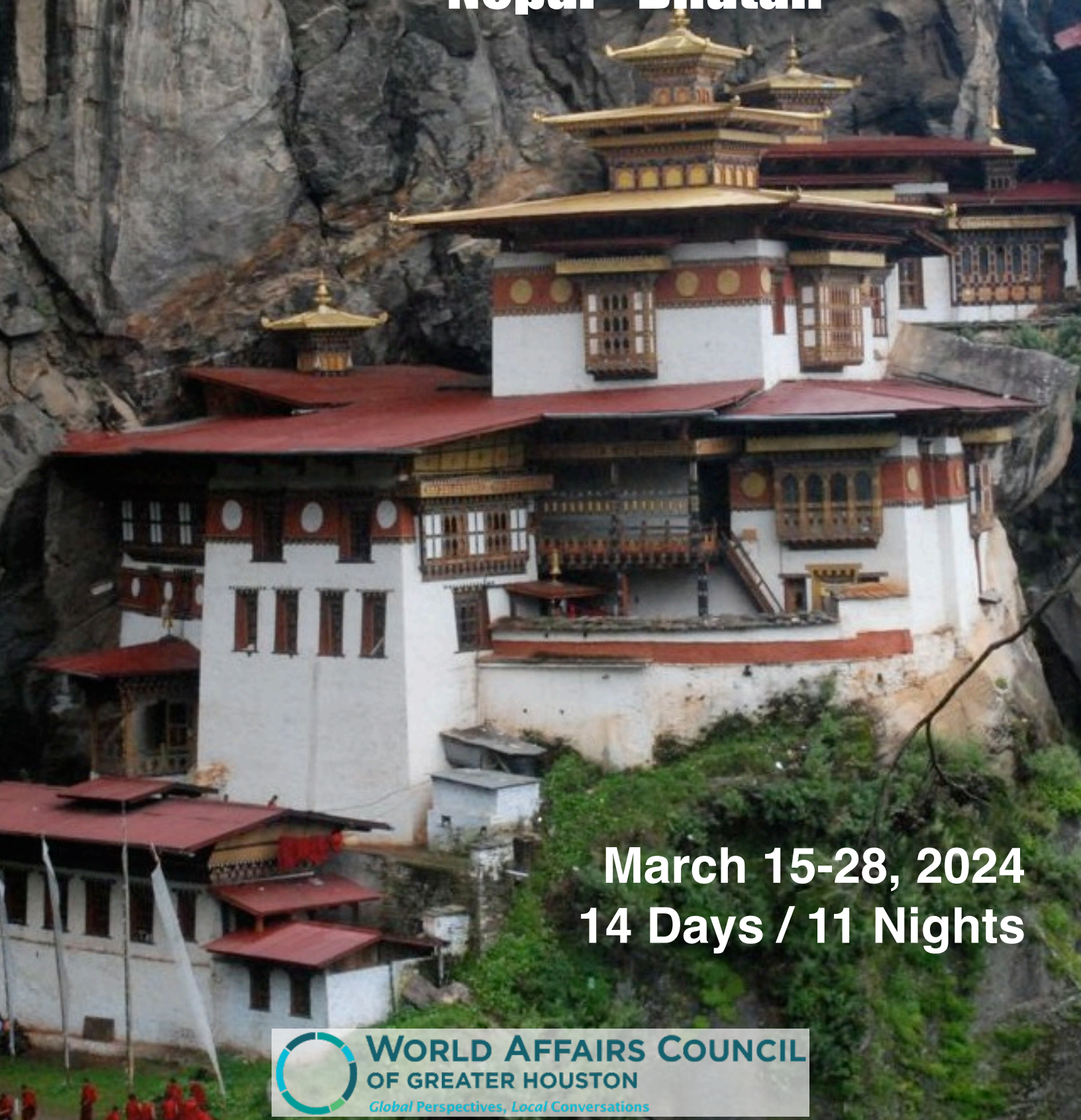


HIMALAYAN KINGDOMS

Nepal - Bhutan



March 15-28, 2024
14 Days / 11 Nights



WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL
OF GREATER HOUSTON
Global Perspectives, Local Conversations



