



I-ADVENTURE'S PRESENTS: THE HAPPINESS JOURNEY TO BHUTAN

April 25 to May 5, 2026

Draft Program, Updated 4 December



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Important Note:

We've assembled a team of three exceptional guides to make every day entirely your own. Whether you wish to push the pedals farther, wander off on a scenic hike with a few companions, linger over a long lunch, or simply relax and soak in the views at the hotel you can. With extra guides dedicated to personalizing each moment, you'll have the freedom to follow your mood, your pace, and your sense of adventure every single day, or you can take advantage of all the planned group activities.

If you need to start the trip later or leave earlier, we'll ensure you're met at the airport and seamlessly connected with the group wherever we are in the country.

April 25, Saturday — Welcome to Bangkok

Arrive in Bangkok and gather for a welcome meeting and dinner before spending the night at the airport hotel.

April 26, Sunday — Arrival in the Kingdom of Happiness



From Bangkok, we'll board Flight KB153 departing at 6:00 AM and arriving in Paro, Bhutan at 8:15 AM. Touch down in the Land of the Thunder Dragon and breathe in the crisp Himalayan air. From here, enjoy a scenic one-hour drive to Thimphu, Bhutan's capital. Along the way, we'll stop to admire the Tachog Lhakhang Bridge — a 15th-century iron-chain bridge built by the Tibetan saint Thangtong Gyalpo. After settling in and refreshing from the flight, take a leisurely stroll through Thimphu to soak in the city's peaceful rhythm. Optional visits include the lively Weekend Market, a feast for the senses, or the majestic Tashichho Dzong, the grand fortress and seat of Bhutan's government. As evening falls, gather for an orientation and Q&A with local friends to gain insight into Bhutan's culture, philosophy, and its timeless pursuit of happiness.

April 27, Monday — The Spirit of Happiness

Begin your morning with an optional yoga session to awaken body and mind. After breakfast, meet local experts to learn about Bhutan's revolutionary Gross National Happiness Index* (GNHI), the guiding philosophy behind the nation's development.

Immerse yourself in Thimphu's creative and cultural heart with visits to the School of 13 Traditional Arts, the Royal Textile Academy and Museum, and the National Memorial Stupa. For lunch, dine with a remarkable woman entrepreneur pioneering hydroponic farming, known for crafting the freshest salads

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in Bhutan. In the afternoon, stretch your legs on a scenic hike from Buddha Dordenma to Changangkha, offering sweeping views of the capital. Spend the evening at leisure, exploring the city's quiet charm.

April 28, Tuesday — Crossing the Dochula Pass to Punakha

This morning's journey to Punakha unfolds like a dream as we travel over the Dochula Pass, where 108 white stupas crown the mountains and prayer flags ripple in the wind. On a clear day, the snowcapped peaks of the Himalayas fill the horizon. Upon arrival we'll visit the "Castle of Happiness," Punakha Dzong, one of Bhutan's most beautiful fortresses and stroll across (or hold on for your life) Bhutan's longest suspension bridge, a kaleidoscope of fluttering prayer flags. Lunch will be a picnic lunch by the river's edge.



April 29, Wednesday — Myths, Monkeys and Mountains

After breakfast, travel toward Gangtey, stopping at the famed Temple of Fertility, dedicated to the "Divine Madman," whose playful teachings shaped Bhutan's unique fertility rituals, and penis worship folklore (yes, you read this right). Continue to Wangdue Phodrang Dzong, admired for its magnificent architecture, before crossing the Lawala Pass, where alpine forests open to sweeping valleys. Keep an eye out for mischievous monkeys along the roadside. By evening, we'll arrive in Gangtey, where a bonfire and storytelling session await beneath the starlit sky.

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April 30, Thursday — The Soul of the Phobjikha Valley

Spend the day exploring the serene Gangtey/Phobjikha Valley, a glacial bowl surrounded by misty mountains. Begin at Gangtey Gonpa Monastery, then hike the Nature Trail, rich with birdlife and breathtaking views. Those who wish can pause to meditate at Khewa Lhakhang before visiting the Black-Necked Crane Center and meeting local families in a traditional farmhouse. Optional cycling through the valley offers a deeper connection with the landscape. In the evening, enjoy a home-cooked Bhutanese dinner with a local family — a truly heartwarming experience.

May 1, Friday — The Road to Bumthang

Today's scenic drive to Bumthang crosses the Pele-la Pass, marking Bhutan's transition from west to east. Prayer flags flutter above forests that give way to high-altitude bamboo. Stop to admire the Chendebji Chorten, an 18th-century stupa built to subdue an evil spirit, and pause in Trongsa — the ancient seat of Bhutan's monarchy — where the grand Trongsa Dzong towers over the valley. After lunch, continue through the Chumey Valley, known for its handwoven wool textiles, before arriving in Bumthang, the cultural heartland of Bhutan. In the evening, meet a local monk to share insights into spirituality, Buddhism, and the Bhutanese way of life.

May 2, Saturday — Temples, Trails and Local Tales

Today we offer two options:

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A) Explore Bumthang's sacred sites — Kurjey, Jambay, and Tamshing — each with deep spiritual resonance. Many are close enough to reach on foot, allowing a leisurely valley walk between them. Along the way, meet monks, farmers, students, and weavers going about their daily lives. Lunch will be at a traditional farmhouse, featuring local delicacies and seasonal fare. In the afternoon, we'll visit the Swiss Farm to sample cheese, fresh juices, and Weiss beer.

