

BHUTAN HIMALAYA SECRET ULTRA-TRAIL

« AT THE KINGDOM OF THE HAPPINESS »

FROM PUNAKHA RIVERS TO THE MONASTERY OF TAKTSHANG

DETAILED SHEET

--- PRE-CONTRACTUAL INFORMATION ---



FROM THE 20TH OF MARCH TO THE 06TH OF APRIL 2021

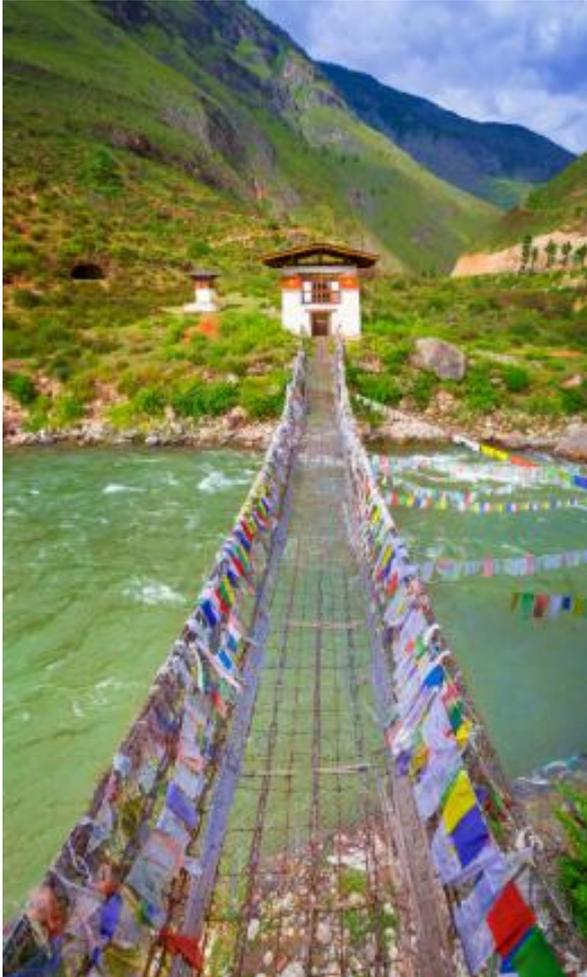


The Bhutan Himalaya secret Ultra-Trail is a memorable 8-step adventure in Bhutan, the kingdom of happiness. This route has been designed for you in the heart of the small kingdom preserved between India, China, and Nepal. A race through the wonders of Bhutan, a unique adventure to live in a traditional country full of surprises.

**“DISCOVER BHUTAN’S SECRET PARADISE BY RUNNING
IN THE HEART OF THE MYTHICAL HIMALAYAN RANGE.”**

GENERAL PRESENTATION

At the pace of your strides under the impressive peaks between rice fields and temples, this long adventure will leave you an indelible memory. Two-day stay in Kathmandu at the end of the trip.



Nestled in the heart of the Himalayas, unspoiled and off the beaten track, the small kingdom of Bhutan holds countless surprises for you.

As small as Switzerland, renowned for its beautiful landscapes and the legendary kindness of its inhabitants, Bhutan is world-famous for its original economic development that puts the preservation of the environment, the promotion of sustainable development and the happiness of citizens at the center of everything, gross national happiness, BNB, an economic indicator competing with GDP.

Cut off from the rest of the world by its Himalayan border mountains, this never-colonized country protects itself from mass tourism by introducing a quota and a tourist tax (which has the consequence of impacting the price of travel).

With its very special atmosphere and atmosphere, its countless encounters and all smiles, its temples built in an unlikely balance in remote places unimaginable, this small Himalayan country offers a must-see and regenerating haven of peace.

An exclusive and limited adventure. Welcome to Bhutan, the country of happiness!

**« It's not just a race,
it is a journey designed with care and passion »**

GEOGRAPHICAL PRESENTATION

Located at the eastern end of the Himalayas, stuck between China (Tibet) and India, Bhutan is as big as Switzerland. This "last earthly paradise" has 21 peaks of more than 7000m, including the Jomolari (7320m) and the Gangkhar Puensum (7570m), the highest point of the country. These peaks were never climbed, being considered as the residence of the gods.

