

Bhutan Peak Adventure

your adventure starts here...



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About Bhutan

Bhutan, also known as “Drukyl”, which means “Land of the Thunder Dragon” and which remained isolated until 1974, is the youngest democratic country in the world. Situated in the Eastern Himalayas and sandwiched between Tibet in the North and India in the South, Bhutan, the last Himalayan Buddhist country, is also the only country in the world where Vajrayana Buddhism is predominantly practiced.

Seventy-two percent of the country is still covered by forests and its pristine nature is so inviting to wildlife of every kind. Diverse in climate and culture, Bhutan is proud to be unique as a nation in the 21st century. His Majesty the King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the 4th King of Bhutan, described Bhutan’s development philosophy as a process towards Gross National Happiness (as opposed to GDP)

Religion

Religion plays a very important role in peoples’ day to day life. It is believed that Guru Rinpoché, who is revered as a second Buddha in Bhutan, is credited with having brought Buddhism to the country in the 8th century AD. The Drukpa Kagyu and Nyingmapa denominations, both rooted in the Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) form of Buddhism, are followed in Bhutan.

Every year, in different part of the country, festivals are held to commemorate the great deeds of Buddha, Guru Rinpoche, and other great masters, who spread Buddhism in Bhutan. On this auspicious day, mask dances are performed by lay monks, which depict the glory of Guru Rinpoche. Mask dances are composed mainly to convey religious messages to the people.

Sustainable Tourism

Bhutan opened its door to tourism in the year 1974. The kingdom represents a mystical destination left for those seeking a journey back into time. Visitors walk into a rich and vibrant culture, still living in dances and songs, festivals and legends, art and architecture, all in a pristine natural setting of majestic mountains and lush, pristine valleys.

In order to provide sustainable tourism industry in Bhutan, the government of Bhutan has imposed a policy of low volume and high quality tourists to ensure that Bhutanese traditions

Day 6: Tongsa – Jakar

The road climbs rapidly through a series of hairpin turns out of Tongsa, with great views back towards the dzong and out across the valley. After passing through cultivated fields, we will re-enter the forest. Approximately 28km out of Tongsa, we will reach the Yutong-La (3310m). From that pass, we will descend to a low point of 2580m at a village called Chumey, where the scenery once again changes as we enter the wide-open Bumthang Valleys.

Day 7: Jakar – Ura

The height gain of 880m to our fourth pass, the Ura-La, is achieved over the course of 40km of biking. As we approach the pass, there will be a panorama of the Himalayan mountain of Lunana to the north. Members of the group who enjoy steep “off-road” descents may choose to follow the old path to Ura, which descends directly from the pass. We don’t recommend this route for those with slick tires on their bikes. The more cautious “roadies” will descend from the pass by long loops, through pastureland and fields, to Ura village.

Day 8: Ura – Mongar

After a short descent to a bridge, we will immediately start climbing to the Thumsing-La, Bhutan’s highest road pass at 3700m. This pass marks the boundary between Central and Eastern Bhutan and is the last of our high altitude climbs.

Day 9: Mongar – Tashigang

Over the next 17 km, we will climb to Kori-La (2390m), the first of two relatively “minor” passes that we will face on the remainder of our journey. At that point, the road begins a rapid descent through corn fields and banana groves and after 9 km, reaches the start of the famous hair-pin turns at Yadi (1460m). Thirteen miles of interminable bends later, we arrive at a bridge across the Sheri river. At 1800 meters, this will be the second longest descent of the trip. A steep 8 km climb will bring us to the end of a rather exhilarating day of biking.

Day 10: Tashigang – Khaling

At Tashigang, we will have reached the easternmost point of our journey. We will begin our day by climbing for 25km until we reach the university at Kanglung. From there, we will continue to a small pass at 2390 feet. A few miles down the road, we will reach the quaint village of Khaling (2050m).

Day 11: Khaling – Camping Area

We will begin today’s ride by climbing to another “minor” pass at 2380 meters, before beginning our descent into the check-post at Wamrong (1950m). A long climb, with the road switching from left to right across the spine of the ridge, leads to the high point at 2380m feet and then down through two small settlements to a campsite on the ridge.

Day 12: Arrive at Samdrup Jongkhar

The road descends rapidly to the plain through a dense tropical forest with an abundance of teak and bamboo until we reach Samdrup Jongkhar. After lunch, we will drive back to Bumthang.

Day 13: Bumthang – Thimphu Drive to Thimphu.

Day 14: Departure

Our representative will drive you to the Paro Airport to see you off.



Biking Around Bhutan (13 Nights / 14 Days)



One needs to be very physically fit to bike on the roads of the mountainous terrain of Bhutan. Bhutan's inviting nature and environment calls the bikers to get the best of Bhutan on wheels. We will be experiencing all 3 climatic zones from alpine, temperate and semi-tropical vegetation.

Day 1: Paro

On your flight to Bhutan, you will view the mighty snow-capped mountains in the Himalayas. For people flying from Kathmandu, you will experience a view of the Majestic Mount Everest and other tallest mountains of the world like Makalu and Kanchenjunga. Upon arrival at Paro airport and after completing visa formalities, you will be greeted and received by our representative who will then take you to you for lunch and to your hotel.

Day 2: Paro – Thimphu

The first tour on bike starts from Paro, and head towards Thimphu, the capital city. The ride will be smooth and easy following the winding roads and the gush of the crystal clear river of Paro ending at the Chuzom where two rivers from Paro and Thimphu meet. We will bike to the Late King's Memorial Chorten, the traditional medicine hospitals, the Buddhist thangka painting school, and the National Library.

