



# KITIPHU RIDGE



**COUNTRIES VISITED:** BHUTAN

**TRIP TYPE:** Trekking  
**TRIP GRADE:** Moderate  
**TRIP STYLE:** Camping  
**5 Based On 1 Reviews**  
**KG Carbon Footprint**

**TRIP LEADER:** Local Leader  
**GROUP SIZE:** 2 - 10 people  
**NEXT DEPARTURE:** 13 Apr 2025  
**14 Trees Planted for each Booking**

This trip combines seeing the culture of Bhutan with a short trek to Kitiphu Ridge also known as The Owl trek. There are incredible views of the Himalaya including Mount Gangkar Punsum. At an altitude of 7,570m this is the highest unclimbed peak in the world.

With this itinerary we visit the main cultural highlights of the Kingdom of Bhutan. We explore Paro Valley with a walk to Taktsang or 'Tiger's Nest' monastery. We also visit Thimphu, Punakha and Bumthang. In Phobjika we have the chance to see Black-necked cranes. The birds spend the winter from mid-October to end of February. We visit their roosting areas located in wetlands at Phobjika and Gyetsa.

The Himalayan trek has three days of scenic walking. From Gyetsa we follow a quiet forest trail up to Tharpaling monastery. We ascend onto Kitiphu Ridge where we see the Himalayan view along the Bhutan and Tibet border. We view Mount Gangkar Punsum at an altitude of 7,570m. This is the highest unclimbed peak in the world.

During the sightseeing part of the trip we stay at hotels. For three nights we sleep in tents and our cooks provide the meals. The other short camping style trek we organise in Bhutan is the five day [Druk Path](#).

## REASONS TO CHOOSE US

- We are Himalayan trekking specialists having operated trips in Bhutan for many years. Over the years we have organised many remote treks including Lunana Snowman. [Roland Hunter](#) has designed Kitiphu Ridge itinerary from his first-hand experience of this trek.
- Our [AITO Traveller Reviews for Kitiphu Ridge](#) have a holiday rating of 100%. Based on client feedback we won the 2018 Gold Award as AITO Tour Operator of the Year. Read more about our [Testimonials and Awards](#).
- We use sturdy A frame tents for our camping treks in Bhutan. These are high quality tents with space for two people plus gear.
- We pay for private weather forecasts from EverestWeather.com. We also use in house forecasting throughout the duration of this trek.
- We send a Thuraya satellite phone on our group treks in Bhutan. Your leader will have reliable communications for logistics, planning and group safety.
- We provide a range of tasty meals for breakfast, lunch and supper. We give everyone in the group a chocolate or muesli bar per day. For breakfast we provide fresh coffee from our Bialetti Moka coffee machine.
- We bring a comprehensive medical aid kit.
- Our team with first hand knowledge of this trek provides pre trip support.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All internal transport and transfers including airport collections in Paro.
- Twin share rooms at hotels while in Bhutan.
- All meals included while in Bhutan.
- Twin share tents while on trek.
- Trekking arrangements. Including permits and fees, tents, Bhutanese guides, pack animals and cooks.
- Weather forecasts from EverestWeather.com.
- Thuraya satellite phones for organising logistics and medical evacuations. It can also be also used for personal calls at extra cost.
- Rubberised luggage tag posted to you before departure
- Full financial protection. Our Air Travel Organiser's Licence (ATOL) number is 10921. Our Association of Bonded Travel Operators Trust (ABTOT) membership number is 5365).
- Pre departure support and advice from The Mountain Company. We are available by email, phone or face to face meetings.

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- International flight to/from Paro (flying from Bangkok, Singapore, Kathmandu and Delhi).
- Travel & trekking insurance.
- Personal clothing & equipment please see Appendix for suggested kit list.
- Tips.
- Other items not listed in "What is included".

## ITINERARY

### DAY 1: FLY TO PARO (2,280M)

---

Arrive in Paro

Lunch and Dinner

Hotel Olathang in Paro

We will meet you on arrival at Paro airport and drive you to the hotel. When the whole group has arrived we will give a full briefing to get you ready for the Kitiphu Ridge trek. Later on we will organise a trip into

Paro to change money at the bank and to look around the town. Afterwards we arrange sightseeing tour to visit Paro Dzong and the National museum. Paro is Bhutan's second largest town. The valley also contains significant religious and historic sites in the country. It also has as well as Bhutan's only international airport.

