

Beautiful Bhutan



~ Highlights of Bhutan ~

~ 06 Nights / 07 Days ~

~ Itinerary at a Glance ~

Thimphu - Punakha - Paro

Bhutan is perhaps the world's most exclusive tourist destination. The country still retains all the charm of the old world, and travelers experience the full glory of this ancient land as embodied in the monastic fortresses, ancient temples, monasteries and stupas which dot the countryside, prayer flags fluttering above farmhouses and on the hillsides, lush forests, rushing glacial rivers, and – perhaps most important of all – the warm smiles and genuine friendliness of the people.

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Day 01

Arrive into Paro Transfer to Thimphu (49Km / 01Hour)

Your journey begins with the most spectacular mountain flight with views of major Himalayan peaks such as Everest, Kanchenjunga and Makalu, and on the final approach Bhutan's own snowy peaks, the sacred Jhomolhari, Jichu Drake and Tseringang. You fly over the southern hills, known as 'dwars', or gateways into the Himalayas as they rise from the plains until they meet the great snow-capped peaks that rise up to the sky.

On arrival at Paro airport and after completion of airport formalities, you will be met by your representative (guide). Drive from Paro to Thimphu, the modern capital town of Bhutan and an exciting blend of tradition and modernity.

Rest of the day at leisure or you may want to take a stroll through this lively town. In the evening, time permitting, visit the impressive Trashicho Dzong/fortress which houses the throne room of the King and various government offices. It is also the summer residence of the Chief Abbot and the central monk body. If your visit falls on a working weekday, arrive in time to watch the hoisting of the National Flag and the March of the Guards. (Open: Mon-Fri [Mar-Oct after 5:30pm] [Nov-Feb after 4:30 pm] / Open on Sat, Sun, Govt. Holidays)



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Day 02

Thimphu

Thimphu, perhaps the most unusual capital city in the world, is the seat of government. This bustling town is home to Bhutan's royal family, the civil service, and foreign missions with representation in Bhutan. It is also the headquarters for a number of internationally funded development projects.

Today's visit will include:

Buddha Dordenma statue sitting on top of a hill overlooking Thimphu. The Statue of Sakyamuni Buddha is one of the tallest in Asia (51.5 m). The site of Buddha Dordenma offers unobstructed views over the capital town. (Closes Daily Nov-Feb at 4pm & Mar-Oct at 5pm)

Memorial Chorten, the building of this landmark was originally envisaged by Bhutan's third king, His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, who had wanted to erect a monument to world peace and prosperity. Completed in 1974 after his untimely death, it is both a memorial to the Late King ("the father of modern Bhutan"), and a monument dedicated to peace. During the mornings and evenings, it a bustling place where people of all ages circumambulate the chorten/stupa, pray and prostrate at the shrine, turn the big prayer wheels, offer butter lamps, bask in the sun as they socialize and mingle. (Closes Daily Nov-Feb at 4pm & Mar-Oct at 5pm)

Zorig Chosum, (also known as the painting school) offers a six year course in the 13 traditional arts and crafts of Bhutan. The students follow a comprehensive course that starts with drawing and progresses through painting, woodcarving, embroidery and statue-making. This is a great opportunity to interact and photograph the students while they practice their skills in the classroom. (Closed on Sat 1pm, Sun, Govt. Holidays, School Break Jul, Jan-Feb).



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National Library: The National Library was established in the late 1960s primarily to conserve the literary treasures which form a significant part of Bhutan's cultural heritage. It now houses an extensive collection of Buddhist literature mostly in block-printed format, with some works several hundred years old. The library also displays the one of the biggest books in the world – "Bhutan" (a former Guinness Book of World's Record holder). Besides its sheer size and weight, the continuously printed images (printed on a roll of paper longer than a football field and with a gallon of ink) are spectacular – vivid colors and human size portraits. (Closed Sat, Sun, Govt Holidays)

Traditional Handmade Paper Factory, witness the process from start to finish. The paper is made from the barks of the black Daphne tree. The thicker paper is used for scriptures and the thinner ones are used for wrapping gifts and various other purposes.

Day 03

Thimphu - Punakha(75kms / 3 Hrs)

Drive over the high mountain pass of Dochu La Pass (3,050m) where on a clear day, there is a panoramic view of the towering Himalayan peaks. The pass is marked by 108 stupas built by the Queen Mother. On a clear day you will be able to see the snow capped Himalayan range from here.

Punakha is located in a sub-tropical valley with warm summers and pleasant winters.

Punakha served as the capital of Bhutan until 1955, when the seat of government moved to Thimphu.

On arrival, visit Chhimi Lhakhang (temple), a 30-40 minute gradual walk through a village and paddy fields. Situated on a hillock below the village of Metshina, the temple is dedicated to

Lama Drukpa Kuenley (also known as the Divine Madman). The temple is popular among women who have difficulties conceiving children.