B) We'll drive to nearby Ura Village to experience its annual festival before returning to Bumthang in the early afternoon.



May 3, Sunday — Return to Paro: Wellness and Culture

We return to Paro on Flight KB013 at 6:30 AM, enjoying once again the breathtaking panorama of the Himalayas on this short but spectacular flight. Upon arrival, those interested may visit traditional astrologers. Later, we'll explore Paro's vibrant Sunday Market, visit Paro Dzong and the National Museum, and watch locals compete in a spirited archery match, Bhutan's national sport and a joyful expression of community.



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May 4, Monday — From Sacred Heights to Visionary Horizons

Today marks a highlight of the journey — a hike to the legendary Tiger’s Nest Monastery (Taktsang), perched dramatically on a cliff high above the Paro Valley. This sacred site offers both spiritual depth and awe-inspiring views, making it one of the world’s most unforgettable experiences. In the afternoon, we’ll learn about Bhutan’s bold vision for the future, the Gelephu Mindfulness City. As Bhutan continues to balance ancient wisdom with modern progress, this new city in the southern plains reimagines urban life as a living expression of Gross National Happiness. The master plan is the creation of BIG, the acclaimed Danish architecture firm and a long-time friend of I-SUSTAIN. Spend the rest of the day at leisure — perhaps shopping for handicrafts, visiting the spa, or reflecting quietly on your extraordinary journey.



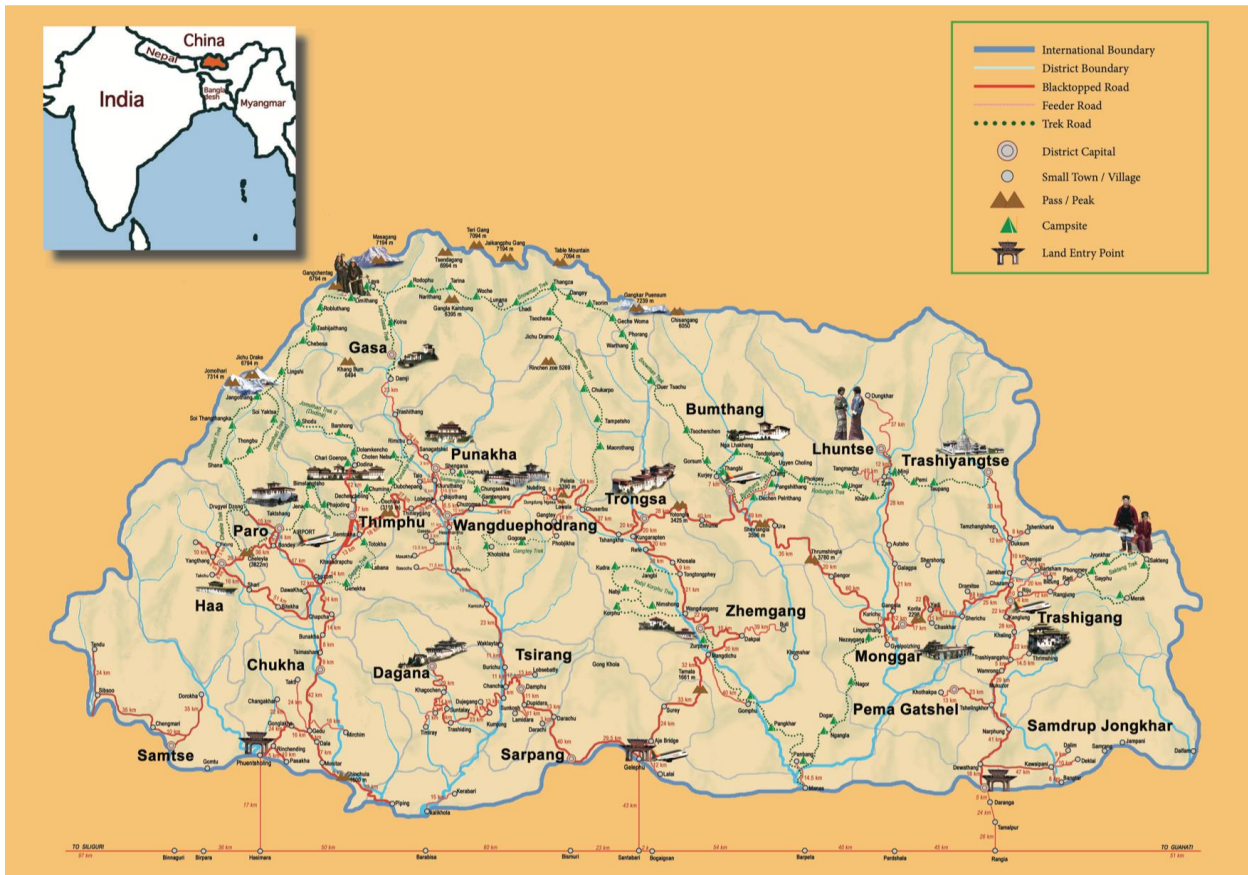
May 5, Tuesday — Farewell Bhutan

Flight KB152 departs Paro at 11:50 AM and arrives in Bangkok at 4:00 PM.

As we bid farewell to Bhutan, we carry home memories of mountain air, timeless traditions, and the warmth of a people who have taught us that happiness is not found — it is cultivated.

*GNHI: https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/well-being-knowledge-exchange-platform-kep_93d45d63-en/bhutan-s-gross-national-happiness-gnh-index_ff75e0a9-en.html

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