The Odyssey Bhutan Tour

Trip information · Nord Extreme Himalaya Pvt. Ltd. · delightful-orange-chimpanzee.tarevirjungleresort.com · Updated 22 November 2026

DURATION	**9 Days**
DIFFICULTY	**Moderate**
MAX ALTITUDE	**3300m**
GROUP SIZE	**10 People**
BEST SEASON	**September–November and March–May**
START / END	**Kathmandu / Kathmandu**
PRICE FROM	**USD 3,350 per person**

Trip overview

The Odyssey Bhutan Tour – A Deep Dive into the Kingdom of Happiness

The Odyssey Bhutan Tour is a longer, more immersive experience for travelers seeking to explore the rich cultural, spiritual, and natural diversity of Bhutan. Unlike shorter itineraries that focus on just one or two regions, this comprehensive tour spans west to east, offering a true journey across the kingdom—from the iconic monasteries of Paro to the untouched valleys of Trashigang. Lasting around 14 to 20 days, the Odyssey Bhutan Tour is perfect for those who want to deeply connect with Bhutan's landscapes, people, and timeless traditions.

Geography

Bhutan is a country of dramatic contrasts. From the subtropical plains in the south to the snowcapped Himalayas in the north, its geography is as diverse as it is stunning. The Odyssey Bhutan Tour typically begins in Paro, travels through the capital Thimphu, and heads eastward through Punakha, Trongsa, Bumthang, Mongar, and Trashigang.

Along the way, travelers pass through soaring mountain passes like Dochula (3,100 m) and Thrumshing La (3,780 m), cross glacial rivers, and explore lush valleys. You'll witness rice terraces, alpine forests, waterfalls, and rural farmlands—all within a single journey.

People and Climate

Bhutanese society is built on harmony with nature and spiritual life. The people are warm, humble, and deeply rooted in Mahayana Buddhism, which influences every aspect of life—from daily rituals to national policies. The tour provides numerous chances to engage with locals, visit family farms, observe monastic life, and attend religious ceremonies.

The population is ethnically diverse, with the Ngalops in the west, Sharchops in the east, and Lhotshampas in the south. This cultural mix is reflected in regional dialects, dress, and customs.

Bhutan's climate varies depending on the altitude and season. Spring (March–May) and autumn (September–November) are ideal for the Odyssey Tour, offering clear skies, blooming forests, and comfortable temperatures. The east is generally warmer and more humid, while the west is cooler and

more temperate.

Transportation

Travel in Bhutan is mostly by road, as the mountainous terrain limits air travel to a few locations. The Odyssey Bhutan Tour involves scenic drives across high mountain passes and through remote valleys. All transportation is in private vehicles, typically included in your tour package with a professional driver and English-speaking guide.

The journey starts with an international flight to Paro International Airport, Bhutan’s only international airport. Some itineraries end in the east, from where travelers can fly back to Paro (if domestic flights are available) or return overland.

The long road journeys are part of the adventure—each bend reveals stunning views, prayer flags fluttering on mountain passes, and opportunities to stop at roadside temples, villages, and viewpoints.

Highlights

- Experience the majestic landscape view of the Himalayas.
- Drive through the picturesque Dochula Pass (3100 meters) to Punakha Valley.
- Discover Bhutan's ancient kingdoms' rich history, stunning scenery, and awe-inspiring architecture.
- Immerse in Bhutanese handicrafts at the Handicrafts Emporium.
- Dive into Bhutan's rich heritage through visits to monasteries and cultural landmarks.
- Experience the warmth of Bhutanese hospitality in a traditional farmhouse.
- Spectacular climbing up to Taktsang (Tiger’s Nest Monastery) through a densely wooded area.
- See rare black-necked cranes at the Crane Centre.
- Learn about the most important concepts in Buddhism.

Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 : Arrival day and drive from Paro to Thimphu

Touching down at Paro International Airport, our Guide will be waiting for you just outside the arrival hall. We will take it easy so that you will have some time to acclimatize to the altitude. We make an hour drive to Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan, and check-in to the hotel. After which, you will visit the National Memorial Chorten which is built in honor of the late king Jigme Dorji Wanchuk. Thimphu Dzong, the largest Dzong in Bhutan, is also the seat of the office of the king of Bhutan. Every Saturday and Sunday most of the Thimphu population congregate on the bank of river where the weekend centenary Farmer’s market is held, here villagers from the valley and other nearby places come to sell their agricultural products. Thereafter, we will drive up to Buddha Point, in Kuenselphodrang Nature Park, where the 169 feet bronze statue of Buddha Dordenma, Vajra Throne Buddha, is located. It is one of the largest statue of sitting Buddha in the world. You can enjoy the night walking around Thimphu Town after dinner.

Day 2 : Thimphu- Full Day Sightseeing

After breakfast, drive to Bhutan’s capital, Thimphu, passing through idyllic countryside, with villages and paddy fields on either side of the road. A route visits Semtokha Dzong, one of the oldest fortresses of the country, which now houses the Institute for Language and Cultural Studies. Afternoon sightseeing in Thimphu valley, visiting: Tashichho Dzong, the seat of the government; the National Memorial Chorten, within which there are finely executed wall paintings and delicately fashioned statues which provide

deep insight into Buddhist philosophy; and the Handicrafts Emporium, which displays a wide range of the traditional handicrafts for which Bhutan is renowned. You may also be able to catch a game of archery in progress at the Changlimethang sports ground, just below the town. Take an early evening stroll around the market area before dinner. Overnight at the hotel in Thimphu.

Day 3 : Drive from Thimphu to Trongsa.

Driving through the majestic Dochula pass viewing 208 Chorten and Himalayan snow caped mountain peaks. Drive to Trongsa across Pele-la pass (3,300m/10,830ft). This pass is traditionally considered the boundary between western and central Bhutan. Further down the road, stop to visit Chendebji Chorten erected in the 18th century by a Tibetan lama to cover the remains of an evil spirit that was subdued at this spot. It is built in the Nepalese style, with painted eyes at the four cardinal points. The landscape around Trongsa is spectacular and its impressive Dzong, stretched along a ridge above a ravine, first comes into view about an hour before the winding road suddenly leads you into the town. On arrival, check in at the lodge. Dinner and overnight at the lodge in Trongsa.

Day 4 : Drive from Trongsa to Bumthang

Morning visit a Trongsa Dzong. Built in 1647 by the Shabdrung, it is the most impressive Dzong in Bhutan. Then visit Ta Dzong on the hillside above the town, built as a watchtower to guard Trongsa. After lunch proceed to Bumthang, one of the most spectacular valleys in Bhutan and also the holy heartland of Buddhism. The 68 km. journey takes about 3 hours. The road winds steeply up to Yutong-la pass (3,400m/11,155ft), then runs down through dense coniferous forest to enter a wide, open, cultivated valley, known as Chumey valley. From here it is about an hour to Bumthang, a most pleasant run in the soft, late afternoon light. Overnight at the hotel in Bumthang.

Day 5 : Bumthang -Full Day Sightseeing

Bumthang is the general name given to a group of four valleys – Chumey, Choekhor, Tang and Ura, with altitudes varying from 2,600 to 4,000m/8,530 to 13,125ft. In the morning we will visit Kurje Lhakhang, one of the most sacred places in the kingdom as Bhutan's "patron saint", Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava) meditated here. From Kurje monastery, a tarmac road heads south along the right bank of the river to Jambey Lhakhang. This temple, erected by the Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo in the 7th century, is one of the two oldest in Bhutan (the other being KyichuLhakhang in Paro). After lunch, we will visit Tamshing Lhakhang, founded in 1501 by Pema Lingpa. It contains interesting and ancient Buddhist wall paintings. Later on we will visit Jakar Dzong, "the castle of the white bird", then take a stroll through Bumthang's market area before returning to the lodge. Dinner and overnight at the lodge in Bumthang.

