

# **KITIPHU RIDGE TREK, BHUTAN**



View from Kitiphu Ridge trek in Bhutan



# HIGHLIGHTS

- ) With this itinerary you will get a real insight to this fascinating country by combining a tour of Bhutan visiting the main cultural centres as well as joining a short trek along Kitiphu Ridge.
- ) You will visit Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) in Paro, the dzong (fortified monastery) in Punakha, the capital of Bhutan in Thimphu, the dzong in Trongsa, the famous monasteries in Bumthang and also the Black-necked cranes Gangtey and Phobjikha Valley.
- ) Kitiphu Ridge is a scenic trek along a ridge high above Bumthang valley with superb views of the snow-capped mountains of the eastern Himalaya including Gangkar Punsum (at an altitude of 7,570m it is the highest unclimbed peak in the world).
- ) You have the chance to see Black-necked cranes in Phobjika and in Gyetsa village at the starting point of Kitiphu Ridge trek. The cranes over winter in these places from end of October to end of February.
- ) Throughout this itinerary you stay at mid-level hotels mainly three star and camp for three nights on Kitiphu Ridge trek.
- ) Roland walked Kitiphu Ridge in December so has first-hand knowledge of this trek, for more information please read Trip Report on our blog at:  
<http://www.themountaincompany.co.uk/bhutan/walking-and-trekking/kitiphu-ridge/report/>
- ) Pre-trip support will be given by Roland via email, phone or face to face meetings.



# KITIPHU RIDGE TREK, BHUTAN

Total number of days	14 days
Grade & days trekking	Moderate, 3 trekking days
Accommodation	10 nights hotel, 3 nights camping
Minimum group size	2
Maximum group size	10
2019 price from Kathmandu	£2,895 (US\$3,775 or €3,295) per person
2020 price from Kathmandu	£2,895 (US\$3,775 or €3,295) per person
Dates	November 3 <sup>rd</sup> to 16 <sup>th</sup> 2019 November 10 <sup>th</sup> to 23 <sup>rd</sup> 2019 December 1 <sup>st</sup> to 14 <sup>th</sup> 2019 March 29 <sup>th</sup> to April 11 <sup>th</sup> 2020 November 1 <sup>st</sup> to 14 <sup>th</sup> 2020 November 8 <sup>th</sup> to 21 <sup>st</sup> 2020 November 29 <sup>th</sup> to December 12 <sup>th</sup> 2020



## **THE FOLLOWING IS INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TRIP**

- ) All transfers including airport collections at Paro.
- ) Twin share hotels while in Bhutan.
- ) All meals included while in Bhutan.
- ) Twin share tents while on trek.
- ) All trekking arrangements including permits and fees, tents, Bhutanese guide, pack animals and cook.
- ) Full financial protection for all monies paid to us through our membership of Association of Bonded Travel Operators Trust (our ABTOT membership number is 5365) and having an Air Travel Organiser's Licence (our ATOL number is 10921).
- ) Pre departure support and advice from The Mountain Company by email, phone or face to face meetings in London. After booking with us we will send our comprehensive "Bhutan Pre Trip Information" notes.

## **THE FOLLOWING SINGLE SUPPLEMENT IS AVAILABLE:**

Single room supplement	US\$POA
Single tent supplement	£100 (US\$125 or €115)

Please note that if you are a single person booking on one of our trips you do not have to pay the single room supplement, this is only payable if you specifically request to have a room or tent to yourself. You will not have to pay this for this option if you happen to end up with a single room or tent due to odd numbers on the trip.

## **THE FOLLOWING IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TRIP**

- ) International flight to/from Paro (flying from Bangkok, Singapore, Kathmandu and Delhi).



- ) Travel & trekking insurance.
- ) Personal clothing & equipment please see Appendix for suggested kit list.
- ) Tips.
- ) Other items not listed in “What is included”.

