



## Better Bhutan

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### *Easy Ways to Be a Responsible Visitor to Bhutan*

Thank you again for choosing Better Bhutan to lead you through one of the world's most unique countries. We sincerely hope you will treasure the time you spend with us and remember it as one of the most unique experiences of your life.

People like you visit Bhutan for the history, the culture, the architecture and the spectacular natural beauty of the Himalayas. Bhutan is also very unique for other reasons. Our Kingdom is the world's first non-smoking country and the only carbon-negative country on Earth. More than 70% of our Kingdom is covered in old growth forest, home to about 80 million trees. (108,000 trees were planted to commemorate the birth of our next King.) If forests are earth's "lungs," Bhutan breathes for much of Asia.

We would love for Bhutan to become the world's first plastic-free country, and we invite you to help us achieve that goal. As in most of the world, plastic trash is a growing problem in Bhutan. At one time plastic bags were outlawed in Bhutan, but that proved to be impossible to enforce. We are a mountainous, land-locked country with a mere 700,000 inhabitants and no significant recycling facilities. Our environment is unbelievably pure, but that is changing because we have to burn or bury plastic trash that never decays. As you enjoy our beautiful scenery and fresh air, we hope you will be mindful of the negative impact of the trash left behind by visitors. We also act that you consider easy ways to avoid leaving a permanent footprint.

One great idea is for you to take your own reusable beverage containers and avoid plastic bottles, beverage cups and straws. Refillable bottles are easy to find in department stores and online outlets like Amazon. Bhutan's water is as clean as it gets, so a plastic container is only for convenience, not hygiene. Avoid merchandise in plastic packaging and refuse plastic bags when you make purchases.

An even greater act of responsibility is to take a bag (preferably woven) with you in which to collect your own plastic trash to take home with you. It is far more likely that your country has the means to recycle than Bhutan does. If you do not have a bag, we or your hotel will provide one free. This simple act means that you leave almost no negative environmental footprint on our beautiful country, which makes you a hero in our eyes.

Many thanks from the Better Bhutan Team,

*Yeshey and Jamyang*

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