

## Weavers' Trail, Bhutan - New

Visit the weavers of Bhutan in the company of renowned textile artist Sue Lawty on a fascinating journey across the kingdom. Includes time at two festivals.



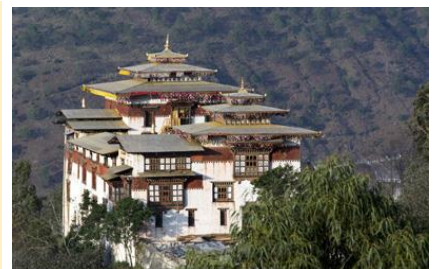
### Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

### Holiday overview

Style	Walking
Accommodation	Hotels, Homestays
Grade	Gentle
Duration	21 days from London to London
Trekking / Walking days	Walks on: 7 days
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Sue Lawty
Land only	Joining in Delhi, India
Max altitude	3,750m/12,303ft, Thrumshing La, Day 13

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available



Watch related videos online: [Weaver's Trail, Bhutan](#)

tel: +44 (0)1453 844400 fax: +44 (0)1453 844422 info@mountainkingdoms.com www.mountainkingdoms.com

Mountain Kingdoms Ltd, 20 Long Street, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire GL12 7BT UK  
Managing Director: Steven Berry. Registered in England No. 2118433. VAT No. 496 6511 08

# Departures

---

## Group departures

### 2025 Dates:

Tue 04 Mar - Mon 24 Mar With Punakha Tsechu and Tangsibi Mani Tsechu

### Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

### No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

### Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 4 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

### Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

### Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

### Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday.

If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

# Your guide

---



Sue Lawty is one of Britain's finest textile artists. Alongside many other materials, Sue has worked in textiles all her life and has exhibited all over the world. She is a tutor and visiting lecturer and as well as going on 'weaving journeys' to Bhutan, Morocco, America, Australia, India, Nepal and Poland she has been visiting artist in Bankfield, Halifax, visiting artist at the Australian National University in Canberra, and also Artist in Residence at the V&A Museum from 2005 to 2010. She also devised the World Beach Project, in association with the V&A, which ran for 5 years, from 2007 to 2012, a global project, where participants uploaded photographs of their own patterns made on a beach with stones. Sue is an accomplished climber and trekker and has led many successful trips for Mountain Kingdoms since she led our first Weavers' Trail in 1995, later also leading treks to Dolpo and Zanskar.



## Your trip highlights

---

- Experience first-hand the unique textile traditions of Bhutan in the company of Sue Lawty, one of Britain's foremost textile artists
- Meet local weavers and learn about the rich Bhutanese culture of spinning and weaving
- Visit small villages and stay in homestay accommodation to experience life with a Bhutanese family
- See Bhutan's cultural highlights and enjoy walks in the beautiful Bhutanese countryside
- Join the revelries at two Bhutanese festivals

## At a glance itinerary

---

Days 1-3	Fly to Delhi. Sightseeing. Fly to Paro in Bhutan. Visit National Museum.
Day 4	Sightseeing in the Paro Valley. Walk to visit Taktsang Monastery.
Day 5	Drive to Thimphu. Visit the giant Buddha statue and paper factory.
Day 6	Visit textile museum in Thimphu. Drive to Punakha. Sightseeing.
Day 7	Walk from Punakha Dzong with lunch in a homestay. Attend the Punakha Tsechu in the afternoon.
Days 8-9	Drive to Gangtey. Walk and visit Black-necked Crane Museum. Drive to Trongsa.
Day 10	Drive to Zugney to visit weavers. Drive to Tharpaling Monastery. Walk and see other temples. Drive to Jakar.
Day 11	Walk and further sightseeing and in Jakar area. Drive to near Ura and walk to homestay in the village.
Day 12	Attend the Tangsibi Mani Festival.
Days 13-14	Drive to Autsho and continue to Khoma weaving village. Observe pottery and weaving demonstrations. Walk and stay in a homestay in Khoma.
Day 15	Visit Dungkhar and return to homestay.
Days 16-18	Drive to Mongar via Lhuentse Dzong and Khaine Laxhang. Sightseeing in Mongar. Drive to Trashigang. Sightseeing, walks and visits to village weavers.
Day 19	Drive to Samdrup Jongkhar with stop at the weaving centre of Khaling en route.
Days 20-21	Drive to Guwahati. Fly to Delhi. Overnight Delhi. Fly to UK.

## Trip summary

---

At the eastern end of the mighty Himalaya lies the tiny Buddhist kingdom of Bhutan. This traditional nation, without doubt, produces the finest woven fabrics to be found in the Himalayan region. Weaving is an ancient art in Bhutan and its textiles are an integral part of its culture and heritage and are unique for their diversity and sophistication. With skills handed down from generation to generation and from family to family, weaving in Bhutan is today an art form that is representative of the very heart of the country.

Sue Lawty led our first 'Weavers Trail' in 1995 and our latest itinerary traces a similar route, travelling through the cultural heartlands to the lesser-known east of the country. On the way, there are visits to, among others, the raw silk 'bura' weavers in the remote village of Radi, the kishuthara weavers of Lhuntse district and Khoma village and the 'yathra' weavers of Bumthang. In addition you will be introduced to other regional traditions of silk, cotton, wool, yak wool and nettle weaving and further crafts such as pottery and paper making, woodcarving and painting and the making of wonderful baskets.