## PARTICIPANT SELECTION

The Mountain Company carefully selects and screens potential participants applying to join our groups to ensure the trip is an appropriate objective for you. We have a number of pre-trip questions asking information about your outdoor experience, training, experience, medical conditions and fitness. To access the pre-trip questions please send in your application by clicking on the “**Apply now**” **button** on the trek webpage. After review of your replies we might contact you by telephone or email for further information to aid our selection process.

Please ensure you have done your own research about Dhaulagiri Circuit trek by reading our pre trip documents (Trip Dossier, Trip Grading and Trip Reports published on TMC blog) to ensure you have a realistic idea of what to expect. Every trip organised by The Mountain Company has been graded based on four factors: daily walking times, altitude, terrain and remoteness.

## INTRODUCTION

Kitiphu Ridge trek will appeal if you looking to experience the unique culture of Bhutan as well as going on a short Himalayan trek.

Our itinerary combines seeing the main cultural highlights of the Kingdom of Bhutan with three days of scenic trekking. You will walk follow a quiet forest trail up to Tharpaling monastery and then once onto Kitiphu Ridge you should see the spectacular view of the Himalaya along the Bhutan - Tibet border including Mount Gangkar Punsum. This mountain is at an altitude of 7,570m and is known as the highest unclimbed peak in the world.



You have several days visiting Bhutan's main cultural sites; you will explore Paro Valley with a walk to Taktsang or 'Tigers Nest' monastery. We also time to explore Thimphu, Punakha's 17th century Dzong and Bumthang.

You have the chance to see Black-necked cranes in Phobjika and in Gyetsa village at start of Kitiphu Ridge trek. The cranes spend the winter in these places from mid-October to end of February and can be seen in their roosting areas located in wetlands in Phobjika and Gyetsa.

## DETAILED ITINERARY

It is our intention to keep to the day by day itinerary detailed below, although there might be some flexibility due to local conditions or other factors beyond our control. If this is the case the trek leader will do everything possible to work out the changes to the itinerary in order to minimise your inconvenience.

### **Day 1. Fly to Paro (2,280m).**

You will be met on arrival at Paro airport and driven back to the hotel. Please provide travel plans on booking and we will arrange the pick-up and transfer. A full trek briefing will be given in the afternoon. Please get in touch with us if you like a quote for your flight to Paro (flying from Bangkok, Singapore, Kathmandu and Delhi). **Overnight at hotel in Paro (Meals: L,D).**

### **Day 2. Sightseeing in Paro (2,280m).**

Paro is Bhutan's second largest town and the valley also contains some of the most significant religious and historic sites in the country as well as Bhutan's only airport.

After breakfast we will organise a walk up to the Taktsang monastery known as the "Tiger's Nest". It takes about 2 to 3 hours to walk through pine forest and up to the monastery perched on a cliff overlooking the valley. **Overnight at hotel in Paro (Meals: B,L,D).**

### **Day 3. Drive over to Dochu La to Punakha- 4 hours driving.**

Today we drive to Punakha the old winter capital of Bhutan. En route we'll cross the Dochu La pass at an altitude of 3,150m marked with 108 chortens. On a clear day the whole range of Eastern Himalayas can be seen from here. We then descend down to the Punakha Valley at an altitude of 1,350m. The road has lots of sharp



bends with breath-taking views of the mountains and valleys. In Punakha we take a short walk through farm houses and fields to Chimme Lhakang, this monastery was built in 15<sup>th</sup> Century and dedicated to Lam Drukpa Kunley (divine mad man). He is one of the most well-known saints in Bhutan and his temple is dedicated to fertility. **Overnight at hotel in Punakha (Meals: B,L,D).**

**Day 4. Sightseeing in Punakha, afternoon drive to Wangdi- 2 hours walking.**

We visit the impressive Punakha dzong known as one of the most important and impressive in Bhutan. This dzong is strategically placed at junction of Pho Chu and Mo Chu rivers was built in 1637 to serve as the religious and administrative centre of the region. In the afternoon, we can walk up to Khamsum Yuelley Namgyal Chorten overlooking Mo Chu river (about 45 minutes' walk). Later in afternoon we drive to Wangdi. **Overnight at hotel in Wangdi (Meals: B,L,D).**

**Day 5. Drive to Gangtey in Phobjika valley (3,000m)- 3 hours driving.**

We drive to the beautiful Phobjikha valley, this place is home to the endangered black neck cranes that migrate every year to this valley in winter. The cranes over winter in these places from mid-October to the end of February.

