

BHUTAN TOUR

11 Days & 10 Nights



OVERVIEW: - 10 Nights 11 Days Bhutan Tour

DAY	PLACE	DATE	ALTITUDE
1	Land Paro - Transfer to Thimphu		2000 m
2	Tour of Thimphu		2200 m
3	Thimphu – Phobjikha / Gangtey		3000 m
4	Phobjikha/Gangtey - Bumthang		2800 m
5	Excursion in and around Bumthang		2800 m
6	Bumthang - Punakha		1242 m
7	Excursion in and around Punakha		1242 m
8	Punakha - Paro		2200 m
9	Excursion to Tiger's Nest		3120m
10	Excursion to Chelela Pass		4000 m
11	Depart from Paro		2200 m

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Day 1

LAND PARO - TRANSFER TO THIMPHU

Fly into Paro by DrukAir / Bhutan Airline. After completing your immigration formalities, you will be received by our representative who will be your tour guide throughout your tour and drive to Thimphu.

National Memorial Chorten, chorten literally means ' seat of faith' and Buddhists often



call such monuments the 'Mind of Buddha'. Meet the elderly local in circumambulation at the National Memorial Chorten. Takin Preserve, which houses the national animal the Takin that is only found in Bhutan. This is an extremely rare

member of the goat family. Found in herds in the very high altitudes (13,125ft and over).

Tashichhoe Dzong, a fortress of the glorious religion. It was built in 1641 by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel and was reconstructed into present structure by the late King, His majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck in

the year 1962-1969. It houses the secretariat building, the throne room and the office of the king, and the central monk body. · Craft Bazaar -A one stop place to witness Bhutanese culture and buy Bhutan made art and craft product. The Bazaar in its 80 stalls covers all aspects of the traditional arts and crafts of Bhutan. At this Bazaar craftsmen and artisans from across the country display and sell their handicrafts. And also visit other handicraft stores



EXPLORE THIMPHU

After breakfast visit following place:

- Institute for Zorig Chusum - commonly known as Arts & Crafts School or Painting School, the Institute offers a six-year course on the 13 traditional arts and crafts of



Bhutan. On a visit, one can see students learning the various skills taught at the school.

- Coronation Park - Located on the banks of the river (near the city stadium), this 5.6 acres of parkland offer a pleasant and relaxing environment to stroll or to sit and watch the river flow by.

- Kuensel Phodrang and visit tallest Buddha statue and enjoy the full view of Thimphu

Valley below.

- The Folk Heritage Museum (Phelchey Toenkhyim) - It is dedicated to connect people to the Bhutanese rural past through exhibits, demonstrations, educational programmes and documentation of rural life. The principal exhibit in the museum is a restored three storey traditional rammed mud and timber house, which dates back to the mid 19thm century. The design and form of house is that of an average household in the Wang area during that era. The age of structure demonstrates the durability and performance of the building materials. From ground to top floor, household objects, typical domestic tools and equipments that would have been used by a family during that period are put on display. The museum is also developing some of the native trees and plants that were used for various domestic purposes in the rural households.



- Changangkha Lhakhang - It is a fortress like temple and monastic school perched on a ridge above Thimphu, south of Motithang. The temple was established in 12th century on a site chosen by Lama Phajo Drugom Shigpo, who came from Tibet. The central statue here is Chenrezig in a manifestation with 11 heads. From temple courtyard, there is fascinating view of Thimphu valley.
- Weekend Market - Every Saturday and Sunday most of Thimphu's scant population and many valley dwellers congregate on the banks of the river where weekend market is held. It is an interesting place to visit and provides opportunity to mingle with the local people.

THIMPHU – PHOBJIKHA/GANGTEY

After breakfast, travel to Punakha through Dochula Pass (3140 m). In the clear spring sky,



you can enjoy the panoramic view of the Himalayan Mountain ranges. . Then pass by the beautiful 108 chortens built on the hill by Her Majesty Ashi Dorji Wangmo

Wangchuck (Queen Mother of Bhutan) for the security and well being of His Majesty, the King of Bhutan.

The valley of Gangtey, is one of the most beautiful and unspoiled places in Bhutan. The surprise of finding such a wide, flat valley without any trees after the hard climb through dense forests is augmented by an impression of vast space, and is an extremely rare experience in Bhutan where most of the valleys are tightly enclosed. A few kilometers beyond the Gangtey Monastery, on the valley floor lies the fascinating valley of Phobjikha. Latter visit Gangtey Goempa Perched on a small hill that rises from the valley floor, the Gangtey Monastery is the only Nyingmapa monastery on the western side of the Black Mountain's Gangtey valley.

The Monastery is surrounded by a large village inhabited mainly by the families of the 140 Gomchens who take care of the Monastery.

Gangtey was founded by Pema Trinley, the grand son of Pema Lingpa, the famous Nyingmapa saint of Bhutan. In 1613, Pema Trinley establish the monastery and became the first Gangtey Tulku. The religious traditions of Pema Lingpa still taught there. The second Tulku, Tenzin Legpa Dondrup (1645 to 1726), enhanced the size of Gangtey while keeping up good relations with Drukpas, and rebuilt the monastery in the form of a Dzong.