This unique trip has been designed to combine first hand experiences of weaving, visits to weavers in their own homes and to the important textiles centres of the kingdom. You will have opportunity to see all the processes involved in producing textiles, dyeing, spinning and weaving as well as the different uses for these textiles, such as in day to day wear of Bhutanese men and women and the rich textiles used for festival attire and religious costumes. This in-depth, specialist tour weaves together a colourful tapestry of textiles, history, rich cultural heritage and stunning landscapes. In addition you will visit some of the most iconic temples, monasteries and dzongs of the kingdom including beautiful Punakha Dzong and iconic Taktsang Monastery and you will have the opportunity to take some lovely walks through picturesque countryside and to more isolated villages. An additional attraction is the opportunity to stay with local families in Khoma Village and Ura where you will learn about day-to-day life in rural Bhutan. You will also enjoy visits to two colourful festivals - a real highlight of any trip to the Thunder Dragon Kingdom.

# Your trip itinerary

---

## Day 1: Fly London to Delhi.

---

Fly overnight from London to Delhi.

**Overnight: In flight**

---

## Day 2: Arrive Delhi. Group transfer to hotel. Visit Delhi Crafts Museum.

---

On arrival in Delhi you will be transferred to your hotel located close to Delhi airport.

In the afternoon, if your flight schedule allows, you will have a trip to the Delhi Crafts Museum where artisans demonstrate traditional embroidery, weaving, carving and pottery making - a fantastic place to get an introduction to the textiles of India.

**Overnight: Lemon Tree Premier Hotel, Delhi Airport**

---

## Day 3: Fly to Paro. Sightseeing in the Paro Valley including the National Museum.

---

After breakfast you will transfer to the airport for your flight to Paro in Bhutan. You will meet your guide on arrival and head off for some sightseeing in Paro and its surrounding valley. The beautiful Paro Valley has always had a great strategic importance for Bhutan and was historically an important staging post on the trade routes with Tibet. The spectacular Paro Dzong, situated on a rocky outcrop above the Paro Chu and with views down both sides of the valley was historically one of Bhutan's strongest and most strategic fortresses. Before the rebuilding of the Tashichhodzong in Thimphu, it was also the seat of Bhutan's National Assembly.

You may begin your time in Paro with a visit the ancient and beautiful temple of Kyichu Lakhang which was one of 108 temples built by Songtsen Gampo, an important early Tibetan king, to pin down the Bon demon who was thought to hover over the whole of Tibet.

You will also visit the impressive Paro Dzong, one of the most important in the kingdom. Above the dzong is the ancient watchtower or Ta Dzong which houses the Bhutan National Museum and has a fantastic collection of Bhutanese treasures with displays including depictions of some of the wide range of Bhutan's history and culture and an impressive collection of ancient thangkhas featuring Bhutan's important saints and teachers. You will also find some fearsome festival masks, a collection of religious statues, some early stone carvings and the original 14th century iron links from the nearby Tamchhog Bridge.

**Overnight: Olathang Cottages or Similar, Paro (Meals: BLD)**

---

## Day 4: Walk to Taktsang Monastery - the Tiger's Nest. Sightseeing or time at leisure.

---

A short drive beyond Paro town takes you to the trail head for the walk up to the famous Tiger's Nest, Taktsang Monastery. The monastery is perched some 600m/2,000ft up on a cliff overlooking the valley and was said to be where the legendary Indian saint, Guru Padma Sambhava, flew from Tibet on the back of a tiger to defeat five demons, who were opposing the spread of Buddhism in Bhutan. It's a steep, uphill walk through woods of about 1½-2 hours, to reach a tea house (an ascent of 340m/1,115ft). Apart from offering welcome refreshment this tea house is one of the principle viewpoints of Taktsang, and those who prefer not to climb any further can relax here whilst others continue on.



If there is a particular religious gathering or VIP visit in progress, you will not be able to enter the monastery but the further half an hour's ascent is well worth it in any case, as it brings you to another viewpoint directly across from Taktsang. If you are able to make a visit, the final section of the walk takes you from here steeply down 100m/330ft into the gorge that separates you from the monastery and then climbs back up again to reach the monastery gate.

Once you have walked back down you will have lunch and then the rest of the day can either be used to do any further sightseeing your guide suggests, or to rest at your hotel.

**Overnight: Olathang Cottages or Similar, Paro (Meals: BLD)**

---

**Day 5: Drive to Thimphu - 1-1½ hours. Visit the giant Buddha statue above the town and the paper factory.**

---

This morning you will drive to Thimphu. The town of Thimphu enjoys an attractive valley location and is relatively small for a capital city although it has grown greatly in recent years. When you arrive in Thimphu you will drive up to see the large Buddha statue, perched above the town, this will give you excellent views and is a good way to orientate yourself to Thimphu and its surrounds.

Then you will see a traditional Bhutanese craft with a visit to the handmade paper workshop to observe the processes involved in making paper. The paper made here is based on materials unique to the Himalaya, the bark of the Daphne Papyri, which is found at altitudes of 3,000 feet and above, the bark of the Edgeworthia Papyri and various additional ingredients like flowers and leaves which add textures and patterns. There are some nice items made from handmade paper for sale here.

**Overnight: Phuntso Pelri Hotel or Similar, Thimphu (Meals: BLD)**

---

**Day 6: Visit the Textile Museum in Thimphu. Drive to Punakha - 3 hours via the Dochu La Pass. Sightseeing.**

---

First stop today will be Thimphu's Textile Museum, which gives a good overview of Bhutan's textiles and weaving methods which differ quite substantially from region to region. Exhibits introduce the major weaving techniques, styles of local dress and textiles made by both women and men.