Phobjikha is located on the north western edge of Jigme Singye Wangchuk National Park and is protected due to its ecological significance and rich natural heritage. Phobjikha valley has largest wetland in Bhutan and is habitat to about 300 Black-necked cranes that migrate in winter from their breeding grounds in Tibet.

On reaching Phobjikha we visit the Gangtey monastery, known as the only gumpa of Nyingmapa religious school in western Bhutan. From here we will walk along the Gangtey Nature Trail, past Semchubara village, through forests of blue pine trees covered with lichen (known as old man's beard) and with views onto the wetlands where you will hopefully see Black-necked cranes . At end of the nature trail in Kingathang village you can visit a temple built by the Queen Mother. After meeting your car we will drive up to the Black-necked cranes visitor centre overlooking the roosting area of the cranes. **Overnight at hotel in Gangtey (Meals: B,L,D).**

**Day 6. Drive to Gyetsa village near Chumey (3,700m)- 7 hours driving.**

We have a beautiful drive to Trongsa on a road with lots of bends, beautiful waterfalls and thick forest cover on the way. This part of the ride offers good view of the south Trongsa Valley and stunning views of the Trongsa Dzong. We will visit



the Trongsa Dzong and the museum. After lunch we continue the drive and meet our trek crew at Gyetsa village where we camp for the night. There are wetlands outside the village used as a roosting area by Black-necked cranes. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

### **Day 7. Trek to Tharpaling monastery- 3 hours walking.**

After walking across the fields and crossing a bridge over a small stream we walk along a small path up through blue pine forest. There are good views back down to the field and wetlands around Gyetsa village. After 45 minutes we reach several traditional Bhutanese farmhouses and a private monastery. From here we follow the ridge up through more forest and along the way we passed prayer flags, mani wall and an old gateway (probably marking the old trail from Trongsa to Bumthang) with a beautiful mandala painted in the roof.

We can see Tharpaling monastery above us near the top of the ridge and after about three hours walking we arrive to our camp in the grounds of the monastery. Your tent will be pitched next to eight stupas and on arrival you will enjoy a cup of tea.

Tharpaling is a cluster of isolated monasteries at an altitude of 3,700m and one of the gompas is located with a cliff behind. Tharpaling is an important monastery complex founded in 1352 by Longchen Rabjampa during his enforced period of exile from Tibet. There are usually more than 100 monks however during the winter they head south to a warmer place so in December we only saw a few caretaker monks. Outside the main assembly hall are eight stupas built in 2011 commemorating the major deeds in the life Shakyamuni Buddha. In the afternoon you can visit one of the temples and attend a puja (religious ceremony). **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

### **Day 8. Trek to Shonath Camp- 6 hours walking.**

In the morning while having breakfast you are likely to see monks and nuns walking their koras around the chortens while spinning their hand-held prayer wheels. After breakfast we walk up through the monastery complex and follow the trail up to a pass on Kitiphu Ridge. From here you should see your first views of the Himalayan peaks to the east. As one walks up the grassy ridge to the first view point bedecked



by prayer flags Mount Chomolhari becomes visible to the west. We pass through a section of forest with blue pine and rhododendron before continuing on more grassy slopes to the second viewpoint. From here one looks down to the Bumthang valley far below and you can see Jakar Dzong located on a hill top.

