



Kingdom of Bhutan March 2019 RSGC & SMLS – Draft Itinerary

Date	Activity	Remarks
Travel Days March 8 & 9 TBD	Details pending flight bookings	
Day 1 Sunday March 10	Arrive in Paro in the morning, Drive to Thimphu (1 hr, 15-minute drive), check into Hotel. Lunch at Hotel Gyelsa and introduction to Bhutan. After lunch we will visit a temple to attend a purification/welcome to Bhutan/good wishes ceremony. Introduction to Bhutan during dinner.	Overnight Hotel in Thimphu Hotel Gyelsa Boutique
Day 2 Monday March 11	Thimphu sightseeing Memorial Chorten - The Memorial Stupa , also known as the Thimphu Chorten , is a stupa, popularly known as “the most visible religious landmark in Bhutan.” We will also visit the National institute of Art and Craft, Folk Heritage Museum, Centenary Park and Buddha Point, where a massive statue of Shakyamuni measures in at a height of 51.5 meters, making it one of the largest statues of Buddha in the world. Tashichho Dzong – built as a fortress in 17th century, but now is used as the “Seat of the Royal Government” Evening talk on Gross National Happiness (GNH)	Overnight Hotel in Thimphu Hotel Gyelsa Boutique
Day 3 Tuesday March 12	Morning drive to Dochula Pass, approx. 45 min drive (3140m) collection of 108 chortens and prayer flags. On a clear day you can see panoramic views of Bhutan’s Himalayan mountains. On the way you can see Semtokha Dzong , the first dzong built in 1629. Then we will continue drive to Punakha (the former Capital of Bhutan) and visit the following places: Chimi Lhakhang - stands on a round hillock and was built in 1499 by the 14th Drukpa hierarch, Ngawang Choegyel, after the site was blessed by the “Divine Madman” the maverick saint Drukpa Kunley (1455–1529) who built a chorten on the site. Short 30 minutes hike. Punakha Dzong - Punakha Dzong is built on the confluence of the Two rivers Po Chu and Mo chu. It is a magnificent structure and a marvel of traditional Bhutanese architecture. It is considered a pride for Bhutan. Punakha Suspension Bridge - The Punakha Suspension Bridge is considered the longest of its kind in Bhutan. It connects the two sides of the Po Chu river. In the early years, the bridge was made for the Lamas of Punakha Dzong who crossed the river very often to visit nearby villages. Today it serves both for locals and tourists who want to visit the temple. It is covered in prayer flags and provides amazing views.	Overnight Hotel in Punakha Hotel Vara



Bhutan Global Experiential Learning Program



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Day 4 Wednesday March 13	<p>Learning & Sharing at Ugyen Academy Early breakfast and attend morning assembly at 8:30, attend classes with students. Afternoon: To be determined with Principal Nima Tshering Evening: cultural evening, dancing evening, learning exchange with students Students will stay overnight at the school dormitory's with the Ugyen Academy students.</p>	Overnight Punakha Ugyen Academy hostel (Students) Teacher - Hotel Vara
Day 5 Thursday March 14	<p>Learning Exchange at Ugyen Academy Morning at conference hall. Video on GNH followed by a discussion and exchange of ideas on the Western concept of happiness vs. Bhutanese concept. Afternoon: Community Service--- based on Ugyen Academy's needs & farewell tea</p>	Overnight Hotel in Punakha Hotel Vara
Day 6 Friday March 15	<p>Hike from Norbugang to Punakha Approximately 40 minute drive to reach the village of Norbugang, the starting point of the hike we will do in the morning. It begins at a Monastery built by the grandfather of the present King. The hike from Norbugang to Punakha is about 2 to 3 hours (mostly downhill) depending on the group's pace. Picnic lunch at the river side.</p> <p>Afternoon: Rafting with Druk Rafting Generally rafting conjures of images of crashing through monstrous waves with laughing and screaming joyful rafters hanging on, but in the context of Rafting in Bhutan, it is a gentle drift-down-the-river admiring the scenery and running a few small yet exciting rapids. Drifting past imposing 17th century Punakha Dzong watching the world's rarest bird, the white belled Heron in its natural habitat and Kingfishers frolicking on riverbank - all these topped off with spectacular sight of serene lush green alpine valleys make for a unique experience on the river.</p> <p>Bonfire and Camping by the riverside overnight.</p>	Overnight Camping at Zomling Thang – Riverside platform tents
Day 7 Saturday March 16	<p>Morning drive to Paro and visit the following places: Ta Dzong an ancient watchtower, which now houses the National Museum Paro Dzong - The centre of civil and religious authority in this valley. A short walk takes you to the base of the Dzong and across a traditional cantilevered, covered bridge. A short distance further is one of the innumerable archery grounds. (Archery is the national sport of Bhutan). If we are lucky, we may catch a match in action.</p> <p>Dumgtseg Lhakhang - Founded by Thangtong Gyalpo. Located on the edge of a hill between the Paro valley and the Dopchari valley.</p>	Overnight Hotel in Paro Hotel Drukchen





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Day 8 Sunday March 17	Drive to the foot hills of the Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest) and from here hike up to the monastery, which is approximately 1000 meters above the Paro valley. Kichu Lhakhang- The oldest temple founded in 7th century by Tibetan king Songsang Gangpo.	Overnight Hotel in Paro Hotel Drukchen
Day 9 Monday March 18	If weather permits we will visit the Chela La Pass , which is about 35km from Paro. The Chele La separates Haa and Paro valley and at 3810m, it is one of the highest motorable passes in Bhutan. The drive from Paro is through dense spruce and larch forests according to the seasons. On a clear day, there are spectacular views of Mt. Jumolhari, Jichu Drake and adjoining peaks to the North West, as well as the view of Haa and Paro valley. If weather does not permit a trip to Chela La, we will share in a Bhutanese Culture Show, and spend some time in the town of Paro souvenir shopping, packing and prepping for our farewell group dinner.	Overnight Hotel in Paro Hotel Drukchen

Hotel Information:

Hotel Gyelsa Boutique in Thimphu
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 Jangchub Lam
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 gyelsaboutique@gmail.com

Hotel Vara in Punakha
 P.O Box No: 1297
 Lobesa
 Punakha, Bhutan
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Hotel Drukchen in Paro
 Khangkhu,
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 drukchen123@gmail.com

Additional Information: www.aliveoutdoors.com/bhutan

Telephone numbers and emails for Hotels in Bhutan and Bangkok are provided solely for emergencies. Should you need to contact the group, email the lead teacher from your son/daughter's respective school.

Royal St. George's College - Emma Totten - etotten@rsgc.on.ca
 St. Mildred's-Lightbourn School - Kristin Read - kread@smls.on.ca

Meet Our Hosts in Bhutan



Karma Tshering is the owner and operator of Good Karma Travels. ALIVE Outdoors has worked very closely with Karma to create an outstanding experience in Bhutan. Karma and Galey Tenzin will guide our group through the Thimpu, Punakha and Paro regions.

We learned on our past trip to Bhutan that Karma and Galey are phenomenal hosts. Their level of customer service is exceptional. Every time we asked them a question, they always responded with, "everything is possible." They both deliver a very level of high customer care, and attention to detail. Bhutan is a small country with an immeasurable amount to teach all who have the privilege of visiting.

To learn more about Good Karma Travels, please visit <http://www.goodkarmatravels.bt/>