

Dartmouth  
Alumni Travel

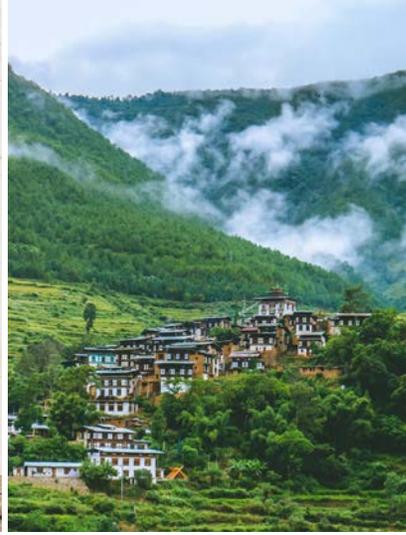
# Bhutan

IS THIS THE LAST SHANGRI-LA?

October 12 – 22, 2024



Paro Taktsang  
(Tiger's Nest)



**A** trip to Bhutan feels like the perfect antidote to the last few years of uncertainty and stress. Blissfully apart from the outside world, and notably untrammled by travelers, Bhutan remains true to itself – its rivers and mountains pure and magical; its people gracious and welcoming; its culture rich and enlivening; and its spirituality prevalent and inspiring.

Spirituality and the strong-rooted Bhutanese culture can be found in almost everything the Bhutanese people do daily, including how they eat, how they work, and how they relate with the natural environment. This tour is rich with people experiences; you'll have exclusive access to nation builders, chefs, artists, and spiritual leaders.

We're staying in central Bhutan during the Jambay Lhakhang Festival, held in one of the oldest and most sacred temples in the Kingdom. We'll be enthralled by the traditional dances, prayers, offerings, and other cultural activities. The highlight of the festival is the fire blessing ceremony held in the belief that passing through the Fire offering in the form of an arch will burn away all the obstacles.

Bhutan has committed to being the first nation in the world to go 100% organic. We'll enjoy meals at restaurants and farm homes serving locally sourced organic farm produce, making every meal a fresh and healthy one. Accommodations are western style hotels and inns enhanced with traditional architecture and textiles.

You will savour this nature, culture, and adventure for a lifetime, uncovering paths known only to the locals; taking tea with monks at their monasteries; and venturing away from the cities to meadows filled with wildflowers, ancient hamlets, forests of blue pine, spruce and rhododendron, and terraced paddy fields and orchards.



## Study Leader

**Sienna Radha Craig** is Professor of Anthropology at Dartmouth. She received her BA in Religious Studies from Brown University (1995) and her PhD in cultural anthropology from Cornell University (2006). Craig's research and work in medical and cultural anthropology has received support from the National Science Foundation, the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, and the Social Science Research Council, among other sources. Craig has authored several books, including *The Ends of Kinship: Connecting Himalayan Lives Between Nepal and New York* (University of Washington Press, 2020), *Mustang in Black and White*, with photographer Kevin Bubriski (Vajra Publications, 2018), *Healing Elements: Efficacy and the Social Ecologies of Tibetan Medicine* (University of California Press, 2012) and *Horses Like Lightning: A Story of Passage through the Himalayas* (Wisdom Publications, 2008). She is also the co-editor of *Medicine Between Science and Religion: Explorations on Tibetan Grounds* (Berghahn Books, 2010) and many other publications. Craig served as co-editor of *HIMALAYA*, Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies, from 2012-2017 and is an Executive Council member of the International Association for the Study of Traditional Asian Medicine (IASTAM).



## Signature Moments

- 🌀 Hike to Tiger's Nest Monastery
- 🌀 Savour farm to table cuisine
- 🌀 Spin the prayer wheels
- 🌀 Explore Paro with an acclaimed Bhutanese architect
- 🌀 Visit ancient monasteries

## Our Route



# Detailed Itinerary

*\*Please refer to the Joining Instructions below. Guests will meet in Bangkok on October 11 and end the tour in Bangkok on October 23*

## Saturday, Oct. 12: Arrive Paro, drive to Thimphu

Arrive at Paro where our local representative will meet you and accompany you to a traditional farmhouse for a blessing and spiritual cleansing ceremony in the altar room. Enjoy a meal, then continue to Thimphu (about one hour). We'll conclude the day with dinner and conversation with an expert on the country's policy of Gross National Happiness to set the tone for our in-depth exploration of the country.

