

ITINERARY | DAY-BY-DAY



CAREER ENRICHMENT



Understanding Healthcare in Bhutan

Cities: Thimphu, Punakha & Paro

11 days / 8 nights

April 19-29, 2018

\$6,499 (Based on double occupancy)

Enjoy the unique culture and traditions of Bhutan while you spend time with the locals. This adventure includes a very special experience visiting local hospitals and clinics and engaging with your medical counterparts.

BOOK NOW 888.747.7501

Bhutan Highlights

- ✓ **Accompanying guest program** – Some alternate activities will be provided for those who do not wish to attend the meetings as noted in the below itinerary. Most activities will be combined with the group.
- ✓ **Optional post trip extension to Bangkok** will be offered
- ✓ **6.0 Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits** will be sought for this journey. *** This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the Essential Areas and policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education through the joint providership of the Wilderness Medical Society and Nanda Journeys. The Wilderness Medical Society is accredited by the ACCME to provide continuing medical education for physicians. ***

Professional Connections

- ✓ The **primary objective** of the journey is to understand how Bhutan delivers healthcare to its people. Learn about current efforts to reduce infant mortality rates, to reduce morbidity and deaths from infectious diseases and prevent ill health due to poverty and malnutrition.

Cultural Immersion & Exploration

- ✓ Take a challenging hike to the enchanting **Taksang Monastery** for an unbelievable 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.
- ✓ Spend time with the staff and children at a **non-profit organization such as Draktsho**.

What's Included:

- 3 - 4* accommodations throughout
- All transportation and activities outlined in the itinerary
- Flights to and from Paro, 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 & most tips

Not Included:

- Personal expenses at the hotel
- Meals not specified
- Tip for national guide
- Passport renewal or issuance
- Domestic flight to gateway city
- Departure taxes where applicable
- Tips to your maid or porters





📍 Los Angeles, California

DAY 1-2: April 19-20, 2018

Fly to Bangkok today

Depart from Los Angeles late today and make your way to Thailand. Lose a day as you cross the International Date Line.

📍 Bangkok, Thailand

DAY 3: April 21

Arrival and hotel check in

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.

Meals today are by your own arrangement.

Overnight: Novotel Airport Hotel (or similar)

Included meals: N/A

📍 Bangkok, Thailand

DAY 4: April 22

Welcome to Bhutan!

Head back to the airport very early this morning for your flight to Paro (daily flight departs at 4:30 am). The **Dragon Kingdom of Bhutan** is the last of the Buddhist kingdoms that once occupied a vast area of the Himalayas. Meal service provided during flight.

Upon arrival in Paro and clearance of customs the group will be met by your national guide for the two-hour drive to **Thimphu**. You will pass 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 a traditional Bhutanese style.

Afternoon orientation and welcome. All travelers will gather this afternoon with your guide and receive further information on the program and the program activities.

Lunch and a welcome dinner will be provided today.

Overnight: Khang Residency Hotel

Included meals: Lunch & Dinner

📍 Thimphu, Bhutan

DAY 5: April 23

Professional & Cultural Program

Please Note: Breakfast is included daily in your program

Professional members of the program will begin your journey with representatives from the **Ministry of Health**. The primary objective of this group is to understand how Bhutan delivers healthcare to its population given its relative isolation. We will learn about current efforts to reduce infant mortality rates, to reduce morbidity and deaths from infectious diseases and provide access to care. Focus also on their widespread use of traditional medicine and herbs.

Guest program

This morning guests will visit the Zorig Choesum School of arts and crafts where students train for 4-6 years to master traditional arts and crafts of Bhutan. From there make your way to see the giant 150-foot-tall Buddha Dordenma statue at Kuensel Phodrang. The statue itself houses over one hundred thousand smaller Buddha statues made of bronze and gilded in gold.

After lunch, the group will wind your way through one of Bhutan's loveliest valleys enjoying one of the most beautiful drives you will ever experience. Along the way we'll see intact landscapes, idyllic farmhouses and small monasteries, crowned by crystal clear mountain views. The great fortresses, known as **Dzong**, are among the most striking examples of Bhutanese architecture. Visit **Tashichhodzong**, the "fortress of the glorious religion," initially erected in 1641 and rebuilt by King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck in the 1960s. Tashichhodzong houses ministries, His Majesty's secretariat, and the central monk-body. Stop for a photo opportunity at the giant stupa of Buddha on your way back to the hotel.

Those interested may further explore the handicraft markets of Thimphu as you have the evening free to relax or explore independently.

Dinner is on your own arrangement this evening.

