

Landscape & Travel Photography

WORKSHOPS & TOURS

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Bhutan

Typical Itinerary

Day 1

Arrival from Bangkok. My preference, if the various government permissions will allow, is to drive directly over to Thimphu, the capital. During the drive we will go over our first mountain pass. A pass, in Drukpa, the language of Bhutan, is "la." So Shangri La, is Shangri Pass.

Of the few thousand tourists a year who visit Bhutan, most don't go any further than the airport town of Paro because another permit is required. We will have two or maybe three different travel permits: to go as far as Thimphu, to go as far as Wangdi, and to go out to Bumthang. You'll notice the government checkpoints. Because of the permit and visa process, Paro has started having a large festival in the Spring to attract tourists whose agents don't want to go to the trouble and expense of obtaining additional visas and permits. Although it is one of the most photographed festivals, the Paro festival is not particularly authentic. Paro—like Page, Arizona—was built by the government during a major construction project: the airport. It is a new city!

The drive from Paro to Thimphu is spectacularly scenic. We will see red banded temples on sloping hills, Bhutanese women laboring in rice fields along the river valleys, and magnificent dzongs perched imperiously on mountain tops. The festivals we will be attending are harvest festivals. This is the



Black Hat Dancers

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time to harvest the rice, which is changing color; it is also the time to harvest the chili, which will be turning bright red.

Finally we will arrive in the country's capital where the first traffic light was installed. It was summarily removed by the King a few years ago. As far as I know this is the only national capital without a traffic light! We'll check into the hotel, get oriented, and have dinner. The following is an outline of what we are likely to do. But it is not written in

stone. The important aspects of the trip are the two traditional festivals, we'll work out any other details or opportunities as they come available. Flexibility will be important. Remember, we are in foreign country whose attitudes and values are different than ours—that is one of the main reasons we are traveling there—so go with the flow.

DAY 2

There are a lot of things to see in the town: there are many folk-craft and cottage industries, the King's Memorial Chorten, an unusual nunnery, the National Library, the School of Thangka Painting, the Traditional Medicine Institute where herbal medicine and ancient healing arts are still practiced. The National Library has some of the oldest Buddhist texts and scrolls; they are using a Leica digital camera to copy them!

We'll also probably visit the Simtoka Dzong with its exquisite murals and some of the friendliest novice monks you'll ever meet.

If there is time, I suggest purchasing beautiful postage stamps at the post office at face value. These beautiful color and foil-stamped pieces are incredible "signatures" for your photographs of Bhutan. Time. Time. Time. If there is enough of it we should visit some of the supplementary-weft weaving studios. Also, I have always enjoyed photographing the young girls making paper from the daphnia shrub; and then taking the opportunity to buy some beautiful handmade-paper directly from them. This past year at the digital printing conference here in Austin, there was a vendor selling handmade Bhutanese paper at \$10 per sheet for inkjet pigment printing! And there's always the fun of discovering "downtown" Thimphu on foot by visiting the many stores catering to the locals. This is where you can buy authentic prayer flags to have blessed by a monk or lama. And of course, as in Bangkok, there are the tailors who produce stunning kiras and ghos for the local clientele. A few participants have had a Bhutanese jacket custom-

made with the traditional deep cuffs that fold back. In cotton or wool or even in silk, they are stunning pieces of wearable art.

DAYS 3 - 5

This is a market day for the people of Thimphu, and since we have the opportunity, we'll avail ourselves of the photo op's it presents in the morning before leaving for Wangdi. Usually on this Friday, the King's Chorten is particularly interesting. We'll just have to see.

Wangu Phoedrong, also known as Wangi, and windy Wangdi, is our goal today. We will go over the beautiful Dochu la (Dochu Pass). At 10 000 feet the road goes through oak, pine and rhododendron forests. There is a large chorten at its crest from which the highest peak in Bhutan may be visible. There are many, many prayer flags at this holy shrine. The point of this excursion is to see the Harvest Festival in a small town where things are up-close-and-personal and not as imperiously formal as in the capital. This festival should have it all: religious dances, musical performances, clowns called *atsaras* that work the crowd making people laugh, and shy Bhutanese dancing women who shield their faces from cameras but manage to smile when caught with your lens. Presiding over this prestigious event may be the high abbot monk, the Je Khenpho, the Dali Lama of the country. He will be high atop a dais surrounded by his theocracy.

A spectacular dance you might see is the Dance of the Black Hats, which drives out the evil spirits and purifies the soul. The drums beat, the dancers chant ever so slowly, and the pilgrims are cleansed. As you can imagine, the older people take this very seriously. From these dances they hope to learn to distinguish the disguises of good and evil spirits so they will not be misled during their journey after death into their new being. It is a cultural and religious event you will long remember!

