

## Judo Journeys - Changing Lives Through Judo

### A note on how to get here, what to bring and all the great stuff we will get up to



Ok tell me about the wonderful teachers who will be running the seminar!!!

**Sabrina Filzmoser**, is an Austrian Olympian judoka. She is a two-time European Champion and six-time Military World Champion who has been doing judo for 27 years. Sabrina is a 'Judo for Peace' ambassador and is currently training for the Rio Olympics next year. Rest assured that Sabrina is the teacher to give you all the skills you need for competitive judo.

**Yoshihiro Horiuchi**, is a Japanese fourth Dan Kodokan judoka who has been doing judo for 23 years. Yoshihiro's judo was so highly regarded that he was chosen by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Kodokan as a coach to promote judo in Bhutan. He has trained and taught judo around the world including Sri Lanka, Nepal, Indonesia, Laos, Philippines and Singapore. Yoshihiro has extensive coaching experience and will be the sensei that drills you on the basics you thought you knew but could never get right.

There is also going to be one surprise senior Japanese sensei whose confirmation we are still awaiting.

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## That's great!! Now tell me what am I going to learn?

Oh don't worry about that. We will make you work on the basic wazas again and again and again. And then you will do lots of newaza and tachiwaza with other international and Bhutanese judoka. Just when you think it couldn't get better we will work on your endurance and flexibility. The seminar will be interactive. Your questions are always welcome and our coaches will try and answer them and give you the personalized attention you need.

But before you think this is only a judo boot camp, rest assured that you will do other cool stuff too. You will have time to hang out, eat amazing food, make friends and explore this magical kingdom called Bhutan.

## What fun adventures do you have planned for me in Bhutan?

You do know that Bhutan is one of the happiest places in the world right? Did you know that they don't measure growth in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) but as Gross National Happiness (GNH) How radical is that? So along with your judo gi you have to bring along your biggest smile because everyone is going to be smiling at you. You will hike the mountains, visit some amazing cultural sites and eat delicious local cuisine. Here is a short overview of your trip!

### September 6: Your trip starts!!!

You would have to aim to arrive in Bhutan on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September. You will have to first get to Bangkok, Singapore or Delhi! From there our friends from Bhutan Judo Journeys will ensure that we reserve enough tickets for all of you to reach Bhutan on Bhutan's national airline. Thanks to their invaluable support, we are scoring a fantastic deal that most tourists to Bhutan don't get!



© Across the Paro Chu (River) Valley from the Gangtey Palace by Terru Straehley

**Flight details:** The flight to Bhutan itself will be exciting. You will fly over the Himalayas and if the day is clear, you will catch a glimpse of Mt. Everest. What's more, the way the plane makes an impossible landing on the narrow strip of Paro airport nestled in the Himalayas is an astonishing feat of piloting that you will never forget.

The flight from Bangkok leaves at 6:50AM and reaches Paro at 9:55AM (Paro is a town in the Paro Valley of Bhutan, where the only international airport in the Himalayan Kingdom

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is located). The flight from Singapore leaves at 6:30AM and reaches Paro at 10:45AM and the flight from Delhi departs at 1:50PM and reaches Paro at 4:40PM. If you depart from Bangkok, we will arrange some tea and snacks to sweeten your waiting time till the judokas from Singapore arrive. Once the participants travelling via Singapore arrive, we will all take a bus to Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan, which is about 60 minutes away from Paro. If you are flying in via Delhi we will arrange another bus for you that will take you to Thimphu (check out Thimphu here: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/bhutan/thimphu>).



© Bhutan Mountains by Michael Foley

Once you've dropped off your bags at the hotel and had a quick wash, we are pretty sure you will be ravenous (judokas are known for their appetite right?). So we will tuck into traditional Bhutanese cuisine at the exquisite Folk Heritage Museum, a three storied, 19th century traditional Bhutanese house (more here: <http://www.tourism.gov.bt/western-bhutan/folk-heritage-museum>). The delicious lunch could make you want to do one of two things. Some of you may just want to go back to the hotel and nap and others will be bouncing off the wall with energy. For those with energy to expend, we will take you on a tour of some of Thimphu's highlights. Accompanied by one of our local guides we will head off to explore the Royal Textile Academy, Memorial Chorten (a mound-like structure used as a place of meditation) and the Buddha Point. The latter is one of the largest Buddha statues in the world with a height of 169 feet (51.5 meters). We will all end the day with a communal Bhutanese dinner where you will be briefed about the Judo Seminar.



© From left to right Thimphu Chorten and Doche-La Stupas by Tan Yilmaz



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## September 7: Let the Judo-mania begin

We will gather for breakfast at the hotel and then jointly head off towards Pelkhil Dojo at 9:00 in the morning. Make sure you stuff yourself because you will be burning some serious calories soon. The morning session will be a two-hour intensive that start at 9:30 AM and ends 11:30AM. You will get a chance to stretch out or get some rest or grab a coffee afterwards before we all get together for lunch.

The afternoon session will go from 2:30PM to 4:00PM. If you feel like resting afterwards, go ahead; take it easy or take a stroll in town or in the hills! For the energizer bunnies amongst you, feel free to join us on a visit to Tashichiho Dzong and witness the evening flag-lowering ceremony. The Tashichiho Dzong is an ancient structure constructed in 1216 A.D. and has been the seat of the government since 1952. It currently hosts the throne room and offices of the king, the secretariat and the ministries of home affairs and finance. The rest of the evening is all yours! You can either join us for dinner or just enjoy a quiet dinner by yourself.