*Overnight: Zhiwaling Ascent, Thimphu*

*Meals: Lunch, Dinner*

## Sunday, Oct. 13: Thimphu

Start the day at the Takin Preserve to view Bhutan's national animal, an unusual goat-antelope with special religious status. Visit the most significant public and private art galleries and learn about the importance of textiles within the Bhutanese tradition. We'll hope to attend an archery tournament during the day to marvel at the national sport. Learn about auspicious days from the astrologer at the 12th century Changangkha Lhakhang perched on a ridge above the city.

*Overnight: Zhiwaling Ascent, Thimphu*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Bhutan Takin



## Monday, Oct. 14: To Punakha

Today's scenic drive takes us over the Dochula Pass in the Himalayas, stopping to see the Druk Wangyal Chortens where 108 memorial stupas stand. Approaching the next valley, we'll visit the marvellous Temple of the Divine Madman established by the yogi Drukpa Kunley who travelled the length and breadth of Bhutan and Tibet using songs, humour, and outrageous behaviour to dramatize his teachings to the common man. It's a pleasant walk through the rice fields and the village to the temple that has become associated with fertility.

*Overnight: Zhingkhram Resort, Punakha*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



## Tuesday, Oct. 15: Punakha

Visit the Punakha Dzong, the most beautiful dzong in the country, to admire the special features of Bhutanese architecture and how these are preserved today. Walk across the suspension bridge and through the rice paddies to the village of Yebisa with splendid views of the valley. We're guests of Aum Kesam for lunch today in her lovely farmhouse by the river to learn about her organic farming techniques and to observe traditional cloth dyeing and weaving.

*Overnight: Zhingkhram Resort, Punakha*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

## Wednesday, Oct. 16: To Gangtey

Begin the day with a hike to the Khansum Yuley Monastery overlooking the Punakha Valley built with the specific goal of warding off evil spirits in Bhutan and across the world and to bring peace and harmony to all living things. Our drive this afternoon continues east to the Phobjikha Valley where we visit the Khewang Monastery, one of the oldest in the valley with three impressive two-storey statues of the past, present, and future Buddhas and the information centre of the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature to observe Karma and Pema, injured black-necked cranes who live in an enclosure at the centre. We'll hope to see these endemic cranes who winter in Bhutan.

*Overnight: Dewachen Hotel, Gangtey*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Punakha Dzong



A top-down view of a light blue ceramic bowl filled with a vibrant orange-red soup. Several dumplings with pleated tops are floating in the broth. The soup is garnished with fresh vegetables including a piece of broccoli, a cauliflower floret, a green pea pod, a carrot stick, and some green onions. Small black sesame seeds and red chili flakes are scattered throughout. In the top left corner, a small white bowl contains a mix of yellow and green shredded vegetables. In the top right, three fresh green pea pods are laid out. The background is a dark, textured grey surface. An orange text box is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**Bhutan has committed to being the first nation in the world to go 100% organic.**



### Thursday, Oct. 17: To Bumthang

Our drive today (about five hours with stops) takes us through a landscape of forested valleys and gentle hills capped with whitewashed monasteries. We'll first visit the beautiful old Gangtey Monastery with its elaborate gates and marvelous valley views. Along our route we'll stop in the pretty village of Trongsa to see the famous Trongsa Dzong perched over the village and the Royal Heritage Museum. Our hotel has a lovely hot stone bath – you'll want to make sure you experience this relaxing traditional Bhutanese tradition during our stay.

We're in Bumthang during the Jambey Lahakhang Festival held in celebration of the founding of the temple of the same name. During the festival, locals and visitors come together to participate in traditional dances, prayers, offerings, and other cultural activities. The highlight of the festival is the fire blessing ceremony held in the belief that passing through the Fire offering in the form of an arch will burn away all the obstacles.

