



WWF INSIDER JOURNEYS

THE EASTERN HIMALAYA



TRIP ITINERARY

A WWF Insider Journey through Nepal and Bhutan with
Dechen Dorji, WWF's Vice President for Asian Wildlife

March 1–12, 2026

Join WWF expert Dechen Dorji, WWF's Vice President for Asian Wildlife, to explore mountain heights and tropical lowlands on a soulful journey through the cultural and wildlife treasures of two Himalayan kingdoms—Nepal and Bhutan. With a presence in the eastern Himalaya since the early days of the conservation movement, WWF works here to protect and restore key species, like tigers and snow leopards, conserve the region's abundant forests, and mitigate the effects of climate change.



Geographically diverse, Nepal contains the world's highest mountains, sub-tropical forests, and captivating cultures. During a private guided journey in Chitwan National Park, see how WWF is leading efforts to protect Bengal tigers, rhinos, leopards, and other majestic animals from poaching. You will also get an in-depth look at how WWF is working



with Nepal's government and local communities to connect 11 protected areas by restoring the forests between them.

Bhutan is one of the world's little-known treasures, a nation dedicated to preserving its Buddhist traditions and pristine landscapes. Our journey will take you to ancient monasteries, Himalayan peaks, glacial rivers, and peaceable villages. Along the way, you will learn how WWF is working with the government, donors, and partners from around the world on an innovative project to

permanently protect Bhutan's extensive network of protected areas and collaborating with the Royal Government of Bhutan to protect the future of wild tigers in Bhutan and beyond.

In 2024, WWF as a member of the Tiger Conservation Coalition, was part of a historic agreement to catalyze a targeted \$1 billion in additional tiger landscape conservation funding.

ITINERARY AT A GLANCE 12 Days

Day	Date	Location	Accommodation
1	March 1	Kathmandu, Nepal	Dwarika's Hotel
2	March 2	Bharatpur / Chitwan National Park	Meghauri Serai
3 & 4	March 3 & 4	Chitwan National Park	Meghauri Serai
5	March 5	Bharatpur / Kathmandu—Patan Durbar Square	Dwarika's Hotel
6	March 6	Paro, Bhutan / Thimphu	Postcard Dewa Hotel
7	March 7	Exploring the Thimphu Valley	Postcard Dewa Hotel
8	March 8	Dochula Pass / Punakha	Dhensa Boutique Resort
9	March 9	Punakha Valley—Temple Hike / Punakha Dzong	Dhensa Boutique Resort
10	March 10	Royal Botanical Gardens / Paro Valley—Archery Lesson	COMO Uma Paro
11	March 11	Paro—Tiger's Nest Monastery	COMO Uma Paro
12	March 12	Paro / Bangkok, Thailand / Depart	



ITINERARY IN DETAIL

Day 1, March 1: Kathmandu, Nepal

Arrive in Kathmandu, the storied capital of Nepal. For centuries this city backdropped by the Himalayas has been a center of religious art and architecture in both Hindu and Buddhist traditions and is renowned for its ancient temples and urban squares. Then settle in at Dwarika's, a heritage lodge that evokes the palaces of Nepal's Newar kings, where we stay among artifacts dating back to the 14th century. This evening, gather with our WWF Hosts and Expedition Leader for a welcome dinner in a private room at our hotel.
Overnight Dwarika's Hotel (D)



Day 2, March 2: Bharatpur / Chitwan National Park

Fly this morning to Bharatpur on the Terai plains of southern Nepal and transfer to our luxury ecolodge, Meghauri Serai, for the next three nights. This serene safari base is ideally situated on the edge of the Rapti River near Chitwan National Park, in the largest area of undisturbed wilderness along the base of the Himalaya. Its location is the best in the Chitwan region for wildlife viewing, which we take full advantage of during our stay. The area surrounding the lodge has a high sighting rate for one-horned rhinoceros, crocodile, and gharial.
Overnight Meghauri Serai (B,L,D)



Day 3 & 4, March 3 & 4: Chitwan National Park

Chitwan National Park, established in 1973, is Nepal's first national park and was named a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1984. It covers 360 square miles of subtropical lowlands and is home to about 50 mammal species and more than 500 species of birds. We spend our days exploring the park on 4x4

safari drives, hoping for views of the park's most famous wild residents. While sightings are never guaranteed, we have good chances to observe rhinoceros, Asian elephant, crocodile, leopard, sloth bear, sambar deer, wild boar, monkeys, and jungle fowl, all in their natural habitat. River safaris can also be arranged. Conditions permitting, a chance to track tigers

is a special highlight, as we join our Expedition Leader and a local guide to search for footprints and pugmarks that mark the tigers' hidden presence in the park.

