

NEPAL AND BHUTAN BUDDHIST PILGRIMAGE TOUR - 12 DAYS

Nepal Bhutan Pilgrimage Tour to sacred Buddhist destinations in the Himalayas....

Trip Level: Easy | Group Size: Min. 1-14 people | Min. Age: 12 | Altitude : 3220 m

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

OVERVIEW

Visit the birthplace of Lord Buddha and important Buddhist pilgrimage sites in Nepal and Bhutan. This trip takes you to the sacred places blessed by the presence of Sakyamuni Buddha and Guru Rinpoche. For devout Buddhists this trip is a spiritual tour. Travel to Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha, feel the positive vibes of Asura Cave, marvel at the sheer beauty of Tiger's Nest Monastery and get close to nature with a hike to Bumdra Monastery....

Take a **Buddhist pilgrimage tour** to **Nepal and Bhutan**, two important destinations with a long history of Buddhist spiritualism. Step inside sacred spaces blessed by the holy presence of [Lord Buddha](#) and Guru Rinpoche (known as the second Buddha in the Himalayas). Explore ancient Buddhist monasteries and walk around sacred shrines and stupas, chanting the mantra 'Om mani padme hum' (Hail the jewel in the lotus).

NEPAL - A DESTINATION TO GET SPIRITUALITY RECHARGED

In Nepal, you visit Lumbini, **Lord Buddha's birthplace**; Boudhanath and Swoyambhunath— two ancient Buddhist shrines which are also UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Kathmandu. Your itinerary also includes visits to Asura Cave where Guru Rinpoche meditated and Kopan Monastery, an important Tibetan Buddhist monastery. Stroll around Patan – a medieval kingdom designed in the shape of a Buddhist 'Dharma Chakra' and home to ancient Buddhist *viharas*. This **Nepal Bhutan package** also lets you enjoy wildlife safari at Chitwan National Park.

BHUTAN - WHERE BUDDHISM IS A WAY OF LIFE...

Journey to Bhutan and explore the ancient *lakhangs* (Buddhist temples), *dzongs* and monasteries at Paro, Thimphu and Bumdra. Visit the meditation caves of Padmasambhava and other Buddhist saints. Interact with the monks and nuns living at the monasteries and seek blessings from the learned Buddhist teachers. Take a **hike to Tiger's Nest** (Taktsang Monastery) and Bumdra monastery and enjoy awe-inspiring views of the

Bhutanese countryside and the Himalayan mountains. Throughout your trip you will be guided by our experienced local guides.

WANT TO EXPLORE MORE OF NEPAL AND BHUTAN?

If you want to skip some of the sacred Buddhist sites and only visit historical sites, then our [Jewels of Bhutan and Nepal Tour](#) might interest you. Already toured Nepal and only interested in visiting Bhutan? This short [Bhutan Cultural Tour](#) itinerary might interest you.

Note:

HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit Lumbini – the birthplace of Lord Buddha and a [UNESCO](#) World Heritage Site
- Circle the holy stupa of Boudhanath, together with the pilgrims
- Climb the steps to the hilltop shrine of Swoyambhunath built by Bodhisattva Manjushri
- Visit ‘Asura Cave’, where Padmasambhava meditated attained ‘mahamudra’
- In Bhutan, step inside sacred monasteries and *lakhangs* (Buddhist Temples)
- Trek to the holy Bumdra Monastery and the iconic Taktsang Monastery(Tiger’s Nest)

Is this trip suitable for you?

- This is a pilgrimage tour that takes you to some of the sacred Buddhist pilgrimage sites in Bhutan and Nepal.
- As the itinerary includes hikes to some hilltop monasteries, you should be able to walk on gravel trails and climb hills. No technical climbing involved.
- You will be accompanied by experienced local guides throughout your trip.
- Seamless cross country travel arrangements. You will be greeted by our representatives at both the international airports(Paro and Kathmandu) upon your arrival. All ground transfers by comfortable private vehicles.
- In addition to pilgrimages to sacred Buddhist sites, you get to enjoy wildlife safari (elephant ride, canoe ride, jeep safari etc.) at Chitwan National Park.
- Accommodation at tourist standard hotels with comfortable and clean rooms. In Bumdra, you will be staying at a luxury tented camp.