*Overnight: Rinchenling Lodge, Bumthang*  
*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Friday, Oct. 18: Monasteries of Bumthang

Today we'll visit the Jambay Lkakhang Temple to witness the festivities and the various colourful dances accompanied by drums and traditional instruments. We'll continue to the Kurje Lkakhang, named for the body print of Guru Rinpoche preserved in a cave inside the temple, and the Tamshing Lkakhang with its huge prayer wheel. Visit the Jakar School to see how the youngest students are preparing for the digital world. We're guests for lunch in the farmhouse home of Am Tshomo who will show us how to prepare Ema Datshi, Bhutan's favourite dish made with chillies, butter, and cheese. Am Tshomo is also the organizer of the next door Dorjibi weaving cooperative preserving the beautiful hand-woven fabrics used for Bhutanese national dress (which also make lovely bed and table covers).

*Overnight: Rinchenling Lodge, Bumthang*  
*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Saturday, Oct. 19: Tang Valley

Rise early for an excursion to the Tang Valley where farmhouses and fields are set between heavily forested mountains. We'll stop at the 'Burning Lake', a deep pool in a river gorge where pilgrims have decorated the approach with a multitude of prayer flags. Visit the Pemacholing Nunnery to meet with some of the young women who have chose the monastic life. Visit the wonderful Ogyen Choling Palace Museum, part folk museum, part religious centre providing an excellent insight into the lifestyles and living conditions of a typical landed family of the last century. We're guests of the sponsor of the museum, Kunzang Choden, for a wonderful lunch (prepared from the estates' organic garden) and to learn of her experiences growing up in Bhutan.

*Overnight: Rinchenling Lodge, Bumthang*  
*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Sunday, Oct. 20: Fly to Paro

A short flight takes us back to Paro. This afternoon we'll explore the impressive Rinpung Dzong and visit the National Museum, a magnificent collection of Bhutanese artefacts including religious costumes, religious paintings, textiles, and stamps.

*Overnight: Khangkhu Hotel, Paro*  
*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Monday, Oct. 21: Paro: Tiger's Nest Monastery

This morning we embark on the amazing hike to the Tiger's Nest, the sacred Paro Taktsang Monastery which clings impossibly to the rock face 900m above the valley floor. This is the birthplace of Buddhism in Bhutan. We'll enjoy a mountainside lunch with spectacular views. Hoist a prayer flag on your walk to commemorate the incredible experiences. This evening we enjoy dinner at a welcoming farm home.

*Overnight: Khangkhu Hotel, Paro*  
*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Tuesday, Oct. 22: Depart Paro

The day is at leisure to enjoy the town's handicraft shops, soak in a hot stone bath, or enjoy a invigorating walk. Bid Bhutan farewell this afternoon, taking it with you in your soul.

*Meals: Breakfast*

*Note: The itinerary and accommodation described in this tour brochure are subject to change due to logistical arrangements and to take advantage of local events.*



Prayer wheels

## Tour Details

**Tour Cost (per person):** US\$8295

*Includes all taxes and gratuities.*

Single Supplement: US\$1495

*We would be happy to try to match you with a suitable roommate. If we are unable to, the single supplement will apply. This will be collected at 90 days prior to departure.*

### Group Size:

12 – 16 participants

Special Note regarding the tour cost:

Your tour cost includes the mandatory US\$200 per person per day Sustainable Development Fee imposed by the Bhutan government. The Sustainable Development Fee enables investment in transformative programmes that preserve cultural traditions, protect heritage and environment, upgrade infrastructure, create opportunities for young people, and build resilience.