Days 3: Thimphu – Wangdi

After breakfast, we will tackle the 22km, 590m climb to the first pass, the Dochu-La (3050m). On the clear day, one will be able to view the sister mountains of Gangar Phunsum. A lunch will be served at the cafeteria at Dochu-La pass. The descent from the Dochu-La into the Punakha Valley is scenic.

Day 4: Wangdi – Gangtey

This is the first big climb of our trip, and we will gain almost 1460m of altitude over the next 40km, culminating at the junction with the side road into Gangtey. For those with energy to spare, a further 490m ascent up this rough jeep road will lead to a small pass overlooking the Phobjika Valley. Phobjika is the home of the black-necked crane, which migrates here from the harsh winter of the Tibetan Plateau every winter. A short descent leads into the small village of Gangtey.

Day 5: Gangtey – Tongsa

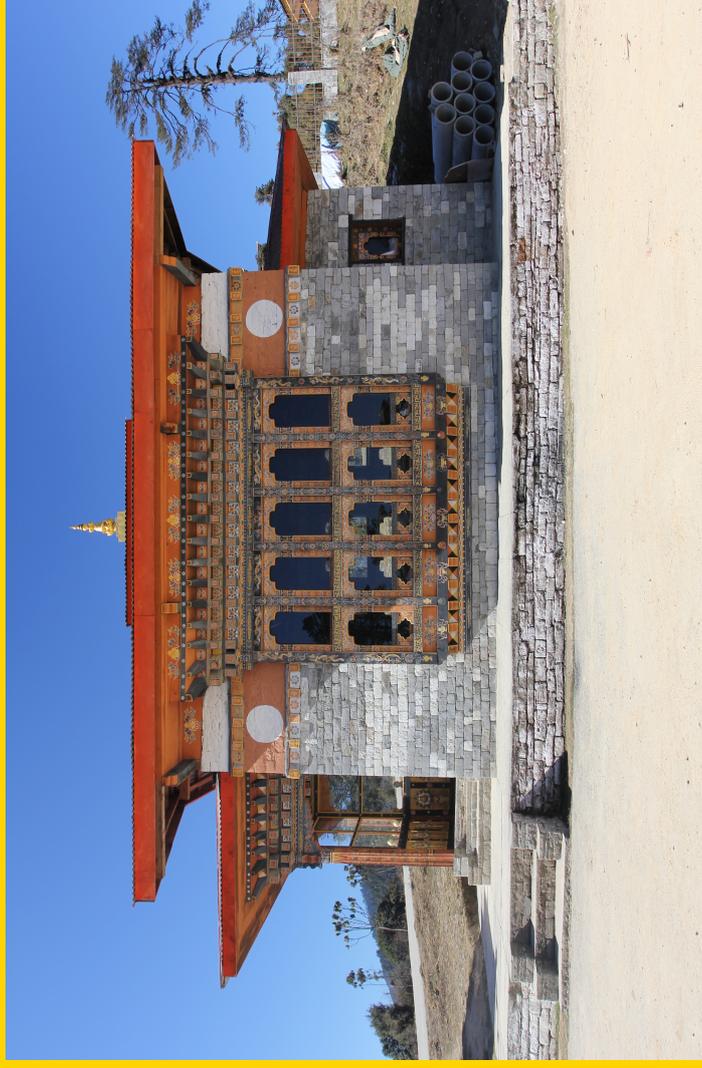
We will load our bikes into the support vehicles for the short (300m of ascent) climb back to the pass, for the superb "off-road" descent back down to the main road. Heading eastwards once again, we will continue our climb for 14 km to the Pele-La (3220m). We are likely to spot langur (monkeys) on the way. Mount Jomolhari (7300m) is visible on a clear day.



When to Come

Bhutan is open to visitors every day of the year. The times during the festivals (specifically the months of March through May and September through November are quite busy where flights are often completely sold-out as well as hotels are fully booked. To help entice travelers to visit during the non-festival times, the government provides a discount of 20% during the "low season" making it much more affordable.

During the winter months, the temperatures can be very cold in some places during the night but is still reasonable during the day time in the sun. The vegetation is mostly brown due to the lack of rain but usually the skies are clear and the full mountain range is visible.



Tours in Bhutan

Unescorted tourism in Bhutan is not permitted. Each guest visiting Bhutan must come as a guest of a licensed tour operator on an all-inclusive package. The guest must also be guided through the entire duration of their stay. The minimum amount of the package tour is set by the government and there are strict guidelines in place to ensure that no operator is undercutting. If you arrange to take a tour for less than the regulated amount, you risk having the tour cancelled and you may end up in very low quality hotels.

Visa

Obtaining a visa to visit Bhutan is very easy as you do not need to send your passport to an embassy. Once the tour has been booked and the funds have been deposited, Bhutan Peak Adventure will apply for your visa (we need just a copy of the first page of your passport, your occupation and your contact information). When the visa has been approved (approximately one week) we will forward a visa clearance letter which you must print and bring with you.

Cost

The cost of visiting Bhutan is typically more expensive than visiting other countries in Asia, however the price quoted is all-inclusive and depends on the number of nights that you will spend in Bhutan.

For nights in December, January, February, June, July, and August, the price is \$200US per day per person. For all other times of the year, the price is \$250US per day per person. The visa application fee is \$40US per person and must be paid along with the tour payment.

