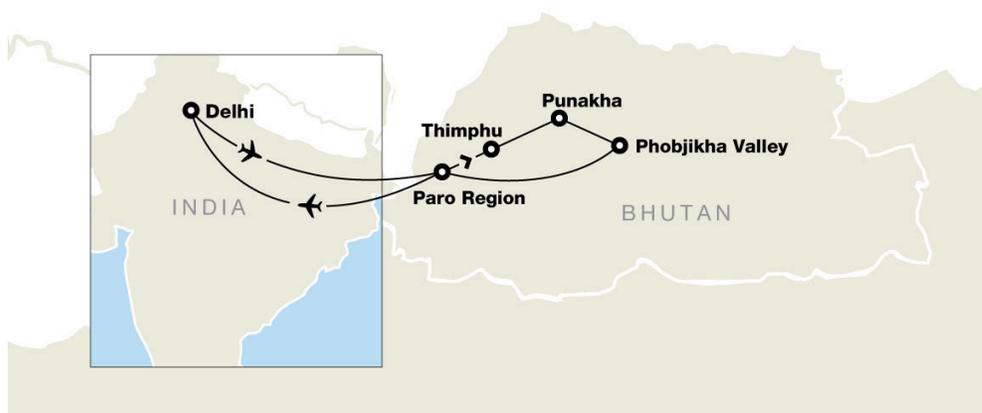




Bhutan Convention

11 days

Join fellow Group Coordinators and Go Ahead staff for an unforgettable adventure thanks to the 2022 re-opening of the historic Trans Bhutan Trail after a 60-year hiatus. When you journey to this small, Himalayan nation, you can explore its ancient fortresses, dramatic mountain landscapes, and charming local villages on a series of breathtakingly beautiful hikes. Plus, when you chat with local monks, students, and villagers, you'll learn firsthand why Bhutan, birthplace of the innovative Gross National Happiness concept, is consistently ranked one of the happiest places on earth. Tour point value: 2,900 for one; 5,000 for two.



Your tour package includes

- 8 nights in handpicked hotels
- 8 breakfasts
- 7 lunches
- 7 dinners with beer or wine
- 1 cooking demonstration
- 8 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach
- 2 on-tour flights

Included highlights

- Gross National Happiness chat
- Dochula Pass
- Zorig Chosum Painting School
- Changjiji READ Library
- Nalanda Monastery monk chat
- Convention Tour meeting and networking
- Optional Trans Bhutan Trail hike
- Punakha Dzong
- Gangtey Gonpa
- Farmhouse cooking demonstration
- Tiger's Nest
- Hot stone bath

Tour pace

You will walk/hike for at least 2 hours daily, across uneven terrain and along unpaved trails that are mostly flat, but with some steep hills.

Bhutan Convention

11 days

Overnight Flight → 1 night

Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Delhi, India, today.

Delhi → 1 night

Day 2: Arrival in Delhi

Welcome to India! Get settled in at your hotel this evening.

Thimphu → 2 nights

Day 3: Flight to Paro, transfer to Thimphu & Gross National Happiness chat

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, welcome dinner

This morning, fly to Paro, Bhutan. Then, transfer to Bhutan's capital city, Thimphu, for an included lunch.

After lunch, learn about the country's Gross National Happiness Index from a local expert.

- Learn how the fourth King of Bhutan declared that one's well-being requires equal importance of non-economic aspects
- Hear about the nine domains that the index is broken into, such as psychological well-being, cultural diversity, and community vitality

Later, get to know your fellow group members at tonight's welcome dinner.

Day 4: Sightseeing tour of Thimphu Valley & cultural dinner

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Set out for a day in the scenic Thimphu Valley and get a closer look at Bhutan's cultural traditions.

- Pay a visit to the Pangri Zampa Monastery, the oldest in the country
- Sit down with a monk astrologer for a private reading to learn the meaning of your name and birth year in Bhutanese tradition
- Stop to see the massive, 125-foot-high Buddha Dordenma statue that sits atop a gilded meditation hall

- Enter the Gagyel Lhundrup Weaving Centre to see the weavers craft traditional cloth and learn about royal ceremonial textiles

Sit down for an included lunch before continuing your journey through the Thimphu Valley.

- Take part in an interactive art lesson with students at the National Institute for Zorig Chusum
- Learn how the college works to promote and revive the country's traditional arts and crafts among its youth
- Meet local women at the Changjiji READ Center to hear about the international non-profit organization's programs and how the women use its library
- Explore VAST Gallery, a contemporary art gallery founded by artists to help educate Bhutanese youth

Tonight, sit down for an included dinner and meet with Thimphu locals to learn about their culture and way of life.

