

Glimpse of Bhutan Tour (3 Nights/ 4 Days)

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Bhutan remained entirely disconnected from the rest of the world until the 1960s. Therefore, visiting the country and witnessing its rich culture that the government has carefully tried to preserve, is an achievement in itself. On our 4-day tour we will be visiting popular Bhutanese landmarks in Paro and Thimphu. In Paro we visit Rinpung Dzong, national museum and Kichu Lhakhang, the oldest Bhutanese temple before hiking to the extraordinary Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) Monastery the next day. In Thimphu we tour some of its popular landmarks including the Memorial Chorten, nunnery Temple, Bhutanese traditional painting school, folk heritage museum and others.

Itinerary

Day 01: Flight to Paro Airport

Arrival in Paro & transfer to Hotel. The Paro valley has kept its bucolic nature in spite of the airport and the existence of development projects. Fields, brown or green depending on the season, cover most of the valley floor, while hamlets and isolated farms dot the countryside. The houses of Paro valley are considered to be among the most beautiful in the country. Paro is believed to be one of the first valleys to have received the imprint of Buddhism.

Afternoon : Visit the National Museum (Ta-Dzong). Once the watchtower for the Rinpung Dzong, it was converted into the National Museum in 1968. The museum stands on a promontory overlooking the Paro valley in all its glory.

Visit the Paro Rinpung Dzong. A flagstone path rises gradually from a beautiful wooden bridge with shingle roofing and abutted by two guardhouses, to the Dzong. Today, the Dzong is the seat of the district administration as well as the home for the monastic school. The central tower (Utse) of the Dzong, with its superb woodwork, is one of the most beautiful in the nation. The Dzong was built in 1645 A.D. Check in at Hotel.

Day 02: Thimphu Sightseeing

Thimphu lies in a wooded valley, sprawling up a hillside on the West Bank of the Thimphu Chhu [Chhu means River]. Thimphu is unlike any other world capital. Small and secluded the city is quiet and there are never the traffic jams familiar in other Asian Capitals. It is often said that Thimphu is the only world capital without traffic lights. Thimphu's main shopping street is a delight not so much for what you can buy there, but for the picturesqueness of the architecture and national costume. Beautiful weaves in wool, silk and cotton, basketwork, silver jewellery, thangkhas and other traditional crafts of the Kingdom are available in various Handicraft Emporiums.

Morning : Visit the Memorial Chorten, a huge stupa built in memory of the third King who reigned from 1952-1972.

Visit the National Library where ancient manuscripts are preserved.

Visit the Painting School where traditional art is still preserved. Artists are taught to paint Thangkhas here (sacred Buddhist scroll).

Visit the Handicrafts Emporium where one can buy Bhutanese textiles and other arts and crafts.

Visit the Weekend market where vendors from throughout the region arrive on Friday afternoon and remain till Sunday. Here you will find indigenous goods, handicrafts, locally produced goods, etc.

Afternoon : Visit Simtokha Dzong. This is the oldest fortress in Bhutan, built in 1629 A.D. by

Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. It also houses the largest monastic schools in the country.

Visit Tashichho Dzong – the main secretariat building. It is from here that the King and other prominent civil servants run the country. The Head Abbot and the central monastic body also reside here during the summer.

Visit Pangri Zampa Monastery, situated just beyond Dechencholing Palace (5 km. from Thimphu). This temple was the first residence of Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal when he arrived in Bhutan in 1616 A.D. Ngawang Chogyel, the great ancestor of the Shahdrung, built it during the first quarter of the 16th century.

Day 03: Thimphu sightseeing / Paro (Excursion to Taktsang Monastery)

Transfer to Paro for a 03 hrs hike to the Taktsang Monastery. Taktsang is the most famous of all Bhutanese monasteries. It is perched on the side of a cliff 900 m above the floor of the Paro valley, where the only sounds are the murmurs of the wind, water and the chanting of the monks. The name Taktsang means 'Tigers Nest'; the Guru is said to have flown on the back of a tigress to the site of the monastery where he meditated in a cave for three months.

The monastery itself is closed to tourists except by special permit. However the one-hour walk to the viewpoint, where there is a small wooden teahouse provides a close-up view of the monastery. It's also a good warm-up hike if you are going trekking. In the evening visit a farmhouse for "traditional hot stone bath" and local hospitality.

Day 04: Departure onward destination

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