

Bhutan Thimphu Tsechu Festival

06 Nights 07 Days

Day 01 Paro – Thimphu

Arrive at Paro airport (PBH), your visa will be stamped on your passport at the immigration counter, your guide and driver shall meet and greet you at the exit gate, they shall assist with your luggage and drive you to Thimphu (55km / 1.5hrs).

Your guide shall assist you with checking in to your hotel where you may relax prior to being escorted to a restaurant for your first taste of Bhutanese cuisine for lunch! Afterwards you will be led on your first excursion around the *Land of the Thunder Dragon*.



Bhutan Postal Museum

Visit the **Bhutan Postal Museum** located in the heart of the city in the same building as the Bhutan National Bank (a convenient place to exchange money into local currency if needed).

This new museum was opened in 2015 and portrays the story of Bhutan's progress and development of communications.

Continue to the **National Institute of Zorig Chusum** (*Zorig Chusum* means *13 Traditional Arts & Crafts*) where you will learn about Bhutan's

cultural heritage, if a class is in session you will be allowed to enter and observe students as they get hands on training. The thirteen arts and crafts include bamboo work, ornament making, weaving and more.

Your final point of interest on your private tour is the **Buddha Dordenma Statue** standing tall on a hilltop overlooking Thimphu Valley. Enjoy a great view of Thimphu city at this bronze statue which was built to celebrate the 60th birthday of the Fourth King. See over 100,000 eight inch tall statues housed here.



Bhutan Postal Museum

Rest of day at your own leisure to explore Thimphu Town, hotel transfer, overnight Thimphu. Lunch and dinner included.

Day 02 Thimphu



National Memorial Chorten

Enjoy breakfast in the comfort of your hotel before you embark to see the **National Memorial Chorten** and the **Thimphu Tsechu Festival**. Welcome to the most frequented religious site in Thimphu, the **National Memorial Chorten** was built in 1974 in memory of the late Third King. People from across the globe travel here to pray and circumambulate, see how Bhutanese people devote themselves to daily prayers at this Buddhist stupa.

Witness one of the biggest festivals in the country, **Thimphu Tsechu**, held in the capital for three days. The Tsechu involves mask dancers and celebrations, an ideal way to promote harmony and happiness through strengthening community. The representations of traditional culture are given high priority and great respect from all levels in Bhutanese society interlinked with their Gross National Happiness (GNH) policy.



Thimphu Tsechu

After lunch, you can continue enjoying the festival or enjoy strolling through town, hotel transfer, overnight Thimphu.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.

Day 03 Thimphu – Punakha

After breakfast, check-out and drive to **Punakha Valley** via the beautiful **Dochula Pass**. Begin with a visit back to the **Buddha Dordhenma Statue** if you like, experience the old traditional culture of praying for a safe journey here as you enjoy the great scenic view.



Dochula Pass

Dochula Pass is about a 45 minute drive from Thimphu, a mountain pass at an altitude of 3,150 meters (10,335 feet) above sea level. On a clear day you can see some of the highest peaks Bhutan has to offer, before construction of the beautiful 108 Druk Wangyal Choetens in 2004, this mountain pass was considered a sacred place.

Drive towards **Punakha Valley** and see the villages you pass by; the elevation gradually decreases as you wind through pine trees on your way to the subtropical valley. Hotel transfer, check-in, relax and have lunch at your hotel. Afterwards you will be escorted on a fun hike to **Khamsum Yuelley Namgyel Choeten**.



Punakha Valley

Tucked away on a ridge overlooking the picturesque Punakha Valley, **Khamsum Yuelley Namgyel Choeten** is a great example of Bhutanese architecture. The journey involves a 20 minute drive from the main town of Punakha to the nearest road head. From there you cross a suspension bridge over the Punakha Mochu River (*Female River*) as your trail takes you through terraced paddy fields. The journey typically takes just under one hour to reach the Choeten.



Punakha Dzong

The historic **Punakha Dzong** is your final landmark, built in the 17th century on a small stretch of land where Phochu and Mochu River converge.

This is the second largest and second oldest Dzong in Bhutan, see the sacred wall paintings and artefacts inside.

Spend the rest of your time at your own leisure in Punakha Town, hotel transfer, overnight Punakha.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.

Day 04 Punakha – Phobjikha

Hotel breakfast, check-out and drive to **Phobjikha Valley** (80km / 03hrs) on the way visit **Chime Lhakhang** and **Wangdue Phodrang Dzong**.

