



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

2014 ~ Celebrating 32 Years!

DATES

October 24 - November 7, 2014

COST

\$5,295 from Bangkok, Thailand (\$800 deposit)
plus \$940 round trip Druk Air ticket fee from
Bangkok to Paro, Bhutan. International air
from U.S. to Bangkok is priced separately.

RATING

Moderate

ACTIVITIES

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

MAIN ATTRACTIONS

- Explore a country where Buddhism permeates all strands of cultural, ethical, and secular life.
- Explore Bumthang in the central north of Bhutan, considered the spiritual heart of the country.
- Visit Gangtey Gonpa, recently restored by some of Bhutan's finest artisans, and one of the oldest monastery's in the country.
- 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.
- Hope for sightings of endangered Black-necked cranes in the Phobjikha Valley, IF they arrive on time from Tibet!
- Hike to Bhutan's most famous pilgrimage site, Taktsang Lhakhang (Tiger's Nest Temple).

(continued on pg. 2)

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

THE SPLENDORS OF BHUTAN: 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 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.

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.

From Thimphu to Punakha, Phobjikha to Trongsa, we also travel to Bumthang in northcentral Bhutan. Not many trips incorporate this very special region, considered the spiritual heart of Bhutan and an area of great historical and cultural importance, for it contains numerous sacred sites.

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.

ADVENTUREWOMEN, INC. | 300 RUNNING HORSE TRAIL | BOZEMAN, MT 59715
EMAIL: trips@adventurewomen.com | WEBSITE: www.adventurewomen.com
406-587-3883 | 800-804-8686 | 406-587-9449 FAX

MAIN ATTRACTIONS (Cont.)

- 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.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF YOUR BHUTAN TRIP

- 12 days /11 nights in Bhutan in the best available hotels and guesthouses on a double occupancy basis with private baths.
- Airport transfers on arrival into Paro and departure from Paro.
- All ground transportation in comfortable buses, minivans, or 4WD SUVs between overnight destinations.
- All meals and sightseeing from our arrival to our departure in Bhutan.
- Guided hikes throughout.
- Entrance fees to sights and monasteries.
- Bhutan visa and visa fee.
- The services of a knowledgeable, English-speaking national guide.
- One AdventureWomen Associate

NOT INCLUDED IN YOUR BHUTAN VACATION

- International roundtrip airfare from your hometown to Bangkok, Thailand.
- Round-trip airfare from Bangkok to Paro, Bhutan, which is arranged by our outfitter. As of September 2013 the total cost was \$940.
- Beverages and alcoholic beverages with meals.
- Passport fees.
- Any excess baggage charges levied by airlines.
- Laundry, other than specified and other items of a personal nature.
- Gratuities for main/national guide, local guides, and drivers.

We recommend:

- \$8/person/day for main guide;
- \$4/person/day for any local guide;
- \$4/person/day for drivers;
- \$1 for hotel baggage handlers.

TOTAL amounts of tips should be approximately \$200

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS TO BHUTAN**Druk Air flight from Bangkok, Thailand to Paro, Bhutan**

On this AdventureWomen BHUTAN vacation, roundtrip airfare from Bangkok, Thailand to Paro, Bhutan, MUST be bought and paid for at the time you register for this trip. We need to fly AS A GROUP on the national airline, DRUK AIR, due to the fact that our outfitter must arrange all of our visas and flights into and out of Bhutan. We can only pick up our visas at the airline ticket counter in Bangkok, as we check in for our Druk Air flight to Paro, Bhutan, early in the morning of Sunday, October 26, 2014.

When you register for this trip, in addition to the Trip Registration and International Passenger Information forms, and your \$800 deposit, we will also need you to send us a color scanned copy of the first two pages of your passport (valid at least 6 months from the day of our departure from Bhutan), plus \$940 for the airfare cost, roundtrip from Bangkok to Paro.

Upon registration, our outfitter will book your Druk Air reservation. Airline tickets on Druk Air need to be purchased well in advance because this is the ONLY airline that flies into Bhutan, and seats are limited. Hence, the airline requires payment at that time to secure your reservation. (Please see below for *Druk Air cancellation policies, round trip Bangkok, Thailand – Paro, Bhutan).

