

# JEWELS OF BHUTAN AND NEPAL - 9 DAYS

**Explore two magical Himalayan destinations – Nepal and Bhutan. Experience a way of life so different from yours...**

Trip Level: Easy | Group Size: Min. 1-14 people | Min. Age: 6 | Altitude : 3100 m

Arrival on: Kathmandu, Nepal | Departure from: Kathmandu, Nepal

## OVERVIEW

**Jewels of Nepal and Bhutan tour takes you on a wonderful journey of discovery. Discover the cultural riches of these two [Himalayan destinations](#). This unforgettable [Nepal-Bhutan trip](#) will let you experience unique mountain cultures and traditions that have remained untouched by modernity. Explore ancient heritage sites and step inside sacred temples and monasteries. Gain an insight about the vibrant spiritual traditions. In less than ten days you will get to experience the major highlights of these two fascinating destinations...**

Take this **Nepal Bhutan Package Tour** and visit two Himalayan nations renowned for their dramatic landscapes, outstanding mountain views, generous hospitality and fascinating culture. For centuries outsiders were forbidden to enter these two Himalayan kingdoms. While Nepal opened its doors to outsiders during the late 1960s, tourism in Bhutan was introduced only in the mid 1970s. Following a strict policy of sustainable tourism to safeguard its environment and culture, Bhutan allows only a handful of tourists to visit the country each year. Embark on an unforgettable journey and **explore Bhutan and Nepal**.

## WHERE DOES YOUR JOURNEY BEGIN AND WHAT WILL YOU SEE?

Your **Nepal Bhutan tour** begins from Kathmandu. Stroll down the cobbled streets of a medieval palace square- **Patan Durbar Square** filled with ancient temples and pagoda-roofed palaces. Witness the religious fervor of the devotees and mysticism at two of the most important sacred sites in Nepal - Boudhanath and Pashupatinath Temple. Get mesmerized by the endless stretch of snow-covered Himalayan peaks as you fly into [Paro, Bhutan](#). Explore the ‘Land of the Thunder Dragon’. Walk through its centuries-old *dzongs* (fortresses) and monasteries. Visit ancient *lakhangs* (Buddhist temples) and palaces. Interact with the friendly locals and seek blessings from the learned monks. Your Bhutan visit ends with an epic hike to the cliffside monastery of Tigers' Nest (Taktsang). Before you finally head home, you sample more of Kathmandu’s cultural delights. Discover medieval Bhaktapur, Panauti and Sanga. Wind up your **Bhutan Nepal Holiday** with an unforgettable hike down the forested trail of [Nagarkot to Changu Narayan](#), one of the oldest Hindu temples in the world.

**WANT TO EXPERIENCE MORE OF NEPAL AND BHUTAN?**

If you want to focus on the spiritual aspect and are searching for a purely Buddhist experience then we have a special itinerary for you. Please check our [Nepal and Bhutan Buddhist Pilgrimage Tour](#). If you want to tour either Nepal or Bhutan you can choose our popular [Best of Nepal Tour](#) or [Bhutan Heritage Tour](#).

Note:

#### **Booking Note:**

Please note international flights from Kathmandu-Paro-Kathmandu not included in the package cost. If you have decided to book this trip, we urge you firstly to check whether flights to/from Paro-Ktm is available on the dates you will be travelling. It will be a hassle for you if you book your trip and later on discover there are no seats available on the day you are supposed to fly out. Do book this trip only after your flight tickets have been confirmed. Alternately, you can send us a request to book your flight tickets. Just let us know when you will be travelling and we will book your tickets in advance.

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

- Visit two remote Himalayan destinations hidden between great mountains
- Enjoy a Himalayan panorama of the world's highest peaks while flying into these countries
- Experience unique indigenous cultures, and get an insight about Hindu and Buddhist spiritual traditions
- Explore places that has remained unchanged for centuries
- Discover Nepal's iconic UNESCO World Heritage Sites and Bhutan's cultural hotspots
- Take a hike to the cliffside Taksang Monastery (Tiger's Nest), an architectural wonder
- Stroll down the streets of ancient medieval kingdoms in Kathmandu Valley
- Find out why Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross Domestic Income in Bhutan

## **Is this trip suitable for you?**

- This trip is a combination of cultural tour and hiking
- Hike to Taksang Monastery - 4 to 6 hours walk on an uphill and downhill trail. Ponies to the halfway point are available on hire at additional cost.
- Nagarkot-Changu Narayan Hiking - 3 to 4 hours hike downwards on a forested trail
- No technical climbing involved during hikes. Should be able to walk for an extended period without any difficulty.
- Easy walking on level ground while exploring heritage sites
- Overland transfers via clean and comfortable private vehicles
- Accompanied by experienced local guides

## **MEALS**

Your vacation is an important investment. While planning a holiday, you have to research and make some major decisions. You need to decide, where and how you will spend your money. To avoid the stress, many opt for the

services of a tour company and leave it to the experts to plan their holiday. By choosing to book with an agency, you can enjoy peace of mind knowing that everything has been taken care of by professionals. In order to cater to the needs of different types of travelers, we have on offer two packages – Standard and Deluxe. A Standard Package cost a little less and is ideal for that traveler who is traveling within a budget. The Deluxe Package is for those looking for a higher level of service and facilities. If you have already decided to book this tour, do select the package that best suits your budget and the kind of experiences you want to explore, and secure your spot.