WWF began working in Nepal decades ago in 1967, when it launched its rhino conservation program in Chitwan National Park. During our visit in Chitwan we will have many rare and exciting opportunities—that few people get to experience—to learn about the many projects WWF has initiated in the area. This includes a private guided journey to see firsthand how WWF is leading efforts to protect tigers and other majestic animals from poaching—and mitigate human-wildlife conflict. And we will get an on-the-ground understanding of how WWF is working with

Nepal's government and local communities to connect protected areas by restoring the forests between them.

Overnight Meghauri Serai (B,L,D)

Day 5, March 5: Bharatpur / Kathmandu— Patan Durbar Square

Return to Bharatpur airport this morning for our flight back to Kathmandu. This afternoon, visit Patan, one of seven designated cultural sites in the Kathmandu Valley that have earned

the region UNESCO World Heritage status. Patan lies a few miles outside Kathmandu and is home to the valley's finest craftsmen who have preserved ancient techniques used in exquisite sculptures and carvings. The city retains much of its old charm with its narrow streets, brick houses and multitude of well-preserved Hindu temples, Buddhist monasteries and monuments. As in Kathmandu, Hinduism and Buddhism have co-existed here for centuries, and the cultural and religious harmony are evident. At the city's heart lies Patan Durbar Square, where the kings of Patan resided. On a guided tour, we wander among the melange of palace buildings, artistic courtyards, graceful pagoda temples and shrines—a display of Newari architecture that reached its pinnacle during the reign of the Malla kings in the 17th and 18th centuries. Continue to our hotel in Kathmandu to spend the night.

Overnight Dwarika's Hotel (B,L,D)



Day 6, March 6: Paro, Bhutan / Thimphu

Fly this morning to the “Land of the Thunder Dragon”—the tiny Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan. If the skies are clear on our flight to Paro, we’ll see the highest peaks on the planet visible below in a serrated white spine, setting a striking backdrop as we approach the green trough of the Paro Valley. Rich in culture, lush in scenic beauty, and steeped in history and legend, Paro offers a bucolic welcome to the kingdom. From Paro we drive to Thimphu, Bhutan’s idyllic capital and a stronghold of traditional Bhutanese art, architecture, and culture. Surrounded by mountains and monasteries, this seat of government and commerce on the Wang Chuu River is a harmonious mix of modern development and ancient traditions. It’s also the only national capital without traffic lights.



Our day includes a visit to WWF-Bhutan’s Country Office and Welcome Center where local representative will brief us on their nearly 50 years of conservation work on the country. As we arrive in Thimphu, we visit the Iron Bridge of Tachogang Lhakhang, built 600 years ago



by legendary bridge builder Thangtong Gyalpo, a renowned engineer believed to be the first to use heavy iron chains in the construction of suspension bridges, which influenced building methods in Europe and Asia. Late this afternoon, we visit Thimphu Dzong. This striking Buddhist monastery and fortress was built in the 13th century, reconstructed over the years, and has served as the office of the king and seat of civil government for the country since 1952.

Overnight The Postcard Dewa (B,L,D)

Day 7, March 7: Exploring the Thimphu Valley

Our day begins with a visit to the capital’s new Buddha statue, one of the tallest in the world at 170 feet. The structure houses more than 100,000 smaller Buddha statues inside, each made of bronze and gilded in gold like the larger icon. Then we head outside town to hike through a serene forest to a temple complex on the edge of a ridge. The trail offers magnificent views of the Thimphu Valley and is often used by His Majesty the fourth king for mountain biking. After lunch, tour a handmade paper factory and a traditional arts school. We also visit the Motithang Takin Preserve on the edge of the city. The takin, a large, shag-

gy hoofed mammal closely related to the muskox, is the national animal of Bhutan, so designated due to its prominent place in a popular Bhutanese myth from the 15th century. The preserve is also home to a few sambar and barking deer. On a hike through verdant meadows near the preserve, admire the landscape marked by colorful prayer flags fluttering from nearby homes and small temples.