Black Necked Crane Information Centre

Situated on the edge of the forest and wetland along the main road of Phobjikha valley, the black-necked crane information Centre has an observation room equipped with high power telescope and spotting scopes for catching the best view of the cranes. The centre also offers display information that outline the natural and cultural history of the area. There is a small gift shop, which sells handicrafts produced by the local people.

Day 4

PHOBJIKHA/GANGTEY – BUMTHANG

After breakfast, travel to Bumthang through Trongsa. The drive will take you through dense forests of oak and blue pine trees and through the subtropical vegetation. The journey will also take you through the village of Nobding and Pele la pass (3300m).

Throughout your trip you will come across the beautiful sceneries of rural Bhutan, with scattered settlements



far from the road which makes for good photographing. You will also pass through open

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meadows, and valley of yak herders and several other villages via Chendebji Chorten(Stupa) .

Lunch will be served enroute. On arrival at Trongsa, you will stop for refreshment and also visit Trongsa Dzong, which is the most impressive dzong in Bhutan. Built in 1644 by



the Shabdrung, the dzong is an architectural masterpiece.

Then continue your travel to Bumthang passing through Yotong La Pass (3400 m). Just before reaching Bumthang you will come across “Yathra” Weaving Centre at Zugney Village where you

will see local weavers weaving Yathra. Yathra is the name for the colorful, hand-woven woolen cloth (often with geometric designs) that is produced in this region and wool used for this type of textile is sheep wool as the sheep is reared in this Bumthang Valley. Yathra is made into jackets or bags, etc. Then you will be driven further to Bumthang Valley. On arrival at Bumthang, check into your hotel in Bumthang.

Day 5

BUMTHANG LOCAL SIGHTSEEING

Jambay Lhakhang

It was divined that the supine demoness was causing obstruction to the spread of Buddhism, and temples were constructed on her body parts that spread across Tibet, Bhutan and the borderlands. The best known of these temples are Jokhang in Lhasa, Kichu in Paro, Bhutan and Jambay Lhakhang in Bumthang District, Bhutan.

Other, lesser-known temples in Bhutan have been destroyed, but it is believed that, among others, Kongchogsum in Bumthang, Khaine in Lhuntse and two temples in Haa District may have part of these 108 temples. Jambay Lhakhang was visited by Padmasambhava and restored by King Sindhu Raja after the former returned his life force.

Kurje Lhakhang

During the 8th century, Sendhu Raja, who was the king of Bumthang fell ill, and he invited Guru Rinpoche who brought Buddhism to Bhutan to cure him. Guru



Rinpoche found out that the King's illness was caused by the local deities including the powerful Shelging Karpo.

Finding the cause of the illness, Guru chased the deities

into a cave, and Guru meditated inside the cave for three months. Guru then subdued the deities including the powerful Shelging Karpo and left his body imprint inside the cave, thus giving the name Kurje (Body Imprint). Beside the Monastery is a tall cypress tree that is believed to have sprouted from the walking stick of Guru Rinpoche.

Mebartsho

The Tang Rivers cuts through the first line of hills, forming a narrow gorge which contains one of the great pilgrimage sites in Bhutan: Mebartsho, "The burning lake" Today it is a sacred pilgrimage site where the devoted Bhutanese float small butter lamps and makes a wish. Images of Pema Lingpa and his two sons are carved on the rock. There is no sanctuary but the site of the gorge itself is sacred.

Jakar Dzong

Founded by great grand-father of the first Shabdrung, the Dzong was initially built as a monastery in 1549. It was upgraded after the Shabdrung had



firmly established his power in 1646. The Dzong is now used as administrative centre for Bumthang valley, and houses the regional monk body.

Swiss Farm & Red Panda Beer Factory

The Swiss Farm was founded by Fritz Maurer, a Swiss who came to Bhutan in the mid 1960s to help develop farming in the Bumthang region as part of the Pro Bhutan Foundation. He got married to a Bhutanese and started a Swiss cheese factory and in 1996 set up the brewery. The small family run factory produces variety of Swiss cheeses, clover honey, apple cider, wine, apple brandy and local draft beer called Red panda. Beer and cheese tasting can be arranged. The family also runs a guest house.

BUMTHANG – PUNAKHA

Chimi Lhakhang

The Chimi Lhakhang, situated on a hillock in the centre of the valley, is dedicated to Lama Drukpa Kuenley, who in the late 15th century used humour, songs and outrageous behaviour to dramatise his teachings and due to this also known as "Divine Madman".



This temple is also known as the temple of fertility. It is widely believed that couples who do not have children and wanting one, if they pray at this temple, they are usually blessed with a child very soon. It is about 30 minute walk across field from the road to the temple. The trail leads across rice fields to the tiny

settlement of Pana, meaning "field". It then follows a tiny stream downhill to Yoaka and across more fields before making a short climb to Chimi Lhakhang.

Punakha Dzong

The Dzong is open for visitors during Punakha festival and in summer months when the monk body moves to Thimphu. The dzong is historically important and stands as the symbol for a unified Bhutan. Punakha had served as the capital of Bhutan from 1637 till 1907.



