



Photo: Crane Wu



# TOUR THE CLOUD KINGDOM OF BHUTAN

WITH GEORGE ARCHIBALD,  
CO-FOUNDER OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION

November 5-20, 2017



The International Crane Foundation works worldwide to conserve cranes and the ecosystems, watersheds, and flyways on which they depend. ICF provides knowledge, leadership, and inspiration to engage people in resolving threats to cranes and their diverse landscapes.

[www.savingcranes.org](http://www.savingcranes.org)

**gtd**  
Group Travel Directors

## DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

### SUN 05 NOV

#### Arrive Bangkok

Arrive independently in Bangkok – most arrivals are around midnight or shortly thereafter. Your hotel rooms will be available for check-in from 3:00PM onward on Sunday, November 5. The hotel is located onsite at the airport and can be accessed either by their 24 - hour complimentary shuttle, which departs from Gate 4 every ten minutes, or through the underground, air-conditioned walkway which takes only five minutes. Novotel Suvarnabhumi Airport Hotel

### MON 06 NOV

#### Bangkok

The primary order of business today is recovery from our long transpacific flights. The hotel pool is pleasant, and the concierge can arrange Bangkok tours for the energetic. We will rendezvous at The Square Restaurant at 6:30pm to discuss plans for our departure and enjoy getting to know each other during dinner. Novotel Suvarnabhumi Airport Hotel (B, D)

### TUE 07 NOV

#### Bangkok/Thimphu

This morning fly via Drukair from Bangkok to Paro, Bhutan, where your local host is waiting to greet you for the short trip to the capital city of Thimphu. Today you have the opportunity to acclimate to the high altitude with no strenuous sightseeing scheduled. Ascend for a panoramic view of the capital city and its adjoining areas. There is a lovely hiking trail that cuts through a lush forest of pine trees. After 30-40 minutes of hiking, you will reach the quaint monastery of Wangditse. Keep an eye out for the Kalij Pheasants that are known to frequent this area. Check in at the hotel for dinner and overnight. Hotel Pedling (B, L, D)

### WED 08 NOV

#### Thimphu/Lobesa

Start the day with a visit to the National Memorial Stupa, built in 1974 in memory of the 3rd King – His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. Then visit the National Institute of Zorig Chusum, a crafts school that trains both boys and girls in the thirteen traditional crafts of Bhutan. Next is the Textile Weaving Factory to see weavers creating elaborate traditional patterns and visit their show room. Depart for the subtropical valley of Punakha. Travel over Dochu La Pass stopping to look for Fire-tailed Myzornis and Spotted Laughingthrushes. At Dochu La Pass, there is a congregation of 108 Buddhist stupas built on a conch-shaped hillock decorated by colorful prayer flags. Arrive in Lobesa later today. Driving time approximately 3 hours plus stops. Hotel Vara (B, L, D)

### THU 09 NOV

#### Lobesa

This morning drive to Tsekha village to seek out the world's rarest heron, the White-bellied Heron, one of the world's 50 rarest birds. The ICF – and particularly George Archibald – has been a key figure in helping with a project to save this giant heron and its habitats, in perhaps the world's only safe place for this rare bird. If we are lucky, we may even see Pallas's Fish Eagle along this river. On the return stop in Punakha to walk across Bhutan's longest suspension footbridge to the Punakha Dzong, built in 1637 and the place where all the Kings of Bhutan are crowned. Hotel Vara (B, L, D)

### FRI 10 NOV

#### Lobesa/Phobjikha

Today leave for the glacial valley of Phobjikha, most commonly referred to as the "Crane Valley." Phobjikha is Bhutan's largest wetland and a designated conservation area. Because of the presence of a large flock of Black-necked Cranes, which come to Bhutan from Tibet in late October and leave in early spring, it is one of the most important wildlife preserves in the country. There will be plenty of birding and photography stops during today's drive. The Yellow-rumped Honey Guide, which is classified as a globally threatened bird, can often be seen feeding on the honeycombs hanging from the cliffs. Driving time approximately 3 hours plus stops. Homestays (B, L, D)

### SAT 11 NOV

#### Phobjikha

After breakfast, drive to the courtyard of the 17th century Gangtey Monastery to attend the Annual Crane Festival. The International Crane Foundation and its travel partner in Bhutan were instrumental in sustaining this festival, which was mainly initiated to demonstrate the benefits of conservation to the local community. There will be masked and folk dances as well as exhibition stalls at the festival. Perhaps the most popular program of the festival is the Black-necked Crane dance performed by the children of the community school. After lunching at the festival site, George will lead us on a hike through the beautiful pine forest bordering the wetlands. We will plan the walk to arrive at particular point about 4 pm in order to witness the cranes flying to their roost. It is always a special thrill to experience the cranes spiraling down the valley and doing their dances upon landing at the roost. Homestays (B, L, D)

