



# Bhutan Adventure: The Trans Bhutan Trail

13 days | 15 days with Delhi extension

An unforgettable adventure awaits thanks to the 2022 re-opening of the historic Trans Bhutan Trail after a 60-year hiatus. When you journey to this small, Himalayan nation, you can explore its ancient fortresses, dramatic mountain landscapes, and charming local villages on a series of breathtakingly beautiful hikes. Plus, when you chat with local monks, students, and villagers, you'll learn firsthand why Bhutan, birthplace of the innovative Gross National Happiness concept, is consistently ranked one of the happiest places on earth.



## Your tour package includes

- 10 nights in handpicked hotels
- 10 breakfasts
- 8 lunches
- 9 dinners with beer or wine
- 1 beer & cheese tasting
- 1 cooking class
- 16 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach
- 2 on-tour flights

## Included highlights

- Trans Bhutan Trail hikes
- Gross National Happiness chat
- Dochula Pass
- Gangtey Nature Trail
- Brewery & cheese factory visit
- Mebar Tsho hike
- Punakha Dzong
- Nalanda Monastery monk chat
- Farmhouse cooking demonstration
- Tiger's Nest
- Hot stone bath

## Tour pace

You will walk/hike for at least 3 hours daily, across uneven terrain and along unpaved trails that are mostly flat, but with some steep hills and inclines.

## Group size

12-21

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## Overnight Flight → 1 night

### Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Delhi, India, today.

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## Delhi → 1 night

### Day 2: Arrival in Delhi

Welcome to India! Get settled into your hotel this evening.

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## Thimphu → 2 nights

### Day 3: Flight to Paro, transfer to Thimphu & Gross National Happiness chat

*Included meals: breakfast, welcome dinner*

This morning, fly to Paro, Bhutan. Then, transfer to Bhutan's capital city, Thimphu.

This afternoon, learn about the country's Gross National Happiness Index from a local expert.

- Learn how the fourth King of Bhutan declared that one's well-being requires equal importance of non-economic aspects
- Hear about the nine domains that the index is broken into, such as psychological well-being, cultural diversity, and community vitality

Later, get to know your fellow group members at tonight's welcome dinner.

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### Day 4: Sightseeing tour of Thimphu Valley & cultural dinner

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

Set out for a day in the scenic Thimphu Valley and get a closer look at Bhutan's cultural traditions.

- Pay a visit to the Pangri Zampa Monastery, the oldest in the country
- Sit down with a monk astrologer for a private reading to learn the meaning of your name and birth year in Bhutanese tradition
- Stop to see the massive, 125-foot-high Buddha Dordenma statue that sits atop a gilded meditation hall

Sit down for an included lunch before continuing your journey through the Thimphu Valley.

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- Enter the Gagyel Lhundrup Weaving Centre to see the weavers craft traditional cloth and learn about royal ceremonial textiles
- Take part in an interactive art lesson with students at the National Institute for Zorig Chusum
- Learn how the college works to promote and revive the country's traditional arts and crafts among its youth
- Meet local women at the Changjiji READ Center to hear about the international non-profit organization's programs and how the women use its library
- Explore VAST Gallery, a contemporary art gallery founded by artists to help educate Bhutanese youth

Tonight, sit down for an included dinner and meet with Thimphu locals to learn about their culture and way of life.

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## Gangtey → 1 night

### Day 5: Gangtey via Dochula Pass & Nature Trail Hike

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

Travel through the snow-covered Himalayas to the glacial valley of Gangtey, making several stops along the way.

- Climb to 10,200 feet to the Dochula Pass, where you can join locals in paying your respects to the gods by hanging a colorful prayer flag
  - Step inside Druk Wangyal Lhakhang, a temple built in honor of His Majesty the fourth Druk Gyalpo, Jigme Singye Wangchuck
  - Visit the Druk Wangyal Chortens, a collection of 108 Chortens, or Lamaist shrines, commissioned by Her Majesty the Queen Mother Ashi Dorji
  - Enjoy an included lunch at a local restaurant
  - Set off on your first hike along the Gangtey Nature Trail hike, regarded as Bhutan's most beautiful nature trail
  - Descend through the Phobjikha Valley and wander through pine forests, bamboo groves, small villages and along the edge of the Black Nested Crane's winter roosting area
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- End with a visit to the 16th century Gangtey Goempa Monastery, which is the main seat of the Pema Lingpa tradition

Enjoy an included dinner in Gangtey this evening.

