



Dear Kingdom Explorers

As the date to our journey to the Himalayas, and the Kingdom of Bhutan approaches, excitement builds and the urgency to prepare becomes more evident. You will be receiving more information on a weekly basis through the next few weeks. Please make sure to fill out all forms and make copies of your own important documents. You may also want to let your banking establishments that you will be travelling, so there isn't an issue with credit cards.

We still need waiver forms from some of you, so please scan and email or send via mail.

EMERGENCY CONTACT & INSURANCE

Please review the attached Emergency Contact Form, so we can keep a record of whom to contact in an emergency. Additionally, please review your International Travel Insurance to ensure what is covered. It is important to have coverage for:

Trip Cancellation and Interruption insurance **Baggage insurance** **Health Care insurance**

Health Coverage is the most confusing, as we think we are covered with existing health care insurance. Within the United States, that's true.

Outside the U.S., however, is a big IF. And in some cases, your insurance won't even cover you if you're traveling on a foreign-flagged vessel.

In many cases, even if you are covered for basic emergency care overseas (again, a big IF), in almost ALL cases, your current health insurance does NOT cover you to evacuate you and repatriate you back to the U.S.

This is where "Medical Evacuation and Repatriation" insurance comes into play. This is essential for anyone who travels. It's an insurance program where if you get sick or injured overseas the policy will get you treated, stabilized and flown back to the U.S.

There are a number of good companies that provide this plan, two of which are Travel Guard and Medjet Assist. The annual premium is about \$300, and it's the card you hope you never have to use.

My recommendation is to get this, with an important caveat: read the fine print!



With Travel Guard and Medjet assist, these policies provide that they will get you initially treated and stabilized and then send a medically equipped and staffed jet to fly you to the doctor and medical facility of your choice. **This is crucial.**

Outside of Travel Guard and Medjet assist, many other companies that offer this insurance will fly you to the doctor and medical facility of their choice. Here's a [link](#) to a good article on what you are getting in your travel insurance

HEALTH

There have been some questions about inoculations for the trip, and my recommendation is to use your own best judgement. If you are a risk for altitude sickness, or pulmonary issues, please take necessary precautions and medications. I myself have asthma, and usually take Diamox for altitude. It is necessary to take Diamox in advance 3 days prior to altitude, so you will have to make that decision based on your own health.

The [US State Dept of Health](#) is concerned for rural areas below 1,700m (5,577ft) in the southern belt districts of Bhutan (Chirang, Geylegphug, Samchi, Samdrup Jongkhar, and Shemgang) along the border with India. Since we are not going to these locations, and will not be in these areas of the country, so there is a low risk.

Cameras, Laptops, iPads & Mobile Devices

Travelling with photo equipment can be difficult, but travelling without a good camera might be considered a waste of a journey!

Carry your equipment onboard to avoid damage or loss. If you still use film, remember when you go through metal detectors, to ask the attendant to hand-screen your film. It will help if you carry film in clear canisters or remove from packaging and in clear plastic bags. Do not pack unprocessed film in luggage that will be stored in cargo. Digital memory cards are not affected by x-rays, but magnetic devices could damage them.

It takes only a couple of seconds for anyone to take an unattended bag so always, keep your eye on your valuables. Bring memory cards, as they're hard to find in Bhutan, so bring extra ones. You can never have too many memory cards, especially in the colourful Kingdom of Bhutan!

Laptop, iPads and Devices

Please use the same precaution you would in any traveling situation.



Most of you are coming through Bangkok, so remember that BKK is a Big city, and one the most bustling in Asia. It sometimes makes New York City seem slow and unsophisticated in comparison! So watch yourself as in any city.

We are staying in luxury accommodations throughout the trip, so you will be safe to have any equipment in the hotel rooms. There will be safes provided in each room, and if you have valuables that need to be in a safety box, there is one at every hotel. I encourage you to only bring necessities, as we are in casual environments, so there is no need for dressing up.

If you bring equipment, please remember to bring any necessary charging devices and/or storage cards. You will probably be able to find things in Bangkok city, but I can almost guarantee you will not find ANY electronics in the Kingdom!

Mobile Phones

Some of you have unlocked mobile phones, that can take a SIM card. I have used mine in Thailand and Bhutan, but note that each telephone carrier has different roaming charges and fees, so be clear with who you buy SIM and ability to reload.

It is VERY DIFFICULT to get a SIM card in Bhutan. I have been able to in the past, but cannot guarantee it will be possible this time.

Internet

Please note that the internet provided in Bhutan is provided by agreement with the Republic of India. So, that means it can be less reliable at best. There have been times I have been in country, and the internet is down. In the Kingdom. Until further notice.

Another good reminder for us to S L O W down, and enjoy the views. As I've mentioned before, the pace of the Bhutanese people and their culture is unique. It is also not one built around rushing or schedules. As much as we can open our hearts and minds to see other cultures, we can also open our concepts of time and space and other logical things to be swept away, as enter the true "Magic Kingdom"

COUNTRY CUSTOMS

[Useful site about Bhutanese customs](#)
[Etiquette in Bhutan](#)



We will be updating you with the policies for exchanging and getting money in Bhutan. When I went the first time in 2008, we were able to use ATM. But when I returned in 2010, it was no longer available anywhere in the Kingdom! I'm sure things have changed again ;)

I am verifying what we need for cash and if we will be able to access cash at the hotels, and will revert news in the next update.

Additionally, you are all confirmed on the Druk Air flights from Bangkok to Paro on Nov 17 and returning Nov 24, and will receive one of those highly limited and highly desirable visas to visit the Magic Kingdom!

As the days go by, we will all be dreaming of those sacred mountains, and know that they will steal a place in your heart, as they have in mine.

Be well my fellow travellers and adventurers, and enjoy the changing pace of [Autumn!](#)