

PACKING LIST

Bhutan Pilgrimage with Adzom Gyalse Rinpoche, March 21-30, 2019 What to Bring, Medical Information and Other Travel Tips

Passport and Visa

Both your Passport and Bhutan visa must be valid until at least 10/12/2019, 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 of **Nangzyer Tours**, will apply for visas for all pilgrims. [USE THIS LINK](#) to send us a scan of the first page of your passport in JPG format (NO PDFs or other formats) as well as your qualification, i.e. degree and subject of graduation, and occupation by **November 30, 2018**. The official visa will be stamped into your passport on arrival at Paro International airport.

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.

What to Bring

Not more than you can carry yourself. Suggested luggage is a large backpack, internal frame recommended or duffle bags. For additional space, a “front-pack” (regular daypack worn on the front) or a messenger-style bag may be helpful. Bring a daypack.

Clothes

In general, we will wear the burgundy color of Tibetan Buddhist practitioners as much as possible, although sometimes we may want to look like normal tourists. The burgundy clothing identifies us as Buddhist and this first visual cue that we are practitioners may open doors that wouldn't open to tourists. Ankle length skirts are easy to walk in; Tara Mandala velvet skirts are great for Asia, or you can get a burgundy cotton Tibetan Chuba (women's dresses) or half-chuba (skirt). Skirts also allow women a kind of privacy, a sort of tent, when there are no bathrooms around. The yogi (yogini) skirts from the Tara Mandala bookstore are also good. For men, maroon or white shirts and whatever pants or yogi skirts you like are fine.

Suggested Clothing List

<http://www.tibetantreasures.com/clothing.html>

Store@taramandala.org 970-731-3711 ext. 103 The new Tara Mandala online Shopify store is not complete at this time, so contact the store by phone or email to make purchases.

Yogi(ni) skirt in maroon or Maroon chuba
Yogi(ni) Zen
Shirts: white, orange, pink, red
Silk turtleneck and silk long underwear
Light-weight walking shoes or light weight hiking boots
Flip flops for wet bathroom floors
Ear plugs (silicon is best)
Wide brimmed hat (strong sun)
Warm jacket (down)

Rain gear or umbrella
Light-weight fleece jacket or light-weight down fleece vest
Light weight Daypack (Osprey makes good ones)
Camera and adequate memory cards
Underwear, hiking socks, etc.
Travel adapter for plugs DON'T COUNT ON REGULAR RECHARGING
(You may want to consider a solar charger for your phone)

Suggested Misc Items

Extra glasses and 2 pair of sunglasses with UV protection
Dust mask, we recommend the [I Can Breathe Honeycomb Mask](#)
All body care and hygiene products
Travel towel
Sunscreen 30+
Insect Repellent, we recommend [Herbal Armor](#) or
[Badger Anti-Bug Shake and Spray](#)
Several chap sticks (you definitely need these)
Thermos or thermos cup
Water bottle (1 litre/ 1 quart), we suggest you bring a bottle with an integrated water filter
Tissue travel packs
Flashlight & extra batteries
Variety of ziplock bags of different sizes are endlessly useful
Small bottles or film cans for sacred water and ziplocks for sacred earth Snacks:
Chocolate, nuts, protein bars, etc.

Required and Optional Practice Items

Small inflatable cushion
Nice scarf or brocade to put practice on if outside
Khata for Dana offerings and a zip lock to keep it in (TM bookstore)
Small damaru (optional)
Have a separate light weight shoulder bag for your practice materials.

Recommended for your Medical Kit

Grapefruit seed extract for stomach protection
Melatonin or other jet lag sleep aid Probiotics
(help prevent stomach bugs)
Two courses of antibiotics (one for lung and one for stomach) in consultation with your health-care provider
Antibiotic cream
Moleskin and band aids for blisters
Eye drops for dry eyes and medicated eye drops for infections
Hand sanitizer
Wipes
All personal medications you require for entire duration of trip

Extra Travel Tips

We strongly recommend that you consult your health-care provider when choosing the appropriate medicine for yourself.