Day 6 : Drive from Bumthang to Punakha

Morning with early breakfast, we will drive to Punakha and overnight in hotel at Punakha.

Day 7 : Drive from Punakha to Paro

Punakha served as the capital of Bhutan until 1955, when the seat of government moved to Thimphu. Originally situated on the riverbank and dominated by the towering walls of Punakha Dzong, the township was relocated to a safer site a few kilometers down the valley, consequent upon extensive flooding in the early 1990s. At the same time, extensive renovation work was undertaken on Punakha Dzong itself, which is now a breathtaking and glorious sight as you first glimpse it from the road. Although four catastrophic fires and an earthquake in past times destroyed many historic documents,

Punakha Dzong still houses many sacred and historic artifacts and also the embalmed body of Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. Afternoon drive to Paro and halt at hotel in Paro.

Day 8 : Paro- Full Day Sightseeing

After breakfast we will visit historic places in Paro. Drukgyal Dzong – A morning drive, north of Paro Valley Brings us to the ruins of Drukgyal Dzong. Built in 1647 by the Great Zhabdrung Nagwang Namgyal, father and unifier of medieval Bhutan, the Dzong was destroyed by an accidental fire and lift in ruins as an evocative reminder of the great victories it was built to commemorate. Explore the ramparts and relive the memories of a glorious past. Kyichu Lhakang – After a sumptuous local lunch, we will retrace out steps to visit kyichu Lhakhang, one of the oldest temple in Bhutan.

Day 9 : Depart Paro

After early breakfast at the hotel, drive to the Paro airport for flight to your onward destination. Your Bhutan Jigme Pelden Tours and Travels' escort will help you with exit formalities and then bid you farewell.

What's included

1. Transportation

- Airport Pickup & Drop-off: All airport pick-up and drop-off services by private A/C car or van for convenience and comfort.

2. Permits & Staff

- National Park Entry Permit: Required entry permit for any national park you will be visiting during the trip.
- Tour Guide: Experienced guide to ensure a safe, informative, and enjoyable experience throughout the trip.

3. Accommodation & Meals

- Meals: All three meals (Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner – BLD) included during the trip.
- Accommodation: Comfortable stays provided during the trip, ensuring rest and relaxation.

4. Health & Safety

- First Aid Kit: A complete first aid kit available throughout the trip for emergency situations.

5. Cultural Experience

- Farewell Dinner: A memorable farewell dinner featuring live Nepalese cultural performance, offering a glimpse into local traditions and entertainment.

Not included

1. Personal Expenses

- Personal Nature Expenses: Costs for shopping, additional personal items, and other individual expenditures.

2. Services & Meals outside Itinerary

- Drinks & Beverages: Any beverages not included in the meals, such as soft drinks, alcoholic beverages, etc.
- Hot Showers & Extra Services: Additional costs for hot showers, WiFi, and other optional services at accommodations.

3. Travel Insurance

- Travel Insurance: Comprehensive travel insurance, covering medical emergencies, trip cancellation, and other unforeseen circumstances.

4. Tips & Gratuities

- Tips: Optional but customary for guides, drivers, and other service providers.

5. Sightseeing Costs

- Entrance Fees: Fees for sightseeing activities, monuments, or attractions not included in the package.