Driving out of Thimphu you climb to cross the Dochu La Pass, 3,048m/10,000ft, a spot marked by 108 chortens. Here, weather permitting, you may take in a magnificent mountain vista. On clear days there are fabulous views of the eastern Himalaya from here, but this is a beautiful spot even on misty days. You then drive down through varied forest into the lush Punakha Valley.

There should be time to explore the town and do a little sightseeing after you've checked in to your hotel.

**Overnight: Khuru Resort or Similar, Punakha (Meals: BLD)**

---

**Day 7: Visit Punakha Dzong then walk along the river. Lunch at 'Lotay's homestay'. Attend the Punakha Tsechu in the afternoon.**

---

Your day begins at fabulous Punakha Dzong, one of the most spectacular and important in the Kingdom. It is also one of the most beautiful, situated at the confluence of two rivers. In 1994 there was a major flood in the town which caused a lot of damage to the dzong, but it has now been beautifully renovated and is a real showcase for Bhutanese craftsmanship and painting. As the annual tsechu is in full swing (which you will attend later today), it will be very busy and full of life and colour.

Leaving the dzong for now you will enjoy a leisurely walk along the riverside before taking lunch at a delightful homestay owned by Lotay - an old friend of Mountain Kingdoms.

In the afternoon you return to the dzong to attend the tsechu. This is an annual festival introduced by the Zhabdrung to commemorate Bhutanese victories over the Tibetans. During the festival there will be masked dances and other enactments recalling the days when, in the absence of an army, men from the eight Tshogchens, or great village blocks of Thimphu came forward and managed to expel the Tibetan forces out of the country, ushering in a new-found internal peace and stability. Such festivals are great fun for visitors and locals alike giving the chance to attain religious merit, celebrate together and socialise.



**Overnight: Khuru Resort or Similar, Punakha (Meals: BLD)**

---

**Day 8: Drive to Gangtey - 3-3½ hours. Walk in the valley and visit the Black-necked Crane Information Centre.**

---

After breakfast you make the journey to Gangtey. Leaving Punakha you drive down the valley to the town of Wangdiphodrang whose massive and important dzong unfortunately burnt down in 2012 and is now under reconstruction. You drive through the few houses which mark the former township of Wangdi and then drive up the beautiful, wooded valley of the Dang Chu into Gangtey.

Gangtey, also known as Phobjikha, is a beautiful glacial valley, wide, wooded and unspoilt. It is particularly famous as a major wintering ground for Black-necked Cranes, which arrive here late October and stay until early spring before heading back to their breeding grounds in Siberia. These birds are particularly respected in local culture and feature in local tradition as 'heavenly birds'. You will discover more about them at the Black-necked crane Information Centre which has some interesting displays on the ecology and wildlife of the valley as well as telescopes for observing birdlife.

In addition to its natural wonders, the valley boasts some intriguing myths and legends surrounding local events and places, including tales about two different types of yeti, a large one and a small variety, as well as many other interesting tales. A number of different walks are possible here and your guide will suggest a suitable one for your group.

**Overnight: Yo Lo Koe Lodge or Gakling Guesthouse or Similar, Gangtey (Meals: BLD)**

---

**Day 9: Drive to Trongsa - 4½-5 hours across the Pele La. Visit the town's museum.**

---

Today you make the drive from Gangtey to Trongsa which takes you over the Pele La Pass, 3,300m/10,825ft, where you will hopefully have fine mountain views.

As you near Trongsa you will see its splendid Dzong long before you reach it because the road takes you up a long side valley before eventually turning back to Trongsa town. Trongsa has an exceptionally dramatic dzong, the ancestral home of the royal family. Because of its important strategic location this was one of the most important dzongs in the country. Set above the dzong is the Ta Dzong, the watchtower, a lovely old building which has been recently really beautifully renovated and houses an excellent museum with several floors of royal memorabilia and sacred artefacts. The views from the roof are worth the climb.



**Overnight: Yangkhil Resort or Similar, Trongsa (Meals: BLD)**

---

**Day 10: Drive to Zugney for weaving workshop then continue to Tharpaling Monastery in Chumey. Walk from the monastery. Drive on to Jakar.**

---

From Trongsa you drive across the Yotong La and towards Bumthang. The Bumthang region encompasses four major valleys and Jakar town where you will stay for two nights is in the main valley called Chokhor. The other valleys are the Ura Valley which is to the east, Tang valley which is slightly more off-the-beaten-track and the Chumey Valley. Your first stop is the village of Zugney, a famous centre for weaving where you will attend a workshop to see the industry that is an integral part of Bhutanese society. It is said that every home is equipped with a loom for weaving and young girls are proficient in the craft before they reach the age of twenty.

After the workshop, you drive up to the cluster of temples at Tharpaling - a sacred spot and place of meditation, founded by Geluwa Lonchen Rabchampa (1308-1363) during his self-exile from Tibet for ten years. Several picturesque monasteries dot the hillside above the Chumey Valley with views over Domkhar (Chumey) and Domkhar Summer Palace. After a picnic lunch, you start the 4 hour walk along an old trail back towards Chumey. The path starts out beneath craggy cliffs, from where it climbs fairly gently up to the ridge top and reaches the Shutre Sae Pass at 3,700m/12,139ft. Sited on the pass in a glass case is a statue of the founder of Tharpaling. From here the views are phenomenal - looking south you can see over the Chumey/Domkhar Valley with the Black Mountains in the distance. The other way you get fabulous and unexpected views over Jakar town with the airport runway and the dzong clearly seen far below. Beyond and further north, you can see towards the high mountains - perhaps even Mount Gangkar Punsum on a clear day.