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

Best seasons for this trip are Spring, Autumn and early Winter. Daytime temperatures remain pleasant; neither too hot nor too hot; during these seasons. Though it may turn a bit chilly in the early hours and late evenings in Autumn and early Winter.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Nepal: In Kathmandu stay at the comfortable boutique hotel, Oasis Kathmandu Hotel, located in the heart of the city. It lies in a peaceful corner in Thamel, adjacent to the 'Garden of Dreams' (a landscaped Edwardian garden). Restaurants, hotels, shops and local markets lie close to the hotel.

You will be accommodated at Hotel Parkland in Chitwan. Surrounded by lush greenery, the hotel is only a stone's throw away from Chitwan National Park.

In Lumbini your address is the grand Buddha Maya Garden Hotel. It lies inside the Lumbini Heritage Site, a few minutes' walk from the UNESCO World Heritage Sites and monasteries.

All these establishments offer air conditioned rooms with attached bathrooms, running hot and cold water, free wi-fi etc. Other amenities include restaurant, bar, coffee shop and a travel desk.

Bhutan: You stay at the splendid Tashi Namgyal Resort overlooking the Pa Chu River in Paro. The resort offers comfortable deluxe rooms, cottages and executive sites with attached bathrooms. Your address in Thimphu is the beautiful Namgay Heritage Hotel. This hotel offers luxurious deluxe rooms and premium suites. Amenities at both these establishments include free Wi-Fi, multi cuisine restaurant, bar, spa, fitness centre etc.

In Bumdra you will be staying at a luxury tented camp. The camp is equipped with heaters, toilet tent, spacious dining tent and tents with comfortable sleeping arrangement (soft mattress, blankets, pillows).

MEALS

Nepal: Find high-end as well as mid-range and budget restaurants and eateries in Kathmandu. In Thamel itself, you will find a wide variety of specialty and multi-cuisine restaurants and eateries. Breakfast, welcome dinner and farewell dinner are complimentary.

In Chitwan and Lumbini you will have your meals at the hotels you will be staying at.

Bhutan: In Bhutan you will discover restaurants and eateries serving continental, Indian and Bhutanese fare. Bhutanese use a lot of chilies, cheese, meat, mushrooms, red rice and buck wheat in their dishes. All meals are included in the trip price.

ITINERARY

1: ARRIVE IN KATHMANDU

Endless rows of mountains surrounding the valley of Kathmandu greet you as you fly into Kathmandu. Our representative will meet you at the airport and drive you to your hotel. After checking in, take some rest. Late in the afternoon or evening our travel consultant will brief you on your trip's itinerary. Later attend a welcome dinner (complimentary) at an authentic Nepali restaurant . Overnight in Kathmandu.

Meal Included : | Dinner

2: KATHMANDU SIGHTSEEING

Your sacred Buddhist Tour begins with a visit to Swoyambhunath, one of the oldest shrines in Kathmandu. Believed to have been built by Boddhisattva Manjushri the stupa is sacred to both Buddhists and Hindus. Located on a hill overlooking the whole of Kathmandu Valley, the origin of this temple is closely linked to the creation of Kathmandu Valley. According to a Buddhist legend, Kathmandu Valley was once a lake and it was drained by Boddhisattva Manjushri as he wanted to meditate at the spot where the Swoyambhunath stupa now stands.

Your next stop is Boudhanath, the largest stupa in Nepal and an important centre of Tibetan Buddhism. The large white dome of the stupa stands on a giant mandala. It is believed that the remains of the Kasyapa Buddha (previous incarnation of Lord Buddha) are buried beneath the stupa. Monasteries, restaurants, souvenir shops surround this magnificent stupa. Complete a *kora* around this sacred stupa turning the prayer wheels with the other pilgrims. Light a butter lamp and offer prayers to the Buddhist deities.

End the day's tour with a visit to the beautiful Kopan Monastery. Located on the northern rim of the city, this is an important Tibetan Buddhist monastery. The meditation courses offered by the monastery are quite popular among tourists. *Overnight in Kathmandu.*

Meal Included : | Breakfast

2: DRIVE TO LUMBINI

Wake up early and take a drive to Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha. Located south-west of Kathmandu Valley, it takes roughly around eight hours drive to reach the sacred town of Lumbini from the capital. After leaving Kathmandu, follow a zigzag road down to Trishuli River. Enjoy mesmerizing sights of mountains, terraced fields and traditional villages. Once you reach Lumbini, head to your hotel and take rest. If you feel up to it, you can do some sightseeing in the late afternoon. Several Buddhist monasteries and decorative stupas built by Buddhist countries dot Lumbini's sacred grounds. You can visit these monasteries and spend some quiet time meditating. Overnight in Lumbini.

