



Essence of Himalayas 6 nights/ 7 days

Day 1 : Arrival Paro

Your flight to Paro will be either from Calcutta / Bangkok / Kathmandu / Dhaka / Delhi or depending on one's international flight connection via Road from Phuentsholing southern part of Bhutan. Druk Air flies from these destinations. When you are about to land Paro you will see the spectacular beauty of our country. In clear weather, views of the world's highest peaks, including Chhomolhari (mountain Goddess) and other magnificent Himalayan snow peaks to the beautiful Paro valley as you land. The representative from our travel agent will escort you to the hotel.

After lunch we will visit National Museum (watch Tower) this museum has the very interesting assortment costumes and different treasures and world-renowned stamps, it will bring the history of Bhutan from the 6th century onwards. Visit Paro Dzong (Fort), Headquarter of Paro District and walk down to the cantilever bridge over the Pa-chu River. Paro altitude: 2250 meters.

Day 2 : Full day Paro Sightseeing and hike to Tiger Nest.

Based on the mirror- like cliff at a height of 900 meters above the lush valley of Paro is one of the most sacred places in Bhutan. Guru Rinpoche, the second Buddha, flew here on a flying Tigress and meditated here for three months in the 8th century. Here he propagated Vajrayana- Mahayana Buddhism (Larger Wheel) that was prophesied by the Buddha at the time of attaining Nirvana.

In April 1998, a fire destroyed the main structure of the buildings and its religious contents. A complete restoration was done and resulted in a carbon copy of the original. This place beholds the history of The Hidden Land. The return walking time is approximately five hours. Then we proceed further to visit the ruins of Drukgyel Dzong. Which it was by built Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in 1649. It was caught fire in 1951.

On the way back you will have the pleasure to visit one of the oldest monasteries we have in Bhutan, The first King of Tibet Songtsen Gampo built Kyichu Lhakhang in 7th century to introduce Buddhism into our country, while our country was still influenced by the Bon beliefs.

Day 3 : Drive to Thimphu and sightseeing.

After breakfast drive to Thimphu is 2 hours through winding roads following the Pa-Chu (Paro River) down stream to its confluence with the Wang-Chu (Thimphu River) and with good views of the forests, Rocky Mountains & scattered villages. As we enter the Thimphu valley we will pass through Semtokha Dzong built in 1629 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyel (The man who unified Bhutan) Semtokha now houses a language and cultural schools where scholars of all the ages study Dzongkha (National Language).

In afternoon drive to the memorial Chorten (Stupa) built in the memory of His Majesty King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk. He is regarded as the father of modern Bhutan. Visit the National Library, which holds ancient Buddhist texts, historical books, and some very famous manuscripts written with gold ink and see the world's biggest picture book.

A three-minute drive to the Traditional Medicine Institute will show you where medicines are prepared from plants, flowers and animal's bones according to ancient practices and acupuncture is its main discipline. Visit the Art & Painting School, where the students learn the 13 different kinds of Bhutanese Arts. Thimphu altitude 2350 m. Driving time: 2 hours.

Day 4 : Fullday Sightseeing Thimphu. (Lot of hikes depends on one's interests)

In the morning visit Changangkha monastery (Temple), which was built in 12th century, visit the viewpoint where we can get a birds eye view of the capital Thimphu, visit Takin our National animal, visit Nunnery, which is NGO in the Kingdom.

Afternoon some of the highlight visits will be, Textile Museum, Folk heritage museum and Bhutanese traditional handmade paper factory. Visit Dechen Phodrang monastic

School; visit General Post Office, where you will see the finest stamps of Bhutan and capital building of Bhutan (Tashi Chhodzong) except after 5 p.m. & holidays.

Day 5 : Drive Thimphu to Punakha.

