



BUTAN
Happiness is a place!

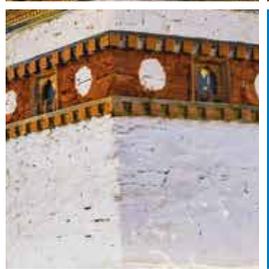




BHUTAN
Happiness is a place!



LE PASSAGE TO INDIA
at a Glance



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Bhutan - Happiness is A Place!



Fresh Experiences





LE PASSAGE TO INDIA AT A GLANCE

Le Passage to India is a firmly established destination management company based in Thimphu, Bhutan, that provides comprehensive tour packages to discerning travellers in Bhutan. The main priority of Le Passage to India is to ensure that clients are provided with excellent services during their trip to Bhutan.

Le Passage to India not only has excellent contacts within the tourism industry, but also enjoys a strong and sustained relationship with partners in the industry. Our experienced team of travel experts

promises proficient product knowledge and best quality services.

Our wide range of product offerings includes cultural tours, treks, and special interest tours (bird watching, mountain biking, botanical tours, festivals and textile tours). With our network of offices at key entry points in Bhutan and a sales and marketing office at New Delhi, we handle all potential queries promptly, efficiently, and effectively, ensuring our esteemed clientele a memorable tour experience.





WHY LE PASSAGE TO INDIA

We in Le Passage to India are one of the better best kept secrets in the market with our own portfolio of specialised experiences in Bhutan. Our motto is always to put you before us.

- **360° Experience Management** – Our value proposition starts even before your clients embark on their journey; where we work with our partners to create your clients’ experiences. It continues throughout their journey and is only completed once the clients fly back home where they can share with friends and family their journey of a lifetime. And through this entire process, we consistently make sure it is your brand that is projected.
- **Your own Dream Merchants** - We will provide you with a dedicated Key Account Management structure that is focused on your sales and product development. The team can arrange almost any travel experience your client dreams up. Seat at the chef’s table of a Michelin starred restaurant? A private museum viewing? Perhaps playing soccer with the monks in Bhutan or golf in the Himalayas? Whatever your passion, they make it happen.
- **Expertise** - Your own black book of experts. In addition to our own guide panel, we have curated a collection of industry experts ranging from well-known speakers, celebrities, sports personalities, fashion icons, chefs, authors and historians who can personalize your clients’ travelling experiences and add value through customized interactions.
- **Value Additions** – Exclusivity and value is what we aim for; from upgrades, to early arrivals and late check-outs, in-house dining at selected hotels, local encounters, curated walks, these are a few of the value add-ons we can offer your clients when they travel with us.
- **Corporate Social Responsibility** - We believe in sustainability, giving back to our communities and making a difference, however small in our world.
- **Quality Management System** - We offer formalized Service Level Agreements based on internationally recognized ISO 9001-2015 standards and best practices in health & safety, incident and crisis management. Standardization helps us create the precondition for operational success so we can focus on ensuring excellence in every part of your client’s journey with us.
- **Preferred Partner Approach** - An exclusive Preferred Partner Incentive and a Global Commission Scheme so the more you book, the more you get back.





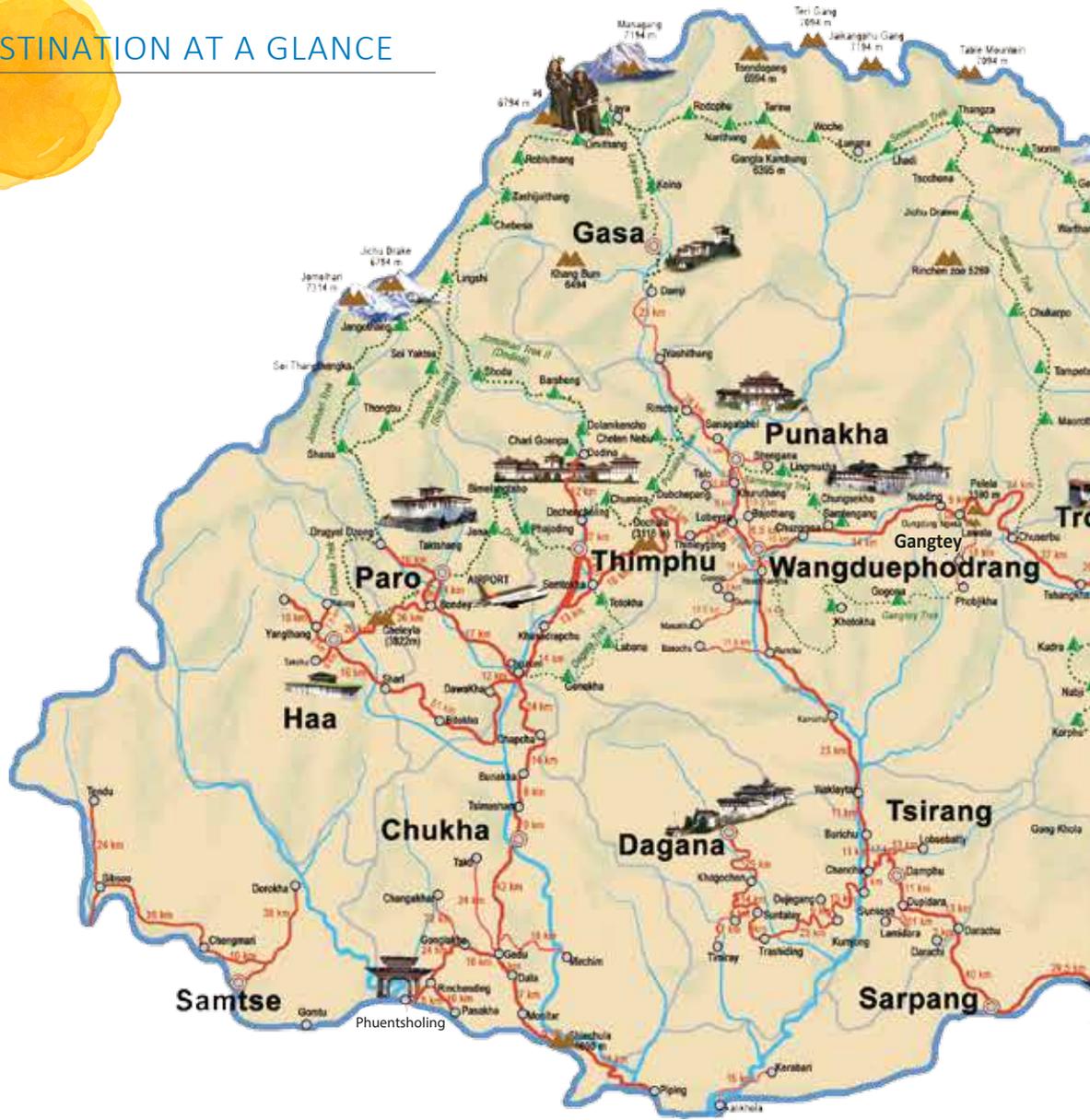
PAYMENT & FINANCIAL SECURITY

All payments made for Bhutan tours are 100% secure as they are strictly monitored and regulated by the Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB), the Government agency that controls tourism activity in Bhutan.

As per the directive of the Tourism Council of Bhutan, a visa clearance letter is issued by them only after receiving full payment in advance. Full payment is required 30 days prior to travel date if tour is based on standard hotels. In some cases where deluxe/luxury hotels are involved, we have to follow the individual hotel's booking/cancellation policies which will be intimated to the foreign agents while submitting the tour proposal.



DESTINATION AT A GLANCE





Map courtesy - Tourism Council of Bhutan



BHUTAN - HAPPINESS IS A PLACE!



The Buddhist Kingdom of Bhutan lies along the lofty ridges of the eastern Himalayas, bordering the Tibetan Autonomous region of China in the North and India in the South. With an area of 38,394 sq. km, Bhutan is comparable to Switzerland both in size and topography, being largely mountainous.

It was the mighty Himalayas that protected Bhutan from the rest of the world and left the Kingdom blissfully untouched. The Drukpa Kagyupa sect of Mahayana Buddhism provided the essence of a rich culture and fascinating history. The Bhutanese people have protected this sacred heritage of ancient traditions and their unique identity for centuries by choosing to remain in fiercely guarded isolation.

With a relatively small population of about 700,000 people, the Bhutanese enjoy a sustainable lifestyle that they have inherited from their forefathers. Over 80 per cent of the population still lives in small villages sparsely scattered over rugged mountain terrain.

Buddhism, prevalent in the country since the 7th century CE, continues to play an important role in their peaceful lives.

For centuries, the Bhutanese have treasured their natural environment, looking upon it as the source of all life. This traditional reverence for nature has brought Bhutan into the 21st century with a pristine environment. More than 72 per cent of the land area is under forest cover. Bhutan is one of the ten bio-diversity hot spots in the world and one of the 221 global endemic bird areas. Its ecosystem harbours some of the most exotic species of the eastern Himalayas with an estimated 770 species of birds and 50 species of rhododendrons, besides an astonishing variety of medicinal plants and orchids. Many parts of the country which have been declared as wildlife reserves, are the natural habitats of rare species of both flora and fauna. Unlike other parts of the region, Bhutan's natural patrimony of extensive and varied forests, limited yet fertile productive farmlands, and pristine water and air remain largely intact.

