

BHUTAN

Jewel of the Himalayas

March 15-24, 2024

10 Days / 7 Nights



**WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL
OF GREATER HOUSTON**

Global Perspectives, Local Conversations



Bhutan Jewel of the Himalayas

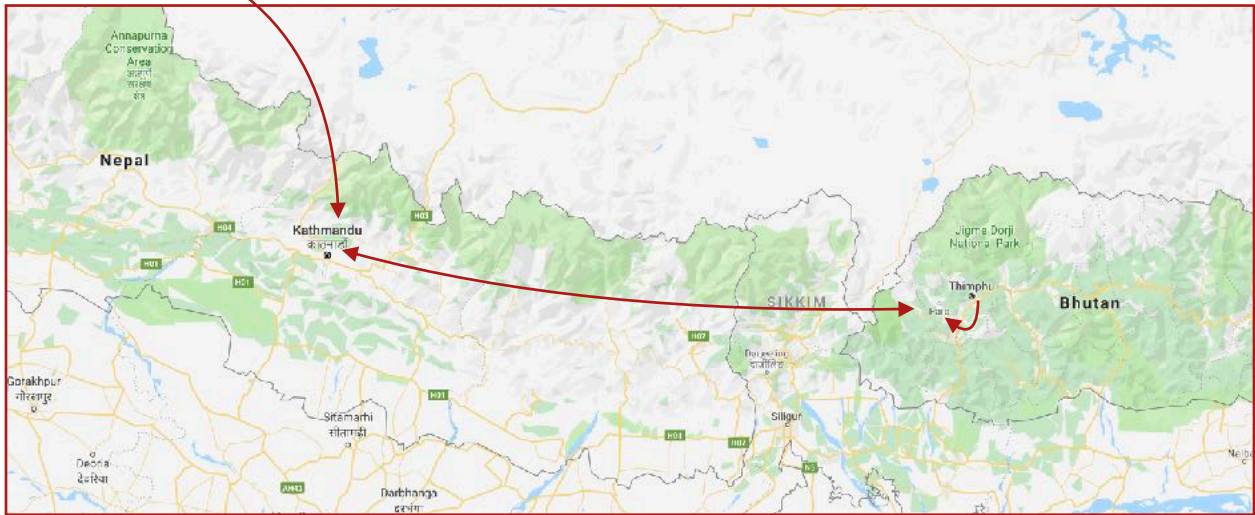
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ITINERARY

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 / Kathmandu
DAY 10	Departure



MAP TRAJECTORY



HIGHLIGHTS

- Memorial Chorten in Thimphu.**
- Gross Happiness of Bhutan.**
- “Tiger’s Nest” Monastery, Paro.**
- Lecture on Buddhism.**
- School of Traditional Arts.**
- Fortress Monasteries.**
- Local markets.**



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INCLUDED

- 7 nights' hotel accommodation with daily breakfast.**
(2 nights in Kathmandu + 5 nights in Bhutan)
- Lunches and dinners as indicated in the itinerary.**
- Drinking water during all included meals.**
- English speaking professional tour guide.**
- Transportation with private vehicles with very good drivers.**
- Arrival and departure transfers - only for suggested flight arrival & departures.**
- 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.**



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SUGGESTED FLIGHTS

Suggested flights are on Qatar Airways via Doha:

15 Mar **Houston to Doha**
QR 714 **dep: 6:40 pm / arr: 5:15 pm on 16 Mar**

17 Mar **Doha to Kathmandu**
QR 648 **dep: 1:00 am / arr: 8:00 am**

24 Mar **Kathmandu to Doha**
QR 645 **dep: 2:15 am / arr: 5:05 am**

24 Mar **Doha to Houston**
QR 713 **dep: 7:50 am / arr: 4:20 pm**

Economy class: \$2,024
Business class: \$10,365
per person, including taxes, surcharges and fees as of January 12, 2024.
Fares may change based on availability.

Please ask for alternative flights on Turkish Airlines.



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ACCOMMODATIONS

Thimpu - Hotel Druk
<https://drukhoteles.com/thimphu/>



Paro - Khangu Resort
<https://khangkhueresort.com/>





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ACCOMMODATIONS

Kathmandu - Yak & Yeti Hotel
<https://www.yakandyeti.com/>





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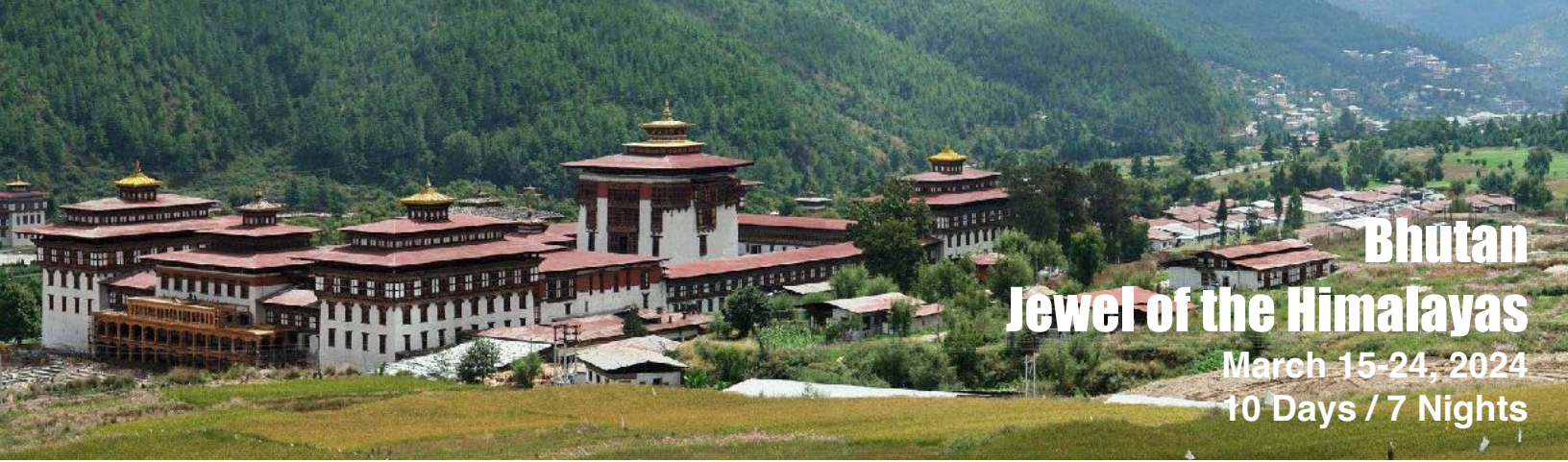
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PROGRAM DETAILS

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

DAY 2	Sat, Mar 16 - In Transit
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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



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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.



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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 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.



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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."



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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



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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



DAY 9

Sat, Mar 23 - Paro - Kathmandu

In the morning we will be transferred to the airport to fly to Kathmandu. Upon arrival day at leisure in Kathmandu.

Overnight in Kathmandu

Meals: B

DAY 10

Sun, Mar 24 - Departure

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

Contact Us

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