



Paro Festival Tour – 10 nights 27 MAR – 06 APR 2021

Introduction:

After the awesome flight into Paro experience the 4 valleys of Paro, Thimphu, Phobjikha & Punakha. You will be amazed by the colour & spectacle of the famous Paro Tshechu (festival). Also, this small group tour caters to a maximum of 8 persons. Furthermore it features the most important sights in Thimphu city; the remote beauty of the Phobjikha valley and the splendour of the magnificent Punakha Dzong. Finally a special pilgrimage hike to Taktsang Monastery (Tigers Nest) in Paro. This tour combines the very best the Kingdom of Bhutan has to offer in western Bhutan.

Tour Itinerary Overview.

- 2 nights Thimphu with sightseeing, hiking and shopping options.
- 2 nights Phobjikha valley for hiking and exploring.
- 2 nights Punakha valley with monastery & Dzong visits.
- 3 nights Paro valley with Taktsang Monastery hike, shopping & sightseeing.

Reasons To Book This Small Group Tour

- This tour is a guaranteed departure.
- We only take a maximum of 8 persons on our tours.
- Witness the spectacle of the Paro Tshechu (festival).
- We tailor our tours for less driving and more sightseeing!
- 17 years experience, service & knowledge.
- Competitive pricing & well constructed itineraries.
- Access to our exclusive travel app COMPANION
- Our comprehensive Bhutan Visitor Information planning guide
- ATAS Accredited via our parent company MTA Travel.

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

Tour Inclusions:

- English speaking guide, driver & private coach.
- All touring & transfers throughout your journey.
- Bhutanese style 3* hotel accom with private bathrooms.
- All meals including bottled water daily.
- Entrance fees, hiking & sightseeing.
- Bhutan visa fees & visa processing.
- Government tourism royalties & local taxes.
- The spectacle of the Paro Tshechu (festival).
- Bank transfer & communication fees.
- Professionally operated by Bhutan Tourism Corp – BTCL.



All travel referred to on this site is arranged through James & Nicola Irving t/a Bhutan & Beyond, affiliated with MTA Travel. MTA – Mobile Travel Agents is a member of Virtuoso, AFTA, ATAS and IATA accredited.
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Tour Exclusions:

- Flights to/from Paro are additional.
- Personal items: phone calls, laundry, drinks etc.
- Tipping – we will advise your tipping regime.
- Travel Insurance – mandatory to enter Bhutan.

Available On Request:

- Upgrade to Business Class on your flights.
- Ex-Australia airfares.
- Stopovers & additional Asian arrangements.

Cancellation Conditions:

Deposit date until 60 days prior departure – Loss of deposit.
From 60 days prior arrival in Bhutan – No refund permitted.

DETAILED TOUR ITINERARY - 27MAR - 06APR 021

Saturday 27 March:

Paro Airport to Paro (20 mins)

After clearing immigration and customs you will be greeted by your BTCL guide & driver and transferred to Paro town. Here you can enjoy a wander through the colourful festival markets. You will mingle with the local Bhutanese before taking lunch at a local restaurant.

This afternoon witness the colour & spectacle of the Paro Tshechu. The festival is held annually at the Rinpung Dzong, just as it has been for hundreds of years. Because the local Bhutanese dress in their finest clothes the proceedings are raucous & joyous affairs. Finally check in at your Paro hotel.

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

Sunday 28 March:

Paro Sightseeing & Festival

Firstly consider the early morning option to attend the festival for the unfurling of the Thongdrel. This takes place at the Rinpung Dzong at around 3.00 am. It is an intensely religious experience for the Bhutanese. The extremely large thongdrel is a painting (Thangka) which is not allowed to be struck by the direct rays of the sun. Therefore it must be rolled back up by 7:30 AM. The mere sight of the Thongdrel is said to cleanse the viewer of sin.



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Sunday 28 March – continued.

Return to your hotel for breakfast. Later this morning visit the Paro morning market, before returning to the Tshechu. After a late lunch in a Paro restaurant take time to relax at your hotel or explore Paro town.

Overnight Paro – Bhutan Style 3* Hotel.

Monday 29 March:

Paro to Thimphu (1 hr 20 mins)

After a leisurely start transfer to Thimphu city, Bhutan's quirky capital. Firstly stop at the Iron Bridge and temple en-route, before arriving into the city. Visit the National Memorial Chorten & the Takin Preserve. This is home to Bhutan's most unusual national mammal. Next visit the 'Simply Bhutan' traditional display village followed by a Bhutanese lunch. At 'Simply Bhutan' you can try ara tasting (local spirit); suja tasting (butter tea); try your hand at archery and enjoy a cultural performance of song & dance during the lunch.

This afternoon visit the majestic Trashichhoe Dzong, the seat of Bhutan's Government & Royal Offices. Furthermore visit the beautiful Tara Lhaden Zingkhom Lhakhang (temple) nearby. Finally check out the Takin Preserve.

