

Photography Tour

with Ewen Bell and Ian Rolfe

Bhutan

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

Maximum group size of 8
US\$9,088pp / 16 Days
Nov 21 - Dec 06, 2020

PHOTOGRAPHY
by Ewen Bell

Ian Rolfe
PHOTOGRAPHY



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.

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. Once in Thimphu we'll get acclimated to the pace of life in Bhutan and visit some local spots for photography and discussion. Aside from acclimating to the Bhutanese culture, Thimphu has some beautiful temples to visit and will help us prepare for the cultural immersion of Central Bhutan.

Days 3-4 | Punakha

Punakha is home to one of the most beautiful dzongs in all of Bhutan can be found, along with some stunning villages and beautiful rivers. We have the option of an early morning hike to watch the sunrise across the rice fields.

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 stone baths. 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, which will be starting to arrive in the valley for winter and are easily observed from a distance.

Day 8 | Trongsa

This drive is beautiful and dramatic with lots of scenic stops along the way. Trongsa is a major highlight of the journey with my favourite Dzong of all Bhutan dominating the view. The chance to see monks engaged in their traditions is excellent, and there's often a chance to see monkeys engaged in mischief too.

Days 9-13 | Bumthang

Bumthang is worth visiting regardless of festivals, but the presence of two unique festival events on the calendar makes it even better. No two festivals in Bhutan are the same and each day of dance is a new experience and new opportunity. They are spectacular, and a little challenging. We'll have time to talk about techniques plus reviews to help us advance our skills and try again the next day. There are many other around the Jakar valley and we'll have a chance to visit some of the quiet ones.

Days 14-15 | 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.

Day 16 | Departure

Everybody goes home, catching the plane back to Bangkok for our connecting flights.

1

Two Festivals

We have two full days of photographing festivals.

2

Cranes

Meet the rare Black Necked Cranes in Phobjikha Valley

3

Inclusions

Everything is covered including the flight into Paro from Bangkok.

4

Education

Two weeks of dedicated assistance from a professional.

5

Peaceful

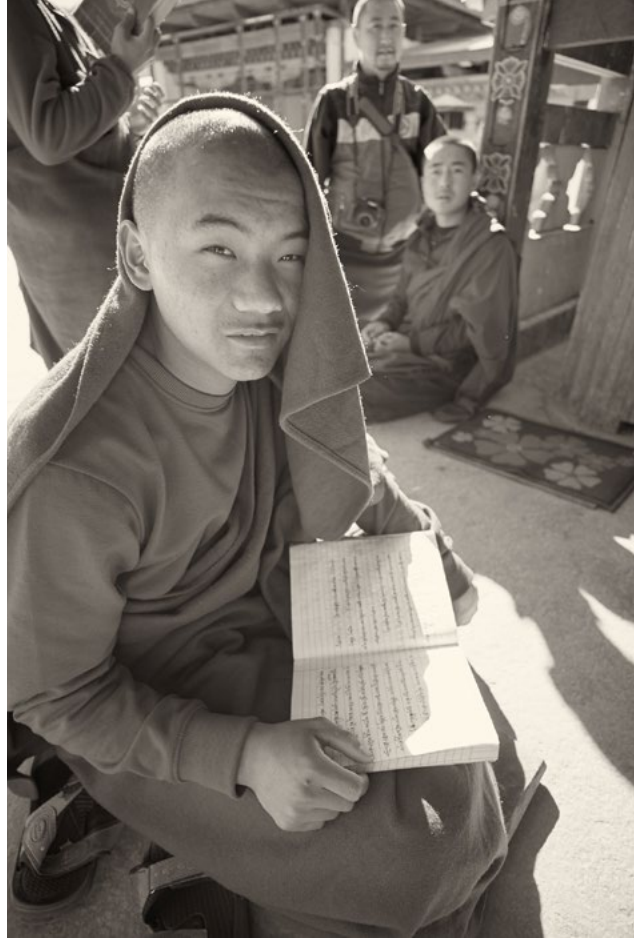
Explore the quiet moments of Bhutanese culture.

