



Nepal and Bhutan Adventure

Go Beyond Tour | 14 Days | Physical Level 4

Kathmandu – Nagarkot – Kathmandu – Thimphu – Punakha – Paro –
Kathmandu

A voyage through the magical lands of Nepal and Bhutan, this tour is a journey of spirituality, ancient tradition and spectacular nature. Get under the skin of these fascinating countries by meeting the hospitable local people in Himalaya-surrounded villages. You will also take some moderate walks, including up to the famous Tiger's Nest monastery. Facilities and accommodation can be basic in some remote areas.

- Gaze on Mount Everest
- Explore Kathmandu
- Walk through rural villages
- Hike to Tiger's Nest Monastery
- Take a Nepalese cooking class
- Visit the dzongs in Bhutan



Nepal and Bhutan Adventure tour inclusions:

Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)

- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English-speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers)
- Visa fees for Australian passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

The only things you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, tipping, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary.

Go Beyond Tours:

Venture off the beaten track to explore fascinating destinations away from the tourist trail. You will discover the local culture in depth and see sights rarely witnessed by other travellers. These tours take you away from the comforts of home but will reward you with the experiences of a lifetime.

Physical Level 4:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights. 'Nepal and Bhutan Adventure' is rated 4 on the physical level scale. A good level of fitness is required as you need to be comfortable walking for 2-3 hours and covering longer distances.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time
- You will be at a higher altitude in Nepal. All passengers should rest and stay well hydrated to acclimatize.

Of course, our National Escorts and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. If you require any more information about the pace of our tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

Itinerary – Nepal and Bhutan Adventure

Day 1: Fly to Nepal

Upon arrival in Kathmandu, you will be met in the Arrivals Hall by your National Escort or Local Guide and transfer around 1 hour 15 minutes to your hotel in Nagarkot to check-in for a two-night stay. The rest of the day is at leisure to acclimatise to the higher altitude.

Destination Information

Nepal - The small Kingdom of Nepal sits atop the Himalayas wedged between India, Tibet and China. It is renowned for its incredible landscapes and is home to 10 of the world's 14 tallest mountains. The mountaineering race of the early 20th century brought this tiny nation to the attention of the whole world. Even today, from the low lands of the Terai (the plain in the southwest), through the ancient and noble towns of the Kathmandu Valley, to the unrivalled heights of Mt. Everest, the country retains a medieval atmosphere. Markets thrive in town squares, alleys wind between temples, homes and water wells, and statues of Ganesh are covered in rice, tiny flowers and coloured powder.

Day 2: Nagarkot

Nagarkot altitude 2,175m

Rise early this morning to watch the sunrise over the striking landscapes of the Himalayan mountains whilst walking through the village of Nagarkot. The village boasts many walking trails with spectacular views and is also home to swarms of butterflies. Later, travel to the neighbouring village of Bastola to meet the local people and take a traditional cooking class.



Destination Information

Nagarkot- A mountainous resort village, Nagarkot offers some of the best panoramic views in Nepal, especially during the hours of sunrise and sunset when the changing light casts dramatic colours and shadows on the magnificent mountain peaks.

Day 3: Bhaktapur - Kathmandu

Kathmandu altitude 1,400m

After breakfast, start your journey back to the capital, Kathmandu. On the way you will stop at Bhaktapur, a wonderfully preserved and atmospheric medieval city, and the third of the ancient royal capitals. At the original town gates, your group coach will drop you off and you will receive a ticket that allows you entry into several important sites within Bhaktapur. Visit the home of a Newari family before wandering to Durbar Square to admire the beautiful architecture including the Golden Gate at the Palace of 55 Windows. Finally, head to Potters' Square to visit a ceramics workshop and learn traditional pottery skills from a master potter. Finish the day by checking into your hotel in Kathmandu, around an hour's drive further.



Destination Information

Bhaktapur - Traffic is prohibited in Bhaktapur, making it a wonderful place to explore on foot. The absence of traffic makes this a treasure trove of antiquated sites. In markets and alleys, corn husks and handmade noodles are all laid out on a sheet to dry in the sun, baskets of chillies, temples and shrines covered with offerings of food, brightly coloured powder or flowers.

