



10 Day Mountain Bike Adventure in Bhutan

Experience the magic of Bhutan! This amazing country is famous for being the happiest in the world and is unparalleled in its cultural preservation. It also has some amazing trails to mountain bike on! We even hear that the king is a mountain biker.

This trip is an enduro style trip that combines culture, nature, the Bhutanese people and way of life, as well as the thrill of riding your mountain bike on world class singletrack trails. On this trip, you will pedal through the best kept secret trails of Bhutan.

The trip starts with an easy acclimatizing ride in the capital Thimphu valley, along with some major cultural highlights. It continues to Punakha to ride the scenic valley and some trails that are in some parts technical and some parts fast and flowy. From here, drive to Paro valley to ride some of the most amazing singletrack of your trip before visiting the famous Tiger's Nest monastery. Every stop along the way will enliven your senses and will leave you with an indelible feeling of having ridden through the soul of Bhutan. Your trip also helps to support training new female guides in Bhutan, so you will be able to leave knowing you got to make a difference in the lives of women in this amazing country.

Itinerary

Day 1- Welcome to Bhutan - Arrival.

Upon arrival you'll be received by our friendly professional guide and then proceed to the capital city Thimphu. If time permits, we'll go for a short ride on thimphu's favorite XC trail – the Wangditse loop.

In the evening, we will visit the Memorial Chor
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In the evening, we will visit the Memorial Chorten Stupa which is a sacred shrine built in the memory of the third king of Bhutan. You will enjoy a welcome dinner at the best restaurant in Thimphu, where you can enjoy authentic Bhutanese cuisine. We will talk about the trip before heading to the resort for a good night of sleep.

Accommodations: 4-star- Thimphu Tower Hotel or Pelyang Boutique

Day 2 - Best of Thimphu's trails to get Acclimatized

Let's get straight into riding! Today we'll explore the capital city which boasts some of our best mtb trails in the country. We will first proceed to the Buddha point on a 4 km gentle climb, where the largest Buddha statue (169ft) sits overlooking the Thimphu city. We will take a short diversion on a MTB trail to the viewpoint to ride the capital's favorite MTB trails called the KC Trail that extends for 6 km and exits in Motithang. We will then shuttle back to the Buddha statue and ride the downhill trail to Babesa.

After lunch, we'll hit the hills up to the Takin Reserve centre to see the national animal. We will then continue to the radio tower, where the Wangditse MTB single-track trail starts. We will shred this trail all the way down to Bebena, and then huttle back to the radio tower to ride the purpose built Takin trail, where you can go fast and furious through the twists and turns in the pine forests.

After the ride, we will have some time to stroll around the city and enjoy a nice dinner. We'll also go to to one of our favorite bars called the Mojo Park to see a bit of Bhutan's urban culture!

Ride time 6-7 hours/ 35 km

Accommodations: 4-star- Thimphu Tower Hotel or Pelyang Boutique

Day 3 -Mega-Madman trail with 2500m descending on one epic trail!

Every rider that's mountain biked in Bhutan has agreed that this is one of the world's best trails. We will start the day by driving to Trashigang Gonpa at 3000m. From here, we'll hike-a-bike to Lungchutse Gonpa for an hour. From the trail head at 3600m, the ride drops into rhododendron forests with wide and wild trails for 3 km of pure descending into the mist. From Dohula pass, we continue riding on the Trans-Bhutan trail- a heritage trail full of Bhutan's history. These are the trails where the nation was built and they are full of stories. We will continue descending down on the famous Madman trail down to Talo village, where a picnic lunch will be waiting for you.

After lunch, we will continue to ride down to an old village by the river, and then pedal on a gentle climb through pine forests to Lapsakha village. From here, we'll ride downhill to Punakha Dzong fortress. The entire day is 25 km with 90% downhill on one of the best trails in the world!

It will then be beer time at a local bar before we head to hotel for a nice evening and dinner.

Ride time 6-7 hours, 25 km ride

Accommodations: 3-star Zhingkham Resort or Hotel Lobesa

Day 4 - Punakha Rest day with sightseeing

Today, it's time to give your bike and legs a rest. We will drive to Punakha valley to visit Khamsum Yuelley Namgyal stupa, which involves a short scenic hike through paddy fields for about 45 minutes to the hilltop where the temple is located. From here you can also enjoy a majestic view of the valley. The temple itself is a splendid example of Bhutan's fine architectural and artistic traditions. If the group is up for it, we can do a white-water rafting at Pho-chu river.

After, we will continue to Punakha Dzong – the most beautiful fortress in Bhutan situated at the confluence of two rivers. This ancient fortress is the winter residence of the monastic order's leadership and still serves as the administrative headquarters for the Punakha region. The fortress is a fine example of Bhutan's rich art and architecture.