*Druk Air cancellation policy (for peak season of May, Apr., Sept., Oct., Nov.)

If cancelled 60 days prior to the departure date, there is a U.S. \$25 cancellation fee.

- 31-59 days prior to departure date, 50% cancellation fee
- 30 days or more prior to departure date, 100% cancellation fee

For this particular trip, it is very important that you consider buying trip cancellation insurance!

Druk Air Baggage Allowance

Passengers are allowed to carry free baggage not exceeding 20 Kgs (44 pounds). Any excess baggage will be charged. One piece of carry on baggage is allowed, the size not exceeding 17.5 x 13.5 x 8 inches) and the weight not exceeding 5 Kgs (11 pounds).

300 BTN (\$4.81 US Dollars) departure tax is charged at the Paro Airport. (1 US Dollar = 62.18 BTN (Bhutanese Ngultrum) as of September 25, 2013)

International round trip flight to Bangkok, Thailand

For your roundtrip international flights to Bangkok, Thailand, 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.

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

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 27, 2014.

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 and trip cancellation. Information is 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.

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

Our flight from Bangkok to Paro, Bhutan, will depart at approximately 4:45 a.m. on October 26, 2014. We return to Bangkok from Bhutan on November 6 by approximately 7:30 p.m.. (NOTE: these airline schedules often change, so give yourself plenty of time between flights!)

Depending on your airline schedule to and from Bangkok, 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.

When calling CIRETTA at MONTANA TRAVEL, 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.

HOW TO REGISTER

First, call (800-804-8686/406-587-3883) or email (trips@adventurewomen.com) the AdventureWomen office to determine space availability. As a courtesy, we will hold your space for 5 days while you are completing the registration process, and making personal and travel arrangements.

Next, complete and sign the Trip Registration and International OR Domestic Passenger Information forms on our Web site by clicking "Sign Up for this Trip" on the trip page. We can also fax or email them to you. Include, with your forms, the required deposit that can be made by credit card (Visa, MasterCard, or Discover), personal check, money order, or cashier's check. You can also give us your credit card number over the phone. Once we receive your **deposit and both forms**, we will mail you a trip confirmation/information packet verifying your registration.

Then, to make your airline reservations, call our travel consultant **Ciretta Green at Montana Travel (1-800-247-3538)** to make your airline reservations.

ABOUT ADVENTURE TRAVEL TOURS

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!

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.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS, 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.)

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.

On our last day's hike to the Tiger's Nest, hiking all the way to the top might be considered MORE than Moderate. You can stop at the overlook (lunch stop) and not go any farther, or you can continue at your own pace to the Monastery. This hike is also "optional", and therefore you can decide before going if you indeed want to do it.

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.

OUR EXCITING ITINERARY FOR *THE SPLENDORS OF BHUTAN – BUDDHISM 101*:

Days 1 - 2, Friday - Saturday, October 24 and 25, 2014: *USA to Bangkok*

If you are flying from the west coast of the U.S., you will depart on October 24. Losing one day due to crossing the International Date Line, you arrive in Bangkok late October 25 or early October 26.

Day 3, Sunday, October 26: *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 are met by our driver for our transfer to Thimpu (approximately 1.5 hours).

At an altitude of 7,700 feet, Thimpu is the only capital city in the world with no traffic lights! This afternoon we will visit the Farmer's Weekend Market where Thimphu residents mingle with villagers in an interesting urban and rural blend.

Later this afternoon we settle into our hotel and have the rest of the afternoon free to relax.