827,000 Bhutanese live in the Dragon Kingdom. Nearly 5,000 monks inhabit the 2,000 monasteries of the kingdom. The average life expectancy is 66 years. 50% of the population is under 25 years of age. Bhutan has been a constitutional monarchy since 2008; the King is very appreciated by his subjects because very close to the people. Agriculture and livestock remain the two main players in the country's economic development., although tourism and the export of electricity in particular to India are charging.

Bhutanese are Buddhists. Religious buildings dot the territory, from the deepest forests to the vertiginous walls of some at-peaks. Prayer flags, multicolored sentinels of the Buddhist word, spread their message carried by the wind everywhere.

If the standard of living in Bhutan seems low, it is difficult to compare it directly to ours. Indeed, the BNB - gross national happiness-y is a more important indicator than our GDP, and is based on more than 70 elements such as the right to education, health, housing...

The habitat, in houses mixing stone and wood, beautifully decorated, seems well adapted to the difficult living conditions peculiar to the Himalayan countries, due to the weather and the places often difficult to access.

Many birds are found in Bhutan, the most famous of them, very protected in the Pobjika area being the Black-Necked Crane. In very deep forests, bears and pandas. Closer to us peaceful flocks of domestic animals: cows, yaks. Many species of monkeys also inhabit forests. The national animal is the Takin, which can weigh up to 200kg. Elephants, tigers and buffaloes inhabit the southern jungle of the country.

The Bhutanese flora is extremely rich and varied. In less than 100 km, there are insensibly succeeding rice fields and banana trees, deciduous forests and alpine forests, tropical trees, firs and oaks, buckwheat and dwarf bamboos.

Take the path of an earthly paradise

Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan, is located at an altitude of 2350m and has about 80,000 inhabitants. The monumental Dzong of Thimphu is the seat of government.

#AmazingBhutan # Punakha # Jakar # Pobjikha



WHERE DOES THE RAID TAKE PLACE?

The Bhutan Himalaya secret Ultra-Trail runs through much of Bhutan from West to East, in eight stages, at an altitude between 1240m and 3540m, from Paro to the Bhumtang region of which the main city is Jakar.



This raid allows us to discover a succession of impressive mythical sites, and to meet the Bhutanese people at the very heart of their daily lives. His legendary kindness is not a myth and the quality of his welcome is unsurpassed!

The course, completely out of the norm, combines the cultural and sporting aspect in a balanced way. The visit of fortresses, monasteries and temples that are an integral part of the Bhutanese landscape, ubiquitous testimonies of the importance of the Buddhist religion in this part of the world, is an important part of our raid.

Travelling around Bhutan leaving aside the cultural aspect of travel would be spectacular.

The raid is organized in 3 separate parts (Punakha region, Jakar region, pobjikha Valley) that allow us to discover different faces of this multifaceted country. Separating these 3 poles, 3 days of transfer whose length is explained by the configuration of the terrain and the sinuosity of the road. We can safely say that the straight line does not exist!

The tracks are of all types, sometimes chaotic, requiring for some of them a sustained attention. Some passages boil down to small paths lost in the forest or countryside, taken by the villagers, allowing us to be at the very heart of Bhutanese life.



All transfers are interspersed with visits to villages or religious monuments (temples, dzongs, chortens) and all sports stages are also related to the cultural side of the country.

Altitude

- Lowest point of stay: 1210m
- Highlight of stay: 3540m
- Average altitude: 2375m

PROGRAM



Saturday 20th and 21th/03

- Flight Paris – Katmandou (Qatar Airways)
- Flight Katmandou – Paro (Drukair)
- Transfer at Thimphu (50km, 1h30)
- Installation, dinner and night at Thimphu Tower hotel (or similar) Thimphu

Monday 22nd/03

- Transfer Thimphu - Punakha (150km / 6h)
- Lunch at the restaurant on the way
- Installation at Sonam Gang hotel (or similar)
- General briefing: presentation of the trail, distribution bibs
- Dinner and night at the Sonam Gang hotel (or similar)

Tuesday 23rd/03

Step 1 Punakha River

- Transfer until 7km for the runners and the walkers
- Lunch picnic at the end of the step
- Visit of Dzong of Punakha
- Dinner and night at Sonam Gang hotel (or similar)

Wednesday 24th/03

Step 2 Djachhu Valley

- Transfer until 5,5 km for runners, at the 9km for walkers
- Lunch picnic at the end of the step
- Dinner and night at Sonam Gang hotel (or similar)