## **DAY 2: MORNING WALK TO TAKTSANG MONASTERY KNOWN AS THE TIGER'S NEST (3,120M)**

---

Walking 9km (4 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Hotel Olathang in Paro

After breakfast we organise a walk up to the Taktsang monastery known as the "Tiger's Nest". The hike up to the monastery through pine forest takes about 2 to 3 hours and the trail ascends 520m. This is a good opportunity to stretch your legs after your travels to Bhutan. After our visit to Taktsang we drive to the Chele La pass at an altitude of 3,780m. From here on a clear day there is a view of Mount Chomolhari to the north. We descend from the pass into Haa Valley at an altitude of 2,712m where we stay for two nights. Being at this high elevation before the trek is essential for acclimatisation. Haa Valley remains one of the least visited areas in the country.

## **DAY 3: DRIVE OVER DOCHU LA TO PUNAKHA (1,300M)**

---

Drive to Punakha (4 hours driving)

Sightseeing in Punakha

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Meri Puensum Resort in Punakha

Today we drive to Punakha which is the old winter capital of Bhutan. On the way we drive over the Dochu La pass at an altitude of 3,050m. This is one of the finest viewpoints of Eastern Himalaya. On a clear day you can see a panorama of the Bhutan Himalaya. We can see Mount Masangang, Tsendagang, Terigang and Gangkar Punsum plus many others. On arrival at Dochu La we get out of the car to admire the view. We will walk around the 108 chortens marking the top. From the pass we drive down through beautiful forest into the Punakha Valley at an altitude of 1,350m.

Before reaching Punakha we visit Chimi Lhakang. This is also known as the fertility temple of Bhutan or the Divine Madman's monastery. Lama Drukpa Kunley was an unorthodox Buddhist saint. It takes about 20 minutes to walk across rice fields to reach the temple. Afterwards we drive to our hotel and check in for the night.

## **DAY 4: SIGHTSEEING IN PUNAKHA**

---

Sightseeing in Punakha

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Hotel Meri Puensum in Punakha

After breakfast we visit Punakha Dzong. This is an impressive building and at the confluence of the Pho Chhu (father) and Mo Chhu (mother) rivers. This dzong is the second largest in Bhutan. Ngawang

Namgyal, 1st Zhabdrung Rinpoche, built the dzong in 1638 so it is also the second oldest.

## **DAY 5: DRIVE TO GANGTEY IN PHOBJIKA VALLEY AND AFTERNOON EXPLORE GANGTEY**

---

Drive to Gangtey (5 hours driving)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Dewachen Hotel Dewachen Hotel in Phobjika valley

Today we drive to the beautiful Phobjikha valley. This place is home to the endangered black-necked cranes that migrate every winter. The cranes over winter from mid-October to the end of February. Phobjikha is on the North Western edge of Jigme Singye Wangchuk National Park. It has ecological significance and rich natural heritage. Phobjikha valley has the largest wetland in Bhutan. It is a habitat to 300 black-necked cranes that migrate from their breeding grounds in Tibet.

On reaching Phobjikha we visit the Gangtey monastery. This is the only gumpa of Nyingmapa religious school in western Bhutan. From here we walk along the Gangtey Nature Trail. We pass Semchubara village through forests of blue pine trees covered with lichen. We see views of the wetlands where you will see black-necked cranes. At the end of the nature trail in Kingathang village we visit a temple built by the Queen Mother. After we drive up to the black-necked cranes visitor centre. This place overlooks the roosting area of the cranes and you can use their telescopes for a closer look at the birds.

## **DAY 6: DRIVE TO GYETSA VILLAGE NEAR CHUMEY (2,920M)**

---

Drive to Gyetsa village (7 hours driving)

Gangtey monastery & Gangtey Nature Trail

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

We drive to Trongsa on a road with lots of bends. We pass beautiful waterfalls and thick forest cover along the way. We have good view of the south Trongsa Valley and stunning views of the Trongsa Dzong. We visit the Trongsa Dzong and the museum. After lunch we continue the drive and meet our trek crew at Gyetsa village where we camp for the night. There are wetlands outside the village used as a roosting area by black-necked cranes.

