



## **INDIA & BHUTAN OVERLAND TAILORMADE TOUR**

<b>TOUR PRICE</b>	<b>LAND ONLY: £ 4500 PER PERSON ON A TWIN SHARING BASIS <i>PRICES ARE ALL INCLUSIVE WITH NO HIDDEN OR LOCAL PAYMENTS</i></b>
<b>FLIGHTS</b>	<b>WE CAN ARRANGE TO BOOK FLIGHTS FOR YOU THROUGH OUR PARTNER TRAVEL AGENT OR YOU CAN ARRANGE YOUR OWN FLIGHTS AND WE WILL ARRANGE FOR YOUR TRANSFER FROM THE PLACE WHERE THE TOUR STARTS</b>
<b>TIME OF VISIT</b>	<b>OCTOBER-MAY</b>
<b>NO OF DAYS</b>	<b>27 DAYS</b>

## **Bhutan & India Overland Tour**

In this tour cross overland into West Bhutan from the Indian state of West Bengal and traverse through Central Bhutan to the lesser visited and pristine East Bhutan before exiting overland through the border town of Samdrup Jonkhar. You will also be visiting the Indian states of Sikkim, Assam and Meghalaya. The tour includes visits to monasteries, mountain journeys, plenty of walks, beautiful scenery and an opportunity to experience some of the lesser visited places. Depending on your interest, the tour can be modified, just drop us an email at [info@wildrhinoadventures.co.uk](mailto:info@wildrhinoadventures.co.uk) for more.

### **Destinations**

Bagdogra-Darjeeling-Sikkim-Paro-Thimphu- Punakha-Bumthang- Mongar- Trashingang- Guwahati-Cherrapunjee

### **Detailed Itinerary**

#### **Day 1| Bagdogra- Darjeeling (70 km., 3 hrs)**

Our representative will meet you at Bagdogra airport and after necessary formalities drive to Darjeeling located at 2050 metres (6825 ft.), it is the oldest hill station in India. The crest of Kanchenjunga shining in the first dawn light truly supports the title "THE QUEEN OF HILL STATIONS ". On arrival check in at hotel. Afternoon free for personal activities. Overnight stay in Hotel.

Accommodation: <http://hotelvillaeverest.com/>

#### **Day 2| Darjeeling full day tour**

Full day tour of Darjeeling and visit Tiger Hill, this spot has earned international fame for the magnificent view of the sunrise over "Kanchenjunga" and the great Eastern Himalayan Mountains, Batasia loop or railway loop, a marvellous feat of engineering, Ghoom Monastery; The original monastery was built during the early twentieth century. The monastery can accommodate around sixty monks. The statue of Maithreya Buddha which is 4.57 meter high, of this monastery is of interest here.

Accommodation: <http://hotelvillaeverest.com/>

#### **Day 3| Darjeeling to Kalimpong (50kms, 2hrs.)**

In the morning, drive to Kalimpong 2150Mitre (4175ft), this exotic town of beautiful people, mystical and enchanting, with a rare ethnic blend of hill people, has a tradition of hospitality from the days of the mule caravans of old. On arrival check in at hotel.

Accommodation: <http://www.holumba.com/>

#### **Day 4| Kalimpong to Darap (Pelling) (130kms, 4.5hrs.)**

Check out from Kalimpong and drive to Pelling in West Sikkim (Alt 7175Ft / 2150M). The pleasant little town of *Pelling* is famous for magnificent views of the snow-capped Kanchenjunga range, the third highest peak in the world.

Accommodation: <http://www.sikkimvillagehomestay.com/>

#### **Day 5| Sangacholing hike ( Pelling) - Kewzing**

Morning Sangacholing hike -The Sanga Choeling Monastery, also spelt Sange Choeling Monastery (gsang sngags chos gling, THL Sangngak Chö Ling), established in the 17th century by Lama Lhatsün Chempo, is one of the oldest monasteries in the Northeast Indian state of Sikkim. The literal meaning of Sanga Choeling is "Island of the Guhyamantra teachings", where gling means a vihara and "secret Mantra teachings" is a synonym for "Vajrayana Buddhism".