Punakha → 2 nights

Day 5: Punakha via Dochula Pass & Nalanda Monastery

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Travel through the snow-covered Himalayas to the subtropical valley of Punakha, making several stops along the way.

- Climb to 10,200 feet to the Dochula Pass, where you can join locals in paying your respects to the gods by hanging a colorful prayer flag
- Step inside Druk Wangyal Lhakhang, a temple built in honor of His Majesty the fourth Druk Gyalpo, Jigme Singye Wangchuck
- Visit the Druk Wangyal Chortens, a collection of 108 Chortens, or Lamaist shrines, commissioned by Her Majesty the Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck in honor of 108 Bhutanese soldiers who were killed in a 2003 battle against Indian rebels
- Enjoy an included lunch with your group
- Stop at Nalanda Monastery to meet and chat with monks

- Help the monastery's resident monks practice their English skills as they study the language

This afternoon, set off on an optional hike along the Trans Bhutan Trail.

- Start in Sew Drangsa, the historic site where monks stop for lunch, and make your way toward Punakha Dzong fortress
- Take in spectacular views of the valley from the fortress

Hiking notes: Sew Drangsa to Punakha – 4.5 miles / 2.5 hours. A moderate hike along a dirt trail that is mostly downhill with some uneven terrain.

Sit down for an included dinner at a local restaurant this evening.

Day 6: Convention Tour meeting & sightseeing tour of Punakha Town

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Join your group for a Convention Tour meeting, a series of presentations and discussions designed with Group Coordinators' questions, experiences, and interests in mind.

- Begin with a keynote address by senior members of Go Ahead Tours' staff, followed by an insider's view of the company and tours
 - Discuss tour planning and recruiting best practices with Go Ahead Tours' staff and your fellow Group Coordinators
 - Get an overview of the many benefits available to you as a Go Ahead Tours Group Coordinator and learn about new program updates
 - Enjoy a break with coffee, tea, and biscuits
- Sit down for lunch at a local restaurant, then return to charming Punakha town for a guided walk.
- Cross the Punakha Bazam, a wooden cantilever bridge used for processions and coronation celebrations
 - Enter the Punakha Dzong for a guided tour of the fortress, which houses sacred relics and is part of the Kagyu School of Tibetan Buddhism
 - Return to the Nalanda Monastery to visit with the monks again, or enjoy free time

This evening, enjoy an included dinner at a local restaurant.

Please note: Punakha Dzong's dress code strictly prohibits shorts and sleeveless shirts.

Phobjika Valley → 1 night

Day 7: Sightseeing tour of Gangtey Gonpa & Bhutanese farmhouse lunch

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Make your way to the glacially formed Phobjikha Valley, home to several types of wildlife, including the endangered black-necked crane. Here, you'll have a chance to visit the Gangtey Gonpa monastery, which is the main seat of the Pema Lingpa tradition.

Afterwards, visit a local farmhouse for a traditional Bhutanese lunch, then hear about potato farming and try your hand at some farm chores.

Enjoy an included dinner this evening with your group.

- Make your way to a farmhouse for a relaxing, rustic hot-stone bath

Tonight, celebrate your trip and experience a vibrant performance of Bhutanese dances followed by a delicious farewell dinner.

Hiking notes: Tiger's Nest – 4 miles / 5 hours. A long and difficult uphill climb.

Overnight Flight → 1 night

Day 10: Flight to Delhi & departure

Included meals: breakfast

Today, fly back to Delhi, India, and relax in a dayroom before boarding your overnight or early morning flight home.

Paro Region → 2 nights

Day 8: Transfer to Paro Region, sightseeing tour & cooking demonstration

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Travel to Paro this morning, then join a local guide and get to know the Paro region on a guided sightseeing tour.

- Visit the Ta Dzong watchtower, a structure that was built in the 17th century to protect Paro Dzong from the Tibetan military and that now houses Bhutan's National Museum
- Explore the stunning Paro Rinpung Dzong fortress
- Enjoy a Bhutanese cooking demonstration, followed by a delicious farmhouse lunch
- Try your hand at archery, which is Bhutan's national sport, and khuru, a traditional dart-throwing game and competitive sport in Bhutan

Tonight, sit down with your group for an included dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 9: Tiger's Nest, hot-stone bath & cultural show

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, farewell dinner

Head out to Bhutan's most famous landmark, Paro Taktsang, more commonly known as Tiger's Nest.

- Hike along the ancient pilgrimage trail through a dense, pine forest
- Catch your first glimpse of the awe-inspiring Tiger's Nest, a cliffside, golden-roofed monastery that's accessible only by foot or horseback
- Enjoy an included lunch at Tiger's Nest and take in stunning views of the ravine nearly 3,000 feet below

Arrive Home

Day 11: Arrival at home

Arrive home today.