Druk Yul or the '*Land of the Thunder Dragon*' as it is referred to by the Bhutanese, is a land replete with myths and legends. Like timeless images from the past, the traveller encounters the full glory of this ancient land through its strategic fortresses called *Dzongs*, ancient temples, monasteries, and *stupas* which dot the countryside, prayer flags fluttering along the high ridges, foamy white waterfalls, and the warm smiles of its friendly people. Each moment is special as one discovers a country that the people have chosen to preserve in its magical purity.

Bhutan's beautiful and largely unspoiled Himalayan setting, its rich flora and fauna, and its vibrant culture have made it an increasingly popular tourist destination. In addition to generating hard currency revenue, tourism is also providing much needed resources to develop the service sector and ensure balanced and sustainable development for the people of Bhutan.



COUNTRY PROFILE

Land area	:	38,394 square kilometres
Forest area	:	72.5 %
Altitude	:	between 240 metres and 7541 metres above sea level
Inhabitants	:	6,91,141
Language	:	Official language Dzongkha; English widely spoken
Religion	:	Vajrayana stream of Mahayana Buddhism (Also known as Tantric Buddhism)
Currency	:	Ngultrum (equal to the Indian Rupee)
Capital	:	Thimphu
National Tree	:	Cypress
National Bird	:	Raven
National Flower	:	Blue Poppy
National Sport	:	Archery
National Animal	:	Takin (goat-antelope)
Life expectancy	:	66 years (Men); 70 years (Women)
Country code	:	975
Local time	:	Six hours ahead of GMT and half an hour ahead of Indian Standard Time (IST)

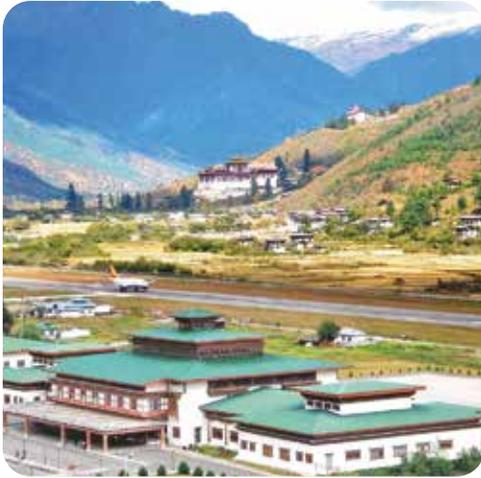






PLACES TO VISIT IN BHUTAN

Within a small area of 46,500 sq. km in Bhutan lie a whole range of places to visit or major tourist destinations.



PARO

(2,280 m)

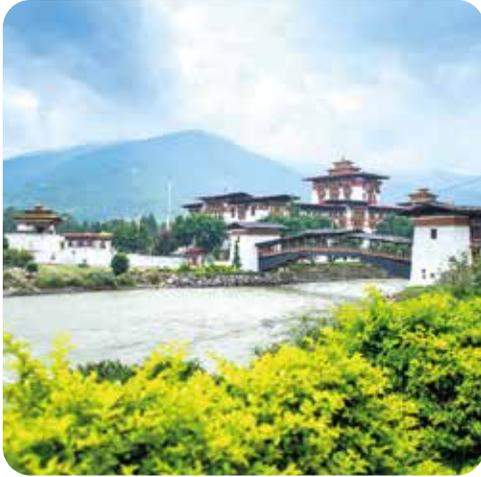
The beautiful valley of Paro holds rich culture, spectacular beauty, and hundreds of myths and legends. It is home to many of Bhutan's oldest temples and monasteries, the National Museum, and the country's only airport. Mount Jhomolhari (7,314 m) reigns in white glory at the northern end of the valley and its glacial waters plunge through deep gorges to form Pa Chhu (the River Paro). Paro is also one of the most fertile valleys in the Kingdom, producing a bulk of the locally famous red rice from its terraced fields.

THIMPHU

(2,320 m)

The capital town of Bhutan and the centre of government, religion, and commerce, Thimphu is a unique city with an unusual blend of modern development and ancient traditions. Although not what one would expect from a capital city, Thimphu is nevertheless a fitting and lively place. Home to civil servants, expatriates, and the monk body, Thimphu retains a strong national character in its architectural style.





PUNAKHA

(1,300 m)

Punakha served as the capital of Bhutan from 1637 until 1907, and is still the winter seat of Je Khnep (the Chief Abbot). Blessed with a temperate climate and owing to its natural drainage from the Pho Chhu (male) and Mo Chhu (female) rivers, the Punakha Valley produces abundant crops and fruits. There are splendid views of the distant Himalayas at the Dochula Pass (alt. 3,080 m) on the Thimphu – Punakha road.

WANGDUEPHODRANG

(1,350 m)

Wangduephodrang is the last town on the central highway before central Bhutan. The town, not very much bigger than a large village, has a few well-stocked shops. Located in the south of Punakha, the higher reaches of the Wangduephodrang valley provide rich pasturelands for cattle. The district is also famous for its fine bamboo products, slate, and stone carvings.





GANGTEY

(3,000 m)

The valley of Gangtey is one of the most beautiful spots 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 – an extremely rare experience in Bhutan where most of the valleys are tightly enclosed. A few kilometres beyond the Gangtey Monastery, on the valley floor, lies the village of Phobjikha. The village is the winter home of black necked cranes that migrate from the arid plains in the north to pass the winter in milder and lower climates. Phobjikha, at an altitude of 2900 m, falls under the district of Wangduephodrang and lies on the periphery of the Black Mountain National Park.

Perched on a small hill that rises from the valley floor, the Gangtey Monastery is the only Nyingmapa (the oldest Red Hat Sect of Tibetan Buddhism) monastery on the western side of the Black Mountain and also the biggest Nyingmapa monastery in Bhutan.

TRONGSA

(2,310 m)

The town, perched on steep slopes above a river gorge, forms the central hub of the nation and is the place from where attempts at unifying the country were launched. The landscape around Trongsa is spectacular.





BUMTHANG

(2,600 – 4,000 m)

Bumthang has a distinct identity that charms its visitors and separates it from other regions. Comprising four smaller valleys, the deeply spiritual region of Bumthang is shrouded in religious legend. Bumthang is also the traditional home of the great Buddhist teacher Pema Linga, to whose descendants the present dynasty traces its origin.

MONGAR

(1,620 m)

The journey from Bumthang to Mongar is one of the most beautiful in the Himalayas, as you cross the 3,800 m high Thrumshingla Pass. Mongar marks the beginning of Eastern Bhutan. The second largest town in the sub-tropical east, Mongar, like Trashigang further east, is situated on the side of a hill – in contrast to the other towns of Western Bhutan which lie on the valley floor.





LHUNTSE

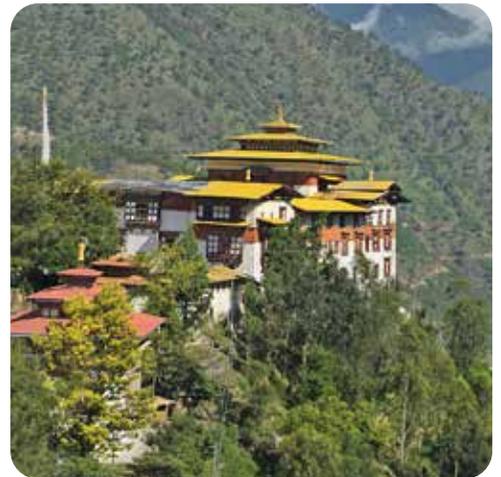
(2,300 m)

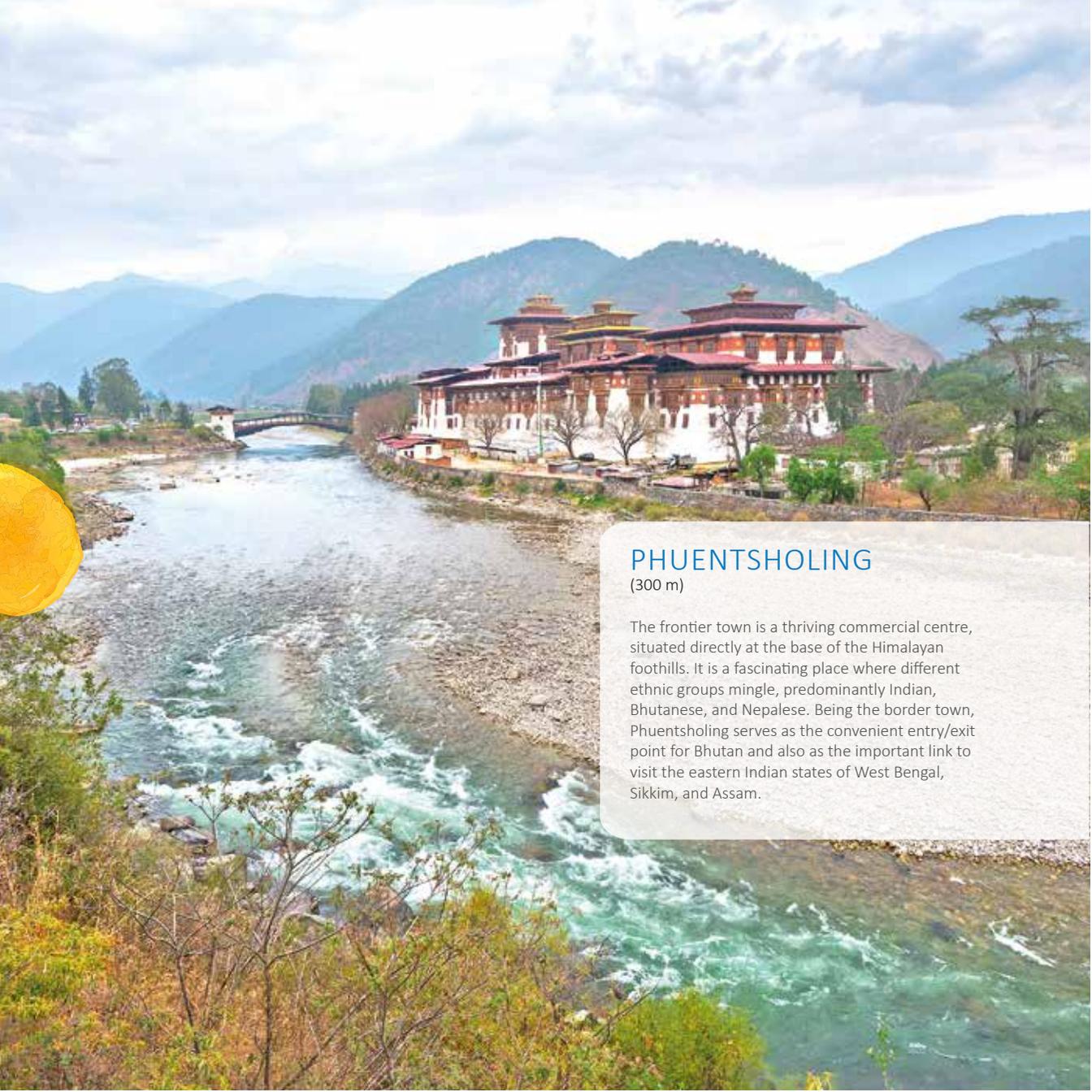
Lhuntse is 77 km from Mongar (3-hour drive) and is one of the most isolated districts in the country. The landscape here is spectacular – with stark cliffs and gorges, and dense coniferous forests. The region is famed for its weavers and their special textiles, generally considered to be the best in the country. The Kurtoe region of Lhuntse is also the ancestral home of the Royal dynasty.