Himalayan Kingdoms Nepal – Bhutan

March 15-28, 2024
14 Days / 11 Nights

ITINERARY

DAY 1	Leave USA for Kathmandu, Nepal
DAY 2	In transit
DAY 3	Arrival in Kathmandu / Kathmandu, Nepal
DAY 4	Flight to Paro, Bhutan - Thimpu / Thimpu, Bhutan
DAY 5	Thimpu sightseeing / Thimpu, Bhutan
DAY 6	Thimpu sightseeing / Thimpu, Bhutan
DAY 7	Paro sightseeing / Paro, Bhutan
DAY 8	Tiger's Nest / Paro, Bhutan
DAY 9	Flight to Kathmandu - sightseeing / Kathmandu, Nepal
DAY 10	Kathmandu sightseeing / Kathmandu, Nepal
DAY 11	Flight to Pokhara - sightseeing / Pokhara
DAY 12	Pokhara sightseeing - Kathmandu / Kathmandu, Nepal
DAY 13	Bhaktapur - Kirtipur sightseeing / Kathmandu, Nepal
DAY 14	Departure

Himalayan Kingdoms Nepal - Bhutan

March 15-28, 2024
14 Days / 11 Nights

MAP TRAJECTORY



HIGHLIGHTS

Durbar Square in Kathmandu.

Himalayas.

Patan City, Nepal.

Boat trip on Phewa Lake in Pokhara.

Bhagtapur and Kirtipur historic towns near Kathmandu.

Memorial Chorten in Thimphu.

Gross Happiness of Bhutan.

“Tiger’s Nest” Monastery, Paro, Bhutan.

Lecture on Buddhism in Bhutan.



Himalayan Kingdoms

Nepal - Bhutan

March 15-28, 2024

14 Days / 11 Nights

INCLUDED

11 nights' hotel accommodation with daily breakfast.

Lunches and dinners as indicated in the itinerary, with two special meals.

Drinking water during all included meals.

English speaking professional tour guides in each country.

Transportation with private vehicles with very good drivers.

Arrival and departure transfers - only for suggested flight arrival & departures.

2 domestic flights in Nepal (Kathmandu - Pokhara - Kathmandu.)

Round-trip flights Kathmandu-Paro-Kathmandu.

Two small bottles of water per person per day on the bus everyday.

All entry fees to places mentioned in the itinerary.

Cultural program with farewell dinner in Bhutan.

A lecture on Gross National Happiness in Bhutan.

Porterage at hotels.

Tips for meals and accommodations.

Gratuities for guides & drivers.

NOT INCLUDED

International airfares / Houston - Kathmandu - Houston.

Visa fees for Nepal and Bhutan.

Drinks with included meals, except tea or coffee for breakfast.

Personal expenditures like phone calls, laundry, medical expenses.

Travel Insurance.



Himalayan Kingdoms Nepal - Bhutan

March 15-28, 2024
14 Days / 11 Nights

SUGGESTED FLIGHTS

Suggested flights are on Qatar Airways via Doha:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 15 Mar
QR 714 | Houston to Doha
dep: 6:40 pm / arr: 5:15 pm on 16 Mar |
| 17 Mar
QR 648 | Doha to Kathmandu
dep: 1:00 am / arr: 8:00 am |
| 28 Mar
QR 645 | Kathmandu to Doha
dep: 2:15 am / arr: 5:05 am |
| 28 Mar
QR 713 | Doha to Houston
dep: 8:05 am / arr: 4:35 pm |

Economy class: \$1,770
Business class: \$5,590
per person, including taxes, surcharges and fees as of Nov 3, 2023.
Fares may change based on availability.



