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DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM
Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment
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PRESS RELEASE

Royal Government extends 50% SDF Waiver until December 2029 to strengthen tourism recovery and growth

(Thimphu, 1 November, 2026): The Department of Tourism (DoT), Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment (MoICE), is pleased to announce that the Royal Government of Bhutan has approved the extension of the existing 50% waiver on the Sustainable Development Fee (SDF) of USD 200 for visitors from Countries Other Than India (COTI) until 31 December 2029.

With this extension, the SDF for COTI visitors will remain at USD 100 per person per night until 31 December 2029.

In addition, the Royal Government has approved the extension of the SDF waiver for visits of up to 24 hours to designated border towns for COTI tourists.

These decisions reaffirm the Royal Government's commitment to ensuring policy stability, predictability and a conducive environment for the continued recovery and sustainable growth of Bhutan's tourism industry.

By providing greater long-term policy certainty, the extension will enable international travellers, tour operators, travel agencies and tourism partners to plan, market and promote Bhutan with greater confidence. It will also strengthen Bhutan's competitiveness and positioning as a distinctive, high-value destination in the global tourism market.

As Bhutan's tourism industry continues its encouraging recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Royal Government recognises that policy consistency and predictability are essential to sustaining growth, strengthening international partnerships and encouraging long-term investment in the sector.

At the same time, Bhutan's tourism development will remain firmly anchored in its 'High Value, Low Volume' tourism policy, guided by the principles of sustainability, responsibility, inclusivity and regenerative tourism.

For more information about the Department of Tourism, visit HERE

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About the Department of Tourism

The Department of Tourism of Bhutan is dedicated to fostering sustainable tourism, showcasing the Kingdom's extraordinary places, people, and experiences to conscious travelers. It operates under the guiding principle of 'High value, Low volume' tourism, ensuring that Bhutan's unique identity and resources are preserved for future generations.

Bhutan Believe

Bhutan's national brand, "Bhutan Believe," reflects the nation's confidence in its future, rooted in the wisdom of its past. The tagline underscores Bhutan's potential, possibilities, and the collective optimism of its people. It calls on all citizens and visitors to embrace Bhutan's aspirations and contribute to its continued growth and resilience.

Tourism Service Providers

Bhutan's tourism services are delivered by certified tour operators, accommodation providers, and guides, licensed and regulated by the Department of Tourism. These providers adhere to national standards on service quality, safety, sustainability, and cultural sensitivity. A comprehensive list of certified tourism service providers is available at services.bhutan.travel.

Getting to Bhutan

Bhutan is accessible by air through Paro International Airport, served by Drukair – Royal Bhutan Airlines and Bhutan Airlines, with direct connections from key regional hubs including Bangkok, Delhi, Kolkata, Guwahati, Kathmandu, Singapore, Dhaka and Dubai. Overland entry is available for regional travellers through designated border points in Samdrup Jongkhar providing access to central and eastern regions by road.

Things to Do in Bhutan – Key Highlights

Bhutan offers a diverse range of experiences for visitors, from adventure and outdoor activities such as hiking, motorbiking, rafting, and fly-fishing through its mountains, forests, and river valleys, to wellness and spiritual journeys that include visits to ancient monasteries, traditional hot stone baths, and immersion in Bhutan's living spiritual culture. Nature lovers can explore protected landscapes and biodiversity-rich regions through ecotourism experiences, while heli-tours provide scenic flights over remote valleys and

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Himalayan peaks. Astro-tourism allows visitors to stargaze under some of the clearest night skies in the Himalayas. Bhutan's vibrant festivals and events, including colourful Tshechus, the Black-Necked Crane Farewell Festival, and Rhododendron Week, offer rich cultural encounters. Culinary experiences further enhance the journey, with opportunities to savour local favourites such as chilli and cheese (ema datshi), butter tea, buckwheat pancakes, and hoentay.

Best Time to Visit Bhutan – A Year-Round Destination

Bhutan is a year-round destination, with each season offering its own distinct character and experiences. In spring, flowers bloom and valleys come alive with colour. Summer transforms the landscape into a lush, green expanse, showcasing Bhutan at its wildest and most vibrant. Autumn brings clear skies, golden harvests, and some of the country's most celebrated festivals, while winter offers crisp air, snow-capped peaks, and a quieter Himalayan magic ideal for cultural travel and nature appreciation.

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