

Northwestern | ALUMNI

# Kingdom of Bhutan

HIDDEN GEM OF THE HIMALAYAS



April 12 – 23, 2027

**D**iscover a land like no other on this adventurous journey through Bhutan, hidden gem of the Himalayas. Take an included flight from Bangkok, Thailand, to Paro, Bhutan, where you will begin your authentic encounter with storied cultural traditions, lush natural vistas and warm, welcoming people. Hike through pristine green forests; visit temples, fortresses and a palace. Take in scenic views of verdant valleys and the snow-capped Himalayas. Learn about rural life and art at the fascinating Folk Heritage and National Textile Museums. During a visit to the Arts and Crafts school observe locals at work and learn about their trades; enjoy a traditional home-cooked lunch with a Bhutanese family. Through it all, immerse yourself in Bhutan's serene environment and experience Gross National Happiness. Over the 9 nights, stay in four different first-class and deluxe hotels. Optional Pre-Tour Extension in Bangkok available.

## Exclusive Highlights

- In this remote Himalayan land, experience age-old local traditions, Buddhist culture and warm, welcoming people.
- Engage in a sustainable and authentic travel experience while contributing to the local economy.
- Take a scenic drive through Dochula Pass, a mountain pass 10,171 feet above sea level with 360-degree views of the snow-capped Himalayas (on clear days).

Here: Punakha Valley

Cover: View of Tashichho Dzong and Thimphu Valley

## Dear Northwestern University alumni and friends,

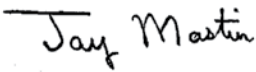
One of the world's most remote and captivating destinations, Bhutan sits at the edge of the Himalayas, beckoning travelers with its sublime vistas, lush green valleys and rich cultural heritage. Spend 8 days exploring the rugged and beautiful countryside, hiking to shrines and monasteries, and crossing swaying bridges dotted with colorful prayer flags.

But Bhutan is more than gorgeous vistas; it is a land of welcoming people. Encounter artisans, craftspeople, students, monks and nuns. Learn about rural life and art at the fascinating Folk Heritage and National Textile Museums. Delight in a home-cooked farmhouse lunch with a Bhutanese family.

Contemplate the country's Gross National Happiness, a reflection of the Bhutanese sense of balance and well-being. At a Buddhist shrine dedicated to world peace, see worshippers perambulating — circling the monument while praying or meditating. At the Arts and Crafts School, observe students studying the 13 traditional arts and learn the captivating history of these practices.

Throughout, stay in first-class and deluxe hotels, savor included meals and enjoy this one-of-a-kind, adventurous program. We expect this unique tour to sell out quickly, so book now while space and special savings are still available.

Sincerely,



Jay Mastin '10 MS  
Director, Alumni Engagement  
Northwestern Alumni Association  
[alumni.northwestern.edu/travel](http://alumni.northwestern.edu/travel)  
[giving.nu/NAA-Travel](http://giving.nu/NAA-Travel)

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**Day 1 | April 12**

Depart your home city for Bangkok, Thailand.

**Day 2 | April 13**

Cross International Dateline

**Day 3 | April 14**

Bangkok, Thailand

Arrive in Bangkok, Thailand. Check in to your hotel and make your own plans for dinner.

**Day 4 | April 15** **B-L-D**

Bangkok | Paro, Bhutan | Thimphu

Take an included flight to Paro, Bhutan, which showcases a spectacular view of the Himalayan peaks from above. On a scenic drive to Thimphu, Bhutan's capital city, discover a mix of ancient and modern that feels truly unique. Visit the National Memorial Chorten, built in 1974. A chorten (also called a stupa) is a Buddhist shrine or monument. Next, stop for a group lunch and check in to your hotel. This afternoon, visit the Great Buddha Dordenma, one of the largest Buddha statues in the world.

Enjoy a group dinner at the hotel.

**Day 5 | April 16** **B-L-D**

Thimphu

Start the morning with a weaving workshop with local artisans. Next, gain insights into rural Bhutanese life and art as you tour the fascinating Folk Heritage Museum and the National Textile Museum. After lunch at a local restaurant, set off for another unusual and memorable destination — the Arts and Crafts School. The students here are enrolled in courses that teach the 13 traditional arts of Bhutan — carpentry; masonry; carving; painting; sculpting;

bronze casting; blacksmithing; ornament making; cane and bamboo weaving; weaving; tailoring, embroidery and appliqué; woodturning; and papermaking. During your visit, learn about some of these practices, observe talented artisans and see their work.

