



Coates Wildlife Tours
Specialist in nature tours since 1986

Trip Dossier

14-Day Bhutan - The Last Shangri-La



Accommodated Small Group Tour - Max 12 passengers
Bangkok - Bangkok 27 April - 10 May 2025

Itinerary Highlights:

- Taksang Monastery (Tiger's Nest) - A small collection of temples perched on a cliff 900m above the ground. This is one of Bhutan's most iconic monasteries. The walk up will provide beautiful scenic views of the valley below.
- Dochula Pass - A mountain pass overlooking the Himalayas, where 108 shortens (stupas) exist in the memory of fallen Bhutanese soldiers.
- Royal Manas National Park - The oldest national park in Bhutan, also known as the "conservation showpiece of the kingdom". This national park boasts a wide variety of flora and fauna.
- Punakha Dzong - a riverside fortress located at the confluence of the Mochhu and Pochhu Rivers. This Dzong is the second oldest and largest in Bhutan.



The Land of the Dragon, as Bhutan is known to its inhabitants, is a fiercely independent Himalayan kingdom where it seems that time has stood still. Bhutan carefully refrains from allowing mass tourism to preserve its unique environment and heritage.

Bhutan is one of the last strongholds of Tibetan Buddhism, and its peaceful and fun-loving people are proud and elegant, with timeless culture and dress.

Large Dzongs (beautiful medieval buildings that incorporate a monastery, village and fort in one) dot the countryside, along with Chortens (shrines) and lhakhans (temples). A visit to the magnificent Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest) near Paro is a particular highlight.

Bhutan is rated as one of the top ten global hot spots in the world because of its pristine forests that provide habitats for a diverse range of wildlife. Over 600 bird species inhabit the unspoiled woods. The trees are wrapped in beautiful epiphytic orchids, lichens, ferns and mosses. The forests harbour some of the most exotic plant species of the eastern Himalayas, with over 50 species of Rhododendron, Magnolias and a wide variety of medicinal plants.

Home to snow leopards, blue sheep, red pandas, Asian elephants and tigers, Bhutan's environment is rigorously protected.

It is a remarkable country that offers not only the exquisite Himalayan scenery but also its rich and ancient traditions.

In a world where disasters and conflict dominate the news, it's nice to get away and find some relief and peace of mind. Nature travel can offer that, and some destinations, in particular, embody the peace and beauty that restore our spirit. Bhutan is one of them!

Itinerary

Day 1 Sunday 27 April Bangkok to Paro

Our very early morning flight to Paro departs Bangkok at 5.00 am (meet your Coates escort for group check-in at 3.00 am). We arrive in Paro around 8.20 am (Sunday is a great day to come as there are always archery matches in progress on the way from the airport – also the weekly Paro vegetable market). We drive to our hotel resort for lunch, then travel 4 km back to Paro to look at the imposing dzong and visit the excellent National Museum, which has a brilliant natural history section.

Accommodation: Kichu Resort, Paro LD

Day 2 Monday 28th April Paro Region

We have the whole day in the Paro region. We can drive the bus to the summit of the Chele La pass (3900m), looking at plants, trees and birds on the way. There will be lots of golden autumn colours. Given fine weather, there will be excellent views of the Himalayas at the pass. Time permitting, there is a chance of an optional short walk through the forest to a nunnery before returning to Paro.

Accommodation: Kichu Resort, Paro BLD

Day 3 Tuesday 29th April Paro Region to Thimphu

We drive from Paro to Thimphu, the small capital “city” of Bhutan. We will be there by mid-morning and can visit the giant seated Buddha, which is on the edge of the forest above the town. After lunch, there are various unique sights to visit in this fascinating city, including the magnificent dzong.

Accommodation: Drugyal Twin Tower Hotel BLD

Day 4 Wednesday 30th April Thimphu - Wangdue Phrodrang - Chuzomza

Today we will drive from Thimphu to Wangdue Phrodrang. Along the way, we will stop on top of the Dochu La (3400m) to look out at the 108 chortens. On a clear day, you can see the entire Bhutan Himalayan range from here. Down the other side, we will spend some time in the Royal Botanical Gardens for a great display of native plants and trees. They are also a haven for bird and animal life. We will enjoy lunch at the restaurant before dropping down to the Punakha Valley to visit the famous and magnificent Punakha Dzong. We will then drive a short way up the Dang Chhu Valley to our idyllic accommodation on the banks of the river, an excellent area for birding and animal spotting opportunities.

Accommodation: Kichu Resort, Chuzomza BLD

Day 5 Thursday 1 May Chuzomza to Phobjika

We will drive up towards the Pele La pass (3400m) looking for wildlife on the way. Just before the pass we turn off south into the beautiful Phobjika valley and to the small village of Gangtey. We will have lunch here and check into the newly constructed Kichu Resort Hotel.

Accommodation: Kichu Resort, Phobjika BLD

Day 6 Friday 2 May Phobjika to Trongsa

Today, we continue driving east over the Pele La (3400m) and down to the small town of Trongsa, which has the largest dzong in Bhutan. On the way, we will have many opportunities to look for birds and plants. If we have time, we will also visit the dzong and museum (or we can do it on our return).

