

FAMILY EXPEDITIONS

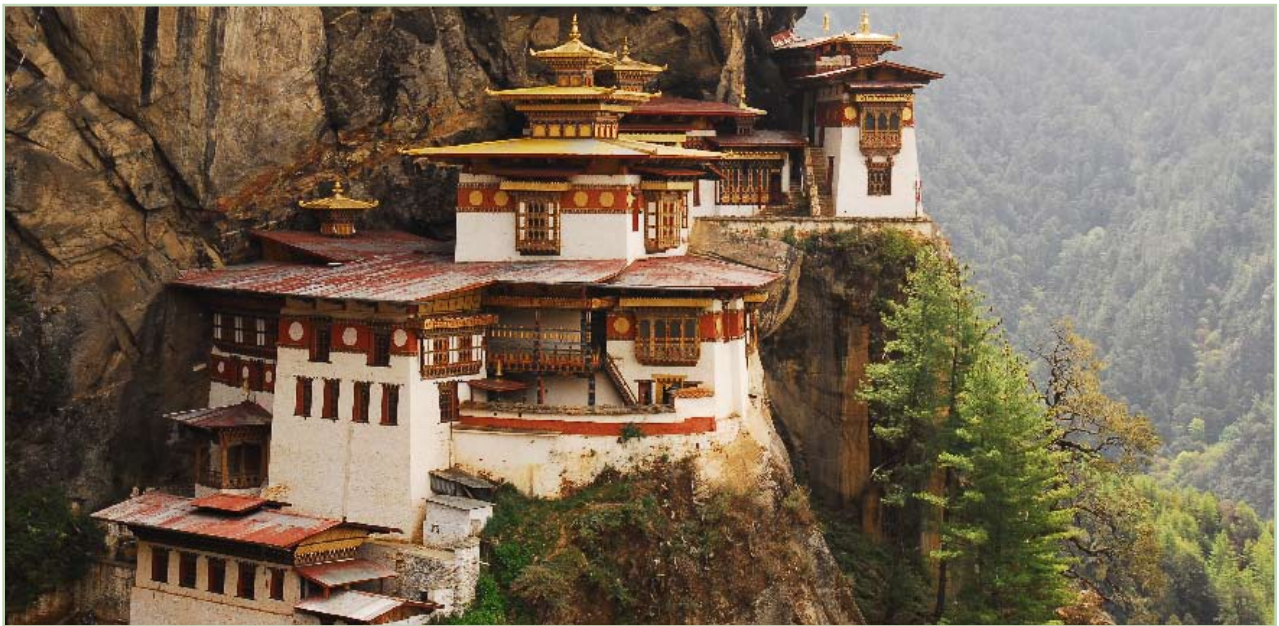
Exploratory Series 2008

Bhutan

by land



TREKKING THE MOUNTAINS



Join your host Lynn Hayes on a magical guided journey as she leads you from remote cliff-side monasteries and dizzying snow-capped peaks to lush river valleys and vibrant medieval villages. Lynn is a travel expert, Editor and a partner in FamilyTravel.com and a contributor to GoodHousekeeping.com. She has spent more than 25 years writing and speaking about travel and family issues. She has written a book about balancing work and family and contributed to several others.



Ultimate Escapes
LUXURY DESTINATION CLUBS

IMMERSE YOUR SENSES...

SEE

a crimson tide spread over the mountains as the rhododendron forests bloom.

SMELL

pungent aroma of butter fat as a sea of candles illuminate the sacred monastery.

TASTE

the national dish of chillies and cheese prepared over a campfire in the wilderness.

TOUCH

the condensation on a bottle of chilled Bumthang Lager, Bhutan's best beer.

HEAR

the cry of the magnificent peregrine falcon as it closes in on its prey.

The Trip



DAY 1 & 2 - THIMPHU

Rise early and board your flight from Bangkok to Paro on Druk Air. You will be met upon arrival by your guide and driver, who will transfer you Thimphu (55kms). Over the next 2 days, visit the National Memorial Chorten, the stupa built in the memory of Bhutan's Third King, explore Trashi Chhoe Dzong, a beautiful fortress/monastery, and choose between a hands-on visit to the Arts & Crafts School or the National Institute of Traditional Medicine, depending upon your interests. Enjoy an invigorating walk through the forests to the picturesque towers and monastic complex of Tango Goemba, built in the 12th century. *Hotel: Phuentsholing Pelri. Meals: BLD*

