

Photography Tour

with Ewen Bell & Anthony McKee

Bhutan

Softly softly in the land of the Thunder Dragon.
A journey from festivals to farmers with intimate
moments and inspirational photography. Come
and find out why Bhutan is such a treasured
experience, and why the people of Bhutan are the
happiest on earth.

Maximum group size of 8
US\$7880pp / 15 Days
Dec 8-22, 2018



PHOTOGRAPHY
by Ewen Bell

The Itinerary

Day 1 | Bangkok

Our journey into Bhutan is based through Bangkok and we meet on the evening of day 1 before flying into Paro the next day. The airfare into and out of Paro is included in the tour. You just have to get yourself to Bangkok and then let us handle the rest.

Day 2 | Thimphu

We have an early morning flight to Paro and then a slow drive through the countryside to get familiar with the landscapes. Normally this drive takes about 1 hour, but with a group of photographers we like to take all afternoon.

Days 3-4 | Punakha

Punakha has one of the most beautiful Dzongs in the entire country and we'll explore it from every angle. Several other temples in the area offer unique photographic charms too and the village of Chimi is a particular favourite for sunrise.

Days 5-7 | Phobjikha

This secluded valley gets really cold at night but we'll be cosy in a farmhouse with log fires and hot showers. The valley still continues with a very basic rural style and offers us a chance to really slow down and contemplate the art of photography. This is home to the potato farmers and the Black Necked Crane, the latter of which will be spending the winter in the valley and likely to be seen from a distance.

Day 8-10 | Trongsa

This drive is beautiful and dramatic with lots of scenic stops along the way. Trongsa is the highlight of the journey with my favourite Dzong in all Bhutan dominating the view. Trongsa will be holding its all annual celebration during our visit and should prove to be the highlight of our journey.

Days 11-12 | Bumthang

We drive a little further into Central Bhutan and explore some of the charms of Bumthang. The landscape here really is different to the Trongsa side of the mountains, and of course there are more temples and wilderness to explore.

Days 13-14 | Paro

We return back to Paro for a little pampering in the most scenic valley Bhutan has to offer. We'll get up close to the scenery in a serious way by ascending the trail to the Tigers Nest. The Tigers Nest is remarkable, a fitting highlight to finish our journey. This is a difficult days hike both going up and going down, so talk to us first if you're at all unsure about the challenge.

Day 15 | Departure

Everybody goes home, catching the plane back to Bangkok for our connecting flights, and arrival back home in time for Christmas.

1

The Festival

We have three full days to photograph Trongsa Festival.

3

Inclusions

Everything is covered including the flight into Paro from Bangkok.

5

Peaceful

Explore the quiet moments of Bhutanese culture.

2

Cranes

Meet the rare Black Necked Cranes in Phobjikha Valley

4

Education

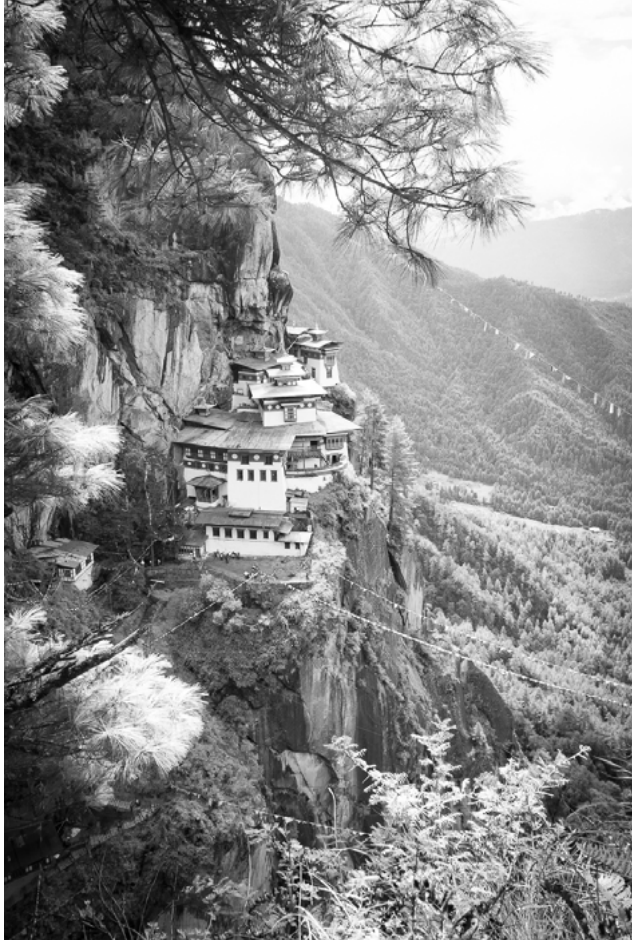
15 days of dedicated assistance from two professionals.