You descend from the pass in beautiful forest, nearly all downhill. On the higher reaches, you pass through pine, fir and rhododendron forest. Eventually you reach the road again at a huge area of prayer flags where you will meet your transport and head to your hotel in Jakar.

**Overnight: Ugyenling Hotel or Similar, Jakar (Meals: BLD)**

---

**Day 11: Morning 'temple walk' in the valley. Drive to the Ura La Pass, 3,573m/11,722ft, and walk down to the village.**

---

There are several temples in the Jakar valley which you will explore on a gentle walk. Nearest to your hotel is the Jambay Lakhang, one of the country's oldest temples, built in the mid-7th century. Look out for the set of three steps in the main temple. The first step, now hidden below floor level, is said to represent the time of the past or 'historical' Buddha, the second, very well worn, step represents the present Buddha, whilst the third step above, is said to represent the age of the future Buddha. The point at which the second step is worn down to ground level is held to be the time when the world as we currently know it will end. From Jambay Lakhang you may walk along a farm track for 30 minutes to reach Kurjey Lakhang, a series of three large temples. The oldest of the temples here houses a rock indented with the body shape of Guru Rinpoche, whilst the most recent dates back just 30 years and was built by the Queen Mother, Ashi Kesang Wangchuck.



In the afternoon you leave Jakar township, driving out of the valley for 2-3 hours until you eventually reach a high pass above the village of Ura. This is the Ura La (also called the Shertung La) at 3,573m/11,722ft. From here, on a clear day, there are fantastic views of Bhutan's highest mountain, Gangkar Punsum, 7,550m/24,770ft. You leave your vehicle at the pass and walk down to Ura Village, a pleasant walk through a lovely forest. When you arrive in the extremely picturesque village, you will visit the small village gumpa, dedicated to Guru Rinpoche, and will then stroll through the medieval looking streets to reach the Bangpa Heritage Farmstay, a large traditional farmhouse offering comfortable if simple accommodation.

**Overnight: Bangpa Heritage Homestay, Ura (Meals: BLD)**

---

**Day 12: Attend the Tangsibi Mani Tsechu.**

---

There is another opportunity to spend time at a Bhutanese festival today. The Tangsibi Mani Tsechu is held annually at the Dechenling Lhakang by the villagers of Tangsibi. As with other Bhutanese Buddhist festivals you will see sacred masked dances several of which are unique to this particular tsechu and are known as 'treasure dances'. There will also be many locals, dressed in their best finest outfits, enjoying both the religious and social occasion. It is an excellent chance to see many beautiful, handwoven fabrics being worn.

**Overnight: Bangpa Heritage Homestay, Ura (Meals: BLD)**

---

**Day 13: Drive to Autsho via Mongar across the Thrumshing La Pass, 3,750m/12,303ft - 7-8 hours.**

---

Today you drive to Autsho, via Mongar. This is a long but stunning drive of many startling contrasts, crossing one of the highest road passes in Bhutan and passing through alpine scenery and sub-tropical forest and travelling one of the most dramatic and spectacular roads in the kingdom. Leaving Ura to rejoin the main highway, you enter the alpine landscapes of the Thrumshing La National Park, passing beneath overhanging cliffs to reach the Thrumshing La Pass, 3,750m/12,303ft, in about one hour. This is the highest point of your trip and, on a clear day, you may be able to see Bhutan's highest peak, Gangkar Punsum. From the pass the road starts its descent, in places hacked into the cliffs, with numerous streams and waterfalls crashing down. Leaving the national park the road emerges into the upper part of the Yong Khola into dense forest, where the scenery becomes lush and sub-tropical with huge trees, bamboos and ferns. This wilderness is one of the prime birdwatching areas in Bhutan. From the forest the road continues to descend through cultivated terraces to arrive at Kuri Zampa bridge, the lowest point of the drive at 570m/1,970ft, an astonishing descent of 3,200m/10,500ft from the pass. From the bridge, the road climbs up for a further hour through pine forests and cultivated fields to reach Mongar and it is then another hour or so north to reach Autsho.

**Overnight: The Phayul Resort or Similar, Autsho (Meals: BLD)**

---

**Day 14: Drive to the weaving village of Khoma - 1½ hours. Walk to Gonpa Karpo. Observe pottery and nettle weaving demonstrations. Drive to Homestay.**

---

You will spend this morning at Khoma village which is famous for its intricate woven cloth called kishuthara and is said to be the birthplace of Bhutan's traditional weaving culture. The weavers here produce some of Bhutan's most sought after and expensive kishuthara textiles. Women throughout the kingdom wear kishuthara on special occasions such as wedding and at festivals. You will see the local woman working at their looms and also learn how they make vegetable dyes.

Later you will walk up to Gonpa Kharpo Lakhang, located on a ridge overlooking Lhuntse, and the centre of another area famous for its weaving. Today you will also see pottery being made and cloth woven from nettles. After your visit here you make the short drive to your homestay accommodation.

**Overnight: Khoma Village Homestay (Meals: BLD)**

---

**Day 15: Excursion to Dungkhar Village (5-6 hours round trip). Visit palace and lunch with local noble family. Return to Khoma.**

---

Today you will drive towards the border with Tibet, to spend time at the historic village of Dungkhar. In Dungkhar you will visit the impressive 16th century palace, the Jigme Namgyel Naktshang, the ancestral home of the Wangchuk Dynasty, the current royal family of Bhutan. Pema Lingpa's son Kuenga Wangpo settled in Dungkhar and it is through him that the royal family trace their ancestry to this village. Pema Lingpa was a frequent visitor to Dungkhar and built the Goeshog Pang Lakhang, a temple found a two-hour walk up the valley. Jigme Namgyal, father of the first king, was born here in 1825.