Overnight Hotel Migmar

Olakha, Thimphu, Bhutan

Tel : +975 2 338901-05

Fax: +975-2-338906

Web: www.hotelmigmar.bt

Day 4, Monday, October 27: The Capital City of Thimpu and the Thimpu Valley

Today is packed with activities as we explore Thimpu and its environs:

- Thimphu also has a number of interesting handicrafts shops that sell silk weaving, masks, wood-carving, jewelry, and other handmade items. We'll visit Lungtenzampa to observe traditional silver-smiths plying their craft, and tour a Bhutanese traditional paper factory.
- We'll pay our respects to Bhutan's popular King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk at his Memorial Chorten, and visit Dupthop Lhakhang, which is a monastery for nuns.
- A stop at the National Library is a must, and also at the Painting School, where traditional art is kept alive through instructions in the art of painting Thangkhas (sacred Buddhist religious scrolls).
- The Medicine Institute is very interesting, where traditional medicines are prepared according to ancient practices.
- After lunch, we visit the Zngdo Pelri Temple (a replica of Guru Rinpoche's celestial abode), and continue to Changlimithang Stadium to witness young Bhutanese practicing their national sport, archery.
- Last but not least, Kunsel Phodrang (Buddha Point) is one of the most happening points in Thimphu. It is called the Buddha point because the largest statue of Buddha in the country sits there. The 51.5 meter bronze statue is three stories high with several chapels. The body of Buddha is filled with 125,000 smaller statues of Buddha. The night view of Thimphu from this point is ravishing and magical.
- And if we have any time left, don't forget that the General Post Office sells Bhutan's world famous stamps.

Overnight Hotel Migmar

Day 5, Tuesday, October 28: From Thimphu 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.

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. The country 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.

We'll stop at the village of Lobesa and hike to visit **Chimmi Lhakhang**, a temple dedicated to Drukpa Kuenley, a great 14th century Yogi 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.

Our very beautiful second hike later today is 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.

We continue our drive north to visit the majestic **Punakha Dzong**. Situated between Phochu and Mochu, this dzong is the most magnificent dzong in Bhutan and

served as the capital of the country in the 17th and 18th centuries. Presently the dzong is the district administration and judiciary office as well as the winter home for Bhutan's spiritual leader Je Khenpo and the 600 monks of Thimphu and Punakha.

Overnight Meri Puensum Resort

Woolakha
Punakha, Bhutan
Tel +975 2 584237
Fax +975 2 584236
www.meripuensum.bt

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 6, Wednesday, October 29: From Punakha to Phobjikha (altitude 9,800 feet)

We begin early today for a fabulous drive to the central valleys of Bhutan through the breathtaking beauty and serenity of Bhutan's rich flora and fauna. As we cross the fertile valley of Punakha and enter into the valley of **Wangdue Phodrang**, we take an opportunity to photograph the majestic **fortress of Wangdue Dzong**.

Climbing steadily we drive through semi-tropical vegetation and over a pass with an alpine environment of rhododendrons and dwarf bamboo, known to be home to Red Pandas and yaks. From the pass we descend 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!

From the Phobjikha Pass we hike through the beautiful Wangdi Valley, passing clusters of traditional houses on our way to visit the famous Gantey Gumpa (**altitude 5,500 feet**). The oldest and largest Nyingma Buddhist monastery in Bhutan, Gantey Gumpa 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.

Tonight we stay in the Hotel Dewachen, located in the hidden valley of Phobjikha – Gantey Gumpa. Encircled by pine forests and above the valley of the very rare Black-necked Cranes, the Dewachen Hotel features sixteen double rooms, modern bathrooms, a restaurant with a magnificent view, and cuisine prepared by a professional chef.

Overnight Hotel Dewachen/or a local Guest House

Hotel Dewachen
Phobjikha, Wangdue Phodrang, Bhutan
Mobile : +975-17117508 / 17584202
Tel : +975-2-442550
www.hoteldewachen.com OR www.dewachenhotel.com

Day 7, Thursday, October 30: Phobjikha to Trongsa

This morning we begin our 3-4 hour journey to Trongsa. After a short drive we cross the Pele la Pass (10,989 ft.), considered the boundary between West and East Bhutan. If the weather is clear we'll be able to view the high snow-capped peaks of Mount Chomolhari (24,355 ft.). We'll make a brief stop at Chendebji Chorten, a stupa built in the 18th century by a Lama known as Shida, who nailed into the ground a demon that had been terrorizing the inhabitants of this valley and the nearby Ada valley. We'll have our packed lunch here.

