Daniel Gutierrez Presents
Sacred Journeys
‘The Land of Medicinal Herbs’
Private Scouting Expedition 2019
Kingdom of Bhutan

Dates: May 5-13, 2019
Cost: $5,500 (early bird pricing)

9 days / 8 nights
All-Inclusive Private Hosted Tour
Departing Bangkok

Explore the Kingdom of Bhutan the world’s epicentre for ancient herbal medicines & holistic healing practices

Travel. Beyond The Ordinary.

By Private Invitation
OVERVIEW

Historically Bhutan was the Tibetan name for “The Land of Medicinal Herbs” — referring to a mythical and coveted location in the high Himalayas, so dense and impenetrable it has remained unconquered and unvisited for centuries.

Recently opened to outside travelers, the Kingdom of Bhutan offers access to one of the most eco-diverse climates on the planet, which generates the most potent and most expensive natural and herbal medicines in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS

• Medicinal Hot Stone Baths
• Evening Chanting with the Nuns of Ura
• Private visit to Bhutan Animal Rescue Sanctuary  (Click here to see video)
• Shopping for rare baby yak fur & raw silk antique textiles (Click here to see video)
• Finding the source of rare natural medicines + Cordyceps — The Miracle Cure!
• Tibetan Amchi Medicine Clinic Visit: Free Treatments & Medicine
• Visit to Ogyen Choling: Spiritual Center & Heritage Homestay
• Visit to the remote “Burning Lake” — one of Bhutan’s most sacred spiritual sites
• Meet The Monks: Gift exchange, lighting butter lamps & burning of sacred incense
• Hanging of prayer flags, spiritual ceremonies, and farewell blessings
• Private Dinner with Author & Royal Heiress - Kunzang Choden
• 1-1 time with spiritual guide & master educator: Daniel Gutierrez
• Special access experiences organized by private travel scout Ian OSullivan
• Service Opportunities: School visits, animal rescue, & monastic service
• A portion of every trip sale is donated to a project we will visit on the trip 😊

IMPORTANT DETAILS

• All Expense Trip Includes: Food, accommodations, activities, passes, entrances, visas and document processing and all transportation departing from BKK airport.
• Elevation Range: 4,000-8,000 ft (sleeping) | 3 x 10,000 ft passes (max driving)
• Weather: May is considered the most beautiful time of the year when fruit trees are blossoming. Expect temperature swings ranging from 55-80 F due to elevation change.
ITINERARY

Day 1 (May 5) Arrive To Thimphu from Bangkok (1 hour drive)

Group Rendezvous - 4:00am @ Novatel Hotel Lobby
Hotel located on-site at Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Airport (BKK)
Arrival to Paro Airport & Customs
Drive 1 hr to Thimphu (Capitol)

Buddha Dordenma Statue
National Memorial Chorten
* Special Event: National Institute of Traditional Medicine (free clinic visit)
* Lodging In Thimphu: Peaceful Resort (or equivalent)

Day 2 (May 6) Explore Thimphu

National Institute of Zorig Chusum (Traditional Arts & Crafts)
Royal Textile Academy
Pangrizzampa School of Astrology
* Special Event: Bhutan Animal Sanctuary - Private Tour (with Marianne Guillet)
* Special Meal (lunch): Momo House (Locals Favourite – Homemade Dumplings)
* Lodging In Thimphu: Peaceful Resort (or equivalent)

Day 3 (May 7) Scenic Drive to Punakha (3 hour drive)

Dochula Pass
View of Gangkhar Puensum (World's highest unclimbed mountain)
Dochula Pass Chorten
Druk Wangyal Lhakhang
* Special Event: Lamperi Royal Botanical Park (private tour with park ranger)
* Special Meal: Druk Wangyel Cafe (En Route Lunch)
* Lodging in Punakha: Meri Phuensum Resort (or equivalent)

Day 4 (May 8) Explore Punakha

Punakha Dzong
Suspension Bridge & Small Villages
* Special Event: Talo Monastery & Monks/Lama Visit
* Special Meal: Chimi Lhakhang Cafeteria (valley views)
* Lodging in Punakha: Meri Phuensum Resort

Day 5 (May 9) Scenic Drive: Trongsa (6-7 hour drive)

Ta Dzong (Museum)
* Special Event: Meet the Monks of Trongsa Dzong
* Lodging: Yangkhil Resort

Day 6 (May 10) Bumthang Valley Weaving & Buckwheat (4 hour drive)

Jakar Dzong (fortress)
Zangdopelri Lhakhang
Kurjey Lhakhang
Jambay Lhakhang
Kurjey Lhakhang
* Special Event: Yathra Weaving Co-Operative (Raw silk & Baby Yak Fur) in Chhume
* Special Meal: Picnic With Weavers + Make Buckwheat Noodles
* Special Accommodations: Ogyen Choling Royal Manor & Heritage Homestay

