JOURNEY OF PURPOSE & DISCOVERY



A Journey of Purpose and Discovery: Bhutan Photo Workshop with Mark Edward Harris

Thimphu, Punakha & Paro (via Bangkok)
11 days / 8 nights
September 24 – October 4, 2021

$6,499 (based on double occupancy, incl. international flights)

Journey with award-winning travel photographer Mark Edward Harris to Bhutan. This special journey is like taking a step back in time to explore this still seldom traveled land described as one of the happiest on earth! Mark will mentor you to create your very own photo essay.

BOOK NOW 888.747.7501

Bhutan Highlights

- ✓ 11 days & 8 nights
- ✓ Make new friends, **improve your photographic skills**, and support a local community project while exploring the culture of the beautiful and peaceful nation of Bhutan.
- ✓ **Small group size** with high-end service and accommodations throughout the journey.

Photo Workshop, Community Connections & Cultural Immersion

- ✓ Learn to tell **dynamic stories** through your camera.
- ✓ Receive daily mentoring from award-winning photographer **Mark Edward Harris** whose work has been featured in ***Vanity Fair, Conde Nast Traveler, The New York Times*** **and** ***LIFE*** among others**.**
- ✓ Take a challenging hike to the enchanting **Drubthop Goetba Monastery {Tigers Nest}** for an unbelieve viewpoint of the surrounding valley. Built around a cave where the Guru Rinpoche meditated, this monastery clings to a cliff of rock 3,000 feet above the valley floor. This is an iconic location for travel photography and Mark will share his expertise as you seek to capture its drama.
- ✓ Meet with locals and explore their stories and daily life in Bhutan.
- ✓ Visit a **local primary school** and donate time to helping in a classroom. Learn about Bhutan's education system and spend time with the children and teachers.

What's included?

- 4* accommodations throughout
- All transportation and activities outlined in the itinerary
- Flights to and from Paro, Bhutan, including airport transfers, will be arranged by our overseas coordinators
- International air to and from Bangkok (gateway city set tentatively out of Los Angeles)
- Local English-speaking guide
- Tips for your local guides/driver & restaurant staff
- Tourist visa for Bhutan

Not included:

- Personal expenses at the hotels
- Meals not specified
- Passport renewal or issuance
- Domestic flight to gateway city
- National Guide tip, tips to your maid or porters

Los Angeles, California

DAY 1-2, September 24 & 25, 2021

Depart from Los Angeles late today and make your way to Thailand. Lose a day as you cross the International Date Line. *Note: Gateway city is subject to change.*

Bangkok, Thailand

DAY 3, September 26

Upon arrival at **Suvarnabhumi Bangkok International Airport**, you will be met and greeted by a local representative and transferred to a nearby airport hotel for check-in and overnight.

Depending on your arrival time, dinner will be provided at the hotel this evening.

Overnight: Novotel Airport Hotel
Included meals: Dinner

Bangkok, Thailand

DAY 4, September 27

Welcome to Bhutan!

Head to the airport this morning for your flight to **Paro**. The Dragon Kingdom of Bhutan is the last of the Buddhist kingdoms that once occupied a vast area of the Himalayas. Lunch is on your own if not provided on your flight.

Upon arrival in Paro, drive the two hours to **Thimphu**, through spectacular mountain scenery and serene countryside to Bhutan's capital. Sandwiched in the heart of the Himalayas, Thimphu is a small, charming city, with all the buildings constructed and painted in the traditional Bhutanese style. Arrive in Thimphu this afternoon for check-in and **welcome briefing & orientation**.

This evening the group will visit a local **farmer's market** or the majestic **Tashichoe Dzong**, office of the King and residence of the central monk lead by the Je Khenpo (chief abbot) of Bhutan.

Overnight: Khang Residency Hotel
Included meals: Breakfast & Dinner



DAY 5, September 28

Cultural Exploration Thimpu

Please Note: Breakfast is included daily in your program.

This morning we will explore and photograph the **Memorial Stupa**, a pious landmark of Thimphu residents. You will have the opportunity to meet with local people from all walks of life. Capture images of the **Giant Buddha Dordenma Statue**. Inside of Thimphu's 169-foot Buddha Dordenma statue, there are 125,000 miniature Buddhas, ranging from 8 to 12 inches tall. The statue sits atop a golden meditation hall and came with a price tag of 100 million dollars when built in 2015 to honor the 60th birthday of Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the fourth King of Bhutan.

This afternoon we will visit artisans at the **Jungshi Handmade Paper** factory (Jungshi meaning natural), one of the oldest in the country. **Learn how authentic Bhutanese paper (De-Sho) is made** from the bark of the daphne papyri bush using ancient techniques. The Ministry of Labor & Industry established this school in 1990 to preserve and promote this age-old Bhutanese tradition.