Day 5: Jimilangtsho – Simkota

Trek distance: 11 km, time: 4–5 hours, ascent: 820m, descent: 400m, camp altitude: 4110m

The trail takes you through dwarf rhododendron bushes and the lake. You will be able to observe the nomadic life of the yak herders on the way today. The camp is beside the Simkota lake.

Day 6: Simkota – Phajoding

Trek distance: 10 km, time: 3–4 hours, ascent: 130m, descent: 680m, camp altitude: 3750m

The trek begins with a gradual climb eventually reaching 4210m at Labana La. In clear weather you will be able to see the spectacular view of Mt. Gangkar Phuensum, the highest mountain in the country and her sister mountains. Descend down to the family of Monasteries at Phajoding which serves as the View point of the Thimphu valley.

Day 7: Phajoding – Thimphu

Trek distance: 5 km, time: 2–3 hours, descent: 1130m

The trail leads downhill till your meeting with the transportation bus which will take you to your hotel. You should be able to get to your hotel before lunch. Rest of the day at leisure. It is possible to stay either in Thimphu or in closer to the airport in Paro on this final evening.

Day 8: Departure

After breakfast, our representative will transfer you to the Airport and see you off for your onward flight.



Druk Path Trek (7 Nights / 8 Days)



Photo Courtesy of Tashi Tshering

Bhutan offers some of the best trekking experiences that you get. The trails are kept in very good condition because of the limited number of trekkers. There are always guides with trekking groups who will ensure that campsites are left in a completely clean condition to benefit the trekkers coming next. Trekking of any duration can be arranged from just a few nights out to more than 20 days.

The Druk Path trek is very popular because it is short enough to be done in a single week and is easily shortened to 5 nights so that you can include a visit to Taksang.

Day 1: Arrival at Paro

On arrival at the Paro Airport, you will be received by the representative of Bhutan Peak Adventure who will then take you to your hotel. After lunch visit Drugyel Dzong or the Fortress of Victory from where the Bhutanese repelled many Tibetan invasions. The Dzong though in ruins holds great historical importance to the Bhutanese. From there, in fine weather, one can view the majestic Mt. Jhumolhari standing at an altitude of 7329m above the sea. Other places of interest include the National Museum, Paro Rinpong Dzong and the local market.

Day 2: Paro – Jele Dzong

Trek distance: 10km, time: 4–5 hours, ascent: 1090m, camp altitude: 3480m

This is a short trekking day and the trail is uphill through conifer forests. The view of the Paro Valley from the camp is absolutely breathtaking. Maximum altitude during the hike is Jele La at 3560m.

Day 3: Jele Dzong – Jangchulakha

Trek distance: 10 km, time: 3–4 hours, ascent: 310m, camp altitude: 3780m

Gradual climbs and a few steep climbs take you through thick alpine forests and rhododendron bushes. You will see yaks and yak herders around the camp today.

Day 4: Jangchulakha – Jimilangtsho

Trek distance: 11 km., time: 4–5 hours, descent: 230m, ascent: 330m, camp altitude: 3880m

The trail follows the ridge and on a clear day one will be surrounded by beautiful mountains and river valleys. The camp site is near the Lake Jimilangtsho known for their giant sized trout.

Includes:

- Hotel (twin sharing), 3 star quality
- Meals (three meals per day)
- Transportation (vehicle) within Bhutan
- English speaking guide for all days
- Entrance fees to museums

What you need to pay for:

- Airfare
- Drinks
- Offerings and Donations to monasteries (optional)
- Personal expenses such as laundry, phone calls
- Tips for guide and driver

If you wish to stay in a higher quality hotel, we can provide this at an additional cost.

Extra Charges and Discounts

For single travellers there is an additional surcharge of \$40 per day. For a group of 2 people, the surcharge is \$30/day per person. There is no charge for children below 6 years. A discount of 25% for children aged 6 through 12 and for students under the age of 25 (please send a copy of your student ID card).

Payment

Credit cards are not currently accepted as a form of payment. The tour amount must be sent via wire transfer in US dollars.

Altitude

While Bhutan is situated in the Himalaya Mountains, most tourist activities (except for trekking) rarely exceed an altitude of 2300m (7500 feet). Altitude sickness while on cultural tours is generally not a concern.

Sickness / Medicine

Due to the altitude of Bhutan, there is no risk of Malaria except along the Indian border at the south. Routine vaccinations (Hepatitis A, Tetanus, and Typhoid Fever) should be discussed with your doctor.

Medicines are not readily available in Bhutan. You should bring all medicines (including analgesics and allergy). Due to higher altitude, we do recommend sunscreen, especially for the lips which can become easily burnt at any time of the year.

Day Hikes

Some of the monasteries will require some hiking; especially Taksang. The hikes can be quite strenuous and if you are not normally active, you may find them particularly challenging. Some people may prefer to have hiking boots for these treks but they are not required.

A full list of details of what we recommend to bring is found on our web site.