As we enter the Trongsa valley we see the huge fortress of Trongsa that is built on several levels. The dzong fits narrowly on a spur that juts out into the gorge of the Mangde River and overlooks the routes south and west. The view from the dzong extends for many miles and in former times nothing could escape the vigilance of its watchmen.

Arriving in Trongsa we check into our hotel, the Yangkhil Resort, one of the most elegant establishments in the historic town of Trongsa. Its 21 rooms of modern design combine with traditional Bhutanese architecture. Lush colorful gardens, a fish pond, and views of mountains soaring over 10,000 feet add to the resort's natural and exotic landscape.

The resort's indoor dining room offers Bhutanese, Chinese, Continental and Indian cuisine. Outdoor dining space provides a casual open air setting while enjoying breathtaking views of the Trongsa Dzong, Ta Dzong, and surroundings.

Yangkhil Resort

Trongsa, Bhutan
Ph: 975 3 521417/521418
Fax: 975 3 521420
Email: yangkhilresort@druknet.bt
www.yangkhil.bt

Day 8, Friday, October 31: Trongsa to Bumthang HAPPY HALLOWEEN! After breakfast we'll visit the majestic Trongsa Dzong. Built in 1647 by Shubdrung Nawang Namgyal, this dzong was the source of many important historical events in the making of modern Bhutan. Our car will drop us at the junction of the road to the Bazaar and the dzong, and we'll walk from here to the dzong.

Returning to the Bazaar, we are picked up and driven to Taa Dzong, the ancient watchtower. Having served as the watch tower in early times, it has now been turned into a beautiful museum dedicated to the Kings of Bhutan.

After lunch at our hotel, we depart for Bumthang, crossing the Yotongla Pass and into the first of the four valleys of Bumthang, known as Chumey.

Situated in the central north of the country, Bumthang is considered the spiritual heart of Bhutan. It is an area of great historical and cultural importance, for it contains numerous sacred sites. The name "Bumthang" means 'beautiful field'. There are 4 valleys in the region and they form part of Bhutan's many protected regions. Not many tours come here, as it is a long distance to travel. But we think it is an important part of any trip to Bhutan. Instead of the long drive back to Paro, we will be flying from Bumthang to Paro.

Entering Bumthang's first valley, we make a short stop at Tsungney village to observe the weavers who make the famous Bumthang fabric known as Yathra. Continuing to the second valley, Chokhor, (if time permits) we will be dropped off at the Chamkhar Bazaar, where we can walk back to the hotel after sightseeing around the market.

For the next 4 nights in Bumthang, overnight at the Yugarling Resort or Similar

The perfect retreat for mind, body and soul, Yugarling Resort offers the best of all including the ultimate in rejuvenation and relaxation. All rooms offer spectacular views of Chokhor Valley. The resort has with full fledged Spa - Health Club, consisting of sauna, steam, Jacuzzi, traditional stone bath and massage center. The restaurant serves Italian, French, Bhutanese, Chinese & Indian cuisine.

Yugarling Resort

Bumthang Bhutan
+975-3-631948 / 631602
yugarling@druknet.bt
www.yugarling.com

Day 9, Saturday, November 1: A Clockwise Exploration of Bumthang

Our sightseeing today will be in the style of Bhutanese tradition, which is clock-wise!

We begin at the Kurjey Lhakhang. This monastery is the final resting place of the first three kings of Bhutan and comprises three temples. One, built in 1652, was built against the rock face where Guru Padmasambhava meditated in the 8th century and subdued the local deity known as Shelging Karpo. The middle temple is built on the site of a cave containing a rock with the imprint of the Guru's body, and is therefore considered to be the most holy. The temple on the left was built in the 1990s by H.M. Ashi Kesang Wangmo Wangchuck, Grand-Queen Mother. All three temples are surrounded by a 108 chorten wall.

Next we cross the suspension bridge to **Tamshing Lhakhang**, founded in the beginning of the 16th century. This is a very important temple, remarkable for its direct connection to the Bhutanese saint Pema Lingpa. Nearly 100 monks still live here. It is the seat of Lama Sungrtul Rinpoche.