Accommodation: <http://www.sikkimstdc.com/GeneralPages/Details/Kewzing-Village/64/Details.aspx>

### **Day 6| Kewzing to Gangtok/Rumtek (80kms, 3hrs.)**

Today after breakfast we will drive to Rumtek. In the hill facing Gangtok is Rumtek, a quiet getaway and home to the Rumtek Monastery, Holiness the Gyalwa Karmapa of the Kargyu sect of Buddhism. The largest monastery in Sikkim, it demonstrates the best of Tibetan architecture and is almost an exact replica of the original monastery in Tsurpu in Tibet. Afternoon stroll around the resort or you can take a small walk to the village.

Overnight at Rumtek.

Accommodation: [Teentaley Eco Farm House](#)

**Day 7|** Full Day sightseeing of Gangtok ; visit Botanical Garden, Namgyal Research Institute of Tibetology, Government Institute of Cottage Industry (GICI), Tashi view Point and stroll in M G Marg.

Accommodation: [Teentaley Eco Farm House](#)

## **Bhutan**

### **Day 8| Gangtok- Phuntsholling ( Bhutan)/ Jaygaon ( 220 km., 6/7 hrs)**

In the morning drive to the Bhutan border town of Phuntsholling, where our representative from Bhutan will meet you and take over from the India guide. Overnight you will stay in a hotel on the India side at Jaigaon.

### **Day 9| Phuontsholling- Paro ( 182 km., 5 hrs)**

After breakfast, drive to Paro, one of the five western provinces of Bhutan which is located at an altitude of 2350 meters. It is a historic town with many sacred sites and historical buildings scattered throughout the area. It is also home to the only international airport in Bhutan. Paro airport has been described as "the most difficult commercial airport in the world "The airport has only one runway. Airplanes on approach pass by 5,500m Himalayan mountain peaks, and the 1,980m runway length presents a double challenge, due to the extremely low density altitude at the site. As a result, only a handful of airline pilots are certified to operate commercial airplanes there.

Along the main street there is a complex of traditional architecture with richly decorated buildings housing small shops, institutions and restaurants. In Paro visit Rinpung Dzong, Duntse Lhakhang, Thangtong Gyalpo and Kyichu Lhakhang. In the evening visit Paro town. Overnight hotel at Paro.

### **Day 10| Paro**

Today, after early breakfast, get ready for the hike upto the historical Tigers Nest. Your guide will tell you what to carry with you for the hike. Paro Taktsang also known as the Taktsang Palphug Monastery and the (Tiger's Nest) is a prominent Himalayan Buddhist sacred site and the temple is located on the Cliffside about 900 meters above the of the Paro Valley. Thereafter visit Drukgyal Dzong. Overnight at Paro.

### **Day 11-12 | Paro- Thimphu ( 51 km., 1 hr)**

Thimphu is the Capital and largest city of Bhutan. It is situated in the western central part of Bhutan. The ancient capital city of Punakha was replaced by Thimphu when it was established as capital in 1955, and in 1961 Thimphu was declared as the capital of Bhutan by His Majesty the 3<sup>rd</sup> King of Bhutan. Over the 2 days, visit Kuensel Phodrang, where you will see the Great Buddha Dordenma, National Memorial Chorten, Motithang Takin Preserve, Painting School or National Institute of Zorig Chusum, National Handicraft Emporium, TashichhoedZong or Thimphu Dzong. Stay at hotel in Thimphu.

### **Day 13|Thimphu- Punakha (86 km., 3 hrs)**

In the morning drive to Punakha Valley, on your way, stop at Dochhu La Pass (3050 m) to enjoy the spectacular views of the mighty Himalayas and then drive down to the warmer valleys of Punakha, where you will visit the 17th century Punakha Dzong. Hike to Chimi Lhakhang monastery( temple of madman), built in 1499 to commemorate Lama Drukpa Kinley's subjugation of the demoness. It is also revered as a temple of fertility and a blessing ceremony with a giant phallus is performed for those who request this. Overnight at Punakha.