## BEST TIMES

We recommend Spring, Autumn and early Winter as the best seasons to take this trip. During these months the daytime temperatures are just right, neither too hot or cold. It may be a little chilly during the early mornings and evenings in Autumn and early Winter.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

**Kathmandu, Nepal:** In Kathmandu, you will be accommodated at *Oasis Kathmandu Hotel*. The hotel is located in Thamel. It lies in a peaceful corner near the ‘Garden of Dreams’ (a landscaped garden once owned by a Rana nobleman). All the major attractions and international airport lie close to the hotel. The hotel features air-conditioned rooms, attached bathrooms, hot and cold water etc. The hotel offers free wi-fi. Other amenities include the restaurant, bar, coffee shop and a travel desk.

**Bhutan:** Stay at the beautiful **Tashi Namgyal** Resort overlooking the Pa Chu River in Paro. The resort lies close to the international airport and offers comfortable deluxe rooms, cottages and executive sites with attached bathrooms. At Thimphu, you will be staying at the attractive **Namgay Heritage Hotel**. These hotels offer luxurious deluxe rooms and premium suites.

In Punakha you will be accommodated at **Drubbchu Resort**. At all these establishments, featured amenities include free Wi-Fi, multi cuisine restaurant, bar, spa, fitness centre etc.

## MEAL

**Nepal:** Kathmandu has a whole lot of high-end as well as mid-range and budget restaurants and eateries. In Thamel you will find a selection of specialty and multi-cuisine restaurants and eateries. Breakfast, welcome dinner and farewell dinner will be complimentary.

**Bhutan:** In Bhutan, restaurants and eateries serve continental, Indian and Bhutanese dishes. Bhutanese dishes are usually made with chilies, cheese, meat, mushrooms, red rice and buck wheat. All meals are included in the trip price.

## ITINERARY

### 1: ARRIVE IN KATHMANDU

As you fly into Kathmandu, you will be greeted by an endless stretch of ice-covered mountains and green hills. Our representative will be there to meet you at the Tribhuvan International Airport. He will escort you to your hotel and help you check in. In the evening one of our travel consultants will brief you about your tour itinerary. Take rest or stroll around Thamel, a popular tourist hub in Kathmandu. Later in the evening, enjoy a welcome dinner at an authentic Nepali restaurant. Overnight in Kathmandu.

Meal Included : | Dinner

## 2: KATHMANDU SIGHTSEEING

Your sightseeing commences with a drive to Boudhanath Stupa, a [UNESCO World Heritage site](#) and one of the largest Buddhist stupas in the world. Festooned with colourful prayer flags, this ancient stupa is an important centre of Tibetan Buddhism. According to local legend the remains of [Kasyapa Buddha](#) (previous incarnation of Buddha) lie buried beneath this stupa. Join the pilgrims and walk around the stupa clockwise spinning the prayer wheels. Head to Pashupatinath Temple, an important Hindu shrine dedicated to Lord Shiva. The pagoda-roofed temple which dates back to 400 AD is one of the most sacred Hindu pilgrimage sites in the world. 'Aryaghat' the Hindu cremation lies nearby and you can observe Hindu cremation rites from the eastern bank of the river Bagmati(which flows beside the temple). Wind up your sightseeing tour with an interesting visit to the medieval city of Patan. Visit Patan Durbar Square another UNESCO World Heritage Site. Built by the Malla rulers, the palace square is filled with temples, Buddhist shrines and a pagoda-roofed palace(now converted into a museum). Overnight in Kathmandu.

Meal Included : | Breakfast

## 3: FLY TO PARO – SIGHTSEEING IN PARO - DRIVE TO THIMPHU

The scenic flight to Bhutan lets you experience the Himalayas from the comfort of your plane. Once you land in Paro, your guide will meet you and apprise you about your **Bhutan Trip itinerary**. He will take you for a sightseeing tour after lunch/refreshments. Head to Ta Dzong, a traditional watchtower which dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This impressive building now houses the National Museum. The museum showcases the battle regalia of ancient Bhutanese warriors, traditional Buddhist paintings, old stamps, religious relics, bronze statues etc. Later head to Paro Dzong, also known as Rinpung Dzong (Heap of Jewels Fort). This ancient fortress was built by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, who is known as the founder of Bhutan. The old traditional fortress now houses administrative offices and a monastery. After your sightseeing tour drive to the capital city of Thimphu. Check into your designated hotel and take rest. In the evening take a stroll down this picturesque capital and observe the locals or shop for souvenirs. Overnight in Thimphu.