**Day 6 | April 17** **B-L-D**

Punakha

During a scenic drive to Punakha, stop at Dochula Pass (elevation 10,171 feet) for an unforgettable panoramic view of the Himalayan mountain peaks (weather permitting). The breathtaking scenery here makes it a popular stop with travelers. Check in to



*Dochula Pass*

National Memorial Chorten



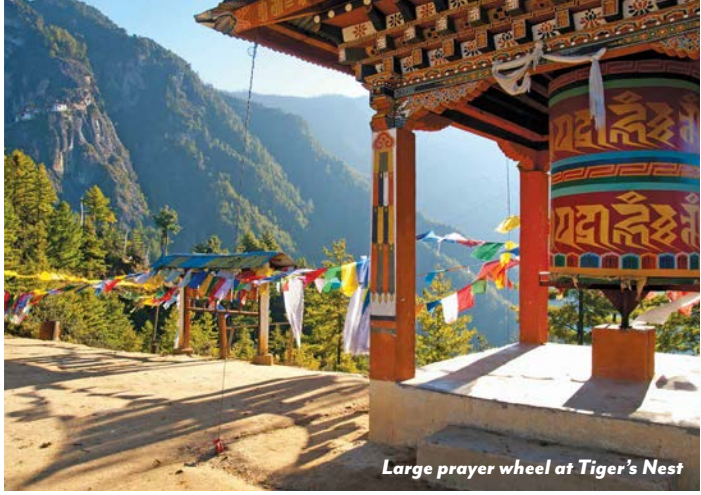
the hotel in Punakha this afternoon. Then attend a prayer ceremony at the striking Sangchen Dorji Lhuendrup Nunnery complex, perched on a ridge overlooking the scenic Punakha valley.

**Day 7 | April 18** **B-L-D**

**Punakha**

This morning, hike to Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten, standing proudly on a hilltop. Cross a thrilling suspension bridge draped with fluttering flags and ascend a narrow track up the hill. Upon reaching the chorten, marvel at the beautiful iconic shrine and soak up the views of the lush valley below — a uniquely peaceful experience. After

Pho Chhu Suspension Bridge, Punakha



Large prayer wheel at Tiger's Nest

lunch, visit Punakha Dzong (Palace of Great Happiness), an iconic ancient fortress built in 1637 at the confluence of two rivers. Cross a famous landmark, the Pho Chhu Suspension Bridge. The swaying bridge is 525 feet long and draped with colorful prayer flags. As you stroll, take in the marvelous view of the fortress and the surrounding green landscape.

**Day 8 | April 19** **B-L-D**

**Paro**

Take a scenic drive back to Paro, a lovely riverside town that is home to some of the world's oldest monasteries and temples — dating back

to the seventh century. Visit Paro Rinpung Dzong, whose name translates to Fortress on a Heap of Jewels. Perched above the dzong a small distance away is its round, thick-walled watchtower, built as a defense in 1649. Some 300 years later, the watchtower was turned into the National Museum of Bhutan and filled with art and arcana that ranges from the quotidian to the surreal. Tour the museum and part of the fortress. Marvel at the stunning architecture and views. Spend the next three nights at the deluxe *Le Meridien Paro*.

Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten





Punakha Dzong



Thimphu

**Day 9 | April 20** **B-L-D**

Paro

Tour Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the country's oldest and most beautiful temples. Next, at a local family's farmhouse, learn about regional dishes, ingredients and cooking techniques as they prepare lunch for you. Savor this delicious home-cooked meal of popular Bhutanese dishes. Spend the late afternoon strolling Paro's main streets and market.

**Day 10 | April 21** **B-L-R-D**

Paro

Choose an included excursion today. Hike to Taktsang

Monastery (more famously known as Tiger's Nest).

This monastery, one of Bhutan's holiest destinations, is perched on a precipitous cliff above the Paro Valley, about 10,236 feet above sea level. Take in the gorgeous view of the lush Paro Valley and breathtaking Himalayan mountains. Or, visit Dzongdrakha, a string of cliff-side chapels and temples overlooking the valley. Immerse yourself in the beauty and tranquility of this less-visited site. Spend time exploring on your own this afternoon. Join your fellow travelers for a Farewell Reception and Dinner this evening.