### SUN 12 NOV

#### Phobjikha/Chhume

Travel to Bumthang, the spiritual and cultural heartland of Bhutan. Today's destination is the quaint valley of Chhume where the Black-necked Cranes visit during the winter months. Drive through misty forests of rhododendrons, silver

### Dr. George Archibald

is the co-founder of the International Crane Foundation (ICF). He has devoted his life to protecting cranes around the world and helping others understand the global context of bird conservation. From Buddhist monks in Bhutan who see cranes as spiritual beings, to Chinese officials balancing economic development and land conservation, George is able to connect through the magic of cranes and leverage people's interests into effective conservation actions.



firs and bamboo, and make several stops to enjoy the breathtaking vistas of the rolling hills and take in the cool, fresh Himalayan air. Driving time approximately 5 hours. Chumey Nature Resort (B, L, D)

### MON 13 NOV

#### Chhume/Yongkhola

Today's drive is hailed by many as one of the most spectacular in the world. Travel past pristine forests, magnificent waterfalls and quaint villages that have remained untouched from the forces of modernization. Stop atop Shertang La from where (if the weather permits), there are fantastic views of Gangkhar Puensum – the highest mountain in Bhutan and the highest unscaled mountain in the world. In the Ura Valley watch for the beautiful Rosefinch, White-browed Rosefinch, Red-billed Chough, Spotted Nutcracker, Russet Sparrow, Black-billed Magpie and Rufous-breasted Accentor. While driving through lush forests of conifers and rhododendrons you may spot coveys of Blood Pheasants scuttling across the roads. Climb through a magical wonderland of moss-draped trees to reach the high-elevation pass of Thrim-sung La, then descend towards the idyllic little village of Yongkhola. This stretch has long been lauded as one of the best spots for birding in Asia with such species as the Black-throated Parrotbill, Goldcrest, Golden Bush Robin, Grey-sided Laughingthrush, and the specialty of this region – the rare Satyr Tragopan. Driving time approximately 5-6 hours plus stops. Trogon Villa (B, L, D)

### TUE 14 NOV – WED 15 NOV

#### Yongkhola

Spend the next two days birding in beautiful Yongkhola. The region's pristine broadleaved forests make it a natural haven for several species of birds. Some of Bhutan's rarest birds are found in this region such as the elusive Ward's Trogon and the majestic Rufous-necked Hornbill. Other bird species found in this area are various types of Scimitar Babblers, Parrotbills, an assortment of Warblers, Fire-tailed Myzornis, Flycatchers, Laughingthrushes, and a variety of Bulbuls. There will be an early start to both days. Much of the morning and afternoon will be spent birding and hiking along the main road that traverses through the Yongkhola/Limithang region. With luck you might encounter the charismatic and photogenic Capped Langur. The evenings bring an altogether different experience when the forests come alive with the sounds and calls of a variety of nocturnal bird and animal species. Perhaps search out owl species such as the Collared Owl and the Collared Scops Owl and catch a glimpse of a flying squirrel in flight. Trogon Villa (B, L, D)

### THU 16 NOV

#### Yongkhola/Bumthang

Start the journey westwards by backtracking a ways - the drive will be just as fascinating as the first time around because of the amazing scen-



ery. Upon reaching the Choekhor Valley, embark on a bit of cultural exploration with visits to two important monasteries: Tamshing Lhakhang, built in 1501 by Bhutan's greatest saint; and Kurjey Lhakhang, one of the country's most sacred sites. The latter commemorates the great Guru Rinpoche and his curing a local king of a spirit-induced ailment in the 8th century, an event that resulted in the king, and finally the whole country, embracing Buddhism. Driving time approximately 5-6 hours plus stops. Kaila Guest House (B, L, D)

**FRI 17 NOV Bumthang/Paro**  
Fly from Paro to Bumthang; although the flight takes only 25 minutes, it is an absolutely delightful visual treat. Enjoy fantastic views of the Bhutanese Himalayas; the melting glaciers also provide an insight on the impact of climate change. Upon arrival in Paro, tour the Paro National Museum. The museum houses the largest and most comprehensive collection of Bhutanese artifacts. Then take a short hike down to the magnificent Paro Dzong, one of Bhutan's most impressive and well-known dzongs, and perhaps the finest example of Bhutanese architecture you'll see. We will also have an opportunity to witness a game of Archery, which is the national sport of Bhutan. Later in the afternoon bird along the Paro River. Janka Resort (B, L, D)