### What's Included:

- Airport transfers for passengers arriving and departing as per the group itinerary
- Accommodation based on double occupancy in hotels listed or similar
- Transportation by comfortable vehicle
- Flight from Bumthang to Paro
- Meals as described in the itinerary: 10 Breakfasts, 10 Lunches, 10 Dinners
- Sightseeing with qualified English-speaking guides
- All activities as described in the itinerary
- All entrance fees
- Exclusive presentations by Bhutanese experts
- Fully escorted by our Bhutanese Tour Director

### Not Included:

- Airfare from your home to join the tour
- Visa Fee: US\$40 (We will apply for this visa on your behalf)
- Meals other than those described
- Alcoholic beverages
- Travel insurance
- Items of a personal nature
- Additional arrangements required due to any emergency or other situation

### Payment Details:

A non-refundable deposit of US\$750 per person is required to reserve a space on this tour. A second payment of US\$2000 per person is due six months prior to departure. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure.

# What to Expect



## Joining Instructions

Please note that flights to Bhutan for this program are via Bangkok. Guests will arrive in Bangkok on October 11 and depart Bangkok on October 23.

## Bangkok pre- and post-tour package:

Cost (per person): Approx US\$1995  
Single supplement: US\$200

## What's Included:

- Accommodation in Bangkok on October 11 and October 22 based on double occupancy at the Bangkok Novotel Airport Hotel or similar
- Dinner on October 11
- Breakfast on October 23
- Roundtrip flight Bangkok/Paro/Bangkok (price subject to change)



## COVID-19 Entry and Travel Requirements

All travelers on Worldwide Quest tours are required to be fully vaccinated and prepared to show proof of vaccination as per local regulations. Please refer to these websites for current requirements:

**Bhutan:** <https://www.doi.gov.bt/?p=1908&lang=en>

**USA:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>



## Level of Activity: Moderate

This tour involves walking on uneven terrain. Please note that we will be at altitudes of 3400 metres at the highest point and average elevations of about 2500 metres. All hikes and walks are optional. Should you have any questions about your ability to take part in this tour, please give us a call.



## Weather

We expect clear, sunny skies with daytime temperatures around 15°C (60°F) and overnight lows of around 0°C (32°F).



## Transportation

We will use a comfortable coach. There are some long drives over narrow and mountainous roads. This itinerary includes one internal flight (Bumthang to Paro).



## Travel Documents

You will require a passport for your trip to Bhutan. Please ensure it is valid for six months beyond your scheduled return date. You will require a visa for your trip to Bhutan. We will apply for this visa on your behalf. To do so, we require a digital copy of your passport, a recent digital passport size photo, and details of your travel insurance. Before booking, please refer to the USA government website to obtain travel advice for the destination(s) you are visiting: [travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov)



## #SafeTravels

Worldwide Quest has been awarded the World Travel and Tourism Council's #SafeTravels Stamp for adopting health and hygiene global standardized protocols. [Learn more.](#)



## Accommodation

We've selected accommodation that prioritize the beautiful views and tranquility of Bhutan. All rooms have private bathrooms.

### Zhiwaling Ascent, Thimpu

A modern hotel set in a beautiful location above the valley, surrounded by swathes of evergreen cypress trees valued for their medicinal essential oils. The hotel is staffed by graduates of the nearby Hospitality School, a positive initiative supporting Bhutanese education. The restaurant is known for delicious cuisine serving organic vegetables from the kitchen garden.

### Rinchenling Lodge, Bumthang

A lovely family-owned guesthouse set in a pine forest, a five-minute walk from one of the Kingdom's most sacred sites, the Jampa Lhakhang. Rooms have pine wood interiors and traditional décor. Enjoy the herbal stone bath or a customized massage.

### Dewachen Hotel, Gangtay

The hotel is encircled by pine forests and boasts fantastic valley views and a hot stone bath. Rooms have beautiful wooden interiors heated by an iron stove and hot water bottles in the bed, as needed.

### Zhingkhams Resort, Punakha

Breathtaking views over the Punakha Valley add to the tranquil feeling of this traditional hotel. Spa services include a variety of holistic practices.