6

Personal

Very intimate tour with just 8 people





Highlights (not hikes)

This tour is for photographers, not trekkers. There is walking to reach the highest temples, but the tour design is comfortable, achievable and carefully balanced to suit the needs of photographers who want to properly explore our locations, not merely make quick stops.

Enjoyment of walking is essential to photography in Bhutan, but we don't do any overnight treks. The hardest section is the walk to Tigers Nest, and while the climb is steep the views are majestic. You can look forward to the following photographic highlights during this Bhutan Photography Tour...

- Extended visits to some of the most majestic of Dzongs in Bhutan
- Stop and smell the Himalayan air at high passes such as Dochu La and Pele La
- Sacred chams at the temple festivals performed by monks
- Exploration of the cultural heritage from Tibetan Buddhist origins
- Stay with remote farming communities and their families
- Sunrise above the rice fields and terraces
- Private blessings with a Lama
- The challenging hill climb to reach Tigers Nest (Taksang Monastery)









Ewen Bell

For the duration of the tour your photographic instructor and tour leader will be Ewen Bell. Ewen has been visiting and photographing Bhutan for the last decade. His work is published all over the world in travel brochures, the travel media and photography magazines. National Geographic Traveler, Lonely Planet Traveller, Vacation & Travel, Food & Travel, Outback Magazine... Just to name a few.

Ewen's depth of experience with photography tours is impressive, covering destinations across Asia, Europe, Australia and Antarctica.

"Bhutan is unique for photographers, a place where traditional culture is remarkably strong. The outside world hasn't claimed Bhutan yet."

ewenbell.com

photographyfortravellers.com



Anthony McKee

Your second escort for this trip will be Anthony McKee.

Anthony McKee has over 35 years experience as a working professional photographer. Has won numerous awards including for his work including NZ Professional Landscape Photographer of the Year (2000) and Australian Professional Documentary Photographer of the Year (2014) 16 years as a contributing editor for Australian Photography Magazine and has 20 years of experience as a photo educator.

anthonymckee.com.au













Photographic Tuition

Not only are these tours designed to deliver exceptional photographic opportunities, but you get two professional photographers included too. Ewen Bell has been running these tours since 2005, working hard to make them even better with each year of experience. Anthony McKee has been teaching fundamentals and inspiration in photo journalism for many decades.

Because the tours are limited to very small groups of just 8 people, Ewen and Anthony have time to help you with one-on-one advice. For two weeks you have personal experts to offer ideas and answer questions. Even better, you're travelling in a group of like-minded people, resulting in a total photographic immersion.

Every detail of the craft is open to discussion. Everything from cameras to careers.

These tours are designed to help you learn to take better photos, and go home with some incredible experiences. Your lead photographers will be there every step of the way to offer support as you need it.



Learn and Explore

Anyone who loves photography can join this tour.

Skills and experience is not a prerequisite. Enthusiasm is essential. There is ample one on one time so that your questions can be answered, your photos can be reviewed and your expression can be encouraged. With such a small group size we can ensure everybody gets the encouragement and guidance they desire.

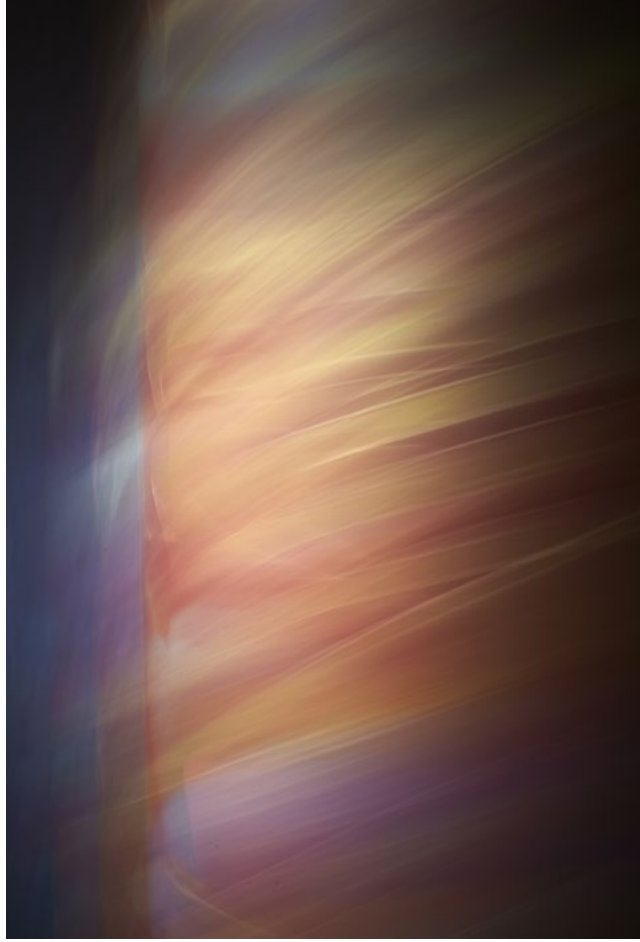
If you're a confident photographer or already work at a professional level, then this journey will simply assist with getting great shots. We encourage everyone on tour to share ideas, to discuss their experiences and learn from each other as well.