TRASHIGANG

(1,150 m)

The largest district in Bhutan lies in the far east on the banks of River Gamri Chu. Once the centre of a busy trade route to Tibet, today it is the junction of the East-West highway, with road connections to Samdrup Jongkhar and then into the Indian state of Assam. The nomadic people from Merak and Sakteng, known for their exceptional features and costumes, use this town as their market place, mostly during the winter.





PHUENTSHOLING

(300 m)

The frontier town is a thriving commercial centre, situated directly at the base of the Himalayan foothills. It is a fascinating place where different ethnic groups mingle, predominantly Indian, Bhutanese, and Nepalese. Being the border town, Phuentsholing serves as the convenient entry/exit point for Bhutan and also as the important link to visit the eastern Indian states of West Bengal, Sikkim, and Assam.

ACCESSIBILITY / LOCATION

Entry into Bhutan can be made either by land or by air. Druk Air, the National Air Carrier of the Kingdom, operates regular flights to / from Paro to Delhi, Kolkata, Bagdogra, Mumbai, Guwahati, Kathmandu, Dhaka, Bangkok, and Singapore. By surface, entry into Bhutan is possible through the southern border town of Phuentsholing. The frontier town is around a 5 hour drive from Thimphu and Paro, 4 and a half hours from Bagdogra, and 7 hours from Darjeeling and Gangtok.

The other private local air carrier, Bhutan Airlines (Tashi Air) has also commenced regular flight operations to / from Paro on the Delhi, Kathmandu, Kolkata, and Bangkok sectors.

Entry to Exit from Bhutan is also possible by surface through Phuentsholing and Samdrup Jongkhar. The Bagdogra Airport, in the state of West Bengal (India) is the nearest airport, approximately 165 km (4 and a half hour drive) from Phuentsholing, while Samdrup Jongkhar is about 110 km and 3 hours from Guwahati's Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport in the state of Assam (India).







TRAVEL NOTES

The Royal Government of Bhutan recognises that tourism is a world-wide phenomenon and an important means of achieving socio-economic development, particularly for developing countries like Bhutan. It also recognises that tourism, in affording the opportunity to travel, can help in promoting understanding among peoples and building closer ties of friendship based on appreciation and respect for different cultures and lifestyles. Towards achieving this objective, the Royal Government, since the inception of tourism in 1974, has adopted a very cautious approach to the growth and development of tourism. The Bhutanese tourism industry is based on the principle of sustainability – that *'tourism must be environmentally and ecologically friendly, socially and culturally acceptable, and economically viable'*.

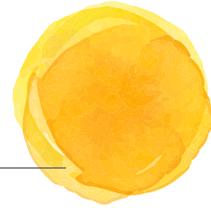






VISA PROCEDURE FOR ALL NATIONALS

(Except Indian/Bangladeshi/Maldivian)



- We require colour scan of passport for visa about 30 days prior to travel date (sooner the better since minimum 7 working days are required to process and obtain Bhutan visa).
- Colour scan or take a picture with your mobile phone/digicam of the passport page with face image and passport number, and email us in Jpeg/pdf format.
- Remaining validity in passport after Bhutan tour must be minimum 6 months excluding travelling month.
- Tourism Council of Bhutan requires full tour payment while applying for visa so along with passport copy, please forward us wire transfer copy or payment details, to process visa.
- Multiple Indian visa required if you enter Bhutan from India and re-enter India after Bhutan tour.
- Passengers visiting India on e-tourist visa and entering Bhutan by Air (by remaining in transit at Delhi / Kolkata airport) and re-entering India after Bhutan tour by surface (Phuentsholing, Samdrup Jongkhar, and Gelephu) are required to travel with original Indian visa stamped in passport by Indian Embassy/
Consulate at their home country as there are no facilities in these border towns to check and verify Indian e- Visa.
- No passport size photo/any pictures / any visa form etc. are required for Bhutan visa – only requirement is clear/readable copy of passport copy in colour.
- Dual passport holders are required to use the same passport of which details are submitted to Bhutan for Visa authorisation, prior to arrival in Bhutan.
- It is mandatory for a tourist (except Indian/Bangladeshi/Maldivian) to buy a full service tour package from a local Bhutanese tour operator like us to avail a Bhutan visa.
- Bhutan visa fee is US\$ 40/ which will be included in tour cost submitted by us.
- Passport copies are also required for ticket issuance for verifying correct names; same passport copy may not be valid for Bhutan visa if it doesn't meet all the above conditions.



WEATHER

Autumn (late September to late November) is the ideal time for trekking and travelling throughout the country, when the high mountain peaks are vividly visible against clear blue skies. Spring (mid-March to May), is recognised as the next best time to visit Bhutan for touring and trekking. Although you may experience more clouds and rain than in the autumn, you are rewarded with gorgeous views of the lofty Himalayan peaks. The magnificent rhododendrons, magnolias, and other wildflowers are in bloom, and birdlife is abundant. The monsoon usually arrives in early June and lasts till mid-September. Light to heavy rain is expected, mainly in the afternoons and evenings. In winter (December to early March), the sky is bright and sunny but cold, especially when the sun hides behind the mountains in the mornings and evenings. At night, temperatures fall below zero.







TRANSPORT

All mode of transport within Bhutan is by road. The motorable roads are well maintained and connect most places. However, the mountainous terrain and winding roads restrict the average driving speed of a vehicle to about 35 km per hour.

We use Hyundai Tucson/Santa Fe for a team of 1 – 2 guests. A Toyota Hiace/Hyundai H1 Minivan for a team of 3 – 6 guests and a deluxe Toyota Coaster for a group of 7 – 18 guests. All these vehicles are periodically checked and maintained.

CLIMATE

Geographically, Bhutan is a land of dramatic contrasts. From the near tropical southern border with India, steep slopes climb to snow-capped heights of over 24,750 feet / 7,500 m at the northern border with Tibet. Consequently, temperatures vary greatly between day and night, and at different altitudes. Hence, layered clothing for changing conditions is recommended. In the central valleys, the summer rains are not as heavy as in the south and occur mostly late afternoon and at night. From mid-May to the end of August, the weather is warm at night (60-64F/17-18C) and during the day (72-78F/22-26C). In winter, the sky is bright and it is sunny but cold. At night, temperatures fall below zero. Spring and Autumn are very pleasant with warm days and cool nights.



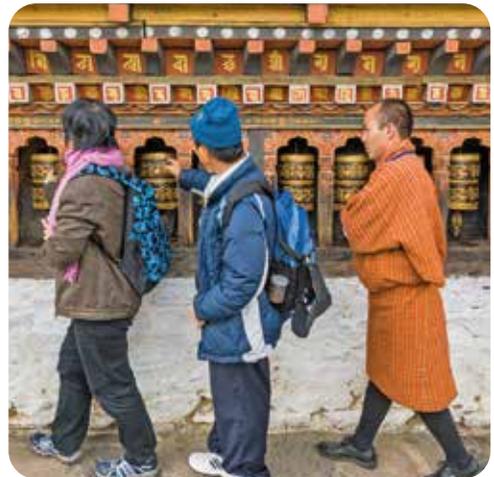


FOOD & DRINK

Traditional Bhutanese food always features spicy red and green chillies, either dried or fresh. The National Dish Ema Datshi, a preparation of *ema* (chilli) cooked in *datshi* (cheese), is a great favourite among the Bhutanese, and a growing number of foreigners even where the fare. Most of the tourist hotels provide meals in buffet style, usually consists of Bhutanese, Indian, Chinese, and Continental dishes. The food in hotels is often the best in town, but in the main tourist centres, there are a few quality restaurants that are increasingly becoming popular. All tourist hotels have a good selection of international and Bhutanese beverages.