Lastly, we visit **Konchogsum Lhakhang**, one of the most ancient temples in Bhutan, built in the 7th century. It is said to be one of the 108 temples built by the Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo, in a single day.

This afternoon we'll visit Jakar Dzong, where a unique festival is held each year, and we are lucky enough to be here during this time. Festivals in Bhutan are rich and happy expressions of its ancient Buddhist culture. They are held in all of Bhutan in honor of Guru Rinpoche, who introduced Buddhism to Bhutan in the 8th century. These festivals, or Tsechus, are held on auspicious days and months in the Bhutanese calendar, lasting up to four days, in which a series of stylized mask dance rituals are performed. At the Dzong we will witness masked dance rituals performed by monks and community dancers. The Bhutanese believe that watching these mystical dances is essential to gain enlightenment.

Overnight Yugarling Resort

Day 10, Sunday, November 2: A Drive to Ura Village

Today we'll drive to Ura, one of the more interesting villages in Bhutan. Crossing Ura-la Pass at 10,000 feet above sea level, the road climbs through amazingly open countryside, only occasionally running into forest. Large sheep pastures line the magnificent view of Mount Gangkhar Puensum, where we stop to get a view of the Ura Valley below. From the pass we begin our hike downhill to reach the Ura Temple, a newer

temple dedicated to Guru Rinpoche. Inaugurated in 1986, it contains a huge statue of the master and remarkable paintings of the cycle of his teachings.

We continue our walk through the village of Ura, remarkable for its clusters of houses alongside cobblestone streets that give the town a medieval look. We make frequent stops to converse with the villagers, children and womenfolk, who wear a sheep skin on their backs to protect from the heavy loads they carry. Within the last 25 years Ura has been transformed from a marginal community to a prosperous valley.

Saying goodbye to this beautiful village, we drive back to Chamkhar for dinner and overnight.

Overnight Yugarling Resort

DAY 11, Monday, November 3: *Jakar Festival and a Special Prayer Ceremony*

This morning we will again visit the Jakar Dzong and the festival, for a special unfurling of a giant Thangka (religious scroll), and to witness more dances. These festivals (tsechus) are a rich form of oral history tradition, where the Bhutanese pass on values, mythology, and spiritual beliefs through the dance dramas. The unfurling of the Thangka depicts Guru Padmasambhava or some other important Buddhist deity.

In the afternoon we'll visit a village farm and family to see how they live their everyday lives on their farms. You can donate some vegetable seeds to the family (bring them from home)- seeds not found in Bhutan like celery, beet root, Chinese bok choy, and others.

From the farm, we will drive to Kharchu Dratshang, to participate in a special prayer ceremony, just for our group, performed by monks at the temple. This will be a very special highlight of our time spent here.

Overnight Yugarling Resort

Day 12, Tuesday, November 4: *Bumthang to Paro*

Early this morning we fly from Bumthang back to Paro, so we don't have to repeat our very long overland drive by vehicle, and can spend more time in Paro and our last two nights in the Dragon Kingdom.

After our arrival in Paro we'll visit the Drukgyal Dzong, built in 1647 by Shubdrung Nawang Namgyal. The dzong was destroyed by fire and left in ruins as an evocative reminder of the victory of the Bhutanese over the Tibet-Mongol forces. Hence the name Druk Gyal, "*the fortress of victory*". On a clear day there are magnificent views of Mount Chomolhari (23,990 ft.).

Driving south we stop to visit the Satsam Chorten, built in memory of the late Dilgo Khentse Rinpoche, and continue on to Kyichu Lhakhang, built in the 17th century by a Tibetan King, Songtsen Gonpo.

After lunch we visit the National Museum of Bhutan, (Ta Dzong) which contains works of art, handicrafts, costumes, armor and rare stamps from Bhutan. Then we take a leisurely hike down to Rimpung 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.

Crossing the river through a traditional covered bridge, we walk to our waiting bus at the valley floor and transfer to our 5 star Hotel Zhiwaling, where we stay for the next two nights.