Meal Included : | Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

## 4: DRIVE THIMPHU TO PUNAKHA VIA DOCHULA PASS

Wake up early and head to the King's Memorial Chorten with your guide. This giant chorten was built as a memorial to the third Bhutanese king, Jigme Dorji Wangchuk. Afterwards take a drive to the hilltop shrine of Buddha Dordenma, one of the most frequented **tourist destination in Bhutan**. A giant metal statue of Buddha

is placed on top of a hill overlooking Thimphu valley. The 169 foot statue holds 1,25,000 miniature statues inside its bronze body. According to locals, the Buddha statues outnumber the total human population of Thimphu which is around 1,00,000. Before leaving Thimphu, head to Tashichho Dzong, the seat of the Bhutan royal government. This magnificent traditional fortress houses the king's throne room and government secretariat. Next take a drive to Punakha en route the picturesque Dochula Pass. From the pass enjoy panoramic views of mountains and forests. The pass is decorated with 108 memorial chortens (dedicated to soldiers who lost their lives in the line of duty). Once you reach Punakha head to your hotel and take rest. Overnight in Punakaha.

Meal Included : | Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

## 5: DRIVE PUNAKHA TO PARO

Punakha is the winter residence of Bhutan's Chief Abbot (Je Khenpo) and his aides. It was seat of the government before the capital was shifted to Thimphu. Coronation ceremonies of all the Bhutanese kings have been held here. Commence your sightseeing tour with a visit to Punakha Dzong. One of the most beautiful *dzongs* in Bhutan, the Punakha Dzong lies in a picturesque location, at the confluence of Pho Chhu and Mo Chhu rivers. One has to cross a wooden cantilever bridge to enter this ancient fort. This majestic building is a classic example of traditional Bhutanese architecture. Besides ancient religious relics and historical artifacts, Punakha Dzong houses the sacred remains of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (the founder of Bhutan) and Pema Lingpa. Later on make your way past paddy fields and local farms to Chimi Lhakhang Temple. Also known as 'Fertility Temple', the shrine is dedicated to the 'Divine Madman' Drukpa Kuenley, the patron saint of Bhutan. Locals believe women who visit this temple are blessed with fertility. Parents also bring their new born babies to this temple to seek blessings and receive an auspicious name from one of the monks residing at the temple. Afterwards the visit is over, drive to Paro. Overnight in Paro.

Meal Included : | Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

## 6: PARO – HIKE TO TAKTSANG MONASTERY (TIGER'S NEST)

Today you visit one of the most iconic places in Bhutan, the Taktsang Monastery or Tiger's Nest. Padmasambhava, also known as the Second Buddha, is believed to have flown on the back of a tigress and meditated at the site where this monastery is built. Taktsang Monastery is one of the most important pilgrimage sites for Buddhists in Bhutan.

Get up early in the morning and drive to the trailhead. Once you reach the trailhead you begin your **hike to Taktsang Monastery**. It is uphill all the way. If you don't feel like straining yourself, you can take (hire) a pony ride till the halfway point. Ponies are only allowed up to a certain stretch. You will have to cover the remaining part of the journey on foot. The trail goes through a dense forest filled with pine trees. Once you reach the top, the views will mesmerize you and make you forget the hard climb. The close up view of the monastery perched on the side of the rocky cliff will take your breath away. Visit the monastery, take pictures and walk down back to the highway. Hop onto the waiting vehicle and head back to your hotel. Overnight in Paro

Meal Included : | Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

## **7: FLY PARO TO KATHMANDU, SIGHTSEEING BHAKTAPUR, PANAUTI AND SANGA**

Your guide will drive you to the airport well on time to catch your flight to Kathmandu. As the plane leaves Bhutan, feast your eyes for the final time on the verdant Bhutanese landscape. Savor breathtaking views of snowcapped mountains and rolling green hills. In less than an hour you reach Kathmandu. Your guide will meet you at the airport and take you to Bhaktapur, one of the three medieval cities in Kathmandu. Stroll around Bhaktapur Durbar Square, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and step inside centuries old pagoda-roofed temples and palaces. Palace of 55 Windows, Nyatapal Temple, Golden Gate, Bhairavnath Temple etc. are some of the architectural wonders dotting this beautiful palace square. Next up, your destination is Panauti – a medieval Newari town located south-east of Kathmandu valley. This atmospheric town is filled with ancient temples and Newari traditional houses. Walk through the narrow lanes and cobbled streets and interact with the locals. Afterwards take a delightful ride to Sanga and stand beneath the world’s tallest statue of Lord Shiva. Known as Kailashnath Mahadev, the statue is 143 feet (43.5 metres) tall and has been built using copper, zinc, steel and concrete. This magnificent statue stands amidst a picturesque landscape filled with rolling green hills and terraced farms. Later head back to your hotel in Kathmandu. Overnight in Kathmandu.

Meal Included : | Breakfast

## **8: DRIVE TO NAGARKOT (SUNRISE VIEW) – HIKE DOWN TO CHANGU NARAYAN TEMPLE**

Get up before dawn and head to Nagarkot, a hilltop resort renowned for its panoramic views and stunning sunrises and sunsets over Himalayan peaks. The drive to Nagarkot is a pleasant one filled with delightful sights of pine forests, rolling hills and traditional farms. Once you reach Nagarkot head to a vantage point and wait for the sun to rise. Witness an almost magical phenomena as the sun rises from behind dark mountains coloring and lighting up the whole landscape in hues of red, pink, orange and yellow. This incredible sight is sure to remain with you forever. Head down to a restaurant and have breakfast. Later on drive to Telkot and hike down a forested path to the ancient shrine of Changu Narayan. Dedicated to Lord Vishnu the temple of Changu Narayan is one of the oldest Hindu temples in the world. Here you will find representations of the different avatars of Lord Vishnu in stone, wood and metal created by artisans living during the Lichhavi and Malla eras. Inside the temple, in a stone pillar is the oldest (464 AD) Sanskrit inscription found in Nepal. Later on , you will be driven back to your hotel. Late afternoon, take a stroll around Thamel and shop for souvenirs. Attend a farewell dinner (complimentary) and celebrate the completion of your wonderful Himalayan adventure. Overnight in Kathmandu.