6. Accommodation in Kathmandu

- Meals & Hotel in Kathmandu: Accommodation and meals in Kathmandu are not included unless specified in the itinerary

Dates & prices

- 02 Mar 2027 – 10 Mar 2027 · USD 3,350 · Available
- 16 Mar 2027 – 24 Mar 2027 · USD 3,350 · Available
- 06 Apr 2027 – 14 Apr 2027 · USD 3,350 · Available
- 20 Apr 2027 – 28 Apr 2027 · USD 3,350 · Available
- 04 May 2027 – 12 May 2027 · USD 3,350 · Available

Best time to visit

Best months: March–May and October–November. Spring (March–May) brings rhododendrons and the Paro Tsechu festival; autumn (September–November) has clear Himalayan views and the Thimphu Tsechu. Winter is cold but bright, and the summer monsoon is green with fewer visitors.

What to bring — packing checklist

Clothing

- [ ] Moisture-wicking base layers (top and bottom)
- [ ] Fleece or light insulated mid-layer
- [ ] Down jacket (–10 °C rated for high trails)
- [ ] Waterproof, breathable shell jacket and trousers
- [ ] 2–3 trekking shirts and 2 pairs of trekking trousers
- [ ] Warm hat, sun hat or cap and buff
- [ ] Light liner gloves and warm insulated gloves
- [ ] Underwear and sports bras

Footwear

- [ ] Broken-in waterproof trekking boots with ankle support
- [ ] Camp shoes or sandals for teahouse evenings
- [ ] Hiking socks (4–5 pairs) and warm wool socks for nights

Equipment

- [ ] Daypack 30–35 L with rain cover
- [ ] Sleeping bag rated to –10 °C (we can provide one)
- [ ] Trekking poles
- [ ] Sunglasses with UV protection
- [ ] Duffel bag for the porter (provided by Nord Extreme)

Health & personal

- [ ] Personal medication and a small first-aid kit
- [ ] Altitude medicine (Diamox) after consulting your doctor
- [ ] Water bottles or a 2–3 L hydration bladder, purification tablets or filter
- [ ] Sunscreen SPF 50, lip balm with SPF
- [ ] Hand sanitiser, wet wipes, quick-dry towel
- [ ] Headlamp with spare batteries, power bank

Documents & money

- [ ] Passport valid for 6+ months, plus copies
- [ ] Travel insurance policy (covering helicopter evacuation)
- [ ] 4 passport photos for permits
- [ ] Cash in USD / Nepali rupees for tips, snacks and extras
- [ ] Credit or debit card

Down jackets and sleeping bags can also be rented in Kathmandu.

Essential information

Duration

The Odyssey Bhutan Tour is an extensive cultural and scenic journey that typically lasts 12–16 days, offering a complete exploration of Bhutan from the western valleys to the remote eastern regions. This carefully designed itinerary allows travelers to experience the country's extraordinary landscapes, ancient monasteries, traditional villages, historic fortresses, and authentic Bhutanese lifestyle while traveling through some of the kingdom's most beautiful and less-visited destinations.

Tour Grade

The tour is graded as Easy to Moderate and is suitable for travelers of all ages with a reasonable level of fitness. The itinerary combines comfortable scenic drives, guided sightseeing, cultural experiences, short nature walks, and optional hikes to monasteries and viewpoints. No trekking experience is required, making the journey ideal for couples, families, photographers, history enthusiasts, and cultural explorers.

Altitude

The tour covers elevations ranging from approximately 1,200 metres to 3,400 metres above sea level. The highest points are the scenic mountain passes of Dochula Pass (3,100 m) and Pele La Pass (3,420 m), offering breathtaking panoramic views of the Himalayan mountain range. The gradual travel through different elevations allows visitors to acclimatize naturally while enjoying Bhutan's remarkable diversity

of landscapes.

Destinations

The Odyssey Bhutan Tour explores many of Bhutan's most significant cultural and natural destinations, including Paro, Thimphu, Punakha, Phobjikha Valley, Trongsa, Bumthang, Mongar, Trashigang, and selected villages in eastern Bhutan. Each destination offers its own unique character, from magnificent monasteries and historic dzongs to remote farming communities and unspoiled mountain scenery.