Later visit Punakha Dzong (fortress/), which is strategically built at the junction of the Pho Chu (male) and Mo Chu (female) river. Damaged over the centuries by four catastrophic fires and an earthquake, the dzong/fortress has been fully restored to its former glory.

Punakha Dzong is one of the most beautiful fortresses in Bhutan. (Open 11am-1pm & 3pm-5 pm)

Rest of the day at leisure

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Day 04

Punakha

Today's sightseeing includes:

Sangchen Dorji Lhendrup Nunnery, perched on a ridge with spectacular views of the Punakha and Wangdue valleys. The temple houses a 14 foot bronze statue of Avalokiteshvara, one of the biggest in the country. The statue was handcrafted exclusively by local artisans. The temple houses a complex for higher studies and meditation center for nuns. Apart from religious trainings, the nuns are also provided skills such as embroidery, tailoring and statue making.

Explore the picturesque villages of Talo or Nobgang, the ancestral home of the Queen Mothers of Bhutan. The villages are scattered along a ridge above the Punakha valley at an altitude of around 2,800m and is known amongst Punakha villages for its neat and clean appearance. The women here are particularly known for their beauty.

Nalanda Monastery to visit the monks who are pursuing higher Buddhist studies and learning English as well. You may interact with the monks and chat with them. They will be more than happy to practice their English language skills with you. Rest of the day at leisure



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Day 05

Punakha - Paro (115kms/4 Hrs)

After breakfast proceed to Paro once again crossing over Dochu la Pass. Continue to Paro. This beautiful valley encapsulates a rich culture, scenic beauty and hundreds of myths and legends. It is home to many of Bhutan's oldest temples and monasteries and the country's only airport. Mt. Jhomolhari (7,300m) reigns in white glory at the northern end of the valley, its glacial waters plunging through deep gorges to form the Pa Chu (Paro River). The Paro valley is one of the kingdom's most fertile, producing the bulk of Bhutan's famous red rice from its terraced fields. In Paro, visit Kichu Lhakhang one of the oldest temples in the country. The temple is one of the 108 temples built in the Himalayas by the Tibetan king, Songtsen Gampo to subdue a demoness in the 7th century. The building of this temple marks the introduction of Buddhism in Bhutan.

Then proceed to visit the National Museum. The museum collection includes ancient Bhutanese art and artifacts, weapons, coins, stamps and a small natural history collection. (Closed on Govt. Holidays)

End the day with a visit to a Farmhouse to share a cup of traditional butter tea with the family.

Day 06

Paro - Tiger Monastery

Tiger's Nest" monastery, most famous of Bhutan's monasteries, is spectacularly located on the side of a cliff 900m above the valley floor. It is said that in the 8th century Guru Rinpoche flew on the back of a tigress from eastern Bhutan to this place and meditated in a cave here for 3 months, hence its name, "Tiger's Nest". The principal temple of the present monastic complex dates from 1692. The main structure was severely damaged by fire in 1998, but after many years of painstaking restoration work, the complex has now been fully restored to its former glory. A pilgrimage to Taktsang is the dream of a lifetime for the devout.

Total hike: 4- 5 hours



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Day 07

Paro - Delhi

Transfer to Paro International Airport for your onward flight.

Please note that some of the sights/itinerary may change due to season, weather, national holidays, and special events. We maintain the rights to alter the itinerary since tours are made in advance and unforeseen circumstances that mandate change may arise. Itinerary changes are made to improve your overall travel experience in Bhutan. The driving and hiking times mentioned are approximate times and do not include breaks in the journey for sightseeing, photo/tea/meal/rest stops. During the treks/hikes, there may be delays or diversion of hiking trails due to trail conditions, inclement weather and other unforeseen circumstances.

HOTEL OPTIONS

CITY	FIRST CLASS	SUPERIOR	Nights
THIMPHU	ARIYA	DUSIT	02
PUNAKHA	RTPO	DHENSA	02
PARO	NAKSEL	LE MERIDIEN	02

Inclusions

- Accommodation at HOTELS mentioned above or similar
- Breakfast at overnight Hotels
- Transfer/transportation (7days)
- English Speaking Guide (7days)
- Sustainable Development Fee Permit
- Processing Fee
- Applicable Taxes

Exclusions

- Sightseeing, Monument Entrance fees (Guests will have to pay the entrance fee to visit museums, monasteries, dzongs and other such sites in Bhutan. The clients can pick the sites and pay directly to the vendors)
- Lunch & Dinner (Guests will pick the restaurants and pay directly to the restaurants)
- All beverages incl. water consumed at hotels/restaurants
- Airfare
- Travel Insurance
- Hotels facilities (phone calls, laundry, internet etc)
- Tips, Gratuities or expenses not mentioned in inclusions
- Bank Transfer Fee + Others not mentioned above

