



- **What languages are spoken in Bhutan?**

There are 19 languages spoken in Bhutan, but the National Language is Dzongkha. English is used throughout Bhutan's education system, so it is widely used and understood.

- **What is the weather like in Bhutan and when is the best time to visit?**

Bhutan is a year-round destination. There are four seasons: Summer (June to August), Autumn (September to November), Winter (December to February) and Spring (March to May). But because of the range of altitudes in the country, and the influence of the east-Indian monsoons, the climate is incredibly varied.

In the south, the humid, subtropical climate is fairly consistent year-round, with temperatures between 20C and 35C. Central Bhutan, with its temperate forests, has a more seasonal climate, with warm summers and cool, dry winters. The northern regions are much colder during winter. Because of the high altitude, mountain peaks are snowy year-round and the lower reaches remain cool in summer.

In summer, the Indian monsoon season runs from late June or July to late September, mostly affecting the southern regions. Most farming activities take place in the summer, when crops thrive in verdant landscapes.

Autumn, from late September or early October to late November, follows the rainy season. It is characterised by bright, sunny days and some early snowfall at higher elevations. It's the season of feasts and festivals as farmers reap the fruits of their work.

From late November until March, the crisp, clear and sunny winter sets in, with frost throughout much of the country and snowfall common above elevations of 3,000 metres. The winter northeast monsoon brings gale-force winds at the highest altitudes through high mountain passes, giving Bhutan the name Drukyul, which means Land of the Thunder Dragon in Dzongkha (Bhutan's national language).

Bhutan's generally dry spring starts in early March and lasts until mid-April. It is a botanist's delight, with nature in full bloom. Summer weather commences in mid-April with occasional showers and continues to late June.

- **What currency is used in Bhutan?**

Bhutan's currency is called Ngultrum. It's 1:1 with Indian Rupees.

- **Which power plug is standard in Bhutan?**

Three different electrical plugs are used throughout Bhutan: the British plug (three square pins, compatible with type G sockets), the European plug (two round pins, compatible with type C socket) and the Indian plug (three thick round pins, compatible with type D sockets). It's a good idea to bring adaptors for all three.

- **What is the international country code?**

For telephone calls, Bhutan's country code is +975. Make sure you add this to the beginning of any number if calling Bhutan from abroad.

- **Do I need a visa to enter Bhutan?**

Visitors of all nationalities, except those from India, require a visa before entering Bhutan. For all visitors, except those from Bangladesh and the Maldives, this visa must be applied for and approved in advance of travel. Visitors from Bangladesh and the Maldives also require a visa, but this can be applied for and approved either in advance of travel or upon arrival in Bhutan.

Visitors from India are able to apply for a permit but are required to hold an Indian passport or an Indian voter ID card. For Indian nationals under the age of 18, a passport or a birth certificate can be used to enter and they must be accompanied by a legal guardian.

Nationals from Switzerland and Thailand holding diplomatic or government-official passports are eligible for a visa at their port of entry.

- **How do I apply for a visa?**

If we are taking care of your travel needs, we will take care of the same. Or if you wish to do the same on your own, please visit <https://visit.doi.gov.bt/>

- **Are there any nationalities restricted from being granted a visa to enter Bhutan?**

No, there are no restricted nationalities in Bhutan.

- **How long does it take to issue my visa?**

A correctly input visa application can take up to five days to process.

- **How much does the visa cost?**

There is a one-off fee of US\$40 for the processing of your application. This is payable at the same time as your Sustainable Development Fee (SDF), as part of the process of submitting your visa application.



- **How long does my visa allow me to stay in Bhutan?**

The visa allows you to remain in Bhutan for a maximum of 90 days from the date of entry.

- **Can I extend my visa while I'm in Bhutan?**

Yes, we will assist you (if you are traveling with us) in order to do so. Please contact us immediately.

- **Can I use my international credit card to pay for my visa/ SDF online?**

Yes, it is possible to use your credit card to pay for your visa and SDF online. However, we strongly recommend that you notify your bank prior to making the credit card transaction to ensure that the payment is processed successfully. If they are not informed in advance, sometimes international banks will block online payments to Bhutan as part of the bank's online security measures.