TOUR GUIDES

All tours are escorted by well-trained, knowledgeable guides who are certified by the Tourism Council of Bhutan. All our trekking guides and cooks undergo additional mountain training, including safety and first aid. We generally provide English speaking guides; however, the services of Japanese, French, German, and Chinese speaking guides can be provided with sufficient prior information and at an additional cost.



HEALTH INFORMATION

No vaccination is currently required for entry into Bhutan. However, if you are arriving from an area infected with yellow fever, you are required to get a yellow fever vaccination. If you are arriving from a cholera-infected area then officials may ask for evidence of cholera vaccination. Anti-malarial medication is recommended for all travellers to Bhutan visiting rural areas in the districts that border India.

It is suggested that you assemble a traveller's medical kit appropriate to destination, length of

trip and general health. On a tour in Bhutan, there are long drives, and roads are winding so medication for motion sickness is strongly suggested. You should also pack an adequate supply of any prescribed medication you may require while travelling. Travellers who plan to visit Bhutan, should consult a physician about high-altitude travel. After a brief period of acclimatisation, most people do not suffer from altitude sickness but elderly travellers or those with high blood pressure or heart condition need to exercise caution at high altitudes.





CUSTOMS & IMMIGRATION

Visitors are required to fill up the Customs Form and hand over to the concerned authorities on arrival. The following articles are exempt from duty:

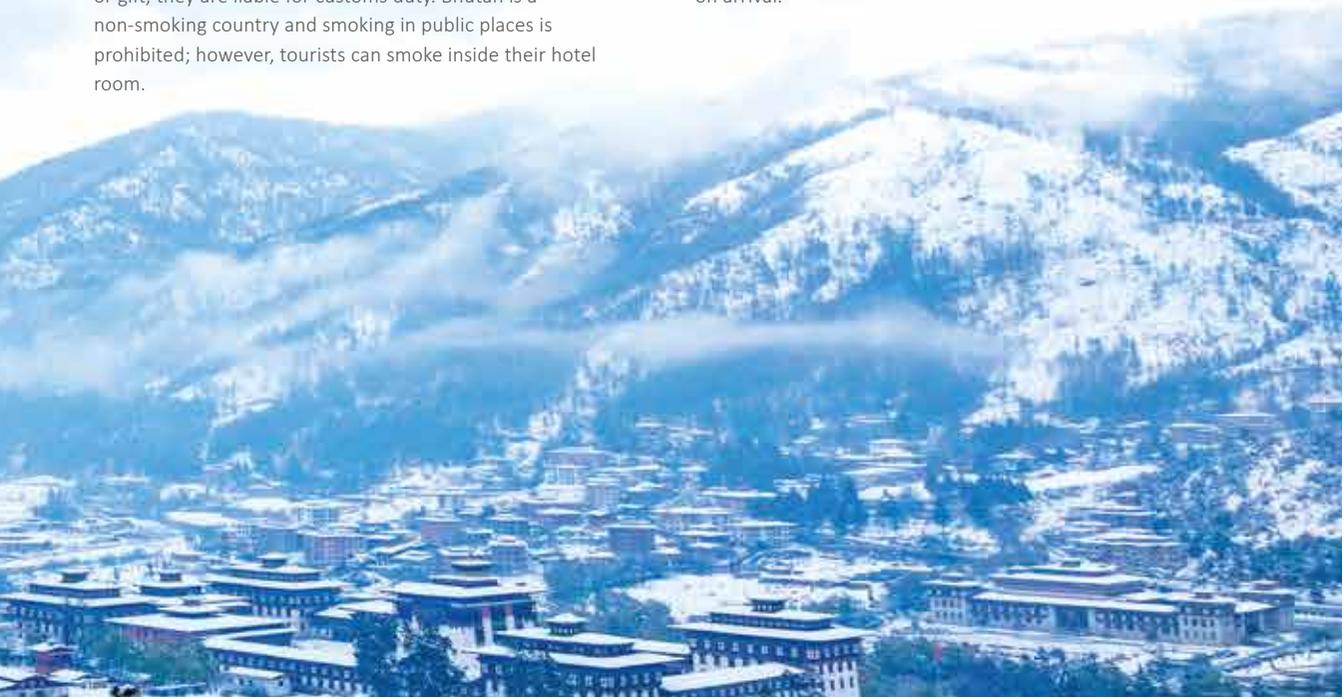
- a) Personal effects and articles for day to day use by the visitor
- b) 2 litres of alcohol, 400 cigarettes, 150 gm of pipe tobacco
- c) Instruments, apparatus or appliances for professional use
- d) Photographic equipment, video cameras, and other electronic goods for personal use.

The articles mentioned under c) & d) must be declared in the Customs Form. If such items are disposed of in Bhutan by sale or gift, they are liable for customs duty. Bhutan is a non-smoking country and smoking in public places is prohibited; however, tourists can smoke inside their hotel room.

Import and Export of the following goods are strictly prohibited:-

- a). Arms, ammunition, explosives, and military stores
- b). All narcotics and drugs except medically prescribed drugs
- c). Wildlife products, especially those of endangered species
- d). Antiques

Visitors are also advised to be cautious in purchasing old and used items. Customs authorities will not allow any old / used items to be taken out of the country if they have not been certified as non-antiques. Imports of plants, soil etc. are subject to quarantine regulations. These items must be cleared on arrival.





A woman in traditional Bhutanese clothing, including a blue patterned jacket and a striped skirt, stands in a mountainous landscape. The background shows a valley with a river and distant mountains under a blue sky with light clouds. A yellow circular graphic is positioned in the upper right corner of the page.

CLOTHING & ACCESSORIES

Comfortable clothing and sturdy, soft-soled shoes are essential for travel in Bhutan. Warm clothing is recommended; and except for the summer months, down jackets and woollen sweaters are suggested. In the summer, heavy cottons and lightweight woollens will work well. Altitudinal differences account for a wide range of temperatures from day to night the year round. It is, therefore, suggested that clothing be layered so that you can adapt to the changing conditions.

While visiting temples and other religious institutions, dress modestly and respectfully. Slacks are appropriate for men and long-length skirts are appropriate for women. Shoulders must also be covered when inside religious buildings. Please keep in mind that shoes must be removed when entering temples. It is, therefore, suggested that you carry a pair of socks to wear inside religious buildings.

The following is a fairly exhaustive list of what you should pack for the trip: clothes as per season, sunglasses / spare glasses, pair of casual shoes, knife, hat, umbrella, insect repellent, hand cream, small sewing kit, safety pins, torch or flash light with spare batteries, mirror, scissors, sun protection cream, lip salve, soluble aspirin, antiseptic cream, anti-histamine cream, anti-diarrhea pills, a preparation for sunburn relief, and any medication you take regularly.



COMMUNICATION

All major towns and cities have basic communication facilities, including phone, fax, and email service. Local and international calls can be made from all hotels and public phone booths for a fee. Cell phones with a Bhutanese SIM card can also be used in most urban places and some rural places as well, and can be used with a commonly available pre-paid mobile voucher. Pre-activated tourism SIM card is also available at the airport in Paro.

Standard mail service in Bhutan is handled by Bhutan Post, and is commonly found throughout the country. DHL and Federal Express now offer courier services from Thimphu.

Internet facilities are continuously increasing in number and can be found in major cities and towns. Although there are several Internet cafes, many still rely on a dial-up connection, which can be very slow; however, high speed wireless and broadband can be found in certain areas.



ELECTRICITY

In Bhutan, electricity runs on 220 / 240 volts. If you do bring electrical appliances, take along an international converter kit complete with a set of adapter plugs.





PHOTOGRAPHY

Bhutan's landscapes, buildings, arts and crafts, culture, and people – make for some of the most stunning subjects of photography in the world. While photographing local people though, it is always better to take permission first. There are certain places such as monasteries and temples, where photography is prohibited. However, there is no restriction on photographing *Dzongs* (fortresses) and *Goembas* (monasteries) from the outside. If you are uncertain about whether or not photography is permitted, please check with your local guide. You should refrain from taking pictures of military installations.

SHOPPING

Items that are most frequently purchased by travellers to Bhutan include postage stamps, lovely hand-woven fabrics, carved masks, woven baskets, *thangka* (literally meaning 'recorded message' the *thangka* is an ancient and sacred form of Buddhist iconography – usually a scroll – painted or embroidered mostly on silk, sometimes on cotton or linen; depicting the Buddha, deities, scenes), wooden bowls, handmade paper, and finely-crafted metal objects. In Bhutan, the buying and / or selling of antiques is strictly forbidden.