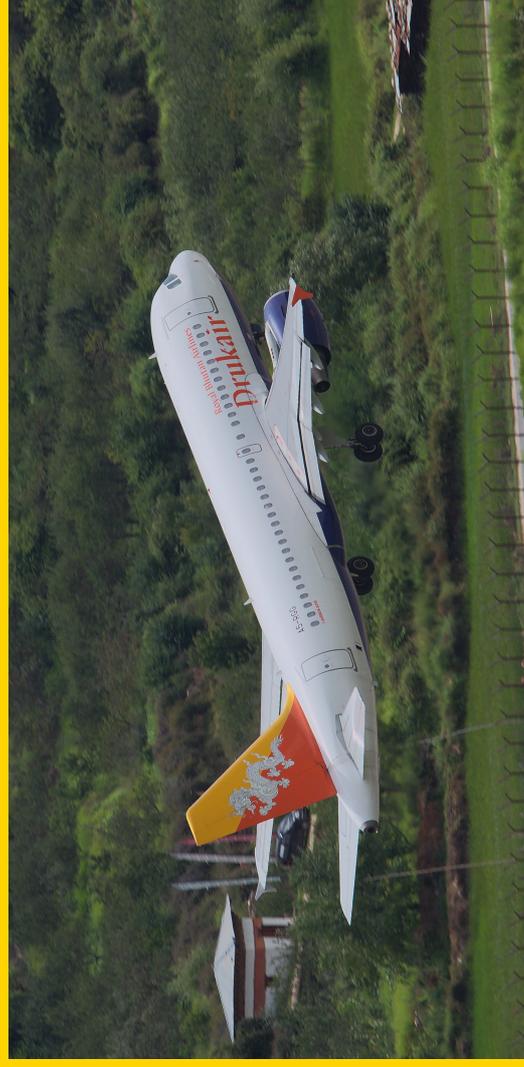
Getting to Bhutan

The only airline operating into Bhutan is the national carrier Drukair. Drukair has a small fleet of Airbus 319 planes and an ATR-42.

Landing at the International Airport in Paro will likely be one of the most exciting and memorable landings you will ever make, especially when arriving in one of the Airbus aircraft. The winds are often from the south requiring the airplane to make a 180 degree turn between two tall mountains and then land in a valley which is less than ½ kilometers wide.

All take offs and landings can only be done under clear visibility and this requirement often results in delayed flights. It is highly advise that travelers leave significant time during the monsoon season to make their onward connections or to purchase a more flexible ticket that can be changed if you miss your initial flight.

Travellers are responsible for ensuring that they hold the correct transit visas for the countries they will be connecting in. Generally most nationals can enter Nepal, Thailand and Singapore without pre-arranging a visa, however please check with the respective embassy before travelling.



Day 10: Paro

Taktsang

After breakfast, we drive to the famous Taktsang Lhakhang “The Tiger’s Lair”. Clinging to a black rock face, 900 meters above the valley floor, nestles Taktsang Lhakhang, one of the holiest and the most beautiful site of Bhutan. Taktsang acquires its name from the legend of its foundation, when in the 8th Century Guru Rinpoché who is widely revered as the Second Buddha arrived from Tibet flying across the mountains on the back of a tigress. Evening would be a free to do some shopping for souvenirs. Overnight in hotel.

Day 11: Departure

After breakfast, our representative will transfer you to the Airport and see you off for your onward flight.



Sacred Pilgrimage (continued) (10 Nights / 11 Days)

Tamshing Lhakhang

Just opposite to Kurje Lhakhang, lies the Tamshing Lhakhang which by built in 1501 by Tertön Pema Lingpa, the tantric saint, who is also believed to be an incarnation of Guru Padmasambhava, whose lineage the Royal Family, traces their ancestors too. This is an important temple of the Nyingmapa sect.

Nunnery of Gangtey Trulku

Founded by the 9th Gangtey Trulku, we visit the only Nunnery in Bumthang which provides a degree in Buddhist Philosophy.

Day 7: Bumthang

Tharpaling Goenpa

This Goenpa is established by Master Longchen Rabjam in the year 1352. Tharpaling Goenpa serves as the centre for spreading the teachings of Radiant Vajra Heart of the Great Perfection. Tharpaling is named after the countless followers of the heart essence of the Luminosity vehicle who achieved liberation in lifetime.

Nimalung

This monastery is a Buddhist college founded by His Holiness Dejum Rinpoche. The followers are of the Nyingmapa sect. During visit, you can see a small monastery which was founded at the time of the construction of this monastery. Possible chances to grace the reincarnation of His Holiness Dejum Rinpoche.

Day 8: Gangtey

Gangtey Goenpa

The only monastery of the Nyingmapa sect of Buddhism in central Bhutan, this monastery is the main seat of the Pema Lingpa tradition, whose ancestry is traced in the Royal family. Overnight in Guest House.