**SAT 18 NOV Paro**  
No trip to Bhutan would be complete without a visit to Bhutan's cultural icon - Taktsang (the 'Tiger's Nest'). Taktsang is Bhutan's most famous monastery and one of the most venerated pilgrimage sites in the Himalayan world. Perched on the side of a cliff at an altitude of 10,428 feet, Taktsang might be the finest example of Bhutanese architecture. Upon reaching the base of the cliff upon

*Itinerary continues on the back page*

**WHAT'S INCLUDED?**

- AIRFARE:** Economy class airfare and taxes for flights via Drukair.
- ACCOMMODATION:** Fifteen nights (three in Bangkok, twelve in Bhutan) accommodation in three to five-star hotels, double occupancy, with private facilities, with the exception of two nights homestays in Phobjikha. Hotels as listed or similar. Note that hotels in Bhutan can be chilly.
- MEALS:** Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily in Bhutan plus breakfasts and a welcome dinner at the Novotel Bangkok Airport. All beverages are included with limited alcoholic beverages.
- GROUND TRANSPORT:** Transfers and transportation by 20-seater Toyota Coaster bus.
- SIGHTSEEING:** Extensive sightseeing throughout; entrance fees included.
- PORTERAGE:** Luggage handling of one piece per person.
- EXPERT GUIDE:** Mr. Hishey Tshering serving as tour guide from arrival in Bhutan through departure from Bhutan; in addition, ICF staff will be assisting the group throughout.
- GRATUITIES:** Gratuities to driver and guide prepaid on your behalf.
- BHUTAN ENTRY VISA:** An entry visa is required for Bhutan (total fees currently \$40 per person); GTD will assist with processing.
- FUEL SURCHARGE/TAX INCREASE PROTECTION:** GTD has included a fund of \$150 per person as protection against unexpected increases in fuel or taxes. If all or part of this fund is unused, a refund will be provided.
- ALL THE INFO YOU NEED:** Comprehensive documentation including travel accessory, bag tags, name tags, flight and land itineraries, destination literature, customs information, travel tips and more.
- ICF CONTRIBUTION:** A tax-deductible contribution of \$3000 is included in your tour price. This contribution will be payable directly to ICF at the time of final payment.

**COST SUMMARY**

**\$11,563\***

from Bangkok

\*Costs per person based on double occupancy in USD  
Contribution of \$3000 to ICF..... Included  
Tour Gratuities..... Included  
Bhutan Entry Visa (\$40)..... Included  
Fuel Tax/Surcharge Fund (\$150)..... Included

Single Room Rate.....\$12,213

**Costs:** The tour cost is per person based on current airfares, double or single occupancy, tariffs and currency valuations as of April 2017, a minimum of 5 full-paying travelers, and subject to confirmation. While we will do everything possible to maintain the listed price and/or itinerary, they are subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. Single rooms may have limited availability and are on a request basis only. *Not all bookings have been made and all space/rates are subject to availability at time of booking.*

**Items Not Included**

- Transpacific airfare and taxes.
- Any meal or sightseeing item not listed in the itinerary.
- Items of a personal nature.
- Passport fees. A passport valid six months beyond date of reentry to the U.S. is required.
- TRAVEL INSURANCE: Insurance for health, baggage, trip cancellation/interruption and emergency evacuation is not included. **The ICF requires that all participants have emergency evacuation/repatriation coverage and proof of coverage will be required at the time of final payment.** GTD offers coverage as an option with your reservation - please refer to the Travel Insurance section for more information or request a detailed Description of Coverage from GTD.

**IMMUNIZATIONS**

The CDC recommends immunizations for Hepatitis A and Typhoid. Please consult their website [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) and your physician.

**RESERVATION APPLICATION • APPLY ONLINE AT: WWW.GTD.ORG G#171106 • OR CLIP AND MAIL**

ICF: Bhutan • November 5-20, 2017 • (G#171106) • Group Travel Directors • 2000 W 98th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55431

(Name as it appears on passport)

1. \_\_\_\_\_  Male  Female Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
First Name Middle Name Last Name Month/Day/Year

2. \_\_\_\_\_  Male  Female Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
First Name Middle Name Last Name Month/Day/Year

Address (no P.O. boxes) \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. (Day) \_\_\_\_\_ (Eve.) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Roommate \_\_\_\_\_  I will pay the supplement for a single room.

Advise if we can assign you a roommate or single supplement. GTD can assist in finding roommates; however, this cannot be guaranteed and the supplement may apply.