Dinner will be provided this evening.

Each evening you will have the opportunity to gather as a group to review your photography and explore with Mark how you can improve your technique.

Overnight: Khang Residency Hotel
Included meals: Breakfast & Dinner



Thimpu, Bhutan

DAY 6, September 29

Cultural Exploration & Humanitarian Visit

This morning take part in a **humanitarian visit** at a local non-profit or community program, such as **Draktsho Vocational Training Center**. They are a non-profit organization and the only one of its kind in the country with aspirations to enhance the living standard of children and youth with disabilities through empowerment by training.

Continue to explore to the **Folk Heritage Museum**, where displays feature traditional Bhutanese history and life including a typical house filled with indigenous household items. At the **National Textile Museum**, see a vast collection of old and rare textiles and traditional garments such as the kira worn by women, and the gho, by men. These museums, both of which opened in 2001, provide fascinating insight into Bhutanese culture.

Lunch is on your own this afternoon.

Continue exploring during a stop at a handicrafts emporium and onward to see the **Drubthob Goemba Monastery** and enjoy the views of the fascinating Thimpu Valley. This is also home of the **Zilukha Nunnery**, where you will have a chance to talk with the nuns about their lives and Buddhism in general. Finally, stroll along **Thimphu's main street**, visiting shops and markets. Before the light fades, capture images of everyday life as the local's shop and socialize with each other.

Dinner will be provided this evening.

Overnight: Khang Residency Hotel
Included meals: Breakfast & Dinner

Punakha, Bhutan

DAY 7, September 30

Today we will take a close look at the Bhutanese art forms that continue to flourish in everyday life: **weavings, woodcarvings and the traditional art of painting Thangkhas** (sacred Buddhist religious scrolls).

As we drive to Punakha, we will traverse **Dochula Pass** (10,500 ft.) and see one of Bhutan's most breathtaking views – a plethora of colorful rhododendron blossoms and soft green wild herbs and forest trees dot a canvas of alpine snow. Enjoy panoramic views of the Himalayan mountain ranges and the fertile valley of Punakha.

Late this afternoon you will arrive in **Punakha**, formerly established as Bhutan's winter capital because of its more temperate valley climate. Visit the nearby stone mason village of **Rinchen Gang**, believed to be one of the oldest villages in Bhutan, the short hike up to the village affords magnificent views of the Dzong valley ad river below. Visit some of the **village homes** to see the fine stone and masonry work firsthand. Enjoy an excursion to **Chimi Lhakhang**, also known as the temple of fertility, situated on a hillock in the center of the valley.

Take an early evening stroll along the roadside markets at **Lobesa.** This will be a great opportunity to capture images for your photo essay including local produce, vendors and everyday life.

Lunch and dinner will include staples of the local diet like rice, seasonal vegetables, noodles, naan, Ema Datshi Chili Cheese along with local dessert options.

Overnight: Drubchu Hotel
Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner



Paro, Bhutan

DAY 8, October 1

Explore Punakha & Visit a local school

This morning you will take a short drive through the valley, then a trek up to the majestic **Khamsung Yuely Namgyel Temple**. Enjoy the grand views of Mo Chu River Valley before a meandering walk through terraced rice fields and small villages. After the Namgyel Temple visit, you will visit **Punakha Dzong** which is arguably the most beautiful dzong in the country, especially in spring when the lilac-colored jacaranda trees bring a lush sensuality to the dzong's characteristically towering whitewashed walls. This dzong was the second to be built in Bhutan and it served as the capital and seat of government until the mid-1950s. All of Bhutan's kings have been crowned here.

Lunch will be provided today.

Depart Punakha for the scenic drive back to **Paro**, arriving at your hotel in the afternoon. **Tashi Namgay Resort** is set amidst five acres of lush foliage and green lawns. Located conveniently in the heart of Paro valley but away from the distractions of the main town,

End your day with a visit to a **local primary school** in Paro. Meet with the staff and students to learn about the education system in Bhutan and opportunities for children to be educated.

Dinner is on your own this evening after you check into your local hotel.

Overnight: Tashi Namgay
Included meals: Breakfast & Lunch





Paro, Bhutan

DAY 9, October 2

Hike to the Tigers Nest & Free Time

This morning, your guide leads you on a hike to the enchanting **Tigers Nest**, the *Taktsang Monastery* viewpoint. Built around a cave where the Guru Rinpoche meditated, this monastery impossibly seems to cling to a cliff of rock 3,000 feet above the valley floor. The Taktsang Monastery is one of the most venerated pilgrim sites of the Himalayan world, containing 13 holy places.