Partners are also welcome on these photo tours, but they may need to exercise a little patience with the desires of photographers to make the most of special moments. My photography tours put the photographers first :)









8 is Great!

Ewen Bell restricts all of his photographic tours to just 8 people. With good reason.

“I never want to run a photography tour with more than 8 people, let alone 12 or 16. Smaller groups mean less drama, more fun and are infinitely more rewarding. My first responsibility is to ensure every person on my tour gets plenty of my time and advice, plus to ensure we don't ruin a lovely location by dragging a horde of photographers about. Small isn't just good, it's great!”



Who Travels With Us

Our photographic journeys appeal to both the young and old, the experienced and novice. Most tours are made up of people aged 25 to 65, and occasionally older or younger still. It doesn't matter what your skills and interest in photography are, you will enjoy sharing a creative and immersive experience with like minded people.

You can read feedback from Ewen's past travellers on photography tours by visiting: ewenbell.com/feedback



Passenger Feedback

Read more feedback from
Ewen's past travellers here:
ewenbell.com/feedback

Melissa and Trent Lanz / 2017 Bhutan Photography Tour

"It's hard to express how grateful we are for the care in planning and guidance Ewen gave on our trip to Bhutan. At every turn he anticipated our needs, executed our desires and delivered beyond our expectations. Ewen goes where everyone else doesn't, allowing us to get a closer view and a deeper understanding of the people and the culture. He takes time to make sure everyone can achieve amazing results with the light no matter what equipment they bring. The hands on, personalized lessons gave both of us great new insights into what's possible for our travel photography.

Above all, Ewen is the kind of person you would invite into your own home to share a great meal. He is kind, patient, knowledgeable and always wears a great smile. It's no wonder so many on our tour were repeat clients. We're looking forward to our next "follow the light" adventure with Ewen."

John Saraccino / 2017 Bhutan Photography Tour

"This was my second photo tour with Ewen. I had always wanted to visit Bhutan and based on my previous experience with Ewen, this tour offered the perfect opportunity to do so. As expected, the tour was well organized and well-staffed by his in-country experts. With Ewen's extensive experience traveling in Bhutan, he is able to blend traditional photo opportunities, such as at festivals and dzongs, with ones off the beaten path to hidden gems, such as lunch in a Bhutanese farmhouse or a morning climb to a monastery overlooking the Punakha Valley.

With respect to Ewen himself, I can only echo the comments expressed by Melissa, Trent, and Sharon, who were on this tour and by Patrick and Joyce who were previous tours and who were with me on Ewen's Nepal tour. I cannot agree with them more; their sentiments are spot on. With respect to logistics, Ewen always finds comfortable accommodations and importantly does not skimp on transport. The bus he charters for this tour had ample room for all of us (8 + Ewen + his guide Rinzi) and our luggage. Both the accommodations and transport he chose went a long way to making the tour even more enjoyable.

For myself, I came home with some great images, which only heightened my desire to return to Bhutan with Ewen in the future."

Passenger Feedback

(a few more)

Read more feedback from Ewen's past travellers here: ewenbell.com/feedback

Sharon Stuart / 2017 Bhutan Photography Tour

"The trip Ewen led to Bhutan in November 2017 turned out to be the perfect antidote to a healthy dose of burnout from work and life in general. I'd lost my photography mojo and hadn't picked up a camera in months; happily, the trip revitalised my interest in both photography and travel.

The team Ewen works with in Bhutan is fabulous, and I can't speak highly enough of them. Ewen himself is the perfect leader for a photography workshop. Not only does he plan the trip itself meticulously, but he has travelled so often in Bhutan that he gets you off the beaten track to find quiet gems of places where other tourists are few and far between. Ewen is extremely generous with his knowledge and love of photography. He has a quiet, gentle way of teaching people that is really lovely, and perfect for when he is dealing with a group of introvert photographers. I highly recommend travelling with him, particularly if it's to Bhutan."