At the end of the ridge is Mount Kitiphu (4,050m) and it is from this point you can see Mount Gangkar Punsum. At an altitude of 7,570m it is the highest unclimbed peak in the world. At this high point there are many prayer flags, a large Buddhist prayer umbrella and a shrine for pujas. After taking your photos start the walk down Kitiphu Ridge and after passing a yak herder's hut you reach Drange La (3,600m). At this pass we descend through a beautiful forest of spruce, fir, rhododendron and bamboo for about 45 minutes to our camp in a grassy clearing called Shonath. In the forest around this camp are owls, hence giving the trek its alternative name "The Owl trek". **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

#### **Day 9. Trek to Dur village, drive to Bumthang- 2 hours walking, 45 minute drive.**

It is a short walk out through blue pine forest to the road head at Dur Village. After exploring the village and saying farewells to our horseman, you will be driven to Bumthang to check into your hotel. In the afternoon you can do some sightseeing in Bumthang starting off with a visit to Tamshing Gomba and then walking over the suspension bridge to Kurjey Lhakang. Kurjey Lhakang is an important place as has the body print of Guru Rinpoche preserved in a cave inside the oldest temple.

**Overnight at hotel in Bumthang (Meals: B,L,D).**

#### **Day 10. Sightseeing around Bumthang.**

Today we take an excursion to Tang valley where we will visit Membar Tsho known as the burning lake, which is one of Bhutan's most important pilgrimage sites. Then we drive to Drangchel, Pema Lingpa's birthplace and then walk up to visit Ugyenchholing Palace. The Palace is now a museum and gives an interesting insight into life in an aristocratic family in the last century. Return to Bumthang for the night. **Overnight at hotel in Bumthang (Meals: B,L,D).**

#### **Day 11. Drive to Wangdi.**

Today we drive to Wangdi and along the road we see a different perspective of the beautiful forest and mountain scenery. If you prefer to avoid the long drive back to



Paro then it is possible to fly from Bumthang, please contact us to find out the flight schedule and availability. **Overnight at hotel in Wangdi (Meals: B,L,D).**

#### **Day 12. Drive to Thimphu.**

Today we continue the drive over Dochu La where we have another chance to see the view of the Himalayan mountains. On arrival to Thimphu we will check into the hotel and then in the afternoon we can explore the town.

We can visit the Takin sanctuary, Takin is the national animal of Bhutan with the head of a goat and body of a bull. Legend has it that Lama Drukpa Kunley the Divine Mad Monk Saint, created this animal. Later we visit the Zilukha nunnery, folk heritage museum, the textile weaving center, Institute of Arts and Crafts called the Zorig Choesuem. Visit the handicraft emporium then the post office with its vast collection of stamps and other items. **Overnight at hotel in Thimphu (Meals: B,L,D).**

#### **Day 13. In afternoon drive to Paro.**

In the morning we can spend more time in Thimphu and in afternoon we drive to Paro. **Overnight at hotel in Paro (Meals: B,L,D).**

#### **Day 14. Transfer to Paro airport for flight home.**



# YOUR COMPLETE FINANCIAL PROTECTION

The Mountain Trekking Company Ltd (trading as The Mountain Company) is a fully licensed and bonded tour operator. For flight inclusive packages sold to UK residents these will be covered by our Air Travel Organisers Licence (our ATOL number is 10921). For packages that do not include flights and for packages sold to customers outside of the UK your financial protection is covered by our membership of Association of Bonded Travel Organisers' Trust ("ABTOT"). Our ABTOT membership number is 5365.



Our membership of these organisations means that you can book with us in complete confidence that all monies paid to us for trips are protected.

## THREAT AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Participants should be aware trekking, mountaineering and travelling in a developing country are activities that involve a risk of personal injury or death. As a condition of booking you must accept these risks and be responsible for your own actions and involvement.

Adventure travel requires an open and flexible attitude. You may experience extreme conditions, unpredictable weather and last minute changes to the itinerary beyond our control. The ability to work in team is an important aspect of all of our trips.

As a part of our planning process we have performed a detailed threat and risk assessment for our Kitiphu Ridge trek. It is worth pointing out all of our trips have a

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certain degree of risk, this is of course part of the attraction of adventure travel and why so many people choose to join this type of holiday. However by identifying the potential hazards on Kitiphu Ridge we can assess the level of risk and implement control measures to reduce this happening.

