be waiting to take us back to our hotel.

NIGHT: Hotel Olathang or similar, Paro (2,300m).

Day 14: Paro to Chele La for high altitude birding and amazing view across snow-topped Jhomolhari. Returning to Paro for cultural program and farewell dinner.

An early morning departure for our journey up through ancient pine and fir forests to Chele La Pass (3,822m), where there are fantastic views of the high Himalayan peaks of Jhomolhari (7,219m), Jichu Drake (6,989m) and down into the Paro and Ha valleys. Chele La gives us the opportunity to ascend above the tree line into alpine meadows and dwarf rhododendron scrub; here we have the possibility of finding some of Bhutan’s special birds such as the **Himalayan Monal; Blood Pheasant; Kalij**.
Pheasant and Satyr Tragopan. After a hot picnic breakfast we will return to Paro and visit a farmhouse to learn how to tie and wear a ‘Gho’ or ‘Kira’ followed by a cultural program and farewell dinner. For those wishing to try out the traditional hot-stone bath, your host will be very happy to arrange it. After the farewell party, we will return to our hotel.

**Day 15:** Flight from Paro to Bangkok for onward connection.

**Group Tour Costs**

**GROUND COST for 15 nights**

**6-9 guests** - US$6,550 per person, based on standard twin occupancy;

**10-15 guests** - US$6,250 per person, based on standard twin occupancy;

Single supplement: $750 per person.

**General Information**

**Included in Bhutan Land Cost**

- Bangkok - Paro – Bangkok (Drukair/Bhutan Airlines) round-trip, economy class;
- Bumthang – Paro (Drukair) domestic flight round-trip, economy class;
- Visa and all taxes;
- Tour Guide who is an excellent birder;
- All activities as mentioned in the itinerary;
- All accommodation based on sharing twin room;
- All meals;
- Tea/coffee and snacks;
- Bottled water throughout the trip;
- Ground transportation;
- All necessary camping equipment’s if camping is involved in your tour;
- Dr. Chris Atwood’s participation cost including his international air;
- All entrance fees for museums and parks.

**Not Included in Bhutan Land Cost**

- Travel insurance (essential);
- Laundry, phone calls and alcoholic drinks;
- Personal expenses;
- Charges incurred as a result of circumstances beyond the control of *Langur Eco Travels*; 
- International flights;
• Gratuity/Tips.

Note Regarding Single Supplements
Single occupancy can be arranged, based on room availability and at an extra cost of US $25 per night.

Health and vaccination requirement
Most travelers to Bhutan will need vaccinations for hepatitis A, typhoid fever, and polio, as well as medications for travelers' diarrhea. Travelers to the southern part of the country will need malaria prophylaxis, in conjunction with insect repellents and other measures to prevent mosquito bites. Additional immunizations may be necessary depending upon the circumstances of the trip and the medical history of the traveler, as discussed below. All travelers should visit either a travel health clinic or their personal physician 4-8 weeks before departure.

Malaria: Prophylaxis with Lariam (mefloquine), Malarone (atovaquone/proguanil), or doxycycline is recommended for rural areas below 1700 m (5,577 ft) in the five southern belt districts bordering India: Cherang, Samtse, Samdrup Jongkhar, Sarpang, and Shemgang.

Vaccinations:

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<tr>
<th>Vaccination</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis A</td>
<td>Recommended for all travelers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Typhoid</td>
<td>Recommended for all travelers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Polio</td>
<td>One-time booster recommended for any adult traveler who completed the childhood series but never had polio vaccine as an adult</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yellow fever</td>
<td>Required for all travelers arriving from a yellow-fever-infected area in Africa or the Americas and for travelers who have been in transit more than 12 hours in an airport located in a country with risk of yellow fever transmission. Not recommended otherwise.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japanese encephalitis</td>
<td>For travelers who may spend a month or more in rural areas and for short-term travelers who may spend substantial time outdoors in rural areas, especially after dusk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B</td>
<td>Recommended for all travelers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rabies</td>
<td>For travelers spending a lot of time outdoors, or at high risk for animal bites, or involved in any activities that might bring them into direct contact with bats</td>
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**Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)**  
Two doses recommended for all travelers born after 1956, if not previously given

**Tetanus-diphtheria**  
Revaccination recommended every 10 years

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**Trip grade: Moderate to strenuous hikes**
You should prepare for certain factors of travel in Bhutan. A few of the most important are: elevation, windy mountain roads and uneven trek paths. Average elevation on this trip is 2,400m. Pass crossings may be up to 4,000m.

**Insurance**
We strongly advise that your travel insurance policies include medical assistance and (helicopter) evacuation - we believe that it is 'better to be safe than sorry!' Should you decline to do so, we must state that we will in no way, accept responsibility for expenses incurred, should you require medical attention/evacuation whilst on holiday with us.

**Accommodation**
It is our policy to use the best available accommodation in each location. All hotels and lodges we use are government approved and registered with the Tourism Council of Bhutan. If you signed up for an camping tour, we have our own camping crew who will set up camps, prepare hot meals and provide hot showers.

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**Temperature**

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<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bumthang/Chumey</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
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What to take with you

Clothing
This trip departs in February which is generally a dry and cool time of the year but you may encounter light rain or damp condition. Evenings may be cool and you will certainly have many early morning starts so will need some warm layers. The key to being comfortable is to adopt a system of several layers rather than one item of bulky warm clothing. Sun hats are an essential item, with a wide brim and something to protect your neck. Temperatures can drop very quickly in the evening and early morning and at altitude and you may again need to put on a number of layers.

Clothing Checklist

<p>| Walking boot | For hiking |
| Training shoe | For comfort in camp |
| Waterproof jacket | Best made with breathable, waterproof fabric |
| Waterproof over-trousers | Best made with breathable, waterproof fabric |
| Lightweight dovet jacket or down gilet | For colder evening/morning or incase of cold snap |
| Trekking trousers | Suggest two pairs, plus trousers to change into the evening |
| T-shirts/ underskirts | |
| Long sleeved shirts | Prevent sunburn on your arms and keep airborne biting insects at bay |
| Thermal underwear | You may like to take to change into this in the evening or have it to sleep in. |
| Micro fleece | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Warm Jacket</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thicker socks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thin socks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolly hat or gloves</td>
<td>For cold weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun hat</td>
<td>With adequate protection for your neck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart/casual clothes</td>
<td>For air travel, in cities and for evenings in hotels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Equipment and Accessories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Small day sack</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunglasses and retainers</td>
<td>If you wear glasses, bring a spare pair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head torch or flashlight</td>
<td>With a spare batteries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti bacterial hand gel</td>
<td>Very useful for washing hands when no water available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Electricity**

Standard voltage in Bhutan is 220-240 volts. You will often find two pin razor type sockets in bathrooms. In rooms sockets are generally round-three pin variety (Indian standard which is larger than European) - but can also be European or British type sockets. Take a universal travel adaptor and if that still does not fit ask at hotel reception.

**Baggage and Hand luggage**

Bhutan Airlines/Druk Airlines Baggage allowances are one cabin baggage (Max weight 10kg) and one checked-in-baggage (max 20kg).

- Small heavy articles can be carried in your day-sack or grip, which can go on as hand baggage. Note that most airlines only allow one item of hand baggage.
- Any excess baggage charge will have to be borne by yourself.
- Electrical equipment and lighters should be packed in your hold luggage.
THANK YOU!