

# Highlights of Nepal and Bhutan

Trip Code: NBH

Version: NBHT Highlights of Nepal and Bhutan Nepal and Bhutan - Thimpu Tsechu Festival



CULTURE



GUIDED GROUP



LEISURELY



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Breath-taking views of the Annapurnas from Sarangkot above Pokhara
- Stroll amongst the temples and Hindu holy-men at Pashupatinath in Kathmandu
- Hike up to the amazing cliff-side Taktsang Monastery in Bhutan's Paro Valley
- Choose a departure which includes a day at one of Bhutan's iconic festivals
- FREE down jacket hire is available for this holiday

## AT A GLANCE

- 13 days easy walking and sightseeing
- Join at Kathmandu

## ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- All meals included
- 6 nights Hotel with swimming pool
- 7 nights Hotel

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

# Introduction

Combining Nepal and Bhutan within a 2-week easy walking and sightseeing [adventure holiday](#) works brilliantly and this fantastic new itinerary provides a real insight into these Himalayan lands. We start out in Nepal where the timeless city of Kathmandu never fails to amaze, with its hustle and bustle and myriad colourful temples and shrines held sacred by the Hindu and Buddhist population.

The old Newar town and former trading post of Bandipur allows us a glimpse of Nepal's 'middle hills' as we travel across country to the lake-side town of Pokhara. Here, with the snow-capped peaks of the Annapurnas reflected in the waters of Phewa Tal, we can begin to understand the sheer scale and magnificence of the Nepal Himalaya. Returning to Kathmandu by air and after a night on the valley rim at Nagarkot, we continue our journey eastwards to the 'Shangri La' kingdom Bhutan. Over the next 5 days we will spend time in the pocket-size capital of Thimphu, where the imposing fortress-monastery of the Tashichoedzong is just one of the many attractions. The annual Thimphu Tsechu and Drupchen (festivals) take place here and some departures will include a day at one of these outlandish festivals. Other highlights of the time in Bhutan include the far-reaching views from the Dochu La and the visits we make to Punakha Dzong and to the dramatic cliff-side Taktsang Monastery. During our time in Bhutan we will also have the chance to meet the welcoming local people; monks, farmers and the general public - all of them in their traditional dress. This is the essence of Bhutan and will live just as long in the memory as the country's dramatic scenery or distinctive architecture. If you're looking for a wonderful combination of Nepal and Bhutan, this perfectly balanced cultural adventure holiday is the perfect choice.

**BOOK EARLY for BHUTAN!** With only two airlines operating flights into Paro from Kathmandu, seats are limited and in high demand. Book early to guarantee your place on your chosen departure. We strongly advise booking a year in advance where possible.

## Is this holiday for you?

During the course of the holiday there are several easy walks of 1 to 2 hours duration, as well as a 4-hour hike to Bhutan's Taktsang Monastery. It's important to note that you can choose not to do these walks and in the case of Taktsang excursion you can cut this walk short in a number of places and still get a lot out of the experience. There are also several city and cultural site tours which can involve spending quite long periods of time on your feet. The itinerary also involves a fair amount of driving as we travel between the various sites.

# Itinerary

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Version: NBHT Highlights of Nepal and Bhutan Nepal and Bhutan - Thimpu Tsechu Festival

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## DAY 1

**Meet at the group hotel in Kathmandu. Transfers from Kathmandu Airport are provided.**

Rendezvous at the group hotel in Kathmandu. Complimentary airport transfers are provided. KE Land Only package services begin with the evening meal.

