



"The Grande Dame" of Women's
Adventure Travel Since 1982

2009 ~ Celebrating 27 Years!

DATES

October 17-30, 2009

COST

\$5,295 from Bangkok, Thailand. Internal air:
\$789 round trip from Bangkok to Paro, Bhutan
(\$800 deposit)

RATING

Moderate

ACTIVITIES

Hiking, Cultural Exploration, Buddhism 101,
Natural History, Sightseeing, Humanitarian
Projects, Wildlife Viewing, Birding, Photography

MAIN ATTRACTIONS

- Explore a country where Buddhism permeates all strands of cultural, ethical, and secular life.
- "Give back" as you participate in three humanitarian projects in Bhutan: donating blankets and/or clothes to a Buddhist nunnery or monastery; sponsoring and attending a special prayer ceremony at a sacred temple; donating reading glasses to women weavers.
- Visit Haa, only recently opened to tourists, and stay 2 nights in an elegant tented camp.
- Allow for the "magic" of spontaneous and unplanned activities in Bhutan—festivals, ceremonies, rituals—and be treated to events experienced by few visitors to this unique and special destination.
- End our stay with 2 nights at a new luxury hotel, handcrafted in traditional Bhutanese-style architecture, combining fine Bhutanese hospitality with 21st-century technology.

AdventureWomen is the oldest
adventure travel company for
active women over 30.

BHUTAN CULTURAL AND HUMANITARIAN ADVENTURE

Buddhism 101

A visit to the tiny Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan may become one of the most remarkable travel experiences of your life!

Tucked into the eastern Himalayas between China and India, the Buddhist kingdom of Bhutan is a modern-day Shangri-La of awesome beauty and friendly people. Culturally and spiritually, it is a profoundly rich country where human relations and Buddhist beliefs outweigh economic indicators—where "gross national happiness" is promoted by the King of Bhutan as a measure of his enchanting country's progress.

Bhutan, "Land of the Thunder Dragon," had a cautious approach to tourism in the past, but has recently opened its doors a little wider. AdventureWomen is fortunate to have the opportunity to explore this peaceful nation, just half the size of Indiana, on a customized 12-day adventure that incorporates more than just sightseeing, hiking, and visiting monasteries.

Bhutan's Buddhist faith permeates all strands of cultural, ethical, and secular life, bringing with it a reverence for Bhutanese society, the environment, and the land. Buddhists believe in preserving nature and giving more back to the earth and the culture than one has taken. So as part of our customized itinerary, we have the opportunity and privilege to "give back" to the people of Bhutan with three special humanitarian projects that we have integrated into our adventure.

- On our 2006 and 2008 trip, we walked to an isolated nunnery, the home of 50 nuns who practice meditation and other Buddhist principles, and donated much needed clothing and blankets. For our 2009 trip, we will again visit this nunnery and bring donations.
- By special invitation, AdventureWomen will sponsor and attend a Buddhist prayer ceremony at a monastery where nuns and monks practice. The ceremony offers prayers and blessings to benefit all beings, and we are fortunate to sponsor this VERY special event. Sharing lunch with the Lama, monks, and nuns who perform the prayer ceremony, we then have a rare chance to receive another special blessing and introductory teachings on Buddhism from the Lama.
- Our last project is to bring 5 or 6 pairs of reading eyeglasses, in various magnifications, to donate to people in remote villages in eastern Bhutan. The Bhutanese people in central and western Bhutan can afford to buy reading glasses from stores in Thimphu, but the people in the east cannot. Women in particular, use these glasses to help create the intricate weavings so important in Bhutanese culture. The weavings not only support their families, but continue their Bhutanese handicraft traditions.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THIS TRIP

- 12 days /11 nights in Bhutan in the best available hotels and guesthouses on a double occupancy basis with private baths. For 2 nights camping, we're in comfortable walk-in cottage tents, with sleeping bags on cots and a magnificent Bhutanese traditional center tent for dining and multi-purpose activities. Toilet tents and hot shower facilities are available.
- All meals and sightseeing from our arrival to our departure in Bhutan.
- All ground transportation in comfortable coaster buses, minivans, or 4WD SUVs between overnight destinations.
- Entrance fees to sights and monasteries.
- Bhutan visa and visa fee.
- All donation fees for three humanitarian projects.
- The services of knowledgeable, English-speaking local guides.
- One AdventureWomen trip escort.

NOT INCLUDED

- Round-trip airfare from your hometown to Bangkok, Thailand.
- Round-trip airfare from Bangkok to Paro, Bhutan, which is arranged by our outfitter. As of July 2008, the total cost was \$789.
- Gratuities for national guide, local guides, and drivers. We recommend \$5/person/day for both national and local guides, \$3/person/day for drivers, and \$0.50-\$1.00 for hotel baggage handlers.