Thursday 25th/03

Step 3 Belanghra

- Transfer until 18km for runners, until 27km for walkers
- Lunch picnic at the end of the step at Belanghra monastery
- Dinner and night at Sonam Gang hotel (or similar)

Friday 26th/03

- Transfer very special Punakha – Jakar (200 km/ 8h)
- Lunch on the road at the restaurant of Trongsa village
- Visit outside of Dzong of Trongsa
- Installation, dinner and night at the River Lodge hotel (or similar) at Jakar



Saturday 27th/03

Step 4 Chankhar Valley

- Transfer until 7km for runners, until 13km for walkers
- Lunch at the end of the step
- Dîner et nuit à l'hôtel River Lodge (ou similaire) à Jakar

Sunday 28th/03

Step 5 Ocholing Palace Tang

- Transfer until 28km for runners, until 34km for walkers
- Lunch at the end of the step at Mistang village
- Dinner and night at the River Lodge hotel (or similar) at Jakar

Monday 29th/03

Step 6 Ura Valley

- Transfer until 47km for runners, until 52km for walkers
- Lunch at the end of the step nearby stupa of Ura
- Dinner and night at the River Lodge hotel (or similar) at Jakar

PROGRAM (SUITE)



Tuesday 30th/03

- Day of transfer Jakar – Phobjikha (7h / 140km)
- Lunch at the restaurant near the Grand chorten Chendebji (XVIIIth century)
- Along the way, visit the village of Rukhubjee
- Installation, dinner and night at Guesthouse Yue-Loki (or similar)

Wednesday 31th/03

Step 7 Phobjika Valley

- No transfer, departure and arrival from the stage to the Guesthouse
- Lunch, dinner and night at Guesthouse Yue-Loki (or similar)

Thursday 01st/04

Step 8 Ngeylung Monastery

- No transfer, departure and arrival from the stage at the hotel
- Lunch, dinner and night at Guesthouse Yue-Loki (or similar)

Friday 02nd/04

- Transfer day Phobjikha - Paro- 7h30/ 16 km
- Passage of Dochula (3050m), spectacular pass with its 108 chortens
- Lunch during transfer
- Installation, dinner and night at Taschi Namgay Resort (4*) in Paro (or similar)

Saturday 03rd/04

- Morning: visit of the Taktsang monastery (Tiger's den) – exceptional!
- Ascent: 2h / 600m+
- Lunch at the end of the hike.
- On the descent and following the weather, visit the ruins of Dzuighel Dzong (view of the high Himalayan peaks).
- Free afternoon in Paro or visit the dzong of Paro.
- Festive evening: traditional dance and music show, results and awards, dinner in local restaurant in Paro.
- Night at Taschi Namgay Resort (4*) in Paro (or similar).



Sunday 04th/04

- Flight Paro – Katmandou (Drukair).
- Installation at Manang hotel (or similar) at Thamel.
- Visit of Katmandou.
- Lunch local restaurant.
- Dinner and night Manang hotel (or similar) at Thamel.

Monday 05th/04

- Morning: visit to Katmandou.
- Lunch local restaurant.
- Free afternoon in Katmandou.
- Dinner and night Manang hotel (or similar) at Thamel

Tuesday 06th/04

- Flight Katmandou – Paris (Qatar Airways)

STEPS DESCRIPTION

BHUTAN HIMALAYA SECRET ULTRA-TRAIL

From the Punakha Rivers to the Taktshang Monastery

8 steps of trail



195km 5376D+ 4390D-



118km 3326D+ 3340D-



Sports level of adventure



TrailRunning from 5km/h



TrailRunning ou Trekking from 3,5km/h

Departure allowed on the following days an abandonment (unless medical contraindication decided by the doctor)

Step 1 – Punakha River



27km 456D+ 400D-



15,5km 416D+ 400D-

The Punakha River Valley puts the bar very high from the start because everything is there. Crossings of timeless and welcoming villages, crossings on Himalayan bridges, single tracks between rice fields and along the river, a succession of temples and chorten and to finish beautifully, the crossing to the dzong (Monastery) of Punakha, one of the most beautiful in Bhutan, by a suspension bridge 300m long!

The picnic on arrival will close a stage of high class, difficult for a start but unforgettable.

Step 2 - Djachhu Valley



24,6km 790D+ 790D-



12km 370D+ 790D-

The recognition of the Djachhu Valley certainly could not have been achieved without the precious help of a monk and then a shepherd of... 84 years old!