Drive to Punakha via Dochula -Pass 3150m above sea level overlooking the high Himalayas and the lush green valleys of Talo and Mendigang, lunch at Punakha and sightseeing including a visit to the exquisite Punakha Dzong, which it was the old capital of Bhutan. On the 17th December 1907, the first king of Bhutan was crowned here and every consecutive year on this date we celebrate national day in Bhutan. After visiting the Dzong drive further to do a mini hike to Khamsum Yuelley Namgyel Chorten and once you reach the top you will see the winding view of the Mo-Chu River and villages below. If you look towards the north you will see the snow capped mountains. Punakha altitude: 1350M, Driving time: 3 hours.

Day 6 : Punakha to Paro via Thimphu.

In the morning, after break fast drive towards Wangdue Phodrang another district that is half an hours drive from your hotel. Before you reach there, take little hike to the Divine Madman Monastery and this is the only monastery we have in Bhutan belonging to him and by visiting this you will know about his unorthodox teachings.

This Saint from Tibet who came to Bhutan in 15th century to introduce the Drukpa Kagyugpa sect of Buddhism to our country built this monastery; he is known as the Lama Drukpa kuenley and called the divine mad man. His sexual nature and jokes were to be a very unique of spreading the religion to the local communities

Wangdue Phodrang is another district and the Dzong was built in 1638 a year after Puankha Dzong. The fourth temporal ruler of Bhutan, Gyse Tenzin Rabgye, enlarged it in 1683. His reincarnation is now 15 years old and lives in Thimphu Tango Monastery.

Just before you cross the Punatsangchu checkpoint, here they check the passes of passengers and vehicles. You will see the Wangdue Phodrang Dzong believed to built on the back of sleeping giant an elephant as the legend says. After crossing the bridge if you happen to look back you will see the beautiful village of Rinchengang, nestled on a vertical hillside and famous for its stonemasons. Buffeted by afternoon winds, Wangdue Phodrang is an important stop off point. Drive back to Paro for tomorrow's departure.

Day 7 : Departure.

In the morning your Tour guide will bid you farewell at Paro Airport.

Myth of Central Bhutan 11 nights / 12 days

DAY 1 : Paro. Altitude: 2250 M

Fly into the Kingdom of Bhutan. On the flight, you can see breathtaking views of the Great Himalayan Mountains. Upon arrival at Paro International Airport, you will be welcomed to the Kingdom by your guide from the Travel Agent and lunch at hotel. Start the day by visiting the National Museum (Ta- Dzong). Once it was watchtower for Rinpung Dzong (Fortress) was converted into the National Museum in 1968. The museum stands on a promontory overlooking the Paro valley in all its glory.

Visit Paro-Rinpung Dzong. The flagstone path rises gradually from a beautiful wooden bridge with shingle roof and abutted by two guardhouses to the Dzong. Today, this massive fortress built in 1646 AD is the seat of the district administration as well as home for the monastic school. The central watchtower (Utse) of the Dzong, with its superb woodwork, is one of the most beautiful in the country. Night Paro.

DAY 2 : Day Excursion to Taktsang.

Hike or take a horse ride to Taktsang Monastery viewpoint. Taktsang meaning "Tiger's Nest" is built around a cave in which Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava) meditated clinging seemingly impossible to a cliff at 3000 feet above the valley floor. For the local people it is a place of pilgrimage, but for a tourist, a hike up to the viewpoint opposite the monastery can be exhausting, thrilling and mystical. The legend has it that Guru Rinpoche had flown to the site of monastery on the back of a tigress from Tibet and meditated in the cave there for three months.

Although the main building of the temple was destroyed by fire on 19 April 1998, the hike up to the viewpoint is still worth the effort as the temple has been restored to its original form.

When we are coming back and reach to main road we turn right and drive further to Drukgyel Dzong. It was built in 1649 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. It was damaged by fire in 1951.

On way back we will visit one of the oldest monasteries that we have in Bhutan. It is called Kichu Lhakhang and built in the 7th century by the first King of Tibet, Songtsen Gampo to spread the Buddhist Dharma throughout Bhutan.