Meal Included : | Breakfast

## **9: DEPART KATHMANDU**

Bid goodbye to Kathmandu. Our representative will drive you to the international airport three hours before your flight’s scheduled departure. If you feel like discovering more of this incredible country, just let us know. We have a range of products - tours and adventure holidays – for travel buffs like you.

Meal Included : | Breakfast

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## Note on itinerary

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

### PRICE INCLUDES

- Airport pick up & drop off service for international and domestic flights
- All ground transportation by comfortable private vehicle as per the itinerary
- Accommodation in Kathmandu at a 3 star hotel, with breakfast
- Professional English-speaking tour guide with government license.
- Complimentary Welcome and Farewell dinner at a traditional Nepali restaurant.
- All Local and Government taxes, administrative charges
- Accommodation at government approved 3 star hotels in Bhutan
- Special permit and Bhutan Visa fee.
- In Bhutan, Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner and bottled mineral water during the trip.
- Accommodation in Kathmandu at a 4 star hotel, with breakfast
- Staff costs including their salary, insurance, equipment, food, transportation and accommodation.
- Complimentary Farewell dinner at a traditional Nepali restaurant.
- Historical monument entrance fees.
- For Deluxe package in Bhutan, breakfast and dinner will be served at your hotel (4 star). Lunch will be at a tourist standard restaurant.

### PRICE EXCLUDES

- Lunch and dinner in Kathmandu
- Travel and medical insurance.
- Nepal Visa fee.
- Extra night accommodation in Kathmandu in case of early arrival or late departure.
- Any unseen expenses due to circumstances beyond our control (natural calamities, strike etc.)
- Expenses not listed in the 'Price Includes' section
- Tips for guide and driver
- International flights for Kathmandu to Paro and Paro to Kathmandu
- Extra night accommodation in case of early arrival or late departure.
- Personal expenses (laundry, drinks, beverages, snacks, phone calls, extra porters, battery recharge, bottle or boiled water, souvenirs, hot showers etc.)

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**Note :**

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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## Passport and Visa - Bhutan

Except for India, Maldives and Bangladesh, all other visitors need to obtain a visa for Bhutan. Visas are obtained through an online system by your licensed Bhutanese tour operator directly or through a foreign travel agent. Tourists are required to send the photocopy of their passports to their tour operator, who will then apply for their visa. Once the full payment of the holiday (including your visa fee of USD 40) is made, the tourism council of Bhutan will process the visa within 72 working hours.

## Passport & Visa for Nepal

All foreigners except Indians need to have a visa to enter Nepal. Unlike other countries, Nepali consulates and embassies overseas issue visas without much fuss. Visas are also issued on the spot at Tribhuvan International Airport or at the border checkpoints. It can easily be obtained at the Nepal/China border as well. When you arrive at the airport you must fill in an application form and provide a passport photograph. A single entry visa is valid for 15, 30 or 90 days and it costs \$25,40 or 100 respectively. At the airport, you can pay this amount in any major currency but some land crossings insist on payment in USD. Children under 10 are required to have a visa but are not charged for the same. If you are planning to visit India, Tibet and Bhutan you could apply for a multiple entry visa. You can change your single entry visa to multiple entry visa at Kathmandu's Central Immigration Office. Keep in mind that your passport must be valid for at least 6 months when you submit your visa application. For further information, you can easily contact the Embassy of Nepal.

All foreign nationals entering Nepal are required to arrange a visa either on arrival or beforehand. A Nepalese visa can be obtained either prior to your arrival at a Nepalese embassy abroad or on arrival in Kathmandu at the airport. Please note that nationals from Afghanistan, Iraq, Cameroon, Ghana, Somalia, Swaziland, Palestine, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Liberia cannot secure the Nepalese Visa upon Arrival. Nepalese visa can also be secured at entry points at Nepalese borders. A digital photo (size: 1.5" \* 1.5") will be required and the following fees either in USD dollars cash or the equivalent local currency:

Multiple Entry | 15 Days | US\$ 25 or equivalent Nepalese currency

Multiple Entry | 30 Days | US\$ 40 or equivalent Nepalese currency

Multiple Entry | 90 Days | US\$ 100 or equivalent Nepalese currency

For further information please visit: <http://online.nepalimmigration.gov.np/tourist-visa>

## Lukla Weather Condition -Nepal [Everest]

- Please note the flights to and from Lukla depend on weather conditions. Bad weather conditions may cause delay for a few hours or the flight may get cancelled by a couple days. This may happen at the start of the trip (while flying from Kathmandu to Lukla) or at the end of the trip (while returning to Kathmandu from Lukla). In such a scenario the extra cost incurred (accommodation, food, etc) will be borne by you. The company will be in no way held responsible for the extra expenses.