*Hiking notes: Gangtey Nature Trail – 2.5 miles / 1.5 hours. Easy hike downhill along a dirt trail.*

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## Bumthang Region → 2 nights

### Day 6: Bumthang Region via Trans Bhutan Trail, brewery & cheese factory

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, beer tasting, tasting, dinner*

Transfer to Yotongla through the Black Mountain Range by bus then enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. Afterward, set off for your first hike along the Trans Bhutan Trail.

- Hike down to the meadow and through the open forest until you come to the Geytsa River
- Continue your hike with a peaceful walk along the river to town

After an included lunch, transfer to Chamkar in the Bumthang region, and marvel at some of the area's hand-crafted works.

- Admire the famous Yatra weaving techniques and patterns in the Chumey Valley
- Visit Bumthang Brewery for a guided tour of its beer- and cheese-making facilities
- Learn about the brewery's Swiss origins and how it introduced European farming and production techniques to the area
- Enjoy a tasting of the brewery's flagship Red Panda beer
- Head to the nearby cheese factory and sample some of their Swiss cheeses

Sit down for an included dinner this evening.

*Hiking notes: Yotongla to Geytsa – 5.8 miles / 3.5 hours. Moderate hike downhill along a dirt trail.*

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### Day 7: Three Temples walk, farmhouse lunch & Mebar Tsho hike

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

Enjoy a day taking in the Bumthang region's scenery during both a walk and a hike.

- Take off from the Jambay Lhakhang temple and make your way into the valley and through farmlands

- View the Kurjey Lhakhang, which is a large and active complex made up of three temples, and is one of Bhutan's most sacred sites
- Cross a suspension bridge and wander through small villages and farmlands to reach Tamshing Lhakhang Monastery

Afterward, visit a traditional farmhouse and enjoy local Bumthap cuisine and other Bhutanese dishes during an included lunch. Then, transfer to Tang Babzur and set off on this afternoon's hike.

- Begin at the Pema Choling Nunnery and learn how the institute was created to increase opportunities for Bhutanese girls and women
- Continue south on the Trans Bhutan Trail, to the sacred Mebar Tsho
- Learn why this body of water is nicknamed the Burning Lake

Enjoy an included dinner this evening.

*Hiking notes: Three Temples – 1.5 miles / 2 hours. Mebar Tsho – 2.8 miles / 2 hours. An easy, mostly flat walk through the valley.*

## Punakha → 2 nights

### Day 8: Transfer to Punakha & sightseeing tour

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

Travel to charming Punakha this morning, then get to know the town on a sightseeing tour after an included lunch.

- Cross the Punakha Bazam, a wooden cantilever bridge used for processions and coronation celebrations
- Enter the Punakha Dzong for a guided tour of the fortress, which houses sacred relics and is part of the Kagyu School of Tibetan Buddhism
- Visit Chimi Lhakhang, the Temple of the Divine Madman

This evening, enjoy an included dinner at a local restaurant.

*Please note: Punakha Dzong's dress code strictly prohibits shorts and sleeveless shirts.*

### Day 9: Nalanda Monastery & the Trans Bhutan Trail

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

Begin the morning with a visit to the Nalanda Monastery to meet and chat. Here you'll help the monastery's residents practice their English skills as they study the language.

Afterwards, set off for an afternoon hike along the Trans Bhutan Trail.

- Start in Sew Drangsa, the historic site where monks stop for lunch, and make your way toward Punakha Dzong fortress

- Take in spectacular views of the valley from the fortress
- Enjoy an included lunch back in Punakha followed by a free afternoon to explore the area at your leisure

After freshening up, sit down for an included dinner at a local restaurant.