Meals: **D**



### Accommodation

Hotel with swimming pool

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## DAY 2

**A full day in Kathmandu with a guided city tour.**

After breakfast at our hotel, we set off on a guided sightseeing tour amongst the most important of Kathmandu's sites. We start our tour with a short drive to the foot of the stairway leading up to the 'Monkey Temple' at Swayambhunath. There are 365 steps, becoming steeper towards the top, and we will take our time, looking out for the mischievous macaques which inhabit this area. There are some colourful statues of Buddha low down and lots of prayer flags festooning the trees that line the walkway. Swayambhunath is dominated by an impressive stupa which consists of a large white-painted dome and a rectangular structure above which is gilded and painted with the 'all-seeing eyes' of Buddha. There are lots of shrines and temples at this site and there's always a lot going on. This is also one of the best places from which to get an overview of the city. After our visit to this principally Buddhist site, we will meet our transport for the drive across town to Pashupatinath, the great Hindu sanctuary beside the Bagmati River. There are more than 500 temples on this site which is also a place of cremation for Hindus. The ritual burning of bodies takes place on raised platforms alongside the river. It is fascinating to spend an hour at the site, exploring amongst the temples, perusing the souvenir stalls and photographing the super-colourful sadhus (Hindu holy men) who hang out here (and make a good living by posing for photographs). We will return to the hotel in time for a late lunch and then the rest of the day is at leisure. The central 'tourist district' of Thamel with its innumerable shops and bars is just a short walk away and, now pedestrianised, is a great place to spend a couple of hours. We will get together again in the evening and go out for a meal at one of the restaurants in Thamel.

Meals: **B L D**

**Accommodation**

Hotel with swimming pool

**DAY 3****Drive to Bandipur and short walk to a viewpoint above the village.**

We will make a reasonably early start today, as we set off on the 5 hour journey westwards on the Prithvi Highway which links Kathmandu with Nepal's second city of Pokhara. Driving out of the city, we cross the rim of the Kathmandu Valley and if the weather is clear we may catch a glimpse of snow-capped Himalayan peaks away to the north. We will make a couple of stops en route to break up this exciting drive, including a lunch stop at a roadside restaurant where we will be able to sample the Nepali staple of dal bhat (rice and dal, with the optional addition of a spicy vegetable and/or meat curries). There's a lot to see on this drive; a mix of landscape with views of the mountains, terraced farmland, villages built on steep valley slopes and rivers of all shapes and sizes. We should get to Bandipur by mid-afternoon and after checking in at our lodge accommodation, we will go out for a stroll to a viewpoint above this traditional and well-preserved village. From November to March it's usual to have good views north to the peaks of the central Nepal Himalaya. Bandipur grew up as a part of the Magar Kingdom of Tanahun and dates back several hundred years. It was once a staging post on a trade route between India and Tibet. With its 18th century architecture and narrow streets, it's a great first taste of rural Nepal.

Meals: **B L D****Accommodation**

Hotel

**Time**

1 - 2 hrs walking

**DAY 4****Bandipur visit, then drive to Pokhara (820m). Afternoon boat ride on Phewa Tal.**

Before continuing our journey to Pokhara (820m) this morning, we'll spend a bit more time in Bandipur. The old part of the village has benefited from some sensitive restoration in recent years and there is a pleasant mix of old houses, cafes and lodges. As well as being a tourist destination, Bandipur has managed to retain its importance as a working town and always seems to be alive with the comings and goings of local people; farmers and tradesmen. There are a number of shrines and temples that we can check out, before meeting up with our transport. It is a relatively short (2 to 3 hour) drive to Pokhara where we check in at our hotel and have lunch. Pokhara is a special place; laid-back and superbly located beside the lake of Phewa Tal. After lunch the afternoon is free to explore, with the option to trek up to the 'Peace stupa' for a birds-eye view over the lake, or to take a boat out onto the water. There are great views from the Lakeside district northwards to the arrayed peaks of the Annapurna Massif, including the sacred 'Fish Tail' peak of Machhapuchhre (6997m). Then, in the evening, we can enjoy our dinner at one of the Lakeside restaurants.