Himalayan Kingdoms Nepal - Bhutan

March 15-28, 2024
14 Days / 11 Nights

ACCOMMODATIONS

Kathmandu - Yak & Yeti Hotel

<https://www.yakandyeti.com/>



Pokhara - Fishtail Lodge

<https://www.fishtail-lodge.com/>





Himalayan Kingdoms Nepal - Bhutan

March 15-28, 2024
14 Days / 11 Nights

ACCOMMODATIONS

Thimpu - Hotel Druk

<https://drukhoteles.com/thimphu/>



Paro - Khangu Resort

<https://khangkhueresort.com/>





Himalayan Kingdoms Nepal - Bhutan

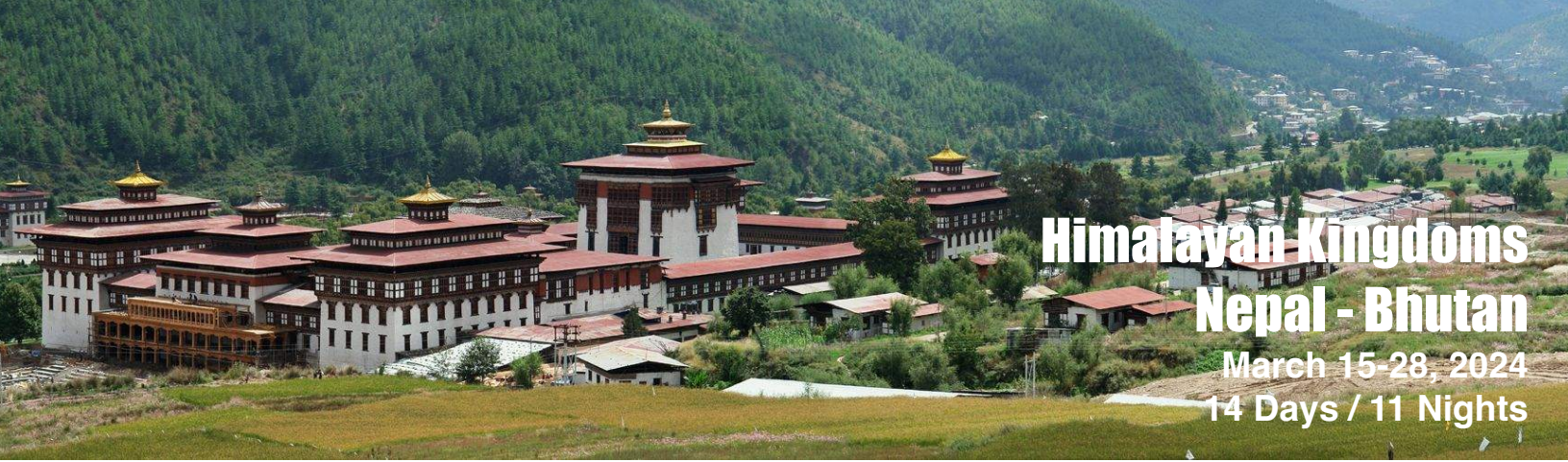
March 15-28, 2024
14 Days / 11 Nights

PROGRAM DETAILS

DAY 1	Fri, Mar 15 - Houston-Kathmandu
	We will leave Houston for Cairo, Egypt.

DAY 2	Sat, Mar 16 - In Transit
--------------	---------------------------------

DAY 3	Sun, Mar 17 - Kathmandu Arrival
	Upon arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu, our guide will meet us and transfer us to our hotel in Kathmandu, the capital city.
	We will be briefed on our trip. Rest of the day at leisure.
	Overnight in Kathmandu Meals: D



Himalayan Kingdoms Nepal - Bhutan

March 15-28, 2024
14 Days / 11 Nights

DAY 4

Mon, Mar 18 - Kathmandu - Paro - Thimpu

In the morning, we will fly from Kathmandu, Nepal to Paro, Bhutan.

Upon arrival at the Paro International Airport in Bhutan, our guide will meet us and transfer us to our hotel in Thimphu, the capital city.

Rest of the day at leisure.

Overnight in Thimpu

Meals: B-D

Thimphu is the capital and largest city of the Kingdom of Bhutan. It is situated in the western central part of Bhutan, and the surrounding valley is one of Bhutan's dzongkhags, the Thimphu District. The ancient capital city of Punakha was replaced as capital by Thimphu in 1955, and in 1961 Thimphu was declared as the capital of the Kingdom of Bhutan by His Majesty the 3rd Druk Gyalpo Jigme Dorji Wangchuck.