- We will try our best to get you on the next available flight. When planes are grounded due to bad weather, helicopter charter companies operate mountain flights to Lukla. At your request we can even arrange a helicopter flight (to or from Lukla) for you. Please remember this will incur an extra cost. A helicopter can carry four or five people on board.
- While trekking in the mountains we will try our best to stick to the original itinerary. But if bad weather persists or if something untoward happens (natural disasters like landslide, avalanche etc.) your trek leader has the right to modify the itinerary. This will be done keeping your safety in mind.
- In instances where bad weather persists for days on end and disrupts your travel schedule, you have the choice to cancel your trek to Everest and book another trek (leading to other trekking regions - Annapurna, Langtang etc.) or a cultural tour. We will help you choose the right itinerary for you; one that suits your budget and time frame. Please note there will be no refunds for the loss of time due to flight delay or cancellation. There will be no refunds either if you decline to book another trip in place of your [Everest trek](#).
- To avoid getting your trip disrupted we recommend you to keep aside a few extra days in your itinerary for emergencies.

## **Best time to visit Bhutan**

Spring (mid February- March – April), Autumn (September – October) and early Winter (November) are the best seasons to visit Bhutan. Northern Bhutan lies close to the Himalayan Mountains and this makes it much colder than the rest of the country. The region receives snowfall during winter. Southern Bhutan with its tropical climate is the warmest. During the monsoon season (June to August) there is heavy rainfall and humidity. The endangered Black-Necked Cranes migrate to Phobjika Valley from Tibet during late October. October to mid-February is the ideal time for bird-watching tours.

## **Climate in Bhutan**

Bhutan's climate ranges from hot and humid in the tropical belt (southern and central Bhutan) to freezing in the north. Spring and Autumn (popular tourist seasons) are generally pleasant with clear skies and mild temperatures. There is heavy rainfall during monsoon or summer season. While the north remains shrouded in clouds the rest of the country gets drenched with heavy rainfall during this time. In winter there is heavy snowfall in the northern parts, while the southern and eastern regions enjoy pleasant weather.

## **Climate in Nepal**

Europe and Nepal share pretty much the same weather, completely opposite of the Australian seasons. January is the coldest month and July is the hottest. We can say that the climate of Nepal is moderate which means that winters are dry and summers are hot. The important thing to note is because of the huge range in altitude and landscape, climate in Nepal differs significantly. Monsoon lasts from around the end of June to the end of August. About 80 percent of the rainfall occurs during this period throughout the country but the remainder of the year is dry. March to May is spring and September to November is autumn and they are also the most pleasant seasons. During winters (December, January and February) temperatures drop down with a high level of snowfall especially in the high mountain areas.

## **Meals-Bhutan**

The national dish of Bhutan is ‘Ema Datshi’ (chili with cheese sauce) and ‘Zow Shungo’ (rice with mixed vegetables). ‘Jasha maru’ (chicken stew), ‘Phaksha Paa’ (pork prepared with vegetables and spices), ‘Hapai Hanteu’ (Bhutanese meat dumplings), ‘Kewa Datshi’ (baked potatoes and yak cheese), ‘Tshoem’ (beef with mushrooms) etc. are some of the important local dishes. Bhutanese widely consume rice (red rice grown locally), meat items (yak meat, pork, chicken, beef and mutton), chili peppers, dairy products (milk, cheese) and organic vegetables. Popular beverages include butter tea or Pho cha, ‘Ara’ an alcoholic drink and beer.

## **Tourism Policy- Bhutan**

Bhutan tourism policy is based on sustainability and environmental protection. According to the Bhutanese government tourism in the country must be “ecologically friendly, economically viable and socially and culturally acceptable”. The government strictly regulates the number of tourists visiting the country annually. Independent traveling is not allowed and it is mandatory for all foreign tourists to book their tours with a government registered tour operator in Bhutan.

## **Banking and Forex In Bhutan**

Bhutan’s unit of currency is Ngultrum (NU). Once you fly into Bhutan, you can exchange currency at the money exchange counters at Paro International Airport. Bank of Bhutan accepts foreign currency as well as travelers’ cheques. Foreign currencies that are accepted include US Dollar, Euro, Pound Sterling, Indian Rupee, Swiss Franc, Canadian Dollar, Australian Dollar, Japanese Yen etc. Since banking and ATM facilities are available only in the major cities it is advisable to carry local Ngultrum while traveling in the rural areas. Only a few upscale establishments (hotels and handicraft stores) accept credit cards. When you shop for items or exchange currency you will be given receipts. Hold on to these as you may need to show the same while leaving the country. If you purchase antique items, you will be asked to show the receipt (of purchase) at the customs checkpoint. Receipt of foreign exchange (that you had received while exchanging currency on entering the country) may also be needed while **exchanging the local currency** to USD or other currencies.

## **Banking and Forex in Nepal**

Payment in hotels, travel agencies and airlines can be made in foreign exchange. Credit card payments are accepted at most business establishments. There are plenty of cash machines or ATMs in cities and most will accept cards issued by any of the major international banking networks (Plus, Cirrus, etc). The maximum withdrawal amount is Rs 10,000 in majority of ATM’s ( you can definitely make repeated withdrawals). Most

credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard, JCB and American Express are readily accepted at most tourist class hotels, restaurants, airlines and major tourist merchants. There is however a transaction fee for processing the cards (please note that this charge is enforced by the banks and not the merchants so it's useless asking for a discount to remove this). The surcharge is usually around 4% or higher.