Meal Included : | Breakfast

4: DRIVE LUMBINI - CHITWAN

Wake up early and visit Maya Devi Temple, the actual site where Queen Mayadevi gave birth to the infant

Gautama Buddha. After offering prayers head to another holy site, the Puskarini Pond. It is believed that Lord Buddha was given his ritual bath after his birth at this pond. Other significant sights include the Ashoka Pillar(a sandstone pillar erected by the Indian Emperor Ashoka to commemorate his visit to Lumbini in 249 BCE and mark the birthplace of Lord Buddha) and the Sacred Garden. Later on depart Lumbini and drive to Chitwan for wildlife safari. From Lumbini it takes a little over four hours by vehicle to reach Chitwan. Overnight in Chitwan.

Meal Included : | Dinner

5: ACTIVITIES IN CHITWAN

Follow your guide to Chitwan National Park. Take a jeep safari and explore the national park. Later on enjoy elephant ride, canoe ride and visit the Elephant Breeding Centre. The park is home to several endangered species, like the one-horned rhinoceros and Royal Bengal Tiger, Black stork etc. Late in the afternoon take a stroll around a traditional Tharu Village and observe the Tharu tribals' lifestyle. In the evening you will be entertained by a Tharu cultural troupe. There will be traditional singing and dancing followed by dinner.

Overnight in Chitwan.

Meal Included : | Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

6: DRIVE BACK TO KATHMANDU

Drive overland from Chitwan to Kathmandu. The ride back to the capital city is filled with delightful sights of lush jungles, verdant hills, glacial rivers and picturesque villages. After arriving in Kathmandu head back to your hotel. Spend the rest of the day at leisure. Take rest or stroll around Thamel or the local market (Ason). Have an early night as you will be flying to Bhutan tomorrow. Overnight in Kathmandu.

Meal Included : | Breakfast

7: FLY KATHMANDU TO PARO

Today you will be flying to Bhutan, the 'Land of the Thunder Dragon'. Watch the snow-covered spires of the Himalayan range unfold from your seat during the flight to Paro from Kathmandu. Upon your arrival at Paro International Airport, you will be met by your guide who will drive to your hotel and help you check in. After lunch, you begin your spiritual tour with a visit to the ancient Paro or Rinpung *Dzong* (Fortress of the Heap of Jewels). The traditional fortress houses many religious relics including priceless paintings depicting Buddhist stories.

Afterwards walk downhill and cross the wooden bridge till you reach the road. Board the vehicle which will be waiting for you and head to Kichu Lakhang, one of the oldest Buddhist temples in Bhutan. According to local lore the temple was built by the Tibetan King Songsten Gampo to subdue a demoness who was obstructing the spread of Buddhism in this corner of the Himalayas. It is said that the temple was constructed overnight. Padmasambhava or Guru Rinpoche is believed to have visited this temple during the eighth century. After exploring the temple head back to your hotel and take rest. Overnight in Paro.

Meal Included : | Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

8: PARO TO BUMDRA MONASTERY

After breakfast drive to the trailhead located at Sang Choekor Buddhist University. After the day's supplies have been loaded on the ponies, you take the uphill trail to Bumdra Monastery. Walk past a forested ridge to a meadow filled with colourful prayer flags. From here you can enjoy amazing views of Paro and Do Chhu valley. Walk another hour or two to reach the sacred temple of Chhoe Tse Lakhang. From here, an arduous hike past ancient ruins, prayer flags and verdant forest brings you to an open meadow which is your campsite. Located at an elevation of 3800 meters, you can savour awe-inspiring views of the Himalayan mountains and surrounding valleys from the campsite. The campsite lies below Bumdra Monastery. Overnight in Bumdra.

Meal Included : | Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

9: BUMDRA TO PARO VIA TIGER'S NEST

Wake up early to catch the sunrise. It is indeed a heavenly sight as the first rays of the sun touch the mountains and the hillsides tinting them in hues of golden, yellow, orange and red. Visit the monastery (Cave of a Thousand Prayers) and offer prayers. Head down and follow the trail to Taktsang Monastery. Walk past a dense forest filled with pine and rhododendron trees till you spy the golden roofs of Taktsang Monastery. Descend down and visit the monastery. One of the holiest pilgrimage sites in Bhutan, Taktsang Monastery or Tiger's Nest hangs precariously on a steep rock face. It is believed that Padmasambhava flew from Tibet on the back of a tigress to meditate at the spot where the monastery now stands. After offering prayers, hike down to the highway. Board the vehicle that will be waiting for you and head to your hotel. Overnight in Paro.