Charles O. Cecil / 2017 Bhutan Photography Tour

"My November 2017 trip to Bhutan met all my expectations. The people of Bhutan are willing photographic subjects. I do not recall anyone saying "no photo" during the two-week visit, except for the king, who attended one of the festivals we observed. Ewen is a very fine photographer, personable and easy to get along with, and eager to share his knowledge and skills with his participants. While walking with him he would often point out his approach to subjects, and suggest ways of getting the best results. He was generous with his time, always happy to respond to photographic questions of any kind. Logistically, Ewen maintains high standards. The tour was well-managed and ran smoothly.

Having led tours to Bhutan for many years, Ewen has developed excellent contacts and knows all the ropes. Hotels were very good, not five-star luxury (though the last one probably was), but very fine, comfortable and clean. Lunches were usually in local restaurants along the way, eating Bhutanese food. Nobody got sick. The trip was so enjoyable I will be looking for other destinations to visit under Ewen's care."

Marcella Bauman / 2017 Bhutan Photography Tour

"I have now been on three trips with Ewen Bell. Ewen never disappoints with his trips! He carefully selects his trip locations with particular attention not only to the location but opportunities for optimal lighting and atmosphere. He builds flexibility into his trips so there is always the opportunity to take advantage of the unexpected and enjoy those spontaneous moments that can arise in a new location! Ewen is an extremely accomplished photographer and in particular his use of light is highly effective in creating stunning images.

He is a generous teacher who readily shares his skills and knowledge with his clients and helps them elevate the quality of their craft. He has a tremendous talent for assembling support teams that know the country and work with Ewen to create authentic, special experiences that bring you into close contact with the spirit of the place being visited. I have traveled on many photography orientated trips and there is no doubt that Ewen's trips rank among the very best of them!"









Art and Creativity

The camera is like a paintbrush, and in the hands of different people it will produce very different images.

Ewen Bell specialises in teaching people about the creative potential of photography, to go beyond the technical issues of a camera and start taking creative control. Expression is at the heart of great photography, sharing your perspective, your view, your experience. Travelling with a photo tour like this one will offer lots of inspiration, but travelling with an instructor like Ewen will give you new ways to express your experience.

A few basic principles underpin the art of travel photography. Go Slow. Get Closer. Look for the Light. Join Ewen for two weeks of photographic adventure and find out for yourself how much inspiration can flow from three very simple ideas.



Camera Gear

We recommend the use of Digital SLR cameras for this journey, but you are not restricted from using any type of camera you may have, including conventional film SLRs and compact cameras. We will have access to power for recharging batteries on every evening of the trip, but it's never a bad idea to have a couple of spare batteries for your camera body.

We also recommend that you carry a wide angle lens for general use and landscape opportunities, and for attending festivals a fast 50mm lens will be handy. A modest telephoto such as 70-200mm zoom is also useful at festivals for when you can't get close enough to the action. We will also be viewing some of the wild Black-necked Cranes during the trip, so a 600mm range would be required to get satisfaction with them. Most of the time the telephotos will rest in the bus, taken out only for the festivals or wildlife.

Finally, we do encourage you bring a laptop. We'll have lots of opportunity to share and review images during the journey and discuss techniques for processing RAW files. Also your laptop can serve as a valuable backup or storage device to make room for more photographs each day.









The Fine Print

Dates

2018: December 08 - 22

Price

US\$7,880

Group Size

Maximum of 8 people

Inclusions

The instructing photographers and a local guide are included for this tour. All meals in Thailand and Bhutan, the Bhutan Visa fee, your return flight between Bangkok and Paro, all transfers in and around Bhutan, the internal flight from Paro to Bumthang, the mandatory Tourism Development Fee, the Bhutan Government Taxes (35%) and all entry fees to temples & monuments.

Accommodation

A mix of 4 star resort, charming guest houses and tourist grade hotels. Lots of variety. All accommodation is on a twin-share basis unless you select to pay the single supplement of US\$980.

Difficulty Rating

Our private bus for the trip will have plenty of extra room for camera gear. This is not a trekking tour, but does have some challenges if your lifestyle does not include daily walking. The hike up to Tigers Nest is the hardest section with two hours of uphill walking.

Not included

- Flight to and from Bangkok
- Gratuities and items of personal nature
- Beverages, Laundry, Phone and Internet Charges
- Your Camera!

The itinerary information may vary slightly for your specific departure, as we continuously research and develop each trip. Inclement weather or other factors outside our control may also necessitate minor alterations.

Make A Booking

How to Book

Follow the link to Ewen's website and fill out the booking form. Once your deposit of US\$1,800 has been received your place on the tour will be confirmed.

ewenbell.com/bhutan

Ewen will be available to help plan packing, flights and talk camera gear in preparation for the trip. Or just email him any questions you have before booking.

ewen@ewenbell.com

