

HARVARD

ALUMNI TRAVELS



HIMALAYAN KINGDOMS A JOURNEY THROUGH NEPAL & BHUTAN MAY 25–JUNE 9, 2024 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

This journey offers a rare view into Nepal and Bhutan, starkly beautiful countries flourishing in the isolation of the Himalayas and offering a richness of religious and cultural traditions and an amazing diversity of art and architecture.

- View the Himalayas by air with over one hundred awe-inspiring peaks, including Everest!
- Gain a strong understanding of the cultural and religious practices of Buddhism in the Himalayan Kingdoms.
- Explore Bhaktapur, home of medieval art and architecture. Walk around Durbar Square overlooking the Palace of 55 windows and Nyatapola temple, considered the finest example of the Pagoda style of architecture.
- Visit Boudhanath, a center of Tibetan culture, where merchants stopped to pray before embarking on the arduous trade route to Lhasa.
- Hike to see the famous Taktsang Monastery, a place so holy that all Bhutanese try to visit it at least once in their lifetimes. The monastery's white temples dramatically cling to a cliff at nearly 10,000 feet.
- Enjoy privileged access to local dignitaries and benefit from our long-established connections to access temples rarely seen by Westerners

SCHEDULE BY DAY

B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner

SAT, MAY 25–SUN, MAY 26 DEPART HOME / FLIGHTS TO NEPAL

Participants make their way to Kathmandu, Nepal on independent arrangements.

MONDAY, MAY 27 ARRIVE KATHMANDU

Arrive in Kathmandu and transfer to your hotel. In the evening, gather for a welcome reception featuring a Nepali Folk Dance followed by dinner at your hotel.

Overnight: *Dwarika's Hotel* (R, D)

TUESDAY, MAY 28 KATHMANDU

Take a morning flightseeing of the magnificent Himalayas (weather permitting).

Visit Bhaktapur, the City of Devotees, and explore Durbar Square and the five-tiered Nayatapola Temple.

In the afternoon, visit Boudhanath, established in the 7th century and one of the largest spherical stupas in the world.

Overnight: *Dwarika's Hotel* (B, L, D)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29 KATHMANDU

Spend time in Patan, referred to as the City of Fine Arts. After exploring the temples and museum, meet Patan's Living Goddess in a private audience.

Continue to a Thangka painting school, to marvel at these Tibetan Buddhist paintings on cotton or silk applique, which usually depict a deity, event, or mandala.

Ride through the narrow lanes of the old city aboard trishaws to Thamel, Kathmandu's hip street.

Overnight: *Dwarika's Hotel* (B, L, D)

THURSDAY, MAY 30 PARO, BHUTAN / THIMPHU

Take a morning flight to Paro, Bhutan.

Continue to Thimphu and visit the beautiful Giant Buddha statue, perched on a hilltop overlooking the valley.

Overnight at *Le Meridien Thimphu* (B, L, D)

FRIDAY, MAY 31 THIMPHU

Participate in a school assembly, then continue to Cheri Monastery, which is used as a monastic school and retreat center.

Continue to the School of Arts and Crafts.

This evening, meet with local dignitaries.

Overnight at *Le Meridien Thimphu* (B, L, D)

SATURDAY, JUNE 1 PUNAKHA

Journey through scenic countryside to Punakha. Stop at Dochula Pass (10,200 feet), with views of the Himalayas.

Visit Chimi Lhakhang, a 15th-century fertility pilgrimage shrine, before arriving in Punakha.

Overnight *Dhensa Boutique Resort* (B, L, D)

SUNDAY, JUNE 2 PUNAKHA

Walk to Khamsum Yuley Namgay Chorten for superb views of Punakha Valley.

Take a short rafting trip on the Mochu River.

This afternoon, visit the 17th-century Punakha Dzong, Bhutan's former winter capital.

Overnight *Dhensa Boutique Resort* (B, L, D)

MONDAY, JUNE 3 TRONGSA

Drive to Trongsa, the ancestral home of Bhutanese Royal family. Ascend the Pele La Pass and visit Chendebji Chorten. Continue to Trongsa Dzong, the largest dzong in Bhutan.

Overnight *Yangkhill Resort* or *Norbu Lingkha Resort* (B, L, D)

TUESDAY, JUNE 4 BUMTHANG

Explore Ta Dzong National Museum, then depart for Bumthang.

Learn about Yatha weaving at Zukney. At Jakar, visit a private monastery founded by renowned reincarnated Namkhey Pimpoche, then enjoy free time in the Chamkar bazaar.

Overnight: *Ghonkhar Hotel* or *Valley Resort* (B, L, D)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5 BUMTHANG

Hike along the Chamkhar River to visit Thangbi Temple.

Explore Ngalakhang village and visit Tamshing and Kencho Sum monasteries.

This evening, visit a farmhouse for local delicacies

Overnight: *Ghonkhar Hotel* or *Valley Resort* (B, L, D)

THURSDAY, JUNE 6 PARO

Take a short flight to Paro.

See the 17th-century Paro Dzong, the center of civil and religious authority in the valley.

If time permits, visit Dzongdrakha Monastery (smaller Tiger's Nest), built in the 16th century.

Overnight at *Le Meridien Paro* (B, L, D)

FRIDAY, JUNE 7 PARO

Hike through beautiful pine forests to the iconic Taktsang ("Tiger's Nest") Monastery, whose white temples cling to a soaring cliff 10,000 feet above the valley.

Overnight at *Le Meridien Paro* (B, L, D)

SATURDAY, JUNE 8 KATHMANDU, NEPAL

Fly from Paro to Kathmandu.

Drive to Pashupatinath, one of the most sacred Hindu temples and a major pilgrimage place dedicated to the god Shiva, to witness the Aarti ceremony, a daily prayer ritual. Enjoy a farewell reception and dinner.

Overnight: *Dwarika's Hotel* (B, L, R, D)

SUNDAY, JUNE 9 DEPARTURES

Transfer to Kathmandu airport for return flights to the U.S. (B)