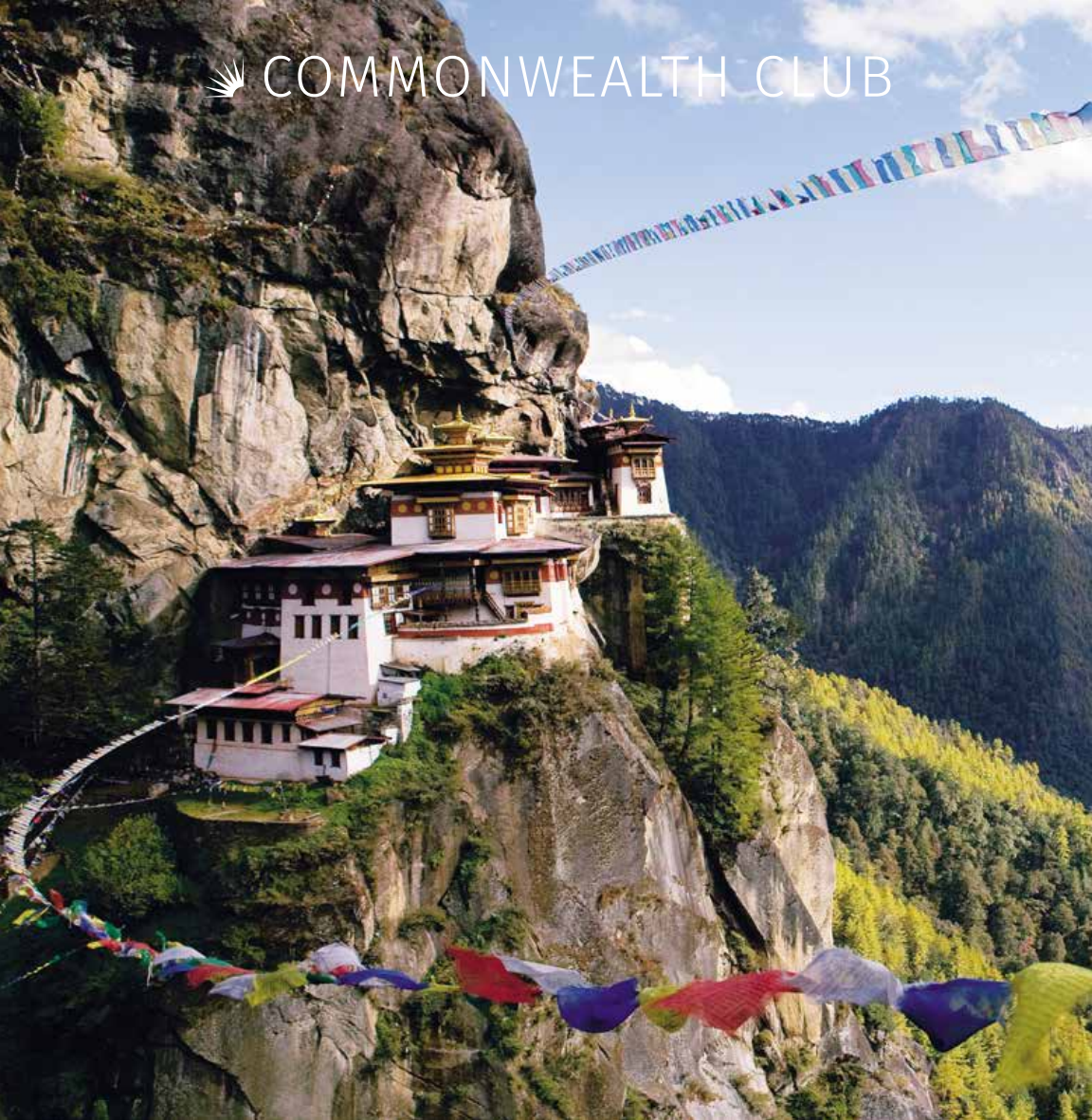




COMMONWEALTH CLUB



Nepal and Bhutan
**Myths and Legends
of the Himalayas**
with Domkhar and Ura Yakchoe
Festivals in Bhutan

April 14 – 30, 2018

☀ COMMONWEALTH CLUB

Dear Traveler,

Nepal is a land of snow peaks and Sherpas, monasteries and mantras, and remains the cultural center of the Himalayas. The Kathmandu Valley offers a unique experience with many hidden backstreet shrines and sublime temple art. In Pokhara Valley we'll enjoy a spectacular Himalayan panorama of the Annapurna massif.

Bhutan is a land of soaring peaks, alpine meadows, and exotic flora and fauna. Its jealously guarded isolation, awe-inspiring Himalayas, ancient culture and friendly people make it a magical place even for the most intrepid of travelers. The main religion is Vajrayana Buddhism, and the teachings of this spiritual tradition influence all aspects of life in the kingdom.

