



# Bhutan: Land of the Thunder Dragon

Post-FGI; May 21-27, 2025 (7 days)



Thimphu

Punakha

Paro



# I. Bhutan trek overview



# Bhutan is a high-quality destination for a high-quality tourist

## Some key facts about Bhutan:

- **Bhutan**, known as the Land of the Thunder Dragon, is a small landlocked kingdom in the Himalayas
- **Bhutan** heavily regulates the number of visitors it can admit every year, arguing that excessive tourism may be damaging to the environment and social fabric of the nation
- **Bhutan** prioritizes people's happiness over excessive economic growth – a phenomenon that permeates every layer of the society
- **Bhutan** withholds \$100 per day in Sustainable Development Fee, promoting mindful and sustainable way of exploring the Kingdom
- **Bhutan** is safe, well-organized; most citizens speak very good English
- **Bhutan** is building the Gelephu Mindfulness City – a unique infrastructure project that prioritizes happiness and mindful development
- **Bhutan** is the only carbon negative country in the world.

**You want to maximize the value of your FGI travel package**



# Trek focus is mindfulness and thoughtful exploration.. a journey for the seekers!

## Join our trek if:

- ✘ **You look for a blend of adventure, cultural immersion, and insightful learning, just like:**
  - Contemplating and discussing the tradeoffs of the “growth at all costs” development model
  - Seeing the rich history and culture of a Kingdom that has never been colonized by any major power
  - Making local friends; engaging in hiking, archery, or meditation with fellow HBS students
- ✘ **You want to be more aware and mindful of what you need to do for a fulfilling life**
- ✘ **You are curious about the world around you** and are eager to push yourself to the boundaries of your comfort zone
- ✘ **You want to make lifelong friends** with students outside your HBS section
- ✘ **You want to maximize the value of your FGI travel package**



# Price of the trip is \$1,800 or \$1,300 if more than 15 students\* sign up

## Included:



### Accommodation

(7 nights, 1 room split between 2 people – twin beds)



### All meals

All meals are covered by the trek fee



### Visits to historic sights and buildings

All entry tickets and guides where applicable



### Meetings

Speaker and translator fee where applicable



### Guided tours

To all sites listed in the trek agenda



### Transfers

All transfers within the country, including to/from the airport



### Taxes

Tourist city and state taxes where applicable

## Not included (extras):



### Insurance

Health and travel insurance



### Flights

You are responsible for booking flights



### On-demand mobile hot-spots

Mobile data



### Tips

Tips are not required but are welcomed



### Optional activities

Free time, nights out, etc.

\* Including partners

# This is our 13<sup>th</sup> student trek to Bhutan since 2017 and the 1<sup>st</sup> one to HBS!



# This is our organizing team

## Core organizing team



**Sonam  
Dorji**

- HKS'24
- Royal Government of Bhutan



**Kinga  
Tshering**

- Former member of the parliament of Bhutan
- Founder of IoH
- CEO of Bank of Bhutan



**Tshering  
Wangmo**

- CEO of Zhu Bhutan Travels
- CEO of Hotel Thimphu Towers

## Involved organizations



**Institute  
of Happiness  
(IoH)**

- Host organization for treks to Bhutan since 2017



**Academic  
Odyssey**

- Partner organization

# II. Trek agenda





# Day 1 – Welcome to Thimphu

06:00

**Arrivals to Paro International Airport**  
Drivers will collect you and bring you to the hotel

**Drive to Thimphu**

12:00

**Guided tour of Thimphu**

18:00

**Bhutan trek introduction session**

24:00

**Dinner**  
Location: Hotel Thimphu Tower

**Bhutan fashion**  
Get your Ghos and Kiras and get ready for the trek!



Thimphu, May 21



**Text** – activity is organized by the hosts; costs are included in the price of the trip

**Text** – activity is organized independently by visitors; costs are not included in the price of the trip (tips will be shared)