Day 9: Wangdiphodrang – Paro

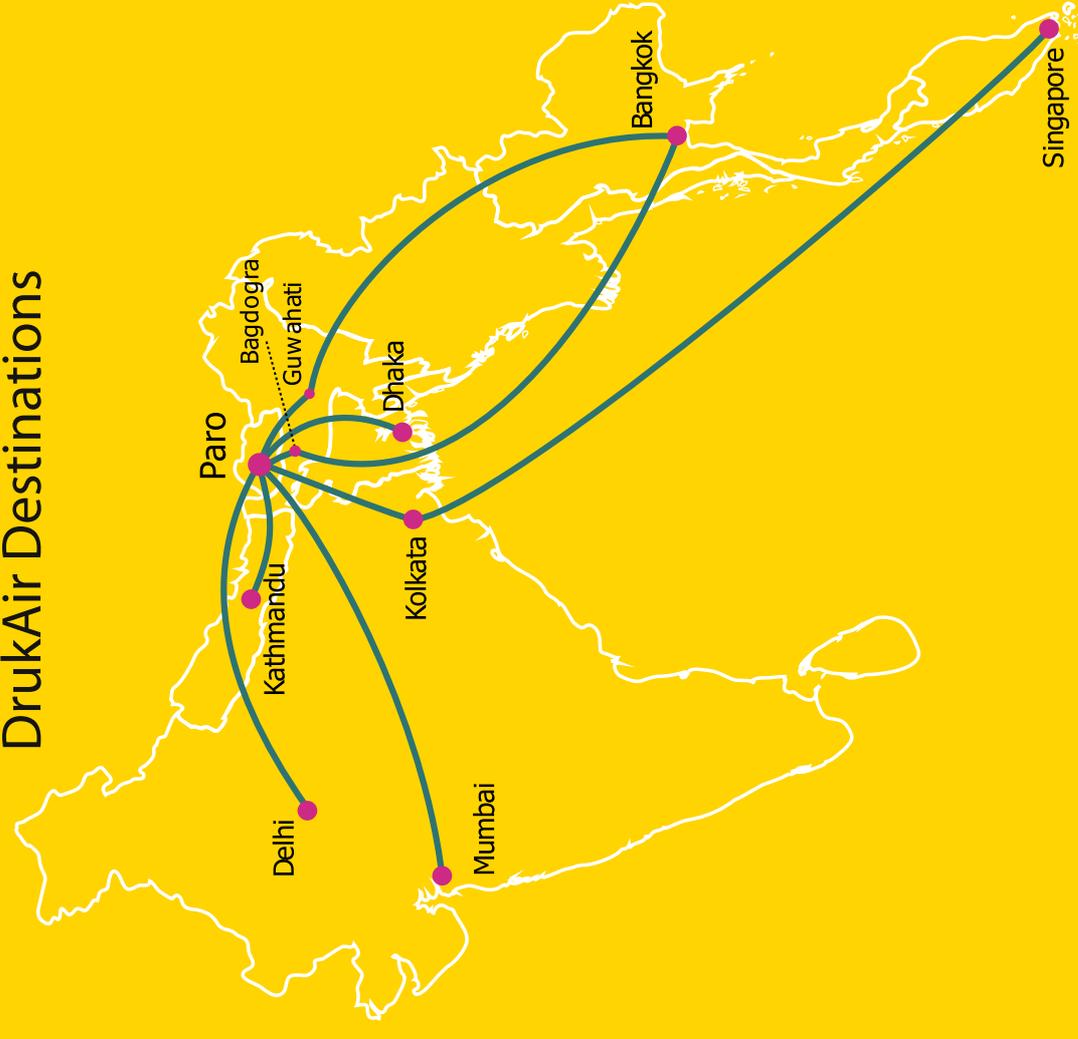
Beylangdra

This is a holy pilgrimage site, built onto the sheer rock. It is a one and a half hour walk from the point where the road ends. This site is associated with Guru Rinpoche who is believed to have meditated for 7 days.

Simtokha Dzong

On the way to Paro we will visit Simtokha Dzong, the oldest Dzong in Bhutan, built in 1629 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyel who unified Bhutan. Overnight in Paro.

DrukAir Destinations



If you are arriving from Kathmandu, ask for seat on the left side of the aircraft for a spectacular view of the Himalayan Mountain Range.

Business class upgrades on DrukAir (Airbus 319 only) are generally very inexpensive and provide a lot of extra comfort for your trip. Upgrades are even possible at check-in time but be sure to carry cash (USD is always accepted).

It is possible to arrange tickets on DrukAir on your own through their website www.drukair.com or you allow us to book the tickets on your behalf.

Heaven on Earth (5 Nights / 6 Days)

Day 1: Arrive Paro

The flight to Paro offers breathtaking view of the mighty Himalayas. On the arrival at Paro International Airport, complete your visa formalities and you will be received by your representative, who will accompany you for the tour.

We will drive to visit Ta Dzong, built in 17th century as a watch tower for Paro Dzong. Visit Rinpung Dzong. We also pay a visit to the Holy and sacred Kyichu Lhakhang. After lunch, we proceed to Thimphu. The drive to Thimphu is very scenic as we follow the river valley to the capital city. One will witness the change in vegetation as Thimphu and Paro is a complete alpine Zone. Before entering into the capital city, we visit the Simtokha Dzong, the oldest fortress in Bhutan. It was built by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, the founder of Bhutan in the year 1629 AD. Sightseeing in Thimphu.

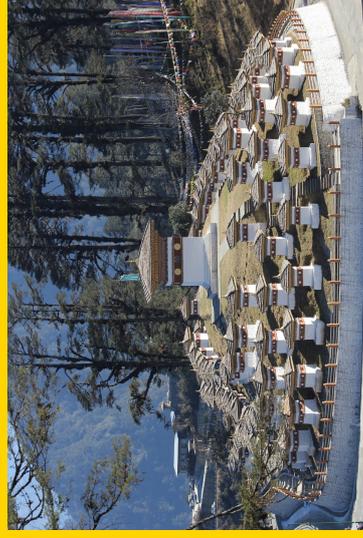
Day 2: Thimphu

Drive to the mini zoo to see the most endangered national animal of Bhutan called the Takin. We then visit the Buddhist Nunery. After lunch, we visit the Memorial Chorten, a stupa built in memory of the Late Third King of Bhutan. Drive to Buddha's point and see the World's largest sitting Shakyamuni Buddha statue. The area is still under construction. In the evening, visit Tashichhodzong, beautiful medieval fortress built in 1641 by Zhabdrung Nawang Namgyal. The evening will be free.



