

Birding and Wildlife Tour in The Land of the Thunder Dragon

Bhutan - 19st February to 7th March 2021



RED PANDA TRAVEL
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in partnership with



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Nature

A fourteen day fully escorted small group tour to discover the birds, butterflies, wildlife and culture of Bhutan plus a brief introduction to the Unesco World Heritage inscribed sites of the Kathmandu valley in Nepal

Tour leaders – Richard Baines and Norbu Bumthap



Richard is an experienced ornithologist/ecologist who has been studying and working as a Wildlife Guide and in Nature Conservation for over 30 years. From recording UK migrant birds as a volunteer for Flamborough Bird Observatory to surveying birds in the Boreal forest of Russia; he has become highly experienced in bird identification and ecology. His professional and volunteer work has often included sensitive species surveys requiring UK government approved licenses for a wide range of protected species.

Richard has travelled extensively especially in Asia. His love for the birds and wildlife of this region started in China. He then explored Thailand several times culminating in a longer trip of 3 months birding in northern Thailand. He has more recently designed and led a wide range of birding trips to Northern India and now Bhutan.

His greatest asset is his knowledge and enthusiasm, he loves passing on his experience of wildlife to a wide range of ages and abilities. Richard is a member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Monitoring. A recent review of a birding trip he led to India in 2019: “A birders masterclass for both the novice and expert. Thank you to Richard and our fantastic local guides and experts”

Norbu is the pre-eminent bird guide and bird photographer in Bhutan and his local expertise and fieldcraft is unrivalled. His knowledge of the species and habitat of Bhutan is superb and he has a great sense of humour to go with it. If the bird is there, he will show it to you.

Itinerary

Fri 19th Feb

Early evening departure, from a UK regional airport of your choice, to Kathmandu via Dubai.

Sat 20th

Met on arrival in Kathmandu and tfr to your hotel followed by a welcome dinner and introductions.

Tibet International

Sun 21 st	<p>Leave the hotel at 08.00 and tfr to the airport for your flight to Paro. Met on arrival at Paro and drive to Thimphu (2hrs) stopping at Tachhogagang temple enroute. After lunch in Thimphu a visit to the Bank of Bhutan to change some currency and the Post Office to have some souvenir stamps printed. A short visit to the stunning Buddha Dordenma Statue then check in to the hotel.</p> <p>Evening talk from a representative of The Bhutan Royal Society for the Protection of Nature. Red Panda Travel and Yorkshire Coast Nature are supporting the RSPN White-bellied Heron and Black-necked Crane conservation projects and you will be informed as to the progress being made to protect these critically endangered species.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Tara Phendeyling</i></p>
Mon 22 nd	<p>Drive to the Dochula Pass (3150 mtrs) for breakfast then on to birding in the peaceful Lamperi Botanical Gardens. Drive to Punakha with lunch enroute and a visit to the Dzong in the late afternoon.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Zingkhram Resort</i></p>
Tue 23 rd	<p>A full days birding along the beautiful rivers around Punakha.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Zingkhram Resort</i></p>
Wed 24 th	<p>To the Phobjekha Valley birding along the way.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Dewachen Hotel</i></p>
Thu 25 th	<p>Full days birding in the Valley watching the majestic Black-necked Cranes and other alpine species.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Dewachen Hotel</i></p>
Fri 26 th	<p>To Trongsa birding enroute and a visit to Trongsa Dzong.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Yangkill Resort</i></p>
Sat 27 th	<p>To Yongkala birding enroute</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Trogon Villas</i></p>
Sun 28 th	<p>Yongkala birding – reckoned by many to be the best birding area in Asia</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Trogon Villas</i></p>
Mon 1 st Mar	<p>More Yongkala birding</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Trogon Villas</i></p>
Tue 2 nd	<p>To Bhumtang – evening temple visit to see the Himalayan Monal and other pheasants.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Hotel Ugyenling</i></p>
Wed 3 rd	<p>Bhumtang to Paro flight</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Hotel Olathang</i></p>
Thu 4 th	<p>Paro sightseeing/Tiger’s Nest hike</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Hotel Olathang</i></p>
Fri 5 th	<p>Early departure to catch the flight to Kathmandu., on a clear day there will be spectacular views of Everest and the high Himalayas. Met on arrival and tfr to Boudhanath Stupa for sightseeing and brunch. Then drive to Swoyambunath, also called the “monkey temple”, for sightseeing followed by check in at your hotel in Patan, close to the Durbar Square. Final dinner at “Of Silk and Salt” restaurant.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Hotel Timila</i></p>
Sat 6 th	<p>After breakfast a short tour of Patan Durbar square then drive to Bhaktapur for a sightseeing tour and a late lunch. Around 16.00hrs tfr to the airport to connect with your flight to UK via Dubai.</p>
Sun 7 th	<p>Arrive at your UK airport.</p>