**Day 11 | April 22** **B**

Paro | Bangkok, Thailand

Transfer to the airport in Paro and fly to Bangkok on an included flight. Once in Bangkok, enjoy dinner on your own and check into the airport hotel.

**Day 12 | April 23** **B**

Return to home city

Following breakfast at the hotel, make the short transfer to the airport, where you'll board your international flight for home.

*Note: This is an ACTIVE program. The itinerary is subject to change due to local conditions.*

Prayer wheels at Kyichu Lhakhang



Craftsman showing his carving handiwork on a traditional dance mask



## Gross National Happiness

In the 1970s, Bhutan's king proclaimed, "Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross Domestic Product." This philosophy guides the Bhutanese government, and led policymakers to create an index to measure the happiness level of its citizens. The index considers nine equally weighted categories: living standards; psychological well-being; health; time use; education; cultural diversity & resilience; good governance; community vitality; ecological diversity & resilience.

The idea that a country might focus on the harmony and joy of its citizens captured the world's imagination. Discover Bhutan's serene environment and calm, contemplative lifestyle for yourself.

### PRE-TOUR EXTENSION



## Bangkok

**April 10 to 14** (Program Begins: April 12)

Spend three days exploring Bangkok, Thailand, the "City of Angels." Embark on a cruise along the Chao Phraya River. See the city's highlights, including the Grand Palace, the sacred Temple of the Emerald Buddha, and Wat Po, which houses the Reclining Buddha. Savor a delicious dinner at the landmark Blue Elephant restaurant. Explore Jim Thompson's House and Chinatown on guided tours. Accommodations are for two nights at the deluxe *Peninsula Bangkok*.

**Price per person, based on double occupancy: \$1,295**

**Price per person, based on single occupancy: \$1,595**

*Further details will be provided with your reservation confirmation.*

## INCLUDED FEATURES

- 2 nights at the first-class *Hyatt Regency Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Airport*.
- 2-night stay at the first-class *The Pema by Realm*.
- 2-night stay at the first-class *Dhensa Boutique Resort*.
- 3-night stay at the deluxe *Le Meridien Paro*.
- Farewell Reception.
- Included Meals | 9 breakfasts, 7 lunches and 7 dinners.
- Experienced Gohagan & Company Travel Director accompanies you throughout the program.
- During included excursions, our experienced, English-speaking local guides will teach you about the history, culture and natural splendor of the destination.
- Gratuities to local guides and drivers on included excursions and transfers.
- Complimentary water is available in your room and on excursions.
- Our extensive pre-departure materials better prepare you for your travel experience.
- Complimentary travel mementos.
- Transfers and luggage handling abroad when you purchase your air through Gohagan & Company and your arrival(s)/departure(s) coincide with the scheduled group transfer(s).

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*Advantages of booking your air with Gohagan include:*

- Our experts know the best flight itineraries that work with your travel program's start and end times, and they will work to find the best rates comparable to those available to the public.
- Free group transfers and luggage handling for arrivals and departures during the designated transfer window.
- 24-hour emergency support throughout the program to handle any schedule changes and unexpected delays.
- Flexibility to change or cancel reservations up to 60 days prior to departure with minimal penalties on applicable tickets.

## Hyatt Regency Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Airport | Bangkok, Thailand

This first-class hotel is connected to the Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok and features eight restaurants and bars, a spa, fitness center, outdoor tropical swimming pool with pool bar, and more.



## The Pema By Realm | Thimpu, Bhutan

*The Pema by Realm* is a vibrant, first-class boutique hotel known for its attentive service. Simple yet elegant, the guest rooms offer cozy comfort with luxurious amenities. Enjoy the fitness center, spa with steam and sauna and more.



## Dhensa Boutique Resort | Punakha, Bhutan

The first-class *Dhensa Boutique Resort* sits in the heart of the tranquil and lush Punakha Valley. Flanked by thick pine forests, it overlooks the Punakha River and hundreds of paddy fields that descend to the valley floor.



## Le Meridien Paro | Paro, Bhutan

At the deluxe, luxurious *Le Meridien Paro*, all rooms face the Paro River and offer striking views. The property also features a spa, indoor heated pool, sundeck, fitness center and two restaurants.