© Left to right: no title by Tourism Council of Bhutan, Tashichoedzong views by Carsten ten Brink

## September 8: A trek you will never forget & a little taste of Japan in the Himalayas

Now that you've gotten used to the altitude and slept off your jet lag, we will have an early start. But we assure you that is worth getting out of bed for. After a quick breakfast, we will head off at 8:00 AM to Paro to hike up to the Taktshang Monastery or the Tiger's Nest. This monastery is a sight to behold and is the most famous of all Bhutanese monasteries. The hike up the mountain to the Tiger's Nest will test your endurance but don't worry; you will be so gobsmacked by the stunning scenery around you that you will forget to get tired. We will carry a picnic lunch with us. Once we summit, you will lunch amidst gorgeous views. We head back to Thimphu after the hike to watch the Judo and Karate demonstration by the Bhutanese martial artists in honour of the Japan Week! You will enjoy an amazing Taiko performance (traditional Japanese drums) by a team coming all the way from Japan.



© TO BH 8B by Roderick Eime

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© Perspective 2 on Tiger's Nest Monastery, Bhutan By Michael Foley

## September 9: The training continues

After a full breakfast we head off to the Dojo again at 9:00AM! The morning session will go on from 9:30AM to 11:30AM. We get together for lunch after which you will have some free time to do some personal shopping, take care of emails or just relax. We kick off the evening training session with the Bhutanese judoka at 5:00PM and will close for the day at 7:00PM. You are welcome to take a stroll in town, grab a drink in one of the local watering holes or just stretch out your sore limbs.



© Karma Dorji

## September 10: Training part #3 & farewell in Thimphu

Yes, you got it right! We get back to training again and head off at 9:00AM to Pelkhil Dojo to enjoy the third and final day of the training. For the complainers among you- hey, isn't this what you came for? And who says fun is supposed to be easy! The morning session goes on from 9:30AM to 11:30AM. We will have a communal lunch thereafter and you will have some time to relax.



© Beef Momos by Andrea Williams



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Once you've got some rest, we will have a wonderful evening with a farewell party thrown for us by the Bhutanese judoka. We will be tucking into delicious 'momos' (traditional Tibetan dumplings) along with some singing and dancing! You will also get the rare chance to wear traditional Bhutanese clothes, which we will borrow from our Bhutanese judoka and friends.

### September 11: A trip into the Bhutanese mountains & back to Paro

Now you must be asking yourself- can this get any better? Yes, indeed fellow judoka. It does get better. We will leave the hotel very early for a trip to Punakha and enjoy a local breakfast at Dochula, a pass on the way to Punakha offering stunning views of the Himalayan mountain range. Our local guide will join us for a visit to two of Bhutan's most magnificent sites: Punakha Dzong and Chimi Lhakhang. After a sumptuous late lunch, we will head off to Paro and check into one of the local hotels. If you like we could all get together for a dinner, make a closing toast and say our goodbyes to each other.



© From top to bottom: Old Capital by sprklg; Local Man Keeps Bhutan's River Immaculate by United Nations Photo

### September 12: Departure

We will arrange a pick up to the airport and make sure you catch one of these three flights: The flight to Bangkok departs at 11:00AM from Paro and reaches Bangkok at 4:05PM; the flight to Singapore departs at 7:20AM and will reach Singapore at 3:35PM, and the flight to Delhi departs at 8:00AM and reaches Delhi at 10:55AM.

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## Taking care of the little big things!

### How is the weather? What shall I pack?

September is still in the middle of monsoon season in Bhutan. Bring a raincoat or an umbrella!

### What is the local cuisine like?

Bhutanese food is basically hot! Chilli is not a condiment but a vegetable in Bhutan. The restaurants and hotels usually go easy on tourists and scale back on the chillies. However, we suggest that those of you with sensitive tummies bring along your favourite pills and tonics you need, just in case!

### How do I wash my judo gi and do my other laundry?

There is a laundry service at the hotel, however, please do not expect a dry cleaning service. We would suggest you leave your tux and evening gowns at home 😊

### How do I connect with the www while in Bhutan?

Internet service is available, though the connection may slow. This is a part of our efforts to teach you the samurai virtue of patience. Ok we are kidding, yes the connection at the hotel may be slow but you can always drop by at the coffee shop in town for faster Internet. We can introduce you to some of these quaint cyber cafes in town. As a tourist you can also get a SIM card with a copy of your passport. In case you need a Bhutanese guarantor, don't worry; we will take care of that.

### Should I get shots before my trip?

There are a lot of stray dogs in Thimphu. They are a part of the community. They are mostly harmless and pretty friendly. And there have been no cases of rabies in the last 20 years! The hospital can give shots to even foreigners in the one in a million chance that you get bitten by a dog! Check out more health related hints by the Lonely Planet here: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/bhutan/health>

Check the entry and exit formalities here: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/bhutan/visas>

Get the facts and the basics here: <http://wikitravel.org/en/Bhutan> and here <http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/countries/bhutan-guide/>

Please also check the etiquette in Bhutan summarised by the Bhutan Canada Foundation here: <http://bhutancanada.org/teacher-orientation-etiquette-in-bhutan/>