

THUNDER DRAGON MARATHON BHUTAN

SUNDAY 28TH MAY, 2017



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Bhutan, the land of the Thunder Dragon, is mystical, enchanting and like nowhere you have ever been. Voted one of the world's top travel destinations, Bhutan remains accessible only to the privileged few.

Nestling between Tibet and India it is a country of raw natural beauty; from stunning mountain scenery to tropical plains. This pristine scenery is home to exotic wildlife and is one of the last refuges of species like the Black-Necked Crane, the Golden Langur and even the Royal Bengal tiger.

The Bhutanese people with their Buddhist beliefs have a strong sense of identity and of the interdependence between man and nature. This is expressed in the national policy of Gross National Happiness and concern for the environment.



We are very privileged to be able to organise one of the most exclusive marathons in the world in conjunction with Bhutanese Tour Operator Blue Poppy.

The Thunder Dragon Marathon highlights all of the aspects of Bhutan that make it so special. Running through the beautiful Paro Valley, the route takes in fantastic scenery and passes many iconic landmarks, like the Tigers Nest, Monastery, Paro Dzong and many

religious Chorten - a true mountain and cultural experience.

Mostly on trails and mountain paths with some road sections, the route has a number of climbs but with an altitude variation that stays between 2,200m and 2,530m there are no tremendously difficult sections although it remains a suitable challenge.

The Route

From the start at Zhiwa Ling, the first few kilometres are downhill on the road before crossing a metal bridge swing bridge festooned in prayer flags. It then follows the Paro Chu River downstream where runners are at 2200m altitude. The route remains undulating along the Wang Chu tributary - going up one side for several kilometres, crossing a bridge and returning down the other side.



Arriving back on the road near Paro the half marathon is reached and the runners in the 21.1km will stop.

The Marathon will then climb steadily for 4km up the side of a valley passing above Paro Dzong, and up to Zueray Dzong at the highest point of the race (2530m) From here you start to drop to the valley passing by the luxury Uma Resort (2413m).

Dropping back to the river, and crossing the ornate Paro Bridge in front of Paro Dzong. From here the route passes to the South of the town. The marathon route then rises up on the road for 3km on to 2,400m,



followed by a short climb on a wide track before picking up forest trails along a line of Chortens festooned with prayer flags. A short but steep climb at 30km on road takes you onto trail around a spur before dropping and rising on a number of side valleys. At 32km there is an amazing section through paddy fields bringing you close to rural Bhutan before a final loop with incredible views of the Tigers Nest as you approach the finish line back at Zhiwa Ling.

The first half of the race is easier than the second half with long sections of flat to undulating running on the gravel trail of the river banks, with one longish climb between 15 and 20km (Marathon route 12-17km half marathon route), where runners are rewarded with fantastic views up the valley before the drop to the finish. This makes the 21km suitable for all runners and run/walkers regardless of pace as there is no cut off time.

Cut off time for the marathon is 8hrs but with some flexibility depending on weather conditions – if the light is OK we will let anyone still on the route finish and receive a medal. Transportation from the finish back to the start is provided for 21km runners and spectators - the marathon starts and finishes at the same place at Zhiwa Ling.

Cut off time for the marathon is 8hrs but with some flexibility depending on weather conditions – if the light is OK we will let anyone still on the route finish and receive a medal. Transportation from the finish back to the start is provided for 21km runners and spectators - the marathon starts and finishes at the same place at Zhiwa Ling.



THUNDER DRAGON MARATHON PACKAGES

We are pleased to offer a wide range of options that allow for runners to acclimatize to the altitude with long and short trips to suit your sense of adventure or the time you have available. The treks are fantastic with magnificent views of the high Himalayas and are considered moderate in difficulty reaching altitudes of 4,000 to 4,200m, or enjoy a cultural west-to-east tour by private minibuss after the marathon to experience the differences across Bhutan. For those on a short time scale the 4-night tour offers enough time to acclimatize and see some of the area including the walk up to the incredible Tigers Nest Monastery and a visit to the capital Thimphu.

Great Wall & Thunder Dragon Marathon Double.

We have designed the 6-night Cultural package so that it is possible to double up your Great Wall packages with the Himalayan Kingdom package for a fantastic cultural experience. Leaving Beijing on the Monday fly to Bangkok (not included) and overnight at an airport hotel (not included) before taking the included flight to Paro.