Hotel Zhiwaling

Satsam Chorten, Paro Bhutan
Phone Number : +975-8-271277
Fax Number : +975-8-271456
www.zhiwaling.com

The 45-room Hotel Zhiwaling ("*Place of Peace*"), 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.

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.

Day 13, Wednesday, November 5: *Paro and the Magical "Tiger's Nest"*

Today is special, as you 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. Viewing the monastery hanging on a cliff, flying tigers don't seem impossible at all!

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. Continuing on, you'll soon see the monastery, clinging to the edge of a sheer rock cliff that plunges into the valley below.

Returning to our luxurious hotel, we celebrate our last night together in the Dragon Kingdom with our Farewell Dinner at the Zhiwaling, a fabulous way to end our time in Bhutan.

Overnight Hotel Zhiwaling

Day 14, Thursday, November 6: *Depart Paro for Bangkok*

Today we transfer to the airport for our departure from the Land of the Thunder Dragon and our return to Bangkok by late afternoon/early evening.

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.

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, Friday, November 7: *Bangkok to Home*

If you took a late evening flight from Bangkok on November 6, you arrive back home on November 7.

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, but it is often accompanied by a bank charge of 5-7%. In Thimphu and Paro, ATM cards of Visa or MC are accepted, however the reliability of the ATM machines is unpredictable.

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. Make sure that any U.S. cash (bills) are a newer version from 2006 onwards, and in good physical condition.

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/WATER/MEALS

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

A few tips about the water. When taking a shower, keep your mouth closed, and use only treated water to brush your teeth. Do not accept ice cubes in drinks (unless your guide tells you it is OK at various hotels). Bottled mineral water is widely available for purchase at hotels, restaurants, and in towns (about \$1 per liter).

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.

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.

WHAT TO BRING / HOW TO PACK FOR YOUR ADVENTURE VACATION IN BHUTAN

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. Beware, however, that **there is a 44 pound limit for checked luggage on Druk Air, and an 11 pound limit for your carry on bag.** You can pay excess baggage fees if you go over that limit (see www.drukair.bt to find out charges).

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 (no sleeveless shirts or shorts in dzongs or monasteries). 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.
- ❑ 2-3 long-sleeved shirts.
- ❑ 2 Short-sleeved shirts and/or T-shirts.
- ❑ 2 pairs long pants that zip off for shorts.
- ❑ A pair of long (hiking type) shorts/capris. 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).
- ❑ Underwear, socks, sleepwear.
- ❑ 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.
- ❑ Lightweight travel/camera vest to wear during your travels to/from Bhutan/or in Bhutan, to keep extra memory cards, batteries, sunglasses, binoculars, and more!
- ❑ Moneybelt or waistpack for money/passport.
- ❑ Washcloth (sometimes not supplied).
- ❑ 2-3 cotton bandanas (for uses too numerous to mention. Anyway, it's an AdventureWomen tradition!)
- ❑ Bathing suit and pair of rubber "thongs" for showers/hot stone baths.
- ❑ Sunglasses.
- ❑ Lightweight, wide-brimmed hat (a must).
- ❑ Extra shoe or boot laces.
- ❑ Hat for sun protection.
- ❑ A spare pair of glasses (if you wear glasses.)
- ❑ Ziploc bags of various sizes.
- ❑ Travel alarm clock.
- ❑ Small flashlight.
- ❑ Cloth, not plastic Band-aids; about 10 individually-wrapped alcohol pads; and a small tube of Neosporin or other antibiotic cream.
- ❑ Toiletries, including Wash & Dries (or moist towelettes)
- ❑ Hand sanitizer.
- ❑ Motion sickness medication (for long vehicle trips on winding roads).
- ❑ Aspirin/ibuprofen, etc.
- ❑ Cold-symptom relief tablets, antihistamine, cough drops.
- ❑ Adequate quantity of sweat-resistant sunscreen with at least an SPF 15 rating or higher, and lip balm with SPF (remember, you are at high altitude).
- ❑ Tweezers.
- ❑ Earplugs. We recommend Mack's Pillow Soft White Moldable Silicone Snore Proof Earplugs, which you can buy at most drugstores, or www.earplugstore.com. Good to 22 Decibels!
- ❑ Ace bandage.
- ❑ Systemic antibiotic (prescription).
- ❑ 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.
- ❑ Imodium, Lomotil, or similar anti-diarrhea medicine.
- ❑ Pepto-Bismol tablets and/or liquid (in leak-proof bottle.)
- ❑ Laxative tablets.
- ❑ Visine or similar eye drops.
- ❑ Walking stick(s) that telescope and pack into your suitcase easily.