The palace has a scenic backdrop of mountains and is of immense historical significance in the history of Bhutan. A visit here is a glimpse into Bhutan's magical historic past. In time it is hoped to renovate the palace and to turn it into a museum, and that tourism to the area will help to boost the incomes of local people.

You will have lunch in the home of a family of the local nobility. After your visit to Dungkhar you return to Khoma.

**Overnight: Khoma Village Homestay (Meals: BLD)**

---

**Day 16: Drive to visit Lhuentse Dzong. Drive on to Tangmachu village to see giant Guru Rinpoche statue. Continue to Khaine Lakhang temple. Walk through village to visit the temple. Continue to Mongar.**

---

There is a lot to do today, so it is a good idea to try to have an early breakfast and leave in plenty of time. From Autsho you drive back to Mongar, then descend by zigzags all the way down into the valley and then up the valley north towards Lhuentse. You drive through some pretty impressive gorges with vertical cliffs, but before reaching Lhuentse, you turn off to the left and climb up into the zigzag road into the hills to visit Khaine Lakhang. This is an incredibly important small temple, one of 108 built by King Songtsen Gampo in AD 659. It is said that three statues flew from here of their own accord to a temple in one of the main valleys of Bumthang. You can park at one end of the village and walk along the road to the temple.



From here is a relatively short drive to Tangchmachu. This is a small village off-the-beaten track and really quite remote, but is nevertheless, the site of the largest statue of Guru Rinpoche (height: 173ft). The statue was constructed by men instead of machines at the instigation of the venerable Khenpo Karpo Rinpoche. Its purpose is to bring peace and prosperity to the world and for the benefit of all sentient beings.

From here you drive to Lhuentse Dzong 1,409m/4,622ft, back down in the main valley. It sits fair and square on top of a steep hill commanding an impregnable position. It is the ancestral home of the kings of Bhutan and was originally established by Pema Lingpa's son, Kuenga Wanpo in 1543. The present Royal family trace their lineage directly to the important saint of Pema Lingpa. A small township straggles the mountainside below the dzong.



There are a few shops and a bank, and some very rough lodging houses but no decent hotel so you drive back to Mongar. Mongar is not located in a valley as the towns of the west are, but is situated on the top of a hill. There are fine views over the Kuru Chu River and surrounding countryside.

**Overnight: Hotel Wangchuk or Ruk Zhongar or Druk Zom, Mongar (Meals: BLD)**

---

**Day 17: Walk through Mongar town. Drive to Dramatse Monastery - 2 hours, and then on to Trashigang -1 hour.**

---

Mongar's dzong is relatively new and while the town has busy shops and bars and a bustling fruit and vegetable market there is otherwise not a lot else to see here. After a stroll through the town you leave to drive to Trashigang with a diversion first to Dramatse Monastery.

Dramatse sits on a ridge top - 1,350m/4,429ft and 18kms above the river below. It was founded in 1511 by a granddaughter of Pema Lingpa and is one of the largest and most important monasteries of eastern Bhutan. It is famous as being the place where the Nga Cham Drum Dance, which is featured in festivals all over the country, originates. From Dramatse you will return to the main road and continue to Trashigang.

**Overnight: Druk Deothjung Resort or Lingkhar Lodge, Trashigang (Meals: B)**

---

**Day 18: Visit Trashigang town and dzong. Short village walks and visit weavers in their homes at Radi.**

---

Although east Bhutan was historically connected to the rest of the country by overland trade routes, these were long and difficult and the people from here often felt more closely connected with their nearer neighbours in Tibet and India and traditionally had closer trade and cultural links with them. This means that the east has a totally different feel to the central and western parts of the country with the eastern region being controlled from dramatic dzongs such as the one in Trashigang and those in Mongar, Tashitangtse and Lhuntse.



Today, you will have time in the morning to explore Trashigang, visiting the centre of town and the impressive dzong. The town is clustered round a small central plaza with a large prayer wheel, a bank, a few shops and bars but not much else! There is a small souvenir shop here which is not very inspiring. Below the plaza is the spectacular Trashigang Dzong, set on a ridge high above the valley. This dzong was built in the 17th century to guard against Tibetan invaders and was one of the most strategically important in the country.

Later you will take a pleasant walk from Trashigang to the village of Khapti. First you will drive to the high court, a handsome building set a little above the town and from near here take a rocky trail which leads up above the town and then continues through lovely forest with lots of birds and wildlife and on through a couple of pretty small villages before coming out on to a new feeder road where you will meet your transport. This will be a pleasant and undemanding walk.

You will then visit Radi Village and will also have time to visit the large Nyingmapa Gompa at Ranjung, which has a school for monks attached to it. This region and its villages are famous for their weaving and you will visit local weavers and village homes to see the raw silk textile weaving, known as 'Bura'.

From Ranjung the road leads up the valley to Phongme, a village where a trek begins into the remote region known as Merak Saktan, an area where the Yeti (known locally as Migoi) is said to be found. Along this valley you may see the Brokpa people who come from this region - they are easily recognised by their distinctive black felt hats with octopus like tentacles which are created to help to keep the rain out of the wearer's eyes!

