

BHUTAN



AT ITS BEST

**10 NIGHTS/
11 DAYS**



Day
1

ARRIVE PARO

- Fly into Bhutan by Druk Air, Bhutan's National Air Carrier. Upon arrival, meet our representative and drive to the Hotel. Check into the Hotel, refresh and relax.
- Paro is a historic town with many sacred sites and historical buildings scattered through the area. In addition, the Paro Valley is wide and verdant and is recognized as one of the most beautiful in all Bhutan. Prefer to stay in Paro if you are someone who is fond of nature and would like to spend quiet and peaceful time.
- Evening time free to walk around.
- Overnight stay at the Hotel.

Day
2

PARO EXCURSION & SIGHTSEEING

- After breakfast take an excursion to Taktsang Monastery, the most famous of Bhutanese monasteries precariously perched on the edge of a 1,200 meter cliff, this monastery creates an impressive sight, and is the unofficial symbol of Bhutan. Taktsang was established as a sacred place for meditation by Guru Rinpoche who visited the site on his second visit to Bhutan in 747 CE, though the first monastery was not constructed until 1694. In 1998 a tragic fire destroyed most of the original buildings, but these have since been painstakingly restored to their former glory. The excursion to monastery takes about 5 hours for round trip.
- Overnight at the Hotel in Paro.





PARO-THIMPU

(55 kms/2 hrs)

- After breakfast, check out and drive to Thimpu, the capital city of Bhutan. Upon arrival, check into the Hotel, refresh & relax.
- Situated in the western central part of Bhutan. The city is spread out laterally in a north-south direction on the west bank of the valley formed by the Raidak River, which is known as the Wang Chuu or Thimphu Chuu in Bhutan. Thimphu is spread over an altitudinal range between 2,248 metres (7,375 ft) and 2,648 metres (8,688 ft). The culture of Bhutan is fully reflected in Thimphu in respect of literature, religion, customs, and national dress code, the monastic practices of the monasteries, music, dance, literature and in the media.
- Overnight at the Hotel in Thimpu.



THIMPU SIGHTSEEING & EXCURSION

- After breakfast, the schedule for the day is to go for a sightseeing to various good and historic places i.e. : the National Library, housing an extensive collection of priceless Buddhist manuscripts; the Institute for Zorig Chusum (commonly known as the Painting School) where students undergo a 6-year training course in Bhutan's 13 traditional arts and crafts. Later visit Textile and Folk Heritage Museum, a fascinating testimony of the Bhutanese material culture and living traditions. Back to Hotel for Lunch.



THIMPU SIGHTSEEING & EXCURSION CONTINUES...

- After lunch, visit King's Memorial Chorten continuously circumambulated by people, murmuring mantras and spinning their prayer wheels. Construction of this landmark was the idea of Bhutan's third king, His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuk ("the father of modern Bhutan") who has wished to erect monument to world peace and prosperity. Completed in 1974 after his untimely death, it serves both as a memorial to the Late King and as a monument to peace. The other places to be seen are the government-run Handicrafts Emporium and local crafts shops, Trashichhoedzong, "fortress of the glorious religion". This is the center of government and religion, site of monarch's throne room and seat of Je Khenpo or Chief Abbot. Built in 1641 by the political and religious unifier of Bhutan, Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal.
- Overnight at the Hotel in Thimpu.

- After early breakfast, drive up to Dochu-la pass (3,088m/ 10,130 ft) stopping briefly here to take in the view and admire the chorten, mani wall, and prayer flags which decorate the highest point on the road. If skies are clear, the following peaks can be seen from this pass (left to right): Masagang (7,158m), Tsendagang (6,960m), Terigang (7,060m), Jejegangphugang (7,158 m), Kangphugang (7,170 m), Zongphugang (7, 060 m), a table mountain that dominates the isolated region of Lunana - finally Gangkar puensum, the highest peak in Bhutan at 7,497m.
- Later visit to Punakha Dzong, 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. Damaged by four catastrophic fires and an earthquake, the dzong is fully restored in the recent times.
- Evening time free to explore around.
- Overnight at the hotel at Punakha.