*Hiking notes: Sew Drangsa to Punakha – 4.5 miles / 2.5 hours. A moderate hike along a dirt trail that is mostly downhill with some uneven terrain.*

## Paro → 2 nights

### Day 10: Transfer to Paro, cooking class & sightseeing tour

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

Make your way to Paro today, known for its sacred sites and beautiful scenery.

- Enjoy a Bhutanese cooking demonstration, followed by a delicious farmhouse lunch
- Try your hand at khuru, a traditional dart-throwing game—and competitive sport—in Bhutan

Join a local guide and get to know the Paro region on a guided sightseeing tour.

- Visit the Ta Dzong watchtower
- Explore the stunning Paro Rinpung Dzong fortress

Tonight, sit down with your group for an included dinner at a local restaurant.

### Day 11: Tiger's Nest, hot stone bath & cultural show

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, farewell dinner*

Head out to Bhutan's most famous landmark, Taktshang Goemba, more commonly known as Tiger's Nest.

- Hike along the ancient pilgrimage trail through a dense, pine forest
- Catch your first glimpse of the awe-inspiring Tiger's Nest, a cliffside, golden-roofed monastery that's accessible only by foot or horseback
- Enjoy an included lunch at Tiger's Nest and take in stunning views of the ravine nearly 3,000 feet below
- Make your way to a farmhouse for a relaxing, rustic hot stone bath

Tonight, celebrate your trip and experience a vibrant performance of Bhutanese dances followed by a delicious farewell dinner.

*Hiking notes: Tiger's Nest – 4 miles / 5 hours. A long and difficult uphill climb.*

## Overnight Flight → 1 night

### Day 12: Flight to Delhi & departure

*Included meals: breakfast*

Today, fly back to Delhi, India, and relax in a dayroom before boarding your overnight or early morning flight home. Or, extend your stay to explore Delhi.

## Arrive Home

### Day 13: Arrival at home

Arrive home today.

## + Delhi extension

Extend your adventure with a visit to India's densely packed capital region. Have a camera handy as your Tour Director shows you around Delhi's bustling bazaars, opulent temples, elegant mosques, and modern landmarks.

## Delhi → 2 nights

### Day 12: Flight to Delhi

*Included meals: breakfast*

Enjoy a free morning in Paro. Later, fly back to Delhi, India, and get settled in to your hotel.

### Day 13: Sightseeing tour of Old Delhi

*Included meals: breakfast, dinner*

This morning, join your Tour Director and enjoy a guided tour of bustling Old Delhi. Built by order of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in the 1600s, this historic, walled neighborhood is laced with narrow lanes, and is chock-full of restaurants, retail shops, and plenty of rickshaws.

- See Raj Ghat, Delhi's tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, and visit the Gandhi museum
- View the black-and-white onion dome and minarets of Jama Masjid, one of the most elegant mosques in India
- Take a rickshaw ride through the streets of Old Delhi

Sit down for an included dinner at a local restaurant this evening.

## Overnight Flight → 1 night

### Day 14: Sightseeing tour of New Delhi & departure

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch*

Today, your Tour Director introduces you to New Delhi.

- Visit the India Gate, the most famous war memorial in India
- See Qutub Minar, an early Islamic tower and UNESCO World Heritage site
- Explore the grand boulevards, government buildings, and city parks
- Sit down for an included lunch
- Visit Humayun's Tomb and learn about the UNESCO-recognized complex
- Enter Gurudwara Bangla Sahib, one of the city's most important places of worship for Sikhs
- Learn about the history and traditions of Sikhism, the fifth-largest and youngest organized religion in the world
- See the langar, or community kitchen, where free meals are served 24 hours a day

*Please note: Due to conditions within Delhi, the schedule of your sightseeing tour may vary based on your departure date. Additionally, all travelers will be given a head covering they're required to wear in the Sikh temple.*

Relax in a dayroom before traveling to the airport for your overnight flight home.

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## Arrive Home

### Day 15: Arrival at home

Arrive home today.