Day 7 (May 11) Tang & Ura Valley Exploration (4 hour drive)

* Special Event: Mebartsho (Holy Burning Lake – Sacred Ceremony)
* Special Event: Join the Nuns of Ura for evening chant (tbd)
* Special Event: Ura Valley Botanicals Expedition & Ura Monastery
* Accommodations: Ogyen Choling Royal Manor & Heritage Homestay

Day 8 (May 12) Fly to Paro & Hike Tiger’s Nest (2 hours)

Tiger’s Nest Day Hike (lunch en route)
Nyemi Zampa Bridge
Special Meal: Farewell Dinner @ Namgay Artisinal Brewery
Special Event: Menchu Medicinal Hot Stone Baths
Accommodations: Tashi Namgay Resort

Day 9 (May 13) Farewell & Departure

Celebration Breakfast & Farewell Blessing (Prayer Flag Hanging)
Depart @ 10:40 am Paro International Airport (PBH)
Arrive @ 2:50 pm Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Airport (BKK)

TOUR COMPLETION
* Additional travel extensions available upon request
** Clients responsible for all travel after arrival to BKK airport
Meet local villagers and experience one of the most unvisited farming communities in the Kingdom.

Experience Ogyen Choling museum to see their private collection of antiques belonging to the lord of the valley.

Sacred Ceremony at Holy Burning Lake of Mebar Tsho
Because of its association with the great Tibetan masters; Longchen Rabjam and Dorji Lingpa, Ogyen Choling Palace and estate is of considerable importance for Bhutan as well as for the Tibetan Buddhist world.

Ogyen Choling was never so much a seat of political power as a center for religion. Throughout its history it was referred to by terms which alluded to its religious nature as being a monastery or hermitage, gompa.
The families of Ogyen Choling have the status of Lama choeju or "religious nobility".

Ashi Punzar Choden, the current day heiress of Ogyen Choling, decided to convert parts of their ancestral home to a museum with the goal of preserving Ogyen Choling as a religious and cultural center.

Traditional living quarters, store rooms, granaries and other rooms have been recreated to capture the 'near realistic' ambience of the lifestyles and living conditions of households of the religious nobility during the 19th and 20th century.

The history of Ogyen Choling begins with the visit of the great Tibetan master of Buddhism, Longchen Rabjam (1308-63).

He is the most celebrated writer and philosopher of the Nyingmapa School (Ancients) of Tibetan Buddhism and is regarded as the synthesizer of the doctrine and methods of Dzogchen, 'School of Great Perfection'.

Oral tradition explains why the great master chose the location for his centre. Looking up from the valley towards Ogyen Choling with the Kanyai mountain to the east, the panoramic view is that of the shape of an elephant’s head.

A few hundred meters above the village, climbing towards the crown of the elephant’s head is a cave which is to this day revered as the meditation cave of Longchen Rabjam.
This place with its special physical features and blessed by the presence of Longchen Rabjam, later became a center of the Tibetan Saint Dorji Lingpa (1346-1405).

Ogyen Choling is regarded as Dorji Lingpa’s center and the descendants of the saint have not only borne the responsibility of upholding the religious tradition, but also the genealogical lineage of Dorji Lingpa.
Your Royal Host

Your gracious host, Kunzang Choden, is a Bhutanese author and proprietor of the Ogyen Choling Royal Manor, which now serves adventurous sojourners who want a first peek at this historical palace and spiritual sanctuary.

In addition to being the royal heiress to the Ogyen Choling Royal Manor, Ashi Kunzang Choden is also one of Bhutan’s most famous book authors, known for her expertise in the food culture of Bhutan.

In her pioneering book “Chilli and Cheese: Food and Society in Bhutan” Kunzang offers insight into Bhutanese food culture within its historical and geographical context, as well as looking at food-related beliefs and practices.

Kunzang Choden, from her perspective as a member of the gentry in Bhutan’s feudal society in the 1950s, shares her perceptions, observations and experiences.

She highlights how food has meaning beyond nourishment, particularly in its symbolic forms in religion and ritual.

Choden is an expert in the agricultural and herding practices, the use of wild plants and the resulting food customs and habits of the Tang region.
Bhutan is historically known as ‘Lhomen Menjong’
Tibetan for The Land the Medicinal Herbs

Bhutan’s tradition of Sowa Rigpa, or Amchi medicine, is among the oldest medical traditions of the world – and one of the five major sciences of Tibetan Buddhism which blends philosophy, culture and Buddhist spiritual practices.

As sowa rigpa considers the health of the entire person, it is generally believed to be particularly effective in curing chronic diseases such as sinusitis, arthritis, asthma, rheumatism, liver problems and diseases related to the digestive and nervous system.

