



Tourism Council of Bhutan



Frequently Asked Questions
for Visiting Bhutan

Regional Tourists

“Taking Tourism to the Top”

The FAQ is developed to help regional tourists from Bangladesh, India and Maldives to help plan their trip to Bhutan

Q.1

Who are the regional tourists?

Regional tourists are the citizens of Bangladesh, India, and Maldives visiting Bhutan for the purpose of leisure tourism including those visiting Bhutan for pilgrimage.

What is the valid travel document required for regional tourist to visit Bhutan?

Q.2

Passport is the valid travel document and it must be valid for at least six months from the intended date of departure from Bhutan.



Q.3

What is the valid travel permit for regional tourists to visit Bhutan?

The valid travel permit for the regional tourist is an e-permit that is approved in advance.



How can e-permit be processed?

Q.4

- The e-permit can be processed through a licensed Bhutanese tour operator. However, regional tourists may select or recommend your own preferred choice of itinerary and services, for example tour guide, hotel, and transport.
- The regional tourists can also use the counterparts of the licensed Bhutanese tour operators in other countries to arrange a tour in Bhutan. However, the foreign tour operator will still need to use the services of a licensed Bhutanese tour operator in order to apply for an e-permit and to arrange other services like a licensed Bhutanese guide, accommodation and ground transport services.

Q5

Where can information on the licensed Bhutanese tour operator, hotels and tour guides be found?

- Information on Bhutanese tour operator, hotels, and tour guides can be found on **www.tourism.gov.bt & www.bhutan.travel**
- In addition, information is also available on **www.hab.org.bt, www.abto.org.bt, and www.gab.org.bt**



What are the prerequisites for obtaining the e-permit?

Q.6

In order to be eligible for the e-permit the regional tourist, through the licensed Bhutanese tour operator, should furnish the following:

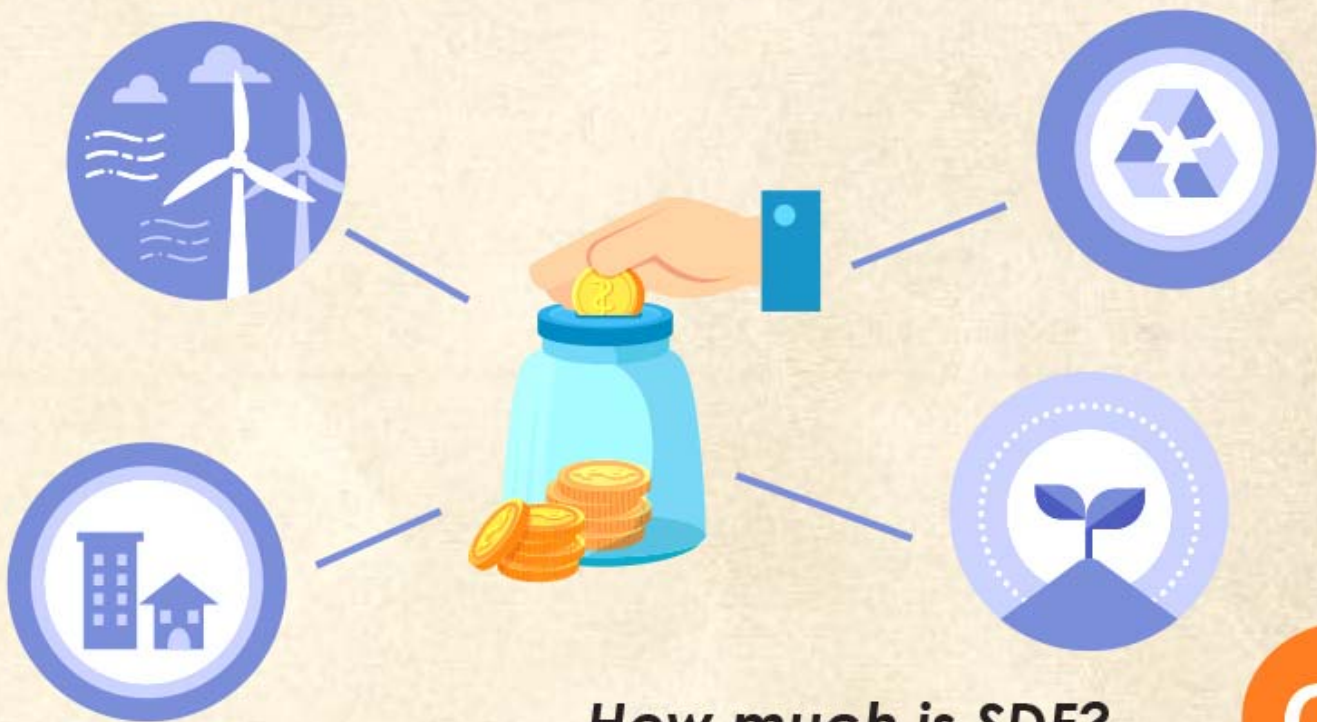
1. Details of the confirmed tour itinerary
2. Details of the confirmed accommodation
3. Details of the confirmed ground transport
4. Details of a licensed Bhutanese tour guide
5. Pay the Sustainable Development Fee (SDF)