Built strategically at the junction of Pho Chhu and Mo Chhu rivers in 1637, by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal to serve as the religious and administrative centre of the region, Punakha Dzong has played an important role in Bhutan's history.

Punakha has been inextricably linked to some of the most momentous events in the Bhutanese history and deserves its reputation as one of the most beautiful and significant regions at the heart of Bhutanese culture.

EXCURSION IN AND AROUND PUNAKHA

**Day
7**

Hike to Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten - A beautiful hike takes one to the regal Khamsum Yuelley Namgel Chorten, which was built to remove negative forces and promote peace, stability and harmony in the changing world. The Chorten dominates the upper Punakha Valley with commanding views across the Mo Chhu and up towards the mountainous peaks of Gasa and beyond. After lunch visit following place Limbukha -



Drive towards limbukha village later walk across the suspension bridge (about 200m long) through absolutely fresh breeze and fascinating view of Dzong. Follow the farm houses gradually climbing

towards Dompala hills. The view of Dzong, Pho Chhu, Mo Chhu rivers and surrounding village is superb amidst chirpine forests.

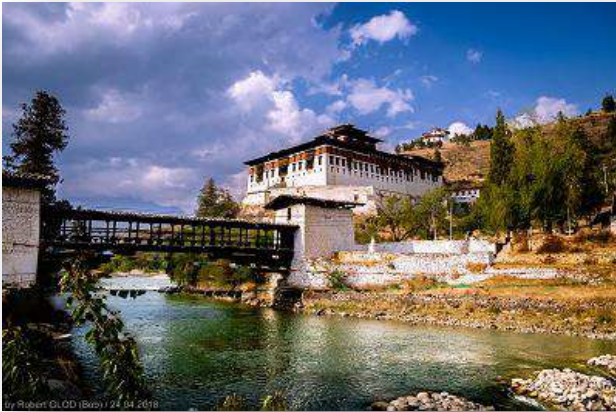
The climb is another two and half hours to Limbukha. Limbukha farmers grow Bhutan's famous red rice which is supposed to have medicinal values. This particular rice needs clean mountain spring so that the taste is good and nutritional value maintained.

Limbukha is also known for its love of peace and tranquility. Legends say that during medieval wars the "limpus" or the people of Limbukha always volunteered as peace negotiators. This is also depicted during yearly festival called 'Serda' when the men are found carrying peace flags instead of swords and fireworks the drive to Gangtey valley .

Day 8

PUNAKHA – PARO

After breakfast travel to paro. On arrival at paro check into your hotel and visit the following: National Museum, housed in the Ta Dzong (watchtower). Here an intriguing



collection of artifacts provide a wonderful introduction to the rich culture and heritage of the Kingdom. Paro Dzong, a fine example of Bhutanese historic architecture. It is also known as the Rinpung Dzong which means a "fortress that sits on a heap of jewels".

The dzong was built in the 16th century on the foundation of a monastery built by Guru Rinpoche (who is regarded as the "second

Buddha."). From the dzong, walk further down to Nyamai Zampa, an oldest traditional cantilever bridge in Bhutan.

In the evening stroll through the Paro town and visit local handicraft stores.

EXCURSION TO TIGER'S NEST MONASSATERY

Day 9

It is one of the most famous monasteries, Tiger's nest located on the side of a cliff 900m above the Paro valley floor. It is said that Guru Rinpoche arrived here on the back of a tigress and meditated at this monastery and hence it is called "Tiger's Nest". This site has been recognized as a most sacred place and visited by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in 1646 and now visited by all Bhutanese at least once in their lifetime. On 19 April, 1998, a fire severely damaged the main structure of building but now this Bhutanese jewel has been restored to its original splendour. Lunch will be served in tiger nest cafe.

On the way visit Kyichu temple, one of the 108 temples built in the 7th century by the Tibetan King Songsten Gampo. The story goes that a giant demon lay across the whole area of Tibet and the Himalayas and was preventing the spread of Buddhism. To overcome her, King Songtsen Gampo decided to build 108 temples, which would be placed on all the points of her body. Of these 108 temples, 12 were built in accordance with precise plans. Thus, it happened that in about the year AD 638 the temple of Jokhang in Lhasa was built over the very heart of the demon.



Day 10

DAY EXCURSION TO CHELELA PASS & SHORT HIKE

After breakfast we will leave for Kila Gompa hike (*total time around 3.5 hours*). First drive about 45 minutes from Paro to Chele La pass at about



3800 metres where you will have a splendid view of the Himalaya range, weather permitting. From the road you can walk up the incline around 1.5 hours towards the highest point at 4500 meters for an even better view of the mountains, including Mount Jomolhari

and other further peaks such as Kanchenjunga. Walk down the hill through rhododendron and hemlock forest towards Kila Gompa, a nunnery inhabited by about 30 nuns, and then on past to another temple called Gorina Lhakhang where there is a small monk residence (the descent will be another 1.5 hours in total). From here you can return to the car, which takes around 30 minutes.

Evening drive back to Paro.

Day 11

DEPART PARO