How to Easily Book a Tour to Bhutan: 5 Simple Steps

Planning 8 min read

> Booking a tour to Bhutan sounds complicated — a mandatory fee, a visa, only two airlines. In practice it comes down to five simple steps, and a licensed operator handles most of them for you. Here is the easy way to plan your Bhutanese adventure. Ready to start? Send a free booking request and we plan the trip with you.

Step 1: Use a Licensed Operator

The single biggest simplifier: let a registered Bhutanese tour company manage your trip. A licensed operator builds your itinerary, arranges official guides (mandatory in Bhutan), books hotels and transport, and takes care of the logistics you'd otherwise research yourself — monument entry fees, internal permits, and the visa paperwork.

With Byways, one conversation about your dates and interests turns into a complete, all-inclusive plan — and our published prices already include the SDF, visa fee, and 5% GST, so the price you see is the price you pay.

What's included in a typical tour package?
Licensed guide, transportation, accommodation, all meals, entry fees, internal permits, SDF and visa fee. NOT included: international flights, tips, alcohol, personal expenses, and travel insurance.

Good to know

- Verify any operator on the Department of Tourism's list of licensed companies before paying a deposit.
- All-inclusive quotes make comparison easy — ask whether SDF, visa, GST, meals, and monument fees are included.

Step 2: Apply for Your Visa

Submit your e-visa through the Bhutan Immigration Services portal — or simply let your tour operator process it for you, which is what most travellers do. The visa costs **USD 40** (one-off, non-refundable) and applications are reviewed within five working days.

Once approved, you receive a **Visa Clearance Letter** by email. Keep a printed copy: you need it to board your flight, and the visa itself is stamped into your passport on arrival.

Good to know

- Your passport must be valid for at least six months from your departure date from Bhutan.
- Indian nationals need a permit rather than a visa — a valid passport or Voter ID is required.

Step 3: Budget for the SDF

Factor in the **Sustainable Development Fee: USD 100 per night** for international adult tourists — locked at this rate until 31 August 2027. It funds local communities and conservation: free healthcare, education, and the forest cover that keeps Bhutan carbon-negative. Children aged 6–11 pay USD 50 per night, and under-6s pay nothing; Indian nationals pay INR 1,200 per night (locked until September 2028).

For rates, the border-town waiver, and refund rules, see our guide: Bhutan's Sustainable Development Fee (SDF) Explained

Step 4: Book Flights

Fly into **Paro International Airport** via regional hubs — Bangkok, Delhi, Kathmandu, or Singapore — on Drukair or Bhutan Airlines, the only two carriers serving Bhutan. Kolkata, Dhaka, Bagdogra, Guwahati, Bodhgaya, Hong Kong, and Dubai also have connections.

Because only two airlines fly the route, seats are limited: confirm your Bhutan sector *before* booking your long-haul flight to the hub city.

> **Good to know**
>
> - Book through the airlines' official websites, or ask your operator to hold seats as part of your package.
> - The Paro landing between Himalayan ridges is spectacular — a left-side window seat from Kathmandu gives Everest views.

Step 5: Pick the Best Season

Plan your visit for **spring (March to May)** or **autumn (September to November)** — pleasant weather, clear mountain views, and the great cultural festivals (tshechus) including Paro and Thimphu's. These are also the busiest months, so book flights and hotels 4–6 months ahead for festival dates.

Winter is crisp, sunny, and quiet; summer brings the monsoon to the south. Full breakdown in our seasonal guide.

How far in advance should I book?
Minimum 1 month, ideally 3-4 months. For festival dates or peak season (March-May, Sept-Nov), book 4-6 months ahead. Drukair flights fill up quickly during festivals.

Popular Itinerary Lengths

How long do you need? Two patterns cover most first visits:

The Essentials

4–5 Days

1. **Paro**Arrival & dzong visit
2. **Thimphu**The capital — Buddha Dordenma & markets

3. **Tiger's Nest Monastery** The famous cliffside hike

4 Days Bhutan Tour

5 Days Bhutan Tour

The Classic Circuit

6–8 Days

1. **Paro & Thimphu** Everything from the essentials
2. **Punakha** The riverside dzong & Dochula Pass
3. **Scenic valleys** Phobjikha & nearby glacial valleys
4. **Tiger's Nest Monastery** Saved for the grand finale

6 Days

7 Days

8 Days

Ready to start?

Send a free booking request and a Bhutanese travel expert plans the trip with you — no payment required.

Book Bhutan Tour

Or browse all our tours first.

Frequently Asked Questions

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Can I extend my trip while in Bhutan?

> Yes, but it requires coordination with your operator. They must extend your visa, rebook accommodations, and pay additional SDF. Give at least a few days notice. Spontaneous extensions are harder during peak season.

Need More Information?

Contact our Bhutan travel experts for personalized advice.

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