**Overnight: Druk Deothjung Resort or Lingkhar Lodge, Trashigang (Meals: BLD)**

---

**Day 19: Drive to Samdrup Jongkhar - 7-8 hours. Stop at the famous weaving centre at Khaling en route and visit weavers in their homes.**

---

Remember to keep your passport on you today as you may need to show it as you enter the town of Sandrup Jongkhar.

Leaving Trashigang, you pass through Sherubtse and the campus of the country's premier University College before you climb to the Yongphu La Pass, 2,190m/7,185ft. Continuing, down from the pass you next reach Khaling, where one of the most famous weaving centres in Bhutan is located, providing cloth for the royal family. The National Handloom Development Project here is operated by the Women's Association of Bhutan and young women from all over eastern Bhutan come to learn how to weave. Here, Sue will introduce you to some of the age-old complexities of Bhutanese weaving as you visit some of the local weavers in their homes.



It is a further 4-5 hours drive from here to Samdrup Jongkhar and, as you get closer to the border, you will enjoy wonderful views of forested hills and valleys rolling away to the foothills and the Indian plains of Assam State. You can often see Langur monkeys, kingfishers, eagles and other brightly coloured birds along the roadside. The Indian-like border town of Samdrup Jongkhar is literally at the very foot of the Bhutanese foothills and is quite subtropical.

**Overnight: Hotel Tashi Gasel or Hotel Monjong or Similar, Samdrup Jongkhar (Meals: BLD)**

---

**Day 20: Drive to Guwahati - 3 hours. Fly to Delhi and transfer to hotel.**

---

You cross the Indian border this morning and then drive to reach the airport at Guwahati to catch your flight to Delhi. On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

**Overnight: Lemon Tree Premier Hotel, Delhi Airport (Meals: BLD)**

---

**Day 21: Group transfer to airport. Fly to London.**

---

After breakfast you will be transferred to the airport for your flight home. (Meals: B)

## Our grading system

---

Weavers' Trail, Bhutan is graded as a Gentle walking holiday, as described below.

### Gentle

Trips within this grade typically mix sightseeing with easy-paced half and/or full day walks. On these trips, walks will be on relatively low altitude trails, for a duration of around 4-6 hours. On all of our Gentle graded trips, some ascent and descent should be anticipated, and there may occasionally be a longer walking day. Holidays within this grade generally use hotels and comfortable lodges although a few do have some nights camping.

These holidays are suitable for people who enjoy easy-paced walks in the British countryside or exploring on foot rather than in a vehicle.

## Trip altitude

---

**Important** - please be aware that this trip involves travel at altitude. Whilst all our itineraries are carefully designed to optimise acclimatisation to high altitudes, participants on this trip are likely to experience some symptoms of being at altitude. The Dossier pack we provide when you book your holiday includes comprehensive advice on safe travel at altitude. If you require further information or advice on travel at altitude prior to booking please contact the office to speak to an experienced member of our team. Alternatively we recommend [www.medex.org.uk](http://www.medex.org.uk) as a good source of information.

## What the price includes

---

Mountain Kingdoms aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

### What's included:

- ✓ The services of Sue Lawty as trip leader
- ✓ Local Bhutanese English-speaking guide and driver to accompany group throughout.
- ✓ Bhutan visa and Bhutan departure tax
- ✓ Good standard accommodation in Delhi and Bhutan, with meals as indicated in itinerary, on twin share basis
- ✓ 19 x breakfasts, 17 x lunches, 17 x dinners
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK and UK departure tax (flight inclusive only)
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicle
- ✓ Single, timed, group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ A free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)

### Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

### What's not included:

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ India visa fees
- ✗ Lunch and dinner in Delhi
- ✗ Tips

### Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

Our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag for their holiday (these are required for certain treks), will instead receive a free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle. These unique Water-to-Go bottles can also be purchased from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit [For further information about our campaign visit https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign](https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign).



# Your accommodation

---

## Difficulties with Bhutan hotels

Please note that there is generally a shortage of hotel/lodge accommodation in Bhutan, especially outside Paro and Thimphu. Although we pre-book rooms as far in advance as possible, anything can happen and probably will, e.g. if the royal family suddenly has a visiting delegation, accommodation may be changed at short notice. Additionally, during peak seasons, it can sometimes be very difficult to secure not only the hotels/lodges we want, but also the single rooms we might need. In these circumstances singles may occasionally be asked to share but in such cases we refund any single room supplements that might apply.

Also please be aware that the standard of accommodation in the east is not as high as for hotels in the west of the country. Given these conditions we will make every effort to secure the hotels below, but if our first choice is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.



### Lemon Tree Premier Hotel, Delhi Airport

The Lemon Tree Premier offers good facilities and a high level of comfort only 4km from Delhi's international airport. Rooms are bright and spacious with tea/coffee makers, mini bars and free Wi-Fi. The hotel has a spa, pool, cafe, pan-Asian restaurant and trendy bar.



### Olathang Cottages or Similar, Paro

This charming boutique style property sits on a hillside quite separate to, and above the Olathang - the famous first hotel ever to be built in the kingdom. Olathang Cottages has a delightful garden which has been developed by the owner's wife. It commands panoramic views of the Paro Valley, and has a quieter more secluded feel. The bedrooms are all en suite and spacious. Traditional paintwork is much in evidence and there is a feeling that you are staying in an elaborate log cabin.



