

ITINERARY : BHUTAN ASSAM GROUP

DAY

1 Arr Delhi
Sat

Late night arrive into the capital of India, New Delhi

Upon arrival and after clearing immigration and customs you will be met and transferred to **HOTEL THE PARK**

Delhi is the capital of India. Its history goes back to 3000 years. Various rulers built eight successive cities in and around present day Delhi. Few capitals in the world have as many monuments of which Delhi is justly proud.

Overnight at the Hotel

DAY

2 Delhi
Sun

Morning sightseeing tour of New Delhi,

Designed in 1911 by the British, New Delhi is one of the greenest capitals in the world. Your tour includes visit to the impressive Qutab Minar, a 234-foot sandstone tower, and Humayun's tomb, a predecessor to the famous Taj Mahal. Later, drive past the government buildings and presidential palace along the broad and majestic Rajpath, Diplomatic enclave etc.

Afternoon tour of Old Delhi, See the Red Fort, a symbol of Mughal power .Drive past Chandni Chowk (old shopping street) and the Jama Mosque area. On return , visit Raj Ghat, a memorial of the great Mahatma Gandhi. We'll visit also visit the Gurudwara Bangla Sahib the Temple of the Sikhs.

Overnight at the Hotel

DAY

3 Delhi/
Mon Paro

Morning transfer to the International Airport for your flight to the Kingdom of Bhutan

Dep: Delhi at 13:10pm by Druk Air 205
Arr: Paro at 15:20pm

The flight into Bhutan takes you close to the great Himalayas, offering dazzling scenic views of some world's highest peaks including the massif of Mount Everest . As you enter Paro valley, you will sweep past forested hills with the silvery Paro Chu (Paro river) meandering down the valley below. Paro Dzong (fortress) and Ta Dzong (watchtower) on the hills above the town will be a fine sight.

Upon arrival & after clearing immigrations and customs you will be met and transferred to HOTEL **TBA**

Evening Drive to Paro Dzong (Fortress) to participate in the Paro Tshechu (biggest festival in spring) .?????????????

Overnight at the Hotel

DAY

4 Paro

Excursion/hike to Taktsang Monastery (till view point)

Tue

Visit the ruins of Drugyel dzong, 16 km up the valley. Built in 1647 by the great Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, father and unifier of medieval Bhutan, the dzong was destroyed by accidental fire and left in ruins as an evocative reminder of the great victories it was built to commemorate. Explore the ramparts and on a clear day experience an unforgettable view of Mt. Jhomolhari (7,314 m).

Excursion to view the spectacular Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) monastery. The trail climbs through beautiful pine forest, many of the trees festooned with Spanish moss, and an occasional grove of fluttering prayer flags. We stop for a rest at the Taktsang Jakhang (cafeteria) and then walk a short distance until we see, clearly and seemingly within reach, Taktsang monastery. Built in the 1600s, this incredible monastery clings to the edge of a sheer rock cliff that plunges 900 m into the valley below. Legend has it that Guru Padmasambhava, the tantric mystic who brought Buddhism to Bhutan, landed here on the back of a flying tiger. Looking at the monastery flying tigers don't seem so impossible after all.

Lunch at Sonam Trophel (Paro town)

After lunch visit Ta dzong, an ancient watchtower, which now houses the National Museum. Casual walk down to Paro Dzong and crossing the traditional foot bridge.

Overnight at the Hotel

DAY

5 Paro/
Wed Punakha

Morning your private Transport will drive you to Punakha (125km/4hrs). The road winds through the forest to Dochula Pass (3,050m), where in good weather the entire Himalayan mountain ranges in Bhutan can be viewed. From the pass we descend to the valley of Punakha/ Wangdue .

Lunch en route at Y.T. Lodge

After lunch visit the Chimi Lhakhang built by Lama Drukpa Kunley. He subdued the demon of the Dochu la with his

Magic Thunderbolt of Wisdom. A wooden effigy of the lama's thunderbolt is preserved in the lhakhang and childless women go to the temple to receive a wang (blessing) from the saint. It's a walk of about 30 minutes from the main road – passing through a village and fields and is a good way to see village activity from close.

Continue onward drive to Punakha; Upon arrival transfer to **HOTEL ZANTO PHELRI**

Punakha, the ancient capital, is situated at the confluence of the Mo Chu and Pa Chu (Mother and Father) rivers. It is the winter headquarters of the Je Khenpo and hundreds of monks, who move in mass from Thimpu to his warmer location every November to remain until May. Rice paddies, orange groves, cactus and banana trees flourish in the temperate climate. The body of the great unifier of Bhutan, Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal who died in the mid 17th century, is preserved in a room inside the Dzong. On the kunrey, or terraced outside the Assembly Hall, are cosmic mandalas representing the Wheel of Life and a pattern of squares which is used to predict fortunes. Punakha Dzong has undergone flooding from a glacial lake, which broke through its barriers high above in the mountains, and fire, but has stood on its remarkable site since the 17th century. The flash flood of October 1994 caused a great deal of damage, but miraculously spared the statue of Lord Buddha.