Among the many highlights, our exclusive program coincides with the Domkhar Tsechu and Ura Yakchoe festivals in the remote Bumthang region. Many special visits have been arranged, including a meeting with a Bhutanese family in their farmhouse and a visit with a senior monk in a monastery.

We have worked closely with our travel partner to design an engaging and unique journey. We hope you can join us on this exclusive Commonwealth Club trip. Space is limited, so we encourage you to make reservations now!

Sincerely,



Kristina Nemeth
Director of Club Travel

*For more information and reservations,
please call us 415-597-6720
travel@commonwealthclub.org
www.commonwealthclub.org/travel*





Novice Monks

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore Nepal's three royal cities – Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Patan.
- Visit Hindu temples and learn about Buddhist traditions.
- Marvel at views of the Annapurna massif during a boat ride in Pokhara.
- Enjoy the colorful and vibrant Domkhar Tsechu and Ura Yakchoe festivals, and experience traditional Bhutanese music and dance performances.
- Watch students create thangka paintings and masks.
- Witness the stunning and dramatic location of Tiger's Nest Monastery- or hike up if you choose!



ACTIVITY LEVEL OF THE TRIP

Participants must be in good health and cleared by their physician for travel in higher altitudes. Average altitudes on this trip are from 4,000 feet to 10,000 feet. This program involves walking 1-3 miles on most days, with opportunities for additional walking. Streets and walkways may be uneven. Visiting temples involves walking many stairs without handrails. We will be driving on curvy mountainous roads at times.



Monastery Dance

ITINERARY

Sat & Sun, April 14 & 15 - Depart the U.S. for Kathmandu, Nepal and in transit.

Mon, April 16- Kathmandu, Nepal: Arrive Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, home of the great Himalayan Mountains. With 50 peaks over 25,000 feet high, these legendary mountains

provide a spectacular sight. After time to relax, gather for our welcome dinner. **(D)**

Tue, Apr 17 - Kathmandu: Visit Kathmandu's Durbar Square and the residence of Kumari Devi, Nepal's living goddess. Explore Swayambunath, known as the "monkey temple", and a sacred pilgrimage site for Hindus. Meet a local Nepalese family in their home.



The Annapurna's



Kumari Devi, The Living Goddess



Thimphu Downtown

This afternoon visit Kopan Hill, which rises out of the terraced fields of the Kathmandu Valley and is visible for miles. Dominated by a magnificent bodhi tree, it is the home of 360 monks, teachers and workers. Meet with people at Shechen Clinic and Hospice, a humanitarian project that provides sustainable medical services to local residents. Tonight visit the Boudhnath stupa and walk around the circular stupa market. **(B, L)**

Wed, Apr 18 - Kathmandu/Pokhara:

Fly to Pokhara and explore Pokhara Valley. Visit Seti River Gorge, the Mahendra Pool, and Bindabasini Temple, dedicated to the Hindu goddess Durga, Pokhara's guardian deity. This evening take a boat ride on Lake Phewa enjoying spectacular views of the Annapurnas. **(B, D)**

Thu, Apr 19 - Pokhara:

Take a guided hike and witness panoramic views of the Annapurnas



22,000 to 26,000 high peaks just 30 miles away. Enjoy some free time to explore Pokhara Valley. **(B, D)**

Fri, Apr 20 - Pokhara/Kathmandu:

Fly back to Kathmandu. This afternoon we visit Bhaktapur, one of three royal cities in Nepal, the most interesting and picturesque ancient town around Kathmandu Valley. **(B, L)**

Sat, Apr 21 - Kathmandu/Paro/Thimphu, Bhutan:

Fly to Paro, Bhutan and take a scenic drive to Thimphu. The capital of Bhutan is a bustling, growing town of over 100,000 inhabitants, lying in a valley just over 7,600 feet. **(B, L, D)**

Sun, Apr 22 - Thimphu:

Visit the Tashicho Dzong (fortress temple) built in 1641, and reconstructed in 1961 in the traditional Bhutanese style, without nails or architectural plans. Tour the National Library, a treasury of priceless Buddhist manuscripts. Visit the Memorial Chorten, built in honor of late King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. Experience a papermaking workshop and attend a Bhutanese cultural performance. **(B, L, D)**

Mon, Apr 23 - Thimphu/Punakha:

This morning we drive to Punakha crossing the Dochu-La pass (10,000ft) offering spectacular views into the Punakha Valley. En route visit Chimi Lhakhang, also known as the temple



Punakha Valley

of fertility. This afternoon we visit Punakha Dzong. **(B, L, D)**

Tue, Apr 24 - Punakha/Phobjika/Gangtey: Today we begin our scenic drive to Phobjika, stopping en route in the market town of Wangdue Phodrang. The Phobjikha Valley is a designated conservation area and is home of The Black-Necked Crane Visitors Centre. This afternoon discover Gangtey Gumpa, an important monastery of the Nyingmapa school of Buddhism. **(B, L, D)**