Durbar Square - Founded in the 12th century and located in the heart of the city, Bhaktapur's charming Durbar Square is filled with monuments, palaces and temples with elaborately carved roofs.

Golden Gate - The splendid Golden Gate is entrance to the Palace of 55 Window. Completed in 1754, the gate is one of the finest examples of Nepal's repoussé metalwork.

Palace of 55 Windows - Built in the 17th century, the palace features a balcony of 55 intricate wooden windows, a masterpiece of wood carving.

Day 4: Kathmandu

Kathmandu altitude 1,400m

Kathmandu is a hub of culture and artistic heritage and a monument to the medieval era. Visit Swayambhunath Temple and the grand Patan Royal Palace in Durbar Square today. There is very little sun protection, so bring hats and sunscreen. Also make sure to keep a firm hold of cameras as monkeys have been known to steal them!



Destination Information

Swayambhunath Stupa - Often called 'the monkey temple' because of the hundreds of monkeys that scamper about the place. Its location, atop a hill west of Kathmandu, makes the stupa visible for miles and is thought to have been a Buddhist pilgrimage site since the 5th century.

Patan - The second largest city in Nepal and located 5km from Kathmandu, on the southern bank of the Bagmati River. Until 1768, when King Prithvi Narayan Shah (a Gorka) unified the Kingdoms of Nepal into a single nation, the Kathmandu Valley supported three separate Kings - one in Kathmandu, one in Patan and another in Bhaktapur.

Durbar Square - Situated in the heart of the city, Durbar Square is the centre of Patan's religious and social life. The stunning display of Newari architecture houses three main courtyards, an array of temples, shrines, houses and the Royal Palace.

Royal Palace - Though parts of the richly decorated Royal palace dates back to the 14th century, the majority of the construction was completed in the 17th century. The Royal Palace forms the eastern side of the Durbar Square and contains a series of courtyards, temples and a museum for the royal collection.

Day 5: Kathmandu

Head to the iconic Boudhnath Stupa and monastery this morning, dominating Kathmandu's skyline for centuries, its great Buddha eyes surveying the city below. Here you will have a special Lama blessing from the local Tibetan Buddhist monks. Later, The Lama Blessing is conducted inside the monastery so smoking, drinking alcohol and eating meat items are prohibited. You will be required to sit on the floor, where you will receive the blessing and Khada (traditional scarf) from the Lama one by one. Later visit the holy Pashupatinath Temple before returning to Kathmandu. This sightseeing involves around 2 hours on foot and may have the climbing of stone steps. Please note that here you may see the practice of animal sacrifice or cremation - refer to the Nepalese Customs section for further information on touring.



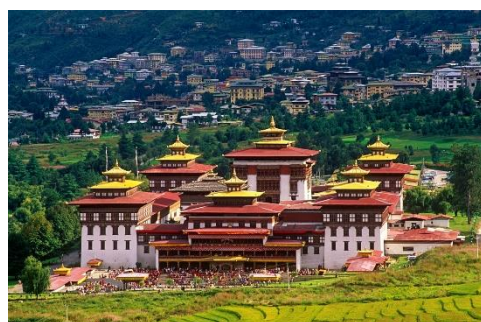
Destination Information

Stupa - The largest stupa in Nepal and the capital city's religious centre for ethnic Tibetans who form a significant proportion of Nepal's population. The Bodhnath Stupa is thought to have been originally built in 600AD, after the famous Tibetan King, Songtsen Gampo was converted to Buddhism.

Pashupatinath Temple - A Hindu temple of Lord Shiva situated 5km east of Kathmandu on the banks of the sacred Bagmati River. Pashupatinath Temple has a two-tiered golden roof and is famous for its superb architecture. It is a centre of annual pilgrimage on the day of Maha Shivaratri. Here one may also witness the cremations of the dead bodies of Hindus. Devotees from all over the world come here to pay their homage to Lord Shiva. **Please note:** Entrance to Pashupatinath is permitted to the Hindus only, however visitors can clearly see the temple and the activities performed inside the temple from outside.

Day 6: Thimphu, Bhutan

Transfer to the airport this morning and fly into the fascinating kingdom of Bhutan. On arrival at Paro airport, transfer to Thimphu, Bhutan's capital. The rest of the day is yours to enjoy at leisure.