Overnight at the Hotel

DAY

6 Punakha/
Thu Thimpu

Morning visit Punakha Dzong; Later in the morning your private transport will drive you to Thimpu (3hrs)

Lunch en route at Dochula

Continue onward drive to Thimpu en route visiting National Memorial Chorten: The building of this landmark was envisaged by the third king, His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, as a monument to world peace and prosperity. Completed in 1974 after his untimely death, it is both a memorial to the Late King ("the Father of modern Bhutan") and a monument to world peace. The paintings and statues inside the monument provide a deep insight into Buddhist philosophy.

Also visit Trashichhodzong (After 5:00pm): This impressive fortress/monastery houses Secretariat building, the throne room of His Majesty, the King and various government offices. It is also the summer residence of Chief Abbot and central monk body.

Upon arrival in Thimpu transfer to **HOTEL RIVERVIEW**

Dinner at Bhutan Kitchen (Experience the exotic flavour of Bhutanese Food)

Overnight at the hotel.

DAY

7 Thimphu

After breakfast visit to Textile and Folk Heritage Museum:**In case there is archery being practised at the Stadium we will stop to see this . Archery is the national sport of Bhutan .**

Fri

these museums, both of which opened in 2001, provide fascinating insights into Bhutanese material culture and way of life. Also visit the National library, a treasury of priceless Buddhist manuscripts; the Traditional medicine center where centuries old healing arts such as acupuncture and herbal remedies are still practiced; the painting school, where young monks learn the art of painting Buddhist tangkas, and the mask makers workshop.

After lunch visit the Thimpu Zoo to see the rare **Golden Takin , the National animal of Bhutan** and get a birds eye view of **Thimpu** .Also visit the **Changangkha Lhakhang** which is a fortress-like temple and monastic school perched on a ridge above Thimphu, south of Motithang.It was established in the 12th century on a site chosen by Lama Phajo Drugom Shigpo, who came from Ralung in Tibet. The central statue is Chengrezi in a manifestation with 11 heads. Books in the temple are larger in size than usual Tibetan texts. There is an excellent view of **Thimpu** from the courtyard.

Also visit the Handicraft center; This government-run enterprise displays a wide range of beautifully hand-woven textiles and craft products. It also carries a small collection of books on Bhutan, Buddhism and Himalayan culture.

Evening take a stroll around Thimphu main street , visiting shops and market.

Dinner at Conifer's

Overnight at the Hotel.

DAY

8 Paro/
Sat Calcutta

Morning your private Transport will drive you to Paro Airport (2 ½ hrs) to connect for your flight to Calcutta

Dep: Paro at 10:30am by Druk Air 124
Arr: Calcutta at 11:00am

Upon arrival and after clearing immigration and customs you will be met and transferred to **HOTEL TAJ BENGAL**

A mere village in the 17th century, Calcutta (Kolkata) is today one of the biggest cities in the world. It is one of the largest ports in the East and the main outlet for the produce of West Bengal and the neighboring states. Calcutta is the commercial hub of Eastern India. To the first time visitor Calcutta is indeed overwhelming. It presents a unique blend of 19th century Europe and the throbbing vitality of a metropolis of teeming millions. The city has produced some of India's finest literature, theatre, films, art & culture, and personalities.... Tagore, Satyajit Ray, Mother Teresa to name a few.

Afternoon , we'll visit Kolkata city; We'll visit the Victoria Memorial, the most solid reminder of British Calcutta- in fact the most solid reminder of the Raj to be found in India. It is a huge white marble museum, a combination of classical European architecture with Mughal influences or as some say an unhappy British attempt to build a better Taj Mahal. The idea behind the memorial was conceived by Lord Curzon and the money for its construction was raised from 'voluntary contributions by the princes and peoples of India'. The Prince of Wales, the later King George V laid the foundation stone in 1906 and was opened by another Prince of Wales (later the Duke of Windsor) in 1921. Also visit the Museum, the museum houses portraits, statues, paintings, miniatures of all from British- India History. Also see the Raj Bhavan, the old British government house, is now occupied by the governor of West Bengal. Also visit the Maidan , Hoogly Bridge and the "Marble Palace" to see the magnificent collection of paintings & Sculptures from all around the world .

Overnight at the Hotel

DAY
9 Calcutta/
Sun Jorhat/
Kaziranga

Morning transfer to the Airport for your flight to Jorhat

Dep: Calcutta at 11:05am by Jet Air 621
Arr: Jorhat at 12:45pm

Upon arrival you will be met by your private Transport and driven to Kaziranga National Park (97km/1 ½ hrs)

On arrival transfer to **HOTEL WILD GRASS**

The Wild Grass lodge is located outside Kaziranga National Park area and is about 200-kms away from

Guwahati. Built in an attractive rural style kind of architecture, the resort's surrounding ground is covered with more than 40 species of trees over 200 species of shrubs, creepers and climbers.