Stretch your legs as you walk 30 minutes through terraced paddy fields and traditional farm houses to a hilltop. **Chime Lhakhang** (*Temple of Fertility*) was linked to a 16th century lama who was famous for his obscene behaviour and use of tools to subdue evil spirits that was phallic. This temple was where women who were able to conceive would journey to in the belief that it shall help bless them.



Chime Lhakhang



Wangdue Phodrang Dzong

Continue your drive to **Wangdue Phodrang Dzong**, the third oldest Dzong in Bhutan from the 17th century that stood on the ledge with steep cliffs on three sides. After the original was destroyed in 2012 all precious relics inside were saved, construction was scheduled to finish by the end of 2018 which incorporated state of the art technology in terms of disaster resilience.

The highlight of the day is **Phobjikha Valley**, a large U-shaped glacial valley at 3,000 meters (9,840 feet), where the endangered Black Necked Crane considered their winter home from November to March. Annually on the 11th of November there is a Black Necked Crane Festival to celebrate the arrival of the bird. **Gangtey Goenpa** (*Gangtey Monastery*) is a 17th century structure, one of the largest in Bhutan and a very famous landmark in the valley.



Phobjikha Valley

After lunch, take a leisurely walk to the **Black Necked Crane Information Center**, for nature enthusiasts and those who enjoy long walks through the woods, we recommend Gangtey Nature Trail (5km / 03hrs). Hotel transfer, overnight Phobjikha.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.

Day 05 Phobjikha – Paro

Enjoy breakfast in the comfort of your hotel, check-out, transfer to Paro (06hrs) back the same way you came past **Wangdue Phodrang**, **Dochula Pass** and **Thimphu**.



Simtokha Dzong

On the way visit **Simtokha Dzong**, the oldest Dzong in Bhutan standing tall from the 17th century. This building is strategically located on a ridge overlooking Thimphu Valley and significant for bordering three major regions; Thimphu, Paro and Wangdue Phodrang. Inside you will find one of the main statues known as the Buddha of Compassion.

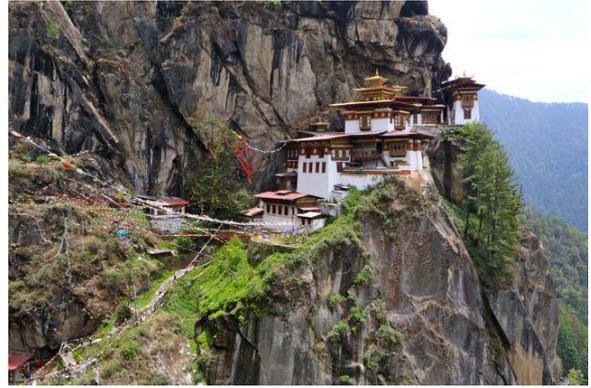
Drive towards Paro, check-in and relax before dinner is served, overnight Paro. Breakfast, lunch

and dinner included.

Day 06 Paro

We recommend a hearty breakfast as today you will be led to **Taktsang Monastery** (*Tiger's Nest*).

Drive to Ramthangka, the base of Taktsang Monastery, it normally takes 02hrs to reach the monastery located on the face of a sheer 800 meter rock cliff, considered the most popular tourist attraction in Bhutan. The trail takes you through the ancient path shaded by pine trees, after about an hour of uphill hiking you will reach a cafeteria offering great views of Taksang Monastery above and the beautiful valley below. Take a break and enjoy tea and snacks here.



Taktsang Monastery

For those who are up for it, hike a further 01hr uphill to visit the monastery, afterwards retrace your steps back to the base where your driver shall be waiting to escort you to the 7th century **Kichu Lhakhang** and **National Museum of Bhutan**. **Kichu Lhakhang** is tucked away just a few minutes drive from the main town of Paro, one of the oldest monasteries in Bhutan.



National Museum of Bhutan

Head to the **National Museum of Bhutan** just above Rinpung Dzong in Paro, which housed an ancient watch tower known as Ta Dzong (*Watch Tower Fortress*) built in the mid 17th century. Displaying hundred of ancient relics and artworks including costumers, armour and handcrafted implements.

Hotel transfer, overnight Paro.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.

Day 07 Paro

After breakfast, airport transfer for your onward journey from Paro (PBH), your guide shall assist you with completing all exit formalities before you check-in.

Breakfast included.