### **Day 14| Punakha to Gangtey (85 km., 3 hrs.)**

In the morning after breakfast, drive to Gangtey valley or Phobjikha Valley, a vast U-shaped glacial valley, named after the impressive Gangtey Monastery of the Nyingma sect in central Bhutan, where the graceful black-necked cranes in Bhutan (*Grus nigricollis*) from the Tibetan Plateau visit the valley during the winter season to roost. On arrival in the Phobjikha Valley in the last week of October, the black-necked cranes circle the Gangtey Monastery three times and also repeat the process while returning to Tibet. The broad valley with its best-known marshland in Bhutan is popular for its scenic splendor and cultural uniqueness. Visit Wangdue Phodrang, Overnight at Gangtey.

### **Day 15| Gangtey- Bumthang (160 km., 6 hrs)**

Drive through dense forests and uninhabited black mountains, cross Pele La Pass, at 10,830 feet, considered the traditional boundary between eastern and western Bhutan. At this altitude the scenery is dwarf bamboo, herds of yak, and snow covered peaks. Take a break at Trongsa and briefly explore the town on foot and walk through centuries old footpath, this is how people travelled across Bhutan before the construction of roads in the 1960s. Thereafter continue your journey of 2-3 hrs. to reach Bumthang. Overnight in Bumthang

### **Day 16| Bumthang**

The Bumthang valley area is considered to be the cultural heartland of Bhutan, and has many historical sights. Visit Tamzhing monastery and the burning lake. You will explore this valley by hiking through beautiful landscapes and meeting people in the many hamlets, including Khoma valley known for the beautiful handwoven textiles. Overnight at Jakar, Bumthang.

### **Day 17-18| Bumthang-Mongar ( 184 km., 6 hrs)**

This long but a beautiful drive east from Jakar to Mongar, passes through Ura village, crosses Thrumshing La pass (3800m)with spectacular mountain vista into Sengor village. Then the road descends through ever changing vegetation, until it hits the lowest point in Kuri Zampa at 570m above the sea level. From here it is little over 1100m climb to the town of Mongar located on the hillside. It is a long drive, but nonetheless a scenic one, with opportunity to see wide varieties of flora and fauna.

### **Day 19| Mongar- Trashigang (64 km., 2 hrs)**

We continue to travel east from Mongar, to arrive in Trashigang, the principal town in eastern Bhutan, seldom visited by foreigners. A 30 minute drive from Trashigang is the very picturesque village of Rangung, known for textiles and the new Rangung Choeling Monastery. Drive to Tashiyangtse, visiting Gomkora temple, Doksum village along the way. In Trashiyangtse, visit traditional Art School, Chorten Kora and stroll around its' small town. Overnight in Trashigang.

### **Day 20| Trashigang**

Today participate in the Trashigang Tshechu, the biggest festival in eastern Bhutan. The nomadic community of Merak and Sakteng, called the Brokpas, stand out of the crowd in their unique dress and appearance. Different sacred mask dances are performed during the festival apart from other traditional folk songs and dances. The highlight of the festival is the unfurling of the thongdrel (large tapestry) of Guru Tshengyed (eight manifestation of Guru Rinpoche). Another thongdrol of Neten Chudrug (Sixteen Arhats) is also unfurled for the public. Overnight in Trashigang.

### **Day 21| Trashigang- Samdrup Jonkhar (175 km., 6 hrs)**

In the morning drive down through the east Bhutan mountains towards the Assam plains and to the border town of Samdrup Jongkhar. Overnight in hotel at Samdrup Jongkhar.

### **Day 22| Samdrup Jonkhar- Guwahati ( 103 km., 3 hrs)**

In the morning after breakfast, our India representative will meet you at the hotel and drive to Guwahati. Visit the Kamakhya temple, the most revered temple of the female goddess or shakti, the temple is associated with a disturbing past as human sacrifices used to take place here. Thereafter, drive to your homestay. You can explore the city in the evening. Overnight in Guwahati.