AVERAGE TEMPERATURE (In Degree Celsius)

PLACES	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
	Max Min											
PARO	12.8 1.4	14.9 3.3	17.6 5.7	20.1 9.1	22.5 12.6	24.5 15.7	25.4 17.9	25.2 17.4	23.5 15.4	20.4 11.0	15.8 6.3	14.0 2.6
THIMPHU	14.6 -3.3	15.8 -0.7	18.2 3.0	20.7 6.7	22.8 10.9	24.4 14.6	24.8 15.9	25.1 15.4	23.8 13.6	21.2 8.0	18.3 2.2	16.0 -2.1
PUNAKHA	17.5 5.8	19.3 8.1	22.2 11.2	24.9 13.8	27.3 17.2	29.2 19.3	29.1 20.1	28.9 19.0	27.9 18.1	25.6 15.6	22.1 12.1	18.9 7.5
WANGDUE PHODRANG	17.8 5.5	19.4 8.1	22.7 10.8	25.5 14.4	27.3 17.8	28.2 20.3	27.6 20.9	27.9 20.6	27.1 19.5	25.6 15.1	22.4 10.5	19.5 6.0
BUMTHANG	11.0 -4.2	12.5 -1.3	14.8 1.9	17.1 5.7	19.4 9.4	21.7 12.9	22.5 14.3	22.4 14.3	21.1 12.3	18.0 6.6	15.1 1.6	12.6 -3.6
MONGAR	16.1 6.0	18.6 7.9	21.5 11.2	24.0 13.6	25.7 15.8	26.6 18.0	26.8 18.5	27.8 18.3	26.8 17.1	24.4 13.7	20.7 10.0	17.7 7.2
TRASHIGANG	13.6 2.5	15.6 4.6	18.8 7.3	21.1 10.4	22.7 13.3	23.7 16.2	24.3 17.0	24.8 16.8	23.9 15.5	21.7 11.2	18.2 7.2	15.4 3.9
TRONGSA	17.5 5.6	19.3 6.2	22.3 10.4	23.9 13.5	23.6 14.5	24.7 17.2	25.9 18.2	26.6 17.1	25.0 17.1	22.3 13.4	19.3 9.7	18.0 7.2
PHUENTSH- OLING	23.9 16.2	26.5 5.1	29.5 18.2	31.1 6.3	32.4 20.9	32.6 10.1	31.9 23.1	32.6 11.9	31.6 24.8	31.2 15.6	28.3 26.0	24.9 17.2
SAMDRUP- JONGKHAR	21.0 9.5	22.9 11.5	25.3 14.3	26.2 16.3	27.6 18.6	28.5 20.6	28.8 21.1	29.4 21.2	28.6 20.1	28.1 15.9	25.9 14.1	23.0 11.1
TRASHI- YANGTSE	12.3 3.6	14.8 6.2	16.7 8.2	19.8 11.1	22.2 14.2	23.2 17.0	23.7 18.5	23.6 17.9	22.4 16.5	19.9 12.3	16.5 8.1	13.2 4.1

DISTANCES & DRIVING TIME BETWEEN PLACES OF TOURIST INTEREST

Bhutan's motorable roads are well maintained, however, the mountainous terrain and winding road restrict the average driving speed of vehicles to about 35 km per hour.

From	To	Distance (Km)	Driving Time
Paro	Thimphu	55 km	1.5 hours
Paro	Haa	70 km	3 hours
Thimphu	Phuentsholing	180 km	6 hours
Thimphu	Wangduephodrang	77 km	3 hours
Thimphu	Punakha	75 km	3 hours
Punakha	Wangduephodrang	19 km	45 min
Punakha	Gangtey (Phobjikha)	70 km	3 hours
Gangtey (Phobjikha)	Trongsa	125 km	4.5 hours
Wangduephodrang	Trongsa	129 km	5 hours
Trongsa	Bumthang	68 km	3 hours
Bumthang	Mongar	198 km	7 hours
Mongar	Lhuntse	76 km	3 hours
Mongar	Trashigang	91 km	3 hours
Trashigang	Chorten Kora	52 km	2 hours
Trashigang	Samdrup-Jongkhar	180 km	7 hours
Samdrup- Jongkhar	Guwahati (Assam, India)	110 km	3 hours
Samdrup- Jongkhar	Phuentsholing (via India)	400 km	10 hours
Phuentsholing	Bagdogra (West Bengal, India)	165 km	4.5 hours
Phuentsholing	Siliguri (West Bengal, India)	155 km	4 hours
Phuentsholing	Darjeeling (West Bengal, India)	200 km	6 hours
Phuentsholing	Kalimpong (West Bengal, India)	185 km	5 hours
Phuentsholing	Gangtok (Sikkim, India)	220 km	7 hours
Phuentsholing	Dooars (Chalsa) (West Bengal, India)	110 km	2.5 hours

A photograph of a cozy hotel room with wood-paneled walls. The room features a light-colored sofa with several pillows, a bed with a patterned bench at the foot, and a window seat with a cushion. A lamp is visible on a side table. The room is well-lit, suggesting a bright view from the window.

ACCOMMODATION

The Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB) has now started categorising hotels according to their respective stars. Though some of the hotels are categorised into 4 star or 3 star, the actual service standards don't fully correspond to their star rating. Due to the limited availability of skilled manpower in the hospitality sector, service may not be up to mark at most mid-range hotels. In major towns such as Thimphu, Paro, Punakha, Wangduephodrang, Bumthang, and Phuentsholing, hotels are of a reasonably good standard; however, when one ventures into the eastern part of the country



into places such as Mongar, Trashigang, and Samdrup Jongkhar, lodgings become more rudimentary. Here, most accommodations are small family-run guest houses.

Over the past few years, a few international hotel chains such as Aman, Starwood chain, Taj, and COMO have established a few luxury and deluxe hotels and resorts in a few major towns and in the countryside in Bhutan. The hotels and resorts maintain international standards of comfort and luxury, blending them beautifully with local Bhutanese art, culture, and tradition.



FESTIVALS

Autumn (late September to late November) is the ideal time for trekking and travelling throughout the country, when skies are generally clear and the high mountain peaks rise to a vivid visible against clear blue sky. Spring, (mid-March to May), is recognised as the next best time to visit Bhutan for touring and trekking. Although you may experience more clouds and rain than in the autumn, you are rewarded with gorgeous views of the lofty Himalayan peaks.



TENTATIVE FESTIVALS DATES FOR 2018



SL#	FESTIVAL	PLACE	DATES
1	Nabji Lhakhang Drup	Nabji village, Trongsa	2-4 January, 2018
2	Punakha Drubchen and Punakha Tsechu	Punakha Dzong	February 22 – March 02, 2018
3	Gom Kora Tsechu	Trashigang	24-26 March, 2018
4	Dzongdrakha Tsechu Festival	Paro	26 March, 2018
5	ParoTshechu festival	Paro	27 – 31 March, 2018
6	Chhukha Tsechu	Chhukha	31 March, 2018
7	Chorten Kora	Tashiyangtse	March 31 – April 16, 2018
8	Bumthang Nimalung Tsechu	Nimalung	21-Jun-18
9	Kurjey tsechu	Bumthang	23 June, 2018
10	Tamshing Phala Choepa	Bumthang	19-21 September, 2018
11	Black Neck Crane Festival	Gangtey Monastery, Phobjikha	11 November, 2018
12	Dochula Druk Wangyel Tsechu	Dochula Pass	13 December, 2018
13	Lhuentse Tsechu Festival	Lhuentse Dzong	15-17 December, 2018
14	National Day	Thimpu; Nationwide	17 December, 2018

FESTIVAL OR *TSHECHU* IN BHUTAN

A festival or *Tshechu* is a religious event celebrated every year in various monasteries, temples, and fortresses across the Kingdom of Bhutan. The dates and duration of the festivals vary from one district to another but they always take place on or around the 19th day of the lunar calendar corresponding to the birthday of Guru Padmasambhava. Guru

Padmasambhava (meaning 'lotus-born'), was an 8th century Buddhist saint – often called the second reincarnation of the Buddha. Also known as Guru Rinpoche, Padmasambhava is regarded as the one who brought Buddhism to Bhutan and is deeply revered and worshipped all over the country. During a *Tshechu*, elaborate dances are performed by

monks (as well as laymen) wearing beautiful, ornate costumes and masks; each aspect of a dance has a symbolic meaning and mostly depicts events from the life of Guru Padmasambhava. It is widely believed that one gains merit by attending a *Tshechu*. Some of the festivals are observed to purify souls and ward off evil spirits. Such significant sacred events are conducted and



choreographed by fully ordained religious heads. The Thimphu *Tshechus*, Paro *Tshechus*, and *Jambey Lhakhang* are among the biggest in terms of participation and audience. Most *Tshechus* also feature the unfurling of a *Thongdrel* (or *thangka*) – a *Thongdrel* is a very large appliqué religious image normally only unveiled during a *Tshechu*. The spectacular *Thongdrels* are the largest form of *thangka*

paintings in the tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Composed of several layers of silk made up of appliqué pieces sewn on, a *Thongdrel* typically depicts a seated Guru Rinpoche surrounded by holy beings.

Thongdrels are especially impressive examples of Buddhist art and are considered so sacred that the mere vision of an unfurled *Thongdrel* is said

to cleanse the viewer of their sins! Apart from being an important religious and spiritual occasion, a *Tshechu* is also very much like a yearly social gathering where the Bhutanese people, dressed in all their finery, come together to celebrate and rejoice – giving them the chance to take a break from their everyday life.







