



Land of Happiness **BHUTAN**

4 nights/5 days —





Bhutan

Happiness is a Place!

Nestled in the Eastern Himalayas, Bhutan stayed self-isolated for centuries, allowing its unique Buddhist identity and pristine ecology to flourish untouched. Roughly the size of Switzerland with 700,000 people, it's the world's only Mahayana Buddhist nation and was never colonized.

Buddhism arrived in the 8th century with Guru Rinpoche, and the country was unified in 1616 under Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. The Wangchuck monarchy began in 1907, and in 2008 — marking 100 years of kingship — Bhutan held its first democratic elections and crowned its fifth king, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck.

Facts and Figures

Land area: 38,394 square kilo metres

Forest area: 72.5 %

Altitude: between 240metres and 7541metres above sea level

Inhabitants: 700,000

Language: official language "Dzongkha", English widely spoken

Religion: Vajrayana stream of Mahayana Buddhism (Also known as Tantric Buddhism)

Currency: Ngultrum (equal to Indian Rupee)

Capital: Thimphu

National Tree: Cypress

National Bird: Raven

National Flower: Blue Poppy

National Sport: Archery

National Animal: Takin

Local time: Six hours ahead of GMT and half an hour ahead of Indian Standard Time

4nights/5days Itinerary

AUG 30/DAY 01: ARRIVE PARO BY AIR & TRANSFER TO THIMPHU (55 KMS / 1½ HRS DRIVE)

The flight to Paro is one of the most spectacular in entire Himalayas. Flying along the Himalayan range from Kathmandu, the journey offers fascinating views and an exciting descent into the Kingdom. Bhutan's first gift, 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 with enroute stop at **Chuzom**, the confluence of Thimphu and Paro rivers. Three different style of stupas; Tibetan, Nepalese and Bhutanese adorn this confluence. Shortly before reaching Chuzom, you will see on your left **TschogangLhakhang**, "the temple of the excellent horse". It is a private temple, built in 15th century, as the result of visitation from Balaha, the excellent horse, a manifestation of Chenrezig, the compassionate Buddha.

On arrival in Thimphu, check into the hotel. The capital town of Bhutan and the centre of Government, religion and commerce, Thimphu is a unique city with unusual mixture of modern development alongside ancient traditions. With the population of about 90,000 it is perhaps still the world's only capital city without a traffic light.

Evening an exploratory walk around Thimphu Main Street and market area. Also visit the **Local Crafts Bazaar**, to browse through example of Bhutan's fine traditional arts. Here you can buy hand-woven textiles, Thangkha paintings, masks, ceramics, slate and wood carvings, jewellery, interesting items made from local materials.

Overnight at the hotel in Thimphu (Altitude 2400m).





AUG 31 / DAY 02: THIMPHU

After breakfast, sightseeing in Thimphu valley including visit to the following: The **National Library**, housing an extensive collection of priceless Buddhist manuscripts; the **Institute for Zorig Chusum** (commonly known as the Painting School) where students undergo a 6-year training course in Bhutan's 13 traditional arts and crafts. Later visit **Textile Museum**, which provides insight into Bhutan's one of the most distinct art form.

After lunch take a short drive (15 km) to **Pangri Zampa**, 16th century one of the oldest monasteries in Bhutan located just north of Thimphu. Here is a monastic school where Buddhist student's monks learn Lamaism and astrology based on Buddhist philosophy.

Afterwards visit to **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 (Kuensel Phodrang). 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.

King's Memorial Chorten continuously circumambulated by people, murmuring mantras and spinning their prayer wheels. Construction of this landmark was the idea of Bhutan's third king, His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuk ("the father of modern Bhutan") who has wished to erect monument to world peace and prosperity. Completed in 1974 after his untimely death, it serves both as a memorial to the Late King and as a monument to peace.

Later visit to **Trashichhoedzong**: This impressive fortress/monastery houses Secretariat building, the throne room of His Majesty, the King and various government offices. It is also the summer residence of Chief Abbot and central monk body.

Overnight at the hotel in Thimphu.

SEP 01/DAY 03: THIMPHU – PARO (55 KMS / 1½ HRS DRIVE)

After breakfast, check-out from the hotel and drive to Paro along scenic highway, enroute visit **Simtokha Dzong**, the oldest fortress of the country built in 1627 which now houses the School for Buddhist studies.

On arrival in Paro, check into the hotel. After lunch, proceed to visit **Ta Dzong**, originally built as Watchtower, which now houses National Museum. The extensive collection includes antique Thangkha paintings, textiles, weapons & armour, household objects and a rich assortment of natural and historic artifacts.

Ta Dzong visit immediately followed by a short walk down the trail to visit **Rinpung Dzong (Paro Dzong)**, meaning ("fortress of the heap of jewels"), which has a long and fascinating history. Along the wooden galleries lining the inner courtyard are fine wall paintings illustrating Buddhist lore such as four friends, the old man of long life, the wheel of life, scenes from the life of Milarepa, Mount. Sumeru and other cosmic Mandala.

Overnight at the hotel in Paro.



SEP 02/DAY 04: PARO

After breakfast excursion to **Taktshang Monastery or Tiger's Nest (approx. 5 hours walk)**: 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 recognised 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 splendour.

Afternoon drive to **Drukgyel Dzong**, a ruined fortress where Bhutanese warriors fought Tibetan invaders centuries ago. The snowy dome of sacred Chomolhari, "mountain of goddess" can be seen in all her glory from the approach road to the Dzong.

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

Overnight at the hotel in Paro.

SEP 03/DAY 05: DEPART PARO BY AIR

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

Cost:

\$1299 sharing basis

\$220 single room supplement

Includes:

- Accommodation on twin-sharing basis at the 3 star hotels or similar
- Meals: Breakfast and dinner at the hotel and lunch at local tourist restaurants
- Transfers & Sightseeing as per the itinerary
- English-speaking Bhutanese guide throughout the tour
- Daily government royalties and taxes
- Bhutan Visa fees
- 01 bottle of mineral water per person per day
- Entrance and monument fees
- Airfare: Kathmandu–Paro–Kathmandu in economy class
- All applicable taxes

Excludes:

- Insurance of any kind, including medical expenses
- Beverages (alcoholic and non-alcoholic)
- Personal expenses such as tipping, laundry, telephone/fax calls, camera/video fees, shopping, etc.
- Tips & Gratuity
- Anything not mentioned in service inclusion

Documents required for booking:

- Valid passport copy
- Recent passport-size photograph

Note: Applicable for all foreign nationals (except Indian nationals)



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