We are also likely to visit a few local small villages such as Rinchengang. Such places have no roads, so we'll have to walk. But it will be well worth the effort. I may not have mentioned that roads were illegal until the present regime. The lack of roads is probably what prevented the Chinese from capturing Bhutan when they took Tibet. Even the road is handmade. And it is handmade every year—since it washes out during the monsoons. Since there is only one road, and you will get to know it pretty well.

DAYS 6 - 9

During these days between the two village festivals, we'll visit Punakha Dzong, one of the most beautiful and important in the country, if not the world. Photography in some areas may be restricted and we will abide by that restriction in order to be permitted to see some magnificent religious halls.

We'll also visit some smaller villages and try to capture some rice harvesting as well. Our main duty will be to drive over some beautiful mountains through some gorgeous forests to the district of Bumthang and Jakar Dzong. Our route will take us past the powerful Trongsa Dzong, the Dzong from which the present dynasty united its kingdom. Trongsa is the crossroads of ancient Bhutan. As we follow the Dangchu River past rhododendron and magnolia forests to the third pass, we'll probably see herds of yak browsing on dwarf bamboo. In Trongsa, we'll see the fortress monastery that marks the boundary between eastern and western Bhutan. A mere 2.5 hours drive from Trongsa is charming Bumthang. Bumthang is known for its buckwheat and honey and buckwheat and honey beers; it also has great apple orchards and thus apple juice, apple cider and apfelsaft (the Swiss brought the orchards). Jakar is the capital of this province and the dzong is magnificent. Have I used that word too much? Well, you'll see it is all magnificent.

Stretched out along the river valley are several monasteries and homes of famous religious teachers. Each one is different; each one is enchanting. If we are lucky, we'll be able to sit-in on some classes.

We'll go even further east to the small town of Ura, which is known for its stone houses and Irish-like rock walls. The people are friendly and the small dzong offers some great photo opportunities.

DAYS 10 - 11

The highlight of these few days will be the festival conducted in a small village with a very small dzong. I have been in some coastal California homes that are larger than the Thangbi Mani Dzong. Most of the dances will be very similar to what you've seen in Wangdi, but with more a small town atmosphere—it is a little more “country” around the edges. And there is one important difference. There is a fire-purification ceremony, which takes place in a large open field. Following blessings and chanting, two bonfires are lit and the people run between the two flaming stacks of hay and rice stalks to cleanse themselves of last year's sins.

DAY 12

These are transition days. We'll be moving back toward the west, it will take most of the day get back to Wangdi, so we'll probably stay overnight there on the 12th. By late morning on the 13th, we'll be back in the metropolis of Thimpu. It will seem incredible large and busy compared of Jakar and Wangdi. Most of Sunday should be spent gathering last minute souvenirs and souvenir photos.

DAY 13

My preference would be for us to transfer to Paro first thing in the morning and then take the longish walk up to Tiger's Nest for lunch. If this is possible—sometimes we can't get arrangements exactly as we'd like—we'll do it.

We'll visit the town of Paro, its Dzongs, historic bridge with prayer flags, and the beautiful river valley. Paro Valley is an enchanting place with roads lined with weeping willows, stately poplar trees, brightly colored alpine-looking houses with slate-shingled roofs held down by stones. The valley floor is a quilt of rice terraces. The Paro River slices through this broad valley, ancient dzongs cling to mountaintops and wonderful walking trails lead up to the centuries old monasteries and to places that offer astounding views.

Paro's sightseeing is full of gems such as the two-century old National Museum that is housed in an ancient military watchtower; it is perched on a steep ridge overlooking the whole valley. In it there is an especially fine collection of national costumes and fabrics such as royal robes woven in weft-weave, an extensive gallery of thangka, and an impressive stamp gallery with three-dimensional

stamps. Other galleries showcase armor and silverware, teapots and bamboo weavings, and other typical national museum stuff. Depending on time, we may also visit Drugyel Dzong, although it is now mostly in ruins. It was built by Shadrung Namgyel in 1647 to commemorate the victory over Tibetan invaders.

DAY 14

This is it. We get up early, have breakfast and drive over to the Paro Airport for the flight back to Bangkok. Since flying out of Paro is VFR, if there are any clouds or fog, the flight will be delayed. If you sneeze funny, the flight will be delayed. Assume the flight will be delayed. That way, if it is on time, you'll be surprised and happy. Since it will probably be delayed, make certain that your connecting flights allow for a later than expected arrival.

HOW TO ENROLL

We'd love to have you join us; please take the time to enroll now to avoid disappointment. Applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Many of our activities are very popular and at popular locations, and therefore reservations can be difficult to obtain, so your early response is important. An early return of your application will significantly aid in your obtaining your choice of activity and accommodations.