After 3.6 km of coast for 400m of altitude difference, it is the beginning of a single track where the change of scenery is total. Very confidential, technical trail, to cross a deep valley before reaching the Punakha River. The ascent, preceded by 2km of flat, will put the organisms to the test for 350m of D+. And it is finally a descent not necessarily repairing to reach the finish.

Picnic on arrival and a well-deserved rest in this superb Sonamgang Hotel very warm!

Step 3 - Belanghra



22km 1310D+ 120D-



12km 780D+ 60D-

If it is a stage that will remain etched in memory, it is this one, with an arrival judged at 2670m altitude.

From a distance of 22km to 1310m of D+ with some lifesaving slopes, the track makes a passage first in a gorge... Himalayan, wild, spectacular, then opens into an opening occupied by the village of Belanghra, very high mountain, far from everything. The last 4km leads to the monastery that dominates the Valley, High place of bouthanese meditation.

Lunch will be taken at the monastery in the company of the monks and on the return, stop in a family that had welcomed us warmly during the previous edition. A top program in contact with the population.

STEPS DESCRIPTION (SUITE)

Step 4 - Chankhar Valley

 27km 480D+ 480D-  14km 110D+ 230D-

The further away we get from Thimpu, the capital, the more difficult progress is to penetrate these remote valleys around Boumthang. "Chankhar Valley" is a succession of very isolated temples, monasteries and villages... many of whom remember our passage during the previous edition. If the first 13 kilometers are on a track with many radadas, the next 8 take a very narrow path that runs along the Chankhar River in a thick pine forest to join the trail of the aller. The departure and Arrival are in front of the monasteries of Jambay Lhakhang and Kurjey Lhakhand, high places of Bhutanese Buddhism.

As for each stage, picnic on arrival.

Step 5 – Ocholing Palace Tang

 21,5km 340D+ 340D-  15,5km 240D+ 280D-

This fifth stage takes place in the Tang Valley, closed by a glacial lock, which explains the hardness of its inhabitants who grow potatoes and raise their meager herds of cows. It is the end of the world and yet it was here that the Kings of Bhutan had installed their Summer Palace, Ogyen Choeling Palace. With a distance of 21.5 km for runners and 15.5 km for walkers, this transition stage will allow a good recovery before the following. Little difference in altitude except the steep climb to the palace and a superb course by the Tang River.

The passage at the foot of the Taarimochen monastery, from the start, deserves to slow down, unique location !

Step 6 - Ura Valley

 24km 490D+ 750D-  16km 310D+ 510D-

In the Ura Valley, this stage makes us gain altitude because it always takes place between 3200m and 3500m on beautiful tracks and single-track techniques. The following single track goes through a wall of prayer mills at col Lalung at 3340m and it is the crossing of Ura and its monastery. An unchanging authenticity, marked by the roughness of this almost forgotten Valley.

Step 7 - Phobjika Valley

 27,5km 1030D+ 1030D-  18km 690D+ 630D-

A wide Green Valley with many adjacent valleys where Meadows, herds and pine forests alternate: it is Phobjikha Valley, The Secret Valley.

The 27.5 km of runners and the 18km of walkers pass from village to village through superb tracks where radadas are not lacking! The reception of the locals launching "Kuzuzambo" (welcome) is amazing and the stupas, temples and the Monastery of Gangthey mark the routes that ask to get involved, the altitude of 3000m being well there.

A different stage from the previous ones whose departure and Arrival are at the hotel that dominates the Valley.

Step 8 – Ngeylung Monastery

 21,5km 480D+ 480D-  15km 410D+ 440D-

Travels the southern part, the wildest and most authentic.

It is first 6km on a balcony track and then the descent to the river that we cross at km 8,3. The ascent on the other side along this river, on a grassy path in the middle of the meadow, is beautiful, to reach the village of Kathcy at 2917m that we had a hard time leaving so many children surrounded us and danced. Return to the hotel without great difficulties passes through the Ngeylung monastery.

TECHNICAL ORGANISATION

The 2012 edition of the Bhutan Himalaya secret Ultra-Trail was such a success that it was a source for Cathy and Serge, the founders of nature extreme development, to renew this event that offers its participants the privilege of surpassing themselves in unpublished and preserved places. After being developed, the routes and routes were checked and adjusted on the ground, both by Nature extreme development staff and our Bhutanese correspondents in July 201

Administrative formalities

Participants must hold a passport valid 6 months after the return date. NED is responsible for obtaining the visas.