Throughout our journey we are immersed in the culture, history, and Buddhist practices of the country, visiting the Bhutanese people in their traditional pastoral hamlets, where they live much the same as they always have. We are welcomed with warmth and hospitality as we walk to traditional monasteries and awesome dzongs—originally built as fortresses during the Middle Ages—which today function as the center of both religious and secular activities. From the colorful, patterned weavings of Thimphu, to dramatic sweeping vistas of the snow-capped Himalayas, our adventure celebrates the breathtaking beauty of this peaceful realm.

For two nights we stay in an elegant tented camp in an area of the country that has remained off limits to tourists until only a few years ago. During the remainder of our trip we stay in comfortable resorts, guesthouses, and hotels, ending with two luxurious nights at a new hotel, beautifully handcrafted in Bhutanese traditional style.

Although we have a day-by-day itinerary, much of the magic in Bhutan happens spontaneously, so we watch for festivals, ceremonies, and rituals. Flexibility allows us to take advantage of opportunities to participate in authentic and unplanned cultural events as they present themselves. Through our planned and unplanned activities, we are treated to events experienced by few visitors to Bhutan.

You are invited to join AdventureWomen on a travel adventure like no other. You feel like you have seen Bhutan through the eyes of its people, and you leave with a deep respect for the country's rich culture. We welcome and look forward to your participation.

HOW TO REGISTER

First, call (800-804-8686) or email (advwomen@women.com) the AdventureWomen office to determine space availability. We will hold a space for you for 5 days while you complete the application process, and make personal and travel arrangements.

Next, complete and sign the Trip Application form included in all of our brochures. We can also fax or mail one to you, or you can get the Trip Application form on our Web site by clicking "Book Now" on our home page. Include with the application the required deposit that can be made by credit card (Visa or MasterCard), personal check, money order, or cashier's check. You can also register over the phone with a credit card. Once we receive your deposit and trip application, we will mail you a package of information verifying your registration. call our travel consultants at Montana Travel, 800-247-3538, and ask for Ciretta to make your airline reservations.

Then, call our travel consultants at Montana Travel, 800-247-3538, and ask for Ciretta to make your airline reservations.

Note: We will only hold your space for 5 days without a trip application and deposit payment!

LIABILITY FORM AND FINAL PAYMENT

Part of what ADVENTUREWOMEN, INC. hopes to foster is the taking of more self-responsibility for our own lives, health, and safety. Please read the LIABILITY FORM carefully, sign it, and return it with the remainder of your balance due by JULY 20, 2009.

CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS

Notification of cancellations must be received in writing. Full payment is due 90 days prior to departure date, and 50% of the registration deposit is non-refundable.

For cancellations received 60-89 days prior to the trip departure date: 50% of the total trip cost is non-refundable. For cancellations received 1-59 days prior to the trip departure date: 100% of the total trip cost is non-refundable.

You are highly encouraged to purchase trip cancellation insurance to cover emergency situations. Information will be sent to you in your registration packet.

SWITCHING TRIPS

Before your final balance due date, you may change your deposit to another trip within the same calendar year by paying a \$75 fee to switch. You may not switch your deposit to a trip in another calendar year.

NO SMOKING POLICY

Beginning in 1995, our trips became smoke free. Please note that there will be no smoking by any participants on AdventureWomen vacations.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS AND HEALTH REQUIREMENTS, AND HEALTH INSURANCE

Citizens of the United States must possess a valid passport, which must be valid 6 months beyond your intended stay in Bhutan. If you do NOT have a passport, GET IT NOW! Please don't wait until the last minute. You should always carry 2 extra passport photographs with you in case of emergency (if your passport is stolen or lost.)

You will need a visa to travel into Bhutan, and we will ask for the necessary information at a later date. Visas are not issued in the U.S., and AdventureWomen will pay for, and apply for, individual visas through our outfitter in Bhutan.

No special inoculations are required for travel to Bhutan, but you should be up-to-date on all vaccinations such as tetanus, typhoid, and hepatitis A and B.

This trip is rated as **MODERATE**. While hiking is not extremely strenuous, you must be fit and in very good health. You should be able to walk/hike 5-8 miles at altitudes up to 10,000 feet, in hilly terrain and on rocky paths on day hikes, be able to climb flights of stairs to monasteries, and walk on sightseeing tours within the villages and cities.

You must have your own health insurance, and not have any physical problems or conditions that would be adversely affected by walking at higher altitudes and the rigors of international travel.