## **Bhutanese Language**

'Dzongkha' is the national language of Bhutan. Other than the national language, Sharchop, Nepali and Lepcha are widely spoken in Bhutan. English is used as the medium of instructions in most of the country's educational institutions.

## **People and Traditional Dress of Bhutan**

The Sharchops, living in the eastern part of Bhutan are believed to be the earliest inhabitants of Bhutan. In the western part of the country live the Ngalongs, descendants of Tibetan settlers. Southern Bhutan is populated by Lhotsampas, settlers who came from Nepal during the nineteenth century. Brokpa, Dhakpa, Lepcha, Doya, Layap and Lhopu make up the indigenous tribes.

When you visit Bhutan you will rarely find Bhutanese wearing western clothes. Almost all of them will be attired in their traditional attire. While the men wear a kilt-like garment called 'Gho', women are seen wearing the traditional robe known as 'Kira', a blouse called 'Wonju' and a light jacket - 'Taego'. These traditional dresses are made with textiles woven on traditional looms. Accessories worn by the women include brooches and necklaces and earrings made of precious stones.

## **Shopping in Bhutan**

If on a trip to Thimpu, don't forget to visit the lively 'Weekend Market'. A local farmer's market which is held during the weekends (from Friday afternoon till Sunday), the Weekend market has sellers from the rural areas selling handicraft items, cheese, honey, meat, vegetables, fruits, incense and an assortment of other goods. You can buy souvenir items at the market or the handicraft shops. Items worth buying include thangkas, traditional handloom items, handmade wooden bowls (Dappa), bamboo baskets (Bangchung), wooden masks, handmade paper products, Bhutanese traditional jewellery, rugs etc. Paro, Thimpu and Phuentsholing are the best cities for shopping.

## **Custom Formalities-Nepal**

On arrival in Nepal, your baggage should be cleared by the customs at the entry point. You are allowed to bring a personal laptop, camera, movie or video camera, 15 film rolls etc. apart from your personal belongings. If you purchase an antique in Nepal and want to take it home with you, the item will have to be certified by the Department of Archeology. In Nepal, it is illegal to take outside the country objects that are 100 years and older.

## **Emergency Contact Information**

Please do not forget to provide your emergency contact information while filling out the form to book this trip. You can give the contact details of a family member or someone close to you.

## **Safety and Security - Nepal**

Nepal is one of the safest and hospitable countries in the world for travelers (for groups as well as solo travelers). Nepalese are very warm and friendly towards tourists and most of them go out of their way to help visitors visiting their country. Having said that, to be on the safe side one should always take care of one's belongings. Keep your cash, jewelry and expensive gadgets and accessories in a safe place. Try not to venture out alone during nighttime, especially at places where there are less people.

## **Electricity - Nepal**

In Nepal the standard voltage is 230V and the frequency is 50 HZ. While in cities most hotels have multi-adaptor style sockets but in the mountains the teahouses may have two pronged or three pronged outlets. It would be handy to bring along a worldwide adaptor with you to charge your devices. Some teahouses along the trail utilize solar polar.

## **Vaccinations - Nepal**

We advise you to visit a physician specializing in travel related illnesses six months before your trip's departure. Take the required boosters and vaccinations. Some of the vaccinations require six months for a complete course and it is advisable to take the full course before embarking on an adventure to a foreign country. You may not have to worry about tropical illnesses if you are trekking in the mountains.

## **Baggage - Nepal (Porter and Domestic Flight)**

On the trail while your heavy luggage is carried by a porter, you will be carrying a light daypack filled with your important belongings and accessories. Please note your baggage (carried by the porter) should not weigh more than 15 kg. One porter will carry the baggage of two clients.

The baggage allowance for domestic flights is 15 kg. You will have to pay for extra baggage if your total baggage weight exceeds 15kg.

## **Group Size**

If you join a fixed departure trip, you will be traveling with a group of people from different countries and backgrounds and of varying ages. It is a great way to meet new people and make friends. For all our fixed departure trips the minimum group size is 2 and the maximum is 16 people.

## **Arrival & Departure (Kathmandu)**

We offer airport pick up and drop off services. On arrival at the Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu, our representative will meet you and drive you to your hotel. On the last day of your trip you will be transferred to the international airport well in time (3 hours prior to your flight's scheduled departure) to catch your flight.

## **Travel Insurance for Nepal**

It is always a good idea to have a travel insurance policy while travelling to Nepal. Nepal is an adventure destination and most of the tourists who visit Nepal come to see the high Himalayan Peaks and experience different adventure sports. You will reach above 4000m in most of the treks in Nepal and it is best to have a policy that covers medical and emergency rescues. Helicopter rescues and emergency evacuation is common in Nepal so you have to choose insurance wisely. It's a wise decision to have insurance policy that pays directly to the hospital rather than you having to pay for it at the spot.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

## **TERMS & CONDITIONS AGREEMENT**

Third Rock Adventures Private Limited

Please read the following Terms and Conditions that governs the relationship between you (client) and Third Rock Adventures Private Limited (hereinafter referred as the 'The Company') with the registration number **184629/074/075**. Please note that while booking a trip you are agreeing to the terms and conditions as well as the cancellation policy and certain limitations of liability set by the company. Both parties agree to these terms and conditions to resolve any legal or other disputes that may arise during the trip.