- **Is travel insurance mandatory?**

Yes. All visitors must have full, valid travel insurance for the duration of their visit. For all visitors except those from India, Bangladesh and the Maldives, it is required to be in place when you make your visa application.

Visitors from India, Bangladesh and the Maldives have the option to purchase domestic travel insurance at their port of entry.

- **If I want to drive my own car into Bhutan, how much does it cost?**

There is a charge of Nu. 4,500 per car, per day. A guide is also mandatory.

If guests want to bring their own car, the cars must meet the requirements of Bhutan's Roads Safety and Transport Authority and must also have a valid driver's license, insurance documentation, pollution control documentation, an entry permit and a vehicle in reasonable condition. A valid Indian driver's license is accepted for self-driving within Bhutan. The same fees and rules apply for motorbikes.

In case the vehicle is not owned by the guests travelling to Bhutan, an authorisation letter is required.



- **How do I get into Bhutan?**

The country has one international airport located in Paro (with another one is coming up in Gelephu; the Southern border).

Flights operated by Drukair and Bhutan Airlines arrive and depart from destinations including Kolkata, Delhi, Bagdogra, Guwahati, Kathmandu, Dhaka, Bangkok and Singapore. Private jets or charters can fly into Bhutan after obtaining the relevant approvals.

There are also domestic airports in Yonphula in eastern Bhutan, Bumthang in central Bhutan, and Gelephu in south-central Bhutan.

- **Are face masks required to be worn in any places or at any times in Bhutan?**

Face masks are no longer required to be worn at any venue or at any time in Bhutan, except in hospitals and health centres. However, guests can choose to wear face masks at their convenience should they wish. Also, it may be mandated by the government that face masks need to be worn in the future if the number of COVID-19 cases go up, therefore it is recommended that guests always travel with a face mask in their luggage as a precaution.

- **What are the current covid-19 regulations in Bhutan?**

Although we recommend all visitors stay up to date with vaccinations against covid-19 to help stop the spread of the disease, there are now no covid-19 vaccination requirements for adults or children to enter Bhutan from September 23rd 2022. There is no quarantine requirement either.

No random covid-19 testing will be undertaken at any port of entry into Bhutan, however this may be done if a guest is showing symptoms or asks for a test.

If a guest tests positive for covid-19 during their stay in Bhutan, they will be admitted entry into the country without any quarantine period, however will be required to wear a face mask at all times and maintain other precautionary measures until they test negative again.

There will be no covid-19 protocols to leave Bhutan, unless the country the guest is travelling to requires them.

- **What are my transport options for travelling around Bhutan?**

The most convenient way to travel in Bhutan is to hire a vehicle and driver. It is not possible to hire a self-drive vehicle in Bhutan.

If you are travelling with us, transport will be arranged for you.

Domestic flights are often the fastest way to travel longer distances within Bhutan. Domestic airports operate flights to and from Yonphula in eastern Bhutan, Bumthang in central Bhutan, and Gelephu in south-central Bhutan.

For special itineraries, helicopter services can be arranged.



- **Do I need a guide or a route permit to travel around Bhutan?**

A local guide will help you see the best that the country has to offer and will ensure your safety when exploring unfamiliar terrain and altitude. It is mandatory to be accompanied by a guide for any journey or any trek beyond Thimphu and Paro. Guides are also mandatory for visitors who enter Bhutan via our land borders and plan to travel beyond the border towns. Guests no longer require a Route permit to travel around the country, so long as they are accompanied by a guide certified by the Department of Tourism.

- **What kind of accommodation is available in Bhutan?**

Bhutan offers a wide range of accommodation, from luxurious five-star hotels to cosy homestays in traditional village settings.

- **Can I stay in a private home, or campsite, in Bhutan?**

You may only stay in accommodation or campsites approved by the Tourism Council of Bhutan.

- **Is it safe to travel in Bhutan?**

Bhutan is a very safe place to visit, even if you're travelling alone. There is very little crime experienced by locals or visitors, although we advise you to take care of yourself and your belongings. In some areas you may encounter stray dogs – please be cautious around them as they are not domesticated. They normally keep their distance, but please stay away from them as much as possible, especially if travelling with children. Please don't feed or pat these or any other wild animals.