Accommodation

Accommodation is provided in carefully selected 3-star, 4-star, boutique, or luxury hotels, depending on the chosen travel package. Each property combines modern comfort with traditional Bhutanese architecture and warm hospitality, ensuring a relaxing and memorable stay throughout the journey.

Meals

Daily breakfast, lunch, and dinner are included throughout the tour. Guests enjoy authentic Bhutanese cuisine together with Indian, Asian, and Continental dishes prepared using fresh local ingredients. Vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, and other dietary requirements can be arranged with advance notice.

Transportation

All transportation is provided by comfortable private tourist vehicles with experienced professional drivers. Airport transfers, sightseeing tours, and intercity travel are included, allowing guests to travel safely and comfortably along Bhutan's scenic mountain roads and valleys.

Best Time to Visit

The Odyssey Bhutan Tour can be enjoyed throughout the year, although the best travel seasons are March to May and September to November. During these months, visitors experience pleasant weather, colorful rhododendron forests, clear Himalayan views, and excellent opportunities for photography and cultural exploration.

Permits and Visa

All international visitors require a valid passport, a Bhutan tourist visa, and travel arrangements through a licensed Bhutanese tour operator. All visa processing, permits, and government formalities are completed before arrival, ensuring a smooth and hassle-free journey.

Travel Insurance

Comprehensive travel insurance is highly recommended and should include medical treatment, emergency evacuation, trip cancellation, travel delays, and personal belongings.

Additional information

Cultural Highlights

The Odyssey Bhutan Tour provides an in-depth exploration of Bhutan's rich Buddhist heritage, traditional architecture, and unique way of life. Visitors explore ancient monasteries, impressive dzongs, sacred temples, traditional villages, and bustling local markets while learning about Bhutan's royal history, religious traditions, and the country's philosophy of Gross National Happiness.

Scenic Highlights

Traveling across Bhutan reveals an extraordinary variety of landscapes, from fertile river valleys and terraced farmland to dense forests, alpine meadows, and dramatic Himalayan mountain passes. The journey includes spectacular drives across Dochula Pass and Pele La Pass, the tranquil beauty of Phobjikha Valley, the cultural landscapes of Bumthang, and the scenic eastern districts known for their untouched natural beauty and traditional lifestyle.

Historic Monasteries and Dzongs

Throughout the tour, visitors discover some of Bhutan's most treasured cultural landmarks, including Tiger's Nest Monastery (Paro Taktsang), Punakha Dzong, Tashichho Dzong, Trongsa Dzong, Gangtey Monastery, Jambay Lhakhang, Kurjey Lhakhang, Trashigang Dzong, and numerous ancient temples that reflect Bhutan's remarkable spiritual and architectural heritage.

Local Life and Traditions

One of the greatest strengths of this journey is the opportunity to experience authentic Bhutanese life beyond the main tourist routes. Travelers visit remote villages, traditional farmhouses, local handicraft centres, and vibrant markets, meeting friendly local communities and gaining valuable insight into Bhutan's customs, festivals, agriculture, and rural traditions that have remained largely unchanged for generations.

Flora and Fauna

The Odyssey Bhutan Tour passes through diverse ecological regions supporting an exceptional variety of wildlife and plant life. Depending on the season, visitors may encounter rhododendron forests, blue pine woodlands, alpine meadows, black-necked cranes in Phobjikha Valley, Himalayan bird species, langur monkeys, yaks in higher regions, and Bhutan's national animal, the Takin, at the Motithang Takin Preserve.

Weather and Climate

Weather conditions vary considerably as the journey crosses several climatic zones. During spring and autumn, daytime temperatures generally range between 15°C and 25°C, while mornings and evenings remain pleasantly cool, particularly in mountain regions. Layered clothing is recommended to ensure comfort throughout the journey.