Night Paro.

DAY 3 : Paro - Thimphu. 65 KM. 2 Hours Drive. Altitude: 2350 M

After breakfast a two-hour drive will take you to Thimphu (7,700 feet), the only Capital City in the world without traffic lights.

Drive through the Paro Valley, which lies beneath Chomolhari, One of the Bhutan's "Mountain of the Goddess." The drive from Paro to Thimphu is spectacularly scenic. In the spring season in Bhutan, you will find nature in a festive mood with rushing turquoise

rivers which can be heard from miles away and mountains transformed into Master artist's palette of brilliant vermilion, yellows, purples, pink, oranges and reds to dazzle your senses. Wild cherry, mountains plums, cotton silk and forests of rhododendron trees bloom with astonishing beauty and abundance especially in spring. Enjoy the magnificent monasteries, stupas in the valleys and the mountains.

Experience the "Last Buddhist Himalayan Kingdom" on earth. Night Thimphu

DAY 4 : Thimphu Sightseeing.

Visit the General Post Office and purchase the world's most beautiful postage stamps, collector's items and postcards at face value.

Visit the Arts and Crafts school where one can see young children at work.

Visit the Traditional Medicine Institute where the ancient healing arts are still practiced.

Visit the Memorial Chorten built in 1974 to honor the memory of the Late King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk, popularly known as the Father of Modern Bhutan. A multi storied stupa that will introduce you to the vitality of Tantric Buddhism.

Observed traditional paper making from *Daphnia* and *Edgeworthia* shrub to the finished product and maybe purchase some beautiful writing sets from the factory.

Visit the mini zoo/sanctuary where one can see the Takin, the National Animal of Bhutan.

Drive up to the viewpoint and take a hike for about an hour to see clear uninterrupted views of the Thimphu valley.

Explore Thimphu on foot, visiting the Handicrafts Emporium and other Arts & Crafts stores. Buy stunning Kiras that can be used as bed covers or wall hangings, jewelry and much more. Night Thimphu.

DAY 5 : Thimphu-Punakha -Wangdue. 77 KM. 3 Hours Drive. Altitude: 1350 M

The drive begins with the ascent to the Dochula pass at an altitude of 3150 meters. On a clear day, you can see the whole range of the Bhutanese Himalayas from here. The pass has 108 Druk Wangyel Chortens. Then descend to Punakha. Punakha was the winter capital for over 300 years until the time of the second King. Punakha Dzong that dominates the whole area was built in 1637 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyel, and established the central monastic body with 600 monks.

Today, Punakha is still the home for Je Khenpo (chief Abbot) and the central monastic body. It was built at the confluence of two rivers called the PO-CHU and MO- CHU. Which means, Male & Female. After lunch continue driving to the town of Wangdue. Another Dzong built 1 year after that of Punakha Dzong. Which it is the District Head Quarters of Wangdue. Night Wangdue.

DAY 6 : Wangdue - Trongsa. 128 KM. 5 Hours Drive. Altitude: 2200M

We will drive to Trongsa. It is 128 kilometers and 5 hours drive from Wangdue. The road will climb all the way to the Pele-la pass. It is at 3300m. It is a landmark between east & west, and from here we will drive on to Trongsa. On the way we will come across Yak herders camps and encounter Yaks especially during winter. We will see high Himalayan villages like Rukubji and Chendebji. All the houses cluster at one place and fields at another.

The road then descends through Rukubji village further down to Chendebji village. Here you will see the 18th century Nepalese style stupa built by saint Shida. The drive to Trongsa from here is about an hour and half with great views of the historical Dzong and valley. Night Trongsa.

