



Central Bhutan Fly/Drive – 11 nights

We love Bhutan....it really is the most wonderful, rewarding destination! We are very fortunate to travel to Bhutan annually to ensure our itineraries and inclusions are the very best possible for our valued clients. Below is an itinerary designed for private travellers and can be tailored to suit your exact requirements.

Tour Itinerary Overview.

- 2 nights Thimphu with sightseeing, hiking and shopping options
- One way domestic flight Paro-Bumthang
- 3 nights Bumthang valleys – Lhakhangs, monasteries, hiking & weaving
- 2 nights Phobjikha valley for hiking and exploring
- 2 night Punakha valley with sightseeing, monastery & Dzong visits & hiking
- 2 nights Paro valley with Taktsang Monastery hike, sightseeing & shopping

OR CALL THE BHUTAN TRAVEL EXPERTS ON
AUS [toll free](tel:1300367875), James – [0412 416 111](tel:0412416111), Nicola – [0413 598 669](tel:0413598669)

Why Book with Bhutan & Beyond?

- 16 years experience, service & knowledge.
- We personally visit Bhutan at least once every year.
- Competitive pricing and luxury hotel upgrade options.
- Exceptionally well constructed & flexible itineraries.
- We provide a comprehensive Bhutan visitor guide
- Experts at combining Bhutan with India & Nepal.
- ATAS Accredited via our parent company MTA Travel
- Access to our exclusive travel app COMPANION

Your Bhutan Land Package Inclusions:

- Professional guide & driver with SUV/minibus.
- All touring & transfers throughout your journey.
- Domestic Drukair airfare Paro-Bumthang or vv.
- Traditional [3 star hotel](#) accom with private bathrooms.
- All meals & bottled water daily.
- Entrance Fees, hiking and sightseeing.
- Visa fees, Government Royalties and Taxes.
- Comprehensive pre-departure planning kit.
- Bank transfer & communications fees.
- Professionally operated by Bhutan Tourism Corporation.
- **OPTION** to take this itinerary in reverse.
- Comprehensive Bhutan visitor guide & full support from Bhutan & Beyond.



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Optional Activities:

Please ensure your travel insurance covers you for these activities.

- White Water Rafting – Punakha Valley. US\$250.00 for up to 5 persons.
- Archery in Paro town @ US\$7.00 pp.
- Mountain bike hire in Paro & Thimphu from US\$25 pp per day.

Your Bhutan land package excludes:

- Airfares to/from Bhutan.
- Personal items incl laundry, drinks, phone, tips etc.
- Upgrade costs for luxury hotels are additional.
- Travel Insurance – mandatory to enter Bhutan.

Cancellation Conditions

Deposit date until 60 days prior to departure – Loss of deposit

From 60 days prior to arrival in Bhutan – No refund permitted

Day 1

Paro Valley to Thimphu Valley (1 hr 30 mins)

After clearing immigration and customs you will be greeted by your BTCL guide and driver and transferred to Bhutan's capital Thimphu, travelling through the spectacular countryside en-route. All the houses and buildings in the Kingdom are painted and constructed in traditional Bhutanese style.

On arrival into Thimphu check-in to your hotel and take lunch. Enjoy the remainder of the day to explore Thimphu, both by vehicle and on foot. Your options include visits to the National Memorial Stupa; the celebrated Royal Textile Academy and the Takin Preserve – home to Bhutan's most unusual national mammal.

Overnight Thimphu – [Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel.](#)

Day 2:

Sightseeing in Thimphu.

This morning visit the majestic Trashichhoe Dzong and the newly consecrated Tara Lhaden Zhingkhram lhakang (temple). Continue on to the awesome Golden Buddha which also offers an excellent 3 km hike option with sensational valley views. Next visit the 'Simply Bhutan' traditional display village followed by a Bhutanese lunch. At 'Simply Bhutan' you can try ara



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Day 2 - continued

tasting (local spirit); suja tasting (butter tea); try your hand at archery and enjoy a cultural performance of song & dance during the lunch. (Simply Bhutan is closed on public holidays)

Other recommended places to visit are Zorig Chusum – the Institute of the 13 Arts & Crafts of Bhutan (closed over school holidays and weekends); the Folk Heritage Museum; the National Library, which holds a vast collection of ancient Buddhist manuscripts; the hand-made paper making factory & the colourful weekend markets (Fri-Sun) where all the locals go to buy an array of fresh fruits & vegetables, home-wares, handicrafts and clothes.