Q.7

What is the Sustainable Development Fee (SDF)?

SDF is a fee levied by the Royal Government of Bhutan to all tourists visiting Bhutan. This is levied to promote sustainable and responsible tourism under the overall principle of “High value, Low volume” tourism. SDF contributes to social welfare, developmental activities, conservation of environment, promotion of culture, and enhancement of infrastructure and facilities for tourists.



How much is SDF?

Q.8

The standard SDF of USD 65 per person per night is levied to international tourists. However, the tourists from Bangladesh, India and Maldives shall be levied a concessional SDF of Nu. 1200 per person per night, equivalent to approximately USD 16.

Q.9

What are the benefits for regional tourist for paying SDF?

The following are some of the benefits of paying SDF:

1. Contribute to the overall sustainable management of tourism in Bhutan.
2. Contribute to the enhancement of infrastructure and facilities, in particular tourism infrastructure and facilities.
3. Process permit in advance to visit places in Bhutan without having to wait at the border gates.
4. Guarantee safe and secure personal attention during the stay in Bhutan.
5. Preferential exemptions granted to all tourists from paying of entry fees for state owned tourist attraction sites.
6. Provide good experiences to all tourists through quality services.



Q.10

What will be the currency for SDF payment?

- For the Indian passport holders, the remittance received should be in INR.
- For the Bangladeshi and Maldivian passport holders, the remittance received should be in USD.



Do regional tourists have to pay SDF for a day excursion trip to Bhutan?

Q.11

They have to pay SDF if they cross the first interior check point in Bhutan and also process e-permit through a Bhutanese tour operator for entry into Bhutan.



Q.12

How can regional tourists make SDF payment?

SDF payment can be made by wire-transferring or by using payment gateways through a licensed Bhutanese tour operator.