DAY 7 : Trongsa - Bumthang. 68KM. 3 Hours Drive. Altitude: 2600 - + M

In the morning after breakfast we will take an excursion drive to Kuenga Rabten. It was the winter Palace for our beloved 2nd King Jigme Wangchuk. It is 23 kilometers from Trongsa and it takes about 2 hours by car. Although, it is mostly empty with only one room occupied for the library. This palace is under Special Commission of cultural Affairs and we do not require any permit to visit the interior.

The trip from Trongsa to Kuenga Rabten will give you an intimate insight into the early days of Bhutan's Monarchy. Beside you will see the beautiful large expanse of rice terraces in the lower Mangdu-Chu valley and as well the big waterfall before the drive back to Trongsa for lunch.

Visit Trongsa Dzong. It was built at different periods on a spur overlooking the Mangdu-Chu River and it is one of the longest & most impressive Dzongs in Bhutan along with Trashi Chhodzong in Thimphu. How did Trongsa get its name? Well many centuries ago the horse of Palden Lhamo (Bhutan's guardian deity) appeared before Lam Naggi Wangchuk who has settled in this village of yueli, a few kilometers above today's fortress of Trongsa. For Naggi Wangchuk, the presence of Lhamo-Pal den's horse was an auspicious event. In order to immortalize the miraculous event, he built a small meditation hut- Tshamkhang and started to meditate there, gradually more and more meditating huts arose near by & the place looked more like a village. People of yueli called it Dzongsar (New Village) and because they pronounced it as Trong -Sar the name stuck.

The evening drive to Bumthang will climb all the way to the Yotong la pass 3400m. It will be the highest pass on your trip to Bhutan. After the pass we will go down through the Chhumei valley before we reach Jakar. This valley is famous for yathra weaving in central Bhutan. Night Bumthang

DAY 8 : Bumthang - Bumthang.

After breakfast make a hike to Thangbi Mani countryside. It is a very easy trail and we will come across a few villages. Here they have a very old monastery with Gomchens & the local community school. We will return for lunch in Jakar.

After lunch we visit Jambay Lhakhang, Kurjey Lhakhang, Tamshing Lhakhang, Guru Lhakhang, and the Swiss Cheese Processing Unit. Here they produce cheese, apple juice and herbal brandies etc. Visit Jakar Dzong and more if time permits. Night Bumthang.

DAY 9 : Excursion to URA Valley.

Excursion to the Ura valley is (48Km) that takes us across blue pine forests & wonderful views of the Choskar & Chhumei valleys. Visit Ura Lhakhang, which will give you an insight into the lifestyle of the people of central Bhutan. Visit some local houses in village and talk to the local people casually and understand their daily way of life. Ura is one of the most beautiful and interesting villages in Bumthang.

The landscape of the Ura valley is different to others, with round sweeping slopes, rich pasture and wide fields. At the bottom you will see the large and unusual village with its cluster of big houses united by paved alleys of stone, a rare sight in Bhutan. The big community monastery dominates the village. Which is dedicated to Guru Rinpoche (the great teacher) and they have Ura festival, which usually take place in the 2nd week of May or sometimes in June, dependent on Bhutanese lunar calendar. Thimshingla National park starts here and if one wishes to see it they have a field office at Ura. It is open Monday to Friday except on holidays. Night Bumthang.

DAY 10 : Bumthang - Gangtey - Wangdue.

Gangtey Goemba was built on a small hillock surrounded by blue pine trees. The descendant of Pema Lingpa founded it. The great Bhutanese saint from Bumthang, in the 16th century. At the end of 17th century it was enlarged once and at present it is headed by the 9th reincarnation called Gangtey Trulku. At present it is under renovation and it is ringed with the family houses of Gomchens (Lay man) who work and worship at the monastery.

Further down you will reach the Phobjikha valley. This place is reserved for the migration of the black Neck Crane. The people out here have become friendly with the endangered species and every consecutive year starting from 2nd week of November to 1st week of April. The fields and marshes of this undisturbed valley are alive with the sight of these rare cranes.

After having a picnic lunch here and drive to wangdue. Night Wangdue.

