



JOURNEY TO BHUTAN

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JOURNEY TO BHUTAN

5 Days

TOUR OVERVIEW:

Travel duration: 4 Nights | 5 Days

Paro – 3 N | Punakha – 1N |

Entry: Paro| Exit: Paro

Embark on a wonderful 5-day journey through the beautiful western parts of Bhutan. It all starts in the charming Paro Valley, then you'll take a scenic drive to the capital city, Thimphu, where you can enjoy lively markets and the city atmosphere. Next, head to Punakha, spending two days exploring the valley's culture and nature. Returning to Paro, visit ancient temples that hold stories of Bhutan's spiritual past. The highlight of your trip is a meaningful hike to the famous Tiger's Nest monastery, sitting on a high cliff. This journey lets you discover the simplicity and warmth of Bhutan's beauty, leaving you with lasting memories of a special adventure.

ITINERARY OVERVIEW

Day	Destination	Overnight Accomodation
Day 1	Arrival at Paro Airport	Haven Resort
Day 2	Drive to Punakha - Explore Thimphu Valley	The Willows Hotel
Day 3	Drive back to Paro Valley	Haven Resort
Day 4	Hike to Tigers nest monastery	Haven Resort
Day 5	International Departure	





DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 01 | **Arrive at Paro**

Arrival at Paro International Airport

Altitude of Paro Valley – 2,300m / 7,365ft

Overnight accommodation – HAVEN Resort

Program for the day:

- Welcome to Bhutan, a land of enchantment and mystique! Prepare to embark on a journey like no other. As you step foot in this extraordinary kingdom, be prepared to be captivated by its breathtaking landscapes, vibrant culture, and warm hospitality. From the majestic Himalayan peaks to the ancient monasteries that dot the valleys, Bhutan offers a unique blend of natural beauty and spiritual tranquility. Immerse yourself in the rich traditions, savor the flavors of Bhutanese cuisine, and explore the hidden treasures of this hidden gem. As you embrace the Bhutanese way of life, may your adventure be filled with wonder, discovery, and unforgettable moments.
- Check into the hotel.
- From the hotel you will drive towards the Paro Dzong and visit the Paro Fortress.
- After the visit to the Dzong you will drive towards one of the oldest temples in Bhutan, Kiychu Monastery and then visit the memorial house of Dilgo Khentse Rinpoche.
- Dinner at the hotel.



Buddha Statue



Dochula Pass

Day 02 | **Drive to Thimphu and do Site Seeing.**

Altitude of Thimphu Valley – 2,300m / 7,365ft

Driving distance - 50 km (1 hr drive)

Overnight accommodation – The Willows Hotel

Program for the day:

- After breakfast you will start your drive towards Thimphu
- Arrive in Thimphu and head straight to the Buddha Dordenma Statue. Marvel at this colossal 169-foot tall bronze statue of Buddha, which offers panoramic views of the Thimphu Valley. Take some time for reflection and enjoy the peaceful surroundings.
- Then we will drive to the National Memorial Stupa and spend some time in the national memorial stupa.
- Visit the Folk Heritage Museum in Thimphu. Immerse yourself in Bhutanese culture as the museum provides insights into the traditional lifestyle, artifacts, and architecture of the Bhutanese people.
- Lunch in Thimphu, savoring delicious Bhutanese cuisine at a local restaurant.
- After Lunch we will drive to the Takin Reserve, where you will see the national animal of Bhutan and after that you will drive to the Sangaygang from where you will get a Panoromic view of Thimphu.
- Towards the evening you will visit the farmers market and the handicraft market.
- Dinner.



Punakha Fortress

Day 03 | **Drive to Punakha and drive back to Paro valley**

Altitude of Punakha Valley – 1,200m / 3,900ft

Altitude of Paro Valley – 2,300m / 7,365ft

Driving distance Thimphu - Punakha - 2 hours (70 km)

Driving distance Punakha to Paro - 3 hour (120 kms)

Overnight accommodation – HAVEN Resort

Programs of the day:

- After breakfast in the hotel we will start early in the morning for a drive to Punakha Valley, on the way you will stop at the Dochula Pass, from where you will have a nice view of the high Himalayas.
- Visit the Punakha Dzong, Punakha Dzong, also known as Pungtang Dechen Photrang Dzong, is a majestic fortress-monastery located at the confluence of the Pho Chhu and Mo Chhu rivers in Punakha, Bhutan. Built in 1637, it is one of the most important and historically significant dzongs in Bhutan. The dzong is an architectural masterpiece, featuring intricate woodwork, detailed murals, and towering white walls. Its picturesque location and elegant structure make it a photographer's delight. Punakha Dzong served as the seat of the Bhutanese government until it was shifted to Thimphu. It continues to be a sacred place, housing relics, statues, and serving as a venue for important religious and administrative ceremonies. and is also the winter residence of the central monk body, it also houses the remains of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal.
- We will have lunch and drive back to Paro after Lunch
- After reaching Paro, we will stop in town to have a look around the handicraft shops to do some shopping for souvenirs if interested.
- Hotel check in - Dinner in the hotel.