Wed, Apr 25 - Gangtey/Trongsa/Bumthang: Today on our drive to the Bumthang region we climb over the Pele-la pass (11,220ft). The scenery in Bumthang is stunning. Visit the Trongsa Dzong before arriving in Bumthang, the religious and cultural heartland of Central Bhutan. **(B, L, D)**

Thu, Apr 26, Bumthang: Today, witness the Domkhar festival in Chumey Valley. Watch performances of the sacred Black Hat Dance, the three Ging and the masked dance of the drummers of Drametse. On return we will visit Jakar Dzong, founded by great grandfather of the first Shabdrung which is now used as administrative centre

for Bumthang valley, and houses the regional monk body. We will also visit Kurje Lakhang, one of the most sacred sites where Guru Rimpoche meditated in a cave and left an imprint of his body on the rock. **(B, L, D)**

Fri, Apr 27 - Bumthang: Wake up very early in the morning and drive to Chumey Valley to witness the ceremony where a Thongdrel (a large ceremonial tapestry) is unfurled, representing the future Buddha Maitreya (Jampa). This event signifies the final day of the annual festival. Later today, witness the Ura Yakchoe festival in Ura Valley. Masked dances are performed during the festival and a sacred and important relic is put on display for people to receive blessings from it. **(B, L, D)**

Sat, Apr 28 - Bumthang/Paro: Fly to Paro this morning. Paro (7,480ft)





is home to many of Bhutan's oldest temples and its first airport. Visit the Paro Dzong and the Ta Dzong National museum, filled with antique thangkas,



textiles, weapons, household objects and a rich assortment of natural and historic artifacts. **(B, L, D)**

Sun, Apr 29 - Paro: Journey to the foothills of Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest). From here one can enjoy views



of the monastery, approximately 2,300 feet above the Paro Valley. Take a challenging and rewarding uphill hike to the monastery (approximately 3 hours) or simply enjoy views from below. Later visit the Drukgyel Dzong. We also meet a Bhutanese family and visit their farmhouse to get firsthand experience of rural Bhutan. Tonight enjoy a festive farewell dinner together. **(B, L, D)**

Mon, Apr 30 - Paro/Kathmandu, Nepal/U.S.: Fly from Paro to Kathmandu this morning. As most flights to the U.S. depart in the very late evening, we take the opportunity to explore the royal city of Patan. Filled with wood and stone carvings, metal statues, ornate architecture, and including dozens of Buddhist and Hindu temples, Patan is known for its rich tradition of arts and handicrafts. We'll reserve a few rooms available at an airport hotel to freshen up and repack, before heading to the airport for flights home. **(B)**



| Day | City | Hotel |
|-------|-----------|------------------------|
| 1-2 | Kathmandu | Tibet International |
| 3-4 | Pokhara | Temple Tree Resort |
| 5 | Kathmandu | Radisson |
| 6-7 | Thimphu | Druk Hotel |
| 8 | Punakha | Dhensa Boutique Resort |
| 9 | Gangtey | Dewachen Hotel |
| 10-12 | Bumthang | Yu-Gharling Resort |
| 13-14 | Paro | Zhiwa Ling Hotel |



Tour Prices Based on Participation of Minimum 10 Guests APRIL 14 – 30, 2018

\$6,990 Per Person, Double Occupancy

\$8,685 Per Person, Single Occupancy

Internal Airfare (Kathmandu/Pokhara/Kathmandu/Paro and Bumthang/Paro/Kathmandu) is included but subject to change.

Economy airfare from San Francisco to Kathmandu round-trip is approximately \$1,350 per person, but subject to change Business class upgrades are available on request.

The land tour price includes the following services:

Coach class internal flights: Kathmandu/Pokhara/Kathmandu/Paro and Bumthang/Paro/Kathmandu.

Hotels: 14 nights at the mentioned or similar hotels as per itinerary inclusive of any applicable taxes and service charges.

Meals: are included as indicated by the symbols: (B) Breakfast, (L) Lunch and (D) Dinner

Transfers: Transfers from airport to hotel and vice versa by private air-conditioned car/van/jeep with driver. (Air-conditioning non required in Bhutan)

Baggage: handling of one piece checked bag per person at airports. Please remember domestic airlines allow only 33lb per person.

Sightseeing: tours, excursions and overland drives as per itinerary by private air-conditioned motor coach with driver and accompanying English speaking tour escort/guide.

Tips and Gratuities: Tips/gratuities to drivers, guides, hotel staff, portorage in Nepal and Bhutan.