Day 3: Thimphu – Punakha

After breakfast and before proceeding to Punakha, we will visit the post office to have an opportunity to see and purchase the world famous and the award winning stamps of Bhutan. We then drive to Punakha, crossing Dochula, a high altitude pass at an altitude of 3,100 m. Constructed on top of a hill are 108 beautiful monumental chortens built by Her Majesty Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck. On a clear day, one can enjoy one of the most spectacular views of the highest peaks in Bhutan. Visit Punakha Dzong.



and architecture is the example of fine Bhutanese architecture and is one of its kinds in the world. The hike to Khamsum Yelley will be approximately 45 minutes.

Chimi Lhakhang

The "Temple of Fertility" Chimi literally means "No dog". This monastery is dedicated to Lam Drukpa Kinley, one of the most popular saints, who lived in Bhutan. Overnight in Hotel.

Day 5: Punakha – Bumthang

We will be driving to the historic district of Bhutan and a religious place of Bumthang. The name "Bumthang" is derived from the shape of a vessel called "Bumpa", which is used for holding holy water. "Bum" means vessel and "Thang" means a field, or literally known as "Beautiful field". One can relax or stroll through the town after the tiring 8 hour journey. Overnight in hotel.

Day 6: Bumthang

Jambay Lhakhang

This monastery is one of the 108 temples constructed by the Tibetan ruler Songtsen Gyampo in 659 AD. It is believed that this monastery was built on the body part of an Ogress who was obstructing the spread of Buddhism in one night.

Kurje Lhakhang

One of the Bhutan's most sacred monasteries, "Kurje" is the name derived after the body imprints of the Guru Padmasambhava and dedicated to Guru who was supposed to have meditated there in the 8th century. This temple is located just a few meters beyond Jambay Lhakhang. The body print of the Guru can still be seen in the cave enshrined in the temple.

Mebar Tsho (Lake of Burning Fire)

It is believed that, Terton Pema Lingpa discovered religious treasures from this lake in the 12th century. Terton Pema Lingpa dove into this lake with a burning lamp in his hand and came out undeterred with the lamp still burning. On auspicious days, many people visit Mebar Tsho and offer butter lamps on this fresh water lake.



Sacred Pilgrimage (10 Nights / 11 Days)

As a Buddhist kingdom in the Himalayas, religion is at the heart of most Bhutanese lives. Guru Rinpoché, who is revered as a second Buddha in Bhutan, is credited with having brought Buddhism to the country in the 8th century AD. The Drukpa Kagyu and Nyingmapa denominations, both rooted in the Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) form of Buddhism, are followed in Bhutan.

Day 1: Paro

On arrival at Paro International Airport, you will be received by our representative who will escort you to the hotel. After lunch, we drive to Kyichu Lhakhang, Dumtse Lhakhang.

Kyichu Lhakhang

Kyichu Lhakhang houses one of the oldest temples in Bhutan called Jowo Temple, originally built in the 7th century by the Tibetan ruler Songsten Gyambo. It is believed that in the 8th century, the temple was visited by Guru Rinpoché and concealed many spiritual treasures.

Dumtse Lhakhang

This monastery, built in 1421 by Thangtong Gyelpo, is the only monastery built in a shape of a Chorten. Thangtong Gyelop had come to Bhutan in search of iron ore to be used for constructing bridges in his homeland Tibet.

Day 2: Paro

Chelela Nunery

Known as Kila Goenpa, it is located on the cliffs below Chelela pass about 3,500 the sea level. The bird's eye view of Paro town can be viewed. The sacred mount Jomolhari can also be viewed on a clear day. Overnight in hotel.