Meals: **B L D**

**Accommodation**

Hotel with swimming pool

**Time**

1 - 2 hrs walking

**DAY 5****Early visit to Sarangkot and hike back to Pokhara. Afternoon free.**

Rising up to the north-west of the city, the hilltop village of Sarangkot (1592m) is the perfect place from which to enjoy early morning views of the Annapurnas. We will have an early breakfast this morning and drive up to the viewpoint at Sarangkot in time to see the mountains to the north at their best. The peaks that we can see include the 8000 metre giants of Dhaulagiri and Annapurna 1, as well as a host of others, including the central and prominent Fish Tail. There are also special views of Pokhara and the lake. To enhance our Sarangkot experience, we will now hike down to Pokhara, following a trail, stepped in places, that takes us through forest and farmland and by way of sleepy villages; at all times offering great views of the peaks to the north. This is a 2 to 3 hour walk at a very leisurely pace and we will arrive back in Pokhara in time for lunch. The afternoon is free for independent exploration or simply to take it easy beside the hotel pool.

Meals: **B L D****Accommodation**

Hotel with swimming pool

**Time**

2 - 3 hrs walking

**DAY 6****Fly to Kathmandu and overnight at a hotel on the valley rim at Nagarkot (2000m).**

After breakfast at the hotel, we return to the airport and check in for the half-hour flight to Kathmandu which is an exciting way to return to the Nepali capital. Arriving at Kathmandu, we meet our transport for the drive up onto the valley rim at Nagarkot (2000m). It takes an hour or so to drive the narrow and winding 25 kilometre tarmac road up to the string of lodges and hotels which line the ridge at Nagarkot. This village is renowned for its Himalayan views and on a clear day (especially at sunset and at sunrise) it is possible to see 8 separate ranges, from the Annapurnas in the west to distant Mount Everest. We will have some free time in the afternoon and then, accompanied by our guide, we will take a stroll along the ridge to a viewpoint where we can watch the light fade and try to pick out some of the famous Nepali peaks. After a busy day, tonight we'll relax and enjoy dinner together at our Nagarkot hotel.

Meals: **B L D****Accommodation**

Hotel

**Time**

1 hr walking



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**DAY 7**
**Sightseeing at Bhaktapur and Bodhnath and return to Kathmandu.**

If it is clear, we will be up early to see if the sunrise views are any better than those at sunset. Then, after breakfast, we'll drive out (15 minutes) to Telkot and from there enjoy an easy walk (2 hours), through villages, open country and forest, to the small temple of Chengu Narayan which is one of the oldest in the valley, dating from the fourth century. We can expect some great views during this walk. Then, reunited with our transport, we will drive down to medieval Bhaktapur, the ancient capital of the Malla kings, where we will have a sightseeing tour. Several of Bhaktapur's important temples were destroyed during the 2015 earthquake and these are undergoing restoration. However, there still a lot to see here, including some of the finest religious architecture in Nepal. We'll also get the chance to do some exploring (and souvenir buying) amongst the many colourful artisan's workshops and stalls. Mid afternoon, we will head back to Kathmandu and pay a visit to the impressive Buddhist stupa at Bodhnath on the way to our hotel. In the evening, we'll go out for dinner at a restaurant in Thamel.

Meals: **B L D**


**Accommodation**

Hotel with swimming pool


**Time**

2 - 3 hrs walking

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**DAY 8**
**Fly to Paro in the Kingdom of Bhutan, transfer to Thimphu and pay a first visit to the Thimphu Festival.**

After taking breakfast in the hotel, the group will meet in the lobby at a designated time and transfer together back to the airport in Kathmandu to check in for our flight to Paro, Bhutan. This is one of the most spectacular of all mountain flights. From the left side of the plane Everest, Makalu and Kangchenjunga, three of the world's highest mountains, are clearly visible. The total flying time is only 45 minutes and soon we are descending into the Paro Valley, enjoying views over forests, small monasteries, temples and flat-roofed farmhouses as we come in to land. On leaving the airport we be met by our Bhutanese guides, most likely in full traditional dress, and then set off on the very scenic one hour drive to the capital of Thimphu (2330m) where we check in at our hotel. We should arrive in the late afternoon and have the time to pay a first visit to the Thimphu Tsechu, a festival which takes place at the very impressive fortress-monastery of the Tasichoedzong, a huge white-painted building sitting amongst well-tended gardens and lines of poplar trees. Thimphu is actually a very compact town. Not too far away is the large Tibetan-style National Memorial Chorten, built in memory of the king Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. Many local people pay their respects each day by walking around the chorten. Over dinner tonight our guide will brief us on what to expect in the days ahead.