## **DAY 7: TREK TO THARPALING MONASTERY (3,600M)**

---

Walking for 5km (3 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

After leaving the village we walk through fields and cross a bridge over a small stream. We ascend a small path up through blue pine forest. There are good views back down to the field and wetlands around Gyetsa village. After 45 minutes we reach several traditional Bhutanese farmhouses and a private monastery. We continue following the ridge up through more forest. Along the way we pass prayer flags, mani wall and an old gateway with a beautiful mandala painted on the roof. This marks the old trail from Trongsa to Bumthang.

We see Tharpaling monastery above us near the top of the ridge. After about three hours walking we arrived at our camp in the grounds of the monastery. We pitch the tents next to eight stupas and after arrival you will enjoy a cup of tea. Tharpaling is a cluster of isolated monasteries at an altitude of 3,700m. This is an important monastery complex founded in 1352 by Longchen Rabjampa. This was during his enforced period of exile from Tibet. There are usually more than 100 monks at Tharpaling. During the winter they head south to a warmer place so in December we only saw a few caretaker monks. Near the main hall are eight stupas built in 2011. These commemorate the major deeds in the life of Shakyamuni Buddha. In the afternoon you can visit one of the temples and attend a puja (religious ceremony).

## **DAY 8: TREK TO MOUNT KITIPHU (4,050M) AND DESCEND TO SHONATH CAMP (3,450M)**

---

Walking for 19km (6 to 7 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

In the morning we are likely to see monks and nuns walking their koras around the chortens. On their hands they spin prayer wheels. After breakfast we walk up through the monastery complex and follow the trail up to a pass on Kitiphu Ridge. From here you should see your first views of the Himalayan peaks to the East.

We ascend the grassy ridge to the first viewpoint bedecked by prayer flags. We see Mount Chomolhari to the West. We hike through blue pine and rhododendron. After there are more grassy slopes to the second viewpoint. From here we look down into the Bumthang valley far below and see Jakar Dzong located on a hilltop.

At the end of the ridge is Mount Kitiphu at an altitude of 4,050m. on a clear day we see Mount Gangkar Punsum. At an altitude of 7,570m it is the highest unclimbed peak in the world. There are many prayer flags, a large Buddhist prayer umbrella and a shrine for pujas. We have time to take photos and enjoy the view.

We start the walk down Kitiphu Ridge and after passing a yak herder's hut we reach Drange La (3,600m). At this pass we descend through a beautiful forest of spruce, fir, rhododendron and bamboo. It takes about 45 minutes to reach our camp in a grassy clearing called Shonath. In the forest around this camp there are owls, hence giving the trek its alternative name "The Owl trek".

## **DAY 9: TREK TO DUR VILLAGE (2,900M), DRIVE TO BUMTHANG**

---

Walking for 9km (3 hours)

Drive to Bumthang (45 minutes)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Swiss Guest House in Bumthang

This morning we have a short walk through blue pine forest to the road head at Dur Village. We explore the village and say farewells to our horsemen. We meet our vehicle and we drive to Bumthang where we check into a hotel.

In the afternoon we go sightseeing in Bumthang. We start off with a visit to Tamshing Gomba. After we walk over the suspension bridge to Kurjey Lhakang. Kurjey Lhakang is an important temple. There is the body print of Guru Rinpoche preserved in a cave inside the oldest temple.



## **DAY 10: SIGHTSEEING IN BUMTHANG**

---

Sightseeing in Bumthang

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Swiss Guesthouse in Bumthang

Today we take an excursion to Tang valley where we visit Membar Tsho known as the burning lake. This is one of Bhutan's most important pilgrimage sites. After we drive to Drangchel. This is Pema Lingpa's birthplace where walk up to visit Ugyenchholing Palace. The Palace is a museum giving an insight into life in an aristocratic family in the last century. Return to Bumthang for the night.

## **DAY 11: DRIVE TO PUNAKHA**

---

Drive to Punakha (8 hours driving)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Hotel Meri Puensum in Punakha

We have a long drive from Bumthang to Punakha via Tongsa. As there is only one road that crosses the country from East to West we drive back the same way.