Our full threat and risk assessment for Kitiphu Ridge is available to clients on request. For your information we have listed below a summary of the significant risks and hazards identified by us:

- ) Falls and trips resulting in physical injury eg. slipping on ice or falling off the path.
- ) Altitude illness including but not limited to AMS, HACE and HAPE.
- ) Severe bad weather and conditions when camping.
- ) Climatic injuries (dehydration, sun burn, heat exhaustion, hypothermia or heat stroke).
- ) Crossing a river with no bridge resulting in drowning and/ or a fall.
- ) Rock fall and landslides.
- ) Lightning strike.
- ) Wildlife, pack animals (eg. donkeys or horses) or stray dogs. Pack animals have been known to knock people off the path. Dogs can attack and bite, we advise you discuss rabies vaccination with your doctor.
- ) Earthquake.
- ) Risk of fire in the hotel or lodge.
- ) Endemic local diseases. We advise you discuss vaccinations with your doctor before departure.
- ) Physiological injury such as heart attack, appendicitis, hernia, toothache etc. in a remote area.
- ) Road traffic or flight accident.
- ) Contaminated food and/ or water.



This trip visits a remote area where you are away from normal emergency services and medical facilities. In case of a serious injury requiring hospitalisation evacuation could take up to several days and may impede your ensuing recovery. Helicopters are the most usual means of evacuation, however they are not always available or they may be hindered by poor weather and flying conditions.

## THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT TOUR OPERATORS (“AITO”)

The Mountain Company is a member of the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO) and we have agreed to abide by the terms of the AITO Quality Charter.

AITO is the Association for independent and specialist holiday companies. Our member companies, usually owner-managed, strive to create overseas holidays with high levels of professionalism and a shared concern for quality and personal service. The Association encourages the highest standards in all aspects of tour operating. For more information please take a look at <http://www.aito.com/>



## ETHICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Mountain Company is committed to adopting a responsible attitude to the areas we visit. We are guests of the communities visited and with some thought and care we can ensure that everyone benefits from the experience. We have developed a Responsible Tourism policy which aims to ensure that The Mountain



Company and its clients act in a way that is socially, environmentally and culturally sound.

In 2017 the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO) launched Project PROTECT in recognition of the important role that destinations play in the future of the travel industry. The aim of this project is to encourage sustainable tourism and to nurture the destinations for tomorrow's travellers. The PROTECT acronym stands for People / Resources / Outreach / Tourism / Environment / Conservation / Tomorrow.

This project is led by Professor Xavier Font of the University of Surrey and each AITO member has to publish an annual pledge and report back at the end of the year on how they got along. To see The Mountain Company's Project PROTECT pledges for 2018 and 2017, please take a look at our [Sustainable Tourism page on AITO website](#).



We work closely with the International Porter Protection Group and abide by their five guidelines for porter protection, their website is at [www.ippg.net](http://www.ippg.net). We also have partnered with Kathmandu Environmental Education Project in Nepal, their website is at [www.keepnepal.org](http://www.keepnepal.org).



# PRACTICAL INFORMATION

## ALTITUDE AND ACCLIMATISATION

Our Kitiphu Ridge itinerary has been designed for acclimatisation to take place. There are ways of helping the acclimatisation process, as described below:

- ) Walk slowly: there is plenty of time included in the itinerary so there is no need to rush, go at your own pace and enjoy the incredible views!
- ) Drink lots of water: it is easier for your body to acclimatise when hydrated so drink water and avoid coffee, tea and alcohol.
- ) Consider taking diamox (acetazolamide): before using this drug we recommend consulting a doctor and thoroughly researching the pros and cons.

Please remember even the fittest and healthiest person can develop one of the altitude illnesses: AMS (acute mountain sickness), HACE (high altitude cerebral edema) and/ or HAPE (high altitude pulmonary edema). The symptoms of these illnesses are listed below, if any of these occur when you are on trek please immediately tell your guide.