Destination Information

Thimphu - The centre of government, religion and commerce in Bhutan and is located in a valley with the Wang Chhu River running through the centre of town. Thimphu is the busiest town in Bhutan but remains the only capital in the world without traffic lights. They were once installed but removed after only one day because too many people complained about them being impersonal. Local police have now taken their place.

Day 7: Thimphu

The centre of government, religion and commerce in Bhutan, Thimphu is located in a valley with the Wang Chhu River running through the centre of town. Despite being the busiest town in Bhutan it remains the only capital in the world without traffic lights! Your sightseeing tour of Thimphu begins this morning with a visit to the National Library, the nearby Institute for Zorig Chusum and a viewing of the National Institute of Traditional Medicine. After lunch at the hotel, discover the National Memorial Chorten, browse a handicraft emporium, tour the Folk Heritage Museum and the Textile Museum. Later offer prayers to Buddha at Buddha Point and explore Trashi Chhoe Dzong. In total today, there will be approximately 3 to 4 hours of walking.



Destination Information

National Library - Serves to preserve Bhutan's literacy history. Established in 1967, the library contains ancient Dzongkha and Tibetan texts and is a good example of traditional Bhutanese architecture.

Institute for Zorig Chusum - Also commonly known as the Painting School. The institute offers a six year course on the 13 traditional arts and crafts of Bhutan

National Memorial Chorten - The building of this chorten was originally the idea of Bhutan's 3rd King, H.M. Jigme Dorji Wangchuck ('the father of modern Bhutan'), who had wished to build a monument dedicated to world peace and prosperity. After His Majesty's untimely death in 1972, the royal family and cabinet resolved to fulfil his wishes and build the memorial.

Folk Heritage Museum - This museum is basically an old farmhouse built and decorated in traditional design and preserved as a reminder of the traditional way of life.

National Textile Museum - View the traditional dress of the various minorities found in Bhutan.

Buddha Point - Located a short drive from Thimphu city centre. Pay your obeisance and offer prayers to the Buddha, the largest statue in the country, then walk around and admire the view of Thimphu valley below.

Trashi Chhoe Dzong - The 'Fortress of the Glorious Religion', which was initially erected in 1641. It now houses some ministries, His Majesty's secretariat, and is also the summer residence of the Dratshang (the central monk body). It is open to visitors while the Monk Body moves in winter to Punakha.

Day 8: Thimphu - Punakha

On arrival to the village of Punakha visit Punakha Dzong before hiking through the paddy fields and local villages to Chimi Lhakhang, also known as the temple of fertility. Explore the area around Punakha today.



Destination Information

Punakha - Served as the capital of Bhutan until 1955 and is still the winter seat of the Je Khenpo (Chief Abbot). Blessed with a temperate climate and fed by the Pho Chhu (male) and Mo Chhu (female) rivers, Punakha is the most fertile valley in the country.

Punakha Dzong - Located on the junction of the two rivers. This Dzong is the second oldest in Bhutan (built between 1637-38) and is still a working monastery. During its life it has survived six fires, two floods, two earthquakes and endless sieges from Tibetan armies.

Day 9: Punakha

Visit Sangchhen Dorji Lhuendrup Lhakhang temple complex, which overlooks the valleys of Punakha and Wangdue Phodrang. Later discover Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten, which was built to remove negative forces and promote peace, stability and harmony in the changing world.



Destination Information

Sangchhen Dorji Lhuendrup Lhakhang - Overlooking the Punakha Valley is Sangchhen Dorji Lhuendrup Lhakhang a Buddhist Nunnery of Bhutan. It is a double storey Nunnery and Buddhist Monastery. The two storey structure showcasing the finest craftsmanship of Bhutanese architecture Sangchhen Lhuendrup Lhakhang Nunnery has become one of the must visit places.

Day 10: Paro

Paro altitude 2,200m

This morning drive 4 and a half hours by road to Paro, stopping en route at the Simtokha Dzong. In the afternoon, visit Ta Dzong and Rinpung Dzong. A steady uphill walk is required to reach the ridge where the Dzongs sit; please refer to Appropriate Dress below for visiting the Dzongs.