Please note: The hike takes about 5 hours (roundtrip) and is challenging although unforgettably thrilling and mystical. *Transport by pony is available on the ascent if you do not wish to hike. **Walking is mandatory on the descent. ***

Lunch is on your own arrangement today with either free time to relax or those interested can continue your exploration with the local guide.

Later in the day, those interested can visit **Rinpung Dzong**, meaning “fortress of the heap of jewels”, which has a long and fascinating history. Along the wooden galleries lining the inner courtyard are fine wall paintings illustrating Buddhist lore.

A farewell dinner will be provided this evening.

Overnight: Tashi Namgay
Included meals: Breakfast & Dinner

Bangkok, Thailand

DAY 10, October 3

Depart Bhutan

Today say goodbye to Bhutan, departing for the airport late this morning to fly back to Bangkok. Check back into your airport hotel this evening.

Lunch is on your own this afternoon. Meal service should be included on your flight to Bangkok.

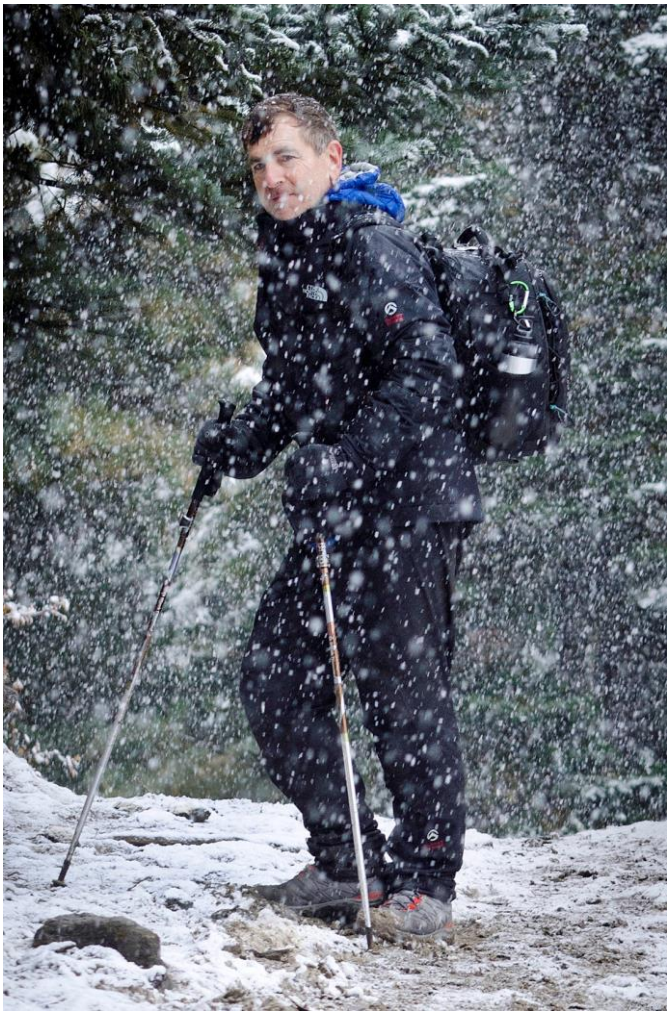
Overnight: Novotel Airport Hotel
Included meals: Breakfast (boxed)

Bangkok, Thailand

DAY 11, October 4

Fly back to Los Angeles today (flight time pending).

Included meals: Breakfast



A NOTE FROM MARK

On this amazing journey through exotic Bhutan, we are going to focus our cameras on one of the most off-the-beaten path countries on earth. During this photo tour we will use the necessary techniques to create cohesive professional travel stories, using images that go far beyond "I was here" photographs. The goal is to come away with a cohesive story told through a series of dramatic photographs.

Successful travel photographers must wear more hats than perhaps any other photographic genre. As you'll see, in a single travel photo essay we are at times landscape photographers, architectural photographers, food photographers, and portrait photographers. The list goes on to encompass almost every possible type of photography.

From the dozens of workshops I've taught, the hundreds of photo assignments I've completed, and talking with many of the great globetrotting lensmen and women I've interviewed, I have developed a methodology that, when applied, should yield impressive and at times spectacular results.

Both photographers seeking to have their work published and those who want to document their adventures for friends, family, and themselves can use the ideas and techniques we will be discussing as we explore the wonders of Bhutan. As to why we travel, my friend and occasional collaborator Pico Iyer penned: "We travel, initially, to lose ourselves; we travel, next, to find ourselves. We travel to open our hearts and eyes and minds and learn more about the world than newspapers will accommodate."

What you will learn:

- To tell focused stories through images
- Refine your photo techniques under the guidance of an award-winning photographer
- How to create dynamic environmental portraits
- Editing and naming protocol techniques
- Photographers of all levels welcome

Bangkok, Thailand

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