Himalayan Kingdoms Nepal - Bhutan

March 15-28, 2024
14 Days / 11 Nights

DAY 5

Tue, Mar 19 - Thimpu

There are a good many things to see in the capital, which has a population of approximately 100,00 people.

After breakfast, we will visit Kuensel Phodrang, where we will feel the grandeur of the world's largest sitting Buddha and enjoy a great bird's eye view of the Thimpu Valley. We will continue on to the Takin Preserve to learn about the national animal of Bhutan.

After lunch, we will visit the National Institute for Zorig Chusum, the school of 13 forms of traditional arts and crafts, commonly referred to as the "painting school", to see how the new generation of the Bhutanese artists are learning and creating.

In the late afternoon or early evening, we will visit the Memorial Chorten built in 1974 to commemorate the third King, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, popularly known as 'the father of the modern Bhutan.' The chorten or stupa is where the pious, young and old alike gather every morning and evening to circumambulate, making it a local favorite spot.

Overnight in Thimpu

Meals: B-L-D

The **takin**, also called cattle chamois or gnu goat, is a large species of ungulate found in the eastern Himalayas. The four subspecies are the Mishmi takin, the golden takin, the Tibetan takin and the Bhutan takin.

Whilst the takin has in the past been placed together with the muskox, more recent research shows a closer relationship to sheep. The takin is the national animal of Bhutan.



Himalayan Kingdoms Nepal - Bhutan

March 15-28, 2024
14 Days / 11 Nights

DAY 6

Wed, Mar 20 - Thimpu

We will take a morning tour to the Changangkha Lhakhang, which is considered to be the oldest tantric temple of Bhutan, built in the 12th century by Lama Phajo, who came to Bhutan from Ralung, Tibet.

Then, we will visit Zilukha Nunnery in Drubthob, the biggest nunnery established by the multi-talented Lama Thenthog Gyalpo in the 15th century.

After lunch, we will have a lecture on Buddhism in Bhutan. We will then drive to Tashichho Dzong or fortress, the administrative headquarters of the government, to be there at 5pm. While the northern half of the fortress is spared for the monks, the southern half houses the office of the King, the Prime Minister's office and the Office of the Gross Happiness Commission.

Overnight in Thimpu

Meals: B-L-D

Gross National Happiness (also known by the acronym: GNH) is a philosophy that guides the government of Bhutan. It includes an index which is used to measure the collective happiness and well-being of a population. Gross National Happiness is instituted as the goal of the government of Bhutan in the Constitution of Bhutan, enacted on 18 July 2008.

The term "Gross National Happiness" was coined in 1972 during an interview by a British journalist for the Financial Times at Bombay airport when the then king of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, said "Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross National Product."



Himalayan Kingdoms Nepal - Bhutan

March 15-28, 2024

14 Days / 11 Nights

DAY 7

Thu, Mar 21 - Thimpu - Paro

Before heading to Paro, we will enjoy the local farmers market in Thimpu, the largest in the country, where farmers from nearby villages sell their produce.

Then we will visit Rinpung Dzong, “fortress on a heap of jewels” the religious and secular center of Paro. The dzong was first conceived in the 15th century, and finally consecrated in 1646.

Overnight in Paro

Meals: B-L-D



Himalayan Kingdoms Nepal - Bhutan

March 15-28, 2024
14 Days / 11 Nights

DAY 8

Fri, Mar 22 - Paro - Tiger's Nest

Today we will go on a strenuous but rewarding hike to visit Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest).

Important note: Hike to "Tiger's Nest" Monastery is an arduous one; 2.5 hrs uphill, 1 hr spending there; 1.5 hrs downhill. So it takes practically the whole day. Any tour member who does not want to do the full hike, can either go up to the half way, see the scenery and come down or visit Kyichu Lakhang Temple and farmhouse and return back to Paro for a leisure time.