After, we will head to town for an authentic local dinner from southern Bhutan.

Accommodations: 3-star Zhingkhram Resort or Hotel Lobesa

Day 5- Punakha Gravity and Flow

Today we'll enjoy some serious descents. First, we'll shuttle to Tshochhasa village and enjoy a long flowy descent from 2200m to 1300m. This ride mostly winds through chirpine forests and ends at the paddy fields near the fortress.

After, we will shuttle to Talo village and enjoy riding on one of the best downhill natural singletrack trails in the valley. We'll have lunch at the country-side farmhouse, quite possibly the best lunch in Bhutan. Stretching 8.9 km with an altitude drop of 1000m, this ride takes us through beautiful forests and villages, punctuated with monasteries and awesome viewpoints.

Ride time 6 hours, 35km

Accommodations: 4-star Wangdue Eco Lodge

Day 6- Punakha to Phobjikha with a ridge ride

It's a easy day today as we'll drive to Phobjikha for 3 hours. Once we reach the pass before Gangtey valley, we'll carry our bikes for 30 mins to reach the trailhead on the meadows overlooking the beautiful glacial valley. From here we'll ride down the ridges for 8 km to bring us to one of Bhutan's famous monasteries called the Gangtey Gonpa. Continue riding down to Phobjikha valley riding on a beautiful stretch of trail that rides down into the villages of Phobjikha. Riders will love it here as the ride takes us on the periphery of the bowl-shaped marshland and meadows, offering spectacular views. As we have been cycling through beautiful rhododendron forest on most of our travels, the contrast of descending into the unique open meadows of the valley is striking.

Ride time 3-4 hours – 14 km

Accommodations: 3-star Gakiling Lodge

Day 7-Transfer to Paro. Ride the most fun sections of Madman trail on the way back.

After a leisurely breakfast and soaking in the views, we'll drive to Paro for 3 hours. On the way after lunch, we'll have an easy ride of the fun bits of the Madman trail because it's worth doing it again, and this time, you will be able to ride faster as you'd remember some lines.

In the evening, we will visit a farmhouse to try a herbal hot-stone bath which is known to be therapeutic and helps ailments related to joints and muscle aches, besides simply soothing your mind and body. Perfect to unwind and goes well with the Red Panda local beer.

Those who want to visit a spa and get a proper massage, we can do this today. We will have some time to explore the town in the evening on foot, and visit handicrafts shops along the street to appreciate Bhutanese craftsmanship. You can perhaps take home a few souvenirs to remind you of the beautiful moments in Bhutan.

Accommodations: 3-star Nirvana Inn

Day 8- World Class Singletrack of Paro

After a day's rest, we will start the first of two amazing big days. After breakfast, we will shuttle for 45 mins to the trailhead, and from there begin the hike-a-bike on the famous Trans-Bhutan Trail to Jela Dzong. We will then hit the famous Jela trail, a 15 km downhill ride on one of the best trails in Bhutan.

Explore the town in the evening on foot, and visit handicrafts shops along the street to appreciate Bhutanese craftsmanship and Art works and perhaps take home a few souvenirs to remind you of the beautiful moments in Bhutan.

Ride time 3-4 hours, 18 km

Accommodations: 3-star Nirvana Inn

Day 9- Tiger's Nest Hike + Paro Ride

Today you'll experience Bhutan's most valued attractions, and perhaps the biggest highlight for your trip! An hike to the famous Taktshang monastery -translated as-Tiger's nest monastery is also a good way to acclimatize before you start trekking. The temple was built in 1692 by a prominent historical figure named Gyaltshe Tenzin Rabgye whose reincarnation is now a young teenager and already a prominent figure in the clergy.

After lunch in Paro town, shuttle the bikes for about an hour and a half to reach the distant Kila Goenpa nunnery at 3800m. Once we reach the temple, we'll enjoy a long descent down to Paro valley for 12 km. The trail starts to get nice loamy on a beautiful fast-flowing trail through rhododendron and Oak forests. Once we get to Gorina monastery, the trail starts to get loose with hardpack dirt with a number of rock gardens, making it awesome ride. The entire DH section is close to 12 km. This trail is pure ecstasy with very interesting features to end your riding holiday on a high note. Visit the brewery in the evening to sample some local craft beer and a farewell dinner.

Ride 2-3 hours, 12 km

Accommodations: 3-star Nirvana Inn

Day 10- See you later!

After breakfast at your hotel and our "see you later", your driver will take you to the airport for your departing flight.

Note: *Itinerary is subject to change.*

Important details

Accommodations

While in Bhutan, we will be staying in 3-4 star hotels. Accommodations will be double occupancy unless you request a single room and pay a supplement.