Since applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, a payment for the full fee or a 50% deposit must accompany your application to reserve your space. The entire fee must be paid 120 days prior to the

program's inception; failure to complete payment may be treated as your cancellation, as if in writing. Fees vary as indicated in the catalogue and website. Services included vary; all programs do not include identical services. Unless otherwise noted, fees for most are tuition and lodging only and do not include transportation, food, or guide fees and gratuities. If a program is full or cancelled, your deposit will be returned.

We cannot guarantee landscape, transportation, or weather conditions; trip, baggage, medical, and evacuation insurance is offered by several commercial carriers.

DEFINITIONS & EXPLANATIONS

Workshops: Workshops are times of intense learning and photography. Our workshops emphasize photography on location. We seek to balance the attraction of extraordinary locations with excellent instruction. We believe that you will learn more by actually taking photographs under supervision than through classroom lectures alone. At a workshop you can expect the full attention of your leader, but you can also expect to learn by observing the techniques your leader exercises while making his own photographs. Workshops frequently include lectures, slide presentations, and portfolio reviews that are impractical during expeditions and tours.

Expeditions & Tours: Tours are for photographers at all levels and differ from workshops primarily in the amount of classroom and lecture time available. A greater degree of individual attention can be expected on a tour than on an expedition, but somewhat less than on a workshop. Expeditions are for those photographers who have moved beyond the need for instruction in the basics, but who desire some help in identifying potentially great photographs and working out difficult problems.

Master Classes: examine the entire photographic process from making an image to presenting a finished print. Master Classes are for those photographers who have moved beyond the basics, but who desire some help in identifying potentially great photographs and working out difficult problems. Master Classes are designed to include scheduled sessions of editing and image finishing with either Photoshop® or darkroom techniques following the field work.

Pricing of Trips: All pricing is in US dollars and based on exchange and room rates at the time of scheduling. Since many of our trips are planned more than a year in advance, currency fluctuations, changes in lodging, guide, or other prices, may cause increases in fees that are sometimes unavoidable. We reserve the right to amend prices without prior notice. If such increases become necessary, we will inform you as soon as possible; an increase in prices shall not be deemed sufficient grounds for refunds other than as determined by the cancellation policy. Rates are based on group tariffs; if the trip does not have sufficient registration, a supplemental fee may have to be charged. Where accommodations are included in pricing, costs are based on twin occupancy. Singles, when available, are more expensive. If no one is available with whom you can share, or if you desire single rooms, we must ask you to pay a single supplement charge.

Refunds & Cancellation: If you must withdraw more than 120 days before an activity, your deposit, less any deposits made on your behalf with other suppliers, government agencies, etc., and less \$75 administration costs will be refunded to you by check; deposits placed with such suppliers will be refunded when remitted to us. If you must withdraw within 90 days of a workshop, your entire fee may be forfeited unless the vacated place can be filled. Such cancellation charges are not transferable. If a program is full or cancelled by us, your deposit will be returned.

Dates & Times: Programs begin at the specified location on the date listed at normal lodging check-in time. Programs end on the date specified by normal checkout time. Travel days are not included in our listings. Although many operators include travel days as part of their listings (and thus manage to charge for days you're not there), our listings are for the first day of activity. Complete information is included with the packet you will receive after registration.

Accommodations: After we receive your completed application, including appropriate fees or deposits, you will receive information regarding schedules and accommodations. Your early return of your application will significantly aid in obtaining your choice of accommodations. We will make appropriate reservations for you. Generally, single-occupancy accommodations are included as part of our pricing; please read listings carefully to determine if rooming costs are included. Occasionally clients with single rooms may be compelled to share a room due to circumstances beyond our control.

Local Transportation: At most North American field workshops we will be traveling from our base location to photographic sites, so cars are considered part of your equipment. If we can, we will certainly try to arrange car-pools to improve logistics and reduce rental expenses. At foreign locations, transportation provided will be specified in the itinerary. Where land costs are included, they do not include en route transportation or accommodations.

International Transportation: In order to allow use and collection of frequent flyer mileage, and in order to allow individuals to tailor their itineraries to their varying personal needs, we do not involve ourselves in group fare pricing, bucket fares, or ticket acquisition. When possible, we will be happy to inform you of routing and providers we have found reliable.

Visas and Passports: Obtaining and paying for government required documents are the responsibility of individual participants. In certain circumstances, we will try to facilitate applications, but we are not a government agency and cannot take responsibility for obtaining or issuing such documents.