Meals: **B L D**


**Accommodation**

Hotel


**Time**

1 hr walking

## DAY 9

**We spend the day in Thimphu at the Thimphu Festival.**

After breakfast we will return to the Tasichoedzong which has been the seat of the Bhutanese Government since 1952 and presently houses the throne room and offices of the king and certain other government ministries. The focus of our attention today will be the Thimpu Tsechu, one of the most important events in Bhutan's religious calendar. Festivals in Bhutan are grand events where entire communities come together, dressed in their finest clothes, to witness colourful masked dances, receive blessings and socialise. There are many ritual dances during the course of the festival and these are performed on the large paved courtyard of the Tashichoedzong. The dances are subdivided into three categories: those that are intended to give moral instruction, those that are designed to drive away evil spirits and those that celebrate the Buddhist faith in its many guises. We spend a second night at our Thimphu hotel.

Meals: **B L D**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel



**Time**  
1 hr walking

## DAY 10

**Drive across the Dochu La (3050m) to Punakha (1200m). Visit Punakha Dzong.**

After an early breakfast, we'll board our transport for the 2-hour drive to Punakha. The road heads back towards Simtoka Dzong and then picks up the east-west highway. Perched on a hill above the road, you can see the Hongsho Gumpa, built in the 15th century by Ngawang Choegyal, a cousin of one of Bhutan's favourite saints - Lama Drukpa Kinley. Passing through the Hongshu check post, the road climbs up through maple and blue pine forests to the Dochu La (3050m). The pass is marked by many prayer flags and a large chorten. A viewpoint just above the chorten offers a magnificent panorama of the Eastern Himalaya, including all of the giant 7000 metre peaks of Lunana in north-eastern Bhutan. There's a café at the pass, where we can have a cup of tea and admire the spectacular views. Dropping down from the pass on a sinuous road, we lose around 1800 metres in altitude and, arriving at Punakha, we find ourselves in a sub-tropical valley where it is noticeably warmer. Punakha was the effective capital of Bhutan until 1955, when the seat of government moved to Thimphu. Before lunch, we will take a short walk through the rice paddies to visit Chimi Lakhang, a small temple built beside a bodhi tree and surrounded by prayer wheels. The temple is dedicated to the Devine Mad Monk, Drukpa Kinley, whose controversial approach to Buddhist teachings involved womanising, drinking and singing bawdy rhymes. Afterwards we visit Punakha Dzong, which provides the winter home for over 1000 monks. The dzong is one of Bhutan's most impressive buildings; it was here that the first king was crowned in 1907 and also where the current, fifth king first donned the Raven Crown. Particularly impressive is the pillared hall, which is decorated with artwork depicting the most important scenes from the life of the Buddha and presided over by impressive giant gilded statues of Buddha, the Guru Rinpoche and Zhabdrung Rinpoche (or Bluebeard). If there's time before dinner, we can also drive to the nearby Nalanda Buddhist Institute and have the chance to meet the monks who study here and to observe their evening routine.