Tigers Nest

Day 04 | **Hike to Tigers Nest Monastery**

Driving distance from Hotel to Tigers Nest Base - 25 minutes (10 k.m)

Hiking duration to Tigers Nest from Base – 3.5 hours (one way)

Overnight accommodation – HAVEN Resort

Programs for the day:

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- After breakfast you will drive towards the Base of Tigers nest and from that point you will start the hike towards the tiger's nest, a famous Monastery which dates back to the 8th century when the famous Guru Padmasambhava is believed to have flown on a back of a tigress and meditated for 3 months at this place. Today this moanstery stands as the most recognisable monastery of Bhutan.
- Lunch
- Dinner at Hotel

Day 05 | **International Departure**

Today we will bid a fond farewell to this beautiful Himalayan country.

We hope that you will leave with wonderful memories of Bhutan, and we look forward to seeing you again in this beautiful land of endless enchantments. On behalf of BLZ Tours and Travels we wish you a safe journey home.

Tashi Delek!



For further information about this journey, hotel options and pricing inquiries, please contact us at our email address: blzbhutantours@gmail.com

TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

Sustainable development fee

The Royal Government of Bhutan has set a sustainable development fee of USD 200 per person per day, which must be paid prior to issuing a visa. This fee goes towards the government fund to help develop Bhutan, preserve its rich natural and cultural heritage and also be able to provide free education and health care to all the Bhutanese citizens.

Exemption and Concessionary Levy

Subject to any conditions specified in the Rules, the Competent Authority may provide for an exemption or concessionary levy rate on the applicable Sustainable Development Fee:

- Day tourists who do not travel beyond the first designated point are exempt.
- Children aged 5 and under are exempt.
- Concessionary levy of 50% for children aged 6 to 12 years.
- Other exemptions or levy rates that may be deemed necessary.

Visa Fee & Required Documentation

A passport copy is required. The passport must be valid for six months from the intended date of departure from the Kingdom.

- Travel insurance valid for the duration of the trip.
- A recent passport size photograph.
- The visa fee is USD 40 per person and it is non-refundable. While the process to issue the visa is usually quick, the visa can take up to five working days to process.

Monument fees shall be applicable for the temples/Fortress/parks etc as per the policy of the government.

FACTS ABOUT BHUTAN

Area: 38,394 sq.km	State Religion: Mahayana Buddhism
Population: 7,91,131 (2017)	National Tree: Cypress
Official Language: Dzongkha	National Flower: Blue Poppy
Currency: Ngultrum (Nu)	National Bird: Raven
Capital: Thimphu	National Animal: Takin
Country Code: 975	National Butterfly: Ludlow's Bhutan Swallowtail
Local Time: 6 hrs ahead of GMT	National Sport: Archery

TRAVEL BY AIR

The country has only one international airport that caters to the needs of visitors. The international airport at Paro is located at a height of 7,300 ft above sea level and is surrounded by mountains and hills as high as 16,000 ft. There are flights to destinations that include Bangkok, Delhi, Kolkata, Bagdogra, Bodh Gaya, Dhaka, Kathmandu, Guwahati, Singapore and Mumbai. The flight between Paro and Kathmandu is one of the most exciting ones as the aircraft passes over four of the five highest mountains in the world. In fine weather, as you soar higher up, you can enjoy the spectacular view of Mt. Everest, Lhotse, Makalu and Kangchenjunga at their best. And there are domestic airports in Yonphula in eastern Bhutan, Bumthang in central Bhutan, and Gelephu in south-central Bhutan.

Two carriers operate to Bhutan, Drukair and Bhutan Airlines.

TRAVEL BY LAND

Phuentsholing, Gelephu and Samdrup Jongkhar are the only land border areas open to tourists. The town of Phuentsholing in south-west is located approximately 170 km east of the Indian national airport at Bagdogra. After crossing Phuentsholing, you begin your journey to Thimphu, the capital city with travel time of about six hours for the 170 km stretch. Gelephu in south-central Bhutan is another entry point to Bhutan. It is approximately 250 kms from Thimphu and the journey will take you through the sub-tropical areas of Bhutan before entering the alpine zone and then finally into Thimphu.

One will have to traverse across three districts and the travel time will be about ten hours. The district of Samdrup Jongkhar in south-east Bhutan borders the Indian district of Darranga, Assam and is approximately 150 kms away from Guwahati, the capital city of Assam. The journey from Guwahati is about three hours.