MONEY

Bhutan's unit of currency is the Ngultrum, which is at par with the Indian Rupee, also a legal tender in Bhutan. You can check the following website to find out the current rate of exchange: <http://money.cnn.com/markets/currencies>

Only Visa credit cards (not MC or American Express) are accepted in shops and hotels in Bhutan. Cash can be exchanged at the airport, larger hotels, and banks. Therefore, it is probably easiest to bring U.S. cash to Bhutan, and not travelers checks.

In Bangkok, Thailand, you can pay for most anything with any credit card. If you have a long layover in the Bangkok Airport, you may want to exchange a small amount of U.S. money into Thai money for incidentals at the airport.

FOOD/MEALS

Although Bhutan is not the culinary capital of Asia, you WILL eat well on this trip. Our hotels and restaurants offer delicious Chinese, Continental, Bhutanese, and Indian Cuisine.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

Language

Dzongkha, which is similar to Tibetan, is the official language, but a growing proportion of the people speak English. Children are taught English as part of their education. Throughout the country, signs, books, menus, road signs, and even government official documents are written in both Dzongkha and English.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION
ABOUT TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS**

We suggest you book your air reservations with our travel consultant EARLY and soon after registering for this trip!

On this AdventureWomen BHUTAN ADVENTURE, airfare to Bangkok and Paro is not included in the total trip price. However, in order to facilitate our round trip air flights from Bangkok to Paro, Bhutan (we meet in Bangkok to fly as a group to Paro, Bhutan) we ask that you work directly with our travel consultants at MONTANA TRAVEL to make your travel arrangements. Korean Air offers one of the best schedules to Bangkok and to our round-trip connecting flights to Paro, Bhutan.

We must fly as a group from Bangkok to Paro, Bhutan, because our outfitter must arrange all of the visas and flights into and out of Bhutan. The country of Bhutan limits the number of tourists who travel there—only 20,000 are allowed per year—and all tourists must be sponsored by an outfitter.

Our flight from Bangkok to Paro, Bhutan, will depart at approximately 5 AM on October 19th. We return to Bangkok from Bhutan on October 30 by approximately 5:30 PM.

After booking your trip, please contact CIRETTA at MONTANA TRAVEL, in Bozeman, Montana, to discuss your air options for getting to Bangkok, from either the west coast or the east coast.

1-800-247-3538
OR FAX 1-406-586-1959
email: ciretta@mttravel.com
CANADIAN RESIDENTS,
please call 406-587-1188

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Special Gifts to Monks and Caretakers at Monasteries

Each participant is encouraged to bring 2-3 pair of woolen socks. Socks can be given as a “group gift” to monks at all the special temples that we visit. Unlike the large monasteries, most of the smaller sacred temples that we visit have just one or two caretaker monks.

You may also leave some of your used clothing and personal items like warm jackets, T-shirts, socks, shoes, and other things that you do not wish to carry home.

Electricity

The voltage in Bhutan is the same as in India, Thailand, and Nepal: 230V, 50 cycles alternating current (AC). To use your U.S. electric-powered equipment, bring a converter and an adapter. Wall outlets take either two flat prongs, like outlets in the United States, or Continental-type plugs, with two round prongs. There are plenty of electrical shops in Thimphu that can make an adapter if you have trouble plugging in an appliance.

Make sure you bring extra batteries and memory cards for your digital cameras, because you cannot count on charging batteries at each hotel.

THE EXCITING ITINERARY FOR OUR BHUTAN CULTURAL AND HUMANITARIAN ADVENTURE - BUDDHISM 101

DAYS 1-2, Saturday and Sunday, October 17 - 18, 2009 USA to Bangkok

If you are flying from the west coast of the U.S., you depart on October 17. Losing one day due to crossing the International Date Line, you arrive in Bangkok late October 18 or early October 19. Other departure cities on the east coast may vary regarding flight times.

DAY 3, Monday, October 19 Bangkok to Paro, Bhutan

Very early this morning we proceed to check in with Druk Air at the Bangkok airport. Our flight from Bangkok to Paro is spectacular, and if we are lucky, we have glorious views of the snow-capped Himalayas. Our route flies over eight of the ten tallest peaks in the world including Mount Everest, Kanchanjunga, and Mount Makalu. The remarkable and steep descent into the Paro Valley (altitude, 7,400 feet) is an awe-inspiring beginning to our adventure, and already you feel the pace of life slow down.

After visa formalities and collecting our luggage, we check in to our nearby hotel in Paro. In the afternoon, we have a brief orientation meeting before visiting the Rinpung Dzong (Paro Dzong), which means “the fortress of the heap of jewels.” This complex houses the administrative and religious headquarters for the Paro district. A part of Bernardo Bertolucci’s movie, “Little Buddha,” was filmed inside this dzong.

