

# PUNAKHA FESTIVAL TOUR

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> March 2020

9 Days & 8 Nights



## OVERVIEW: - 8 Nights 9 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 – Punakha (Festival)		1242 m
5	Punakha (Festival)		1242 m
6	Punakha - Paro		2200 m
7	Excursion to Tiger's Nest		3120 m
8	Excursion to Haa Valley		3056 m
9	Depart from Paro		2200 m

Email: [bhutantravelgate@gmail.com](mailto:bhutantravelgate@gmail.com) Website: [www.bhutantourpackages.travel](http://www.bhutantourpackages.travel)

Ph: +97517126248 /77126248

## 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.

### **PHOBJIKHA/GANGTEY – PUNAKHA**

Day  
4



Its a 3 hours drive from Phobjikha to 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**

Built strategically at Thimphu town 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. Damaged by four catastrophic fires and an earthquake, the Dzong has been fully



restored by the present King. The Dzong is open for visitors during Punakha festival and in summer months when the monk body moves to Thimphu.

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. Punakha had served as the capital of Bhutan from 1637 till 1907. The dzong is historically important and stands as the symbol for a unified Bhutan.

**Day  
5**

**EXCURSION IN AND AROUND PUNAKHA**

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 –



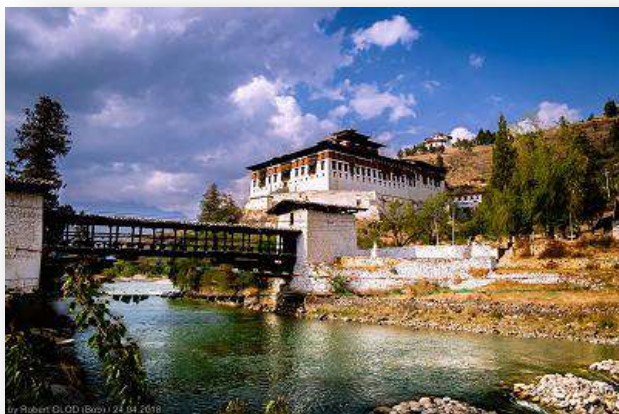
Drive towards limbukha village later walk across the suspension bridge (about 200m long) through absolutely fresh breeze and fascinating view of Dzong. Follow the farm houses gradually climbing towards Dompala hills. The view of Dzong, Pho Chhu, Mo Chhu rivers and surrounding village is superb amidst 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  
6**

**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.

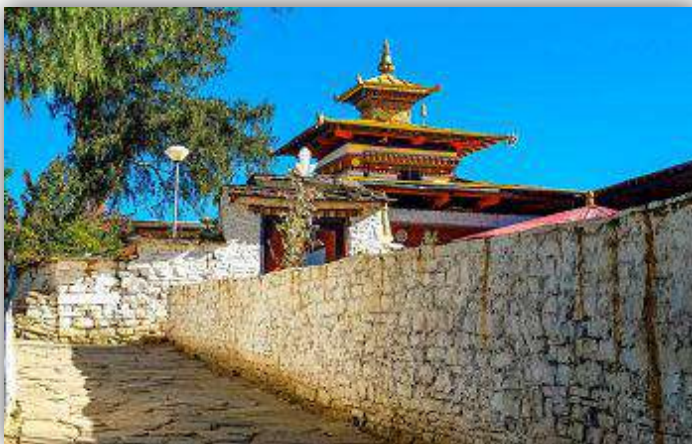
In the evening stroll through the Paro town and visit local handicraft stores. Over night at Paro.

### EXCURSION TO TIGER'S NEST MONASSATERY

After breakfast, drive to base of taktshang monastery. The walk up to the viewpoint will take about 1 – 1 ½ hrs depending on your fitness and from view Point you will enjoy a spectacular view of the monastery clinging to the side of the cliff. Stop for refreshment at the View Point Cafeteria. Then walk further up to the monastery which will take about 1 hour. 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. The



principal Lhakhang (monastery) of the present monastic complex dates from 1692. Taktsang was damaged severely by fire in 1998 but has now been fully restored to its former glory. After visiting the monastery, walk downhill back to the road on the way stop for lunch at the view point cafeteria and then walk further downhill to the road point. Then drive back to hotel.



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 8

### 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 9

### DEPART PARO