Meal Included : | Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

10: PARO TO THIMPHU

You drive to Thimphu after an early breakfast. Upon reaching the capital commence your tour with a visit to King's Memorial Chorten which was built for world peace and prosperity. Next head to Tashichho Dzong. This magnificent traditional fortress houses a monastery and government offices. Also visit Changangkha Lakhang, an ancient Buddhist Temple located on a ridge top. The temple is frequented by new parents with their infants with the hope of receiving auspicious names for their newly born babies from the monks residing at the *lakhang*. Changangkha Lakhang was built in the 12th century at a site chosen by Lama Phajo Drukgom Shigpo who arrived from Tibet to spread the Drukpa Kagyu teachings of Buddhism in Bhutan. Later head to the hilltop shrine of Buddha Dordenma at Kuenselpodrang. The Buddha Dordenma is a giant metal statue that stands at a height of 51 metres. At the base of the statue is a chapel. 125,000 smaller statues of Buddha are placed inside the statue. From here one can enjoy a 360 degree of Thimphu valley. Overnight in Thimphu.

Meal Included : | Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

11: DRIVE TO PARO- FLY KATHMANDU AND VISIT PATAN DURBAR SQUARE AND PHARPING

From Thimphu you will be transferred to Paro International Airport well on time to catch your flight to Kathmandu. You will be met by our representative and transferred to your hotel. After checking in and getting refreshed meet your guide. Together you head to Patan, one of the three medieval kingdoms in the valley. The kingdom was designed in the shape of a Buddhist 'Dharma Chakra' in the olden days. Also known as Lalitpur or the 'City of Artisans', Patan has a large Buddhist population. Viharas and ancient Buddhist shrines dot this ancient city.

Your guide will take you to Patan Durbar Square, a palace square built by the Malla Kings which is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The square is filled with palaces, Buddhist shrines and Hindu temples. Hiranya Varna Mahavihar or Golden Temple (one of the most ancient Buddhist shrines in Nepal), Mahaboudha Temple. Mahaboudha Temple which dates back to the 16th century, is a miniature representation of the Mahabouddha Temple in Bodhgaya (the place where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment). The temple is built using tiles engraved with the images of Buddha.

After Patan tour, you take a drive to Pharping, a small town that lies south on the outskirts Kathmandu valley. Follow your guide to one of the most important Buddhist pilgrimage sites in Kathmandu, the 'Asura Cave'. It is here that Guru Rinpoche or Padmasambhava meditated and achieved the state of 'Mahamudra'. Later drive back to your hotel. Celebrate the completion of your tour with a complimentary farewell dinner. Head to an authentic Nepali restaurant and enjoy a traditional feast and a cultural show. Overnight in Kathmandu.

Meal Included : | Breakfast | Dinner

12: DEPART KATHMANDU

You will be driven to the international airport three hours before your flight's scheduled departure. If you want to visit more places in the Himalayas, do let us know. We have a range of interesting itineraries.

Meal Included : | Breakfast

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.
- Monument entrance fees.
- 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.
- In Chitwan, accommodation at a 3 star resort. Three meals (Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner) and all activities included.
- Accommodation in Lumbini at a 3 star hotel, with breakfast
- Accommodation in Kathmandu at a 4 star hotel, with breakfast
- For Deluxe package in Bhutan, breakfast and dinner will be served at your hotel (4 star). Lunch will be at a tourist standard restaurant.
- Staff costs including their salary, insurance, equipment, food, transportation and accommodation.
- Complimentary Farewell dinner at a traditional Nepali restaurant.

PRICE EXCLUDES

- Travel and medical insurance.
- Personal expenses (laundry, drinks, beverages, snacks, phone calls, extra porters, battery recharge, bottle or boiled water, souvenirs, hot showers etc.)
- International flights
- Nepal Visa fee.
- 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.
- Lunch and dinner in Kathmandu and Lumbini

Note :

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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 thangkass, 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 power.

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 and will be the terms referred to in any dispute.