Destination Information

Paro - Paro's beautiful valley encapsulates a rich culture, scenic beauty and hundreds of myths and legends. It is home to many of Bhutan's oldest temples and monasteries, the country's only airport and the National Museum. The Paro valley is one of the Kingdom's most fertile, producing the bulk of Bhutan's famous red rice from its terraced fields.

Day 11: Paro

Paro altitude 2,200m

This morning experience what is sure to be a highlight of your time in Bhutan - hike to the Taktsang Monastery (Tigers Nest)! Drive approximately 20 minutes to the start point for a hike to Taktsang Monastery. The moderate hike takes all morning, after which a vegetarian lunch is served at the cafeteria located inside the Monastery, which is run by monks. Return to Paro in the afternoon, visiting Kyichu Lhakhang, (if time permits) one of the oldest and most sacred temples of the Kingdom.



Please note: The trek to the Taktsang Monastery is very steep in some places and can be unstable on foot, particularly on the downward leg as the steps (close to 800 of them) are only found between the view point and the monastery with the remainder of the path being dirt. Despite this, the journey is certainly worthwhile on account of the superb views en route. If you have mobility issues or dislike heights, you may struggle to undertake this trek. Please speak to your National Escort or local guide if you have any concerns. Please read the Taktsang Monastery section of the travel information below for more details on today's hike.

Destination Information

Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest) - One of the most famous monasteries in Bhutan. The monastery is perched on the side of a cliff, 900m above the Paro valley floor. It is said that Guru Rinpoche arrived here on the back of a tigress and meditated at this place, hence why the monastery is also called 'Tiger's Nest'. This site, which has long been recognised as a most sacred place, was visited by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in 1646, the religious and temporal ruler of Bhutan. It is a place of pilgrimage that Bhutanese try to visit at least once in their lifetime.

Kyichu Lhakhang - One of the oldest and most sacred temples of the Kingdom, Kyichu Lhakhang was built in 659AD by King Songtsen Gampo of Tibet; legend tells that it was built over the body of a giant 'demoness' who was preventing the spread of Buddhism.

Day 12: Kathmandu

Say farewell to Bhutan and transfer to the airport for your early morning flight to Kathmandu. Upon arrival transfer to your hotel for an overnight stay. This evening take a rickshaw ride through the bustling streets around Thamel markets, finishing the day with a delicious farewell meal of traditional food whilst enjoying Nepalese folk music and dancing. At the Thamel market please be mindful of your valuables.



Destination Information

Thamel markets - Thamel has been the centre of the tourist industry in Kathmandu since the mid-1960's, starting from the hippie days when many artists came to Nepal and spent weeks in Thamel. It is the hottest spot for tourism inside the Kathmandu valley and is known by its narrow alleys crowded with various shops and vendors. Commonly sold goods include food, fresh vegetables/fruits, pastries, trekking gear, walking gear, music, DVDs, handicrafts, souvenirs, woolen items and clothes. Travel agencies, small grocery stores, budget hotels, restaurants, pubs and clubs also line the streets.

Days 13-14: Depart Kathmandu

You will be transferred to the airport according to the departure time of your flight today. Any time before your flight will be at leisure.

Visas

Entry visas are required by all visitors to India and Bhutan. Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. Please be advised that your passport must have at least 6 months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

For India: Please be advised that all E-Visa Applications for India will be completed by Wendy Wu Tours. The information is available from <https://www.wendywutours.com.au/before-you-go/passports-visas-travelhealth/> - Wendy Wu Tours requires the information sheet, a clear colour photo in JPEG format and clear colour passport copy emailed through to documentation@wendywutours.com.au. Visas are valid for 120 days from the date of issue and allow you to stay in the country for up to 60 days. Visa application forms and all relevant documentation are due in our office 75 days prior to departure. Applications will not be accepted within 30 days of departure. E-Visas will be included with your final documentation approximately three to four weeks prior to your group tour's scheduled departure. If you require your E-Visa organised earlier, please contact us.

For Bhutan: A permit is required to enter Bhutan. Our partners in India will also arrange this, as it is not available from Australia. The Bhutan permit will also be applied for after the Indian Visa is issued. A scanned colour copy of your passport bio page will be taken by our Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department once your passport arrives in our office for the application of your Indian visa. The permit will then be applied for and a document will be sent back to our office. This is not your permit, just proof showing you have applied for one. Your actual travel permit will be stamped in your passport when you cross the border at Phuentsholing.