### Khangkhu Hotel, Paro

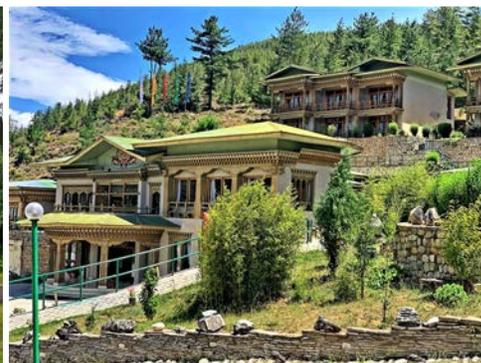
Perched on the mountain slopes opposite the Paro Dzong, the hotel has lovely views over the Paro Valley. Wood-paneled rooms have spacious bathrooms.



Zhiwaling Ascent



Rinchenling Lodge



Khangkhu Hotel

## Additional Info

### Extend your Stay

If you are interested in exploring more of this region, we would be happy to design a personalized extension for you either before or after this tour. Please let us suggest some options, based on your time available, budget and interests.

### Terms and Conditions

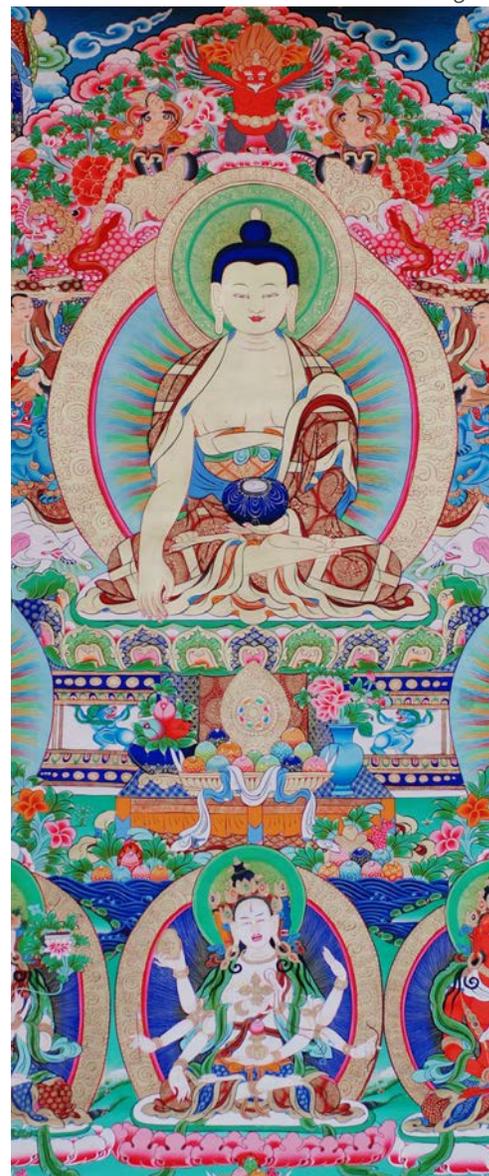
For additional information about our terms and conditions, please refer to your booking form, the current brochure or our website. All participants booking with Worldwide Quest are covered by the terms of the Ontario Travel Industry Act (Worldwide Quest International, Ontario - License # 2667946). See full details [here](#).

### Cancellation Policy

All payments are non-refundable, however you may transfer your initial deposit for any land tour to another tour 90 days or more prior to your scheduled departure date. Initial deposits for cruises are non-refundable and non-transferable. Your second payment and your final payment are non-refundable and non-transferable. If you cancel within 90 days prior to trip departure, all associated trip costs are non-refundable. In the event of a cancellation, you must notify Worldwide Quest immediately and in writing. See full details [here](#).

### Travel Insurance

We urge you to ensure that you have adequate cancellation and medical insurance in place, should an unexpected event cause you to cancel or interrupt your trip or should the tour not be operable per our terms and conditions. We will offer you Manulife insurance coverage. Medical insurance including emergency medical evacuation coverage is mandatory on all our tours.



## How to Book

Please contact the Worldwide Quest office for more information and to secure your booking.

**1-800-387-1483 | 416-633-5666**  
**[travel@worldwidequest.com](mailto:travel@worldwidequest.com)**

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