The remainder of the afternoon is free to relax and get acclimated to the 7,400-foot elevation.

Overnight Paro Kichu Resort or similar.

THE EARLIER YOU ARRANGE YOUR AIR SCHEDULE, THE MORE OPTIONS YOU WILL HAVE!

When calling, please identify yourself as an AdventureWomen traveler. If you leave a message on Ciretta's voice mail or email, she will return your call or email promptly. She will be happy to discuss your travel plans and help you decide when to purchase your ticket for the best rate. If you purchase your ticket through her, she can also help you with hotels and other arrangements, should you want to come early to Bangkok, or extend your trip.

This beautiful resort is located on nine acres next to the Paro Chu River and offers picturesque views from the hotel.

DAYS 4-5, Tuesday and Wednesday, October 20 - 21 *Haa and Hike to a Buddhist Nunnery*

Leaving Paro we travel west to Haa, one of the most magnificent and pristine provinces in Bhutan. The Haa Valley is situated in western Bhutan at an elevation of approximately 9000 feet. Very close to Tibet, Haa has remained off-limits to tourists until only a few years ago. We are fortunate to be able to visit this area.

The road into the Haa Valley climbs slowly, crossing the Chelela Pass and winding through quaint villages and thick conifer forests before opening onto a valley dotted with fields of millet, barley, potatoes, and wheat. The farmhouses are adorned with intricately painted cornices and frames. From one of the highest passes attainable by road (12,400 ft.), we have a spectacular view of Mount Jumolhari (24,000 ft.), one of the most sacred mountain peaks of Bhutan.

From the pass we take a beautiful hike to an isolated nunnery, home to 50 nuns who practice meditation and other Buddhist principles. On our

2006 trip we donated much-needed clothing and blankets to the nuns who live here. You are able to talk with these nuns and see the robes that we had specially made for them.

In addition to wonderful scenery, Haa has some very old gompas (monasteries) and lhakhangs (temples) which we visit during our two-day stay here.

Our accommodations for the next two nights are in a Bhutanese-style deluxe tented camp at a beautiful campsite consisting of large, two-person tents and a lovely handmade Bhutanese tent for meals and group activities. We are supplied with sleeping bags on cots and comfortable toilet and shower tents complete with hot water.

Overnight Tented Camp

DAY 6, Thursday, October 22 *From Haa to Punakha (4,500 feet)*

This morning's drive has extraordinary views! The scenery includes dense forests of pine and oak, buckwheat and mustard fields, and meadows full of colorful wildflowers, gushing waterfalls, and traditional villages. On our way to Punakha, today's destination, the road continues to climb, passing chortens (stupas) and prayer flags before heading up to Dochula Pass at 10,000 feet. Here we see 108 special chortens (stupas) surrounded by thousands of prayer flags dedicated to the Kingdom's Peace and Gross National Happiness.

In Bhutan, prayer flags on mountain slopes, bridges, and high passes transmit prayers to the Gods and keep up a constant communication with the heavens. A small teahouse near the pass houses a pair of 200-power binoculars donated by a Japanese expedition that climbed Masa Gang on the Tibetan border. If the weather is clear, we can look through these binoculars and view the entire range of the Bhutan Himalaya.

From the Pass, we drive through beautiful rhododendron and magnolia forests. Bhutan's ecosystem harbors some of the most exotic species of flowering plants in the Eastern Himalayas, with over 2,000 varieties including 50 species of rhododendron. This area is also wonderful for bird watching. Bhutan has a stunning 770 species of birds, including many that are globally threatened.

Bhutan has been identified as one of the ten most important bio-diversity hot spots in the world. A bio-diversity "hot spot" is a place that constitutes less than two percent of the globe's surface area but contains more than 50 percent of its bio-diversity.

Overnight Meri Puensum Resort or similar (Kichu Resort, on the banks of a beautiful river).

For the next two nights we stay at the Meri Puensum Resort in Punakha. Built in 1999, the hotel hugs a steep hillside and its spacious rooms overlook the rice terraces of the Punaka Valley. Decorated with colorful flower

boxes, it has a large stone patio and cozy dining room, and is cheerfully run by the retired governor of the Punakha district.

DAY 7, Friday, October 23 Punakha Dzong (altitude 5,500 feet)

This morning we will visit the magnificent Punakha Dzong, the "Palace of Great Happiness," built in 1647 by Shabdrung Nawang Namgyel, the man who unified Bhutan. The Dzong lies near the confluence of the Fo Chu (male river) and the Mo Chu (female river), and is the winter home of the Central Monk Body. It is believed that the Mo Chu and the Fo Chu were once lovers, flowing in the same bed. One evening, after a quarrel, the Mo Chu silently left during the night and moved to the next valley. Since that time, the Fo Chu has been rushing down to the confluence, trying to catch his estranged lover.