DAY 3 - WANGDUE PHODRANG

Drive to Wangdue Phodrang (75kms) with a short stop at Dochu La pass (3080m) to soak up the most enchanting views in Bhutan and enjoy a short walk through the colourful rhododendron forest. Afternoon visit Wangdue Phodrang Dzong, a majestic fortress situated at the junction of Punak Tsang Chhu and Dang Chhu rivers. Later take a stroll around local market. *Hotel: Dragon's Nest Resort. Meals: BLD*



DAY 4 - GANGTE

Drive to Gangte (75kms). Visit Gangte village and monastery after lunch, then wander over to the Black Neck Crane research station and enjoy an early evening stroll through the Phobjikha Valley, a beautiful bowl shaped glacial valley which is one of the most important wildlife preserves in the country. *Hotel: Hotel Dewachen. Meals: BLD*

DAY 5 & 6 - GOGONA TREKKING

Set off on our two night porter and pony-assisted trek through the Himalayan foothills and rhododendron forests. The trail over the next few days winds up and down through forests of juniper and bamboo, stopping in remote villages and tiny hamlets. Try your hand at Bhutanese darts one night before dinner in a competition against the local school kids. The highest pass is Shobe La pass at 3,480m, and the daily elevation change is 500 to 1,000 meters up and down. The campsites, along with dining tents, campfire, cooks hut, etc., will be located in beautiful river valleys. *Hotel: Trekking Campsite. Meals: BLD*

BHUTAN

LOCAL DIVERSIONS...

LOCAL PASTIMES

Darts Anyone? While archery is the national game of Bhutan, darts (or khuru) is the national game of school-kids. Two targets are placed at each end of the outdoor darts range, which is usually 50 meters long. In a typical competition two teams compete, and a hit on the target is celebrated with a victory dance performed by the team-mates. We have a match lined up against local villagers in Gogona.

CAMPFIRE STORIES

On one of our nights in Bhutan we will be joining the local village families for an early evening picnic and campfire. Entertainment will be provided by energetic masked dancers, wearing colourful wooden or composition face masks and stylized costumes depicting heroes, demons, animals, and gods.

CULINARY DELIGHTS

We have planned a unique lunchtime visit to a school in Paro where we will have a chance to mingle with the local kids and sample the lunchtime fare. Soups of meat, rice, and dried vegetables spiced with chillies and cheese are a favourite meal during the cooler seasons, and butter tea is available year-round.

DAY 7 - PUNAKHA

After a leisure morning of trekking, transfer to Punakha (70kms) and explore the Punakha Dzong (the most enchanting in the country). *Hotel: Hotel Zangto Pelri. Meals: BLD.*



DAY 8 & 9 - PARO

After breakfast, transfer to Paro (125kms), where you will have a chance to visit the Ta Dzong (national museum), the Rinpung Dzong (a fortress with a fascinating history), and the ruins of Drukgyel Dzong (with spectacular views of Jhomolhari) over the next few days. Save your energy for the highlight - a half day walk to Taktshang Monastery (or Tigers Nest), the most famous monastery in Bhutan, perched miraculously on the side of a sheer 900m cliff looking over Paro. Relax at night in the Uma Paro, the most stylish of the boutique hotels in Paro. *Hotel: Uma Paro. Meals: B*

DAY 10 - DEPART

Transfer to the airport to catch your flight back to Bangkok, where you will say your goodbyes and continue on with your journey. *Meals: B*

The Details



Level of Activity: *Moderate to Challenging* - Rolling terrain with some short hikes and 2 days of trekking. Suitable for travellers of average fitness, with a minimum age of 12 for kids. Many opportunities for extended walks.

Start: Paro, Bhutan

Finish: Paro, Bhutan

What's Included:

- all accommodations on a shared twin/double room basis
- all transfers and sightseeing (including a private driver in Bhutan)
- an English speaking local guide as well as trip leader Lynn Hayes
- 10 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 7 dinners
- all government taxes, royalties, tourism development fees and Bhutanese visas
- all special events and on-trip surprises
- all pre-departure materials

Trip Operator: **Horizon & Co.** (founded in 1963), is Canada's leading boutique travel company. Horizon designs and stages authentic and deeply personal travel experiences that are carefully choreographed to induce a life-long memory. In addition to offering published trips on seven continents, Horizon builds private custom trips for discerning individuals and small groups.

Trip Format: Our **Escorted Trips** are open to the public (with an average group size of 16), are escorted by at least one Horizon guide for the entire duration of the trip, have a fixed itinerary, have a fixed price and leave on fixed departure dates. The quality of the experience on our escorted trips are driven by two things (apart from the itinerary itself) - our guides & your fellow-travellers.

Dates & Prices

DURATION

10 NIGHTS / 11 DAYS

DATES

MAR 1 - 11

PRICES

\$3,495 USD (PER PERSON SHARING)

BOOK YOUR TRIP...

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