### **1. THE BOOKING CONTRACT:**

Once your booking has been confirmed, the tour operator or the travel agent issues a written confirmation after you have deposited the amount for your trip. Do go through the confirmation details thoroughly and report any incorrect or incomplete information to the company immediately. Please ensure that your names are stated exactly as in your passport.

If you book on behalf of other participants, then you are deemed to be the designated contact person for every participant included on that booking. This also means that you are responsible for making all payments due in connection with your tour booking. You will have to notify us if changes or cancellations are required and you will be solely responsible for keeping your group informed.

If you book on behalf of others, then you represent and warrant that you have obtained all required consents. It is your responsibility for verifying the information that you provide on behalf of other people is complete and accurate and the company will under no circumstances be liable for any errors or omissions in the information provided to complete a booking.

## **2. BOOKING A TRIP:**

- A 'trip' refers to any product itinerary or activities that you buy from us including Trekking, Tours, Expeditions and / or other adventure tour programs.
- The contract between the Company and the Client comes into existence only when the company sends a confirmation invoice or email to the customer.
- The company has the right to increase or decrease product (trip/tour) prices before booking are confirmed and the contract comes into force.
- The company will not be liable for any warranty, collateral agreement, prior agreement, and description of services or conditions other than expressed herein

## **3. BOOKING DEPOSIT, FINAL PAYMENT REQUIREMENT, AND LIFETIME DEPOSIT:**

While booking a trip the non-refundable deposit should be sent to the company. The same amount (non-refundable deposit) is levied for standard as well as customized trips.

### **Deposit Payment:**

To book a trip, a non-refundable deposit of 20% along with due airfares (if the client wants the company to arrange it) 30 days before the trip departure is required. If your booking is done 30 days or less prior to departure, then you must pay the full amount at the time of booking.

### **Final Payment:**

For standard as well as customized trips the non-refundable deposit should be made 30 days prior to your trip's departure. The balance (final payment) should be paid within 30 days of the departure date. In case a booking is made less than 30 days before the departure date, then full payment is required at the time of booking.

### **Lifetime Deposit**

When you are forced to cancel your booking due to unavoidable circumstances, you can rest easy. Your deposit will not go to waste. Your deposit can be retained, provided the reason for the cancellation can be taken as an emergency or an unavoidable circumstance (like illness etc). You should furnish plausible proof (documents like doctor's certificate etc.) for canceling the trip to retain your deposit. You can use the deposit later on to book the same trip or another trip of the same value at a later date.

Please note if the trip has been cancelled for non-payment or violation of these Terms & Conditions your deposit will not be counted as a Lifetime Deposit. Only one Lifetime Deposit is issued per cancelled booking per person. If the value of the Lifetime Deposit is greater than the value of the new trip (per person) then the

company will not refund or credit the difference. You can also transfer or regift your Lifetime Deposit to a friend or family to book a trip with us by notifying us.

#### **4. PAYMENT METHODS:**

The company receives a booking deposit through the online payment system. We accept all major credit and debit cards. Kindly follow the instructions provided on the booking form.

##### **Prices:**

The prices quoted on [our website](#) are the current prices. The quoted price is for per person and is subject to minimum group size. If the minimum numbers are not met by the payment date, a small group surcharge will be levied to ensure the trip's operation. To check the price validity, inclusions and exclusions please do go through the trip notes. If the departures are past the validity date, there will be a likely increase on the trip cost due to a rise on operational costs. There may also be a reduction in trip prices in the instance of a drop in local service charges. Once the deposit amount is paid for your trip any subsequent discounts or price reductions that are advertised may not be applicable.

Third Rock Adventures reserves the right to amend tour prices at any time. Amendments may be done for many reasons including, but not limited to, increases in ground operator services, exchange rate fluctuations, increased fuel costs, airfares, airport charges, or the need to engage alternative air or ground operators. If there is an increase in the tour price, it must be paid prior to the departure date.

#### **5. CANCELLATION BY THE CLIENT:**

Any cancellation by a client must be made in writing and acknowledged by the company. The date on which the request to cancel is received by the company or its agents will determine the cancellation charge applicable. The cancellation charges are expressed hereafter as a percentage of the total tour price. Please note these charges are levied when you don't furnish plausible proof (documents like doctor's certificate etc.) for canceling the trip.

- Cancellation 30 days or more before departure: Loss of deposit.
- Cancellation 7-29 days before departure: 50% of the cost of services booked.
- If you neither show up on the starting day of the tour nor inform the company about your absence: 100% of the cost of services booked.

The client is strongly advised to take out cancellation insurance at the time of making the booking.

Please note that no refunds will be made if you voluntarily leave a trip for any reason after the trip has begun.

No refunds will be made for any accommodation, transport, sightseeing, meals or services not utilized.