Don't forget to take a wander along Thimphu's main street, Norzin Lam, which offers good shopping and the Craft Bazaar. For those who have an interest in quality weavings and local art check out the Gagyel Lhundrup weaving centre, where you can interact with the weavers, and the adjacent S. Bishwa art gallery. The city bars are also worth a visit. Your guide will advise you the best options. Please note Tuesday is 'dry day' in Bhutan and most bars in the city will remain closed.

Overnight Thimphu – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel.

Day 3:

Domestic Flight & Sightseeing in the Bumthang region.

Transfer to Paro airport early this morning for your short, and very scenic, 40 min flight to the Bumthang region of central Bhutan and you will be accompanied by your guide. Bumthang includes the 4 valleys of Choekhor, Tang, Ura and Chhume. Meet your permanent driver on arrival and transfer to your hotel for check-in and lunch.

This afternoon visit the Jakar Dzong; the Wangdicholing Palace (external area only) and enjoy a wander through nearby Chamkhar town.

Overnight Choekhor Valley – [Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel](#).

Day 4:

Day Trip to Ura Valley. (4-5 hrs drive round trip)

Ura valley is the cradle of Buddhism in Bhutan and is one of the earliest settled valleys in the Kingdom. The stony paths of Ura village lend an almost medieval feel to the area. Consider an easy downhill hike from the road into the valley itself, with a picnic lunch at the local lhakang (temple).

*Choose to stay in Ura tonight at a local farmhouse and interact with the family or return to your hotel in Choekhor valley.

Overnight Choekhor Valley – 3* Hotel or Ura Farm Stay.



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Day 5:

Sightseeing & Leisure in the Bumthang region.

Today enjoy visits to the Jambay & Kurje Lhakhangs. These are the oldest two monasteries in the kingdom and all the Kings of Bhutan are cremated at Kurje Lhakhang. Choose to hike back to Chamkhar town for lunch at a local restaurant.

This afternoon visit the Tamshing Monastery where about 95 Monks reside, most being under 15 and from poorer families who cannot afford to send their children to state school and consider a visit to the nearby Swiss Farm to sample local cheese and wheat beer.

Alternatively enjoy one of the hikes available in this region or find a nice quiet spot at the hotel to catch up on some reading.

Overnight Choekhor Valley – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel

Day 6:

Choekhor Valley to Phobjikha Valley (5-6 hrs)

Today transfer to Phobjikha, via the Chhume valley for the opportunity to shop for local handicrafts and textiles. This region is renowned for its exceptionally high quality weavings. Traverse the Yotu La (pass) and continue on to Trongsa where the Dzong is the ancestral home of the Royal Family of Bhutan. The Dzong has added the excellent Tower Of Trongsa Museum into its ancient watchtower, which you will visit during your lunch stop.

Continue westwards via the Pele La (pass) which crosses through the Black Mountains National Park and divides western and central Bhutan. This is the best place in Bhutan to see yaks from the road. You will pass the village of Rukubji surrounded by extensive fields of mustard, potatoes, barley and wheat and keep a watchful eye out for Rhesus Macaques (Brown Monkeys).

Potatoes are this region's primary cash crop once exported to India. Phobjikha is a glacial valley on the western slopes of the Black Mountains and is one of the most beautiful open valleys in Bhutan. It is also one of the most important wildlife preserves in the country and the winter home (late October to early February) of the rare black necked crane, which annually flies in from Tibet. There are also muntjaks (barking deer), wild boar, sambar, Himalayan black bear, leopard and red foxes.

Overnight Phobjikha Valley – [Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel](#)



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Day 7:

At Leisure in Phobjikha Valley

Whilst in Phobjikha visit the Black Crane nature information centre and the sacred Gangtey Goemba (Monastery) plus take a wander through the quaint village of Gangtey and hike the Gangtey Nature Trail.

There are many more wonderful strolls & hikes in the Phobjikha Valley and your guide will recommend a suitable hike for your fitness and to suit the conditions. Alternatively, just enjoy the serenity and beauty of this very special place.