# Day 2 – Understanding Bhutan

06:00

## Breakfast

Location: Hotel Thimphu Tower

12:00

## Meeting with Hon. Prime Minister of Bhutan\*

Location: TBD

*Pending availability*

## Lunch

Location: TBD

18:00

## Meeting with Hon. Speaker of the Parliament of Bhutan

Location: Parliament of Bhutan

24:00

## Dinner and drinks

Location: TBD



Thimphu, May 22



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# Day 3 – Mindful development forum 1/2

06:00

## Breakfast

Location: Hotel Thimphu Tower

12:00

## Mindful development symposium

Discuss “mindful development” economic model with local Bhutanese participants, discuss the Gelephu Mindfulness City

18:00

## Lunch

Location: symposium venue

## Mindful development symposium continued

## 19:30 – 21:00: Dinner

Location: TBD

24:00

## 21:00: Free time

Location:



Thimphu, May 23



**Text** – activity is organized by the hosts; costs are included in the price of the trip

**Text** – activity is organized independently by visitors; costs are not included in the price of the trip (tips will be shared)

# Day 4 – Mindful development forum 2/2

06:00

## Breakfast

Location: Hotel Thimphu Tower

12:00

## Mindful development symposium

Discuss “mindful development” economic model with local Bhutanese participants, discuss the Gelephu Mindfulness City

18:00

## Lunch

Location: symposium venue

## Mindful development symposium continued

## 19:30 – 21:00: Dinner

Location: TBD

24:00

## 21:00: Free time

Location:



Thimphu, May 24



**Text** – activity is organized by the hosts; costs are included in the price of the trip

**Text** – activity is organized independently by visitors; costs are not included in the price of the trip (tips will be shared)

# Day 5 – Explore Punakha

06:00

**Breakfast**  
Location: Hotel Thimphu Tower

**Drive to Punakha**

12:00

**Visit Dochula Peak**

**Lunch**  
Location: TBD

18:00

**Visit Punakha Dzong**  
Location: Punakha Dzong

**Visit Temple of Divine Mad Monk**  
Location: Temple of Divine Mad Monk

24:00

**Dinner**  
Location: TBD



Punakha, May 25



**Text** – activity is organized by the hosts; costs are included in the price of the trip

**Text** – activity is organized independently by visitors; costs are not included in the price of the trip (tips will be shared)

# Day 6 – Welcome to Paro

06:00

**Breakfast**  
Location: Hotel Thimphu Tower

**Drive to Paro**

12:00

**Visit Bhutan National Museum**  
Location: Paro

**Lunch**  
Location: TBD

18:00

**Visit Duntse Lhakhang**

**Visit Drugyel Dzong**

24:00

**Dinner**  
Location: TBD



Paro, May 26



**Text** – activity is organized by the hosts; costs are included in the price of the trip

**Text** – activity is organized independently by visitors; costs are not included in the price of the trip (tips will be shared)

# Day 7 – Climb the Taksang

06:00

**Breakfast**  
Location: Paro Hotel

12:00

**Hike up the Taksang (Tiger's Nest)**  
3-4 hour trek in the mountains

**Lunch**  
Location: Any café along the Taksang Trek

18:00

**Transfer back to Paro**

**Archery match**

**Hot stone bath**

24:00

**Dinner and wrap-up session**  
Location: TBD



Paro, May 27



**Text** – activity is organized by the hosts; costs are included in the price of the trip

**Text** – activity is organized independently by visitors; costs are not included in the price of the trip (tips will be shared)

# Day 8 – Departures

06:00

**Breakfast**  
Location: Paro Hotel

12:00

**Departures**  
We will take you back to the Paro airport

18:00

24:00



Paro, May 28



**Text** – activity is organized by the hosts; costs are included in the price of the trip

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# III. Accommodation and logistics overview