#### **CANCELLATION BY THE CLIENT DURING AN EMERGENCY**

When you cancel your booking at the last moment due to an emergency, there won't be any refund of your

initial deposit. But if you inform us(via email) at least 7 days before the trip starts, stating the reason for the cancellation and furnishing valid documents as proof we will retain your deposit after deducting 20% from the initial deposit. You can use the remaining 80% to book a tour (added charges applicable for the chosen trip) for yourself, your family or friends.

## **6. CANCELLATION OF A TOUR BY THE COMPANY:**

- The company reserves the right to cancel any trip you booked unless guaranteed to run.
- Third Rock Adventures reserves the right to cancel any trip, including a guaranteed trip, prior to departure in the event of natural disasters, flight cancellation, strikes, industrial action, wars, riots, sickness, quarantine, government intervention, weather conditions, or other untoward occurrences beyond its control. In such a case, the company will refund the trip price only. If the company cancels a departure which is guaranteed to run, the trip price will be refunded, or you will be entitled to take an alternative trip of the same value.

The significant alterations do not include a change of airline carrier, flight timetables or itineraries, provided the departure and arrival dates remain unchanged. Change in cabin category or hotel accommodation provided is of the same category.

- The company is not responsible for any incidental expenses or consequential losses that the client may have incurred as a result of the booking such as visas, vaccinations, non-refundable flights or rail fares, non-refundable car parking or other fees, loss of earnings, or loss of enjoyment etc.

## **7. MEDICAL CONDITIONS AND SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:**

In case of any medical condition, do inform the company at the time of the booking. A physically challenged condition or any other mental or physical debility which may hinder your ability to travel should be notified at the time of booking. Failure to notify the company may result in the client being refused to travel. It may also result in the loss of deposit amount or 100% of the trip cost.

There may be some trips that may be unsuitable for clients of a certain age, physical (mobility, pregnancy etc.) or mental conditions. It is the client's responsibility to check prior to booking. The company will not provide any special facilities unless it has agreed to do so in writing. The company will also do its best to meet the clients' special requests including dietary. Please note that such requests do not form part of the contract and therefore the company is not liable for not adhering to these requests.

The medical facilities vary from country to country and the company makes no representations and gives no warranties in relation to the standard of such treatments.

## **8. TRAVEL INSURANCE:**

All travelers must travel with adequate and valid travel insurance. Your travel insurance must cover accidents, injuries, illnesses, death and medical expenses (including any related to pre-existing medical conditions), emergency repatriation (including helicopter rescue and air ambulance where applicable) and personal liability. It will be helpful if your insurance covers trip cancellation, curtailment, and loss of luggage and personal effects. You must carry proof of insurance with you and produce it when requested by the company employees or suppliers. If you are unable to provide proof of insurance when requested, the company reserves the right to cancel or suspend your participation on a trip or in certain activities that comprise part of a trip, at any time, including after the commencement of your trip, with no right of refund.

## **9. FLIGHT DELAYS AND CHANGES IN THE ITINERARY:**

Please understand that mountain adventure is always unpredictable due to weather. Bad weather in the mountain regions can cause domestic flight delays. If the domestic flights get delayed or cancelled, the company will arrange accommodation (guest house) and food (lunch and breakfast) at the request of the client. However, the client is responsible to bear all additional expenses including food and accommodation costs. If you wish to make an alternative arrangement such as a Helicopter flight to avoid flight delays, all additional cost would be your responsibility.

Third Rock Adventures will not be held responsible if the client misses his/her international flight. However, we would try and assist to make alternative arrangements wherever possible. Please also note that during outdoor activities, we may have to make some changes in the itinerary owing to bad weather conditions or events outside our control.

## **10. TRIP AMENDMENT:**

If the booking amendment request is received by Third Rock Adventures 30 days or more prior to your original trip departure, the company will make the necessary amendment with a charge of US\$100 per person. In case you wish to make amendments within 30 days of the trip departure, the cost of an amendment may be higher depending upon the company's arrangements with other parties such as hotels, teahouses, ground operators or airlines.

## **11. VISA & PASSPORT:**

You must carry a valid passport and visa when traveling with Third Rock Adventures. Please ensure your passport is valid for 6 months beyond the duration of the trip. Nepal Visa is available on arrival in Nepal. For Tibet & Bhutan, the company can make the necessary arrangements upon request. For India, the client will have

to acquire the Visa from their own home country.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of the correct visas for the countries you are traveling to. Third Rock Adventures will not accept responsibility if you are refused entry to a country or places because you lack the correct visa documentation.

## **12. INJURIES AND EVACUATION:**

Third Rock Adventures will not be liable for any injury, health conditions, emotional or other conditions suffered by the client during the trip. Similarly, our package cost does not include any personal insurance. Hence, we advise the clients to take adequate travel insurance package, including medical emergencies and evacuation by Helicopter.

## **13. SERVICES MISSED OR UNUSED:**

There will be no discounts or refunds for missed or unused services. These include voluntary or involuntary termination/departure from the tour due to sickness, the death of a family member etc, late arrival on the tour, or premature departure either voluntarily or involuntarily.

## **14. UPDATING OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS:**

The company reserves the right to update and amend these terms and conditions at any time. It is the responsibility of the client to keep himself/herself updated with any changes. The current version of terms and conditions will always be found on the website [www.thirdrockadventures.com](http://www.thirdrockadventures.com) and will be the terms referred to in any dispute.