Overnight The Postcard Dewa (B,L,D)

Day 8, March 8: Dochula Pass / Punakha

En route to Punakha, cross Dochula Pass, a 10,171-foot saddle marked by 108 chortens, fluttering prayer flags and a panorama of the entire eastern Himalaya. The road drops dramatically into the Punakha Valley, descending through evergreen oak and rhododendron forests into fertile lowlands lush with rice, oranges, bananas, and guavas. Punakha is the former capital of Bhutan and the winter residence of the monastic body. After lunch at



a traditional local restaurant, set off for a short hike to Chimi Lhakhang Temple, a small shrine dedicated to one of Bhutan's favorite saints, the 15th-century Lama Drukpa Kunley. A rag-clad lotharian who used humor, songs, and outrageous behavior to dramatize his teachings, he became known as the "Divine Madman" and is still beloved as such today. The peace of the Bhutanese landscape is palpable as our path to the temple ambles through green pastures and rice paddies, passing farmers and livestock in the terraced fields.

Overnight Dhensa Boutique Resort (B,L,D)

Day 9, March 9: Punakha Valley—Temple Hike / Punakha Dzong

This morning we visit Khamsun Yuelley Namgyal Chorten, a temple dedicated to the well-being of the kingdom, its people and all sentient beings. Built atop a high ridge, the temple offers magnificent views of the Punakha Valley. After a picnic lunch, explore the massive Punakha Dzong, known as the "Palace of Great Happiness." Straddling



the confluence of the Po (Father) and Mo (Mother) rivers, the monastery is Bhutan's best-known fortress. Built in 1637, it was the seat of government until 1955 and home to Bhutan's religious establishment. The palace occupies one of the most scenic dzong sites in Bhutan; maroon-robed monks and guests must cross a wooden footbridge over the river to reach it

Overnight Dhensa Boutique Resort (B,L,D)



Day 10, March 10: Royal Botanical Gardens / Paro Valley—Archery Lesson

A half-day drive returns us to Paro, though we stop en route for a visit to the Royal Botanical Gardens at Lampelri on top of Dochula Pass. Opened in 2008, this is the first botanical garden in Bhutan, encompassing 125 acres of lush forest, flowers, a lake, and walking paths that lead to striking mountain viewpoints. A highlight is the park's 46 species of rhododendron, which thrive in the Himalayas, including 18 species native to the park—they bloom in a profuse show starting in mid-spring. We may also see musk deer roaming the misty woods. Continue on to the Paro Valley in the mountainous northwest of Bhutan, a region rich in natural beauty and culture and abounding with myths and legends. We visit a local farmhouse where we'll participate in a traditional archery lesson. Archery is the national sport of the kingdom, and tournaments and competitions are held throughout the country, often during public holidays and local festivals called tsechu. Though archery historically is a martial art, it



is practiced by the peace-loving Bhutanese for physical exercise and to hone concentration.

Overnight COMO Una Paro (B,L,D)

Day 11, March 11: Paro—Tiger's Nest Monastery

Our final morning in Bhutan holds a most impressive sight: Taktsang Monastery,

also known as the "Tiger's Nest." The famous subject of many photographs, this complex of 17th-century temples clings to the side of a precipitous cliff nearly 3,000 feet above the valley floor.

Its name is derived from myth, which holds that Guru Rinpoche, the tantric mystic who brought Buddhism from India to Bhutan in the 8th century, landed here on the back of a flying tigress and stayed to meditate in a cave for three months. Gain an initial vista as we hike to a viewpoint opposite the monastery, while those who choose to tackle the entire challenging journey will have their effort well rewarded with unsurpassed views of the temples, surrounding peaks and valley below. Afterward, there may be time to do some last-minute shopping before saying farewell to this most captivating country.

Overnight COMO Uma Paro (B,L,D)



Day 12, March 12: Paro / Bangkok, Thailand / Depart

Our Himalayan sojourn concludes as we depart from the Paro airport on a group flight to Bangkok, where we connect with onward flights.