Day 3: Thimphu

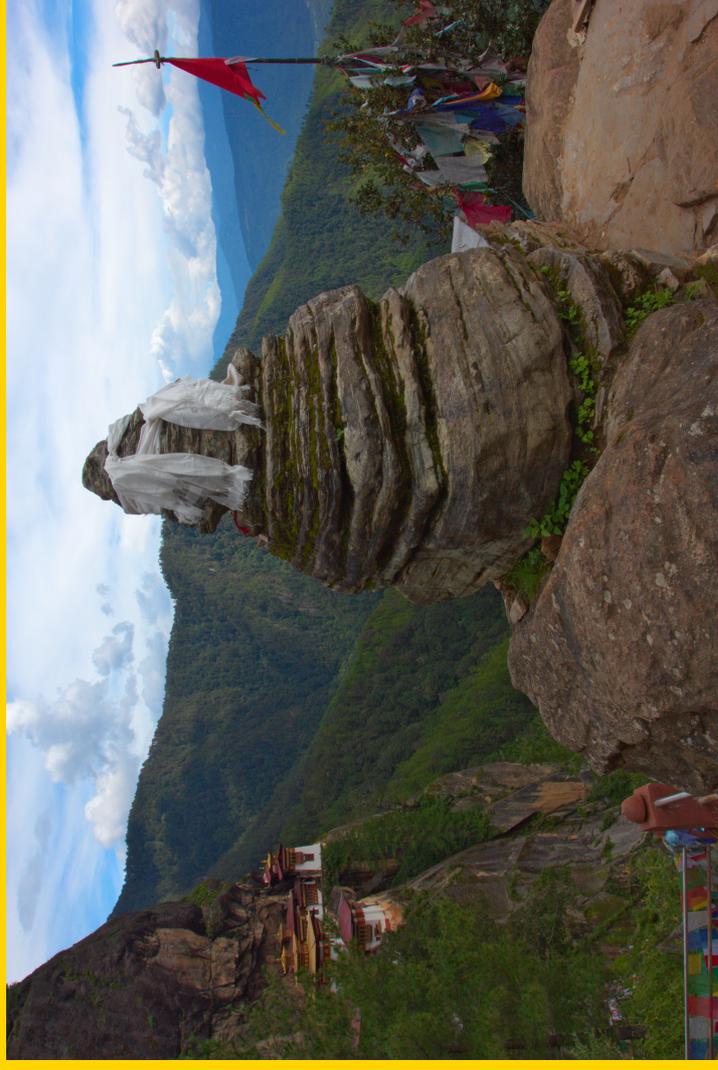
Tango

Tango was founded by Lama Gyalwa Lhanampa in 12th century. The Monastery is now an important centre of higher learning for monks is also associated with Lama Drukpa Kuenley and Zhabdrung. The three-storey main temple is dedicated to the body, speech and mind of the Buddha and it was established upon Gyalse Tenzin Rabgye's command in the memory of Zhabdrung. The name 'Tango' means head of horse. It is about 45 min hike to the monastery. Overnight in Thimphu.

Day 4: Punakha

Khamsum Yuelley

This chorten was built by the present Queen Mother Ashi Tshering Yangdon Wangchuck. Its art



Day 4: Wangdi – Paro

We visit Khamsum Yuelley Namgyal which stands majestically on a strategic ridge above the Punakha valley. Built over a period of 9 years, Bhutanese craftsmen including carpenters, painters, and sculptors consulted holy scriptures rather than engineering manuals, to construct this 4-storey temple. It is a splendid example of Bhutan's fine architectural and artistic traditions and the only one of its kind in the world. After lunch, we will drive to Wangdiphodrang. On 24th June 2012, the Majestic Wangdiphodrang Dzong was engulfed by fire and razed to ashes. The Royal Government is now working out to reconstruct the Wangdi Dzong and bring to its original splendour. Drive to Paro.

Day 5: Paro

Early morning drive to the trail route of the famous Taktsang Lhakhang commonly called the "Tigers Lair". Clinging to a black rock face, 900 meters above the valley floor, nestles Taktsang Lhakhang, one of the holiest and the most beautiful site of Bhutan. After lunch, we visit the Drugyel Dzong, a ruined Fort.

Day 6: Departure

Drive to Paro international Airport for onward journey. See off by our representative.

Paro Festival (6 Nights / 7 Days)

There are many festivals in Bhutan throughout the year. Below is a sample itinerary for the Paro festival. Please contact us for details and dates of other festivals but be aware that festivals are very popular and flights into Bhutan can become quite difficult to obtain at these times.



Day 1: Arrive Paro

During your flight to Paro, you will experience breathtaking views of Mount Everest, Kanchen Junga and other Himalayan Peaks including sacred Jomolhari and Mt. Jichudrake in Bhutan. On arrival at Paro International Airport you will be received by the representative of Bhutan Peak Adventure. After Lunch, we will visit the National Museum and the sacred Kyichu Lhakhang one of the oldest temples in Bhutan built in the 7th century.

Day 2: Paro – Thimphu

We visit to Rinpung Dzong to observe Tshedu, where monks perform mask dances, wearing colourful silk brocade costumes. These dances depict the winning over the good over evil. On this auspicious day, people irrespective of age, dress in their finest clothes and jewellery flock in the Dzong, to witness the occasion. After lunch, we will drive to Thimphu. We will visit the Memorial Chorten built in 1974 in memory of the 3rd King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. Later in the Evening, we visit the Changangkha Lhakhang.

Day 3: Thimphu

We visit the Textile Museum, Folk Heritage, Painting School, and Zilukha Nunnery, the only surviving nunnery in the country. We also visit Bhutan Post to buy colourful and award winning stamps. We then visit the Jungshi Handmade paper factory, a Bhutanese paper factory.

Day 4: Thimphu – Punakha

After breakfast, we will drive towards Punakha. On the way we will stop by Dochula and get the view of the Himalayas and see the 108 stupa (monument) built by the present Queen Mother. We will then proceed to Punakha and have lunch. We will go and visit the famous Punakha Dzong. This is the winter residence of the Monks and as well the old capital of Bhutan.

Day 4: Thimphu – Punakha

During the first half of the day, we will do some local sightseeing to visit the National Memorial Chorten and visit Zilukha Nunnery. After lunch, we drive to Dochula Pass (3050m) which will take about one hour. While at Dochula, one can witness hundreds of fluttering prayer flags surrounding 108 small Chortens (stupas). On a clear day one can enjoy the most spectacular and breathtaking views of the Bhutan's Mountain ranges. We then will proceed to Punakha. Punakha is the old capital of Bhutan.

Day 5: Punakha

We will visit Punakha Dzong (Fortress), the former capital of Bhutan, now serving as the district administrative center and also the winter residence of the Je Khenpo, the Chief Abbot, of the Monastic body. Punakha Dzong built in 1637 and is beautifully located in between the two rivers. We take a short hike to Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten in the northern part of the valley. The architecture and the art of this temple has been artistically designed which is supposed to be one of its kind in the world. After lunch, we will take a drive for about an hour to Talo, the native home town of the queens for our short downhill hike following a trail till Punakha.