Refuelling

They are in place about every 8 km. The exact locations will be confirmed at the daily briefing the day before each step. They include: mineral water (clogged bottles), solid energy foods (dried fruits, cookies, etc.), fresh fruits (bananas, oranges, etc.).

Meal

Lunches taken together at the end of the stages, hearty, quality and adapted to your needs.

Hearty meals are served in hotels as buffets. Starchy foods: rice, pasta and potatoes. Chicken, sometimes fish, beef. Be careful, the Bhoutanese do not eat dessert and no bread (except for breakfast) and reserve the fruit for snack between meals. Bhutanese are very careful not to offer us too spicy food!

Accommodation

All nights are in hotels. Full of charm, welcoming, cleanliness is impeccable.

- The Thimphu hotel, the Thimphu Tower (3*), in the city center, allows an immediate immersion in the city's alleys. It is located near the Central Market.
- In Punakha, the hotel Sonam Gang slightly off-center and in height compared to the city, it gives us a superb setting.
- Jakar, the guesthouse the extremely welcoming and warm River Lodge River, a mountain chalet type, offers an unobstructed view of the city.
- Pobjhika, the guesthouse Le Yue-Loki is very comfortable, recent and the service is of quality as in all our accommodations. Its particularly valuable location for our stages (no transfer) makes it a choice establishment for our project.
- As for the Hotel de Paro Le Tashi Namgay Resort (4*), a real happiness. Beautifully decorated, overlooking the Valley and is located opposite the monumental dzong of the city.

Transports

- international flight: Paris / Katmandou / Paris (Qatar Airways).
- national flight: Katmandou / Paro / Katmandou (Drukair).
- terrestrial: minibus for transfert.

Steps markup

The markup is made with red and white rubalisa that we take care to remove after our passage.

The refueling and control points are announced by signs 1km ahead and the arrival from the 5 km, every km. Mandatory systematic scoring at each refueling station.

Assistance and safety vehicles

Three vehicles will be on the route ready for possible interventions. The first is reserved for marking, the second embarks the doctor, and the third remains in the clamp.

Health

Each participant will return to NED the medical certificate that was sent to him upon confirmation of his registration.

TECHNICAL ORGANISATION (SUITE)

Climate

The sky is normally clear at this period of year.

Clothing

For sports stages, classic outfit identical to that worn in France.

Provide a warm outfit for the evenings: waterproof windproof (type Gore-tex) + warm fleece + warm socks + cap + gloves.

Do not forget frontal + spare batteries + sunglasses + lip stick (protector and repairer).

Attire required for visits to religious sites: often covered arms and pants for all.

Money

Possibility of currency exchange at the airport, Paro and Thimphu.

1€= 76 Ngultrum (BTN) during our reconnaissance trip in July 2019.

Possibility of withdrawal at the distributor in Thimphu.

Language

Dzongkha is the official language but many regional dialects are also used. English is especially used in hotels.

Time difference

4 hours less in Paris until Paro (when it is noon in Paris, it is 16h in Paro).

Voltage

220V in hotels, no adapter. Possibility to charge your digital camera in all hotels.

Security

Bhutan is an extremely safe country. It is the country with the least crime in the world. However, caution is still needed in cities.

Essential Vigilance on the tracks where the traffic of vehicles, even rare, exists!

Internet

Possibility of connection in all hotels.

Phone

Mobile SFR network coverage in some places. SMS possible anywhere.

Nature extreme development will communicate daily with its office at La Féclaz so that your families and loved ones can have news of our trip.

Craft

Bhutanese crafts are extremely expensive. Available mainly in the cities of Paro and Thimphu. The weaving in the Bhumtang area is superb. Woven wicker, bamboo, rattan, incense. Bhutanese stamps are exceptional (pay attention to their large size when you write an address).

THE BUDGET

Cost of registration: 4 860 €

The price includes...

- Flight Paris – Katmandou – Paro – Katmandou – Paris (Qatar Airways and Drukair).
- Land transfers by minibus (narrow and winding roads).
- Technical supervision of Nature Extrême Développement and our Bhutanese correspondents of the agency Keys to Bhutan.
- Accommodation in full board during the entire stay (except during the expectations and stopovers airports).
- Entries to paid protected sites enrolled in the program.
- All refuelling during stages and all transfers.
- Obtaining visas (Bhutan and Nepal, the latter will be taken on arrival at Kathmandu airport for two days in the country).