The types of medicines administered are different herbal compounds in the form of pills, tablets, capsules, syrups, ointments, medicated oil, or powder.

The traditional medical system of sowa rigpa contains more than one thousand herbal formularies and recipes. This art of healing is therefore a holistic approach to healthcare.

The National Institute of Traditional Medicine - Thimphu

Contact: Menjong Sorig Pharmaceuticals (Provider of Tsheringma Herbal Tea)
Contact: Dr. Gado Tshering – Director of Health

Tsheringma Tea of Longevity Tea

Named Tsheringma after the Goddess of longevity, wealth and prosperity, and under the motto-promoting health and happiness the natural way - The tea is the first commercial product of the institute along with a medicinal incense under the same brand name.

Traditional Medicine of Bhutan

By Subhuti Dharmananda, Ph.D.
Director, Institute for Traditional Medicine, Portland, Oregon

Medicinal Plants of Bhutan

> http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3024923/
> http://nopr.niscair.res.in/bitstream/123456789/9345/1/IJTK%203(2)%20212-218.pdf

> http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3024923/
> http://nopr.niscair.res.in/bitstream/123456789/9345/1/IJTK%203(2)%20212-218.pdf

> http://www.nitm.edu.bt/

> http://www.nitm.edu.bt/


> http://www.itmonline.org/arts/bhutan.htm

> http://www.fao.org/docrep/x5335e/x5335e05.htm
Hot Stone (Dhotso) & Medicinal Water (Menchu) Baths

In Search Of Botanicals

A wide range of plant diversity covers Bhutan’s two main mountain ranges, the Lho-Menjong and the Druk-Yul. From these rugged mountains come over 300 plant species traditionally used in preparing indigenous (Ayurvedic) medicine.

A number of medicinal plant species growing naturally in Bhutan have international market value. Among these are agar wood (Aquilaria agallocha), Rauvolfia serpentina, tshe (Ephedra gerardina), Himalayan yew (Taxus baccata), chutsa (Rheum nobile), chumtsa (Rheum accuminata), kutki/putishing (Picorrhiza kurroa), pangpoi (Nardostachys jatamansi), tsenduk rig (Aconitum spp.), and yartsa-gunbu (Cordyceps sinensis). All are in high demand for pharmaceuticals.

In Bhutan’s past, medicinal plants, such as manjito (Rubia cordifolia), chereta (Swertia cherita), pipla (Piper nigrum and Piper longum), sarpa-gandah or nakbhel (Rauvolfia serpentina) and putishing/kutki (Picorrhiza kurroa), among others, were sold to India.

Owing to the great volume of competitive synthetic products currently marketed, the trade in medicinal plants and their derivatives has declined in many industrialised countries (Study on the Market for Selected Medicinal Plants and Their Derivatives, Geneva, 1982.)

Trade in botanicals, however, has risen following their relatively recent increased use by the food and cosmetics industries. A renewed interest in traditional medicine in Asia, and the introduction of health foods in Europe and North America, has between them provided new outlets for many botanical products.

Over 400 botanicals are used commercially in Western Europe, with Hamburg as the centre for the trade. Of the Western nations, the United States is the major importer of medicinal plants. Japan is the major importer among Asian countries.

The National Institute of Traditional Medicine (NITM) has a programme for research on, and propagation of, medicinal plants. During the reign of Bhutan’s second king, His Majesty Jijme Wangchuck (1926-52), the people of the Bumthang Valley cultivated two medicinal plant species - manu (Innula helenium) and ruta (Saussurea lappa).

Both these plants were used for producing "sowa-rigpa" medicine and incense.

The manu plant, however, is in demand from NITM in Thimphu.

The plant has survived years of neglect and is now cultivated in Ura by one family for supply to the Indigenous Hospital in Thimphu.

The fate of the second plant, ruta, is not known. A survey is needed to determine if it still exists in the valley.
The Kingdom of Bhutan

Voted Best ‘Bragging Rights’ Trip of 2014 by Afar Magazine
Ranked #5 on NY Times “Top Places To Travel 2013”

Official Covershot of 2016 Bhutan Tourism Council Calendar (taken by our team!)

A Kingdom Awaits Your Discovery....In The Happiest Place On Earth?

- The world’s only Buddhist Kingdom – a sovereign country that’s never been conquered
- Classified as the #1 “least urbanized” country in the world (with not one traffic light yet)
- Home to the world’s ‘Highest Unclimbed Mountain’ (#40 tallest peak), the world’s “Longest Trek” (28-day Snowman), and the world’s ‘Toughest Bike Race’ (166-mile Tour of The Dragon)
- Last country in the world to introduce TV and Internet – in 1999.