

Thimphu Tshechu

7Days/6 Nights

Thimphu, Paro & Punakha

Day 1: Arrival in Paro - Embrace the Land of the Thunder Dragon

Upon arrival at Paro International Airport, your guide will greet you warmly. Today is all about acclimatization to the breathtaking altitude that characterizes this Himalayan Kingdom. A scenic drive takes you to Thimphu, Bhutan's vibrant capital city. Upon arriving, you check into your hotel, and then explore Thimphu. Our first stop is the National Memorial Chorten. Here, you'll join the elderly Bhutanese citizens in their serene circumambulation around this sacred monument, an essential daily ritual. Next, you will visit the Royal Textile Museum. Here, you'll be entranced by the intricate artistry of traditional weaving. Witness firsthand the skill and craftsmanship that go into creating Bhutan's distinctive textiles. But the true highlight of your day awaits at the Institute of Zorig Chusum (School of 13 Traditional Arts & Crafts). Here, you'll have the privilege of interacting with novices who are mastering the 13 traditional arts and crafts of Bhutan. It's an immersive experience that will connect you deeply with the artistic traditions that define this land.

Day 2: Thimphu Tshechu

Today we will visit to the majestic Tashichhodzong, referred to as the "Fortress of the Glorious Religion." Originally constructed in 1641 and restored under the reign of the Third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, in the 1960s, this grand edifice serves as a home to several government ministries, His Majesty's Office, and the central monastic body. The colorful and sacred Thimphu Tshechu is held at the Tendrelthang, adjacent to the Dzong. Tshechu or festival of mask dances is a vibrant celebration that honors Guru Padmasambhava, the revered saint who brought Tantric Buddhism to the Himalayas. The festival's essence lies in the mesmerizing masked dances performed by monks, adorned in splendidly colorful brocade attire. The pinnacle of the festival is the unveiling of a colossal cloth thangka, a sacred scroll bearing images of Padmasambhava and depictions from the Buddhist pantheon. It's a spectacle that transports you through time and space, connecting you to Bhutan's profound spiritual heritage.

In the afternoon, you will visit the Buddha Point, nestled at Kuensel Phodrang. Here stands an awe-inspiring 169-foot bronze statue of Buddha Dordenma, the embodiment of indestructibility. The view from Buddha Point, especially at night, offers an enchanting panorama of Thimphu Valley.

Day 3: Thimphu to Punakha

Today, you embark on a picturesque journey from Thimphu to Punakha, traversing the awe-inspiring Dochula Pass. This iconic pass features 108 chortens, a stunning tribute constructed by Bhutan's beloved Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck. These chortens symbolize Bhutan's victory over Indian militants and serve as a spiritual haven for lost souls.

Your next stop is Punakha Dzong, a masterpiece of Bhutanese architecture, dating back to 1637. Set amidst the confluence of two rivers, this fortress exudes the aura of a medieval city. Our next stop is Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten, a marvel built by the Queen Mother Ashi Tshering Yangdoen Wangchuck. This architectural gem is a one-of-a-kind structure in the world, constructed over eight and a half years with inspiration drawn from religious scriptures.

Day 4: Punakha to Paro

Today's adventure takes you deeper into Bhutan's heartland as you visit Chhimi Lhakhang, a temple nestled amidst terraced fields. To reach this sacred site, you embark on a picturesque 20-minute walk through the village of Sopsokha. The temple was built in the 15th century by Ngawang Chogyel, inspired by the "divine Madman" Drukpa Kuenlay, who erected a small chorten in this very location. On your journey, you will visit the newly constructed Wangduephodrang Dzong, a fort perched dramatically on a hill, overlooking the confluence of the Tsang Chu and Dang Chu rivers. You will then drive to Paro.

Day 5: Paro

The day begins with a visit to Paro Dzong, also known as Rinpung Dzong. This massive fortress and monastery, dating back to the 15th century, not only serves as a remarkable architectural wonder but also houses the administrative center of the dzonkhag. As you explore its intricate courtyards, you'll feel the palpable sense of history etched into every stone. Next, you visit Ta Dzong, originally a watchtower that has been transformed into the National Museum since 1968. Within its walls, you'll encounter a treasure trove of antique Thangka paintings, textiles, weaponry, household artifacts, and a rich array of natural and historic relics.

Day 6: Hike to Taktsang (Tiger's Nest)

The grand finale of your Bhutanese adventure awaits as you embark on a thrilling three-hour hike to Taktsang Monastery, more famously known as the Tiger's Nest. This iconic structure clings to the edge of a sheer cliff, 900 meters above the Paro Valley. Legend has it that Guru Padmasambhava arrived here on the back of a tigress, making this spot sacred. The trek through pine-scented forests and across wooden bridges offers breathtaking vistas at every turn. Prayer flags flutter in the mountain breeze, and the distant sound of monks chanting in the monastery adds to the mystique of the journey. As you ascend, you'll reach a charming cafeteria perched on the mountainside, providing a perfect vantage point to marvel at this architectural marvel. Arriving at the Tiger's Nest, you'll feel an overwhelming sense of accomplishment as you take in the astounding views of the valley below. The monastery itself is a testament to Bhutanese architectural ingenuity, clinging to the cliffs like an eagle's nest. It's a place where spirituality and natural beauty converge, leaving an indelible mark on your soul.

Day 7: Departure from Paro

After breakfast, you will leave for the airport for your onward journey.

Tashi Delek! Until we meet again in this beautiful land of enduring magic and grace.