The price does not include...

- Beverage other than those taken into account by Nature Extrême Développement.
- Personal expenses, phone, other purchases.
- Activities or visits other than those provided for in the program.
- Cancellation insurance – repatriation.

ATTENTION: the cost of overweight possibly charged by the airlines remains at the expense of the participants.

Insurance

Each participant must have individual civil liability as well as individual multi-risk warranty in order to protect themselves from incidents or accidents that may occur before or during the hike or trip. Please note that payment with a credit card generally only covers assistance provided you have used your card to pay for the trip. Payment by credit card usually does not cover the risk of cancellation.

Nature extreme Development offers you to subscribe to the Global Assistance contract "temporary travel multi-Risk Solution". The amount of this insurance, which varies according to duration and destination, is indicated in the travel registration form, and offers extended guarantees according to the formula chosen : medical repatriation, interruption of stay, delay of transport, payment of the arrival of a relative in case of hospitalization on the spot, coverage of emergency medical expenses and hospitalization, baggage coverage in case of loss or deterioration, civil liability abroad. To find out the exact contractual terms, in particular the scope of warranties, deductibles and exclusions, we recommend that you consult the full contractual terms and the product information document available on the site or on request from Nature extreme Development.

The proposed insurance must be taken out at the time of registration. In the proposed insurance, the insurance premium and visa fees are not refundable either by extreme Development Nature or by the insurer.

Carbon Offset

As responsible tourism is part of the values of an extreme Development nature, carbon compensation is proposed for each flight through the GOODPLANET Foundation (www.goodplanet.org).

Payment schedule

For a reservation more than 35 days from the date of departure of the trip, you will need to pay the deposit mentioned on the registration form. For any registration less than 35 days from the date of departure, payment must be made in one time and for the entire price of the trip. The balance of the price of the trip must be paid, without any rebate from us, no later than 35 days before the trip.

WHO ARE WE?

Nature Extrême Développement is a travel agency sharing through sport, world culture and discovering new horizons. Trips that can be both distant, close to home or indoors; timed or non-timed; alone or in groups

Founded in 1995 by Serge and Cathy MOREL-JEAN, **NED has organised more than 200 raids on 5 continents** over the past 25 years. Benoît LAVAL joined the company in 2020 as President.

NED, it is a team of professionals surrounded by passionate volunteers and quality local partners to make you live the most beautiful sport and tourist adventures.



Serge MOREL-JEAN, Founder of NED since 1995:

Mountain Guide, Nordic ski instructor, mountain hunting officer military career in Annecy, Briançon and Chamonix.

Former director of the French military ski team, climbing the highest peaks of the Alps such as Eiger, Piz Badile, Matterhorn, Aiguille Verte, Grandes Jorasses, Mont Blanc...

The Transbaikal and the Moskova (Moscow – St Petersburg) performed with sled dogs.

Cathy MOREL-JEAN, Manager since 2002:

Great sportswoman, swimming (European Youth Championships in 1968), running (Marathon des Sables, Desert Cup, Sierre-Zinal, and several marathons)

Former assistant professor of sport, lifeguard, sports educator, completed with a 2-years post high school degree Tourism and graduated in Ericksonian hypnosis, NLP and Sophrology.



Benoît LAVAL, President since 2020:

Race on foot since the age of 9, more than 200 trails with more than 60 wins and more than 30 countries visited in running, a selection in team of France Trail, 2nd place in the Grand Raid of the Reunion, participations in the Barkley and the 400km of Gobi.

Founder of Raidlight and Trail station network.

Organizer of races since 1992, such as the challenge of the Oisans, the Chartreuse Terminorum, and more classic trails.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Responsible tourism is one of the values of an extreme Development nature.

For each flight, carbon compensation is proposed through the GOODPLANET Foundation (www.goodplanet.org).

Nature extreme Développement also carries out other actions for Responsible Tourism, and is a member of the association ATR (Act for Responsible Tourism).

As such, we invite every traveller to read and sign voluntarily the traveller's ethical charter: <https://www.tourisme-responsable.org/voyager-responsable/charte-ethique-voyageur/> so that all together participate at our level to this goal.

NATURE EXTRÊME DÉVELOPPEMENT

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