Prevention of Traveler's Diarrhea

Probiotics - Acidophilus and Lactobacillus are the two main species of "friendly bacteria" that colonize our intestines. When they are living there it makes it hard for "bad" bacteria to invade and cause diarrhea and infections. **You should take probiotics for one month before the trip;** a variety are available at health food stores.

Pepto-Bismol - Studies have shown that taking bismuth (the ingredient in pepto-bismol) daily can prevent traveler's diarrhea. This is an easy way to avoid the runs.

Dosage: one pepto-bismol tablet a day.

Lomotil or other anti-diarrheals - to stop the runs if you do get them. You should not use these if you have blood or mucus in your stool.

Constipation

Many people are prone to constipation from long periods of inactivity such as sitting on long train or plane rides. Drinking lots of fluids and eating fiber (fruit, psyllium) is helpful, but there is also Colace (bisacodyl) which is a stool softener, and Smooth-Move herbal tea or prunes.

Jet Lag

You will be crossing many time zones and spending a lot of time on the road travelling. Getting good sleep is essential. There are many herbal, homeopathic and allopathic (traditional western) options available.

Ambien - 5-10 mg; this is a very clean sleeping medicine with very little hangover effect and low addictive potential. Needs a doctor's prescription.

Halcion - different medicine in the class of valium. Pretty similar to ambien regarding the lack of side effects.

Benadryl - inexpensive and can be purchased over the counter without a prescription. Can cause dry mouth and urinary retention (an important issue for some men) and sometimes it doesn't work well.

Melatonin - our body's natural hormone that helps us distinguish between day and night. Can be bought at a drug store or health food store. Very gentle.

Valerian - an herbal product with similar properties as Valium. Some addictive potential, probably fine for occasional use.

Altitude Sickness

Altitude sickness arises when one has not had sufficient time to acclimate to the higher altitude and lower oxygen content in the atmosphere. It can happen at relatively low elevations (6000 ft or 2000m) depending on the individual. The best way to prevent altitude sickness is to ascend slowly (not more than 300 meters or 984 ft/day) and avoid overexertion. Symptoms of early altitude sickness include headache, lethargy, dizziness, chilliness, nausea, and vomiting. Later on, there can be facial flushing, difficulty breathing, turning cyanotic (blue), and irritability. The person can also have insomnia, no appetite, rapid heartbeat, and disordered breathing. In its most severe form, people will have pulmonary edema (water in the lung) and encephalopathy (delirium).

At the first signs of mild altitude sickness, one can take Acetazolamide (250 mg every 8 hrs), which should help relieve the symptoms. If you know that you always get altitude sickness at a certain level, it is wise to take prophylaxis treatment. The day before the ascent, one starts with Acetazolamide (250 mg two to three times a day) and continues until 2-3 days after reaching the desired altitude. This does cause people to urinate because the medicine is a diuretic so keep drinking water to stay hydrated. The other option is Dexamethasone (2-4 mg every 6 hours) beginning on the day of ascent until 3 days at the desired altitude. One must then taper off the medication slowly over the next 5 days. If one has asthma or wheezing, this may be a good medicine, otherwise there are many possible side effects that would be better avoided.

If one has any of the serious symptoms, *especially* pulmonary edema with frothy sputum, the most important thing is to **go down**. Even descending 1500 – 3000 feet will help a lot. Oxygen will also relieve symptoms at that point as well. Avoiding strenuous exertion is important.

People who should be careful traveling at high altitudes are those with anemia (low red blood cell count), heart or lung problems or physical deconditioning.

Motion sickness

If one will be doing a lot of traveling on windy roads, etc., it may pay to be prepared for motion sickness. There are several medical and non-medical options. One can use an acupressure point on the inside of the wrist that will help prevent vomiting. From the inside crease of the wrist, measure two fingertips away from the hand and press in the midline; press firmly on that point continuously. Usually it causes one to burp, and then feel better. There are also plastic wristbands with a knob attached designed to press on that point. They are available on the internet from several sources as well as in diving shops.

For medicine, one can use a scopolamine patch, Meclizine or Antivert. In a pinch, Benadryl can help some. The downside of all of these medicines is that they all make you feel drowsy and you miss the scenery. Be sure you check with your doctor regarding these products