Meals: **B L D**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel



**Time**  
1 hr walking

## DAY 11

### Drive to Paro. Afternoon free and evening farmhouse and archery visit.

We'll have another reasonably early breakfast before setting off on the 3 and a half hour drive back to Paro. This is another opportunity to witness the great variety of the Bhutanese landscape, including orderly farmland and lush forest which includes banana trees low down and rhododendron and magnolia higher up. Keep a look out for monkeys in the trees beside the road. On arrival in Paro, we can visit the auspicious Kyichu Lakhang, a sacred monument dating from the 7th century which is believed to pin down the left foot of a treacherous ogre. After lunch, there's some free time to either take it easy or explore the town or to visit Paro Dzong, for instance. Then, in the evening, we'll go out to visit a Bhutanese farmhouse where you can have a go at the national sport of archery using bamboo bows. At the farm, you can also taste Bhutanese food at its most traditional - if you want to.

Meals: **B L D**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel



**Time**  
1 - 2 hrs walking

## DAY 12

### Sightseeing in Paro, including the hike to Taktsang Monastery (3000m).

This is the last full day in Bhutan and a very special one. We start out with the stunning hike up to one of the most important religious sites in the entire Himalaya, Taktsang Monastery, also known as the Tiger's Nest. The monastery has a most stunning location, perched on a cliff-side ledge high above the Paro Valley. Approximately half way up the trail there is a classic viewpoint for Taktsang, looking across the gorge to the monastic buildings clinging to the cliff wall opposite. There is a small teahouse here where we can stop for a rest and a drink with a truly unforgettable view. The final approach to the monastery takes us down to a sacred waterfall, surrounded by a thousand fluttering prayer flags, where every crack in the rock is crammed with tsa-tsas (small caskets containing the ashes of the dead), before climbing back up towards the monastery. Leaving our bags and cameras at the gate, we should hopefully be allowed to take a look around inside. As we explore amongst the various atmospheric chambers and altar rooms our guide will be on hand to explain all about the Buddhist rituals and iconography. We return to our accommodation in Paro in the early afternoon and again have some free time. Later, we will go to the Namgyal Artisanal Brewery for our farewell dinner at a very pleasant restaurant which has views of Paro Airport and also of the imposing medieval monastery of Paro Dzong. Bhutan has a long tradition of farmhouse brewing using many different types of grain, but the Namgyal Artisanal Brewery is only the third commercial venture. The signature drink is a lager made from red rice, but there is a choice of several brews, as well as a refreshing apple cider.



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Meals: **B L D**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel



**Ascent**  
700M



**Descent**  
700M



**Time**  
3 - 4 hrs walking



**Distance**  
6KM

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### DAY 13

#### **Morning flight to Kathmandu. The afternoon is free for independent sightseeing.**

We have an early transfer to Paro Airport for the morning flight to Kathmandu. The flight takes only 45 minutes and on arrival we transfer to our comfortable hotel. The remainder of the day is free to explore the Nepalese capital city or for shopping in the bazaars. We will enjoy our final dinner of the holiday at the excellent restaurant in the group hotel.

Meals: **B L D**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel with swimming pool

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### DAY 14

#### **Departure day. Kathmandu airport transfers provided.**

KE Land Only package services end after breakfast. Depending on individual flight schedules, there may be an opportunity for last minute souvenir buying before heading to the airport. Complimentary airport transfers are provided for all flights

Meals: **B**

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# Extensions

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When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.



## Kathmandu Tour - Nagarkot and Bhaktapur

The Kathmandu Valley contains the cities of Patan, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu itself, all of which were once independent kingdoms. An exploration of the valley's historic and cultural sights is an excellent way to begin or end your adventure in Nepal. Highlights of this tour includes a very early drive up to Nagarkot on the Kathmandu Valley rim, the perfect place to watch a Himalayan sunrise. This is followed by a tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bhaktapur, renowned for its temples and traditional buildings.

1 day from  
**US\$175** per person



## Chitwan Jungle Extension

The jungles of southern Nepal are an interesting counterpoint to trekking in the foothills or the high Himalaya. Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge provides a relaxing and comfortable base for a wildlife safari and cultural village experience. During two days of wildlife viewing in the Chitwan National Park 'buffer zone' - the interface area between visitors and the animals that live at Chitwan - you will be accompanied by expert guides on safaris by jeep by boat and on foot.

