

5 NIGHTS/6 DAYS BHUTAN
Thimphu, Punakha & Paro

Day 01: Arrive Paro & transfer to Thimphu

The flight to Paro is one of the most spectacular in entire Himalayas. Flying along the Himalayan the journey offers fascinating views and an exciting descent into the Kingdom. Bhutan's first gift to you as you disembark from the aircraft will be cool, clean fresh mountain air. After immigration formalities and baggage collection, you will be met by our representative, and afterwards drive to Thimphu, the capital town of Bhutan.

On arrival, in Thimphu check-into the hotel. The capital town of Bhutan and the center of government, religion and commerce, Thimphu is a unique city with unusual mixture of modern development alongside ancient traditions. With the population of over 100,000 it is perhaps still the world's only capital city without a traffic light.

After short rest, visit **Memorial Chorten**: The stupa built in the memory of Bhutan's third King, His Late Majesty, King JigmeDorji Wangchuk, who is popularly regarded as Father of modern Bhutan. The paintings and statues inside the monument provide a deep insight into Buddhist philosophy.

Followed by a visit to **Motithang Takin Preserve** is a protected area where the national animal of Bhutan, Takin, is preserved. A half an hour walk here would unveil many exotic birds and animals to you, who wander around the area freely and in the most natural of habitat. Overflowing with serenity, the wildlife here is exquisite and should be seen once.

Evening an exploratory walk around Thimphu Main Street and market area.

Overnight at hotel in Thimphu.

Day 02: Thimphu

After breakfast, proceed for the guided tour of city's main attractions that includes:

Buddha Point (Kuensel Phodrang). Located at a short drive from Thimphu city Centre, visitors can get a good overview of the Thimphu valley from the Buddha point (KuenselPhodrang). You can pay your obeisance and offer prayers to the Buddha, the largest statue in the country and then walk around and take a glimpse of the valley.

Institute for Zorig Chusum: Commonly known as Arts & Crafts School or Painting School, the Institute offers a six-year course on the 13 traditional arts and crafts of Bhutan. On a visit, one can see students learning the various skills taught at the school.

National Library: The history of Bhutan lies imprinted in archaic texts, which are preserved at the National Library. Besides thousands of manuscripts and ancient texts, the library also has modern academic books and printing blocks for prayer flags.

Lunch followed by city tour that includes:

Textile Museum: is worth a visit to get to know the living national art of weaving. Exhibitions introduce the major weaving techniques, styles of local dress and textiles made by women and men.

Conclude the tour of the day with a visit to Kaja Throm, where you will find the vendors and farmers from nearby regions selling their farm products.

Overnight at hotel in Thimphu.

Day 03: Thimphu/Punakha

After breakfast, drive to Punakha across Dochula pass (3,080m). In Bhutan, the passes are marked by a large Bhutanese Chorten and prayer flag. Dochula pass offers the most spectacular view over the high peaks of the eastern Himalayas on a clear day. Visit **Druk Wangyel Lhakhang**, the temple built in honor of Wangchuk Dynasty and for the 60th birth anniversary of Fourth King of Bhutan.

Well before reaching Punakha, stop en route and hike to **Chimi Lhakhang**, perched on a hill in the centre of the valley, Chimi Lhakhang is a temple dedicated to Lama Drukpa Kuenley. Also known as the 'Divine Madman', he used humour, song and dramatic reenactment to disperse his teachings back in the 15th century. Chimi Lhakhang is widely known as the temple of fertility; locals come here to receive blessings from the lama. They pray and ask to be blessed with a child. Locals also bring their newborns to be named here. The Lhakhang is about a 30-minute walk through fields from the main road.

Later, **Punakha Dzong**, built strategically at the junction of Pho Chhu and Mo Chhu rivers in 1637, by ShabdrungNgawangNamgyal to serve as the religious and administrative center of the region, Punakha Dzong has played an important role in Bhutan's history. Damaged by four catastrophic fires and an earthquake, the Dzong has been fully restored by the present King. The Dzong is open for visitors during Punakha festival and in summer months when the monk body moves to Thimphu.

End your day with a visit to **Sangchhen Dorji Lhuendrup Nunnery**: Perched on a ridge, amid pine trees and overlooking valleys of Punakha and Wangduephodrang, gleams the magnificent structures of SangchhenDorjiLhuendrup Lhakhang (Temple). The temple houses a 14-foot main bronze statue of Avalokiteshvara (Chenrigzigchagtongchentong). Other statues include those of Guru Padmasambhawa, Gautama Buddha, ZhabdrungNgawangNamgyel, TselaNamsum, the 21 Taras and Tsepamay (Buddha of longevity). The Avalokiteshvara statue, one of the biggest in the country, was the handiwork of entirely local Bhutanese artisans.

Overnight at hotel in Punakha.

Day 04: Punakha/ Paro

After breakfast drive back to Paro descending back down from Dochu La, follow the way back up the dramatic Wang Chhu and Paro Chhu river valleys, before crossing through Paro Town towards the north end of the valley.

Check in at hotel.

On arrival, witness **Paro Tshechu**. The Paro Tshechu is a Buddhist Festival and one of the major annual events of Bhutan. The Tshechu holds religious significance and is held to commemorate the birth anniversary of Guru Padmasambhava, the patron saint of Bhutan who introduced Tantric Buddhism in Bhutan. Festivals are held mostly in the huge courtyards of the magnificent Dzongs/Fortresses and comprise of colorful masked dance and traditional folk songs and dances attended by even more colorfully dressed Bhutanese people.

Overnight at hotel in Paro.

Day 05: Paro

After breakfast **excursion to Taktshang Monastery (5hrs hike) (3150 Meters):** It is one of the most famous of Bhutan's monasteries, perched on the side of a cliff 900m above the Paro valley floor. It is said that Guru Rinpoche arrived here on the back of a tigress and meditated at this monastery and hence it is called 'Tiger's Nest'. This site has been recognized as a most sacred place and visited by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in 1646 and now visited by all Bhutanese at least once in their lifetime. On 19 April 1998, a fire severely damaged the main structure of building but now this Bhutanese jewel has been restored to its original splendor.

Post lunch, visit the 7th century **Kyichu Lhakhang**, one of the 108 temples built in the Himalayas by Tibetan King, SongtsenGampo. The building of this temple marks the introduction of Buddhism in Bhutan.

Evening an exploratory walk around Main Street and Paro Kaja Throm.

Overnight at hotel in Paro.

Day 06: Paro - Departure

After early breakfast at the hotel, drive to the airport for flight to your onward destination. Our representative will explain the exit formalities and then bid you farewell.