Not Included: Round trip international flights to Kathmandu; passport and visa fees; airport taxes; travel insurance; meals except those indicated; gratuity to the guide/tour director who accompanies from beginning to end (suggested \$10 per person per day); laundry charges, beverages, massages/spa treatments, telephone calls, faxes or any other charges of personal nature.

RESERVE YOUR BHUTAN AND NEPAL TOUR TODAY!

Enclosed is my/our deposit for _____ (\$1500 per person) for _____ person/s for the **Nepal and Bhutan: Myths and Legends of the Himalayas**. I/we understand the final payment is due at least 120 days prior to departure. Payment may be made by American Express, MasterCard, or VISA or by personal check. Please send reservation form to: Commonwealth Club Travel, PO Box 194210, San Francisco, CA 94119 OR Fax to: 415-597-6729 OR Call: 415-597-6720 OR E-mail: travel@commonwealthclub.org

Full Passport Name _____ Date of Birth _____ Gender _____

Full Passport Name _____ Date of Birth _____ Gender _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Home Ph. (_____) _____ Cell Ph. (_____) _____

E-mail _____

Please book my air from _____ I/we request a Business Class upgrade.

I will share a room with _____ I desire a single room (limited availability)

Method of Payment

Check American Express MasterCard VISA

Account # _____ Security Code _____ Exp. Date _____

Credit Card # _____

Signature _____

I have read and agree to conditions, cancellation and refund policies, as stated on this brochure.

Signature _____ Date _____ Signature _____ Date _____

(Each tour member must sign)

We require membership to The Commonwealth Club to travel with us. Please check one of the following options:

I am a current member of The Commonwealth Club. Please sign me up/renew my membership with the credit card information provided here. I will visit commonwealthclub.org/membership to sign up for a membership.



RESERVATIONS

A \$1,500 deposit, along with the completed Trip Registration Form is required to reserve your space. Final payment is due 120 days prior to departure.

CANCELLATION

If you must cancel your trip, your deposit and all payments will be refunded, less a cancellation fee. If written notice of cancellation is received more than 120 days prior to departure, the penalty is \$750 per person. 120 days to 90 Days prior 50% penalty, 89 days till departure 100% penalty. Trip no-shows will not receive any refund. Trip cancellation/interruption insurance is highly recommended.

ELIGIBILITY

We require membership to the Commonwealth Club to travel with us. To learn about membership types and to purchase a membership, visit commonwealthclub.org/membership or call (415) 597-6720.

RESPONSIBILITY- AN IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Commonwealth Club, Worldview Tours and cooperating agencies act only in the capacity of agent for the participation in all matters relating to transportation and/or all other related travel services and assume no responsibility for injury, loss or damage to person or property in connection with any service, including but not limited to that resulting directly or indirectly from: acts of God, detention, annoyance, delays and expenses arising from quarantine, strikes, thefts, pilferage, failure of any means of conveyance to arrive or depart as scheduled, civil disturbances, government restrictions or regulation, discrepancies or change in transit over which it has no control. Tour plan, program details, tour leadership, costs sequence of cities visited or even number of nights in each city as advertised can change due to change in logistics at the time of travel. Prices are subject to change without notice. We reserve the right to provide alternate hotels if mentioned hotels become not available for any reason. If for any reason beyond our control, scheduled flights or airfares are changed, any increase in airfare will be collected from tour members, and any decrease will be refunded. The airlines used are not to be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time passengers are not on board the aircraft. Neither The Commonwealth Club /Worldview Tours nor its agents/associates accepts liability for any airline cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a nonrefundable domestic or international ticket to the tour departure cities and return. Baggage and personal effects are the sole responsibility of the owners at all times. The Commonwealth Club /WORLDVIEW TOURS recommends that travelers strongly consider the purchase of trip cancellation/interruption insurance, baggage, medical expense, medical evacuation, accidental death coverage, and emergency assistance insurance. Information will be sent to you upon registration.

RELEASE AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK

The undersigned has read carefully the schedule of activities for this tour, as well as the conditions of application and participation as set forth in the tour brochure, and recognizes and accepts any risks thereof and the conditions set forth therein, including the refund policy. The undersigned also understands and hereby agrees for and on behalf of himself/herself, his/her dependents, heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns to abide by the conditions set forth under RESPONSIBILITY, above, as well as in the brochure, and to release and hold harmless The Commonwealth Club WORLDVIEW TOURS and any of their officers, agents, licensees or representatives from any and all liability for delays, injuries or death, or for the loss of or damage to, his/her property however occurring during any portion of, or in relation to, the tour referred to in the brochure and in other related documents received by the undersigned, such as Tour Bulletins, relating to the program and potential risks.

ARBITRATION

Any controversy or claim arising out of or relating to this agreement or the performance there under, including without limitation any claim related to bodily injury, property damage or death, shall be settled by binding arbitration in Santa Ana, California, in accordance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association then existing.

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