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Please note: The itinerary provided is meant as a guideline and is subject to change without notice. On rare occasions, it may be necessary to deviate from our regular itinerary for reasons beyond our control. In these instances, we will provide the best available alternative. Dates for 2026 are tentative and may shift once confirmed due to final travel visa entry and exit date approval by the Government of Bhutan.

Meet Our Expert



Dechen Dorji, WWF's Vice President for Asian Wildlife

Dechen Dorji is the vice president for Asian wildlife on WWF's Wildlife Conservation team. Dechen oversees WWF-US's wildlife efforts in Asia, working closely with our goal teams and leadership, WWF's country offices, and the Wildlife Practice and other WWF initiatives to help develop, implement, and mobilize resources for our wildlife conservation priorities in Asia.

Previously he served for seven years as WWF's Country Representative in Bhutan, where he led a number of successful conservation efforts, notably the 'Bhutan for Life' initiative,

through which he worked closely with our leadership and the former Bhutanese Prime Minister to raise \$43 million, and launched some of Bhutan's first nationwide conservation efforts for threatened species such as tigers, snow leopards and golden mahseer. He is also a strong advocate for the conservation of 'lesser known species, that do not often receive adequate protection and conservation resources. Dechen also received the National Order of Merit, Gold, from His Majesty the King for the Bhutan for Life initiative and his services to the Bhutanese environmental sector.

Before joining WWF, Dechen served as a public policy researcher with the Peoples Project Office during Bhutan's transition to Democracy in 2007-2008, and as the founding Director of Bhutan's First Environmental Research and Training Institute.

Dechen is passionate about finding innovative solutions, pushing the boundaries of partnership and advocating for greater engagement with the corporate sector and governments to deliver conservation impacts at scale and across borders.

What To Expect

This trip requires a moderate to difficult level of activity. You must be able to walk unassisted (without the use of walking aids) for at least two miles at a steady pace over uneven terrain, climb stairs without hand railings, and be active at altitudes exceeding 7,000 feet above sea level in order to participate in this adventure. The Kathmandu city tour may last 2-3 hours (with stops) and include climbing steep stairs in order to visit all cultural sites. Our excursions in Chitwan National Park include easy nature walks over unpaved walking trails and typically last about two hours. Climbing short ladders is required in order to get into and out of safari vehicles, and wildlife drives in the park travel dirt roads that are sometimes very rough and bumpy with potentially dusty conditions. Those with back problems or other health issues that could be exacerbated by such circumstances should take this into consideration. The trip also involves many very early morning starts and long, full days of activities with little downtime, which can be quite tiring.

All areas visited in Bhutan lie above 4,000 feet, with several over 7,000 feet in elevation. We also drive over a mountain pass that is 10,000 feet in elevation. The most difficult excursion is the hike to the Tiger's Nest monastery in Paro, which involves a 4-hour round-trip walk with a 3,000-foot elevation gain ending at 10,000 feet above sea level. There are also many stairs to navigate in order to reach the monastery. Mules are available to transport clients partway up (weight restrictions do apply; riders cannot exceed 200 pounds), but guests must walk on their own back down to the bottom. There is a viewing place at the halfway point on the hike, where you can stop to view the monastery without traveling the entire distance.

Accommodations



Dwarika's Hotel

This award-winning heritage hotel in Kathmandu is modeled on the grand palaces of Nepal's Newar kings, featuring intricate carved wood and terracotta, antiques, and contemporary amenities.



Meghauri Serai

An elegant safari lodge in the heart of Nepal's Terai lowland jungle near Chitwan National Park, featuring 16 luxury riverside villas with private plunge pools that offer a soothing sanctuary in the heart of the jungle.



The Postcard Dewa

Located in the forest on the outskirts of Bhutan's capital city, the Postcard Dewa Hotel is a quiet and secluded retreat with views of the Khasadraphchu Valley and Wangchu River.



Dhensa Boutique Resort

In the heart of the Punakha Valley, modern design meets Bhutan's peaceable principles with private balconies for solitude, a glass-enclosed dining area and a broad stone terrace for fresh mountain air.



