

Itinerary: The Beautiful Bhutan

Duration: 6 Days / 5 Nights

Destinations: Thimphu, Paro and Punakha/Wangdue

Package Type – Fly In/Fly Out

Overview

Snuggled in the arms of Eastern Himalayas, Bhutan is the only country in the world where Vajrayana Buddhism is a way of every day life. Buddhism is everywhere. Countless prayer flags, stupas and monasteries demonstrate the importance of spirituality in Bhutan. During the journey we encounter not only warm, mostly good-humored people, but also to explore a sensational mountain scenery, lush green forests and wide valleys with fertile rice terraces. The Government measures the development not in material wealth but in terms of Gross National Happiness. To the local people traditional values, environmental preservation and good governance takes precedence over material things. Bhutan is the travel world's best kept secret. The **Beautiful Bhutan Tour** takes you to the Golden Triangle of Bhutan – Thimphu, Paro and Punakha.

Thimphu: Capital and the largest city of Bhutan - Only capital city in the world that does not have traffic lights - Main center of Commerce, Religion and Government in the country - Most modern city of Bhutan and has abundance of restaurants, internet cafes, nightclubs and shopping center. It is one of the few cities of Bhutan having ATM facilities.

Paro: Small town in the western part of Bhutan - Also home to Paro Airport, Bhutan's only International Airport - The valley has many isolated small villages and is known for red rice - Also home to most of Bhutan's oldest temples and monasteries.

Punakha and Wangdue: Punakha and Wangdue is located in the same valley. These two places are located within a distance of 13 km. Punakha was the capital of Bhutan and the seat of government until 1955 - The valley is fed by the Pho Chhu and the Mo Chhu rivers - It is one of very few places in Bhutan which offers Rafting facilities - It is the winter seat of the Je Khenpo (Chief Abbot) and the monk body at present.

Highlights of the tour:

- Visit Tashichhodzong and Punakha Dzong – two of the most impressive dzongs (fortresses)
- First had experience of Bhutanese way of life and traditional rural villages.
- Untouched Nature and unique Art & Architecture
- Untouched Buddhist Culture.
- Hike through pine forests to visit “Tiger's Nest”
- Beautiful landscapes and spectacular Himalayan scenery.
- The must visit Dochula Pass and the Druk Wangyal Chhortens

Day Wise Itinerary

Day 1. Paro – Thimphu:

Driving Distance: 65 Km, Driving time: 1.5 – 2 Hr., Altitude of Thimphu: 2,350 m

Your flight to Paro on a clear day, is marked with the panoramic views of the Himalayas including the Everest and other famous Peaks. The approach through the foothills and the landing (including few steep turns) at the tiny airstrip of Paro has been termed as adventurous by many travelers. After the completion of immigration formalities at the Paro Airport exit door, you will be received by your Bhutanese guide with traditional “**Tashi Khadar**”. Afterwards drive to Thimphu following the Pa Chhu (River). Check-In to the hotel and have your first experience with Bhutanese Cuisine. Rest of the day is at leisure. You can explore the Thimphu valley and town or shop till your heart’s content. **A private traditional Cultural Show would be organized especially for you in the evening.**

Meals – Lunch and Dinner; Overnight at the Hotel in Thimphu

Day 2. Thimphu Sightseeing:

Today you would be driven in and around Thimphu covering key places of interest. After breakfast you would visit

- **Kuensel Phodrang**, the gigantic Buddha Dordenma Statue located atop a hill in Kuensel Phodrang Nature Park.
- **National Memorial Chhorten**, a Stupa built in 1974 to honor the third Druk Gyalpo, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. Every morning till night old people and young people circumambulate the Chhorten. **You may choose to light butter lamps and also circumbulate around the Chorten.**
- **Zorig Chusum**, Premier institute of traditional arts and crafts in Thimphu established with an objective of preserving “thirteen arts and crafts of Bhutan”.
- **Folk Heritage**, traditional house giving an insight to the Bhutanese lifestyle, and artifacts from the rural households

Thereafter, you would be taken to a local restaurant for lunch. In the afternoon you would be taken to

- **Sangaygang View Point**, also known as BBS Tower offering panoramic view of Thimphu Town situated at an elevation of 2,685 m.
- **Changangkha Monastery**, popular fortress like temple perched on a ridge above Central Thimphu built in 15th Century by Lama Phajo Drugom Zhipo.
- **Takin Preserve Centre**, see Takin (National animal of Bhutan) It is a unique combination of Goat and an Antelope
- **Tashichhodzong**, or ‘the fortress of the glorious religion’. Initially erected in 1641 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, it was rebuilt in the 1960s during the reign of Bhutan’s

third king in the traditional style, without plans or nails. It houses some ministries, His Majesty's secretariat, and the central monk body and opens after 5 PM.

On the completion of sightseeing, you are driven back to your hotel. After relaxing for sometime you shall be served with dinner.

Meals – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner; Overnight at the Hotel in Thimphu.

Day 3. Thimphu – Punakha/Wangdue:

Driving Distance: 76 Km, Driving time: 2.5 – 3 Hr., Altitude of Punakha: 1310 m

After breakfast you are driven to Punakha/Wangdue, for your second leg of the tour. On the way, you would stop at

- **Dochula Pass**, lies at an elevation of 3,150 m and is a great place to view the higher Himalayas. The landmarks around the pass includes 108 Druk Wangyal Stupas built under the patronage of Queen Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuk.