## The Gohagan Difference – An Inclusive Luxury Experience

For your comfort and convenience, our fares are comprehensive. We offer incredible inclusions not typical of all providers.

- Wi-Fi/Internet
- Gratuities & Portage
- All Taxes, including V.A.T.
- Travel Director(s)
- Bhutanese Visa
- Bhutanese SIM Card
- Round-trip flight between Bangkok-Paro

A VALUE  
of up to  
**\$2,000**  
per person

**2027 DEPARTURE DATE | April 12 to 23 | Tour Begins: April 14**

Occupancy	Standard Rate	Special Savings Rate*
Double	\$9,495	<b>\$8,495</b>
Single	\$11,865	<b>\$10,865</b>

**\*The Special Savings Rate is valid if booked by 7/12/26 and paid in full at booking. These Special Savings consist of \$500 Early Booking and \$500 Pay-in-Full Savings.**

- All rates are in U.S. dollars, per person, based on double occupancy, including taxes, unless stated otherwise.
- Single occupancy has limited availability.
- A surcharge of 3% will be applied to all bookings paid by credit card to cover payment processing costs. This fee is non-refundable and will be added to the total booking amount at checkout. No surcharge applies to payments made by e-check (ACH).
- Deposit amount is \$2,000 per person. Final Payment is due at least 150 days prior to departure.
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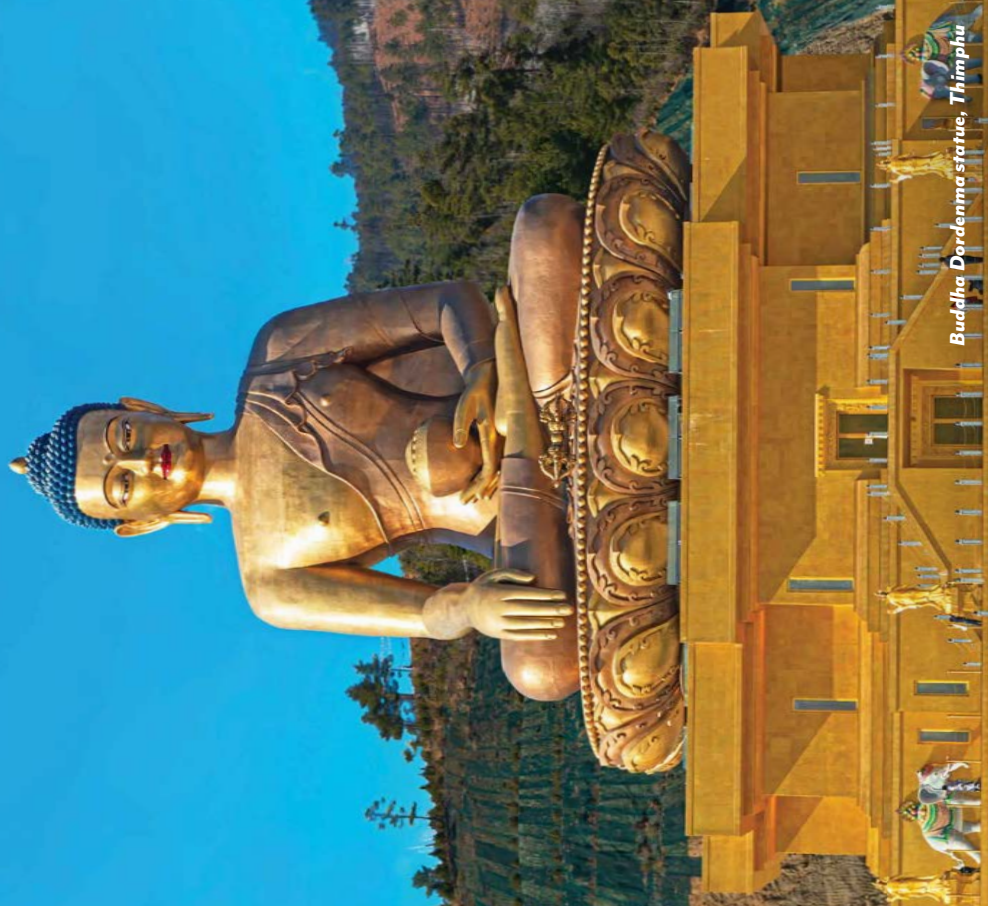
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*Buddha Dordenma statue, Thimphu*