There is an option here to spend 1 or 2 nights in a farm stay with a Bhutanese family for a very traditional and authentic experience.

Overnight Phobjikha Valley – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel

Day 8:

Phobjikha Valley to Punakha Valley (3-4 hrs)

This morning depart westwards for the Punakha valley. As you pass the dramatic Wangdue Phodrang Dzong (sadly destroyed by fire in June 2012 & still under reconstruction) notice the large cacti that cover the surrounding hillsides. These were planted long ago to discourage invaders from climbing the steep slope to the Dzong. From this point you can also view Rinchengang, one of Bhutan's oldest villages, which did not have access to water, electricity or schooling until the early 1990's. The craftsmen of Rinchengang are stonemasons, originally from India, and sought after for their skills in construction of Dzongs and Lhakhangs (temples).

Punakha holds the title as the winter capital because of its more temperate climate. Arriving into the valley visit Chimi Lhakhang, a monastery built by Lama Drukpa Kuenley (also known as the Divine Madman or Mad Monk), which is a pleasant, easy 20 minute walk across paddy fields. It is believed that childless women who visit the temple will conceive after receiving a "wang" (blessing) from the resident monk. Continue on to the local Nunnery and the small very traditional village of Talo where you can stroll through the beautiful and serene gardens of the local monastery.

Overnight Punakha Valley – [Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel](#).

Day 9:

Sightseeing & hiking in Punakha today.

This morning visit the dramatic Punakha Dzong, which formerly served as the seat of the government and is still the winter residence of the Dzatsheng (Central Monk Body). This is Bhutan's most spectacular Dzong and an excellent example of how a medieval fortress, and a centre of both monastic and administrative functions, has adapted and evolved for modern day use.



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Day 9 – continued.

This afternoon travel up the valley & hike to Khamsum Yulley Namgyel Chorten along the river bank and through tiny villages surrounded by vegetable fields and rice paddies. This Chorten holds very special significance being consecrated in 1999 and dedicated to the protection of the former Crown Prince, today's current King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, by his mother, one of the 4 former Queens.

Overnight Punakha Valley – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel.

Day 10:

Punakha Valley to Paro (4-5 hrs)

This morning transfer by road to Paro, via Dochu La (pass) at 3018 m. At the pass view the 108 Stupas, commissioned by a former Queen, and a memorial to those who lost their lives during the low intensity conflict in late 2002 when Bhutan evicted Indian rebels camped in the jungle on the Bhutan – Indian border. On a clear day you will witness a breathtaking view of the eastern Himalaya and, depending on the time of the year, the vista can vary from alpine snow (November – March) to a profusion of blossoms (March – May) splashed among the soft green of the wild herbs and forest trees. From the pass you can elect to hike through the forest to nearby Lungchuzay Temple. Descending from the pass drive past the Semtokha Dzong, built in 1629, the oldest fortress of its kind that guarded Thimphu and today is a monastery.

After lunch at a local Paro restaurant visit the Rinpung Dzong, with its cantilever bridge, the National Museum (time permitting) and take a wander along Paro's main streets which offer good shopping for handicrafts and local jewellery.

Overnight Paro Valley – [Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel.](#)

Day 11:

Paro Valley Hiking & Sightseeing

This morning end your Bhutan adventure on a high with a hike to the majestic Taktsang Monastery, also known as 'Tigers Nest', almost impossibly located on cliffs 800 m above the valley floor. This is a pilgrimage all Bhutanese Buddhists endeavour to make at least once in their lives and each step they make along the trail counts as credits towards a brighter future.

Choose between a 1.5 to 2 hour hike to the monastery viewpoint, with a café offering excellent Bhutanese vegetarian food & refreshments, or be bold and take the 5 hour round trip hike into the monastery itself – recommended only for the fit and active as this can be quite a strenuous hike with many, many, stairs to contend with. The result is well worth it all the same.

After your hike consider a spa treatment, or hot stone bath, from your valley hotel.

Overnight Paro Valley – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel.



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Day 12:

Day of Departure

Sadly, prepare for your departure this morning to your onward destination. Transfer to Paro Airport for flights to Bangkok, Delhi, Singapore, Kathmandu, Kolkata, Bagdogra or Dhaka.



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