When the Shabdrung arrived in Punakha, he set up camp at the confluence of the two rivers. That night he had a dream in which he heard the prophecy of Guru Rinpoche, the second Buddha and the founder of Tantric Buddhism. The prophecy said to build a dzong, and Shabdrung placed the Rangjung Kharsapani, the most sacred relic that he brought with him from his monastery in Tibet, on that spot.

A devastating flash flood in 1994 washed away a major part of the dzong. His Majesty the King personally supervised its reconstruction, a project that has occupied thousands of skilled craftsmen and builders during the past twelve years. The results of the restoration are amazing. You see the most magnificent architectural and artistic masterpiece in the Kingdom, which was completed and consecrated in an elaborate ceremony in May of 2003.

After lunch we have an optional hike to Khamsum Yuley Lhakhang, through beautiful rice paddy fields and past traditional farmhouses. A visit here is a good introduction to Tantric Buddhism in all its complexities. Containing some of the best Tantric art in Bhutan, we are able to compare this art with the more traditional Buddhist statuary and wall paintings that we saw at the Punakha Dzong. The shapes and forms of the Tantric statues may surprise most visitors. The terrifying divinities are manifestations of peaceful gods, which assume these forms to subdue evil spirits that are hostile to Buddhist doctrine. The nudity of most of the deities shows that this world's conventions are of no importance on higher planes, and the persons being crushed by the wrathful deities are either spirits hostile to Buddhism or primordial negative concepts such as ignorance, jealousy, and anger. In Tantric Buddhism, numerous statues and paintings are also in the form of sexual union, which represents the

union of compassion and wisdom that permits the attainment of a sublime state of enlightenment.

Overnight Meri Puensum Resort or similar.

Day 8, Saturday, October 24 Phobjikha and Black-Necked Cranes (altitude 9,800 feet)

From the village of Lobesa we hike to visit the Chimmi Lhakhang, a temple dedicated to Drukpa Kuenley, who is a favorite saint of the Bhutanese people, affectionately known as "the Divine Madman." The temple sits on a hillside in the middle of rice fields and has become a pilgrimage site for childless couples.

After Chimmi Lhakhang, we travel to the hidden valley of Phobjikha, a glacial valley on the western slopes of the Black Mountains. The valley is a designated conservation area and borders the Black Mountains National Park. Due to the large flock of rare and endangered Black-necked Cranes that winter here, it is one of the most important wildlife preserves in the country. The cranes migrate from Tibet to Bhutan and use the swampy center of the Phobjikha Valley as their winter residence from mid-November to mid-March. If we are lucky, some of the "earlybirds" from Tibet may have already arrived!

A beautiful valley, Phobjikha is surrounded by mountains with rhododendron, pine, and dwarf bamboo, a favorite food of the yaks that also live at this high altitude.

For the next two nights we stay in the new Hotel Dewachen, located in the hidden valley of Phobjikha – Gantey Gompa. Encircled by pine forests and above the valley of the very rare Black-necked Cranes, the Dewachen Hotel features sixteen double rooms, modern bathrooms, great beds, a restaurant with a magnificent view, and cuisine prepared by a professional chef. You can take a traditional hot stone bath to unwind at the end of the day (rocks are heated in a bonfire and then put into the bathwater of a "hot tub"). Hot water bottles are supplied to warm your beds at night, and there is no electricity after 9 PM (a rather nice aspect to experience)!

Overnight Hotel Dewachen

DAY 9, Sunday, October 25 Wangdi and Gantey Gompa (altitude 5,500 feet)

This morning we may have a chance to visit a nearby village school. Then we hike through the beautiful Wangdi Valley, passing clusters of traditional houses on our way to visit the famous Gantey Gompa. The oldest and largest Nyingma Buddhist monastery in Bhutan, Gantey Gompa is perched on a ridge with

panoramic views of the landscape below. It is directed by Gantey Tulku, the ninth reincarnation of Pema Lingpa (a "tulku" is a reincarnated person), who is a famous Buddhist saint and teacher. The monastery recently completed its million dollar renovation, and we may have a chance to visit one of its temples.

Late afternoon we visit the Crane Information Center and a local weaving shop.

Overnight Hotel Dewachen

DAY 10, Monday, October 26 *The Capital City of Thimphu (altitude 7,700 feet)*

After breakfast at the hotel we drive to Thimphu, the only capital city in the world with no traffic lights! Arriving in Thimphu, we settle into our hotel and have the rest of the afternoon free to relax.

