

TRANQUIL BHUTAN (11 Nights/12 Days)



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Bhutan popularly known as the Land of the Thunder Dragon is the last remaining Buddhist Himalayan Kingdom. Majestic Monasteries & Dzong, wide variety of flora and fauna and unique architecture blended with ancient traditions Bhutan breathes tranquility and mystery in all respects.

This trip is the perfect opportunity for the adventurous and flexible traveller. Bhutan continues to be one of the top world destinations and it is definitely not to be missed.



ITINERARY

25 Oct: Kathmandu (Arrival)

Upon arrival, you will be met, assisted and transferred to the hotel.

Briefing on Bhutan.

Rest of the day free.

Overnight at the Nirvana Garden Hotel.

26 Oct: Kathmandu-Paro-Thimpu

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your Kathmandu-Paro flight on Druk Air. The flight should offer us spectacular mountain and landscape views. On arrival and after visa formalities you will be received by Bhutanese members and depart for Thimpu, the capital of Bhutan.

Overnight Phintsophelri Hotel.

27 Oct: Thimpu to Punakha

After breakfast visit the Memorial Chorten built in the memory of the late King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck as well as the 15th century Changangkha Monastery, the National Library, the Royal Goldsmith Workshop and Handicraft Centers. After a visit to the Motithang Park above Thimpu to see the rare Takins, national animal of Bhutan. The four hours drive from Thimpu to Punakha, will take you across the Dochlu Pass at 3100 meters. Depending on weather, you may see spectacular views of the high peaks of the Eastern Himalayan ranges including the highest mountain in Bhutan, Mt. Gangar Punsum at 7520 meters. The descent from the pass, dropping to the lower and warmer valley of Lobesa will take you through a temperate type of leafy forest of rhododendron and magnolia then to a semi-tropical zone where orange and banana trees and cactus grow. Enroute visit the Punakha Dzong, which served as an old capital of Bhutan. Situated at the confluence of the Pho and Mo rivers (literally the father and mother rivers), this remarkable fortress was built in 1637.

Overnight at Zangtopelri Hotel

28 Oct: Punakha to Bumthang

Following breakfast proceed over the Black Mountains to Tongsa. Travelling over two more high passes you will pass through dense forest, more rhododendrons and magnolia as well as high-altitude dwarf bamboo, the favorite food of yaks which you should see enroute. After passing through the town of Tongsa will offer magnificent views of the Himalayas and beautiful landscape through scattered hamlets and forests of rhododendrons and pine.

Bumthang, at an altitude of 2600 meters/8530 feet is comprised of four smaller valleys. The deeply spiritual region of Bumthang is shrouded in religious legend. Here tales of Guru Padmasambhava and his reincarnation known as a terton (a discoverer of religious treasures) still linger in most nooks and crannies. Bumthang is also known for its woolen material, which can be seen, hung outside of houses for sale. We will visit the Jakar Dzong, the 7th century Jambay Lhakhang, the Kurjey Monastery and Tamshing and Kunchosum Monasteries.

Overnight at the Wangdicholing

29 Oct: Bumthang

Today you will visit the Mebartsho, which means “burning or flaming lake,” one of the great pilgrimage sites of Bhutan. This is where Pema Lingpa found the treasures hidden by Guru Rimpoche and thus became a terton. Although it is called a lake, it is actually a gorge through which a river rushes. This is where Pema Lingpa found the treasures hidden by Guru Rimpoche and thus became a terton. Images of him and his sons have been carved in the rock. On the way back visit the Swiss Farm where apple juice, cider and cheese are made. Afternoon free to wander around Bumthang town. Bhutan is famous for its stamps and the small but friendly post office is the perfect place to send postcards from and there are a couple of gift shops, selling traditional arts and crafts.

Overnight at Wangdicholing.

30 Oct: Bumthang

Visit the Jakar Dzong, the 7th century Jambay Lhakhang, the Kurjey Monastery and Tamshing and Kunchosum Monasteries.

Afternoon free to wander around the village.

Overnight Wangdicholing.

31 Oct: Bumthang – Tongsa

Following breakfast drive to Tongsa.