### Phuntso Pelri Hotel or Similar, Thimphu

Despite its somewhat dark entrance hall, this new hotel is very well appointed, with custom made Bhutanese wooden furniture and good sized rooms. During busy periods, especially during festivals, we may use the Jomolhari Hotel, the Kisa Hotel, Hotel Gakyil, Hotel Osel or the Amodhara Hotel. These are amongst the best tourist class hotels in Thimphu.



### Khuru Resort or Similar, Punakha

This property has something of an up-market feel about it, but not of the modern glitz and glass variety. It's atmosphere is something more old style and classy. It is located on a hillside overlooking Punatsangchu river, Khuruthang town, surrounding hills, villages and rice paddy fields. The dining room harks back to colonial times and has elegant furniture. The hotel is well located but peaceful. Our MD loves the place.



### Yo Lo Koe Lodge, Gakiling Guest House or Similar

Both the Yo Lo Koe Lodge and Gakiling Lodge are situated in Gangtey and have been recently updated. They offer relatively simple but comfortable accommodation, and are built in local style with cosy rooms using a lot of wood panelling and with attached bathrooms. Food is plentiful and good.



### **Yangkhil Resort or Similar, Trongsa**

This is the best hotel in Trongsa, perched outside the town with views across to the dzong and valley. The hotel has mature gardens and well appointed rooms with tea and coffee making facilities. There is also a bar and restaurant on site.



### **Ugyenling Hotel or Similar, Jakar**

Nestled in a picturesque setting facing the Bumthang valley and river, the Ugyenling has well-appointed rooms with a seating area warmed by a bukhari (wood burning stove). Rooms also offer tea/coffee making facilities and Wi-Fi as well as a sit-out balcony with views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. Set in a walled compound, the hotel has its own international restaurant, large bar and a traditional hot stone bath.



### **Village Homestays**

For a truly authentic glimpse of Bhutanese rural life, spend a night or two in a homestay. Accredited by the Bhutanese Tourist Council, there are several homestay options in rural locations including Gangtey Valley, Ura and Punakha. Facilities may be simple but they all have bags of character. Meals, in some cases, can be taken with the family, and the food is delicious. Electricity is available in some of the homestays and all will provide hot water for washing. There may even be the chance to enjoy a hot stone bath, try your hand at archery, learn to cook like a local or take a tour of the family farm. Please note that if we have a full group, we may use two homestay properties.



### **The Phayul Resort or Similar, Autsho**

Accommodation in Lhuntse is rather limited. If accommodation is available in Lhuntse you will stay there, if not you will stay at the Phayul Resort, a small, simple but pleasant lodge located between Lhuntse and Mongar. Rooms are comfortable and have attached facilities.



### **Hotel Wangchuk or Druk Zhongar or Druk Zom, Mongar**

This is quite a large modern hotel, looking out over the town and surrounding countryside. Rooms are large and comfortable and the restaurant serves very good food. If rooms are not available at the Wangchuk there are two other very pleasant hotels located nearby, the Druk Zonghar and the Druk Zom, both of which have good rooms and all facilities.



### **Druk Deothjung Resort or Lingkhar Lodge, Tashigang**

Druk Deothjung is a stunning new lodge situated a few kilometres outside Tashigang in a lovely rural location. It has stylish rooms and a good restaurant. If space is not available here you will stay at the Lingkhar Lodge, a pleasant, small hotel 20 minutes' drive from Tashigang town.



### **Hotel Tashi Gasel or Hotel Monjong Lodge or Similar, Samdrup Jongkhar**

The Hotel Tashi Gasel is a quiet hotel situated just out of town. It has comfortable rooms with all facilities and a pleasant restaurant offering good food. Alternatively we will use the Hotel Monjong or another property of a similar standard.

## Meal arrangements

---

19 x breakfasts, 17 x lunches, 17 x dinners.

## Flight arrangements

---

### Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

### Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

## Further information

---

When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

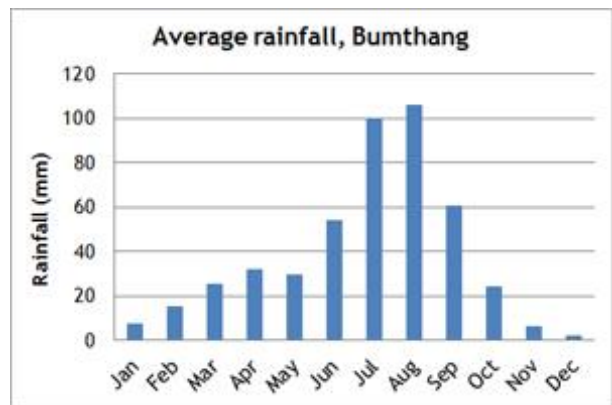
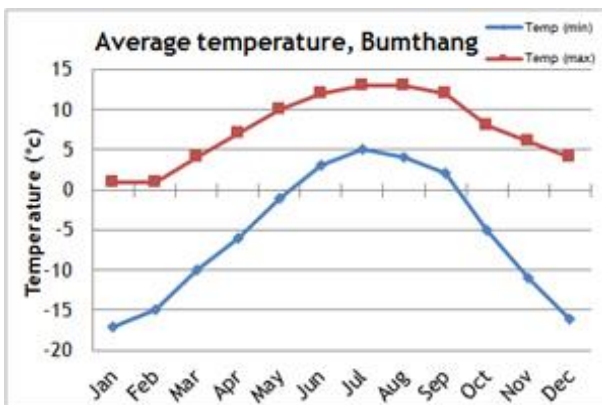
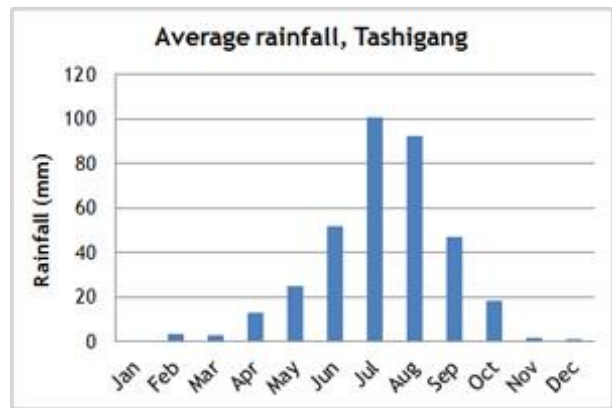
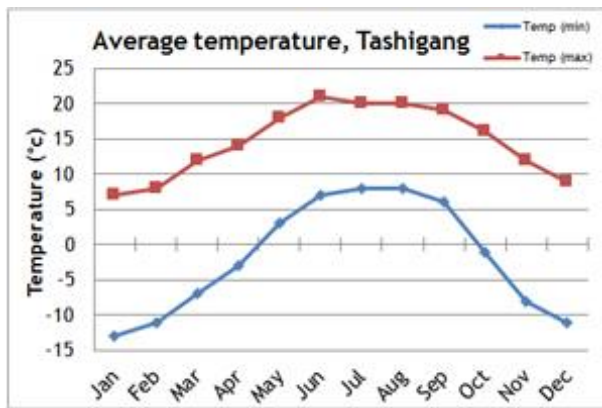
## The nature of adventure travel