**DEPOSIT/TRAVEL INSURANCE (please check one)**

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ space(s) for me/us; we choose the following deposit option:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ **\$1905** per person **inclusive of travel insurance** (\$1924 in single).

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ **\$1500** per person **without travel insurance.**

I/We decline now, but understand it can be purchased later. without the pre-existing waiver.

**Physical Conditions**



This rigorous tour will include hiking in altitudes over 11,000 feet. Please consult your physician to confirm your fitness for this challenging adventure. Expect travel over rough roads for up to 6 hours at a time with few stops for refreshment.

**Flight Arrangements**

If you would like assistance with your flight arrangements, please contact Valerie Bartl at [vbartl@gtd.org](mailto:vbartl@gtd.org).

**Form of Payment**

- Check
- Charge my deposit(s) to

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp \_\_\_\_\_

Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

Name as it appears on credit card: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to Group Travel Directors G#171106

I/We have read and understand the conditions of this brochure. Parent or guardian signature is required for travelers under age 18.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



where the monastery complex is located, we will hike for about two hours to reach the monastery. The initial part of the hike is through a forest of pine before the vegetation changes to massive oak trees. There is a cafeteria at the halfway point that offers an excellent view of the Tiger's Nest. Return to Paro for a farewell dinner and overnight. Janka Resort (B, L, D)

**SUN 19 NOV** **Paro/Bangkok**  
Transfer to the Paro airport for the Druk Air flight to Bangkok and overnight at the same Bangkok airport hotel. Novotel Suvarnabhumi Airport Hotel (B)

**MON 20 NOV** **Bangkok/Departure**  
After breakfast, depart individually for home. (B)

Code: **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**  
Itinerary subject to change.

## TOUR CONDITIONS

**PAYMENT SCHEDULE:** Your reservation and deposit of \$1500 per person are requested immediately to fulfill the group deadline requirements. Note that space is limited and reservations are taken on a first come, first served basis. A second payment of \$1500 is due July 3, 2017. Final payment to Group Travel Directors (GTD) and donation to ICF are due September 1, 2017. For credit card payment GTD and ICF accept Visa, MasterCard, or Discover.

**REFUND POLICY:** If you should need to cancel your reservations, we ask that you provide this in writing to assure proper documentation. Unfortunately we are unable to refund fees for partial or unused land arrangements. Note: Airline tickets will be issued well in advance of departure and may be nonrefundable. To this end, we will be unable to refund the entirety of your deposit, with specific breakdowns as follows: Up to July 2, 2017 - \$100 per person administrative fee plus any unrecoverable deposits; July 3 - October 21, 2017 - Deposit plus any unrecoverable payments to hotels, tour operators or airlines; October 22, 2017 or after - We are unable to provide a refund.

**LATE BOOKINGS:** Passengers registering within thirty days of tour departure will incur a \$50 per person administrative fee, and possible airline and/or ground service charges. We ask for tour payment in full at the time we request space on your behalf.

## GTD TRAVEL PROTECTION

Travel protection is optional, but we encourage all travelers to purchase a plan. GTD offers an extensive and competitively priced plan from Travel Insured International. Travel protection can help provide coverage for trip cancellation/interruption, baggage delay/loss, emergency accident and sickness medical expense, and emergency evacuation/repatriation. If you decline coverage at the time of reservation, you may purchase it later, but the Pre-existing Conditions Waiver is available only if the plan is purchased within 14 days of the initial trip deposit. You may contact Travel Insured International for further information before making your decision: 800-243-3174. Review your Plan Document for Schedule of Benefits and Plan Details.

## GTD TRAVEL PROTECTION INCLUSIONS

Trip Cancellation.....	up to Tour Cost**
Trip Interruption.....	up to 150% of Tour Cost**
Travel Delay.....	\$750
Missed Connection.....	\$300
Baggage.....	\$1,000
Baggage Delay.....	\$200
Medical Expense.....	\$50,000
Evacuation/Repatriation.....	\$500,000
Accidental Death.....	\$10,000
Political Emergency Evacuation.....	\$100,000
ID Theft Resolution Services.....	included
Assistance Service.....	included*
	<i>a maximum of \$8,500 per person</i>
	<i>** a maximum of \$12,750 per person</i>

Cost of this optional GTD Travel Protection is \$405 per person (\$424 in single occupancy). Additional coverage provided as needed; the full cost of your tour must be covered with the exception of the donation to ICF, which is uncollectible as a travel expense.

This protection may be purchased without the trip cancellation feature and used for emergency evacuation/repatriation. The fee is \$97.