If you prefer to avoid the drive back to Paro it is possible to take a flight from Bumthang. Please contact us to find out the flight schedule and availability.

## **DAY 12: DRIVE TO THIMPHU, AFTERNOON SIGHTSEEING**

---

Drive to Thimphu (3 hours driving)

Sightseeing in Thimphu

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Gyelsa Boutique Inn in Thimphu

Today we continue the drive over Dochu La. We have another chance to see the view of the Himalayan mountains. On arrival to Thimphu we will check into the hotel and then in the afternoon we can explore the town.

## **DAY 13: SIGHTSEEING IN THIMPHU**

---

Sightseeing in Thimphu

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Gyelsa Boutique Inn in Thimphu

Today we have a full day of sightseeing in Thimphu. There are many options of places to visit with your

guide. We visit the Tashichho Dzong and the large Shakyamuni Buddha statue overlooking town. It is also worth taking time to explore the town centre. We can see the Clock Tower square and Changlimithang Stadium. There are lots of shops, restaurants and cafes.

## DAY 14: FLY HOME

Flight back

Breakfast

Transfer to Paro airport for flight home. End of trip.

## DATES & PRICES

### 2025

Dates	Trip Leader	Price	Single Supplement: Room/Tent	Availability
13 Apr 2025 to 26 Apr 2025	Local Leader	US\$4,950pp	US\$595pp / US\$95pp	2 Left to Guarantee
05 Oct 2025 to 18 Oct 2025	Local Leader	US\$4,950pp	US\$595pp / US\$95pp	2 Left to Guarantee
19 Oct 2025 to 01 Nov 2025	Local Leader	US\$4,950pp	US\$595pp / US\$95pp	2 Left to Guarantee
02 Nov 2025 to 15 Nov 2025	Local Leader	US\$4,950pp	US\$595pp / US\$95pp	2 Left to Guarantee

### 2026

Dates	Trip Leader	Price	Single Supplement: Room/Tent	Availability
12 Apr 2026 to 25 Apr 2026	Local Leader	US\$4,950pp	US\$595pp / US\$95pp	2 Left to Guarantee
04 Oct 2026 to 17 Oct 2026	Local Leader	US\$4,950pp	US\$595pp / US\$95pp	2 Left to Guarantee
18 Oct 2026 to 31 Oct 2026	Local Leader	US\$4,950pp	US\$595pp / US\$95pp	2 Left to Guarantee
01 Nov 2026 to 14 Nov 2026	Local Leader	US\$4,950pp	US\$595pp / US\$95pp	2 Left to Guarantee

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

A Typical Day On Trek

## TYPICAL DAY ON CAMPING TREK IN BHUTAN

We provide a comfortable experience on our camping style treks in Bhutan. Our team works hard to

support you so that you can relax and enjoy the trek. We provide personal tents, mess tent, kitchen tent and toilet tent(s). The camp will be set up and dismantled by the trek crew. We bring along a cook and kitchen helpers to provide the meals.

The day starts with an early morning mug of tea brought to your tent by one of the trek crew. Before heading for breakfast you pack your overnight gear into your duffel bag. During breakfast the trek crew pack away the tents. The pony men load up the pack animals and set off on the trail. After breakfast, between 7am and 8am, we start walking.

The pace of the trek is moderate as there is plenty of time in the itinerary to reach the camp for tonight. There will be plenty of time to enjoy the scenery, take photos and explore the local villages. Lunch will be around midday at a spot by the side of the trail. After lunch we continue the walk and on most days we arrive to camp by mid afternoon. Some of the trek crew would have gone ahead of the group to set up camp and to put up the tents. On arrival to camp you will get a hot drink and biscuits. In the evening our cook will provide a three course meal in the mess tent around 6pm.

After supper the leaders will discuss the plan for the next day. Afterwards people might stay in the mess tent chatting about the day's events or playing cards. After a tiring day most people head to their tent quite early for the night. Tomorrow is likely to be very similar as today! The only difference is that if we are crossing a high pass or climbing to a summit we leave camp earlier in the morning.