# Accommodation

## Thimphu Tower Hotel, Thimphu



Family-owned hotel in central Thimphu



## TBD Hotel, Paro



Cozy hotel in Paro with easy access to the airport

# The trek fits both HBS RC and EC schedules

## Class of 2025 (EC) academic calendar

1	1/19/2025	20 Holiday	21 SIPs	22 SIPs	23 SIPs	24 SIPs		1/20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day 1/21-24 Short Intensive Programs (SIPs) (Optional)
2	1/26/2025	27 X	28 Y	29 *	30 X	31 Y		Spring Term: Quarter 3 and Quarter 4; *Jan 29: class day for once/weekly & Q4
3	2/2/2025	3 X	4 X	5 X	6 Y	7 Y		X schedule: 27 sessions (14 Q3 + 13 Q4) Q3: 1/27-3/5; Q4: 3/10-4/22
4	2/9/2025	Open	11 X	12 X	13 Y	14 Y		Y schedule: 27 sessions (14 Q3 + 13 Q4) Q3: 1/28-3/12; Q4: 3/13-4/23
5	2/16/2025	17 Holiday	18 X	19 X	20 Y	21 Y		2/17 Presidents' Day
6	2/23/2025	24 X	25 X	26 Y	27 Y	28 Y	1 WS	3/1 Weekend Sprints
7	3/2/2025	3 X	4 X	5 X	6 Y	7 Y		
8	3/9/2025	10 X	11 X	12 Y	13 Y	14 Y		
9	3/16/2025	17 Open	18 Open	19 Open	20 Open	21 Open		3/15-23 Spring Break
10	3/23/2025	24 X	25 X	26 X	27 Y	28 Y		
11	3/30/2025	31 X	1 X	2 Y	3 Y	4 Y		
12	4/6/2025	7 X	8 X	9 X	10 Y	11 Y		
13	4/13/2025	14 X	15 X	16 Y	17 Y	18 Y		
14	4/20/2025	21 Open	22 X	23 Y	24 Exams	25 Exams	26 Exams	EC Exams 4/24-noon on 4/30
15	4/27/2025	28 Exams	29 Exams	30 Bridges	1 Bridges	2 Bridges		4/30 noon-5/2 Bridges: on campus academic program.
	5/4/2025	5	6	7	8	9		
	5/11/2025	12	13	14	15	16		
	5/18/2025	19	20	21	22	23		
	5/25/2025	26 Holiday	27	28	29	30		5/26 Memorial Day 5/29 Commencement (Class of 2025)

## Class of 2026 (RC) academic calendar

	1/19/2025	20 Holiday	21 SIPs	22 SIPs	23 SIPs	24 SIPs		1/20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day 1/21-24 Short Intensive Programs (SIPs) (Optional)
1	1/26/2025	27	28	29	30	31		Spring Term   1/27 Quarter 1 Begins
2	2/2/2025	3	4	5	6	7		
3	2/9/2025	10 Open	11	12	13	14		
4	2/16/2025	17 Holiday	18	19	20	21		2/17 Presidents' Day
5	2/23/2025	24	25	26	27	28	1 WS	2/24 Spring Quarter 2 Begins 3/1 Weekend Sprints
6	3/2/2025	3	4	5	6	7		
7	3/9/2025	10	11	12	13	14		
8	3/16/2025	17 Open	18 Open	19 Open	20 Open	21 Open		3/15-23 Spring Break
9	3/23/2025	24	25	26	27	28		3/24 Spring Quarter 3 Begins
10	3/30/2025	31	1	2	3	4		
11	4/6/2025	7	8	9	10	11		
12	4/13/2025	14	15	16	17	18		
13	4/20/2025	21 Open	22	23	24	25		4/21 Spring Quarter 4 Begins
14	4/27/2025	28	29 Exams	30 Exams	1	2		
15	5/4/2025	5 Exams	6 Exams	7 Exams	8 Exams	9 Exams	10 FGI Travel	5/10-11; 5/20-21 FGI Immersion Travel
16	5/11/2025	12 FGI Travel	13 FGI	14 FGI	15 FGI	16 FGI		5/12-19 FGI Immersion
17	5/18/2025	19 FGI	20 FGI Travel	21 FGI Travel	22	23		5/21 End of RC Term
	5/25/2025	26 Holiday	27	28	29	30		5/26 Memorial Day 5/29 Commencement (Class of 2025)

