How to Get to Bhutan: Flights, Airlines & Land Routes (2026)

Planning 8 min read

How do you get to Bhutan? There are only three doors into the kingdom: a flight to Paro International Airport, a flight to the new Gelephu International Airport, or a road crossing from India. Just two airlines, Drukair and Bhutan Airlines, fly in, and neither flies long-haul, so every journey from the Americas, Europe or Australia connects through a hub such as Bangkok, Delhi, Kolkata, Kathmandu or Singapore. This guide lists every route with days, flight times and typical fares, taken from the airlines' published timetables for October 2026 to February 2027, then covers the land borders and the booking rules that are unique to Bhutan. Last checked 28 October 2026.

How Do You Get to Bhutan? Your Three Options

There are exactly three ways to get to Bhutan:

- **Fly to Paro (PBH)**, the main gateway, served from nine cities in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Thailand, Singapore and, in season, the UAE.
- **Fly to Gelephu (GLU)**, the southern airport, which has a twice-weekly Drukair flight from Kolkata.
- **Cross by road from India** at Phuentsholing, Gelephu or Samdrup Jongkhar.

Only Drukair and Bhutan Airlines are licensed to land in Bhutan, and there are no direct flights from outside the region. Travellers from the Americas, Europe and Australia always connect through a hub.

Whichever route you choose, one rule comes first: you cannot board a flight to Bhutan or cross the land border without a visa clearance letter, which your tour operator arranges before you travel. Details are in our Bhutan visa cost guide.

Good to know

- Book your Bhutan sector before your long-haul flight. Only two airlines fly the route and seats sell out around the festivals.

Which Airlines Fly to Bhutan?

Drukair (KB), the national flag carrier, and **Bhutan Airlines (B3)**, a private carrier, are the only airlines authorised to land in Bhutan. The route table at the top of this page shows who flies where. In short:

- **Both airlines** fly Bangkok, Delhi, Kolkata and Kathmandu to Paro, and both add Gaya (Bodhgaya) in the winter pilgrimage months.
- **Only Drukair** flies Singapore, Dhaka, Guwahati, Bagdogra and, in season, Dubai, and only Drukair serves Gelephu.

- **Bhutan Airlines** runs a daily Bangkok to Paro service via Kolkata, with nonstop flights on some days in the autumn timetable.

Drukair holds interline agreements with Thai Airways, Turkish Airlines and Air India, which lets some through-tickets be issued to Paro. Most travellers still book the Bhutan sector separately from the long-haul flight. Timetables change by season, so check the current month on the airlines' websites, or let us hold the seats as part of your package.

> **Good to know**
>
> - Flying in from the west, from Delhi or Kathmandu? Ask for a window seat on the left for Everest and the Himalayan range.

Which Airports Serve Bhutan?

Paro International Airport (PBH) — the main gateway, 2,235m up a valley flanked by 5,000m peaks. The approach is flown visually, in daylight and good weather only, by a small group of specially certified pilots; it is regularly ranked among the most spectacular landings in world aviation. Paro town, Tiger's Nest, and Thimphu (about 1.5 hours by road) are all close by.

Gelephu International Airport (GLU) is the kingdom's southern gateway for the Gelephu Mindfulness City region. Drukair flies Gelephu to Kolkata nonstop twice a week, and Paro to Gelephu three times a week since 2 September 2026. Landing in the south suits itineraries that begin in southern or central Bhutan and saves the long drive down from the capital.

Domestic airstrips at Bumthang (Bathpalathang) and Yonphula in the east connect onward, and helicopter charters are available for remote valleys.

What is special about landing at Paro?
Paro is one of the world's most challenging airports - only certified pilots can land there. The approach through narrow valleys with steep banks is thrilling. Request a window seat on the left side from Delhi/Kathmandu for Himalayan views.

How Do You Get to Bhutan from India?

India has the richest set of options: five gateway cities plus the only land borders.