It is a condition of booking with us that you take out suitable travel insurance. You must provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. These details will be available to your national escort should they be required. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Eating in Nepal and Bhutan

Nepalese cuisine is based around the ingredients grown locally in the mountainous areas. Dishes served in restaurants on our group tours are varied. Some will be vegetable-based with meat mixed in, and a few will be meat-based. Our restaurants are well aware of the western palate – there are plenty of non-spiced options. When eating meals on group tours, you will be seated around a circular table with other tour members. Dishes will be served in the traditional 'family style'; meaning that various dishes will be laid out in the centre of the table top. These dishes are intended to be shared amongst the group – there is always more than enough to feed everybody. Bhutanese cuisine consists of steamed rice (red or white) served with spicy curries and can be

vegetarian and non-vegetarian. Most hotels offer buffet-style meals that include Continental, Chinese and Bhutanese food.

We recommend that when it comes to food, you stay open minded and try to be adventurous!

Altitude

This itinerary visits several areas of high altitude. If you have an existing respiratory, vascular or coronary condition, we recommend checking with your doctor before undertaking this itinerary. The following parts of the itinerary have high altitude:

AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness) occurs in some people when they travel to altitudes over 3,000m. Mild symptoms of AMS include dizziness, fatigue, nausea or loss of appetite, breathlessness or headache. These usually develop over the first 36 hours at altitude and not immediately on arrival. AMS symptoms are experienced by people of varying ages and levels of fitness, and usually the symptoms will subside after a day or so. If symptoms worsen, you should seek medical advice and descend in altitude immediately. It is recommended to drink more water, non-alcoholic and non-caffeinated drinks and avoid exertion after arriving at altitudes over 3,000m.

Making sure you are well hydrated (by drinking lots of water and refraining from alcohol/caffeine) before and during the tour, as well as exercising to improve your aerobic fitness before you leave, are generally considered to be excellent ways to prevent or alleviate the severity of mild AMS. If you smoke, your doctor will probably also advise you to stop several weeks before your tour. During this tour, the Wendy Wu Tours group tour coach will be equipped with oxygen tanks for emergency situations. Take this Tour Dossier with you to your appointment to explain the altitude at which you will be travelling. Information on AMS can also be found in a document below or at http://www.travelvax.com.au/resource_files/Travel-Tips---Altitude-Sickness.pdf

Insurance

We strongly encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the originals.

Accommodation

Your accommodation has been selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family-run guesthouse in a smaller town or a heritage-type hotel. In remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard but do please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between Australia and Nepal. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards are met.

All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and a telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort or Local Guide.

Transport

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary.

Road Conditions: Time taken in getting from A to B in this region is usually dependent on the size of your group. Roads particularly in Bhutan are mostly tarred but a single lane. Though marked as dual lanes, they are invariably the width of one and a half lanes. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road – not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. Main and inner-city roads in Nepal have a reputation for being very congested. For this reason, it may not always be possible to return to your hotel after sightseeing to freshen up before going to the restaurant for dinner. Roads in Nepal and Bhutan have generally been improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the sections above are approximations only.

Most of the roads are also very winding and are cut into a cliff face, giving you a magnificent view of the scenery and mountains as you drive past. This means space to pass is at a premium, and although distances are not large the time to travel these distances is a lot longer than it would take in Australia. Continual road works are also taking place in Bhutan, with rocks being extracted to be used in the Hydro Electric Power Stations that are under construction in Bhutan. This will impact on drive times and may mean some days are full of driving including comfort stops throughout the day. Though there are toilet stops at cafes and restaurants, some will be at 'bush toilets' en route, hence it is a good idea to carry some toilet paper with you at all times.

Development in Nepal and Bhutan

Although Nepal is developing quickly, it still lacks international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in Australia. The same information can be applied to travelling in Bhutan. While efforts are being made by local government to improve facilities and infrastructure, roads are still quite undeveloped. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in Australia, for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. All of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort or Local Guides.