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

Tuesday 30 March:

Thimphu Sightseeing

Early this morning take an excursion to the awesome Golden Buddha. This also offers an excellent 1-hour (3 km) hiking option with sensational views of Thimphu city and valley. Followed by a visit to the celebrated Royal Textiles Academy.

Take lunch at Gawa Restaurant before a visit to Zorig Chusom – the Institute of the 13 Arts & Crafts of Bhutan is adjacent. Here you can interact with the students. 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. Finally some free time to check out Thimphu's main street, Norzin Lam, featuring the Craft Bazaar.

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Wednesday 31 March:

Thimphu to Phobjikha (4+ hrs)

This morning drive eastwards to the Phobjikha Valley. Ascend to Dochu La (pass-3116 m) to view the 108 Stupas. These were commissioned by a former Queen as a memorial to those who lost their lives during the low intensity conflict in late 2002. This is when Bhutan evicted Indian separatist rebels camped in the jungle on the Bhutan-Indian border. On a clear day you will witness a breathtaking view of the eastern Himalaya.

When the Wangdue Phodrang Dzong comes into view, notice the large cacti that cover the hillside below. These were planted long ago to discourage invaders from climbing the steep slope to the Dzong.

Phobjikha is a glacial valley on the western slopes of the Black Mountains. It is one of the most beautiful open valleys in Bhutan and, in addition, also one of the most important wildlife preserves in the country. Phobjikha is the winter home (late OCT to early FEB) of the rare black necked crane which annually flies in from Tibet. There are also barking deer, wild boar, sambar, Himalayan black bear, leopard and red fox.

While you are in Phobjikha you will visit the Black Crane nature information centre & the sacred Gangtey Goenpa (monastery). Furthermore enjoy time to wander through Gangtey village and hike the Gangtey Nature Trail. Time permitting you can take an excursion to the remote Phobji area of the valley. Here you can take an easy, flat hike through farm houses and temples.

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

Thursday 01 April:

Sightseeing Phobjikha Valley

Explore the Phobjikha valley as per the above suggestions.

Overnight Phobjikha Valley – Bhutan Style 3* Hotel.

Friday 02 April:

Phobjikha to Punakha Valley (2+ hrs)

Depart this morning to the Punakha valley. This holds the title as the winter capital because of its more temperate climate. Arriving into the valley firstly visit the markets at Mesina. After that we visit Chimi Lhakhang, a monastery built by Lama Drukpa Kuenley (also known as the Divine Madman), which is a pleasant 20 min 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.



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Friday 02 April – continued.

After lunch at a local restaurant take an excursion along a scenic country lane to the very traditional village of Talo. Here you can stroll through the beautiful & serene gardens of the local monastery. Finally, time permitting, visit the Sangchen Dorji Lhuendrup Lhakhang & Nunnery.

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

Saturday 03 April:

Sightseeing & hiking in Punakha

This morning visit the Punakha Saturday morning market, before a visit to the dramatic Punakha Dzong, which formally served as the seat of the government. It is still the winter residence of the Dratsheng (Central Monk Body). This is an excellent example of how a medieval fortress, and a centre of both monastic & administrative functions, has evolved for modern day use.

After lunch at a local restaurant we hike to Khamsum Yulley Namgyel Chorten. This is a delightful hike through tiny hamlets, fields of vegetable and rice paddy. The Chorten holds very special significance being consecrated in 1999. It is dedicated to the protection of the former Crown Prince – today's current King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck.

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

Sunday 04 April:

Punakha Valley to Paro Valley (4 hrs)

Depart Punakha this morning for your transfer westwards to the Paro Valley. Once again traversing Dochu La and arriving in Paro town for a late lunch at a local restaurant.

This afternoon visit the National Museum featuring a wide range of historic artefacts. After that check in at the hotel and enjoy the remainder of the afternoon at leisure.

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



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Monday 05 April:

Taksang Monastery Hike

After early breakfast we take a 'pilgrimage' hike to the Taksang Monastery, also known as Tigers Nest. All Bhutanese Buddhists desire to make this pilgrimage at least once in their lives. As a result each step they take along the trail counts as merit points towards their future.

Choose between a 1.5 to 2 hour round trip hike to the Monastery viewpoint or a longer 5 hour and more strenuous hike into the Monastery itself. Tigers Nest clings impossibly to a cliff of rock 800 m above the valley floor. Furthermore, this is where Guru Rinpoche flew on the back of a tigress to subdue the local demons. This was followed by 3 months meditation in a cave still visible in the monastery. In 1998 the monastery was seriously damaged by fire and has since been painstakingly reconstructed to its original condition. It was then consecrated by the 4th King in 2005.

Take lunch at the Viewpoint Cafe on the hiking trail. Head back to your hotel via the revered Kyichu Lhakhang (temple). This is one of Bhutan's oldest and most beautiful temples. Furthermore it boasts an orange tree that perpetually bears fruit. After that take the rest of the afternoon at leisure. Or consider more shopping or sightseeing in Paro town.

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Tuesday 06 April:

Early morning transfer to Paro Airport for your onward flight.



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