Food provided on Camping Trek

## **FOOD PROVIDED ON CAMPING TREK IN BHUTAN**

While on a camping style trek in Bhutan we provide tasty and nutritional food. We make sure there is more than enough quantity to go around as trekkers will be hungry after a long day on the trail. Over the years we have worked on increasing the variety of the menus. We have expanded the list of ingredients provided to the cooks so they have more to work with. Also in 2015 we purchased two food dehydrators with a vacuum sealing machine. We dehydrate a large number of different vegetables in Paro before departure. This has transformed the quality of food especially on the longer treks to remote areas.

For breakfast we provide porridge or cereal, toast or chapatis and eggs. There will be hot drinks including tea, herbal teas, hot chocolate and coffee. We provide fresh coffee from our Bialetti Moka coffee machine.

For lunch we stop at a convenient spot with water at the side of the trail. In Bhutan the cooks prepare lunch after breakfast before leaving camp in the morning. One of the ponies carries the insulated "tiffin" containers to the lunch place. After lunch we have time to relax before starting to walk again in the afternoon.

On arrival at camp in the afternoon you have biscuits and a hot drink such as tea or coffee. Around 6pm we serve a three course meal in the mess tent. The starter is often soup with popcorn or poppadums. We have a range of main dishes and carbohydrates including rice, potatoes or pasta.

We cater for a variety of dietary requirements. Our meals are suitable for vegetarians. If there is a meat dish then we also provide vegetarian options as standard. During booking we find out if you have any dietary needs and agree upon meal plans before departure. If you have any questions about the food provided please get in touch with us to discuss further.

Communications

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

We bring a Thuraya satellite phone for logistical, safety and personal use. Personal calls charged at £4 (US\$5 or €4.50) per minute and £2 (US\$3 €4.50) to send and receive SMS text.

Kit List

## **CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT LIST FOR KITIPHU RIDGE**

For the safety of everyone in the group and to help ensure a successful trek, you are required to have the



following items in our clothing and equipment list tailored for Kitiphu trek.

As a reminder, the weather on this trek will vary season to season and day to day as you ascend to higher elevations and you will experience the coldest temperatures in December would have overnight lows around -5°C.

Each trekker should bring one backpack for gear required during the day. Your day backpack will contain items such as warm clothes, jacket, camera, water bottles, personal first aid kit and snacks. **The maximum weight allowance for back pack is 5kg.** The rest of your personal equipment packed in a duffel or kit bag will be carried by a pony. **The maximum weight allowance for your duffel bag is 15kg.** Please ensure that your bag is marked clearly on the outside for easy identification.

We suggest you print the kit list and tick items off as you pack them then weigh your kit bag before you come on trek.

#### Footwear:

- Walking boots. A pair of water repellent boots with ankle support.
- Wool and liner socks.
- Trainers/sneakers or sandals. Can be used in camp during the evenings.

#### Clothing:

- Waterproof jacket and trousers (goretex or similar). For use if it rains or snows during the trek.
- Trekking trousers.
- Long sleeve shirts (not cotton).
- Micro fleece.
- Mid to heavyweight fleece.
- Sleeveless/ gilet or body warmer type fleece. This will help keep your core warm while not bulking when layering up. Gilet fleece can be used in combination with base layers, other fleeces and down jacket to provide maximum warmth and insulation.
- Thermals or base layer for top & bottom (merino wool or synthetic).
- Medium weight down jacket (eg Nuptse jacket by The North Face)

#### Handwear:

- Fleece gloves.

#### Headwear:

- Wool or fleece hat.
- Sun hat.
- Bandana or scarf. (eg. [Buff Headwear](#) or purchase a [#myTMCbuff](#)).
- Headtorch. Bring extra batteries.
- Sunglasses.

#### Personal Equipment:

- Sleeping bag. Maximum overnight lows will be around -5 Celsius.
- Fleece or silk liner for your sleeping bag. A liner protects your sleeping bag from getting dirty and helps by adding extra insulation to keep you warm at night.
- Sleeping mat (eg. Thermarest).
- Recommended size is 30 to 40 litres as you need to have enough space to carry water bottles, camera, snacks and extra clothing such as down jacket etc. It is also a good idea to bring a rain cover to keep the contents dry.
- Trekking poles (Black Diamond with "Flick Lock" are best). Having two poles is mandatory as required for your safety on steep and loose sections of the trail and for walking through deep snow higher up.
- Stuff sacks for keeping your gear dry and organised. Or even better are fold- drybags such as from Exped.
- Two water bottles (Nalgene wide mouth bottles are the best).
- Pee bottle. Highly recommended as means you do not have to get up to find toilet tent at night! For men you can use an old water bottle for women take a look at [SheWee](#).