Accommodation: Yangkhill / Norbulingka Resort, Trongsa BLD

Day 7 Saturday 3 May Trongsa to Tingtibi

Today, we start our three-day adventure off the beaten track by driving down a minor road above the actual left bank of the Mangde Chhu River (which lies at the bottom of a deep gorge) and into a sub-tropical region of the country in the Royal Manas National Park. This area is rich in birdlife and is home to the endangered golden langur. We will be driving for about five hours in total.

Accommodation: T.Wang Hotel, Tingtibi BLD

Included

- All transfers and transportation;
- 2 crew members - Coates Wildlife Tours escort and a local English speaking guide;
- Return Bhutan Airlines flights from Bangkok to Paro;
- Bhutan visa fees, taxes and permits;
- Bhutan accommodation with all meals;
- Sightseeing with entrance fees;
- Tips and Gratuities for our Bus Driver and Local Bhutanese Guide.

Not Included

- Tips and gratuities to local staff other than our driver and local guide;
- Alcoholic, carbonated & any other beverages in hotels;
- Travel insurance (very strongly recommended);
- Travel expenses to and from Bangkok;
- Pre and post tour accommodation in Bangkok;
- All other private expenses (e.g. laundry, telephone calls, camera batteries);
- Entrance fees or activity costs other than those included above.

Tour Costs

Cost: **USD \$8,770.00** Per Person Twin Share
USD \$ 550.00 Single Supplement

Tour

Departs: Bangkok 27 April 2025
Finishes: Bangkok 10 May 2025

Max No. Of Participants: 12 passengers

Prices have been based on all known costs and current rates of exchange. Any significant changes beyond our control will be passed on to passengers.

Tour Payments

Deposit: At time of booking, **USD \$1,500.00** per person

Final Payment: 90 days before departure; 27 January 2025

Note: The deposit is non refundable and the final payment is non refundable if cancelled within 90 days of the departure date. All cancellations must be made in writing and delivered to Coates Wildlife Tours at the following address: P.O. Box 1208 Booragoon, WA 6954. You may also email to info@coateswildlifetours.com.au

We strongly recommend purchasing travel insurance to help protect you and your travel investment.

Tour Information

Local Naturalist Guide:

Dhendup

Vehicle:

Toyota Coaster Bus or similar.

Accommodation:

Hotels, Resorts and Forest Lodges with private facilities.

NOTE: Please be aware that some of the forest lodges have been chosen for their location and they may not all have western styled toilets.

Meals:

Meals are included as per the itinerary. Most special dietary requirements can be catered for with plenty of prior notice. Please advise of any special requirements at the time of booking. A surcharge may apply.

Trek Grading:

Moderate. Most serious walks such as Takstang (Tiger's Lair) are optional. If you cannot walk, a driver and transport will be on standby to take you around and show you other sites. Other walks are quite easy and only a reasonable level of fitness is required. All the walks can be avoided if you do not feel like participating. Overall, one must be able to walk about 1-2 hours a day to get maximum enjoyment out of the trip.

Weather:

Spring is the ideal time to explore Bhutan. You can expect clear blue skies and mild temperatures. The days are mainly warm and the nights cool, with maximum temperatures around 23 degrees Celsius, and minimum temperatures around 10 degrees Celsius.

Clothing:

A suggested list of items to bring on tour will be included with our pre-departure information sent to you about one month prior to departure. However in general, due to the wide range of temperature and conditions we recommend that you bring appropriate clothing for the cold and rain.

Clothing made of natural fibres are more comfortable as they allow the body to breathe. It is considered offensive to the Bhutanese people to wear skimpy or tight-fitting clothes.

Although there may be opportunities to wear shorts, we would recommend that women wear skirts or loose trousers. Men should not wear singlets. Trousers, long-sleeved shirts or jackets should be worn when visiting religious sites and dzongs. Sturdy and comfortable walking shoes or boots are essential.

Passport & Visas:

A visa is required for Bhutan however this is arranged for the group by our operator in Bhutan. They will send us the visa a couple weeks prior to the start date of the trip.

Please note: As the group is travelling on the same visa the entire group will need to be checked onto the Bangkok to Paro flight at the same time.

Health & Vaccinations:

There are no statutory requirements unless you are arriving from an area designated as infected by cholera or yellow fever. We recommend vaccinations against typhoid, tetanus, polio and hepatitis A.

Please consult your doctor or vaccination centre for up-to-date information. If you are on any prescribed medication, ensure that you bring a sufficient supply with you. As Bhutan is a remote country, we advise that all travellers with a pre-existing condition consult their doctor about their travel plans.

Travel Insurance:

We strongly recommend that you have cancellation, medical and personal accident insurance covering repatriation costs, air ambulance and helicopter rescue services. Please ensure that your policy provides a sufficient level of protection and covers you for your trip to Bhutan and pre and past tour travel arrangements.

For detailed **Terms and Conditions**, please visit the [FAQ page](#) on our website.



To make a booking or for further information please contact
Tom or Sylvia Grove at Coates Wildlife Tours

P.O. Box 1208

Booragoon, WA 6964

Phone: 08 9330 6066 Free Call Country & Interstate: 1800 676 016

Email: info@coateswildlifetours.com.au Web: www.coateswildlifetours.com.au