### **Symptoms of AMS:**

- ) Tiredness
- ) Dizziness
- ) Nausea or if severe, vomiting
- ) Poor sleep

### **Symptoms of HACE:**

- ) Usually preceded by AMS
- ) Like "Severe AMS" also with severe headache unresponsive to painkillers; confusion and physical clumsiness (ataxia).



## Symptoms of HAPE:

- ) Fluid in the lungs: cough, tiredness, breathlessness out of proportion to exercise especially at rest and worse when lying flat.
- ) Often symptoms start later (at night or after 24 to 48 hours at new altitude).
- ) Often occurs without AMS (often no headache)
- ) But you can have AMS and HACE too.

If you have symptoms of altitude illness (AMS, HACE or HAPE) you must not ascend in altitude. If you have HACE or HAPE you must descend to nearest health post (if available) or seek medical help.

If you have only mild symptoms of AMS you should rest, drink fluids, try to eat, keep warm. If symptoms go away then you can go up. If symptoms get worse you have to descend in altitude escorted by one of our guides (someone with altitude illness must never descend alone).

For further information we suggest you take a look at the following websites:

High Altitude medicine website:

<http://www.high-altitude-medicine.com>

Medex Travel at High Altitude:

<http://www.medex.org.uk/v26%20booklet.pdf>

BMC website:

<http://www.thebmc.co.uk/Feature.aspx?id=1746>

## ACCOMMODATION IN BHUTAN

Tourist accommodation in Bhutan is comfortable but can be fairly basic especially as you travel further east. Most hotels in the main tourist destinations have rooms with private bathrooms, hot water (at least at some stage during the day), telephone and electricity. Plumbing is not always up to the standard you may be used to and there are no hotels with central heating although heaters of some sort will generally be provided.

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Tourist hotels tend to provide meals buffet-style which gives you the opportunity to try a variety of Bhutanese dishes. In the larger hotels a la carte service is also available, although they do not always have everything on the menu. Thimphu has a pizza restaurant (the Seasons) and there are a number of good cafes in Thimphu (near the Swiss bakery) such as Art Cafe and Karma Café.

Please note that there is currently a shortage of hotel accommodation in Bhutan especially during festivals or the peak trekking season of October. We reserve rooms at all hotels in advance but the bookings are never certain until the group check in on the day. Bearing this in mind we will reserve rooms in the following hotels:

Paro: Hotel Olathang, Silverpine Hotel or Phuentsho Juney Hotel

Thimphu: Peaceful Resort, Hotel Pedling or Hotel Wangchuk

Punakha/Wangdue: Meri Puensum, Dragon Nest Resort or Damchen Resort

Gangtey/ Phobjika: Hotel Dewachen

## **A TYPICAL DAY ON TREK**

The day starts with an early morning mug of tea brought to your tent by one of the cook's helpers. Before heading over to the mess tent for breakfast it is best to pack your overnight gear into your duffel bag. During breakfast the tents will be packed away and, after the pack animals have been loaded they will set off on the trail in the cool of the morning.

After breakfast, probably around 8am we start walking. The pace of the trek is leisurely with plenty of time to enjoy the scenery, take photos and explore the local villages. A hot lunch will be prepared by the cook after breakfast and transported in a tiffin carrier until lunch time.

There is more walking after lunch and normally you should get into camp by mid to late afternoon with the tents already put up by the local staff. In the evening a three course meal is served in the mess tent around 7pm. After supper the western leader will discuss the plan for the next day with the group. People might stay in



the mess tent chatting about the day's events for a while before retiring to their tent for the night.

## FOOD

While on the trek you will get breakfast with porridge and cereal, toast or chapattis, omelettes and a range of hot drinks. Normally a hot lunch is prepared by the trek crew or on the longer days a pack lunch is provided after breakfast. On arrival at the camp in the afternoon you will be given tea and biscuits and a three course meal will follow later in the evening. We bring along fresh vegetables for the main meals. We also provide a supply of chocolate bars and nuts.

## CLIMATE AND WEATHER

The traditional trekking seasons in Bhutan are late September to December and March to May with October generally recognised as having the best weather. Spring is also a popular time of year with warmer weather and the advantage of seeing spring flowers and rhododendrons in bloom.