3 days from  
**US\$1,680** per person

# Holiday Information

## What's Included

- Professional and qualified English-speaking tour leaders in Nepal and in Bhutan
- Kathmandu Pokhara and Paro airport transfers
- Pokhara to Kathmandu flight
- Kathmandu to Paro return flights
- All land transport involved in the itinerary
- All accommodation as described
- All meals
- Guided sightseeing tour in Kathmandu and at other cultural sites mentioned in the itinerary
- Entrance fees to all sites mentioned in the itinerary
- All permits and park fees necessary to complete the itinerary
- Bhutan visa fee

## What's not Included

- Travel Insurance
- Nepalese Visa
- Tips for tour guide and local staff
- Optional activities
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc.

## Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Kathmandu.

Transfers are provided from/to Kathmandu Airport for all clients arriving on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary and departing on the last day of the Land Only itinerary.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

## Meal Plan

All meals are included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 14.

## Food & Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. You should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) to treat your water. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

This is a wide-ranging holiday and you will encounter a variety of dishes on the holiday. In Nepal, the meal encountered everywhere from the humblest kitchen to the best restaurants is dal-bhat-tarkari (literally lentils, rice and vegetable) although its make-up and presentation varies considerably. In Bhutan, they love chillies; red, green, raw, cooked and as flavouring in their condiments - fans of spicy food will be in their element in Bhutan! But, if spicy food is not for you, all the hotels and restaurants we use offer a range of delicious dishes suitable for all tastes. Throughout this holiday there will be ample opportunity to sample local cuisine including regional variations. However, there will always be an option for more familiar international dishes. Breakfasts whilst in hotels will consist of choice of cereal or muesli, eggs, toast, beans, sausage or bacon with tea, coffee and juices.

## Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your meals with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

## Accommodation

In Kathmandu we use the Hotel Shanker which offers a range of first-class facilities including a pleasant tree-shaded garden complete with swimming pool. In Pokhara we use the Hotel Barahi which is excellent and centrally-located and which also has a pool. When at Bandipur and Nagarkot, we use simple and clean tourist-class hotels chosen for their location and character. In Bhutan, we will also use comfortable and well-located hotels. Accommodation throughout is in twin-share rooms with en-suite facilities. Wi-Fi is usually available at most of the places we stay. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. Single rooms may be available for a supplementary cost on request. Additional hotel nights in Kathmandu can also be pre-booked.

## Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be accompanied by an experienced English-speaking local leader throughout the holiday. You will not have the same guide in Bhutan that you had in Nepal. In both countries, the group will also have the services of one or more experienced, professional drivers.

## Altitude

This holiday involves going to moderately high altitude. During the course of your trip you will reach altitudes in excess of 2500 metres. Most people will have no difficulty with this level of altitude but before coming on the holiday, we recommend you read the advice on [trekking at high altitude](#). You can also talk to one of our trekking experts if you have any concerns about altitude.

## Spending Money

Approximately £250 should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses including drinks and the tips you can expect to pay to your local guides and drivers. There are some interesting souvenirs to be bought in Kathmandu, in Pokhara and in Bhutan. The Nepalese unit of currency is the rupee and Bhutan's is the ngultrum which is tied to the value of the Indian rupee. It is not necessary to purchase Nepalese or Bhutanese currency before you travel. You should consider buying £100 worth of Nepalese currency at the Hotel Shanker on arrival. You will be able to obtain your Bhutanese currency on arrival at the airport in Paro. Sterling and US dollars are readily exchanged in Nepal and in Bhutan. Please note: Scottish and Northern Ireland bank notes are not accepted in Nepal. Credit cards can be used to purchase many goods in Kathmandu and larger towns in Bhutan and are particularly useful for expensive souvenirs. It is possible to withdraw cash (rupees only) from cash machines in Kathmandu using credit and debit cards.



## Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is an accepted and expected part of the culture in both Nepal and Bhutan, although you should only tip for services which are well done. The total amount that you can expect to pay in tips for your local guides and drivers is approximately £80 (in rupee or ngultrum equivalent). Your guides will advise you on appropriate tips for the drivers and you will be able to tip each of your guides - in Nepal and in Bhutan - at the end of your time with each of them.

## Beat the Jet Lag

Our holidays are normally designed with minimal 'down time' at the start of the trip, but having a day or two at the beginning will have the additional benefit of allowing you time to get over the stress of a long journey or travelling across time zones, leaving you refreshed and ready for your holiday. We can easily arrange for you to have additional nights and airport transfers.

## Baggage Allowance

You should travel with one main piece of luggage and a daypack. You can check in only a single piece of hold baggage (max 20kgs) on the included internal flights, with 5kgs hand baggage. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

## Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

# General Information

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## Passport & Visas

**The information that we provide is for UK passport holders.**

A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel.

### Visa Nepal

All nationalities require a visa. The visa process is partly automated and the fee is \$30 for 15 days, \$50 for 30 days, \$125 for 90 days. The visa is FREE for children under 10 years. The visa allows multiple re-entry. Payment must be made in cash and USD, GBP or Euros are accepted.

Part of this on-arrival visa process involves filling in a 'Tourist Visa Application Form' and you can simplify the procedure at Kathmandu Airport by filling this form in online (**within 15 days of travelling**) at [this link](#). This generates a receipt which you present (hard copy or saved on your phone) on arrival. This should allow you to go straight to the cashier to pay for your visa and has the potential to save you time in the visa queue.

Whilst these are not now needed for the visa process, we recommend that you travel with at least 2 spare passport photographs.

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### Visa Bhutan

All nationalities require a visa. KE will apply for the visa for you and the visa fee is included in your holiday cost.

Your individual visas will be issued to you in Kathmandu prior to your check-in for the flight to Paro in Bhutan and your passport will be stamped on arrival in Paro.

To make the arrangements for your Bhutan Visa we need:

- 1). A clear and complete colour scan of the information page of your passport.
- 2). A colour scan of a recent passport style photo. Portrait orientation on a white background - with eyes open and forehead and ears clearly visible.

Please email these scans to us at the earliest opportunity.

## Health & Vaccinations

Dengue fever is a known risk in places visited. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you [take precautions to avoid mosquito bites](#).

### Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid.

Malarial prophylaxis is not usually required for trips in the mountains, however if you are visiting rural and remote low lying areas then they might be necessary.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

### Currency

The unit of currency in Nepal is the Nepalese Rupee.

The unit of currency in Bhutan is the Bhutanese Ngultrum.

### Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at [travelaware.campaign.gov.uk](http://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk) and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

### Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

## Books

- Lonely Planet Guide to Nepal. Lonely Planet
- Rough Guide to Nepal. Rough Guides
- Kathmandu and the Kingdom of Nepal. Prakash Raj
- Portraits of People: Nepal Himalayas. Eric Valli
- Bhutan. (Odyssey Illustrated Guide). Pommaret
- Lonely Planet Guide to Bhutan. Lonely Planet
- Bhutan, Land of the Thunder Dragon. Edmunds

## Maps

### Nepa Maps - Himalayan MapHouse

Nepal on a large, indexed overview map at 1,500,000 scale from Himalayan Maphouse, the country's leading publishers of trekking maps. Road network shows main highways, major and minor roads, gravel or dirt roads and trails.

### Bhutan Himalaya. 1:390,000. Nepa Maps (Himalayan Maphouse)

This map gives a general overview of Bhutan. Relief is indicated by shading and selected altitudes of peaks and passes. Highways, main roads, minor roads, and trekking routes are marked. Symbols denote post offices, dzongs, monuments, places of interest etc. The map is indexed for place names, dzongs, passes and peaks. Inside the map cover are printed some geographical notes on the country and driving or walking times between selected locations.

## Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

# Equipment Information

## Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your luggage to a minimum as this makes for the most comfortable travel experience.