OPTION 1: 4 NIGHT RACE WEEKEND & CULTURE TOUR

Get a taste of the beautiful and mystical country that is Bhutan. This long weekend option takes you to the famous Tigers Nest and a day visit to the capital city Thimphu.

THURSDAY 25 MAY: Arrival from Kathmandu. Arrivals from Delhi and Bangkok also available at a supplement. *Overnight Paro.*

FRIDAY 26 MAY: Hike to Taktsang Monastery (Tigers Nest) 6hrs. On the way back visit Drukgyel Dzong and Kichu Lhakhang. *Overnight Paro.*

SATURDAY 27 MAY: Excursion to the Capital City Thimphu (1 hr journey by coach). Visit the painting school, folk heritage museum, textile museum, Buddha Point, Takin Reserve. Afternoon visit to craft bazaar and weekend market. *Overnight Paro.*

SUNDAY 28 MAY: FULL & HALF MARATHONS. Celebration dinner and Cultural show at Olanthang Hotel. *Overnight Paro.*

MONDAY 29 MAY: Fly out to Kathmandu, Delhi or Bangkok.

OPTION 1: 4-NIGHT RACE WEEKEND TOUR	TWIN OR DOUBLE BEDDED ROOM	SINGLE ROOM
PRICES PER PERSON IN US\$		
3-STAR HOTELS	\$1895	\$2095
4-STAR HOTELS	\$2595	\$3195
5-STAR HOTELS	\$2895	\$3595
FLIGHT SUPPLEMENT KATHMADU - PARO	NONE	
FLIGHT SUPPLEMENT DELHI – PARO	\$265	
FLIGHT SUPPLEMENT BANGKOK – PARO	\$300	
RACE ENTRY FEE	\$200	
DEPOSIT	\$300	

NOTE: Flights from Kathmandu, Bangkok and Delhi depart early in the morning to Paro and we strongly advise that you book overnight accommodation before your flight. Similarly, it may be necessary to book overnight accommodation in Bangkok on the return as the flight arrives late afternoon. Evening flight connections from Kathmandu and Delhi will be possible without overnight accommodation required.



OPTION 2: 6-NIGHT TOUR - CULTURAL TOUR INCLUDING THIMPHU AND PUNAKHA

A tour that captures the variety and culture of Bhutan. The Paro Valley with its surrounding pine clad mountainsides, Thimphu, the capital city of Bhutan and the Punakha Valley, a lower lying valley which gives a semi-tropical climate.

TUESDAY 23 MAY: Arrival from Kathmandu. Arrivals from Delhi and Bangkok also available at a supplement. Drive to Punakha via Dochu La Pass (approx 2 1/2hrs). Afternoon sightseeing in Punakha; visit the Devine Mad Monks Temple (Temple of Fertility) and the remarkable Punakha Dzong, past home to the King of Bhutan. *Overnight Punakha.* Lunch, dinner.

WEDNESDAY 24 MAY: Today we start our acclimatisation activity with a hike Soela Gompa via Khamsum Yuelley Namgyel Chorten. This hike is approx 20km at moderate difficulty and will take around 8hrs. Overnight in Punakha. Breakfast, lunch, dinner.

THURSDAY 25 MAY: Drive to the Capital City Thimphu (2 1/2hrs). Hike up to Buddha Point and the giant seated Buddha, the Takin Reserve (National animal), Thimphu Dzong and craft workshops. After lunch drive on to Paro (1hr) visiting the National Museum with the chance to hike part of the marathon route before visiting Paro Dzong. Breakfast, lunch and dinner. *Overnight Paro.*

FRIDAY 26 MAY: Hike to Taktsang Monastery (Tigers Nest) 6hrs. On the way back visit Drukgyel Dzong and Kichu Lhakhang Monastery. *Overnight Paro. Breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

SATURDAY 27 MAY: Free time for shopping in Paro. Race day briefing. *Overnight in Paro.*

SUNDAY 28 MAY: FULL & HALF MARATHONS. Early breakfast before the 8am start of both races. Celebration dinner and Cultural show at Olanthang Hotel. *Overnight Paro.*

MONDAY 29 MAY: Fly out to Kathmandu, Delhi or Bangkok.

