



In 2023 Bhutan is on track to receive their target of 95,000 visitors and surpass the US\$23.4 million received in 2019 from its Sustainable Development Visitor Fee.

Some of the highest mountain peaks reach 7,326m making them popular for hiking and trekking expeditions.

Temples are symbols of traditional architecture and spirituality and a key driver for culture and heritage tours.

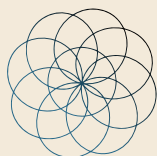
Vision: A small country of Gross National Happiness with citizens and governments free from the fear of corruption.

BHUTAN CASE STUDY 2023

WELLNESS SNAPSHOT

Global Wellness Institute -
Wellness Destination Tourism Initiative

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REGENERATIVE WELLNESS TOURISM: *A BEST IN CLASS*

As part of the country's strategy, Bhutan is only accessible to a limited few, and the country does this in the name of conservation of culture, heritage and environment.

Wellness means something different to everyone, but the spirit of wellbeing is a key driver for the Wellness Traveler visiting Bhutan. A small nation with a big heart, one that for decades has undertaken an inspiring vision to measure social well-being and the happiness of its citizens, rather than by their wealth. Regarded as one of the most exclusive travel destinations in the world, Bhutan is the perfect model of Wellness tourism that attracts conscious travelers with the purpose to accessing health and wellbeing while also contributing sustainably and responsibly.

The old name of Bhutan translates to "Land of Healing" with the country known for its medicinal healing herbs and free universal healthcare which is rooted in Buddhism philosophies. Well-known for living in harmony with their environments, the Bhutanese people value a belief that supports "always taking the higher road" with a spirit to help one another, which is expressed in the harmonious hospitality offered by its people.

The intention of happiness is a Bhutanese guiding principle that dates back to 1729 when a legal code was passed that stated "The purpose of the government is to provide happiness to its people. If it cannot provide happiness, there is no reason for the government to exist."

Bhutan is one of the last remaining biodiversity hotspots in the world, with most of its natural environment still untouched and intact, another key driver for travelers wanting to explore this country.

CARISSA NIMAH
CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER, BHUTAN TOURISM

" THIS KINGDOM IS STEEPED IN HISTORY, BUT IS FIXED ON THE FUTURE. GUARDIANS OF SOME OF THE MOST PRISTINE WILD AND SACRED PLACES AND A RICH DEEPLY ROOTED CULTURE, BHUTAN'S FUTURE REQUIRES IT TO PROTECT ITS HERITAGE AND TO FORGE FRESH PATHWAYS FOR FORTHCOMING GENERATIONS. "

"A major success of the policy is that Bhutan has remained a reasonably equitable and sustainable society where the proportion of happy people is high despite a relatively low level of per capita income. In the long run, our goal is to create high-value experiences for visitors and well-paying and professional jobs for our citizens."

TANDI DORJI, BHUTAN'S FOREIGN MINISTER

KEY SUCCESSES

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FEE

The country's strategy is to avoid mass tourism while promoting responsible travel. To support this they have implemented a Sustainable Development Fee of 100USD per day. Free education and healthcare, infrastructure upgrades, maintenance of the temples along with environmental and community projects are just a few of the ways this fee supports transformative projects aligned with the UN Sustainability goals. It has taken some time for tourism experts to understand the value of the Sustainable Development fee however when you connect with the spirit of the people in Bhutan, you soon realize that everything is done with intention for the people and the planet.

SUSTAINABILITY

Single-use plastic was banned in 1999 under strict enforcement from the government however with the importation of numerous goods it is a challenge to be 100% compliant.

The Government has created several macro policies on environmental conservation including 60% of countries land must be covered with forest for eternity and forests that have been gifted to communities who nurture them.

IMPACT TOURISM

High-value, Low impact tourism serves the purpose of creating an image of exclusivity and high yield.

MARKETING

Bhutan has a strategy with partners and influencers that revolves around thought leadership. Using influential people they choose people who have the values and principles that align with the Bhutanese cultural experiences as a key driver to attracting a Wellness Traveler.

HEALTHCARE

Since the 1970s, the Bhutan government has offered free universal healthcare to all its citizens, this has been successful in supporting the fundamentals for social well-being in the country contributing to a positive GNH. In addition to this basic public healthcare has also been offered free to visitors.

EDUCATION

Bhutan's Constitution mandates that 'The State shall provide free education to all children ensuring that higher education is equally accessible to all based on merit.

WHEN COUNTRY VALUES BECOME THE DRIVING STRATEGY FOR ATTRACTING A WELLNESS TOURIST

KEY LEARNINGS

Gross National Happiness guides public discussions and the formulation of policies and laws in the country. The development of human capital (education, healthcare) in Bhutan is fundamental to the country's growth strategy. The approach is dedicated to upskilling people and technology at international levels.

The Gasa Tshachu hot springs in Bhutan are known for their healing powers. The hot springs are believed to cure arthritis, skin diseases, ulcers, rheumatism, and indigestion and welcome over 7000 Wellness travelers per year to soak in the springs.

Meditation retreats are a common practice amongst visitors to Bhutan providing a respite to destress from hectic lives. Devout Buddhists often visit the mountains on meditation pilgrimages, meditating on the purpose of life.

Festivals are a significant part of Bhutan's culture, thousands of travelers flock to Bhutan yearly to engage in the celebration of festivals. With over 150 festivals yearly, steeped in culture and tradition and expressed through dance, costume, and masks as they re-enact scenes from their past.

Bhutan has the largest % of medicinal doctors with over 30 hospitals across the nation making equitable healthcare available to all residents for free.



FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Spirituality quests: Bhutan will continue to attract the conscious wellness traveler who is looking for a low-impact destination that allows visitors to naturally explore nature's landscapes in a way that brings knowledge, culture, and wellness traditions into one destination experience. The demand and attraction for spiritual tourism experiences will continue to grow for travelers under 45 years of age.

Environmental ambitions: The government is looking at climate-resilient infrastructure that will require significant investment in terms of human resources, and technology transfer.

Food Cycles: 98% of households are food secure however 88% of children between 6 to 23 months are not receiving the minimum acceptable diet. The government will focus on initiatives that boost nutrition and well-being.

People: There is a population of 700K young Bhutanese people, and each year 20K go abroad causing staff shortages. The aim is to continue to engage with the younger generations, upscaling their development and encouraging them to stay in the country or return after their studies. A further initiative continues to offer family incentives to help grow the population and invest and upskill their people.



OPERATOR EXCELLENCE



Six Senses - the Bhutanese believe that happiness is the result of good health. Six Senses wellness experiences focus on bringing the body into balance, boosting the immune system, and helping to open the mind and expand consciousness to aid spiritual healing.

Green Vibes Juice Bar- a juice bar providing locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables that are free of sugar, syrup, preservatives, & other chemicals.

Bhutan Spirit Sanctuary - a place where you can find the peace to let go of the daily craziness, find a balance between body, mind, and spirit, and experience the essence of Bhutan.

For more information contact
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