CAMERA EQUIPMENT

Since photography is such a large part of this trip for many women, we suggest you bring the following:

- ❑ Digital camera, LOTS of extra memory cards and batteries, battery charger, and adapter. You can charge your digital batteries in hotels.

Most digital cameras have a built in converter so you only need to bring an adapter. Adapters can also be bought while in-country.

GIFTS:

- ❑ 2-3 pairs of woolen socks, to be given as a “group gift” to monks and caretaker monks at the special temples we visit.
- ❑ Vegetable seeds for Day 11 November 3: celery, beet root, Chinese bok choy, and a few others of your choice.

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 an adapter. Wall outlets take either two flat prongs, like outlets in the United States, or Continental-type plugs, with two round prongs.



OPTIONAL

- ❑ Small, lightweight binoculars (optional) for viewing birds or scenery. Nikon or Minolta make fine, lightweight viewing binoculars. Try a general game viewing 7 X 28, or 8 X 20 binocular.
- ❑ Pictures of your house and family (the Bhutanese people love to see this!)

- ❑ Reading material.

PRE-DEPARTURE TASKS

- ❑ 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.).
- ❑ Bring 2-3 extra passport size photos to use in emergencies.
- ❑ Your valuables should be insured for the duration of the trip, but better yet, leave them at home.
- ❑ **Please leave all valuable jewelry at home!!!**
- ❑ Remove extra credit cards, driver's license, and personal items from wallet or purse.
- ❑ Make sure passport and airline tickets 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).

SOME EXTRA ITEMS TO ADD TO YOUR “WHAT TO BRING” LIST (if you can fit them into your 44 lb. checked bag or in your 11 lb. carry-on bag!)

We think these items help make your long airline flights much more comfortable and even more bearable:

- ❑ Neck pillow - Inflatable neck pillow for blissful support and deep sleep. For packing, it folds into itself. Self-sealing valve means nothing to close. Soft microfleece cover removes for washing.
Eagle Creek Large Inflatable Travel Neck Pillow at TravelSmith.
- ❑ Sleep mask /Comfort eye shade - Ultra lightweight and comfortable, the Comfort Eye Shade screens out light and distractions for a cozier flight. Ultra-soft micro fleece for comfort. Adjustable elastic strap for a perfect fit. Made of Molded Polyester Micro Fleece.
Eagle Creek® Comfort Eye Shade at TravelSmith.
- ❑ Travel compression socks - Reduce ankle and leg swelling and reduce the risk of deep vein thrombosis. These doctor-designed socks stimulate circulation through gradual compression that stops swelling and guards against (DVT). Made of cool-max®-lycra®-nylon. The TravelSox® cushion Walk Socks have extra-padded soles and are made of moisture wicking SoftPrim®.
TravelSox® Cushion Walk Sock™ at TravelSmith.

- Noise canceling headphones - Block out unwanted sounds of children crying and airplane engine drone, and/or enjoy great audio sound. Reduce distortion and increase perceived loudness so you can enjoy sound at a lower volume. Get the around the ear design, which is very comfortable.
 - Bose Quiet Comfort 2 - List Price: \$199.99. Oval shaped around-the-ear design, an iPod fits nicely in the center of the case between the headphones. You can get the next generation of Bose Quiet Comfort 3, but the cost is \$349.00.
 - Audio Technica ATH-ANC7- List Price: \$219.95 Excellent sound quality and above average noise cancellation. Comfortable leather cushioning around the ear and can be worn for long periods of time with nodiscomfort. Excellent headphones with a reasonable price tag.

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*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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