



Bhutanese Monasteries and Nepalese Tigers

WITH

PANORAMIC JOURNEYS

BHUTAN & NEPAL

BHUTAN, The land of the Thunder Dragon, is an extraordinary place. Vast and impressive fortresses, known as Dzongs, dominate Bhutan's landscape - from the wide subtropical valleys in the south to the Himalayan mountain ranges of the north. One of the world's biodiversity hotspots, Bhutan's national animal is the Takin - legend says it is half goat, half cow. This is a country where selling cigarettes or plastic bags is illegal, where giant protective penises are painted on the walls, where chillies and cheese with red rice is the national dish, and where Gross National Happiness is deemed more important than Gross National Product.

NEPAL, is of course synonymous with the greatest mountain range in the world, the Himalayas and its highest mountains, awe inspiring treks, and rich religious cultures, but this breath taking country offers even more. The warmth of the subtropical south is home to an abundance of exotic wildlife in stark contrast to frozen peaks of the north. A diverse people farm terraces clinging on to hillsides and the country is shaped by the ancient trade routes between India and Tibet. New wonders are around every corner and open arms will welcome you as the country rebuilds itself after the devastating earthquake in 2015.

BHUTAN & NEPAL WITH PANORAMIC JOURNEYS

As our name suggests, we like big panoramic vistas and encounters that give one a new perspective on life – These countries boast a few of these of Himalayan proportions. We have made a name designing journeys that allow our clients to get "under the surface" of a country - to meet the people and get off the tourist route. In designing this itinerary, we have allowed time to meet local people, to walk in rural valleys, and really get to know these beautiful countries, as well as taking in the most important historical, natural and religious sights and highlights that define Bhutan & Nepal.



BHUTANESE MONASTERIES & NEPALESE TIGERS



Discover these two contrasting Himalayan Kingdoms in a two week journey that takes in the best of both at a relaxing pace.

This journey starts in Nepal's enthralling, bustling capital Kathmandu before travelling to the slower-paced Kingdom of Bhutan. The Nepali stop-off will also help with your altitude acclimatisation. Explore the highlights of Bhutan before returning to Nepal's Chitwan National Park, home to tiger, elephant, rhino and more. Spend your last night at the wonderful Dwarika's Hotel in Kathmandu. You never know, you may get David Beckham's room...

MAP OF BHUTAN



DAY	ITINERARY	ACCOMMODATION	TRAVEL DETAILS
1	<p>Arrive Kathmandu Arrival in Nepal is a treat for the senses: the smells, sounds, and colours of this fascinating city will be on display during the journey to your hotel where you will have the rest of the day to relax after your flight. The afternoon is yours to unwind or explore the city.</p>	Kantipur Temple House, deluxe room	Airport to Hotel – 40 mins
2	<p>Kathmandu City Tour Explore the delights of central Kathmandu before heading west to Swayambhunath Stupa – one of the oldest Buddhist monuments of the Kathmandu Valley. You also have the option to take an early morning hour-long scenic flight to Everest. What better way to start your Himalayan adventure? This afternoon you will visit the Hindu Pashupatinath and Buddhist temple, Boudhanath to the east of Kathmandu, and then the city of Bhaktapur. Walk through the traffic-free streets of this vibrant town. Visit the Durbar Square, which is bigger than Kathmandu's but with fewer temples due to an earthquake in 1934. A short walk from the Durbar Square is Taumadhi Square with the five-story pagoda-style Nyatapola, the highest temple in Nepal and also the Café Nyatapola, where the balconies provide a great view over the square. From Bhaktapur continue east to Nagarkot. As you wind up into the hills, you should feel the air cool. The rest of the day at leisure.</p>	Kantipur Temple House, deluxe room	
3	<p>Fly to Paro & on to Thimphu The flight from Kathmandu to Paro is spectacular. On arrival in Paro, you will be met by your guide and driver and taken along the national 'highway' to the capital of Thimphu, stopping off at Thamchu Lhakhang on the way. The view over Thimphu from the big Buddha statue helps get our bearings before heading into Thimphu town. Have your first taste of Bhutanese food at one of the capital's restaurants. Later this afternoon head up to Mothitang to see Bhutan's national animal, the rare and elusive Takin. If there is time, for those who wish to stretch their legs, there are great views of the town and Dzong on a lateral hike through the forests (1hr-1.5hr) to Wanguetse and Dechenphodrang monasteries.</p>	Namgay Heritage Hotel, Thimphu	Transfer to airport and 1.5 hour flight

