



བཟང་བཤམ་ལས་བྱེད་པ། བཟོ་གྲྭ་རྩིས་ལས་དང་ལྷན་གཞིའི་ལྷན་ཁག། DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment
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Press Release

Experience Bhutanese hospitality: homestay options for immersive and authentic experiences in Bhutan

(Thimphu, Bhutan- March 27, 2024): Bhutan is excited to unveil an authentic homestay experience, offering visitors a unique chance to live with Bhutanese families and engage intimately with the daily customs of local life, alongside our comprehensive selection of star-rated and various accommodation options.



Image credit: Mendegang Heritage Homestay, Punakha

Homestays are spread throughout the country and today, a total of 123 homestays are certified and validated by Bhutan's Department of Tourism. These homestays are often located in peaceful, less crowded areas, making them the perfect place for quiet reflection. While these homestays may not offer facilities like hotels and resorts, visitors can stay in a local farmhouse with a Bhutanese family and experience the daily life of Bhutanese people. They offer a clean, cozy, and spacious room for a comfortable stay and visitors can get a view of lush green nature, beautiful paddy fields, monasteries, mountains and so much more.

Staying in a Bhutanese local homestays offers a genuine Bhutanese experience, with warm hospitality and local meals. Visitors can join the daily rituals of Bhutanese people living in villages and participate in cultivation and harvesting alongside other farmers, pick seasonal fruits and vegetables, and eat authentic Bhutanese dishes. Moreover, one can also learn how to cook Bhutanese food as a family, with the homestay host often offering cooking classes. Bhutan has an abundance of local fresh organic vegetables



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and simple ways of Bhutanese cooking introduces visitors to a basic style of cooking, prevalent in the Himalayan region. They can learn how to make classic favorites such as momos (dumplings), Ema Datsi (chili & cheese), buckwheat noodles and traditional salads.



Image credit: Chimi Homestay, Haa Valley

Additionally, to provide a more immersive experience, homestays arrange cultural activities such as traditional dances, attire try-ons, and religious ceremonies. Services like spa and baths that are available in the modern hotels are replaced with hot stone baths in sheds near their homes. Hot-stone bath isn't just another wellness treatment, it is also an act of hospitality, as the host takes care and prepares the experience for guests. Hot stone baths are good for body aches, skin issues and muscle cramps.

Another interesting fact of homestays is that they prioritize sustainability in their design, operations, and amenities. Guests staying in a homestay can contribute significantly to sustainability and conservation efforts by embracing eco-friendly practices such as supporting local businesses, respecting wildlife and natural habitats, and participating in community-based conservation projects. The revenues from guests who stay in the homestays also contribute to the livelihood of the family and the local community.



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"We invite visitors from all across the world to stay in Bhutanese homestays and connect with locals. Each homestay reflects the personality of the host, which in turn creates a warm and genuine atmosphere that feels like home away from home. One of the delightful highlights of this experience is the opportunity to enjoy home-cooked meals, often prepared from secret family recipes. More than a stay, it is a chance to build connections that feel like family and create enduring memories of one's journey," concluded Carissa Nimah, the Chief Marketing Officer of the Department of Tourism.

Find the full list of validated and certified homestays at this [link](#). For more information about Bhutan's Department of Tourism, please visit this www.bhutan.travel.

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About the Department of Tourism

The Department of Tourism of Bhutan is responsible for the development and promotion of sustainable tourism in Bhutan. It works to share the Kingdom's remarkable places, people and experiences with conscious travellers, guided by the principles of high value, low volume tourism.

Bhutan Believe

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Bhutan Believe is Bhutan's national identity, which showcases an evolution and a spirit of optimism, destined to inspire pride, and spark the imagination of citizens and visitors alike.

As part of the revamped identity, the nation developed policies and plans for the country's advancement – in particular, for how it can invest in creating sustainable opportunities for its young people. Bhutan Believe goes beyond simply creating a new identity but aims to leverage the power of branding to connect Bhutan, and the stories it wants to tell, with a global audience.

Bhutan Visas and SDF

Applying for a visa (or permit) to Bhutan is simple. All visitors must have a visa and permit before traveling to Bhutan (except for tourists from India who can obtain a permit on arrival and those from Maldives and Bangladesh who can also obtain a visa on arrival). Visitors apply online for a visa or permit or via a Bhutanese Tour Operator.

It takes around five days to process a visa.

All guests must pay Bhutan's Sustainable Development Fee (SDF) of USD 100 per person per night (Concessionary rates apply for children) and a non-refundable, one-off visa application fee of USD 40. Indian guests pay SDF of Nu/INR. 1,200 per person per night. The SDF funds important cultural, environmental, health and educational projects across Bhutan. More information is available at: www.bhutan.travel

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