FRESH EXPERIENCES

- Send your wishes to the Himalayan sky by raising a prayer flag at the Dochula Pass enroute from Thimphu to Punakha.
- Participate in an early morning prayer ceremony held by local monks in Thimphu's Changangkha Lhakang temple, Lhodrak Kharchhu in Bumthang or in the Gangtey Goempa.
- A lecture on the importance of astrology in Bhutanese society and religion during a visit to the Zangri Zampa monastery in Thimphu.
- Early morning or late afternoon meditation at Kuensel Phodrang, the Buddha statue overlooking Thimphu valley, followed by a typical tea or coffee.
- Visit a local village called Zungney enroute from Bumthang to Gangtey, well known for its traditional weaving and craftsmanship.
- Visit a local village called Sangaygang in Punakha valley for an evening ceremony of the local people or Richengang, where villagers focus on local handicraft for the *Dzongs* in the region.
- Participate in *Suja* making, Bhutan's famous local butter tea followed by a typical farm dinner with *Ema Datshi*.
- Enjoy a picnic after your hike to the famed Tiger's Nest monastery in Paro amidst a picturesque landscape.
- Try the National Sport of Bhutan, archery, and follow a local match on an archery ground.
- Go on a nature walk through the alpine flower fields and woods; combine it with a bird watching experience in the Phobjikha valley.
- Visit 16th century monastery orphanage in Paro and play *Khuru*, an outdoor dart game, with the children.



TRADITIONAL FARM HOUSE EXCURSION



A leisurely walk through the village will give you rare glimpses into the everyday life and fascinating lifestyle of the villagers. Bhutanese farm houses are very colourful, decorative, and traditionally built – their uniqueness lies in the fact that they are constructed without the use of nails! The majority of the population of Bhutan continues to live as it has for centuries – in small isolated farms and hamlets, surrounded by terraced fields of rice, maize, and buckwheat.

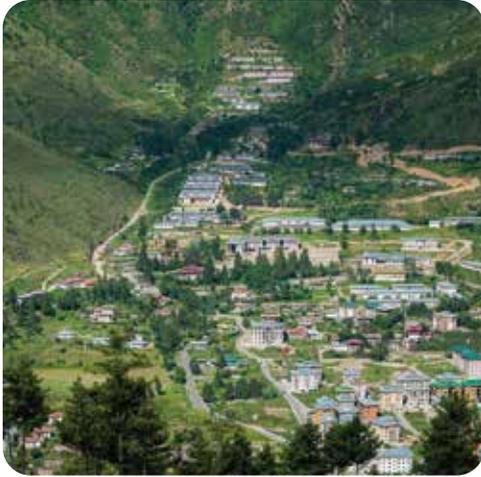
Here, you will also have the chance to make Bhutan's famous brew *Suja* (*su* meaning churn and *ja* meaning tea is traditionally prepared salted butter tea) while at a farmer's home. *Suja* is usually made by boiling tea leaves, the decoction of which is strained; then, salted butter is added to this tea strain and churned, usually using a traditionally made churner. Your cup of *Suja* is ready to be served!



PRAYER FLAG HOISTING

Prayer flags are an integral part of the Bhutanese landscape and also of the cultural and religious heritage of the country, especially the textile and weaving crafts. They are ubiquitous in Bhutan ; in and around monasteries, *chortens* or *stupas*, *dzongs*, *lhakhangs*, homes, on the railings of bridges and mountain roads, and invariably on or near the summits of the mighty peaks that tower over the country. Red, blue, green, yellow, and white – they add a splash of stunning colours to the rugged landscape.

Deeply spiritual, the people of Bhutan believe that with each flutter, a flag releases the prayer printed on it into the air, which in turn carries it to the heavens. The more the flag flaps, the greater is its divine value. It is for this reason that prayer flags are positioned in such a way that they catch the wind – high up on the forested slopes of mountains, across bridges, near rivers and streams that gush down valleys; in fact anywhere where there is a wind and tunnel effect. We offer this ceremony at a place called Dochula at 3000 – metres where the intensity of the wind is high – Dochula is considered a greatly revered site for prayer flag hoisting.



VILLAGE TOUR

While in Punakha visit Richengang Village – it is one of the oldest villages in Bhutan, with traditional architecture and delightful local people. This remote corner of the quiet Punakha valley still follows an ancient way of life that has remained unchanged for generations. Most of the villagers still work as stonemasons and as the original craftsmen of *dzongs* (fortresses) and *lhakhangs* (temples). Visit a local farmer's or stonemason's house at Richengang Village, get a glimpse of the daily life and lifestyle of the villagers. Bhutanese farm houses are very colourful, decorative and traditionally built without the use of nails. The majority of the population of Bhutan continues to live as it has for centuries – in small isolated farms and hamlets, surrounded by terraced fields of rice, maize, and buckwheat.



TSHEWANG CEREMONY

A prayer ceremony for peace, prosperity and happiness can be organised at a monastery in Paro/Thimphu.

The *Tshewang* is a special prayer ceremony held within a monastery by monks to invoke blessings for peace, prosperity and good health. Guests are requested to light butter lamps at the monastery altar.





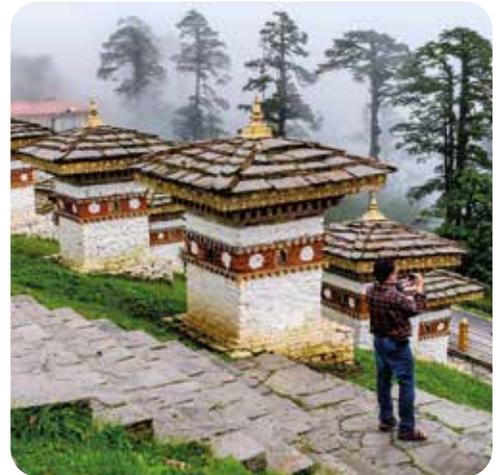
COOKERY CLASS

Enrich your local culinary knowledge – this is a special cooking session held at a local restaurant where a team of chefs instruct/demonstrate how local Bhutanese delicacies are prepared. Bhutanese food is heavily seasoned with red chillies and can be quite hot. The deliciously fiery *Ema Datshi*, made with chillies and local Bhutanese cheese, is the National Dish of Bhutan.

Guests can enjoy the interesting interactive session and can even put their culinary skills to the test by participating in the preparation of local Bhutanese dishes.

NATURE WALKS IN GANGTEY

This pleasurable walk will be an unforgettable experience. From the small hilltop overlooking the Gangtey Goemba, you head downhill through flower meadows to Semchubara village, and from here through beautiful forests and into the open valley. After passing a *chorten* (a significant Buddhist religious monument, also called 'stupa') and Khewa Lhakhang, the trail ends at the local community school; this involves a 30-minute walk up to the start of town. (1-2 hours).





ORPHANAGE VISIT

While in Paro visit the Orphanage at the 16th century Neyphug Monastery. The relatively unknown and rarely visited Neyphug Monastery is about 7 km deep into the mountains over Paro Valley, and is home to some 60 orphans. The Monastery is a beautiful, peaceful place but is in poor condition and in need of restoration. The children's accommodation is also very basic.

The school here is led by Neyphug Trulku Rinpoche, also its founder. In 2005, Rinpoche returned to Bhutan as Professor of Buddhism and saw much suffering among the poor. Daily life is rugged and those living in remote areas have little means of support, struggling to survive in conditions of extreme poverty and threats of chronic illness. Rinpoche came across orphans and abandoned kids whose parents could not afford to take care of them. Their desolate conditions, helplessness, and hopelessness touched him deeply and inspired him to start a school.

A game of *Khuru* with orphans and residing monks can be a heart-warming experience. *Khuru* is a traditional game played in Bhutan. It is similar to darts but the size of the *Khuru* dart is bigger than the usual plastic dart with a metal tip. *Khurus* are carved out of hard-wood and there is no restriction on the weight or the size to be played.



ARCHERY – THE NATIONAL SPORT

Archery is the National Sport of Bhutan and every village has its own archery range. High spirited competitions, usually accompanied by a banquet, are a part of all festive occasions. Using bamboo bows (although modern compound bows are now common in cities), teams of archers shoot at targets only 30 centimetres in diameter from a distance of 120 metres. Each team has a noisy crowd of supporters who, as well as encouraging their own side, try to fend off the opposition. Archery competitions are among the most picturesque and colourful events in the country and are an integral part of all festivities. Inter-village rivalry is common throughout the Kingdom and this rivalry is never more fiercely expressed than during the annual archery tournaments! They are generally held during Losar (Bhutanese New Year) but smaller competitions are held throughout the year.



TREKKING IN BHUTAN

Trekking in Bhutan is a truly amazing experience. From the warmth and lush vegetation of the river valleys to the icy slopes of the eastern end of the Himalayas, you will encounter some of the most stunning scenery and friendly people imaginable. All the treks we offer in Bhutan are a combination of natural discovery and insights into the unique culture and lifestyle of the people. The trail on each trek passes through traditional and ancient villages where the lifestyle of the villagers has seen little change in over a century. You will get the chance to mingle with the locals, observe their customs and traditions, the unique architecture of their houses, and the ancient monasteries.





MOUNTAIN BIKING

Mountain Biking in Bhutan is a relatively new sport but is gradually gaining momentum, and emerging as one of the most sought after activity for adventure enthusiasts. The tour program is crafted to offer travellers an experience that is a unique blend of cycling and a cultural tour, in a landscape of incredible beauty. The average daily cycling duration does not exceed five hours, hence it is adventurous and enjoyable; at the same time, not taxing. The tour is also accompanied by a vehicle; and at any point of time if travellers feel tired of biking, they can use the vehicle.





CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT REQUIRED OF TREKKERS

Equipment Provided by Company

On all our Camping treks we provide all the tents (Northface, Mountain Hardware, Eureka, Salween, Wild Country or a similar brand), sometimes dome tents, sometimes sturdy A frames; normally people share one tent between two; a foam mattress each; all the cutlery and utensils, cooking pots, stoves; candles/kerosene lantern, tables and stools, kitchen tent, dining tent, and toilet tent; and all the main meals. These are not luxurious tents; these are set up each day by our trekking crew at each camp site. Our Trek support team moves ahead of tourists and pitches tents in advance (on a daily basis) before the arrival of the guests. For toilets too, temporary toilet tents are fixed whereas in shower tents, hot water in buckets is provided for bathing. In the dining tent, we provide portable tables, chairs etc. Whilst trekking, guests are provided with foam mats but for more comfort they can bring a self-inflating mat pack called Thermarest. This packs up small but when inflated gives great insulation and is more comfortable than a single closed-cell foam mat.

KITBAG

For all the treks, your gear that is carried by porters or ponies, is best packed in a strong kitbag (duffel bag / duffle bag). A simple design without wheels and without foldable handles is best.

SLEEPING BAG

Down-filled bags are better (4-5 season). because high altitude nights will be cold. Good down is fluffy, light, and thick. A muff (an extra section around the neck) makes a big difference to the overall warmth of a bag. Used sleeping bags are also available for rent in Thimphu (not recommended). Alternatively, add a fleece sleeping bag liner to add warmth to a 3-4 season bag.

SLEEPING BAG LINER

Cotton, silk or fleece. Saves washing your sleeping bag and adds warmth.

DAYPACK

Should be comfortable; also, a good waist band that transfers some of the weight to the hips is most important. It needs to be big enough to take a jacket, fleece, water, camera, and odds and ends.

FLEECE JACKET / VEST

Most trekkers consider this essential, but alternatives are a thick thermal top or a light down jacket.

BOOTS

For a happy trek you need comfortable feet. Good boots have: good ankle support, plenty of toe room for long descents, a stiff sole to lessen twisting torsion, and are light because with every step you lift your boot up. Look at the inner lining - leather is good and Cambrelle is even better, a material that eats smelly feet bacteria. Good lightweight trekking boots or light all leather boots are perfect. Boots must be lightly worn in before trekking and this should include some steep hills to show up trouble spots. The longer the trek, the better the boots you need.

SOCKS

In the low country your feet will be warm or even hot while walking, so quality cotton mix sports socks are best. Three to four pairs are enough. Thick trekking socks are better for higher country and cool evenings. Four pairs are enough. Mostly, modern trekking boots fit snugly so wearing two pairs of socks at the same time is impractical.

DOWN JACKET / VEST

Almost essential for the cold evenings. A down jacket is the best option, although a vest can also be brought along.

CAMP SHOES / SANDALS / FLIP-FLOPS

A luxury for your feet at the end of the day. Sandals or running shoes. Flip-flops, available for cheap in Thimphu, are a necessity for rain during the trek.

WIND/RAIN JACKET

Waterproof and breathable. Plastic ponchos or non-breathable raincoats are not suitable. Gore-tex (or similar) jackets are recommended for treks over passes or climbing trips. Lighter jackets should be a second jacket, easy to throw in the daypack for warmer days.

THERMAL SHIRTS / UNDERWEAR

Good thermals, both tops and bottoms, are one of the secrets to cold weather trekking comfort. Expedition-weight thermals are the most versatile and can be worn as your high altitude trekking top or under pants on extremely cold days. Zip-up tops are great for changeable weather. Underwear: 4 to 7 pairs.

WARM HAT / BALACLAVA

Nice for the evenings, hats essential for cold trekking days.

NIGHTWEAR THERMALS

Silk-weight is lightest and warm, mid-weight is perfect. Great for warm nights in the sleeping bag!

FLEECE / SWEATPANTS

Great for the chilly evenings, thicker is better.

DAY-WEAR SHIRT

T-shirts are popular but a cotton shirt or mixed yarn travel shirt is more versatile. The collar protects the back of your neck and the sleeves can be rolled up or down. Take two or three so you can swap damp for dry.

TREKKING PANTS

You will live in these. Light material, loose, and dark-coloured is best. You can survive with only one pair, although two is better.

WIND PANTS

If your trekking pants are reasonably windproof then special wind pants are not needed. If you do bring a pair, it is not necessary to have Gore-tex. Similar, non-waterproof is quite OK.

TORCH / FLASHLIGHT

Any good quality with LED bulb.

TREKKING POLES

Definitely useful, especially on steep, rough terrain; but if you are not used to using them you can survive without.

SUNGLASSES

Suitable for snow; it's bright up there, but specialised glacier glasses with side pieces are not needed. Contact lens wearers report very few problems except cleaning them in the conditions. Ski goggles are unnecessary.

MITTENS / GLOVES

A good pair of wind-proof gloves is essential. Available in Thimphu for cheap if you don't have a pair.

WATER BOTTLE

Should be one litre or more in capacity; should carry boiled water and be leak-proof. Nalgene or a similar brand, or European fuel bottles, are best. You need at least two water bottles, if not, definitely one water bottle.

TOWEL

Bring only a small one for trekking, or a camp towel. In Thimphu the hotel supplies towels.

SUNSCREEN AND LIP BALM WITH SUNSCREEN

The sun is strong at altitude, especially after snow. Bring sunscreen and lip balm with an SPF 15 at least, or better still SPF 30+.

MOISTURISER

A small tube for sensitive or well cared for skins. The air is dry and the sun harsh.

FIRST AID KIT

We provide a standard First Aid kit set. You should however, bring any personal medicines that you need.

WATER PURIFICATION

A bottle of iodine tablets such as Potable Aqua, Polar Pur or Couglans. We mostly use water from the streams. The use of mineral water is discouraged from an environmental point of view, but is available in cities.

MONEY-POUCH / BELT / INSIDE POCKET

Most people find wearing one while trekking is a hassle and keep it buried in their kitbag or daypack. The hotel has safety deposit boxes.



BHUTAN – THE LAST SHANGRI-LA



DAY 01: ARRIVE PARO BY FLIGHT

- Meeting and assistance on arrival and transfer to Thimphu (55 km, approx. 1.1/2 hours), the modern capital town of Bhutan.
- Later in the afternoon, take a short drive to Kuenselphodrang, to see the largest statue of Buddha in the country.
- Evening take an exploratory walk around Thimphu city centre.
- Overnight at the hotel in Thimphu.

DAY 02: THIMPHU

- After breakfast, visit Textile Museum, Simply Bhutan Museum, National Library, Arts & Crafts School.
- Post lunch, visit Memorial Chorten, the *stupa* built in memory of Bhutan's Third King. Then drive to see, Trashichoedzong- The Fortress of the Glorious Religion.
- Evening explore local crafts bazaar.
- Overnight at the hotel in Thimphu.

DAY 03: THIMPHU- PUNAKHA / WANGDUEPHODRANG (75 KM, APPROX. 3-HOUR DRIVE)

- After breakfast, drive to Punakha / Wangduephodrang across Dochula Pass (3080 m) that heralds the most enchanting views of Bhutan.
- Afternoon visit the magnificent Punakha Dzong also known as 'Place of Great Happiness or Bliss'.
- Then take a short walking excursion to Chimi Lhakhang – The Temple of Fertility.
- Overnight at the hotel in Punakha / Wangduephodrang.

DAY 04: PUNAKHA/WANGDUEPHODRANG–PARO (125 KM, APPROX. 4.5 HOUR DRIVE)

- After breakfast, drive to Paro. En route visiting Simtokha Dzong, the oldest fortress of the country which now houses the School for Buddhist Studies.
- Post lunch, in Paro, visit Ta Dzong (National Museum) and then walk down the trail to visit Rinpung Dzong – The Fortress of Heap of Jewels. Overnight at the hotel in Paro.

DAY 05: PARO

- After breakfast, embark on a fascinating excursion to the famous Taktshang Monastery also known as Tiger's Nest (approx. 5-hour round trip walk).

OR

- Driving excursion to Chelela pass (3988 m), to enjoy fascinating mountain views (65 km, approx 2-hour round trip drive).
- Post lunch, visit Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the oldest and most sacred shrines of the country.
- Then drive to Drukgyel Dzong, the ruined fortress. On a clear day, there is a fascinating view of Mount Chomolhari (7314 m) below this ruined fortress.
- Overnight at the hotel in Paro.

DAY 06: DEPART PARO

- After breakfast, transfer to the airport for flight to onward destination.





BHUTAN – THE HIMALAYAN JEWEL



DAY 01: ARRIVE PHUENTSHOLING BY SURFACE

- On arrival at Bhutan's border town Phuentsholing, you will be met by our representative and check-in at the hotel.
- Evening take an exploratory walk around Phuentsholing city centre, visiting Zangtho Pelri Lhakhang (temple).
- Overnight at the hotel in Phuentsholing.

DAY 02: PHUENTSHOLING / THIMPHU (180 KM, APPROX. 6 HOURS DRIVE)

- After immigration formalities, embark on an interesting journey to Bhutan's capital town, Thimphu. En route visiting Kharbandi Goempa, the beautiful monastery situated in a garden of tropical plants and flowers.
- Evening enjoy a stroll around Thimphu city centre.
- Overnight at the hotel in Thimphu.

DAY 03: THIMPHU

- After breakfast, visit Textile Museum, Simply Bhutan Museum, National Library, Arts & Crafts School.
- Post lunch, visit Memorial Chorten, the *stupa* built in memory of Bhutan's Third King. Then drive to Kuenselphodrang, to see the largest statue of Buddha in the country.
- Later visit, Trashichoedzong – The Fortress of the Glorious Religion.
- Evening explore local craft bazaar.
- Overnight at the hotel in Thimphu.