- Drive down the valley to the town of Wangdiphodrang. Here again there is a very large fortress built in the shape of a sleeping bull. Our road gradually winds its way up towards the Pele La Pass at 11,152ft, where we make stop for views of the snow clad peaks, including that of Bhutan's sacred peak Mt. Chomolhari. Possibly, your picnic lunch is planned at Chedebji Chorten (Stupa) patterned after Swayambhunath in Kathmandu. It is a popular picnic lunch and pilgrimage for Bhutanese driving east-west road. In afternoon, we arrive in the town of Trongsa after 6 hours of driving.
- Trongsa is a very popular place with largest Dzong in Bhutan and certainly one of the most impressive ones. It was from here that the present royal family emerged as the most powerful force at the beginning of this century. You may love to wander around Trongsa Township.
- Overnight in the Hotel at Trongsa.



A man in traditional Bhutanese attire, including a patterned brown and gold robe, is aiming a bow. He is standing outdoors, and other people in similar attire are visible in the background. The scene is set against a backdrop of green foliage.

Day
7

TRONGSA SIGHTSEEING AND DRIVE TO BUMTHANG

(Jakar/68 kms/3 hrs)

- In the morning you will visit the inner courtyard of historical Trongsa Dzong followed by a watchtower above the main Dzong. Watch tower (Ta Dzong) has a fine temple at the top containing original Mongol Armour and a large prayer wheel outside. After lunch, you drive across the Yotong La 11,234' and descend eventually into the valley of Chumey, the first of four Bumthang valleys. Here we will visit the Palace used primarily by the second King as his summer residence, and hike for about 15 minutes that brings us to the Prakar monastery, followed by visit to Yathra Weaving centers (a Colourful wool weaving). Then we'll drive onto the Jakar the center of Bumthang valleys. Bumthang valley is one of the most sacred in the kingdom and innumerable legends surround the area. It is here that the kings were cremated and the present royal families trace their ancestry back to a famous saint called Pemalingpa, who was also a smith in Jakar Township.
- Overnight in the Hotel in Bumthang.



BUMTHANG VALLEY - SIGHTSEEING AND WALKS IN JAKAR

- This is one of the most spectacular valleys in Bhutan and also the heartland of Buddhism. The Guru and his lineage of Tertons (treasure finders), have led to the sprouting of many temples in the valley. In the morning we hike to visit the Tamshing Monastery (one of the oldest monastic schools built by Terton Pema Lingpa) and Kurjey Lhakhang (where the Guru Rinpoche subdued a local demon and left his body imprint on a rock). We also visit Jambay Lhakhang (one of the oldest temples in Bhutan built in 7th century) and Jakar Dzong (seat of the district administration). In the afternoon, hike to Thangbi valley across the suspension bridge and visit the Thangbi Lhakhang built in the 14th century.
- Overnight in the Hotel at Bumthang.



BUMTHANG – PUNAKHA (212 KMS/7 HRS)

- From the township of Jakar, you first climb out of the Bumthang valleys on the twisting mountain road towards the Yotong La (11,000ft/3,353m). Near the pass is an area of wild cane/bamboos that is a well-known habitat for Red Panda. The road then descends to Tongsa but instead of stopping here for the night you will drive on, past Chendebji Stupa, over the Pele La (11,000ft/3,353m) and start the descent until you reach your hotel located on the bank of the river.
- Overnight in the Hotel in Punakha.





PUNAKA – PARO

- You will drive past Wandgüe town and Dzong along the east west high way. On reaching at a junction called Lobeysa, you will take a diversion and drive towards the valley of Punakha to visit a 'temple of fertility' or 'Chimi Lhakhang'. Chimi Lhakhang was built by lama Drukpa Kunley in 1499. He subdued the demoness of the Dochu la with his 'magic thunderbolt of wisdom.' A wooden effigy of the Lama's thunderbolt is preserved in the Lhakhang, and childless women go to the temple to receive a wang (blessing) from the saint. It's a 20-minute walk across the rice fields from the road at Sopsokha to the temple. The trail leads across rice fields to the tiny settlement of Pana. There are very few monks at the temple, which is surrounded by a row of prayer wheels and some very beautiful slate carvings.
- Walk back to meet your transport and continue drive towards Thimphu along Dochu La pass where we make a short stop once again to view the Eastern Himalayas. Descend from the pass brings you the village of Hongtsho, a Tibetan settlement and then onto Thimphu. After lunch in Thimphu, drive in the evening to Paro.
- Overnight in the Hotel in Paro.



DEPARTURE

- After breakfast transfer to the airport for flight to onward destination or opt to drive to Phuentsholing (160 kms/5 hrs) to reach India and head for onward destinations.