Accommodation: <http://www.prabhakarhomestay.com/>

### **Day 23| Nov 20: Guwahati- Cherrapunjee ( 160 km., 5 hrs)**

Drive from the plains of Assam into the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya the 'Abode of the Clouds', abound by beautiful scenery and landscape of rolling hills lined with pine trees. During the journey you will have several stops to take in the beautiful gorges, thundering waterfalls and serene lakes as you drive and finally reach your destination at Cherrapunjee. Overnight in Cherrapunjee.

Accommodation: <http://www.cherrapunjee.com/>

### **Day 24| Nov 21: Double Decker Living Root Bridges Hike**

In the morning go on a trek to the double decker living root bridge. The living root bridges are ingeniously built bridges over streams and rivers from the roots of the rubber plant by a root guiding mechanism that takes decades to build and continue to function for centuries. These are built by the local War Khasi tribes and is a skill that is passed on from one generation to the next.

This is a day long trek as you will walk through meandering paths going downhill and enroute, you will come across little villages. The double decker bridge is one of its kind as there are two bridges stacked one over the other. If you fancy a dip in one of the natural pools at the bottom of the trek, carry your swimming costumes. Then you will start climbing uphill. Overnight in lodge in Cherrapunjee.

Accommodation: <http://www.cherrapunjee.com/>

### **Day 25| David Scott Trek**

In the morning go on an old trekking route, the David Scott trail discovered in the 1800s, which goes all the way from India and ends in Bangladesh. While the entire trek is 100 km., long, today you will walk 16 km. The whole trek is blessed with mesmerising views, hamlets, streams and waterfalls. You will end your trek near Mawphlang, where you will be picked up by the car and then drive to your lodge. Overnight in Mawphlang.

Accommodation: <http://www.culturalpursuits.com/>

### **Day 26| Laitlum and Shillong ( 60 km., 2 hrs)**

In the morning drive to Laitlum canyons and trek to the nearby village that promises breathtaking gorges and steep winding stairways. Here meet the Syiem/ Khasi chief in the village of Smit and witness the last living traditions of the Khasi tribe ( with over 85% of the Khasis embracing Christianity it is very difficult to come across authentic and animist Khasi culture and tradition). Thereafter continue your drive to Shillong, the capital of the state of Meghalaya. In the evening go for a stroll at Police Bazaar, heart of the city.

Accommodation: <http://www.aerodene.in/> or similar

### **Day 27| Shillong-Guwahati (150 km., 3 hrs)**

Drive to Guwahati airport for your onward journey home.

### **Includes**

All accommodation  
Most major Meals as mentioned above  
English speaking guides throughout the tour in Bhutan and Sikkim/ Darjeeling  
Local guides ( English speaking) in Meghalaya  
Protected Area Permit for Sikkim  
Bhutan visa  
All transportation

### **Passport and Visa Requirements**

India: A passport (with at least six months remaining validity) and a current Indian visa are required for this trip. Please note that you are required to have a passport with a machine-readable bar code. You will need to apply for your Indian visa in advance from the relevant issuing authority in your home country. In UK, this is done by an agency VFS. Please visit the website <http://www.vfsglobal.com/india/uk/Tourist.html>

Bhutan: Please send us your passport copy and visa will be arranged by our Bhutan agent.

### **Permits for Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim**

Please send us copies of your India visa and passport at least 2 months before start of your tour to arrange for the Protected area permit for Arunachal. We will separately email to you a form which is to be filled up and sent to us. For Sikkim, the permit is arranged on arrival at Bagdogra for which please carry copies of your passport, India visa and 4-8 passport size photos.

### **Travel Insurance**

It is recommended that you take out appropriate insurance to cover personal accident, medical costs, repatriation, loss of baggage and holiday cancellation.

### **Vaccinations**

Please visit your GP for guidance for vaccinations and advice for prophylaxis against malaria. Please also visit this website for more details [http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk/destinations/asia-\(east\)/india.aspx](http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk/destinations/asia-(east)/india.aspx)