Inoculations and Other Health Matters: In those locations where there are special health and disease concerns, you will be informed. However, you are personally responsible for maintaining and keeping current your inoculations, prescriptions, and dietary regime. Specific information about foreign locations is available by email, fax, and internet from the Center for Disease Control.

Group Size: Compared to most similar operations, our group sizes are very small. The group sizes indicated for any particular activity are probable limits set without knowing who will be participating. The number of participants may be slightly increased or decreased at the discretion of the leader.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important for you to understand that by enrolling in and attending a program you are accepting certain risks. Your application shall serve as a release of our liability and a complete assumption of all risks by you and your heirs, administrator, executors, successors, and assigns for all members of your family and any persons accompanying you. Your signature on the application indicates that you are aware that travel, wherever it may be and by whatever means, involves some inherent risk of injury, illness, death, loss, or damage to personal property, which may be caused by forces of nature, negligence or actions of others, or other agencies. In consideration of, and as part of the payment for, your participation in our programs, workshops, excursions, exploratories, expeditions, or other activities, you are voluntarily releasing Joe Englander Photography and all those involved with it from any liabilities because you are assuming the risks yourself. You are voluntarily traveling to areas which may be remote or foreign, mountainous or wilderness, and which may not be operated nor maintained to the standards to which you are accustomed and therefore may involve certain additional risks, dangers, and inconveniences including, but not limited to, forces of nature, terrorism, civil unrest, wild animals, hotels and other accommodations, airplanes, vehicles, taxis, boats, roads, walkways, trails, and other means of conveyance. You must be aware that medical services or facilities may not be readily available during all or part of the trip, and that this includes emergency medical care, presence of physicians, and adequate medication. We assume no responsibility for medical care or any special dietary requirements you may have.

In addition, your application signifies that you release and will hold harmless Joe Englander Photography, as well as its officers, agents, sponsors, and associates, from any and all liability, actions, causes of action, claims, debts, and demands of every kind and nature whatsoever which you now have or which may arise in connection with your participation in any activities arranged by them including, without limitation, all liability, actions, causes of action, claims, debts, and demands related to the negligence of said

persons. You must understand that travel with a group invariably involves compromise to accommodate the diverse desires, travel goals, personalities, and physical abilities of group members. You must further understand that while itineraries are carefully planned, they are not a guaranteed schedule of activities, events, or participation, but only an example. Participants must allow for flexibility and changes deemed necessary by the program leader. In addition, there may be situations beyond our reasonable control due to geographic, climatic, physical, or governmental restrictions that will cause further changes in timing, locations, and activities. You understand that there are no discounts or refunds for activities curtailed or otherwise affected by such circumstances. You have assumed the responsibility to select an activity appropriate to your physical abilities and interests. You are personally responsible for being in sufficiently good health to undertake the activity. By forwarding a signed application form and deposit, you certify that you do not knowingly have any physical or other conditions of disability that would create risk for you or other participants. We reserve the right to request a doctor's statement of good health.

You will be responsible for studying all pre-departure information; for bringing all detailed and appropriate equipment and clothing; for conforming to standards of personal hygiene; and, for acting in a manner considerate of fellow group members and the locations and people visited. You understand that we reserve the right to cancel any activity and to accept or reject any person as a member of any activity. The program, workshop, expedition, excursion or exploratory leader's judgment shall provide the ultimate determination of an individual's ability to participate in, or to continue to participate in, any activity or program.

Your signature on the application is an acknowledgment of your understanding of your responsibilities and your consent and acceptance of them. All participants are urged to purchase appropriate travel insurance including trip cancellation and interruption insurance.

REGISTRATION

Send with payment (check or credit card) to:

Joe Englander Photography
P.O. Box 1261
Manchaca, TX 78652

Location and date desired _____

Price \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____ FAX _____

Phone: Home _____ Work _____

Age _____ M/F _____ Physical condition _____

Occupation _____

Phone: 512-922-8686

trip-info@englander-workshops.com

Years in photography _____ Days per year photographing _____

Format used, cameras owned, preferred format and camera: _____

Medium: Digital B&W Color prints Transparencies

Previous workshops attended: _____

How did you hear about us? Friend Internet Magazine

Reason for attending, what you'd like to learn: _____

Accommodations: Single Double with roommate (specify if you know with whom)

In the event that a particular program is cancelled, for any reason, the extent of our liability is limited to the return of fees paid as outlined above. All refunds will be made by check. As a program participant, you agree to accept full and complete responsibility for your own welfare and property as outlined above and assume the full risks of travel and participation in our activities, and your signed application is a waiver of our responsibility and liability to the maximum extent permitted by law. All workshops, tours, and expeditions are nonsmoking.

Credit Card Number (Visa or MasterCard)

Exp. Date

Applicant's Signature