Bhutan trek

# How to get to Bhutan

There are no direct flights to Bhutan; one must travel through Delhi\*, Kathmandu, or Bangkok\* to get to Bhutan

Departure location	Duration	Approx. price (RT)
Delhi, India	2.5 hours	USD 400
Kathmandu, Nepal	1 hour	USD 300
Bangkok, Thailand	4:30 hours	USD 600
Taipei → either of the above	10 hours	USD 800

\* Delhi and Bangkok are two FGI locations. Another one – Taipei is also close, but a participant would still have to travel through India, Nepal or Thailand to get to Bhutan

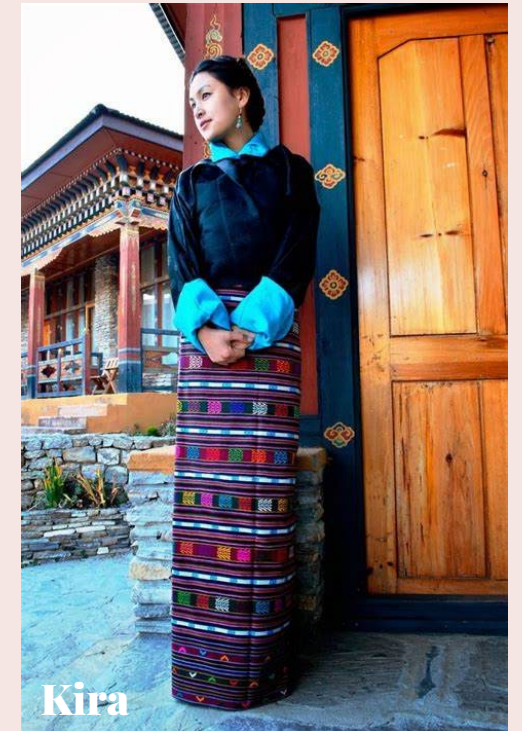
# IV. Signup and misc.



# Recommended packing list

**While on the trek you have an option to wear a Bhutanese national attire (Gho for men and Kira for women). In addition, we recommend that you pack the following:**

- Comfortable walking shoes
- Long knee length Gold Toe for men
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Hat/cap
- Warm thermal shirt and long johns
- Semi-formal attire
- Water Bottle