DAY 11 : Wangdue -Thimphu - Paro. 142 KM. 5 Hours Drive

An early breakfast then drive to Thimphu for our lunch, as well as shopping for souvenirs and then an evening drive to Paro. Night Paro.

Day 12 : Departure.

Representative from our company will bid you a farewell.

Glimpse of Bhutan 4 nights / 5 days

Day 1: Arrival at Paro.

Your flight to Paro can be from any of these entry points Calcutta/Bangkok/Kathmandu/Dhaka/Delhi or depending on one's international flight connection. Via road from India and enter the southern part of Bhutan. When you are about to land at Paro you will be introduced to the spectacular beauty of our country. In clear weather, views of Chomolhari (Mountain Goddess), and other magnificent Himalayan snow peaks, before you see the beautiful Paro valley as you land.

The representative from Bhutan Footprints *Travel will escort you to the hotel. After lunch, visit the National Museum (watch Tower). This museum has a very interesting assortment of costumes, treasures and world-renowned stamps, and will bring alive the history of Bhutan since the 6th century. Visit Paro Dzong (Fort), Headquarter of Paro District. Altitude: 2250 meters.

Day 2 : Hike to Tiger Nest and drive to Thimphu. (Alternative for old person)

Built on the seemingly impossible cliff at a height of 400 meters above the lush valley floor of Paro is one of the most sacred places in Bhutan. Guru Rinpoche, the second Buddha, flew here on a flaming Tigris for the second visit to Bhutan and meditated here in the 8th century. Here he propagated Vajrayana- Mahayana Buddhism (Bigger Wheel) that was prophesied by the Buddha at the time of attaining Nirvana.

In April 1998, a fire destroyed the main structure of the buildings and the religious contents. A complete restoration was done and resulted in a carbon copy of the original. This place beholds the history of The Hidden Land. The return walking time is approximately five hours (if you have a permit to the site). Otherwise, around 3- 4 hours is enough to make round trip to the viewpoint.

In the evening drive to Thimphu, 2 hours through winding roads following the Pa-Chu (Paro River) down stream to its confluence with the Wang-Chu (Thimphu River). There are good views of the forests, Rocky Mountains & scattered village on our route. As we

enter the Thimphu valley we will pass through Semtokha Dzong built in 1629 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyel (The man who unified Bhutan). Now Semtokha houses the language and cultural school where scholars of all the ages study Dzongkha (National Language).

Thimphu altitude 2350 m, Driving time: 2 hours.

Day 3 : Full day sightseeing (lots of hike depends on one's interest)

In morning visit to Changangkha monastery (Temple), which was built in 12th century, the viewpoint where we can get a birds eye view of the capital Thimphu. Visit the animal sanctuary home of the Takin our National animal, and then visit the Nunnery, which is NGO in the Kingdom.

After lunch, some highlight visits will be the Textile Museum, Folk heritage museum and Bhutanese traditional handmade paper factory. Visit Dechen Phodrang monastic School; visit General Post Office, where you will see the finest stamps of Bhutan and the capital building of Bhutan (Tashi Chhodzong) except after 5 p.m. & holidays.

Day 4 : Morning sightseeing and drive back to Paro.

After breakfast, drive to the memorial Chorten (Stupa) built in the memory of His Majesty King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk. He is regarded as the father of modern Bhutan. Visit the National Library, which holds ancient Buddhist texts, historical books, and some very famous manuscripts written with gold ink.

A three-minute drive to the Traditional Medicine Institute will show you where medicines are prepared from plants, flowers and animal's bones according to ancient practices. Acupuncture is its main discipline. Visit the Art & Painting School, where the students learn the 13 different kinds of Bhutanese Arts.

Afternoon free for the last day shopping at Thimphu and evening drive back to Paro for tomorrow's departure.

Day 5 : Departure.

In the morning your representative will bid you farewell at Paro airport.