DAY 04: THIMPHU – PUNAKHA / WANGDUEPHODRANG (75 KM, APPROX. 3 HOURS DRIVE)

- After breakfast, drive to Punakha / Wangduephodrang across Dochula pass (3080m) that heralds the most enchanting views of Bhutan.
- Afternoon visit magnificent Punakha Dzong also known as 'Place of Great Happiness or Bliss'.
- Then take a short walking excursion to Chimi Lhakhang – The Temple of Fertility.
- Overnight at the hotel in Punakha / Wangduephodrang.

DAY 05: PUNAKHA / WANGDUEPHODRANG – PARO (125 KM, APPROX. 4.5 HOURS DRIVE)

- After breakfast, drive to Paro. En route visit Simtokha Dzong, the oldest fortress of the country which now houses the School for Buddhist studies.
- Post lunch, in Paro, visit Ta Dzong (national museum) and then walk down the trail to visit Rinpung Dzong – The Fortress of Heap of Jewels.
- Overnight at the hotel in Paro.

DAY 06: PARO

- After breakfast, embark on a fascinating excursion to famous Taktsang Monastery also known as Tiger's Nest (approx. 5-hour round trip walk).

OR

- Driving excursion to Chelela pass (3988 m), to enjoy fascinating mountain views (65 km, approx 2-hour round trip drive).
- Post lunch, visit Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the oldest and most sacred shrines of the country.
- Then drive to Drukgyel Dzong, the ruined fortress. On a clear day, there is a fascinating view of Mount Chomolhari (7314 m) below this ruined fortress.
- Overnight at the hotel in Paro.

DAY 07: PARO – PHUENTSHOLING (175 KM, APPROX. 6-HOUR DRIVE)

- After breakfast, transfer to the airport for flight to onward destination.



BHUTAN – THE KINGDOM IN THE SKY



DAY 01: ARRIVE PARO BY FLIGHT

- Meeting and assistance on arrival and transfer to Thimphu (55 km, approx. 1.5 hours), the modern capital town of Bhutan.
- Later in the afternoon, take a short drive to Kuenselphodrang, to see the largest statue of Buddha in the country.
- Evening take an exploratory walk around Thimphu city centre.
- Overnight at the hotel in Thimphu.

DAY 02: THIMPHU

- After breakfast, visit Textile Museum, Simply Bhutan Museum, National Library, Arts & Crafts School.
- Post lunch, visit Memorial Chorten, the *stupa* built in memory of Bhutan's Third King. Then drive to see, Trashichoedzong – The Fortress of the Glorious Religion.
- Evening explore local crafts bazaar. Overnight at the hotel.

DAY 03: THIMPHU – PUNAKHA / WANGDUEPHODRANG (75 KM, APPROX. 3-HOUR DRIVE)

- After breakfast, drive to Punakha / Wangduephodrang across Dochula pass (3080m) that heralds the most enchanting views of Bhutan.
- Afternoon visit, the magnificent Punakha Dzong also known as 'Place of Great Happiness or Bliss'. Then take a short walking excursion to Chimi Lhakhang – The Temple of Fertility.

DAY 04: PUNAKHA / WANGDUEPHODRANG – TRONGSA- BUMTHANG (200 KM, APPROX. 7.5-HOUR DRIVE)

- After breakfast, drive to Trongsa across Pelela pass (3,300 m). En route visit Chendbji Chorten, the *stupa* patterned on Swambhunath in Kathmandu.
- Drive further and visit majestic Trongsa Dzong, the impressive fortress / monastery. Afterwards cross 3,400 m Yutongla pass and visit en route Chumey valley, famous for *Yathra* (woolen fabric) weaving. Overnight at the hotel.

DAY 05: BUMTHANG

- After breakfast, visit to ancient temples of Jambay Lhakhang, Kurje Lhakhang and Tamshing Lhakhang..

- Post lunch visit Jakar Dzong or the 'Castle of the White Bird'.
- Then drive to Lhodrak Kharchhu monastery.
- Evening at leisure in Bumthang city centre.
- Overnight at the hotel in Bumthang.

DAY 06: BUMTHANG – PUNAKHA / WANGDUEPHODRANG (200 KM, APPROX. 7.5 HOUR DRIVE)

- After breakfast, drive to Punakha/Wangduephodrang. En route visit Ta Dzong, the old watchtower, converted into an excellent museum. Overnight at the hotel.

DAY 07: PUNAKHA / WANGDUEPHODRANG – PARO (125 KM, APPROX. 4.5 HOUR DRIVE)

- After breakfast, drive to Paro en route visiting Simtokha Dzong, the oldest fortress of the country which now houses the School for Buddhist studies.
- Post lunch, in Paro, visit Ta Dzong (National Museum) and then walk down the trail to visit Rinpung Dzong – The Fortress of Heap of Jewels. Overnight at the hotel in Paro.

DAY 08: PARO

- After breakfast, embark on a fascinating excursion to famous Taktshang Monastery also known as Tiger's Nest (approx. 5 hours round trip walk).

OR

- Driving excursion to Chelela pass (3988 m), to enjoy fascinating mountain views (65 km, approx 2-hour round trip drive).
- Post lunch, visit Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the oldest and most sacred shrines of the country.
- Then drive to Drukgyel Dzong, the ruined fortress. On a clear day, there is fascinating view of Mount Chomolhari (7314 m) below this ruined fortress. Overnight at the hotel in Paro.

DAY 09: DEPART PARO

- After breakfast, transfer to the airport for flight to onward destination.



BHUTAN – THE KINGDOM IN THE SKY OPTION 2 (with Gangtey & Bumthang)



DAY 01: ARRIVE PARO BY FLIGHT

- Meeting and assistance on arrival and transfer to Thimphu (55 km, approx. 1.5 hours), the modern capital town of Bhutan. Later in the afternoon, take a short drive to Kuenselphodrang, to see the largest statue of Buddha in the country.
- Evening take an exploratory walk around Thimphu city centre.

DAY 02: THIMPHU

- After breakfast, visit to : Textile Museum, Simply Bhutan Museum, National Library, Arts & Crafts School.
- Post lunch, visit Memorial Chorten, the *stupa* built in memory of Bhutan's Third King. Then drive to see, Trashichhoedzong – The Fortress of the Glorious Religion. Evening explore local crafts bazaar. Overnight at the hotel.

DAY 03: THIMPHU – GANGTEY (150 KM, 5.5 HOURS)

- After breakfast, drive across Dochula pass (3080m) that heralds the most enchanting views of Bhutan. Further ahead pass through dense forests and oak, rhododendron trees, reaching at Gangtey (Phobjikha).
- Afternoon take a walk around Gangtey village and visit Gangtey Gumpa, the only Nyingmapa monastery in this region. Overnight at the hotel.

DAY 04: GANGTEY – TRONGSA - BUMTHANG (190 KM, APPROX. 7.5 HOURS DRIVE)

- After breakfast, drive to Trongsa across Pelela pass (3,300m). En route visit Chendbji Chorten, the stupa patterned on Swambhunath in Kathmandu.
- Drive further and visit majestic Trongsa Dzong, the impressive fortress / monastery. Afterwards cross 3,400m Yutongla pass and visit en route Chumey valley, famous for Yathra (woolen fabric) weaving. Overnight at the hotel in Bumthang.

DAY 05: BUMTHANG

- After breakfast, visit to ancient temples of Jambay Lhakhang, Kurje Lhakhang and Tamshing Lhakhang..
- Post lunch visit Jakar Dzong or the 'Castle of the White Bird'. Then drive to Lhodrak Kharchhu monastery.
- Evening at leisure in Bumthang city centre. Overnight at the hotel.

DAY 06: BUMTHANG – PUNAKHA / WANGDUEPHODRANG (200 KM, APPROX. 8 HOURS DRIVE)

- After breakfast, drive to Punakha / Wangduephodrang. En route visit Ta Dzong, the old watchtower, converted into an excellent museum. Overnight at the hotel.

DAY 07: PUNAKHA / WANGDUEPHODRANG

- Visit magnificent Punakha Dzong also known as 'Place of Great Happiness or Bliss'. Then take a short walking excursion to Chimi Lhakhang – The Temple of Fertility.
- Afternoon visit Sangchhen Dorji Lhuendrup Lhakhang nunnery: Perched on a ridge amid pine trees and overlooking valleys of Punakha. Overnight at the hotel.

DAY 08: PUNAKHA /WANGDUEPHODRANG – PARO (125 KM, APPROX. 4.1/2 HOURS DRIVE)

- After breakfast, drive to Paro en route visiting Simtokha Dzong, the oldest fortress of the country which now houses the School for Buddhist studies.
- Post lunch, in Paro, visit Ta Dzong (national museum) and then walk down the trail to visit Rinpung Dzong – The Fortress of Heap of Jewels. Overnight at the hotel in Paro.

DAY 09: PARO

- After breakfast, embark on a fascinating excursion to famous Taktshang Monastery also known as Tiger's Nest (approx. 5 hours round trip walk).

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DAY 10: DEPART PARO

- After breakfast, transfer to the airport for flight to onward destination.



BHUTAN

Happiness is a place!



Thank You,
We look forward to serving you



MARIA DO CARMO CAMACHO



ARVIND BHATIA



Le Passage
to India

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