Stretching over an area of 430sq km on the south bank of the Brahmaputra river, Kaziranga is one of the last refuges of the Indian rhino. A vast stretch of coarse, tall elephant grass, marshland and dense tropical forests, it has managed to survive the onslaught of poachers, urbanization and burgeoning human populations. Plans are already afoot to extend the park's boundaries to include the Brahmaputra river to the north and a part of the Mikir hill ranges to the south.

Fairly early on- in 1908, in fact- Kaziranga was declared a reserve forest and was officially closed for shooting; at the time it could boast of only a few dozen rhinos. By 1950 the area was a wildlife sanctuary, and in 1974 it was designated a national park. Bounded by the misty blue hills of Barail and Karbi Anglong to the south, the national park was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985. Today it's one of the few places in India where it's possible to see the rhino out in the open- an awesome sight indeed. And, what's better still, the rhino population of Kaziranga now numbers more than a thousand of the creatures. Endangered, no doubt, but protected too.

Kaziranga is home also to elephants, sloth bears, tigers, leopard cats, jungle cats, hog badgers, capped langurs, hoolock gibbons, pigs, jackals, porcupines, pythons, wild buffaloes, Indian bison, swamp deer, sambhars and hog deer. Besides these, the park has a respectable avian population, which increases considerably in the winter, when migrating birds visit the park.

Afternoon safari of the park by Jeep.

Overnight at the Hotel

DAY
10 Kaziranga
Mon Tezpur/
Kaziranga

Early morning Elephant Safari; The vast open country makes Kaziranga National Park very accessible and wildlife viewing fairly pleasurable. Here one can leave in the early hours of the dawn for an elephant-back-ride. Authorized and trained Mahouts who guide visitors through the park train the Elephants. One could see wild Elephant herds roaming around or Indian Rhinos browse past visitors unconcernedly.

Afternoon drive to Tezpur Bridge (1hr);Situating on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, Tezpur is a beautiful and multifaceted city steeped in mythology and history.The city abounds in archaeological sites, hills, lakes and gardens. The Kolia

Bhomora Bridge is a 3- km bridge over the Brahmaputra River that connects Tezpur on the north bank with Nagaon on the south bank. It is one of the longest bridges in India and stands unrivalled in its grandeur.

Experience a river cruise on the mighty Brahmaputra river to see the Gangetic Dolphin

Return to Wild Grass for Overnight

DAY

11 Kaziranga/
Tue Nameri/
Kaziranga/

Morning your private Transport will drive you to Nameri National Park (85km/2hrs)

Nestled at the foothills of Eastern Himalayas, Nameri National Park covers an area of 200 Sq. Kms. With river Jia Bhoroli bifurcating the park, it is the most scenic of all the national parks of Assam. Its in the eastern border of Assam in the valley and mountainous Arunachal Pradesh, Nameri is home to some of the endangered species like white winged wood duck, Sloth Bear, Tiger Leopard, Clouded Leopard, Sambar, Gaur, Indian Wild Dog, four varieties of Hornbill and many other winged species.

Experience white river rafting, against the divine backdrop of lush forests and snow-capped mountains.

Afternoon return to Kaziranga, Later in the day a Jungle safari by Jeep is provided.

Overnight at the Hotel

DAY

12 Kaziranga
Wed

Full day visit to a Tea Garden to have a first hand insight on Tea bushes and learn about their cultivation , tea plucking and the processing of tea leaves in the factory

Assam is the world's single largest tea-growing region, producing more than 1,500,000 pounds of tea annually.

Lunch will be provided at the Managers Bungalow

Return back to Wild Grass for Overnight

DAY

13 Kaziranga/
Thu Guwahati

Morning your private transport will drive you to Guwahati (217km/5hrs)

Situated on the left bank of the mighty river Brahmaputra, Guwahati is said to be the legendary Pragjyotishpur or City of Eastern Light. It is the gateway to north eastern India. The name is a combination of two words: Guwa meaning areca nut and Hat

meaning market. Guwahati is the commercial nerve centre of the North-East and also the capital of the state of Assam .

Upon arrival transfer to **HOTEL ASHOK BRAHMAPUTRA**

Afternoon visit the Kamakhya Temple

The Kamakhya Temple in Assam is one of the most venerated Shakti shrines in India, and is regarded as one of the Shakti Peethams associated with the legend of Shiva and Daksha Yagna. Kamakhya is located on a hill - Neelachala Parvat or Kamagiri near the city of Guwahati in Assam. Shakti, residing on the Kamagiri hill is known as Kamakhya, the granter of desires. Assam traditionally has been known as the Kamarupa Desa and has been associated with Tantric practices and Shakti worship.

Overnight at the Hotel

DAY

14 Guwahati
Fri Delhi

Morning Cruise on the Brahmaputra River by Special Launch

Afternoon transfer to the Airport for your return flight to Delhi

Dep: Guwahati at 16:40pm by Sahara Air 112

Arr: Delhi at 18:25pm

Upon arrival transfer to **HOTEL ASHOK COUNTRY RESORT**

Later at night transfer to the International Airport for your home-bound flight