- Sunscreen and lipsalve with a high SPF.
- Insect repellent.
- Water purification tablets (Pristine, Biox Acqua or Acqa Mira).
- Favourite snack food.
- Books, phone and cards etc.
- Camera with spare batteries and memory cards.
- Insurance certificate.
- Earplugs (optional).
- Baby wipes (optional).
- Hand sanitizer (optional)

#### Travelling:

- Duffle bag or large backpack for your personal gear on the trek (carried by a porter). Bring a small combination padlock to secure the bag.
- Travel clothes. You will need casual clothing for air travel days and time spent in Paro, Punakha, Bumthang and Thimphu.
- Toiletry bag include toilet paper, soap, towel, toothbrush, etc.

#### Personal first aid kit:

Note: we provide a comprehensive group first aid kit but please bring personal medications and other items you might use regularly such as:

- Any personal medications.
- Blister treatment (Compeed patches are the best).
- Rehydration powder eg Dioralyte.
- Analgesics (paracetamol, ibuprofen and aspirin).
- Plasters and zinc oxide tape.
- Throat lozenges.

#### Threat and risk assessment

### **RISK ASSESSMENT FOR KITIPHU RIDGE**

You should be aware trekking in a developing country involves a risk of personal injury or death. You must accept these risks and be responsible for your own actions and involvement. Adventure travel requires an open and flexible attitude. You may experience extreme conditions and unpredictable weather. There could be last minute changes to the itinerary beyond our control. The ability to work in a team is an important aspect of our trips.

We have performed a threat and risk assessment for our Kitiphu Ridge trek. Our trips have a degree of risk. This is part of the attraction of adventure travel and why so many people choose to join this type of holiday. By identifying the hazards we assess the level of risk. We have control measures in place to reduce this happening or to reduce the impact.

Our risk assessment is available to clients on request. We have listed below a summary of the significant risks and hazards identified by us:

- Falls and trips resulting in physical injury eg. slipping on ice or falling off the path.
- Altitude illness including but not limited to AMS, HACE and HAPE.
- Getting lost or becoming separated from the group.
- Severe bad weather and conditions when camping.
- Climatic injuries (dehydration, sunburn, heat exhaustion, hypothermia or heat stroke).
- Crossing a river with no bridge resulting in drowning and/ or a fall.
- Rock fall and landslides.
- Lightning strike.
- Wildlife, pack animals (e.g. donkeys or horses) or stray dogs. Pack animals can knock people off the path. Dogs can attack and bite. Discuss rabies vaccination with your doctor.
- Earthquake.
- Risk of fire in the hotel or lodge.
- Endemic local diseases. Discuss vaccinations with your doctor before departure.

- Physiological injury. Such as heart attack, appendicitis, hernia, toothache etc. in a remote area.
- Road traffic accidents.
- Contaminated food and/ or water.

This trip visits a remote area. You are away from the usual emergency services and medical facilities. Evacuation for a serious injury requiring hospitalisation could take up to several days. This delay could impede your ensuing recovery. Helicopters are the usual means of evacuation. They are not always available or hindered by poor weather and flying conditions.

Weather and conditions

## **WEATHER AND CONDITIONS FOR KITIPHU RIDGE TREK**

Kitiphu Ridge trek has a wide range of temperatures. This depends on the season, altitude and time of day. In the mountains between 2,000m and 3,500m the nights will be cool around 5 Celsius. During the day temperatures sometimes rise to 20 Celsius. At higher altitudes temperatures range from about 15 Celsius to -5 Celsius.

The trekking season in Bhutan is late September to May. October and November is generally recognised as having the best weather. Spring is a popular time of year with warmer weather than in Autumn. Also there is the advantage of seeing spring flowers and rhododendrons in bloom.

