

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

### Reminder - Forms and payment due by November 30, 2018

As part of your registration process, please provide us with the three required forms and a copy of your passport (JPEG format)

You are not fully registered until these forms are received.

- [International Pilgrimage Release and Waiver of Liability](#)
- [Pilgrimage Physician's Certificate](#)
- [Pilgrimage Emergency Contact Travel Insurance Form](#)
- JPG Copy of first page of your passport (see below).

*We have created a secure online form for your convenience in sending these completed forms, your passport photo, and answers to questions that are required by the tour operator.*

[Click here to access the secure registration form with upload function.](#)

### Passport and Visa

**Both your Passport and your Bhutan visa must be valid until at least September 21, 2019, which is 6 months from date of entry into Bhutan.**

All Bhutanese visas need to be processed by a licensed Bhutanese Tour Operator. Our Bhutanese partner, Ms. Phurba Wangmo from Nangzyer Tours, will apply for visas for all pilgrims. Please upload the scan of the first page of your passport in JPG format (NO PDF OR OTHER FORMATS) with the other forms, as Phurba needs a perfect JPG copy in order to obtain your visa. The JPG scan must be clear, legible, with no reflections, good resolution, and it must be valid until at least September 21, 2019. Phurba will also need to submit your qualification, i.e. degree and subject of graduation, and occupation. The secure upload form referenced above includes input areas for all required information and a file attachment function for the image of the first page of your passport and your signed documents.

### Visa for Nepal

Depending on your itinerary, **you will need a visa for Nepal** and possibly for other countries you are transiting. Please make your own arrangements for these.

<http://nepalembassyusa.org/tourist-visa/>

### Insurance

We request that each pilgrim purchase travel insurance for this trip. Travel insurance will usually cover baggage loss, delayed flights, medical emergencies and many more useful things. When buying travel insurance be sure that your insurance will cover helicopter evacuation. This would be necessary in case something serious happens with a participant at Taktsang Monastery.

### Flights

Our Kathmandu to Paro and back flights will be arranged by our Bhutanese tour operator, Ms. Phurba Wangmo in early 2019. We will post these details on our website and send via email when available.

Please arrive in Kathmandu, Nepal by March 20, 2019 to allow a buffer time. **Please note: Your online registration form provides fields to enter your flight itinerary to Kathmandu and from Kathmandu, as well as Kathmandu hotel information, special food requirements, and SIM card information if applicable.**

### **Baggage restrictions Bhutan flights**

Your baggage limitations for the flights from **Kathmandu** to Paro will be 65 lbs /30 kg for economy class. You can bring two smaller bags both together weighing less than 20 kg.

For carry-on you can have a hand bag and a small bag not weighing more than 15lb / 7 kg. You can pay for excess baggage but please do not bring more than two checked bags.

### **Recommended Hotel in Kathmandu**

To make it easier to coordinate the group we suggest you stay at the [Hotel Vajra](#). If you are staying at a different hotel, please include details in your online registration form.

### **Packing List**

I have attached a packing list, which also includes advice on common traveler diseases and natural remedies for those.

### **Gifts for hosts**

Bring things that are practical like fleece vests, hats, gloves or thermos cups.

### **Altitude**

These are the names and the altitudes of the places where we will spend the night, which is most important for altitude adjustment.

Paro: 7382 ft. / 2250m

Bumthang: 9185 ft / 2800m

Punakha: 4300 ft / 1310m

Thimphu: 7710ft / 2350m

Tiger's Nest/Taktsang: 10,232ft / 3118m. We will take a 5 hr. hike, but we will not spend the night here.

We will be traveling over passes with altitudes between 9820ft / 3000m to 12460ft / 3800 m.

### **Water**

Nangzyer Tours will provide us with bottled mineral water for the whole trip in Bhutan.

### **Food**

Most of the meals will be served buffet style. The food will not be very spicy. You can add spice if you prefer. There will be seasonal vegetables, rice, spaghetti, meat items, soup, tea and snacks as well. All three meals per day in Bhutan are included in the package cost *excluding* alcoholic beverages.

If anyone has diet restrictions please provide details in your registration page. I will give the list of special food needs to Phurba. Nangzyer Tours will make arrangements accordingly.

## **Money**

Nangyzer Tours offers to do all money exchange for us. This will save us a lot of time.

- If you change \$100 bills you get a better rate (63) than with smaller bills (less than 59).
- They do NOT accept the \$100 bills from 1996. Please bring only brand new ones.
- All bills have to be really clean, no scribbling on them. Otherwise the bank will not accept them.

We recommend you take at least \$1000.00 in cash for expenses and shopping on the trip. Costs that are not covered by the program fee are alcohol, dana, tips and any personal shopping you wish to do.

- We recommend between \$150 - \$500 as dana for monasteries and Lamas that we will be visiting.
- Bigger shops will take credit cards like Mastercard and Visa, most will NOT take American Express.
- Please do not take traveler checks. These can only be handled by banks. We want to avoid group trips to a bank which would take us hours.
- There will be ATMs in Paro, Thimphu, Bumthang and Punakha to withdraw money. Again please do not rely on this as your main way to get Bhutanese currency. We cannot wait for people going to an ATM.

## **Communication**

US cell phones can be used with roaming ONLY if AT&T is your operator. There is the option to get a local SIM card. Your phone has to be unlocked to be able to use a SIM card from a different operator.

Nangyzer Tours will arrange the Bhutan telecommunication's SIM for all the guests. On your registration, note your phone type or SIM type (micro SIM, mini SIM and regular SIM). Based on your registration, Phurba will make arrangements for your SIM card.

## **Immunizations**

Recommended website:

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/bhutan>

Make sure you are up-to-date on routine vaccines before any trip. These vaccines include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine, varicella (chickenpox) vaccine and polio vaccine. Recommended Immunizations specifically for Bhutan are also Hepatitis A and B as well as Typhoid.

## **FYI**

In lieu of the 5 hr. round trip hike to Tiger's Nest, a horse or mule can be rented for about \$15USD, paid in cash before the ride.