Tonight we stay at the River View Hotel, the first hotel built in Bhutan using past and present traditional architecture. One of the finest properties in town, River View Hotel Thimphu is ideally located along the banks of the Wangchu River and above the east bank of Thimphu Chuu River. The hotel offers 50 well-appointed rooms, all with private balconies and a view of Thimphu, the river, and the mountains. The atmosphere is serene, the staff pleasant and friendly, and the location is stunning.

Overnight River View Hotel or similar

DAY 11, Tuesday, October 27 *Thimphu and Special Prayer Ceremony*

Today is packed with activities! For our second humanitarian project, we sponsor and attend a prayer ceremony at a local monastery, recently built by a Tibetan community under the auspices of the Rinpoche, one of the most revered Buddhist teachers in Bhutan. The ceremony offers prayers and blessings to benefit all humankind, and we are fortunate to sponsor this VERY special event. Sharing lunch with the monks and nuns who perform the prayer ceremony, we then have a rare chance to receive another special blessing and introductory teachings on Buddhism from the Lama. This unique aspect to the trip is RARELY experienced by visitors to the region.

For the remainder of the day, we explore Thimphu. There are a number of options from which we can choose:

- A visit to the Farmer's Weekend Market where Thimphu residents mingle with villagers in an interesting urban and rural blend.
- A visit to the Takin Preserve for a chance to see the takin, Bhutan's national animal. The takin is an interesting animal that resembles a cross between a

gnu (African wildebeest) and a musk deer. It has a large head and a thick neck.

- A Bhutanese archery game, Bhutan's national sport and an integral part of all festivities. The game is played using two painted wooden targets, 12 inches by 47 inches, which are placed at each end of a range, 120 meters apart. When an arrow hits the target, the archer's teammates sing and perform a celebratory dance. During major competitions, women dance and sing, extolling their own team while teasing and mocking their adversaries, trying to make them lose their concentration.

- Thimphu also has a number of interesting handicrafts shops that sell silk weaving, masks, woodcarving, jewelry, and other handmade items..

- The General Post Office sells Bhutan's world famous stamps.

This evening, we attend a traditional Bhutanese banquet with local Bhutanese friends who want to hear about our adventures and answer any questions we may have about Bhutan, the culture, Buddhism, or its people. Musicians and dancers provide entertainment, and we may reciprocate with a few of our own American songs and dances!

Overnight Hotel River View

DAY 12, Wednesday, October 28 *Paro and the Magical "Tiger's Nest"*

After breakfast we return to Paro for our last two nights in the Dragon Kingdom.

Once in Paro we have the option to hike to the very famous and magical monastery known as Taktsang (the "Tiger's Nest"), one of the most sacred pilgrimage sites in the Buddhist Himalayan World. The monastery itself is perched high on a granite cliff that drops 2,000 feet to the valley floor. Its name is derived from a legend that tells how Guru Rinpoche flew across the mountains to this spot on the back of a tigress, reaching a cave in which he meditated for three months, converting the people of the Paro Valley to Buddhism during his stay.

The path takes us through a forest of oak, blue pine, and rhododendron to a small chorten surrounded by prayer flags. Walking further we reach a teahouse, our lunch stop, with a spectacular view of the Taktsang temples.

This afternoon we check in to our hotel, one of the most luxurious new hotels built in Bhutan in the past two years. It is truly a work of art, and a fabulous way to end our time in Bhutan.

Overnight Hotel Zhiwaling

**ABOUT ADVENTURE
TRAVEL TODAY
Please Read Carefully!**

At AdventureWomen, we would like to ensure that all participants understand that our excursions are *adventure travel vacations*, and not “tours.” We define “adventure travel” as travel in which one *actively participates*, as opposed to a “tour,” in which one is more or less a passive observer. AdventureWomen designs and organizes vacations all over the world for women who want to experience an *active, out of the ordinary vacation, and meet new friends*. Most of all, we want our trips to be fun!

In this spirit, the successful adventure traveler should be a *good-natured realist* and have a sense of humor! *Adventure vacations, by nature, require that participants be self-sufficient, flexible, and able to accept situations as they exist, and not just as they would have preferred or expected them to exist.* The constraints of scheduled group traveling also necessitate that each of us be understanding of and sensitive to others. *Being on time is important, and contributes to the congeniality, success and well being of both individuals and the group!*

For the next two nights we stay at the 45-room Hotel Zhiwaling (“Place of Peace”), which combines fine Bhutanese hospitality with the best of 21st-century technology. Envisioned and built by a local Bhutanese company, the hotel’s elaborate hand-carved wooden cornices and masterful stonework co-exist beautifully with technology. The hotel includes everything from radiant floor heat to a cutting-edge telecommunications system.