Tourists entering Bhutan through Samdrup Jongkhar will take you to Trashigang, and from there over the lateral route to Monggar, Bumthang, Trongsa, Wangdue Phodrang and then finally into capital, Thimphu. The distance is about 700 kms and will take you a minimum of three days to reach Thimphu.

SEASONS

Bhutan has a season for everyone. The kingdom stretches across three climate zones - from the sub-tropical jungles in the south, to the moderate heights of 2000-2500 meters in the centre, and up to the alpine world of the towering Himalayas. Temperatures in the central valleys do not normally exceed 30°C in the summer and in the winter around 15°C during the day.

Spring is a botanist's delight as rhododendrons, wild azaleas, and masses of wild flowers, including the edelweiss, cover the meadows like a carpet. Pear and apple blossoms add a dainty touch to the valleys as their pink and white blooms add a sense of new wonder to the land.

Summer is an abundant time of the year as flowers are in bloom and valleys are covered in green. Weeping willows sweep the banks of many of the rivers and the pine cones glisten in the sun, so full with resin they are ready to plummet to the ground.

Autumn casts a bright golden glow on the vast landscape. The rice fields ripen to a golden brown under crisp blue skies. The merry pink and white of cosmos flowers dot the countryside.

Winter has also its moments. The days are full of sunshine while evenings can turn chilly. Soft turfs of clouds drape lazily over mountain tops as if waiting for new life to blow it across the landscape.

LANGUAGE

You will get by comfortably if you speak English, as the language is taught in schools in Bhutan. The national language, Dzongkha, is widely used and Bhutanese are generally multi-lingual, speaking Dzongkha, Hindi and Nepali. Many children, even in the rural areas, tend to walk up to visitors, wave and say "hello" or "good morning".

The Bhutanese are always thrilled when they meet visitors who try to speak their language. Though all licensed guides speak English, visitors can also request services of licensed language guides like German, Japanese, Spanish, etc.

TREKKING AND ADVENTURE

Trekking in Bhutan is a unique experience. The variety of treks range from a simple 3-day trek from the district of Thimphu to Paro (and vice versa), to the legendary 25-day Snowman's Trek that takes veteran trekkers through some of the most exquisite spots in the country. The Snowman's Trek is also labeled the world's toughest trek as it goes over 12 mountain passes, all of them over 4,500m.

Almost all the treks offer a combination of natural discovery and an insight into the country's delicate and unique daily life. Many of the trails take walkers past remote and ancient monasteries, through deep forests, and close to villages. The trails pass grasslands and pastures for livestock, and meadows of wild flowers, butterflies, and grazing animals. Trekkers often get to see blue sheep, takin, and a variety of bird life including wild pheasants.

Bhutan's treks are also famous for the majestic views of the Himalayan peaks that provide a sense of awe and wonder and a point of contemplation for trekkers along the way.

TRAVEL TIPS

Visa

With the exception of visitors from India, Bangladesh and Maldives, all other visitors to Bhutan need a visa. Visas are issued only after a confirmed booking through a licensed Bhutanese tour operator has been made.

Currency

The Ngultrum (Nu) is at par with the Indian Rupee and 1 US dollar is approximately Nu. 82. Foreign currencies can be changed at the airport and from the banks. ATM and banks accept Visa International and MasterCard. Currently, most business outlets in Thimphu, Paro, Punakha, Wangdue, Trongsa, Bumthang, Monggar, Trashigang and Phuentsholing have point-of-sale terminals.

Accommodation

A wide variety of accommodation is available ranging from luxurious 5-star hotels to cozy little hotels and homestays in traditional Bhutanese homes and settings. Visitors can be assured of the warmth and comfort of the hotels. Similarly, the ambience and hospitality offered by the hotels are incredible.

Dining out

Most of the restaurants serve Indian, Continental and Chinese cuisines in addition to other international cuisines. Bhutanese dishes are available in all the restaurants and Ema Datsi - a cheese and chilly dish is popular among Bhutanese and visitors. All Bhutanese dishes use an abundance of chilli so do order according to your palette strength! Besides the locally produced beer and whisky, the local brew, Ara that is distilled from rice, barley or wheat is also popular.

Shopping

Bhutan is popular for its textiles, cane and bamboo products. There are a lot of shops and emporiums that sell handwoven Bhutanese textiles, handicrafts, thankas, jewellery, antiques, organic herbal products which the Bhutanese use for a variety of purposes.

Telecommunications

Bhutan is well connected and virtually every town has good telecommunication services. Internet cafes are available almost everywhere. Cell phones can also be used in most places around the country. Sim cards are available at the airport and in most shops.



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