Day 6: Punakha - Phobjikha

Before driving to Phobjikha, we will pay a visit to Chhimi Lhakhang, "the temple of fertility", dedicated to Lama Drukpa Kinley, one of the most popular Buddhist saints who lived in Bhutan in 1455–1570. Phobjikha valley is one of the loveliest high altitude valleys in Bhutan, and is also one of Bhutan's few glacial valleys. It also houses the black necked cranes, migrating from the Tibetan plateau in the winter.



Day 7: Phobjikha – Wangdiphodrang

Early morning drive to the starting point of the hike from the hotel. The hike will be 4 hours. Shasi-La is a pass of about 3700m and the trail ends at the halfway where you will be routed towards Gangtey. We climb up gradually through the thick dwarf bamboos, birch, rhododendron, hemlock and fir to Shasi-La. During this short hike, you will be able to view the Black Mountain ranges.

Day 8: Wangdi – Paro

We drive till Dochula pass and take the hike of about 3 hours to Lungsi Goenpa and continue drive to Paro. Free evening. Overnight in hotel.

Day 9: Departure

Early breakfast and drive to the airport for onward flight.

Naturally Nature (Nature) (8 Nights / 9 Days)

Day 1: Paro

Bhutan's national carrier Druk Air flies some of the most spectacular flight paths in the world. One of which, the flight from Kathmandu to Paro gives you one of the most spectacular experiences one will ever encounter. One can easily get the view the Majestic Mt. Everest, Kanchenjunga and the entire Himalayan range from the left side of the aircraft. Upon arrival at Paro International Airport, after completing immigration and custom formalities, you will be received by your tour guide, who will take you to your hotel.

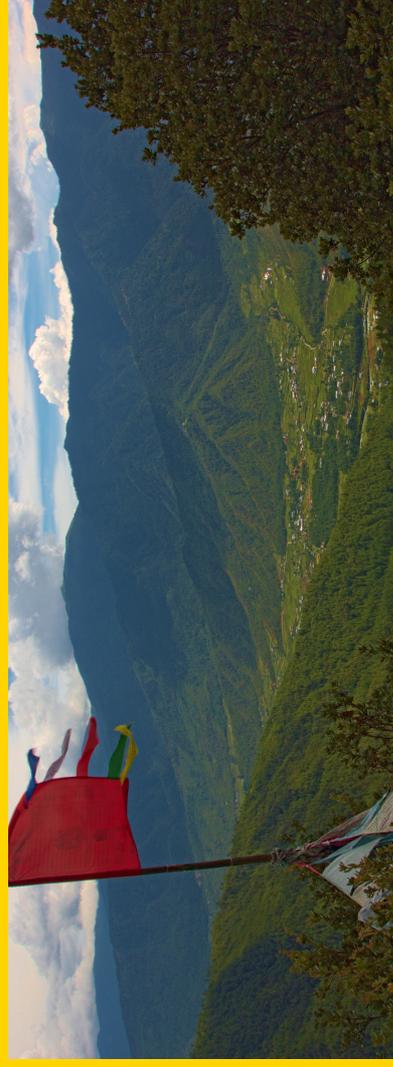


Day 2: Paro – Chele-La

At 3750m, Chele La pass is the highest motorable pass in the country. Once we reach the top we high up along the meadow to Kung Karpo La (4100m). If weather permits we can visit the Sky burial area. We will enjoy the breathtaking views of the snow-capped mountains while walking above the tree line along the ridge that divides Ha valley and Paro. The short steep descent from the top will take us to the nunnery of Kila Gompa. The monastery is surrounded by a lush forest dominated by tall firs. Sparkling mountain streams wind down the slopes, which are covered with a variety of wildflowers and plants. The walk down from here to the road is lined with small white chortens and it will take us about an hour.

Day 3: Paro – Thimphu

Early drive to the famous Taksang Lhakhang “The Tigers Lair”, one of the holiest and the most beautiful sites of Bhutan. After lunch, we will drive to Thimphu. Thimphu is very scenic as we follow the river valley to the capital city. One will witness the change in vegetation as Thimphu and Paro is a complete alpine zone. Sightseeing in Thimphu.



Day 5: Punakha – Paro

Early in the morning of this day, we will go and hike to Khamsum Yuelley Monastery. This monastery is also built by the present Queen Mother and it is about 45 minute hike and is a most beautiful monastery. Its architecture is one of the best in the world. After lunch, if interested we will visit the “temple of fertility” called Chimi Lhakhang. We proceed to Paro.

Day 6: Paro

In the early morning at 2.30 AM, of the new day, we will drive to Paro Dzong to view the unfurling of the Great Thanka, (an appliqué of Guru Rimpoche) measuring about 85 feet wide and 55 feet tall. Prayers are performed to hoist and unfurl this world's biggest Thanka. People pray, prostrate and get the blessing of the Thongdrel, which is said to liberate the viewer who has faith, and the level of their understanding, why they require liberation.

Drive to the famous Taksang Lhakhang “The Tigers Lair”. Clinging to a black rock face, 900 meters above the valley floor, nestles Taksang Lhakhang, one of the holiest and the most beautiful site of Bhutan. (If preferred we can arrange for a complimentary hot stone bath)

Day 7: Departure

After breakfast, our Representative will drive you to the Airport and see you off for your onward flight.



Roads and Trekking Routes of Bhutan