After arrival at Punakha, check in to the hotel. Post lunch, you would visit

- **Punakha Dzong**, built in 1637 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. For many years until the time of the second King, it served as the seat of the Government. It is still the winter residence of Je-Khenpo (The Chief Abbot of the Central Monastic Body of Bhutan)
- **Chhimi Lhakhang**, a famous Temple, which is also known as “The Temple of Fertility” built by Lama Drukpa Kuenley

Later you are driven back to the Hotel. Evening free for leisure activities.

Meals – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner; Overnight at the Hotel in Punakha/Wangdue

Day 4. Punakha/Wangdue – Paro:

Driving Distance: 135 Km, Driving time: 4.5 – 5 Hr., Altitude of Paro: 2,280 m

After breakfast, you would check out of the hotel to proceed to Paro for the final leg of the tour. On the way stop at

- **Royal Botanical Park, Lamperi**, also known as the Rhododendron Garden. It is the first Botanical Garden of Bhutan. It is famous for 46 species of rhododendrons.

After arriving at Paro, you would be transferred to you Hotel for Check In. Post lunch, you would be taken around to visit

- **Paro Rimpung Dzong**, also known as Fortress of the heap of jewels, built during the time of Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in 1646
- **Ta Dzong**, an ancient watch tower overlooking Rimpung Dzong built in 1951 now converted into national museum.

Later you are driven back to the Hotel. Evening is free for **leisure activities such as Archery experience, National Dress wearing experience** and shopping around the Paro Town.

Meals – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner; Overnight at the Hotel in Paro.

Day 5. Paro:

After breakfast, start your day with a hike to

- **Taksang Monastery (Tiger's nest)**, the abode of gods and monks situated at an altitude of 3100m on the Upper Paro Valley, Bhutan. As per the legend, Guru Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche), the tantrum mystic who brought Buddhism to Bhutan, came in the form of Dorje Drolo riding a flying tigress to subdue the demon that was obstructing the spread of Buddhism in the Himalayas.

After the completion of the hike, you would be served **picnic lunch among the woods**. Post lunch, visit

- **Kyichu Lhakhang**, one of the oldest monasteries in Bhutan built in the 7th century by the Tibetan Emperor Songtsen Gampo

Later in the day, you would then drive to village house to witness the traditional rural life in a Bhutanese village. Also you have an option of experiencing a Traditional Hot Stone bath in the village house. You can also choose to have your dinner in the house with the Family or also spend your overnight in the village house (needed to be confirmed at the time of confirmation of the Tour) or be driven back to your hotel.

Meals – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner; Overnight at the Hotel in Paro.

Day 6. Departure:

Today we will bid farewell to this beautiful country and take an early flight back. We hope by now you must have made some good friends and also have taken photographs and beautiful memories of Bhutan. We certainly hope of serving you again on your next visit to this great country or the Last Shangri-La. Tashi Delek

Footnotes

- Except for the overnight destinations, we keep the itinerary flexible in order to give the travelers the best opportunities to capture and experience Bhutan as per the situation, interest and convenience during the time of travel. The Day 1 itinerary is subject to early arrival of the flight in Paro.
- Please note that some of the sightseeing may be closed on government holidays and certain occasions. In such cases you shall be given options for other sightseeing or opportunities to capture and experience Bhutan.
- All the itineraries can be customized as per the requirements of the travelers for any duration or within any destination and can be combined with any kind of activities such as trekking, rafting, walking tour, cycling , etc. Extra Cost may be applicable for some of the activities.

**BHUTAN TOUR PACKAGE
2016
(3 Star Standard Hotels only)**

Season	1 Pax	2 Pax	3 Pax and above
Low Season	1375	1225	1050
High Season	1425	1275	1100

Tariff Based on US Dollars / Per Pax

Low Season: December, January, February, June, July & August

High Season: March, April, May, September, October & November

Included in the minimum daily tariff package:

- Visa process and arrangement
- Royalty to the government and all other taxes
- Government surcharge for individual groups travelling as one or two pax
- All accommodations in 3 Star standard hotels
- Standard room on twin sharing basis only
- Meals on fixed buffet (Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner)
- Full time English speaking guide
- Private transportation for airport pick up/ drop and all sightseeing
- Entrance fees to events, historic sites, museums and parks as indicated in the itinerary

Not included in the minimum daily tariff package:

- Visa fee for single entry (US\$ 50)
- Refreshment, water and any alcoholic/non-alcoholic beverages
- Travel Insurance (Must for Trekking) applicable
- Single room supplement charges (US\$ 40/Night) applicable
- Luxury star hotels and resorts available at an additional cost
- Luxury camping/trekking can be arranged at an additional cost
- Gratuities to guide, driver, trekking staff, etc.
- Specialized guides (Foreign Language, Photography, Bird Watching, Buddhism or any specialized guide) available at an additional cost
- Any personal expense
- **Extra services like Cultural Show, Hot Stone Bath, Archery Session and National Dress Wearing Experience. For these services supplemental charges would be applicable as below.**
- **Special Group Discounts available**

Supplemental Costs:

- Cultural Show – \$ 95 Per Show
- Hot Stone Bath at Rural House – \$ 25 Per Person Per Bath

- Archery Session and National Dress Wearing Experience – \$ 15 per person per session.

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