

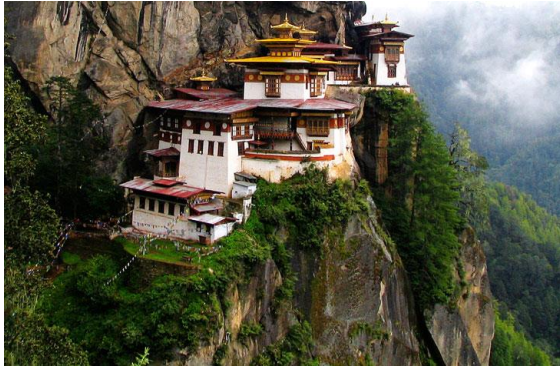
# FOOTSTEPS OF HIMALAYA, INDIA and BHUTAN

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## *Darjeeling, Gangtok, Kalimpong, Thimphu, Paro - 12 days*

Departure: September 23, 2017

Return: October 04, 2017



*Essence of India and Bhutan*

*Experience some of the oldest Buddhist monasteries. Impressive views of Himalayan mountain ranges and tea gardens of the queen of Hill stations 'Darjeeling'. Dazzling a ray of architecture, culture and natural wonder.*

### ***Highlights***

#### ***India***

Tea Gardens home of Darjeeling tea

Ghum Buddhist Monastery

Mt. Kanchenjunga

Rumtek Monastery

Deorali Orchid sanctuary

#### ***Bhutan***

Trashichhodzong monastery

Taktsang (Tiger's Nest)

the cylindrical Ta Dzong National Museum

**Day1. Saturday, September 23. (D)\* UNITED STATES – DELHI**

Depart this evening abroad any airline of your choice to Delhi, India. Dinner and light breakfast served on the plane.



## Day2. Sunday, September 24. (B, L, D)\* DELHI

Continue flying on your airline to Delhi. Lunch and Dinner on the plane. You arrive late night at the Delhi International Airport. We meet you outside the customs and transfer you to the hotel, where we stay three nights at the deluxe centrally located ITC Maurya hotel.

## Day3. Monday, September 25. (B). DELHI – BAGDOGRA – DARJEELING

Today morning after breakfast, we will take domestic flight to board the flight for Bagdogra. We will arrive at Bagdogra from where, we will drive to Darjeeling (around 3 hrs drive). It was the summer capital of India during British Raj. This small town has the picturesque views of the highest peaks of Himalayas and tea gardens. Evening at leisure. Dinner at the hotel. We will stay two nights at The Elgin Darjeeling.

*Darjeeling “The queen of Hill stations” offers magnificent views of the Himalayan mountain ranges. It’s fern filled valleys, snowcapped peaks, rich folk culture, and aromatic tea gardens make all senses alive. The name Darjeeling is a composition of ‘Dorje’ means thunderbolt and ling means ‘place’ the land of thunderbolt.*

## Day4. Tuesday, September 26. (B) DARJEELING

Early morning, we will visit Tiger hill to enjoy breathtaking sunrise. When the sun rays touch the snow peaks of Mt. Kanchenjunga amazing colors reflects. We will return to hotel for breakfast. We will start our sightseeing with Ghum Monastery, it was built in 1875 by a Lama called Sherab Gyatso. It preserves some rare hand-written Buddhist manuscripts. The monks of Ghum Monastery follow the Gelugpa order of Buddhism. We will continue our visit to Batasia loop and Tibetan Refugee Self-Help Centre, which was started on October 2, 1959. Following the dramatic escape of His Holiness the Dalai Lama during that period of mayhem, thousands of our fellow countrymen, leaving hearth and home, fled into neighboring countries so they could live as free human beings.

## Day5. Wednesday, September 27. (B, D) DARJEELING – GANGTOK

Today after breakfast we will drive 4 hrs to reach to Gangtok the capital of Sikkim “ First Organic State of India”. We will check in to our hotel The Elgin Nor – Khill, where we will stay two nights. We will start sightseeing with Research institute of Tibetology, it is perched on the top of a beautiful hill. It was established in 1958 to promote research into the Mahayana sect of Buddhism. The institute holds one of the largest collection of Buddhist books and rare manuscripts. Dinner at the hotel.



## Day6. Thursday, September 28. (B) GANGTOK

Today after breakfast, we will start our sightseeing with Rumtek Monastery. It is Sikkim's biggest monastery which was built in 1740. It features golden stupa containing the relics of the 16th Kamapa, with several other sacred Buddhist artefacts. Sikkim is a heaven for Orchid lovers, we will visit Deorali Orchid sanctuary. Surprisingly 454 species of orchids are known to exist in this world, out of which about 200 are found in the sanctuary. In the afternoon, we will visit Lal Bazaar, it portrays the true vibrant color of Sikkim, it is the market where local farmers from around Gangtok congregate to sell their products.