OPTION 2: 6-NIGHT CULTURAL TOUR	TWIN OR DOUBLE BEDDED ROOM	SINGLE ROOM
PRICES PER PERSON IN US\$		
3-STAR HOTELS	\$2495	\$2795
4-STAR HOTELS	\$3495	\$4695
5-STAR HOTELS	\$4595	\$5995
FLIGHT SUPPLEMENT KATHMADU - PARO	NONE	
FLIGHT SUPPLEMENT DELHI – PARO	\$265	
FLIGHT SUPPLEMENT BANGKOK – PARO	\$300	
RACE ENTRY FEE	\$200	
DEPOSIT	\$300	

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OPTION 3: 8 NIGHT TOUR - 4 DAY DRUK TRAIL TREK WITH RACE WEEKEND

Bhutan has some of the best trekking in the World and here we offer a fully supported 4 day trek on the famous Druk (or Dragon) Trail. Hiking at around 4,000mt each day you will also acclimatise well for the race (which has an average altitude of 2,300mt). You also visit the famous Tigers Nest and stay overnight in the capital Thimphu.

SUNDAY 21 MAY: Arrival from Kathmandu. Arrivals from Delhi and Bangkok also available at a supplement. *Overnight Paro.*

MONDAY 22 MAY: Hike to Taktshang Monastery (Tigers Nest) 6hrs. On the way back visit Drukgyel Dzong and Kichu Lhakhang. *Overnight Paro.*

TUESDAY 23 MAY: DRUK PATH trek – Day 1. Climb gradually upwards from the Paro Valley to the camp at 3650m. Most of the altitude gain is done today through Forest. 20km Moderate difficulty. *Overnight camping.*

WEDNESDAY 24 MAY: DRUK PATH trek – Day 2. Leaving the camp climb fairly steeply for 1hr the follow a ridge with views of Mt Jomolhari. A steep descent takes you to the campsite next to a beautiful lake. 15km. *Overnight camping.*

THURSDAY 25 MAY: DRUK PATH trek – Day 3. Today is a tough day of ascents and descents up to 4150m. 11km. *Overnight camping.*

FRIDAY 26 MAY: DRUK PATH trek – Day 4. The day begins with a gradual climb with views of Mt Gangkhar Puensum, Bhutan highest mountain before dropping into Thimphu. *Overnight Thimphu.*

SATURDAY 27 MAY: In Thimphu. Visit the painting school, folk heritage museum, textile museum, Budda Point, Takin Reserve. Afternoon visit to craft bazaar and weekend market. *Overnight Paro.*

SUNDAY 28 MAY: FULL & HALF MARATHONS. Celebration dinner and Cultural show. *Overnight Paro.*

MONDAY 29 MAY: Fly out to Kathmandu, Delhi or Bangkok.

OPTION 3: 8-NIGHTS WITH DRUK TRAIL TREK & RACE WEEKEND	TWIN OR DOUBLE BEDDED ROOM	SINGLE ROOM
PRICES PER PERSON IN US\$		
3-STAR HOTELS	\$3195	\$3495
4-STAR HOTELS	\$3895	\$4695
5-STAR HOTELS	\$4595	\$5795
FLIGHT SUPPLEMENT KATHMADU - PARO	NONE	
FLIGHT SUPPLEMENT DELHI – PARO	\$265	
FLIGHT SUPPLEMENT BANGKOK – PARO	\$300	
RACE ENTRY FEE	\$200	
DEPOSIT	\$300	

NOTE: Flights from Kathmandu, Bangkok and Delhi depart early in the morning to Paro and we strongly advise that you book overnight accommodation before your flight. Similarly, it may be necessary to book overnight accommodation in Bangkok on the return as the flight arrives late afternoon. Evening flight connections from Kathmandu and Delhi will be possible without overnight accommodation required.



THE TOUR PRICES INCLUDE:

- Flights from Kathmandu to Paro, or Delhi and Bangkok for a supplement.
- Accommodation in choice of 3, 4 or 5-star hotels.
- Breakfast and dinner in hotels each day (except on trekking days), lunch in local restaurants as determined by the day's itinerary.
- Guides for each tour option throughout the tour from arrival to departure.
- All sightseeing and entrance fees.
- All ground transportation in Bhutan from arrival to departure in 22 seater Toyota Coaster buses or 8-seater Toyota Hiace bus.
- On treks – all facilities and staff required on trek including, guide, cook, helpers, and horses to carry luggage and tents (sleeping bags are not provided)
- Visa for Bhutan

NOT INCLUDED:

- International flight to tour starting point in Kathmandu, Delhi or Bangkok.
- Visas for Nepal, India or Thailand.
- Travel Insurance.
- Drinks (except water on the bus).
- Personal items such as laundry and souvenirs.
- Tips.