**You must bring the following items:**

- Comfortable walking boots or shoes
- Sandals / Training shoes
- Lightweight trousers
- Casual shirts and T-shirts, long and short sleeved
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Sunhat
- Sunglasses
- Small daypack
- Headtorch and spare batteries (there can be power cuts)
- Sun protection (including bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottle
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash

Basic First Aid Kit including: antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, insect repellent, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite). Glucose tablets and multi-vitamin tablets.

**The following items are optional:**

- \*Warm (down or equivalent) jacket



- Swimwear (for hotel pools and saunas)
- Travel clothes
- Camera

## Local Customs and Etiquette

During the course of this holiday we will visit several sites that are considered sacred to people of Buddhist and Hindu faiths. Please be respectful of local norms and customs in these places and pay attention to the advice given by your trip leader on how to dress and act. The Nepali people are amongst the most polite in the world and are unlikely to let us know if anything we do offends but this does not mean they are not offended. We recommend that you always have a long sleeved shirt and trousers or full length skirt handy to put on when appropriate. In some places it will be necessary to remove your shoes or sandals and you should also consider bringing a pair of socks that can be quickly slipped on and off.

## Notes

\*FREE down jacket hire is included in your KE holiday booking upon request. Please make all requests at least 6 weeks prior to the trip departure date. You will be issued with the jacket on arrival in Nepal and will hand this back to your guide before flying to Bhutan where you will be issued with a similar jacket. Please remember to allow room in your luggage for this item.

## Bhutan Festivals

### Festival Dress Code

If your holiday involves visiting any of the 'tsechu' or festivals in Bhutan, we would like to advise you that there is a dress code that you need to be aware of when attending any festival. The Bhutanese always come dressed in their finest for a festival and it is important that you to bring a smart set of clothes if you plan to attend. You will need to wear long sleeves, long trousers (no jeans) and no trainers, boots or open toed sandals. Hats should not be worn and umbrellas are not acceptable.

### Festival Etiquette

Festivals are religious events. The ground where they are held is purified and consecrated by lamas, so when you are watching a festival you are, in essence, on the perimeter of an outdoor religious ground. The conduct of the onlooker should be governed with this in mind. The dancers, whether monks or laymen, are in a state of meditation. They transform themselves into the deities which they represent on the dance ground. They generate a spiritual power, which cleanses, purifies, enlightens and blesses the spectators.

Any behaviour which may be deemed obtrusive, disrespectful or discourteous is out of place at such an event. The dance ground is not a place to eat, drink, smoke, talk or laugh loudly at inappropriate times. You should not use flash photography or intrude on the dance space. Common courtesy should rule one's action when photographing dances or onlookers.

Festivals are not pageants or entertainment events. They are not held as tourist attractions. They are genuine manifestations of religious traditions thousands of years old which outsiders are given the privilege of witnessing. We would like to see that privilege retained, and hope that KE groups will always display courtesy, sensitivity and respect to the people of Bhutan who have welcomed them to attend these events.

## Cotswold Outdoor

Many of the equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive a 12.5% discount with Cotswold Outdoor, Snow+Rock and Runners Need. The discount code can be downloaded from your MyKE account and you can use this code at the checkout, either in store or online.

## Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary starting at the hotel in Kathmandu. Transfers are provided from/to Kathmandu Airport for all clients arriving on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary and departing on the last day of the Land Only itinerary.

## Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Kathmandu. Outbound flights will usually depart from the UK in the evening, arriving mid-afternoon on the following day (Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights will depart Kathmandu usually in the morning of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK later the same day.

# Why Choose KE

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## Why KE

We have used our long experience of working in both Nepal and Bhutan to come up with this excellent easy walking and sightseeing holiday. As is usual with KE, all meals are included in your holiday price, hire of a down jacket is provided FOC and there are no 'optional extras'.

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 18/03/2025 and the trip is subject to change