*Gangtok is the capital and the largest town of the state of Sikkim. It is located in the eastern Himalayan range, at an elevation of 1,650 m (5,410 ft). Nestled within higher peaks of the Himalaya and enjoying a year-round mild temperate climate. Gangtok rose to prominence as a popular Buddhist pilgrimage site after the construction of the Enchey Monastery in 1840.*

## Day 7 Friday, September 29. (B) GANGTOK – KALIMPONG

Today after breakfast we will drive 75 kms (3hrs) to arrive in Kalimpong, where we will stay two nights at The Elgin Silver Oaks. We will do half day sightseeing in & around Kalimpong covering Durpin Dhara, Zong Dong Palri Fo-Brong Monastery and flower & Orchid Nurseries and Kalimpong Market. Overnight at Hotel.

*Kalimpong is famous for its Orchids & Nurseries and some of the rarest cacti & Orchids can be seen. Oak, Maple and Chestnut stretch up the ridge as far as the eye can reach.*

## Day 8 Saturday, September 30. (B, D) KALIMPONG – BAGDOGRA - THIMPHU

Today after breakfast we will drive to Bagdogra to take International flight to Paro, Bhutan. We arrive at the Paro International airport from where, we will drive to Thimphu, the modern capital town of Bhutan. En route to Thimphu enjoy the views of silvery Pa Chu (Paro River) which is meandering its way through the thick forested ravine and the Paro Dzong (fortress) and Ta Dzong (watch tower). We will stay two nights in Thimphu at The Taj Tashi. Dinner at the hotel.

*Thimphu is the capital and largest city of the Kingdom of Bhutan. The city is spread out laterally in a north-south direction on the west bank of the valley formed by the Raidāk River, which is known as the Wang Chuu or Thimphu Chuu in Bhutan. The culture of Bhutan is fully reflected in Thimphu in respect of literature, religion, customs, and national dress code, the monastic practices of the monasteries, music, dance, literature and in the media.*

## Day 9 Sunday, October 1. (B) THIMPHU



Today after breakfast we will start our full day of sightseeing in Thimphu valley. National Library has a vast collection of ancient Buddhist texts, manuscripts, modern academic books and printing blocks for prayer flags. We will continue with Thimpu Painting School, famous for traditional thangha paintings. The Traditional Medicine Institute is where the rich herbal medicines abundant in Kingdom are prepared here. The institute also imparts the art of herbal medicines to would be practitioners. Memorial Chorten is the beautiful stupa built in the memory of Bhutan's third King. The paintings and statues inside the monument provide a deep insight into Buddhist philosophy. Trashichhodzong, the beautiful fortress/monastery which houses Secretariate building, King's Throne room and other government's offices, is also the summer residence of Chief Abbot. Overnight at the hotel.

### Day 10 Monday, October 2. (B) THIMPHU – PARO

After breakfast, visit Folk Heritage Museum (an old farmhouse showing the rural life of Bhutanese) and to Bhutan Post Office Headquarters where you can make stamps with your own photos (USD 4 for 12 stamps, at your expense). After lunch, drive back to Paro and then visit a farm house to touch the life of local people. We will stay two nights at the Le Meridien.

Paro is a town and seat of Paro District, located in the Paro Valley of Bhutan. It is a historic town with many sacred sites and historical buildings scattered through the area. It is also home to Paro Airport, Bhutan's sole international airport. Rinpung Dzong a fortress-monastery overlooking the Paro valley has a long history. A monastery was first built on the site by Padma Sambhava at the beginning of the tenth century, but it wasn't until 1644 that Ngawang Namgyal built a larger monastery on the old foundations, and for centuries this imposing five storey building served as an effective defence against numerous invasion attempts by the Tibetans.

### Day 11 Tuesday, October 3. (B) PARO

This morning, take a scenic hike to Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) - the most sacred monastery in Bhutan, built on the steep cliff, offering you enchanting views of the Paro valley. Later get a glimpse of Bhutan's history at the cylindrical Ta Dzong National Museum and visit Paro Dzong, may be the finest example of Bhutanese architecture you'll see, which is now used as an administrative centre and school for monks.

### Day 12 Thursday, October 4. (B) PARO – DELHI – USA

After breakfast, we will escort you to the airport for your onward flight to Delhi. Evening departure on your flight back home, arriving the next day.

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\* B-Breakfast, L-Lunch, D-Dinner



## LAND COST

DOUBLE: \$6,550 PER PERSON

SINGLE: \$7,600 IN DOUBLE ROOM

## TOUR INCLUDES

- To and fro flight tickets – India to Bhutan
  - Hotel accommodations in 5-star deluxe hotels
  - Buffet breakfast daily
  - Private air-conditioned vehicle with chauffeur throughout the tour
  - Experienced English speaking local tour guides
  - Entrance fees to World heritage sites and museums
  - Private sightseeing in each city
  - Return airfare for India - Bhutan
  - Domestic airfare as per the itinerary
  - Visa for Bhutan
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