Cultural information

## **DRESS CODE AND CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR ENTERING DZONGS**

It is important to follow the dress code for dzongs, monasteries and lhakhangs. Use the details below to assist with your planning for the trip. We understand when on trek you will have fewer smart clothes with you. Your guide will discuss each days visits with you to reconfirm appropriate attire.

- Go for smart casual look such as long sleeved shirt with collar i.e no T shirts or short sleeved shirts.
- Full length trousers or long skirts (ankles must be covered) i.e no shorts,  $\frac{3}{4}$  length trousers or short skirts.
- Shoes with socks covering ankles i.e no sandals or slippers.
- No hats and umbrellas allowed.
- Photographs are only allowed in the courtyard of most monasteries.
- Walk around Buddhist temples or stupas in a clockwise direction.
- Turn off your mobile/ cell phone and talk in a quiet tone.
- It is customary to give a small donation when visiting a monastery.

## **ETHICS AND ETIQUETTE IN BHUTAN**

The Royal Government of Bhutan has a policy to preserve its cultural values.

- Lakes in Bhutan are holy and inhabited by spirits. No fishing, swimming or throwing stones.
- Do not disturb or feed wildlife or do anything to destroy their natural habitat.
- Do not use detergent in or near rivers. For personal washing use biodegradable soap at least 50m from any watercourse.
- Do not give sweets, pens or gifts to children or distribute medicine to villagers. There are Basic Health Units operated by Bhutan Government throughout the country.
- Do not buy local household items or religious artefacts from villagers. Antiques may not be taken out of the country.
- Please respect the culture and traditions of local people. This includes trek crew, villagers and pack animal owners.

## ACCOMMODATION

### HOTEL OLATHANG IN PARO



Hotel Olathang is set amidst 28 acres of blue pine forest on a hill overlooking Paro valley. This hotel is in traditional Bhutanese style.

There are 28 rooms with attached bathrooms and the cottages have an outdoor deck with chairs. There is a restaurant and bar in the main building. Other facilities include a spa and a traditional hot stone bath.

This was the first hotel built for tourists in Bhutan. Established in 1974 for the guests invited to the coronation of the Fourth King of Bhutan.

## SWISS GUESTHOUSE IN BUMTHANG



Swiss Guesthouse is above Jakar with good views over the valley. This property is an old Bhutanese farmhouse surrounded by apple orchards. The older sister of the first King of Bhutan used to live here.

A Swiss-Bhutanese family set up the guesthouse. They also make cheese and this property is well known for its Swiss dishes such as Fondue and Raclette. There is a restaurant and a bar. They serve Red Panda beer, this is a traditional wheat beer brewed in Bumthang. The rooms are simple with attached bathrooms. They also have a wood-burning stove (bukhari) for heating.



## DEWACHEN HOTEL IN PHOBJIKHA VALLEY



Dewachen Hotel is located above Gangtey valley and a short walk from the area with black necked cranes. This property is designed in traditional Bhutanese style and is set in three acres of garden and apple orchard with views over the valley.

There are 16 rooms with attached bathroom and individual balconies. Each of the rooms has a wood-burning stove (bukhari) for heating. There is a restaurant and a bar.



## HOTEL MERI PUENSUM IN PUNAKHA



Hotel Meri Puensum is above Punakha with good views down to the river and valley below. This property is family owned and was one of the first hotels built in Punakha.

The rooms have attached bathrooms and are simple yet functional. Some of the rooms have balconies overlooking the valley. There is a restaurant serving Bhutanese, Indian and Chinese dishes. Most meals are a buffet style. The blocks of the hotel are set in an attractive garden.



## GYELSA BOUTIQUE INN IN THIMPHU



Gyelsa Boutique Inn is a family-run hotel located in the centre of Thimphu city. It is within walking distance of the restaurants, cafes and shops of the largest city in Bhutan.

The hotel has 6 suites and 12 twin rooms. The furniture is made in Bhutan from Himalayan wood. Facilities include a restaurant, bar and café. Every room has wifi.

## CAMPING IN BHUTAN



We use A frame tents in Bhutan. These sturdy tents work well with the conditions experienced in Bhutan. They are waterproof plus have ample headroom inside.

---

**Notes downloaded on: 23-11-2024**