Food

All meals are included in the tour.

Flights/Arriving in Bhutan

For this trip, you can fly to Bhutan from Delhi, India, Kathmandu, Nepal or Bangkok, Thailand. We will book your flight from one of these locations to Bhutan. Please get in touch before booking your flight to get the times of the departure to make sure your flight will work with the flight to Bhutan. Please note that you may need to arrive the day before the trip start date into one of these destinations to make your Bhutan flight.

If flying into Delhi, you will need to get a double entry India visa **IN ADVANCE** of your trip. Please do this at least two weeks before your trip to make sure you get your visa in time.

For all flights, you will not be able to check your luggage all the way through to Bhutan. You will need to reclaim your baggage in one of these three destinations and then re-check on your Druk Air flight to Bhutan.

Flights to Bhutan:

Please bring a digital or paper copy of your flight voucher with you. Luggage allowance for Druk Air flights is 30kg for checked bags, including your bike bag. If you have excess of this, it is around \$3-4 per kg. You can also pack as much as possible into two smaller bags as cabin luggage. Please check in for your flight 3 hours in advance.



Rental Bikes

We recommend traveling with your own bike to Bhutan, but there are enduro and trail rental bikes available if you choose to not travel with your bike. Please inquire about rental bike availability and pricing.

Visa

A visa is required for visiting Bhutan. Our local guides will process this application, please upload your passport as soon as you can, as well as a recent photo with a neutral expression against a white background. Make sure your passport is valid for at least 6 months from the date of your trip to Bhutan. Please note that we need a picture of your passport that is clear and does not have any glare, fingers or cut off corners.

Currency

Some places accept credit cards in Bhutan, but it is mostly a cash based culture. You can get some Bhutanese currency from an ATM once you arrive or exchange cash on arrival. The Bhutanese Ngultrum is a closed currency so you won't be able to purchase any before arriving in Paro.

Cell Phones and Internet

If you wish to use your phone, you can purchase a SIM card on arrival in Bhutan. Just before you exit the airport there is a Telecom kiosk where you can purchase a local SIM card from Tashi Cell, to be connected even while on the trails. The hotels generally have decent wi-fi, but not always 100% reliable. A SIM card with enough data for 10 days should not cost more than 10 USD.

Luggage

We will be bringing all of our luggage with us along the way, and will have secure storage for bike bags and boxes if you bring your own.

Weather

The weather in Bhutan may be on the colder side, so bring plenty of layers for all weather conditions. It is not likely to rain but we do recommend being prepared in case it does with a rain jacket and pants. The nights can be quite chilly, so make sure to bring a jacket and some warmer layers.

Gratuuity

Gratuuity is not included in your trip and can make a big difference for your guide. We recommend around \$25-50 per guest per day. These get split between your guide and driver. If you would like to tip more, your guide and driver will very much appreciate it!

Gear Donations

World Ride trips help to support the growth of women's mountain biking in Bhutan. Donations that you can bring to Bhutan to leave with the ladies are very much appreciated! Things that are needed include:

- Bikes (getting a new one? Travel with your bike and then leave it there!)
- Helmets
- Pedals
- Shoes
- Tires
- Gloves
- Hydration Packs

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is recommended for your trip that includes medical. Typically bikes are not 100% covered by travel insurance policies. Many homeowners or renters policies do cover bikes while traveling abroad, so be sure to check into this before the trip. If you wish to get extra insurance for your bike, we recommend Velosurance.

Packing List

Anything you need for your own bike (if bringing)

- Derailleur hanger
- Extra brake pads
- Any special bike tools (Multitool, mini pump, spare tube)
- Bike gear
- Helmet
- Sunglasses
- Buff/scarf
- Pack (we recommend a 15L in size to carry layers and capacity of 3L of water)
- Bike shoes
- Gloves
- 3-4 pairs of bike shorts or more depending on preference.
- 3-4 jerseys
- Socks
- Long sleeve base layer
- Waterproof rain jacket and pants

Other gear

- Warm jacket (nights can be chilly)
- Headlamp
- Other clothing for post rides/dinner
- Comfortable shoes to hike and walk around in
- Clothes to sleep in
- Swimsuit
- Any medication you might need
- Toothbrush and other necessities
- Sunscreen

Personal items

- Passport
- Proof of travel insurance
- Credit and debit cards
- A small amount of cash to travel with (USD)
- Camera (or just your cell phone)
- Cell phone (plenty of wifi along the way)
- USB Battery pack (optional- there are outlets in all of the hotels)
- Electronics cords and chargers
- Power adapter (Bhutan uses 220v and outlet type D, F and G)

Misc

- Any extra mountain bike gear you might be able to bring or collect and donate for the ladies over there 😊 See above for what we could use!