Communication and Currency

Mobile phone coverage and internet services are available in most towns and hotels, although connectivity may be limited in remote eastern regions. The local currency is the Bhutanese Ngultrum (BTN), while Indian Rupees are widely accepted. Credit cards are accepted in many hotels and larger establishments, although carrying some local currency is advisable when traveling through rural areas.

Responsible Tourism

Bhutan is internationally recognized for its High Value, Low Volume tourism policy, which protects the country's environment, culture, and traditions. Visitors are encouraged to travel responsibly by respecting local customs, dressing appropriately at religious sites, reducing plastic waste, supporting local communities, and helping preserve Bhutan's extraordinary natural and cultural heritage.

Packing Recommendations

Recommended items include comfortable walking shoes, lightweight clothing, a warm jacket or fleece, waterproof outerwear, sunglasses, sunscreen, a sun hat, reusable water bottle, camera, binoculars, personal medications, and modest clothing suitable for monastery visits and cultural activities.

Why Choose the Odyssey Bhutan Tour?

The Odyssey Bhutan Tour is the ultimate journey for travelers seeking to discover the full diversity of Bhutan. From the legendary Tiger's Nest Monastery and magnificent dzongs of western Bhutan to the peaceful valleys, remote villages, and hidden cultural treasures of central and eastern Bhutan, this tour offers an enriching and unforgettable experience. Combining breathtaking Himalayan scenery, authentic cultural encounters, historic landmarks, and warm Bhutanese hospitality, it is one of the most complete and rewarding ways to experience the Last Himalayan Kingdom.

Frequently asked questions

How difficult is The Odyssey Bhutan Tour?

The Odyssey Bhutan Tour is graded Moderate — suitable for most active travellers. Expect 5–7 hours of walking on most days on mountain trails with plenty of ascents and descents. Regular cardio training — hiking, running, cycling or stair climbing — for 6–8 weeks before departure makes the trip far more enjoyable.

What is the best time for The Odyssey Bhutan Tour?

For the Bhutan region the best months are March–May and October–November. Spring (March–May) brings rhododendrons and the Paro Tsechu festival; autumn (September–November) has clear Himalayan views and the Thimphu Tsechu. Winter is cold but bright, and the summer monsoon is green with fewer visitors.

What permits do I need for The Odyssey Bhutan Tour?

You need your Bhutan visa and the Sustainable Development Fee (SDF), which must be arranged through a licensed operator. Nord Extreme arranges every permit for you before the trip starts — check the "Includes" section above for exactly what is covered in the price. Just bring your passport and a few passport-size photos.

What is the accommodation like on The Odyssey Bhutan Tour?

In Kathmandu you stay in a comfortable hotel; on the trail we use the best available family-run teahouses and lodges with twin-share rooms, shared or attached bathrooms and a warm dining room. Upgrades to luxury lodges are possible on popular routes such as Everest and Annapurna.

Can I book The Odyssey Bhutan Tour as a private trip or join a group?

Both. You can join one of the fixed departures listed under "Dates & Prices", or book a private trip for just you, your family or friends on any date. Solo travellers are welcome — you will always have your own licensed guide.

Do I need travel insurance for The Odyssey Bhutan Tour?

Yes, travel insurance is compulsory. It must cover medical treatment and emergency helicopter evacuation up to the trip’s highest altitude, plus trip cancellation. Please send us your policy details before departure.

What should I pack for The Odyssey Bhutan Tour?

See the "What to bring" checklist on this page for the full list. The essentials are broken-in boots, warm layers, a down jacket, a waterproof shell, sun protection and a daypack. Down jackets and sleeping bags can be rented cheaply in Kathmandu, and a porter carries your main bag (up to 10–12 kg).

Ready to book or have a question?

Trip page: https://delightful-orange-chimpanzee.tarevirjungleresort.com/holiday/package/the-odyssey-bhutan-tour/

Contact our team in Kathmandu: sonam@nordextreme.com · +977 9851078748 · delightful-orange-chimpanzee.tarevirjungleresort.com