# Organizational timeline

We are here



Deadline to  
sign-up:  
March 10

## End of January

- Join the WhatsApp group

## Early March

- Security deposit paid (\$200)
- Sign-up form completed

## Late March

- Remainder paid (\$1,500 or \$2,000) depending on # of participants

## Early April

- Submit documents for visa processing

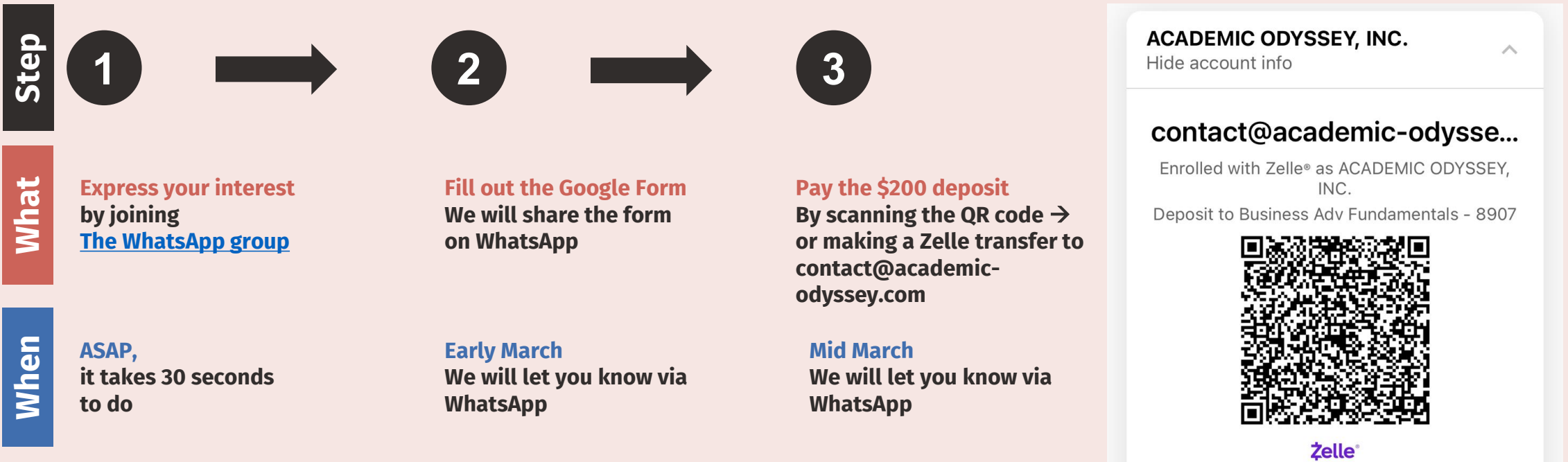
## May 20

- Arrival in Bhutan

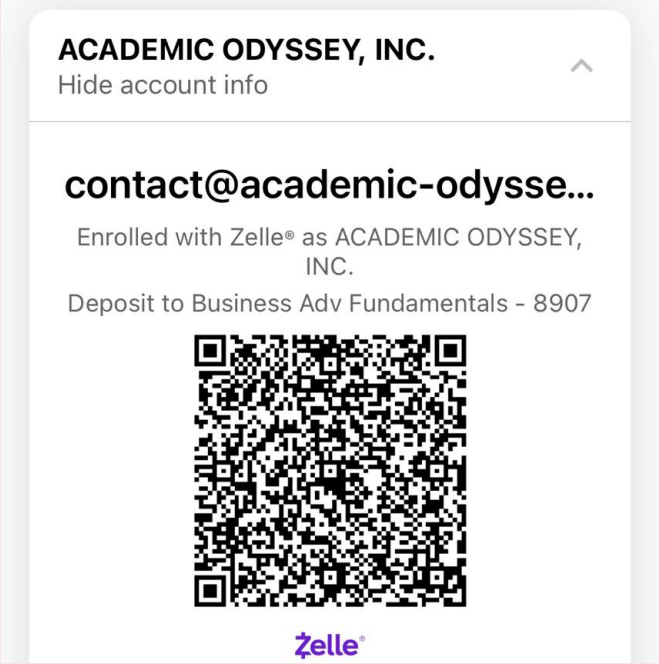
## May 27

- Departure from Bhutan

# Next steps



If you have a specific question, please reach out via email:  
[kingatshering@gmail.com](mailto:kingatshering@gmail.com)  
[contact@academic-odyssey.com](mailto:contact@academic-odyssey.com)





# Miscellaneous items



## Entry requirements

- You are required to have a valid visa to travel to Bhutan. We will issue a visa for you after trek registration. We will collect a visa fee in addition to the trek fee.
- If you travel to Bhutan via India, you are required to have a valid Indian transfer visa.



## Health

- Bhutan is a country in the Himalayan mountains; if you are prone to getting altitude sickness, consider bringing relevant medication
- Consider bringing motion sickness tablets if you are prone to getting car sick as some transfers take a few hours on winding mountainous roads



# V. FAQs



# FAQs

**Q1: Can partners join?**

**A1:** Yes

**Q2: Is Bhutan safe?**

**A2:** Yes, Bhutan is one of the safest countries in the world.

**Q3: What about for the LGBTQ+ community?**

**A3:** Bhutan is safe for everyone.

**Q4: Do I need to bring a lot of cash?**

**A4:** No, most places in Bhutan accept international debit and credit cards.

**Q5: Will my SIM card work in Bhutan?**

**A5:** Most SIM cards work well using roaming. However, if you would like to get a local SIM card, we can arrange one for you.





Hope to see you soon