Accommodation

Please click on the hotel name for a link to the website

Dates	Nts	Hotel	Room	Meal plan
20 th Feb	1	Tibet International - Kathmandu	Deluxe	HB
21 st Feb	1	Tara Phendeyling - Thimpu	Deluxe	HB
22 nd / 23 rd	2	Zingkhams Resort - Punakha	Deluxe	HB
24 th / 25 th	2	Dewachen Hotel - Phobjekha	Deluxe	HB
26 th Feb	1	Yankhill Resort - Trongsa	Deluxe	HB
27 th / 28 th Feb, 1 st Mar	3	Trogon Villa - Yongkala	Deluxe	HB
2 nd Mar	1	Hotel Ugyenling - Bhumtang	Deluxe	HB
3 rd /4 th Mar	2	Hotel Olathang - Paro	Deluxe	HB
5 th Mar	1	Hotel Timila – Patan, Kathmandu	Deluxe	HB

HB: Room, breakfast and dinner, lunches and snacks will be provided enroute

Tour cost* (excluding flights) - group size 10 people

Per person sharing a double/twin room	£3105
Single supplement	£ 285

*Please read the notes concerning possible variations in the tour cost

Flights (subject to revision at time of booking)

Return economy flights from UK to Kathmandu via Dubai	£660
Return economy flights with Druk Air from Kathmandu to Paro	£350
Internal flight Bumthang to Paro	£170
Total	£1180

Total tour cost - sharing	£4285
- single traveller	£4570

Included:

Accommodation in 3/4-star hotels with private en-suite facilities

Meals as per the table above, and as mentioned in the itinerary, plus tea, snacks and mineral water throughout the day

Fully escorted travel with a Yorkshire Coast Nature expert guide from the UK plus a licenced Bhutanese escort and expert naturalist

All surface transfers by private vehicle with experienced local driver

All entry fees to monuments, museums and National Parks.

All internal taxes and charges (including royalties)

Bhutan visa fees

Excluded:

Nepal visa fees – you will need \$US30 in cash to pay on arrival at Kathmandu airport.

Optional tours/excursions

Personal and incidental expenses - Tips, laundry, phone calls, and bar bills

Insurance – you will need a **comprehensive travel insurance policy with full medical cover**

Any other services not mentioned as included

Notes:

UK and EC citizens require a visa to visit Nepal and Bhutan and you will need at least 6 months validity on your passports after your scheduled return date in order to obtain a visa. Nepal operates a visa on arrival system and we will arrange for the application to be done so that all you will need to do is present your pre-approved documents at Immigration on arrival in Kathmandu and pay the \$30 visa fee. We will also obtain the necessary visa allocation for Bhutan and the visa will be stamped in your passport on arrival at Paro airport.

Baggage allowance – all your flights have a checked in baggage allowance of 20kg plus up to 7kg as a carry on bag. In addition you are allowed a small handbag/laptop bag of reasonable size.

Journey times are approximate and may vary considerably due to adverse traffic or road conditions and the number and duration of stops along the way.

Hotel check-in & check-out time is usually mid-day.

Prices especially air-fares are subject to revision at time of booking. The ground price quoted is for a full group of 10 - a smaller group size may result in a slight increase in cost as economies of scale diminish.

We are required to pay for your tour arrangements in \$US – the £ prices quoted are calculated at £1=\$US1.3. To be fair to all parties the final cost of your trip will be calculated on the day you pay for your trip in full. This may result in a small increase or reduction in the total cost.

In case of any amendments to Government taxes, or any fuel surcharges, we reserve the right to adjust the tour price accordingly.

For Flight bookings we will require your full names as shown in your passport. A good quality scan of the photo page of your passport is required for visa application purposes plus a copy of your passport photo.

The Essentials

Currency

In Nepal this is the Nepalese Rupee currently around £1/150NPR. There is an ATM at Kathmandu airport and many dotted around the Kathmandu Valley. Your hotels accept debit and credit cards as do many shops/restaurants/bars.

In Bhutan this is the Ngultrum (Nu) currently around £1/90 Nu. Just about all your expenses are covered in the tour price but you will need some local currency for souvenirs, bar bills etc. Although you will see many ATM's as you travel around only those operated by the Bank of Bhutan (BOB) will accept foreign debit/credit cards. The safest bet is to take some £ and change them at the bank in Thimpu on the arrival afternoon. Most hotels will accept a mixture of £/\$US/NRP and Nu and most will also take payment by card but connections can be indifferent so do not rely on that.

Tipping

We suggest that you bring £ with you to give to the escort who will then distribute appropriate tips to your guides, drivers, hotels etc. You are of course at liberty to deal with this yourself as you see fit.

Power/plugs

Generally 220v - most hotels have at least one socket that will accommodate a standard British 3 pin plug or an adaptor that will accommodate several. But please take at least one round pin (2 or 3 pin) adaptor to be on the safe side and ensure that your batteries etc. are fully charged each day. A power bank can be a very worthwhile investment but do ensure that you put it in your carry-on bag and not in your hold luggage.

Mobile Phones/ Internet

Wi-fi will be available at all your hotels but speeds can be a little slow. Your mobile will work just about everywhere but roaming charges can be high please check with your service provider. If you need to be in constant contact with home, we suggest that you purchase a Tourist SIM card on arrival at Paro airport as the most economical method of communication in Bhutan.





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01759307943 info@redpandatravel.co.uk www.redpandatravel.co.uk