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 stop every hour and take pictures on a whim. 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 walk to reach Tigers Nest (Taktsang 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











Photographic Tuition

Not only are these tours designed to deliver exceptional photographic opportunities, but you get the professional photographer included too. Ewen Bell has been running these tours since 2005, working hard to make them even better with each year of experience.

Because the tours are limited to very small groups of just 8 people, Ewen has time to help you with one-on-one advice. For two weeks you have a personal expert 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. Ewen's style is to emphasise the creative potential of photography without getting mired in the technical. He will push you to be in control of the camera, to make the images your own, but for the sake of creativity and expression.

These tours are designed to help you learn to take better photos, and go home with some incredible experiences. Ewen 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 :)



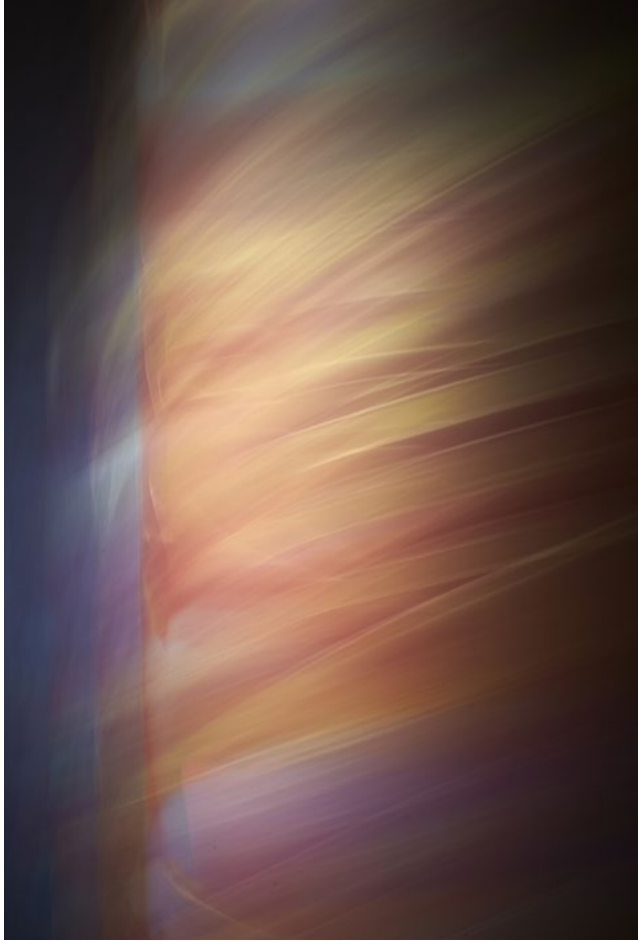
Art and Creativity

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.







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 www.ewenbell.com







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!"









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 good quality telephoto lens will be handy. 70-200mm zoom is plenty, and the faster the lens the better. For chasing the Black Necked Crane or Hornbills a longer telephoto is advisable. You can also add a 2x converter to a 70-200mm zoom to get that extra reach. Wildlife is always a challenge, and good lenses are heavy. Most of the time the telephotos will rest in the bus, taken out only for the festival days, or wildlife days.

A good quality day pack will be an essential part of the packing list. The traditional type of 'over-the-shoulder' camera bag is not very suitable for travel photography, a day-pack style bag is better. The Lowe Pro Flipside 300 or 400 are highly recommended for these tours.

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. Affordable and light Netbooks or the Mac Air are powerful enough to edit RAW files, review your work and record important details from the journey.







The Fine Print

Dates

2020: Nov 21 - Dec 6

Price

US\$9,088

Group Size

Maximum of 8 people

Inclusions

The instructing photographer and a local guide are included for this tour. Other inclusions include: All meals in Thailand and Bhutan, the Bhutan Visa fee, your return flight between Bangkok and Paro (plus a business class upgrade), 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\$1180.

Difficulty Rating

Our private bus for the trip will have plenty of extra room for camera gear and the luggage restriction is 30kg. 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 to three 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\$2,000 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