- **Delhi to Paro:** the classic western approach, about 2 hours 20 minutes, flown daily by both airlines, with Himalayan views on the left on the descent.
- **Kolkata to Paro or Gelephu:** the only city serving both Bhutanese international airports. Bhutan Airlines flies to Paro daily, Drukair twice a week, and Drukair's Gelephu flight runs twice a week. Flight time is about an hour.
- **Bagdogra, then by road:** fly to Bagdogra (IXB) and drive 4 to 5 hours to the Phuentsholing border. This is the most economical route and the most popular with Indian travellers. Drukair also stops at Bagdogra twice a week on its Bangkok rotation.

- **Guwahati and Gaya:** Drukair calls at Guwahati on the way to Bangkok and Singapore; Gaya is a winter-only route (December to February) flown by both airlines for Bodhgaya pilgrims.
- **By road:** see the border-crossing section below.

Indian nationals travel on a permit rather than a visa (valid passport or Voter ID) and pay a Sustainable Development Fee of INR 1,200 per night, a rate locked until September 2028. Full details are in our SDF guide.

Starting from Outside the Region

From anywhere beyond South and Southeast Asia the journey is two tickets: a long-haul flight to a hub, then the short Bhutan sector. The best hub depends on where you start, and we have written a full planning page for each of our main markets.

Starting fromBest hubsTypical total journeyPlanning pageUnited States & CanadaBangkok, Delhi or Singapore; Kathmandu from the east coast via the Gulf20 to 26 hours with one overnight in the hubFrom the USA · From CanadaUnited KingdomDelhi (shortest), Bangkok or Kathmandu via the Gulf14 to 18 hoursFrom the UK
Germany & EuropeDelhi or Bangkok nonstop from Frankfurt or Munich; Kathmandu via the Gulf13 to 17 hours From GermanySingaporeDrukair direct, with a stop in GuwahatiAbout 6 hours door to doorFrom Singapore
AustraliaBangkok or Singapore13 to 16 hoursFrom AustraliaNepalKathmandu direct, daily on both airlinesAbout 1 hour 15 minutes, past EverestSee the route table above
Every one of those pages covers the same ground as this one from your own airport outward: flight routings, what the Bhutan sector costs, the visa, and a sample itinerary. The Bhutan from your country hub lists them all.

> **Good to know**
>
> - Allow at least 6 to 8 hours between landing in the hub and your Bhutan flight, or stay the night. Paro flights can shift with mountain weather, and a missed connection usually means waiting a day.

Can You Enter Bhutan by Land from India?

Bhutan's land borders are shared only with India (the Chinese border is closed). Three crossings are open to international tourists:

- **Phuentsholing** — the main gateway, opposite Jaigaon, West Bengal; 4–5 hours' drive from Bagdogra airport. From the border it's about a six-hour mountain drive up to Thimphu.
- **Gelephu** — south-central Bhutan, reached from Assam; now paired with the new international airport.
- **Samdrup Jongkhar** — the eastern gateway from Guwahati, ideal for east-to-west itineraries starting in Trashigang.

The same visa rules apply as for air arrivals: your visa clearance letter must be issued **before** you reach the border. Indian nationals can obtain permits at the border immigration office. Note that tourists spending under 24 hours inside the four designated border towns are exempt from the SDF — see the waiver details in our SDF guide.

Can You Drive Your Own Car or Motorbike into Bhutan?

Yes — self-driving into Bhutan is permitted through the land border crossings, and it's a popular road trip from India, especially for motorcyclists. The rules, per the Department of Tourism:

- **Vehicle fee:** Nu. 4,500 per vehicle, per day — the same rate for cars and motorbikes.
- **A licensed guide is still mandatory**, at an additional charge, even when you drive your own vehicle — the guide accompanies you throughout.
- **Documents you'll need:** a valid driver's license (Indian licenses are accepted for self-driving), insurance documentation, pollution control certificate, and a vehicle entry permit. The vehicle must be in reasonable condition and meet the requirements of Bhutan's Road Safety and Transport Authority.
- **Borrowed vehicle?** If the car or bike isn't registered in your name, carry an authorisation letter from the owner.