This document contains highlights of the plan. The Plan contains insurance benefits underwritten by the United States Fire Insurance Company. Fairmont Specialty and Crum & Forster are registered trademarks of United States Fire Insurance Company. The Crum & Forster group of companies is rated A (Excellent) by AM Best Company 2015. The Plan also contains non insurance Travel Assistance Services that are provided by an independent organization, OnCall International, and not by United States Fire Insurance Company or Travel Insured International. Review the Plan Document for complete terms, including benefits, conditions, limitations and exclusions that apply. The Plan Document will be provided to you upon purchase of the plan. Coverages may vary and not all coverage is available in all jurisdictions.

### EXCLUSIONS & LIMITATIONS

Insurance benefits are not payable for any loss due to, arising or resulting from: suicide, attempted suicide or any intentionally self-inflicted injury of You, a Traveling Companion, Family Member or Business Partner booked to travel with You, while sane or insane; an act of declared or undeclared war; participating in maneuvers or training exercises of an armed service, except while participating in weekend or summer training for the reserve forces of the United States, including the National Guard; riding or driving in races, or speed or endurance competitions or events; mountaineering (engaging in the sport of scaling mountains generally requiring the use of picks, ropes, or other special equipment); participating as a member of a team in an organized sporting competition or participating as a professional in a stunt, athletic or sporting event or competition; participating in bodily contact sports, skydiving or parachuting, hang gliding, or bungee cord jumping; piloting or learning to pilot or acting as a member of the crew of any aircraft; being Intoxicated as defined herein, or under the influence of any controlled substance unless as administered or prescribed by a Legally Qualified Physician; the commission of or attempt to commit a felony or being engaged in an illegal occupation; normal childbirth or pregnancy (except Complications of Pregnancy) or voluntarily induced abortion; dental treatment (except as coverage is otherwise specifically provided herein); amounts which exceed the Maximum Benefit Amount for each coverage as shown in the Schedule of Benefits; due to a Pre-Existing Condition, as defined in the Certificate. The Pre-Existing Condition Limitation does not apply to the Emergency Medical Evacuation or Return of Remains coverage; medical treatment during or arising from a Trip undertaken for the purpose or intent of securing medical treatment; due to loss or damage (including death or injury) and any associated cost or expense resulting directly from the discharge, explosion or use of any device, weapon or material employing or involving chemical, biological, radiological or similar agents, whether in time of peace or war, and regardless of who commits the act and regardless of any other sequence thereto.



## CONDITIONS AND RESPONSIBILITY

Group Travel Directors (GTD) provides customized travel planning throughout the world for group travelers who have a variety of reasons and goals for travel. The goals and/or opinions of these groups do not reflect or imply the position of GTD in any matter. Brochure contents may not be duplicated without permission from GTD. In offering these travel arrangements, Group Travel Directors, Inc. (GTD) acts solely as an agent for the sale of air transportation and other travel related services. GTD maintains no control over the personnel, equipment or operations of any entity furnishing services, products or accommodations. GTD assumes no responsibility or liability for, and shall not be expected, asked or required to pay for any injury, damage, expense, personal injury, property damage, inconvenience or any other loss experienced by reason of: (1) any intentional, wrongful, negligent or unauthorized act or omission on the part of any supplier, its agents or employees; (2) any defect, breakdown or other failure of any vehicle, equipment, service, product or other instrumentality which is owned, operated or otherwise used by a supplier; (3) any intentional, wrongful, negligent, or unauthorized act or omission on the part of any other party not under the direct control of GTD; (4) financial problems causing nonperformance by any supplier; or (5) any other cause, condition or event whatsoever beyond the direct control of GTD. GTD cannot guarantee any rates, bookings or reservations of any supplier. Your retention of tickets, reservations or bookings after issuance shall constitute a consent to the foregoing provisions. All prices quoted are subject to change if airlines or ground operators increase their prices, the U.S. dollar is devalued significantly against foreign currencies, the group falls below minimum numbers, or a fuel surcharge, government tax or user's fee is imposed. Baggage and personal effects are the sole responsibility of the owners at all times. GTD reserves the right to withdraw from any tour any tour member whose conduct is incompatible with the interests of the group as a whole. The above Conditions and Responsibility also covers the group leader(s) and their respective organizations.

## NOTE TO OUR TRAVELERS:

*Be assured that GTD continually monitors industry events, such as airline strikes and bankruptcies, etc. If any such events affect your tour, you will be notified. At the time this tour was developed there was not a U.S. State Department Travel Warning in effect for this destination; please refer to the following website for current information or call GTD. <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html>*

**For more information on this global adventure with the International Crane Foundation contact:**

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