DAY 13, Thursday, October 29 Full Day of Relaxation at the Luxury Hotel Zhiwaling

Today you have time for last-minute shopping, sightseeing, packing, and to enjoy your luxury hotel for one more night.

The hotel’s spa offers all the amenities of a modern fitness center: sauna, steam room, gym, and a traditional Bhutanese stone bath. There is a business center, tea house, conference room, and a meditation house. One of the restaurants offers contemporary international cuisine and the other, classic Bhutanese dishes. For after-hours fun, everyone gathers at the Mad Monk Bar.

The crowning glory of this new, ten-acre cultural landmark in the quiet Paro Valley is the temple built into the second floor of the hotel. Honoring the spiritual heritage of this ancient Buddhist Kingdom, the temple was built with 450-year old timbers from the famous Gangtey Monastery.

Overnight Hotel Zhiwaling

DAY 14, Friday, October 30 Paro to Bangkok

This morning we transfer to the airport for our departure from the Land of the Thunder Dragon and our return to Bangkok by late afternoon.

If you have a late evening flight back to the U.S., you will most likely have plenty of time between flights. If you want a more relaxed schedule, you might consider staying overnight at the very comfortable Novotel Suvarnabhumi Airport Hotel, a 4 star hotel only a 10 minute walk (or free shuttle) from Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok. Boasting 612 comfortable and contemporary rooms, the hotel also offers 2 bars and 4 restaurants. With a 24 hour airport shuttle every 10

minutes from Gate 4 Level 2, there is no better place to stay. Having sampled their restaurants and rooms, AdventureWomen can highly recommend BOTH for a “transition” night between long flights!

999 Suvarnabhumi Airport Hotel
Moo 1 Nongprue Bang Phli
Samutprakarn
10540 BANGKOK
THAILAND
Tel (+66)2/1311111
Fax (+66)2/1311188
E-mail: reservation@novotelsuvarnabhumi.com

OR, you may choose to stay in Bangkok for more adventures on your own! It’s a very interesting and fun city, and there are some great hotels to choose from. Ciretta at Montana Travel can help you with that.

Tashi delek! (Good Luck/Best Wishes!)

DAY 15, Saturday, October 31 Bangkok to Los Angeles

If you took a late evening flight from Bangkok on October 30, you arrive back home on October 31.

WHAT TO BRING

Due to the variety of climates we encounter in any one day, you should pack for "layering." This means that you can put on more clothing if it is cold or take off layers as it warms up. October is a wonderful month to travel in Bhutan, with warm days and crisp, cool (and sometimes cold!) nights.

We recommend you take a duffle bag with wheels, or a soft-sided suitcase. Also bring an empty duffle so that if you buy artifacts or weavings, you have an extra bag to pack them into.

We also suggest you use your daypack as your carry-on bag for our flight to Bhutan. In addition to your passport, money, credit cards, and airline tickets, your daypack should contain all essential personal items: toiletries, medications, one set of clothing, camera and accessories, etc. You should wear (or carry in your carry-on bag) the comfortable lightweight boots that you will use for walking.

Clothes

Choose pants and shirts that can be used for outdoor activities as well as in a more formal place like a dzong or a monastery. The new low maintenance and wrinkle resistant fabrics are great (see the TravelSmith catalog that we enclose in your registration packet).

- Lightweight hiking boots, well broken-in. Please do not buy heavy, leather boots as there are numerous, light- and medium-weight, high-quality hiking boots on the market. Asolo, Garmont, Merrill, Vasque, and other makes are widely available and designed especially for women. Since they are waterproof, Gore-tex boots, although a bit more expensive, are our first choice. Other boots should be waterproofed with one of the excellent waterproofing products available such as Nikwax. **MAKE SURE** your boots fit properly and are well broken-in. Please do not come on this trip with a pair of boots you have never worn before.
- Pair of comfortable shoes and/or sport sandals, for relaxing in the evening.
- 3-4 pairs polypropylene liner socks, 3-4 pairs thick, natural fiber walking socks.
- 5-6 pairs quick drying underpants and a few bras (you will want to wash out bras and panties). See the TravelSmith catalog.
- 2-3 pairs comfortable, lightweight pants.
- A pair of long (hiking type) shorts. The locals do not appreciate short shorts.
- One pair of nicer pants or a skirt for our hotel stays.
- Swiss army knife or equivalent with scissors (make sure you pack this in your checked luggage, and not your carry-on).