Nepalese Customs

Nepal has many special customs and rituals that tie into daily life, some of these may be surprising or unsettling for some passengers. While the guide will make every effort to forewarn passengers when visiting sites that may participate in the practise of animal sacrifice or cremation, there may be special local festivals within villages where such rituals are unavoidable. When visiting the Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu, please be aware that you may witness cremations taking place across the canal. If you would prefer not to participate in this touring, please let your National Escort or Local Guide know upon arrival in Nepal.

Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest)

As the most famous of Bhutan's monasteries is perched on the side of a cliff 900m above the Paro Valley floor, this trek deserves its own mention. The climb is steep in some places and can be unstable under foot, particularly on the downward legs as steps are only found between the view point and the monastery with the remainder

of the path being dirt. Despite this, the journey is certainly worthwhile on account of the superb views en route. However, this is quite a physically challenging hike and anyone with mobility issues or a dislike of heights may prefer to stop at the halfway point; the cafeteria where lunch is served! The view from this point is quite spectacular should you not wish to continue to the top.

The hike to the monastery can be broken down into various stages. The first stage is the trek to the cafeteria (lunch stop) which is situated on a rocky outcrop across a ravine from the monastery. This leg of the trek takes approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour, depending on your level of fitness. There are ponies for hire (payable locally), however a weight restriction of approximately 80kg is applied by local operators.

The second stage of the walk is from the cafeteria to the lookout opposite the monastery. This leg takes close to another hour. At this point some may be content to snap photos and return to the cafeteria.

The next stage is the trek/climb down the steps in the cliff face to the bottom of the ravine which crosses over a stream and waterfall before the path again ascends to the entrance of the monastery. Once here we should be able to enter into the monastery and view the cave where Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal meditated. (Please note that cameras are not allowed inside the monastery). The visit and climb to the entrance and back to the lookout will take about another hour.

If you require any more information about the pace of this tour, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

Souvenirs

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions, which demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone, so we aim to take you to places, which hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a National Escort. There will usually be no more than 22 in the group, although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with Local Guides.

Tipping Policy

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed amongst your main service providers (for example local guides and drivers) throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at

a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the National Escort. Any other tipping, such as tips for bathroom attendants or hotel porters that are taking luggage to your room, is at your discretion based on satisfaction of services received, as are gratuities for additional requested special services.

Appropriate Dress

When visiting temples or mosques, both men and women should dress in conservative, non-revealing clothing. Full-length trousers with a shirt or t-shirt for men; and trousers or skirts well below the knee with a top that covers the shoulders and upper arms for women. Women might also consider carrying a 'modesty shawl' in their daypack – this could be a sarong or light scarf – which they can wear over their shoulders and heads to feel more comfortable while sightseeing at mosques.

Religious sites and homes throughout Bhutan Nepal require all visitors to remove their shoes to enter. Even if you then need to walk outdoors, over hot or rough ground, you will not be allowed to wear shoes. You will often find shoe storage rooms near the entrance of a site where it is customary to leave your shoes near the entrance. Occasionally there are 'shoe minders' who will offer to keep your shoes safe for a 'tip' – this is not compulsory so each customer can choose to tip for this service or not. If you do not want to remove your shoes, you will have to remain outside.

We recommend shoes that easily slip on and off, and carry a pair of thick, old socks in your daypack, which you can wear to protect your feet from any rough or hot surfaces.

Climbing Steps

Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defense against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Hindu and Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries, who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

Packing list and Climate

You will find a complete packing list and a helpful climate chart in the 'Suggested Packing List', which will be included in the pre-departure information link sent within your deposit documentation. Seasonal weather patterns can be quite unpredictable. Up to the minute information on worldwide weather can be found on www.weather.com

Luggage

All travelers are limited to two items of luggage each; a suitcase with a maximum weight of 15kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

Exchanging Cash

It is highly recommended that when travelling to cities outside of the main cities that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money. US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout Bhutan and Nepal however, other currencies such as Australian Dollars can generally be exchanged in hotels and airports provided notes are new and undamaged. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Your National Escort/Local Guide will remind you to do this before departure.

Personal Expenses & Optional Tours

Personal Expense - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of \$250AUD per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

Vaccinations and Your Health

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.travelvax.com.au

Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.smartraveller.gov.au as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

After your booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 3 weeks prior to departure.

Last updated September 30, 2019