Budget realistically: on a week-long ride, the vehicle fee alone adds Nu. 31,500 (about US$375) on top of the SDF and guide costs. Mountain roads are winding, slow, and shared with trucks — experienced riders love the route up from Phuentsholing, but allow a full day for the climb to Thimphu. Our visual guide includes a one-page vehicle-entry infographic you can save for the border.

What Do Flights to Bhutan Cost?

The Bhutan sector is short but not cheap: two airlines, small aircraft and a demanding airport keep fares high. Bhutan Airlines publishes one-way fares on its website; these are the figures shown there in October 2026, in US dollars and including taxes.

Route (one way)Bhutan Airlines published fareFlight timeKolkata to Parofrom about US$1901 hour 10 minutesDelhi to Parofrom about US$2452 hours 20 minutesKathmandu to Parofrom about US$2501 hour 15 minutesBangkok to Parofrom about US$3603 hours nonstop; about 4 hours 30 minutes via Kolkata
Drukair does not publish a fare table; its fares on the same routes are in a similar range and are quoted at booking, plus a 5 percent goods and services tax that applies to all Drukair services from 1 January 2026. Expect a Bangkok to Paro return of roughly US$700 to US$900, and a Singapore to Paro return of about US$1,000 or more. Fares do not move much with advance booking the way long-haul fares do, but seats do run out around the spring and autumn festivals.

> **Good to know**
>
> - Children under 2 fly for a fraction of the adult fare and children 2 to 11 at a reduced fare on both airlines; ask for the current child rates when you book.

Weather, Cancellations and Buffer Days

Paro is flown by sight, in daylight and good weather only. In the monsoon (June to September) and on foggy winter mornings, flights can be delayed by hours or moved to the next day. Both airlines rebook you on the

next available flight at no charge, but the knock-on effect is on your onward connection, not on the Bhutan sector.

What happens if my flight is cancelled due to weather?
The airline moves you to the next flight with seats, usually the following day. You are responsible for your onward long-haul ticket, so book a flexible fare or leave a full day between your Paro departure and the long-haul flight home, and carry travel insurance that covers delay. Your Byways guide and driver stay with you until you are on the plane, and we rebook hotels if a night is added.

Good to know

- Plan a buffer night in the hub on the way home rather than on the way in: a delayed arrival costs you a day of Bhutan, a delayed departure can cost you a long-haul ticket.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is special about landing at Paro?

> Paro sits at 2,235 m in a valley flanked by 5,000 m peaks, and the approach is flown by sight in daylight by a small group of specially certified pilots. Request a window seat on the left when flying in from Delhi or Kathmandu for Himalayan views.

What happens if my flight is cancelled due to weather?

> The airline moves you to the next flight with seats, usually the following day. Book a flexible long-haul fare or leave a full day between your Paro flight and the flight home, and carry travel insurance that covers delay.

Are there direct flights to Bhutan from the USA, Europe or Australia?

> No. Drukair and Bhutan Airlines fly only within the region, so every long-haul journey connects through a hub such as Bangkok, Delhi, Kolkata, Kathmandu or Singapore. Singapore is the longest Bhutan sector at about six hours including a stop in Guwahati.

How much is a flight to Bhutan?

> One-way fares published by Bhutan Airlines in October 2026 start at about US$190 from Kolkata, US$245 from Delhi, US$250 from Kathmandu and US$360 from Bangkok. Drukair fares are in a similar range and are quoted at booking.

Need More Information?

Contact our Bhutan travel experts for personalized advice.

bywaysinquiry@gmail.com | +975 77973131 | www.byways.bt