Q.13

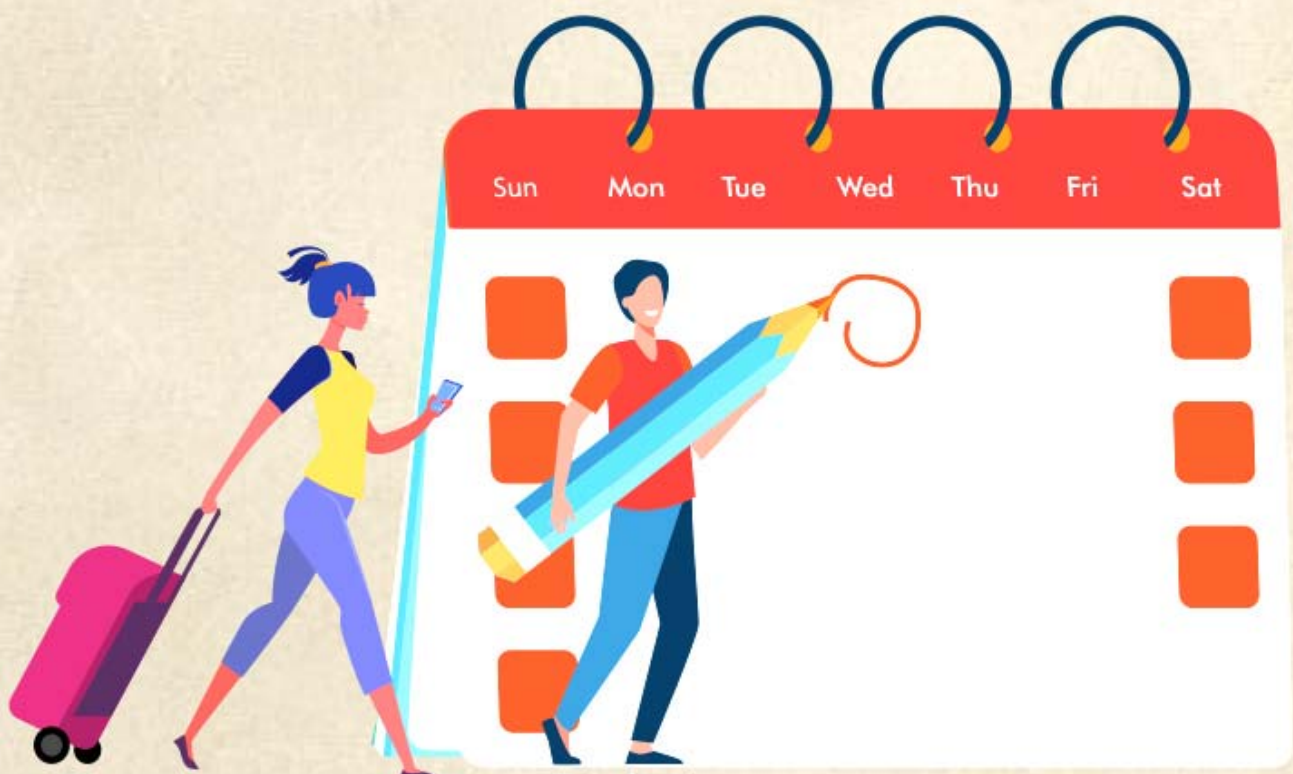
How long does it take to approve the e-permit?

It will take at least 5 working days to approve the e-permit.

Can a regional tourist postpone or cancel the tour?

Q.14

Yes, he or she can postpone or cancel the tour through a licensed Bhutanese tour operator. However, you must understand and agree to the policy of the Bhutanese tour operator and other service providers with regard to cancellation and postponement.



Q.15

Is a regional tourist eligible for SDF refund in case of tour cancellation? If so, what is the refund process?

- Yes, SDF can be refunded in case the tour gets cancelled.
- However, please discuss with the licensed Bhutanese tour operator on cancellation policy for tour payment refund.



Q.16

Can the stay be extended? What are the conditions for applying for permit extension?

Yes, tour can be extended by depositing the required SDF with the help of a licensed Bhutanese tour operator.



What is the maximum duration for tourist permit?

Q.17

A tourist permit shall be initially granted for maximum duration of 30 days or for actual duration of stay whichever is less. However, the permit may be extended further by depositing the required SDF with the help of a licensed Bhutanese tour operator.



Q.18

What are the benefits for regional tourist for booking the tour through a licensed Bhutanese tour operator?

The following are some of the benefits of booking the tour through a licensed Bhutanese tour operator:

1. Guaranteed services from a dedicated Bhutanese tour operator in arranging the trip to Bhutan in a desired manner to enrich the experience.
2. Process permit in advance for visiting places and sites in Bhutan.
3. Safe and secure personal attention during stay in Bhutan.
4. Licensed Bhutanese tour operators taking accountability for the entire duration of the tour in Bhutan.
5. Ensure hassle free and reliable services in Bhutan.
6. Ease of making tour arrangement with the help of the professional licensed Bhutanese tour operator.
7. Get best deals with the help of a licensed Bhutanese tour operator.
8. Help plan your trip and enter Bhutan even during weekend and holidays.

Other information that may be useful.

Q.19

- Please understand and agree to the services provided by a licensed Bhutanese tour operator.
- For SDF payment made in USD the refund exchange rate calculated will be of the day when it is refunded by the licensed Bhutanese tour operator or as per the cancellation policy agreed.
- For other refund the transfer charges shall be as per the cancellation policy agreed.
- Please ask the Bhutanese tour operator for more information.

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A MEMORABLE TRIP TO BHUTAN



For more information contact:

A Bhutanese ground handler

OR

Tourism Council of Bhutan

Tel: +975-2-323251 / 323252

Fax: +975-2-323695 / 337356

Website: www.bhutan.travel



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