This trek will have a wide range of temperatures depending on the altitude and the time of day. In the mountains between 1,000m and 3,500m the nights will be cool, normally around 5°C, and during the day temperatures sometimes rise to 20°C. At higher altitudes temperatures range from about 15°C to -5°C.

## CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

A list of clothing and equipment for Kitiphu Ridge trek has been included in Appendix below. It is worth pointing out that you will need a sleeping bag for this trip.

If you do not have the clothing and equipment contained in this list then a good option might be to rent from the UK. Trek Hire and Expedition Kit Hire rent out high quality items at competitive prices which would save you the expense of buying. The links to their websites are at <http://www.trekhireuk.com/> and <http://www.expeditionkithire.co.uk>



Alternatively if you are going to buy then please contact the office for the Cotswold Outdoor promo code that entitles you, as a client of The Mountain Company, to a 15% discount in their stores and online.

Each trekker should bring one backpack for items required during the day. Your day backpack will contain items such as warm clothes, jacket, camera, water bottles, personal first aid kit and snacks. Typically the backpack would be 30 to 40 litres in size.

The rest of your personal equipment packed in a duffel bag or backpack will be carried by a pack animal. **The maximum weight allowance is 15kgs.** Please ensure that your bag is marked clearly on the outside for easy identification.

## VISA REQUIREMENTS

### Bhutan visa

The Mountain Company team will obtain your Bhutan visa. We will send you a copy of the confirmation from the Bhutanese Department of Tourism showing that your visa has been authorised. Your actual visa will be issued on arrival at Paro.

## VACCINATIONS AND MEDICAL

You should obtain professional advice from a travel clinic or your local GP about which vaccinations to have before you arrive in Bhutan. A dental check-up is a good idea as there will be no dental facilities while on the trek.

## FLIGHTS

The Mountain Company does not book international flights for our holidays. Instead all package prices are Land Only with services starting from arrival to the destination country.

If you would like help arranging flights then we suggest you contact our partner travel agent, StudentUniverse (ATOL registered) a specialist division of the Flight Centre Travel Group ---> [Get an online quote](#)



## INSURANCE

Travel insurance for any Mountain Company itinerary is a condition of booking a holiday. At the very least you should have emergency medical and repatriation insurance which must include the cost of mountain rescue. Cancellation insurance is strongly recommended as all deposits paid to The Mountain Company are non-refundable.

Please carefully check your insurers' Terms and Conditions in particular you should make sure the following is covered: 1) Activity (i.e touring, trekking or mountaineering) 2) Maximum altitude reached on trek 3) Helicopter evacuation in an emergency.

It is important for you to understand that ultimately the burden of any expense incurred in evacuation and repatriation procedures will be borne by you and that it is your responsibility to pay any costs incurred in respect of any evacuation or for medical treatment. You should be fully aware of the implications involved in arranging your own travel insurance and understand the limitations and exclusions of your policy.

You should be aware that under certain circumstances, The Mountain Company leader (or our local agent, if no western leader) might instigate rescue proceedings via helicopter (or any other means necessary) in situations of medical emergency without first contacting your insurance company for their approval.

The Mountain Company has arranged travel and trekking insurance for European Union residents with the specialist insurance broker **Campbell Irvine**. Their insurance policy will cover you for most of the trips in our portfolio. However if your trek is classified or graded by The Mountain Company as "**Strenuous**" or "**Challenging**" then you must make sure you select this option when obtaining an online quote for your insurance. Campbell Irvine will not provide insurance cover for any trips classified as "**Mountaineering**".

**CAMPBELL IRVINE**  
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



To apply for an online quote through [Campbell Irvine's Direct Travel Insurance](#) website. Should you have any questions regarding the terms and conditions of cover please contact Campbell Irvine on 0207 938 1734 or email [info@campbellirvine.com](mailto:info@campbellirvine.com)

We have [listed on TMC website a comprehensive list of specialist adventure travel insurers](#) that our trekkers from UK, EU and Internationally based have used in the past. Please carefully check their Terms & Conditions prior to purchase. These companies are not necessarily recommended by us so it is your responsibility to ensure you have appropriate coverage.

## CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Royal Government of Bhutan has a strict policy to preserve its cultural and traditional values. For example antiques may not be taken out of the country and they request that clients do not give sweets, pens, etc., to children or distribute medicine to villagers.

## SUGGESTED READING

- ) Pocket Guide to the Birds of Bhutan: Grimmett R, Inskipp C & T.
- ) Two and Two Halves to Bhutan: Peter Steele
- ) Bhutan – Land of the Peaceful Dragon: G.N. Mehra
- ) Bhutan, An Illustrated Guide: Françoise Pommaret, Odyssey Guides
- ) Bhutan, Land of the Thunder Dragon: E.T. Owen, London 1998
- ) Pocket Guide to the Birds of Bhutan: Grimmett R, Inskipp C & T.



# APPENDIX

## SUGGESTED CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT LIST

### Footwear:

- ) Walking boots. A pair of water repellent boots with ankle support.
- ) Wool and liner socks.
- ) Trainers/sneakers or sandals. Can be used in camp during the evenings.

### Clothing:

- ) Waterproof jacket and trousers (goretex or similar).
- ) Trekking trousers.
- ) Long sleeve shirts (not cotton).
- ) Micro fleece.
- ) Mid to heavyweight fleece.
- ) Sleeveless or body warmer type fleece.
- ) Thermals or base layer for top & bottom (merino wool or synthetic).
- ) Fleece pants.
- ) Medium weight down jacket (for treks in late November and December).

### Handwear:

- ) Fleece gloves.
- ) Gloves.

### Headwear:

- ) Wool or fleece hat.
- ) Sun hat.



- ) Bandana or scarf.
- ) Headtorch. Bring extra batteries.
- ) Sunglasses. The lenses need to be Category 4 rated and should have side protection or wraparound design to prevent light getting through to your eyes that could cause sun blindness.

**Personal Equipment:**

- ) Sleeping bag.
- ) Sleeping mat (eg. Thermarest). Please note we do not provide a mat for our Bhutan treks.
- ) Daypack. Recommended size is 30 to 40 litres as you need to have enough space to carry water bottles, camera, snacks and extra clothing such as down jacket etc. It is also a good idea to bring a rain cover to keep the contents dry.
- ) Stuff sacks for keeping your gear dry and organised. Or even better are fold-drybags such as from Exped.
- ) Two water bottles (Nalgene wide mouth bottles are the best).
- ) Pee bottle. Highly recommended as means you do not have to get up to find toilet tent at night! For men you can use an old water bottle for women take a look at SheWee at <http://www.shewee.com/>
- ) Sunscreen and lipsalve with a high SPF.
- ) Insect repellent.
- ) Water purification tablets (Pristine, Biox Acqua or Acqa Mira).
- ) Favourite snack food.
- ) Books, ipod and cards etc.
- ) Trekking poles (Black Diamond with “Flick Lock” are best).
- ) Camera with spare batteries and memory cards.
- ) Insurance certificate.



- ) Earplugs (optional).
- ) Baby wipes (optional).
- ) Hand sanitizer (optional)
- ) Travelling:
  - ) Duffle bag or large backpack for your personal gear on the trek (carried by a porter). Bring a small combination padlock to secure the bag.
  - ) Travel clothes. You will need casual clothing for air travel days and time spent in Paro, Punakha and Thimphu.
  - ) Toiletry bag include toilet paper, soap, towel, toothbrush, etc.

**Personal first aid kit:**

Note: we provide a comprehensive group first aid kit but please bring personal medications and other items you might use regularly such as:

- ) Any personal medications.
- ) Blister treatment (Compeed patches are the best).
- ) Rehydration powder eg Dioralyte.
- ) Analgesics (paracetamol, ibuprofen and aspirin).
- ) Plasters and zinc oxide tape.
- ) Throat lozenges.
- ) Diamox (helps with acclimatisation).