Upon arrival check into hotel.

After lunch visit the Tongsa Dzong and the local town.

Overnight Yangkhil Resort.

01 Nov: Tongsa – Gangtey Valley - Punakha.

After breakfast drive to Gangtey Valley. Gangtey Gompa Valley also known as Phobjikha Valley, one of Bhutan’s few glacial valleys at an altitude of 2800 meters. The only Nyingmapa monastery in Western Bhutan is located here. This beautiful valley is also home to the rare Black Necked Cranes migrating from the Tibetan plateau to escape the harsh winter. Currently there are 200 to 300 cranes residing in this valley and the Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN) is taking every measure to ensure the safety of the Cranes. While the cranes reside in the winter valley for 4/5 months the

village folks are not allowed to make loud noises or fish in the river that runs through the valley.

After lunch drive to Punakha. Enroute visit the Wangduephodrang Dzong, which is perched on a spur at the confluence of two rivers. Depending on time you may also visit the local market area.

Overnight Zangtopelri.

02 Nov: Punakha – Paro

Today the drive of 3 to 4 hours to Paro will take you through Lobesa where a short walk through farmhouses and fields to Chime Lhakhang. This monastery was built in the 15th century and dedicated to the famous Lam Drukpa Kunley or “divine mad man.” He is one of the most important saints in Bhutan and the temple is a pilgrimage site for women unable to bear children.

Overnight Olathang Hotel.

03 Nov: Paro

Following an early breakfast drive to the start point for the hike to the Taksang Monastery. This is a beautiful walk, through pine, oak and rhododendron forests, ending at a teahouse where we will have spectacular views of the monastery, which clings to a huge granite cliff 800 meters above the Paro Valley. It is believed that the great saint Padmasambhava came in the 7th century on a flying tigress and meditated in a cave here. The demons that were trying to stop the spread of Buddhism were subdued and the valley was converted to Buddhism. Towards the end of the 17th century the monastery was built on the spot where the saint meditated and it is a pilgrimage site that every Buddhist hopes to visit in his lifetime. Visit the ruined fortress of Drugyel Dzong, which still attracts visitors due to the strategic location of the fort, which defended the Paro Valley from the Tibetan invasion from the north in the early 17th century. In clear weather, Mt. Chomolhari (7320 meters) can be seen towering over the Dzong. You will proceed through the beautiful valley to the ancient watchtower, known locally as Ta Dzong. In the 1960's the Third King, Jigme Dorjee Wangchuck conceived the idea of restoring the Ta Dzong as a place to house the National Museum. The seven-storey museum highlights various aspects of Bhutanese culture and history dating back to the 7th century. A short walk downhill takes you to the Rinpung Dzong which serves as the administrative center and school for monks. After drive to Paro Town and stroll around the market before driving back to the hotel.

Overnight Olathang Hotel.

04 Nov: Paro - Kathmandu

Transfer to the airport for your flight to Kathmandu. On arrival to Kathmandu transfer to the Nirvana Garden Hotel.

Rest of the day free.

Overnight Nirvana Garden Hotel.

05 Nov: Departure

Following breakfast, departure for airport for flights home.

NETT COSTS:

**USD 2800 PER PERSON ON TWIN/DOUBLE SHARING ROOM
USD 3300 PER PERSON IN SINGLE ROOM**

COST INCLUDES

- Airport transfers
- 2 Nights accomodation on twin sharing with breakfast at Nirvana Garden Hotel, Kathmandu
- Bhutan Visa Fees
- Airfare Kathmandu – Paro - Kathmandu
- 09 Nights/10 Days accommodation at hotels/resorts with all meals while in Bhutan
- All sightseeing tours, excursions, surface transportation in a private coach with an English speaking tour guide in Bhutan
- All taxes, tolls, entrance fees

NOT INCLUDED IN COST

- Nepal Visas
- Personal items such as laundry, drinks at meals, excess baggage, housekeeping tips
- International Flights to and out of Kathmandu
- Insurance of any kind
- Lunch and Dinner in Kathmandu
- Sightseeing in Kathmandu
- Tips and Porterages