

Communication Facilities in Bhutan: Internet, Mobile & Staying Connected

Practical Info

8 min read

Staying connected in Bhutan is easier and faster than ever. While the kingdom once felt worlds away, a robust 4G network and the expansion of 5G in urban centers mean you can share your Himalayan adventures in real-time. Here is your essential guide to internet, mobile, and communication in Bhutan.

Mobile Network Operators

There are two main cellular providers in Bhutan. Both offer excellent coverage in towns, though signals can be intermittent in deep valleys or high-altitude trekking routes.

- **Bhutan Telecom (B-Mobile):** The state-owned provider with the widest nationwide coverage, especially in remote and rural areas.
- **TashiCell:** A private operator known for high speeds and reliable 4G/5G services in urban hubs like Thimphu, Paro, and Phuntsholing.

How to Get a SIM Card

As a tourist, you can easily obtain a Tourist SIM at the airport or in major towns.

- **Where to Buy:** Counters are located in the arrival hall at the Airport.
- **Requirements:** You will need a copy of your passport.
- **Typical Cost:** Packages range from Nu. 200 to Nu. 1,900, typically including 1GB to unlimited data and some local talk time.
- **eSIM Availability:** Both Bhutan Telecom and TashiCell now offer eSIMs for compatible devices.

Internet & Wi-Fi

- **Hotels:** Almost all 3-star, 4-star, and 5-star hotels offer free Wi-Fi in rooms and common areas. While sufficient for emails and social media, speeds can vary during peak evening hours.
- **Cafes:** Thimphu and Paro have a growing "digital nomad" culture with several cafés offering high-speed fiber internet.

Essential "Stay Connected" Tips

- **International Roaming:** Major global carriers (like AT&T, Vodafone, and Singtel) have roaming agreements in Bhutan, but the costs are astronomical. **Buying a local SIM is highly recommended.**

- **Power Up:** Bhutan uses Type D, F, and G plugs (the same as India and the UK). While most hotels are "multi-plug" friendly, bring a universal adapter for older farmstays or rural guesthouses.

Tax Note

Be aware that a **7% telecom tax** is applied to all mobile recharges and data plan purchases.

Quick Connection Checklist

- ☐ Passport copy for SIM registration
- ☐ Unlocked smartphone (required for local SIMs)
- ☐ Pre-downloaded "WhatsApp" or "Telegram"
- ☐ Portable power bank for long mountain drives

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I get a local SIM card in Bhutan?

Yes! Buy from TashiCell or B-Mobile at Paro Airport or Thimphu shops. Bring your passport. Tourist SIMs cost around Nu. 200-500 with data packages. 4G/LTE is available in major towns.

Is WiFi available in Bhutan?

Most tourist hotels offer WiFi, though speeds vary from good in Thimphu/Paro to slow in remote areas. Some cafes and restaurants have WiFi. Don't expect reliable connectivity in rural villages or during treks.

Will my international SIM work in Bhutan?

Most international SIMs work via roaming, but charges are high. Check with your provider before traveling. A local SIM is much cheaper for data and local calls.

Can I use WhatsApp and social media?

Yes, all major apps work. WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and video calling apps function normally. Download offline maps (Google Maps, Maps.me) before arriving as cellular data can be spotty.

Is there internet in remote areas?

Limited. Eastern Bhutan and remote villages have patchy coverage. During treks, expect no connectivity except at occasional camps near villages. Consider a digital detox as part of the experience!

What voltage and plug type does Bhutan use?

Bhutan uses 230V/50Hz with Indian-style plugs (Type D, M, and G). Bring a universal adapter. Most hotels have USB charging points. Power cuts occur occasionally - hotels usually have backup generators.

Need More Information?

Contact our Bhutan travel experts for personalized advice.

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