3-STAR HOTEL OPTIONS

UDUMWARA HOTEL

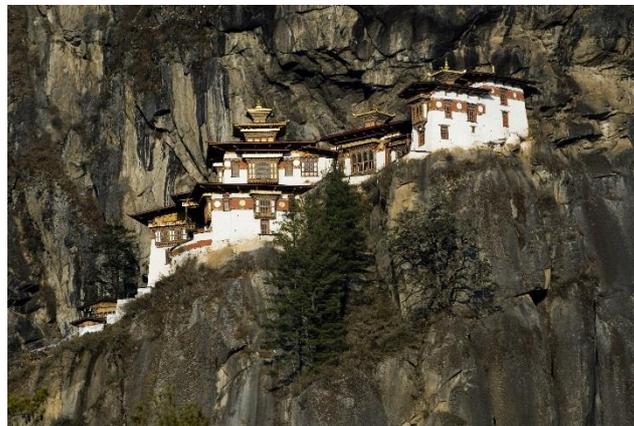
(standard 3-star):

The resort has 10 rooms at the main block and 5 cozy villas with 4 rooms in each villa, which are all deluxe twin bedded rooms decorated in a traditional style with modern facilities like security boxes, TV and free wireless internet connection. Pakshing Bar made wholly of bamboo which serves only local drinks and a handicraft shop with all the antiques on display just next to the bar in the main block will surely mesmerize you.



To add on to the existing natural beauty of the resort, a traditional bridge is constructed which passes over a small brook. The resort is a blend of traditional look with a touch of modern architecture.

Hotel in Thimphu after the Trek on 8-night options will be Hotel Phutsho Perli or simialr and in Punakha for the 6-night tour the Zangto Perli or similar.



4-STAR HOTEL OPTIONS

RAVENS NEST HOTEL

Raven's Nest Resort is the latest addition to the hotels in Paro. It has 21 guest rooms with en suite bathroom, private balcony, 42-inch cable LCD TV with premium channels, kitchenette, refrigerator, working desk and space heating. It has 8 standard rooms, 3 deluxe rooms, 2 deluxe rooms with kitchenettes, 6 junior suites and 2 villas. Bathroom amenities include shower and tub combination and rainfall showerheads. Each room is provided with bathrobes, hair dryers, slipper, hair dryers irons and ironing boards and adequate complimentary toiletries. All rooms are provided with complimentary bottled water and coffee or tea makers.

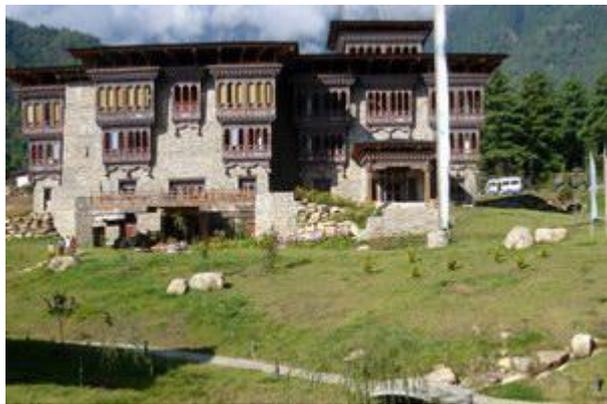


Hotel in Thimphu after the Trek on 8-night options will be the Druk Hotel or simialr and in Punakha for the 6-night tour the Dhensa Punaka or similar.

5-STAR HOTEL OPTIONS

ZHIWA LING HOTEL (5-star Junior Suite):

The 45-room Zhiwa Ling Hotel combines the sensibilities of a fine Bhutanese guesthouse with the best of 21st Century technology. Envisioned and created by a local Bhutanese company, the hotel's elaborate hand-carved wooden cornices and masterful stonework coexist beautifully with today's cutting-edge technology.



The spa offers all the amenities of a modern fitness centre - sauna, steam room, gym - as well as a traditional Bhutanese outdoor hot-stone bath. The hotel located amidst beautiful landscape and evergreen forest houses fully equipped business centre, a tea house, two fully-equipped conference rooms, a meditation house and multi cuisine restaurant.

Honouring the spiritual heritage of this ancient Buddhist kingdom, a temple has been built into the second floor of the hotel, made with 450-year-old timbers from the famous Gangtey Monastery, the crowning glory of this new ten-acre cultural landmark.

Hotel in Thimphu after the Trek on 8-night options will be the Taj Tashi Hotel or simialr and in Punakha for the 6-night tour the Uma Punaka or similar.



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