Thimphu – museums, markets & monuments

4

After breakfast, a sightseeing tour of Thimphu. Visit the memorial Chorten, which is so important to Thimphu's inhabitants, and the Folk Heritage Museum which will give you an insight into how many rural Bhutanese live. A stop at the weekend market is a must. You can buy some prayer flags to attach to the poles that adorn every high pass in Bhutan.

This afternoon, a walk to Cheri or Tango Goempas on the outskirts of town. Alternatively you can stay in town and have time to explore further, head back to the market or rest. This evening dine at one of Thimphu's international restaurants.

Namgay Heritage
Hotel, Thimphu

Dochu Laa and to Punakha

5

This morning you will really get a sense of being in the mountains as you ascend to the colourful Dochu Laa pass where you will hopefully see clear views of the snow-capped mountains to the north. Generally the views from the pass are clearer first thing in the morning - so it's best to start as early as possible.

Take time to visit the ornate Druk Wangyal Lhakhang (temple) and perhaps enjoy a tea break before descending into Punakha Valley. As you descend into the subtropical valley of Punakha, you will notice the forest changing in character from pine and evergreen to huge-leaved tropical trees. After lunch walk through a small hamlet and paddy fields to a temple on a hill. Round off the day with a riverside walk with views of the Dzong.

Meripuensum
Resort, Punakha

Thimphu to
Punakha;
80km, 3 hours

Punakha Dzong and Chorten walk

6

This morning you drive up to the other side of Punakha valley to visit the Khamsum Yuelley Namgyal chorten. It's a 45 minute hike up to the chorten over a suspension bridge.

Afterwards head back down into the valley for a picnic lunch and visit the spectacular Punakha Dzong - arguably the most beautiful Dzong in Bhutan, where you will take time to explore some of the magnificent temples. Later this afternoon, time permitting, drive around Punakha valley to the villages of Talo and Nobding.

Meripuensum
Resort, Punakha

7 **Drive to Paro**
Head back over the Dochu Laa pass to Paro. If it is clear spend some time at the pass taking in the fantastic views before stopping in Thimphu for lunch. A stop at the weekend market is a must!
Arrive in Paro late afternoon and settle in to your hotel.

Gangtey Palace,
Paro

Punakha to
Paro; 129km,
4.5hrs

8 **Paro valley**
This morning explore Paro valley. Visit Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the oldest temples in Bhutan with its magic orange tree that bears fruit all year round and the interesting and unusually shaped Duntse Lhakhang (take a torch) before heading west to Drukgyel Dzong, built in 1648 by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal to control the northern route to Tibet (from here, it is only a two-day hike to the border, dominated by Mt Jhomalhari). This afternoon you can relax in and around the hotel - perhaps have an archery lesson, try a hot stone bath, or visit Paro town.

Gangtey Palace,
Paro

9 **Hike to Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) Monastery**
One of the most sacred of pilgrimages in the Himalayas, this hike is quite tough - but most abilities will be able to cope with it if it is taken at a steady pace. Although those accustomed to the altitude might take 2 hours to climb to the temple, we allow the full day for the excursion and stop regularly, including for coffee on the way up, and for lunch on the return leg.
You will be able to go at your own pace (or hire a pony - ask your guide) and if you prefer to stop at the cafe or view-point a little higher up, that is fine. Walking through oak, rhododendrons and trees draped in lichen, it is a rewarding and photogenic hike. If there is time (and you have the energy!) you may like to visit Drukgyal Dzong on the way back to the hotel.