- **Are there visitor information centres?**

Yes – Bhutan's Department of Tourism has a dedicated visitor centre at Paro International Airport. Others may be found at the four border entry points.

- **Where can I exchange currency?**

You can change your local currency for ngultrum upon arrival at Paro International Airport or at banks, larger hotels and authorised currency exchange businesses in Thimphu.

- **How much cash can I bring into Bhutan?**

You may bring cash equivalent to US\$10,000 per person into the country.





- **Can I use my credit card and ATM card in Bhutan?**

ATMs and banks accept Visa and Mastercard. International credit cards (barring the cards issued in India which are mostly not valid for transactions in Bhutan & in Nepal) are widely used in urban areas of Bhutan. However this service may not be available in other parts of the country. Visitors can download the digital wallet app goBoB launched by the Bank of Bhutan, which can be used with a local SIM card and is widely accepted throughout the country. Another option is the MyPay digital wallet app launched by Bhutan National Bank. Both apps can be connected to international credit cards and used widely. Cash in US dollars and Indian rupees is also widely accepted. We advise bringing some cash in either of these currencies, or in Bhutanese ngultrum.

- **Is there good internet connection and Wi-Fi in Bhutan?**

Most hotels have Wi-Fi in Bhutan, but we recommend obtaining a guest SIM card for more convenient access to data and a more reliable internet connection. Mobile data in Bhutan can also be expensive. You can find the B-Mobile SIM in mobile stores in larger cities, which you can easily top up using the Bank of Bhutan app goBoB. This app also facilitates other payments within the country.

- **Where can I get a visitor SIM card?**

SIM cards can be purchased from the Paro International Airport's visitor information centre on arrival, or from branch offices of Bhutan Telecom and TashiCell, or from authorised agents in towns.

- **Are there any restrictions on dress?**

There are no rules about what visitors should wear. However if you are planning to visit places of religious significance, respectful smart-casual clothing that covers your body from shoulders to knees is appropriate and appreciated.

- **Do I need a guide to enter monuments and Dzongs in Bhutan, and are they chargeable?**

Yes, a guide is required to enter monuments and Dzongs in Bhutan.

- **Where are good places to buy handicrafts and gifts?**

There are plenty of places to shop for special objects, from high-end pieces to small mementos. Many visitors enjoy shopping at the Cottage and Small Industries (CSI) Market and the Centenary Farmers' Market. The Textile Museum shop has a wonderful selection of artisan-made textiles and homewares, as do the nearby Tarayana and Craft galleries. Our OGOP shops are also excellent places to find food, drink and handcrafted products sourced directly from the country's artisans and farmers.





- **Are there certain things I can't take out of Bhutan when I leave?**

Keeping important antiques and artefacts in Bhutan is a key part of how we preserve our heritage for future generations. We have a law that sets out which artistic, historic, cultural, religious, social, archaeological and technical objects you may not take with you when you leave. To ensure any items you acquire comply with the law, you will need an Export Permit for Non-Antique Artefacts.

- **Can I use a drone for photography while in Bhutan?**

A permit, which must be applied for in advance, is required to fly a drone either recreationally or commercially in Bhutan. Please let us know in advance.

- **If I drive my own car into Bhutan, do I still need a guide?**

Yes. A guide is required at all times for all guests who drive their own cars to Bhutan. It is highly recommended to pre-book guides before arriving at the borders. If you need help with arranging a guide, please contact our host services team here.

- **Are Route Permits required for guests to move around between areas in Bhutan?**

Route Permits are no longer required to move around Bhutan. However, anyone on a business visa or for an official purpose is required to have a Route Permit.

- **Are permits required to enter National Parks in Bhutan?**

Yes, permits are required to enter National Parks in Bhutan. However the process can be done online and the permit should be issued quickly.

- **Are there any fees to enter monuments or other sites in Bhutan?**

While most monuments in Bhutan are free, some are chargeable. Children below 18 years will have a 50% concession and children aged five years and below will be exempted. Most monuments are open from 9am – 5pm each day. In June 2023, it was announced that foreign visitors can now visit monuments whenever they are open to the general public, without any restrictions.