---

Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.



# Climate information



# Extensions

---

## Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).



### Kaziranga National Park extension

The Kaziranga National Park is located east of Guahati which you visit at the end of the trip so it is possible to add on a trip to Kaziranga at the end of your Bhutan holiday. Kaziranga is a world heritage site, situated on the edge of the Eastern Himalaya biodiversity hotspot. It offers an amazing diversity of the landscape and wildlife. The large numbers of one-horned rhino are a particular attraction of Kaziranga.

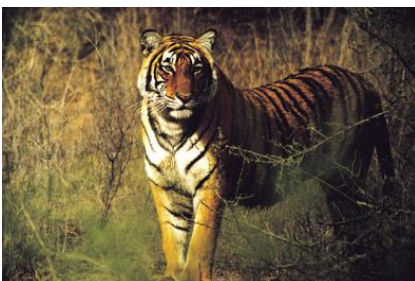


### Additional accommodation in Delhi

If you would like to stay longer in Delhi we can arrange additional nights and upgrades from our selection of first rate hotels such as the Oberoi Maidens in the city or Claridges Hotel in New Delhi.

### Agra, the Taj Mahal and Jaipur

We offer various extensions to Agra, from a one-day visit to see the majestic Taj Mahal to a six-day trip to visit both the Taj and the Amber Fort at Jaipur. All options travel to Agra on the Shatabdi Express and include the services of an English speaking guide, sightseeing and private transport.



### Ranthambore or Corbett National Park

In both Ranthambore and Corbett, northern India has two superb national parks. Both have a diverse range of habitats and are home to a fantastic variety of wildlife including large populations of tigers as well as elephants, leopard, bears and monkeys. Both parks are also renowned for the number and diversity of birds they attract. We can arrange a three night stay at a jungle camp at either Ranthambore or Corbett from where you can enjoy many wildlife watching activities such as nature walks, safaris and bird watching.

## Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

---

- This itinerary is unique to Mountain Kingdoms. It has been carefully designed to provide the ideal balance between meeting weavers and other craftspeople, taking gentle walks, sightseeing and enjoying time to simply relax.
- Sue Lawty is an unrivalled expert on textiles and is well qualified to give you a fantastic insight into Bhutanese textiles, weaving techniques and other crafts of the kingdom.
- Visits to the most important cultural attractions of the Thunder Dragon Kingdom are included such as Taktsang monastery (Tiger's Nest), Punakha Dzong and Trashigang Dzong.
- You will also explore the spectacular and little visited hill-top towns and temples of east Bhutan as well as the better known west of the country.
- Four nights in Bhutanese farmhouse homestays will give you a more personal and authentic insight into Bhutanese home-life and customs.
- Time at two local festivals has been included for the complete Bhutan experience.
- We have been pioneering holidays in Bhutan for over 35 years. Our M.D, Steve Berry, is one of the leading authorities on Bhutan in the travel industry and has written two books about his experiences in the Thunder Dragon Kingdom.
- We have been working with our partners in Bhutan for many years. Their knowledge, experience and attention to detail means you can be assured of a very high quality holiday.
- We offer a flexible service and you can extend your holiday with extra hotel nights, upgrades and activities.
- Our maximum group size is 12 for this trip. This provides for a genuine small group travel experience and helps reduce the negative aspects associated with larger groups.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.
- We are an IATA accredited agent and work directly with some of the world's major airlines. If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights Manager, April, for flight options, quotes and further information.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com) or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.



# Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

---

## **Truly independent**

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

## **Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality**

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

## **Complete financial security**

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

## **No Surcharge Guarantee**

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

## **Award winning Responsible Tourism**

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).

## **Genuine small group travel**

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

## **Loyalty Discount**

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

## **Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier**

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

## **Comprehensive information**

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.



## RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit [www.tourismdeclares.com](http://www.tourismdeclares.com)

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

### Carbon Offsetting

#### Already doing:

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

#### Will do:

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

### Reducing Carbon Emissions

#### Already doing:

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

#### Will do:

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.