Overnight: Khang Residency Hotel

Included meals: Breakfast & Lunch



📍 Thimphu, Bhutan

DAY 6: April 24

Professional Interaction

Professional members of the program will interact with professional counterparts this morning for a meeting at a **local hospital or clinic**. Discussion topics will include the major causes of morbidity and mortality in Peru and allow you an opportunity to see and tour a local medical facility.

Later this morning you will meet with representatives from the non-profit **Gross National Happiness Centre**. GNH is a holistic and sustainable approach to development that balances material and non-material values with the conviction that humans want to search for happiness. The objective of GNH is to achieve a balanced development in all the facets of life that are essential for Bhutan's happiness. They will share information on how the country is monitoring and measuring the GNH level of the people and meeting the requirements outlined by the government.

Guest program

After breakfast guests will enjoy an optional hike to Tango Goemba. It takes about 60-90 minutes from the foot of the hill to the only Buddhist University in Bhutan. Once on the top, you will feel rewarded with the serene atmosphere and impressive architecture. Visit the monastery and if the monks are at recess, you will have an opportunity to chat with them and learn about the monastic lifestyle. This afternoon you will explore the Textile Museum.

After lunch, the group will take part in a humanitarian visit in Thimphu at a **local non-profit or community program** such as **Draktsho**. 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 and eventual integration with the mainstream population.

Time permitting this afternoon the group will also visit the **Takin Zoo** (Preserve Center). The facility was established to protect the Takin, the national animal of Bhutan.

Dinner is by your own arrangement this evening.

Overnight: Khang Residency Hotel

Included meals: Breakfast & Lunch

📍 Punakha, Bhutan

DAY 7: April 25

Depart for Punakha

Depart this morning for the 3.5-hour drive to Punakha. In route, traverse and stop for a photo opportunity at **Dochula Pass** (10,500 ft.). This morning you will 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 (4,430 feet).

This afternoon you will arrive in **Punakha**, formerly established as Bhutan's winter capital because of its more temperate valley climate. Lunch will be provided after arrival in Punakha.

This afternoon, explore Punakha including an excursion to **Chimi Lhakhang**, also known as the temple of fertility. Situated on a hillock in the center of the valley. It is widely believed that couples who do not have children should pray at this temple and are usually blessed with a child very soon.

Lunch and dinner will be provided today.

Overnight: Drubchu Resort

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner





📍 Paro, Bhutan

DAY 8: April 26

Cultural Program & Rural Clinic Visit

This morning, the entire group will visit a **rural health clinic** in Punakha to talk to the staff and learn about health care in rural areas of Bhutan. Discussions will touch on access to care issues and provide an opportunity to assess the differences in care in this setting vs. a larger town.

Next, visit **Punakha Dzong**, the winter capital of Bhutan until 1958. Even today, the Je Khenpo (spiritual leader) head of the central monastic body reside in Punakha Dzong during the winter months and in Thimphu during the summer. Walk over the longest suspension to countryside remote village of Mendhagang.

Depart Punakha for the scenic drive back to **Paro**, arriving at your hotel in the late afternoon. Lunch will be provided in Thimphu in route.

The Raven's Nest has a business center, a currency exchange desk, 24-hour front desk services, laundry, safe deposit boxes at reception, a spa and fitness center, an onsite restaurant and free Wi-Fi.

After a chance to check in the group will 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.

Dinner is by individual arrangement this evening.

Overnight: Raven's Nest

Included meals: Breakfast & Lunch



📍 Paro, Bhutan

DAY 9: April 27

Taktsang Monastery & Farewell Dinner

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. Taktsang, the "Tiger's Lair", gets its name from the Bhutanese legend. In the 8th century, Guru Rinpoche came to Taktsang in a miraculous manner, flying on the back of a tigress from Khenpajong in the region of Kurteop. The hike takes about 5 hours roundtrip, and is challenging, but unforgettably thrilling and mystical.

Lunch is by individual arrangement today. The group will have a variety of options to choose from.

A farewell dinner will be provided this evening at a local restaurant including a delightful Folk performance including their famous mask dance.

Overnight: Raven's Nest

Included meals: Breakfast & Dinner





📍 Bangkok, Thailand

DAY 10: April 28

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



📍 Bangkok, Thailand

DAY 11: April 29

Fly back to Los Angeles early this afternoon.

Included meals: Breakfast





📍 Bangkok, Thailand

Novotel Airport Hotel

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Bangkok, Thailand

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<http://www.novotel.com/gb/hotel-6183-novotel-bangkok-suvarnabhumi-airport/index.shtml>



📍 Thimphu, Bhutan

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📍 Punakha, Bhutan

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📍 Paro, Bhutan

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