The trail to the monastery climbs through a beautiful pine forest. We will continue at a leisurely pace and have a picnic lunch on the way. Built in 1600s, the imposing monastery clings to the edge of a sheer rock that plunges 2953 ft in the valley below. It is believed that, in the 8th century, Guru Rimpoche, the tantric mystic who brought Buddhism to Bhutan, landed here on the back of a flying tigress to subdue a demon. He is believed to have meditated here to be followed by numerous Buddhist masters over the centuries. It is considered one of the most sacred places for Buddhists.

Time permitting we can also visit the 7th century sacred Kyichu Lakhang Temple and a typical farmhouse on our way.

Overnight in Paro

Meals: B-L-D



Himalayan Kingdoms Nepal - Bhutan

March 15-28, 2024
14 Days / 11 Nights

DAY 9

Sat, Mar 23 - Paro, Bhutan - Kathmandu, Nepal

In the morning we will be transferred to the airport to fly to Kathmandu. Upon arrival, we will visit Patan.

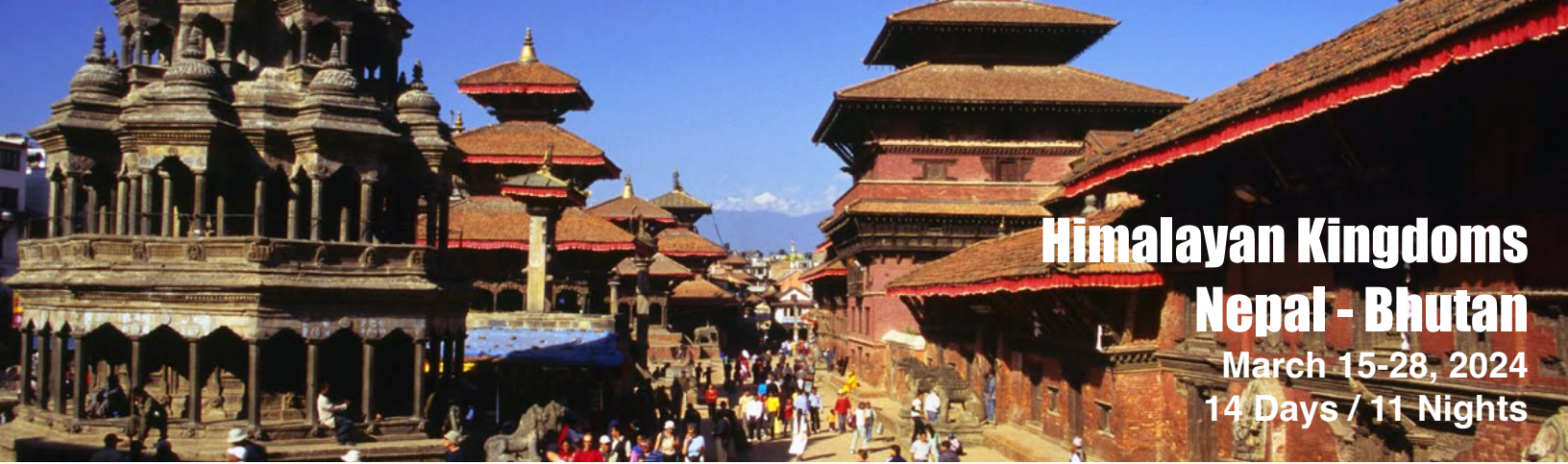
The ancient name of Patan is Lalitpur, meaning “the city of beauty.” Its most photogenic center of attraction is its Durbar Square complex. The city is full of Buddhist monuments and Hindu temples, with fine bronze gateways, guardian deities and wonderful carvings.

Overnight in Kathmandu

Meals: B-L-D

Kathmandu is the capital and largest city of Nepal, with a population of around 3 million. Kathmandu is also the largest metropolis in the Himalayan Mountain region. Nepali and Newari are the most spoken languages in the city.

Kathmandu, also known as City of Temples, stands at an elevation of approximately 1,400 meters (4,600 feet) above sea level in the bowl-shaped Kathmandu Valley in central Nepal. The valley is historically termed as "Nepal Mandala" and has been the home of Newar culture, a cosmopolitan urban civilization in the Himalayas foothills. The city was the royal capital of the Kingdom of Nepal and hosts palaces, mansions and gardens of the Nepalese aristocracy.