Gangtey Palace,
Paro

Return to Nepal and Chitwan National Park

Up early to catch your flight to Kathmandu and then connect with the short flight south to Chitwan National Park.

10

You will see a totally different landscape as you enter the southern plains which are home to large farms and swathes of jungle. There are many ways to explore Chitwan and try to spot tigers, rhinos, elephants, crocodiles, and untold species of birds: early-morning jeep safari; river-boat safari; bird watching; jungle walks, and a visit to the local Tharu village to learn how they life in close proximity to this wildlife. The team at the lodge will sit down with you to plan out your next few days in the jungle.

Barahi Jungle
Lodge, Chitwan

Flight 1.5
hours; flight
25 mins

Chitwan National Park

Start your morning early with a birdwatching tour in the area around your lodge where over 276 bird species have been recorded.

11

However you decide to safari you will have the chance to see the one-horned rhinoceros, several types of deer, monkeys, wild boar, bison, sloth bear, leopard and, if lucky, the Royal Bengal tiger.

Barahi Jungle
Lodge, Chitwan

In the evenings farmers from nearby villages will perform traditional Tharu Cultural dances. Or you can hear from one of Chitwan National Park's Jungle Experts, learn about the history of the park and more about the park's wildlife, and ask any questions.

Explore more in Chitwan

12

Rise early for a game drive in Nepal's most famous reserves. Home to tigers, rhinos, wild elephants, bisons, antelopes, sloth bears and the Gharial crocodile. After lunch you can (weather permitting) take a silent trip down the Rapti River on a traditional patela boat where as well as many birds and animals coming to drink, you may also see crocodiles and Gharials. Alternatively take a short early walk to the local villages, where our expert will brief you about all aspects of local life. After the visit, take a ride back on a Bullock Cart. There may also be an opportunity to visit the elephant stables to learn more about the elephants, and if it's warm, see the elephants bathe in the river.

Barahi Jungle
Lodge, Chitwan

13	<p>Fly to Kathmandu, at leisure at Dwarikas</p> <p>An early start for another spectacular flight over the Himalayas. On arrival back in Kathmandu you have the rest of the day at leisure to relax in the famous Dwarikas Hotel or to explore Kathmandu city. If you would like to arrange guided sightseeing please ask.</p> <p>This evening you will have a 6-course farewell dinner at the traditional Nepalese Krishnapan restaurant in Dwarikas hotel. It is a great experience, and will round off your trip before your flight home tomorrow.</p>	Dwarikas Hotel, Kathmandu	Transfers and flight 25 mins
----	---	------------------------------	---------------------------------

14	<p>Departure Kathmandu</p> <p>Transfer to the airport to catch you flight home, 3 hrs before departure.</p> <p>If you want to take the optional Everest scenic flight today, this is also possible, time and weather permitting.</p>		Transfer to airport
----	---	--	------------------------

Bhutanese Monasteries & Nepalese Tigers

HOW TO BOOK

1. GET IN TOUCH

This itinerary is just a suggestion, a starting point, something to build upon. Everyone of our itineraries is unique to you – we can add or lose days, tweak the activities, change the accommodation or hire a private jet until it's perfect for you. So, let's have a chat. Call one of our experts to discuss creating your private journey to Bhutan.

2. BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY

Once we've crafted the perfect journey for you we can sign you ready to go. We accept bank transfers, Visa, Mastercard or American Express, and UK cheques. Full payment methods are detailed in our booking conditions. We shall then send you a booking confirmation together with an invoice for the full payment of your holiday which is due 90 days before your departure date.

ANY QUESTIONS?

Call one of our experts on +44 (0)1608 676821 or email us at info@panoramicjourneys.com.

Some quick travel facts can be found in the Essentials section on the Bhutan page of our website

<https://www.panoramicjourneys.com/Destinations/Bhutan>. We will also send you a comprehensive Bhutan Practicalities document once you have booked.