- 3-4 cotton bandannas (for uses too numerous to mention. Anyway, it's an AdventureWomen tradition!).
- Field shirts: 2 long-sleeved, 2 short-sleeved, and a few T-shirts.
- Sweatshirt or sweater, lightweight polar fleece jacket, and lightweight down jacket.
- Lightweight long underwear (polypropylene) – top and bottom.
- Waterproof rain gear, jacket, and pants. Your rain jacket may double as an outer shell or windbreaker jacket to layer over your fleece jacket for cool weather at higher elevations.
- Sleepwear.
- Sun hat and swim suit.
- Extra shoe or boot laces.
- Hat for sun protection.
- Lightweight flashlight.
- Small travel alarm clock.
- Sun glasses.
- Water bottle. We recommend the 22 oz. Nalgene Everyday OTG Tritan Bottle. Made of Eastman Tritan™ copolyester, the bottle is completely BPA-free. Tritan™ copolyester provides excellent impact resistance and is suitable for both warm and cold beverages.
- Earplugs.
- Washcloth (sometimes not supplied.)

Humanitarian Projects and Gifts

- 5 or 6 pairs of reading eyeglasses, in various magnifications, to donate to people in remote villages of eastern Bhutan.
- 2-3 pairs of woolen socks, to be given as a "group gift" to monks and caretaker monks at the special temples we visit.

Personal Items

- Passport. Make sure it is valid for at least 6 months after returning from our trip.
- 2 spare passport photos (in case of lost passport.)
- Contact lenses, cleaner, saline solution, extra eyeglasses with safety band.
- Money belt/fanny pack.
- Cash, Visa credit card.
- Address book, writing paper, journal, pen/pencil.
- For film cameras: lots of film, lead bag or containers to protect film in airport x-ray machines.
- Digital cameras: extra batteries and memory cards, plus a battery charger.
- Locks for your suitcase/duffle bag.
- Ziploc-type bags (at least a dozen, of various sizes) for packing shampoo or other liquids, or wet, dirty washcloth.
- Personal toiletries in small leak-proof bottles.
- Biodegradable bar soap (can double as laundry soap.)
- Tampons or sanitary napkin supply.

(WHAT TO BRING—continued on page 10)

(WHAT TO BRING—continued from page 9)

- Kleenex in small packages (there is often not toilet paper in public toilets).
- Thread, needles, safety pins for minor repairs.
- Insect repellent (small.)
- Wash & Dries and/or antiseptic gel.
- Your favorite snacks for a “pick me up” during the day.
- Walking stick(s) that telescope and pack into your suitcase easily.

Personal First Aid Kit

- Regarding foot care: To prevent blisters, many hikers use moleskin. However, we recommend bringing a small roll of ordinary duct tape as an alternative. Applied when you feel a “hot spot” before the blister forms, duct tape reduces friction better than moleskin. If you develop a blister, Spenco “2nd Skin” is a very comforting necessity. Also bring foot powder for moisture absorption; cloth, not plastic Band Aids; about 10 individually wrapped alcohol pads; and a small tube of Neosporin or other antibiotic cream.
- Aspirin/ibuprofen, etc.
- Cold-symptom relief tablets, antihistamine, cough drops.
- Sun screen and lip balm with sunscreen.
- Tweezers, Band Aids.
- Ace bandage.
- Antibiotics.
- Prescription medicines in their original bottles.
- Acidophilus enzyme (available in capsules in health-food stores). This often helps your digestive system get in shape for “new” flora and fauna (eating yogurt does the same, however it is not always available).

- Immodium, Lomotil, or similar anti-diarrhea medicine.
- Pepto-Bismol tablets and/or liquid (in leak-proof bottle).

Optional

- Lightweight, small, binoculars.
- Pictures of your house and family (the Bhutanese people love to see this!)
- Reading material.

Pre-Departure Tasks

- Obtain or renew passport.
- Evaluate and obtain trip cancellation, baggage, and medical insurance.
- Consult with physician for updated vaccinations.
- Break in primary footwear.

Last-Minute Reminders

- Make photocopies of your airline tickets and the first two pages of your passport and put them in different locations (suitcase, carry-on bag, etc.)
- Record numbers of travelers checks (if you bring them) and store separate from the checks.
- Bring two additional photos to use in emergencies.
- Leave valuable jewelry and other valuables at home (don't wear expensive gold and diamond jewelry.)
- Make sure passport, tickets, and visas are valid and in the correct name.
- Check with airline to reconfirm reservations and departure time (most airlines want to hear directly from the client for confirmations.)

*Thank you for choosing to travel with AdventureWomen!
If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call, write or email us.*

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