Himalayan Kingdoms

Nepal - Bhutan

March 15-28, 2024

14 Days / 11 Nights

DAY 10

Sun, Mar 24 - Kathmandu

Early in the morning (6:30 AM) Optional Mountain Flight to see the Himalayas: Tour members who want to join this flight will be transferred to take the one-hour flight. After the flight, back to the hotel to have breakfast.

In the morning we will have a sightseeing tour of Kathmandu, originally known as Kantipur. We will visit the Durbar (Palace) Square, starting with the inner palace complex of Hanuman Dhoka and Gorkha Durbars, the traditional seat of the Nepalese royalty, which were converted to museums and the Kumari Ghar (house), the residence of the Kumari; the Living Goddess of Kathmandu.

We will also see the Kasthamandap, an unusual temple built from a single tree and gave its name to the city. After lunch, we will visit the Boudhanath Stupa. This stupa is one of the biggest in the world of its kind. It stands with four pairs of eyes in the four cardinal direction keeping watch for righteous behavior and human prosperity. Then we will visit the Pashupatinath Temple, Nepal's most important Hindu Temple dedicated to Shiva.

Situated amidst a lush green natural setting on the bank of the sacred Bagmati River, the temple was built in pagoda style and has gilded roof and richly carved silver doors. Visitors will be permitted to view the temple from the east bank of the Bagmati River. Entry to the temple is strictly forbidden to all non-Hindus.

We will have our welcome dinner at a special restaurant with Nepalese delicacies and cultural show.

Overnight in Kathmandu

Meals: B-L-D



Himalayan Kingdoms

Nepal - Bhutan

March 15-28, 2024

14 Days / 11 Nights

DAY 11

Mon, Mar 25 - Kathmandu - Pokhara

Transfer to the airport to fly to Pokhara, a remarkable place of natural beauty with several lakes and stunning panoramic views of the Annapurna Mountain Range.

We will visit International Mountain Museum, and then enjoy a boat trip on the Phewa Lake and see the Barahi Temple, which is right on a small island on the lake.

Overnight in Pokhara

Meals: B-L-D

DAY 12

Tue, Mar 26 - Pokhara - Kathmandu

We will have a short hike to Sarangkot to view the amazing sunrise before breakfast. After breakfast, we will enjoy the Gurkha Museum and the Gupteswar Cave. Then we will go to the Tibetan Refugee Camp to visit the SOS Children's Village. In the afternoon, we will fly back to Kathmandu.

Depending on actual flight arrival time we may have time to drive to Bungamati, a pleasant traditional Newari village that dates back to the 16th century.

Overnight in Kathmandu

Meals: B-L-D



Himalayan Kingdoms Nepal - Bhutan

March 15-28, 2024
14 Days / 11 Nights

DAY 13

Wed, Mar 27 - Kathmandu

Today we will have an excursion to the towns of Bhagtapur and Kirtipur located near Kathmandu.

Overnight in Kathmandu

Meals: B-L-D

Kirtipur, a traditional Newari town, has a wonderful sense of faded grandeur thanks to the impressive medieval temples dotted around its backstreets.

When Prithvi Narayan Shah stormed into the valley in 1768, he made a priority capturing Kirtipur to provide a base for his crushing attacks on the Malla kingdoms.

Kirtipur's resistance was strong, but eventually, after a bitter siege, the town was taken.

The inhabitants paid a terrible price for their brave resistance-the king ordered that the nose and the lips be cut off every male inhabitant in the town, sparing only those who could play wind instruments for his entertainment.



**Himalayan Kingdoms
Nepal - Bhutan**

**March 15-28, 2024
14 Days / 11 Nights**

DAY 14

Thu, Mar 28 - Departure

Early in the morning we will be transferred to the airport to take a flight back to the U.S.A.

Contact Us

travel@wachouston.org

713-522-7811

www.wachouston.org