COMO Uma Paro

COMO Uma Paro is a luxurious retreat in the serene Paro Valley of Bhutan. The hotel combines modern comfort with traditional Bhutanese design, offering a tranquil escape surrounded by nature. Featuring elegant rooms and suites, a range of dining options made with seasonal ingredients, and wellness facilities, including a spa and yoga studio. Guests can enjoy breathtaking views of the Himalayan foothills and the picturesque Paro Valley.

About WWF Insider Journeys

WWF Insider Journeys is a special conservation travel program for our closest supporters to see first-hand the positive impact World Wildlife Fund is making. Each of these curated journeys is accompanied by WWF experts and offers exclusive opportunities to discover the wildlife and ecosystems we protect; meet community members whose lives are being improved because of our work; and immerse yourself in the worlds of our staff and partners on the ground. Come explore the best of the natural world alongside other WWF supporters and see how together we are making a difference for our planet.

About Our Travel Partner



This journey is being arranged by Natural Habitat Adventures of Boulder, Colorado. For more than a decade, WWF has partnered with Nat Hab to take travelers to view nature's greatest sights. WWF selected Natural Habitat as its partner because of its long-standing commitment to conservation and the exceptional quality of its adventures.

Reservation Information & Trip Details

To register or if you have questions, please contact Aly Jacobsen at Natural Habitat Adventures (888) 993-8687 or alyj@nathab.com.

DATES:	March 1 – 12, 2026
GROUP SIZE:	Limited to 10 guests
LAND COST:	\$15,095 per person, double occupancy (+internal air) Single supplement: \$2995 Internal air: \$1997 per person (this will be listed separately on our invoicing).
DEPOSIT:	\$1000 per person (nonrefundable)

INCLUDED:

Trip price includes: Accommodations, services of Nat Hab's professional Expedition Leader(s), travel costs for your WWF Expert, and local guides, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on final day, most gratuities, airport transfers on Day 1 and final day (in Bhutan only), all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees.

NOT INCLUDED: Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, passport and Nepal visa fees, optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry and internet, etc.), airline baggage fees, required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

PAYMENTS: A deposit of \$1000 confirms your space. Payments are accepted by credit card or by check made out to Natural Habitat.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS: Cancellations must be received in writing at Natural Habitat Adventures by US mail, email or fax. At the time Natural Habitat Adventures receives your written cancellation, the following per person penalties apply: On or before 120 days before the trip: Full refund minus \$1000 nonrefundable deposit. On or before 60 days before the trip: Forfeit 50% of tour cost. After 60 days before the trip: No refund.

INSURANCE: Since the areas we travel to on this trip are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require medical evacuation insurance for our guests' safety. If you decline the medical evacuation insurance coverage offered by Natural Habitat, we request that you send us documentation of the independent coverage you have selected. We will add the cost of a medical evacuation policy to your tour invoice until you provide our office with proof of coverage including your insurance company's name, contact number and your individual policy number. Thank you for understanding that our policy exists exclusively in the interest of our guests' safety.

To protect your investment and to provide peace of mind while you travel, we also strongly recommend purchasing comprehensive travel insurance. Plans may cover everything from medical treatment to trip cancellations and delays and lost luggage. Please contact our office if you would like more information about the medical evacuation and comprehensive travel insurance policies we offer by calling 800-543-8917.

GETTING THERE & GETTING HOME:

You should plan to arrive in Kathmandu, Nepal by 3 pm on Day 1 of the trip in order to participate in an orientation and group welcome dinner beginning at 6:30 pm. You are free to schedule your departing flight from Bangkok, Thailand after 9 pm on the final day. We recommend that you stay an extra night in Bangkok to account for any flight delays. We can best serve you if our Natural Habitat Adventures Travel Desk makes your reservations, as we are intimately familiar with the special requirements of this program and can arrange the most efficient travel. Please call us at 800-543-8917. Note that while we offer you the best possible rates available to us on airfare and additional nights' accommodations, you may find special web rates or better fares online.

While adventures are designed specifically for WWF's closest supporters and enhanced with WWF Experts, exclusive site visits, and enriched content, a minimum number of guests is required to run each trip. To avoid canceling, WWF and Nat Hab may fill unsold spots with WWF and non-WWF members.