



Enchanting Bhutan Tour – 12 nights 17 – 29 OCT 2021

Introduction:

After the awesome flight into Paro be amazed by the colour & spectacle of the Jambay Lhakhang Drup & Prakhar Duchhoed (festivals) in central Bhutan. This small group tour, catering to a maximum of 8 persons, also features the most important temples & scenery of the central Bumthang region; the remote beauty of the Phobjikha Valley; the splendour of the magnificent Punakha Dzong and culminates with a pilgrimage hike to the majestic Taktsang Monastery (Tigers Nest) in Paro valley. This tour combines the very best the Kingdom of Bhutan has to offer in the west & central regions.

Tour Itinerary Overview.

- 2 nights Thimphu with exploring, hiking and shopping options.
- 2 nights Phobjikha valley for hiking and exploring.
- 3 nights Bumthang valleys, festivals, hiking, exploring
- 1 night Trongsa with museum & Dzong visits.
- 2 nights Punakha valley with monastery & Dzong visits.
- 2 nights Paro valley with Taktsang Monastery hike, shopping & exploring.

Reasons To Book This Small Group Tour

- This all-inclusive 12 night tour is a guaranteed departure.
- We only take a max of 8 persons on our tours.
- Witness the Jambay Lhakhang Drup & Prakhar Duchhoed (festivals) in Bumthang.
- We tailor our tours for less driving & more sightseeing!
- 17 years experience, service & knowledge.
- Competitive pricing & well constructed itineraries.
- We provide a comprehensive pre-departure planning kit.
- Experts at combining Bhutan with India & Nepal.
- 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)

Bhutan 13 Day/12 Night Land Tour Costs & Inclusions

Tour Dates – 17 – 29 OCT 2021

All inclusive Bhutan land tour cost @US\$3481.00 per person twin/dbl share.

Single room supplement @US\$515.00

Please note tour costs are quoted in USD.

Airfares to from Bhutan are additional.



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Tour Inclusions:

- Professional guide, driver & private coach.
- All touring & transfers throughout your journey.
- Bhutanese style 3* hotels for 12 nights with private bathrooms.
- All meals & bottled water daily.
- All entrance fees and sightseeing.
- Bhutan visa fees, Bhutan Govt royalties & taxes.
- Witness the Jambay Lhakhang Drup & Prakhar Duchhoed festivals in Bumthang.
- Professionally run by Bhutan Tourism Corp Ltd – BTCL.

Tour Exclusions:

- Flights to/from Paro are additional.
- Personal items: phone calls, laundry, drinks, designer coffee's, tips etc.
- 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 – 17 – 29 OCT 2021

Sunday 17 October 2021

Paro to Thimphu (1 hr 30 mins, drive time)

After clearing immigration & customs you will be greeted by your BTCL guide & driver immediately outside the terminal exit door. Transfer by road 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 (time permitting) visit the colourful weekend markets (Fri-Sun) where everyone goes to buy an array of fresh fruits & vegetables, home-wares, handicrafts and clothes before enjoying lunch at a local restaurant. This afternoon visit the National Memorial Stupa followed by the Takin Preserve – home to Bhutan's most unusual national mammal.

Overnight Thimphu-[Bhutan Style 3* Hotel](#)



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Monday 18 October:

Exploring the Thimphu Valley today.

This morning visit the awesome Golden Buddha which also offers an excellent 3 km hike option with sensational valley views. Next head north up the valley to the majestic Trashichhoe Dzong and Tara Lhaden Zhingkhams lhakang (temple). 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 celebrated Royal Textiles Academy. Don't forget to take a wander along Thimphu's main street, Norzin Lam and visit the Craft Bazaar.

Overnight Thimphu-Bhutan Style 3* Hotel

Tuesday 19 October:

Thimphu to Phobjikha Valley (4-5 hrs)

This morning you will be transferred by road eastwards to the Phobjikha Valley. En-route passing the Semtokha Dzong, built in 1629 & the oldest fortress of its kind that guarded the Thimphu valley, which today it is a monastery. Continue ascending to Dochu La (pass) to view the 108 Stupas, commissioned by a former Queen as 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.

When the Wangdue Phodrang Dzong (currently being rebuilt) comes into view, notice the large cacti that cover the hillside below which, were planted long ago to discourage invaders from climbing the steep slope to the Dzong. From the road 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 sought after for their skills in construction of Dzongs and Lhakhangs (temples).

Potatoes are Phobjikha's primary cash crop and mainly 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.

Time permitting walk the Gangtey Nature Trail on arrival this afternoon. Alternatively undertake this tomorrow morning. This is an easy, mainly flat, walk through forest and pastures.

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



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Wednesday 20 October:

Exploring & hiking in the Phobjikha Valley

Today you will visit the sacred Gangtey Goenpa (Monastery) plus enjoy time to wander through Gangtey village, visit the Black Crane nature information centre and nearby hide to view the cranes should they be present in the valley. Take time this afternoon for some relaxation, an additional hike, or exploring on your own in this beautiful valley.

Overnight Phobjikha Bhutan Style 3* Hotel

Thursday 21 October:

Phobjikha to Choekhor Valley (4 hrs)

Early this morning depart Phobjikha to the central Bumthang region comprising the 4 valleys Choekhor, Tang, Ura and Chhume. Traverse the Pele La (Pass) which crosses through the Black Mountains National Park and divides western and central Bhutan and stop in Trongsa to visit the Tower of Trongsa museum. You will spend more time in Trongsa on your return journey. Keep a watchful eye out for Rhesus Macaques (Brown Monkeys) on the side of the road. The Trongsa Dzong is perched at the end of a ridge and seems to hang in space at the head of the valley. The Dzongs location afforded it great power over this part of the country as the only foot and mule trail between east and western Bhutan leads straight through Trongsa and through the Dzong itself.

On arrival in the Bumthang region notice the large fields of buckwheat that cover the valleys....buckwheat noodles and pancakes are a Bumthang specialty. Enjoy a picnic lunch today at the Prakhar Duchhoed (festival) in the Chhume valley before finally arriving at your hotel in the Choekhor valley. Later this evening, after dinner you have the option of attending the opening of the Jambay Lhakhang Drup (8.30 pm) the program this evening features the Naked Dance!

Overnight Choekhor-[Bhutan Style 3* Hotel](#)

Friday 22 October:

Festival visits & Exploring in the Bumthang Valleys.

This morning witness the colour & spectacle of the Jambay Lhakhang Drup, held at Jambay Lhakhang. The Bhutanese love their festivals and will all be dressed in their finest clothes.

After a picnic lunch at the festival visit Kurjey Lhakhang and later Wangdichholing Palace (exterior courtyard only) or return to spend a little more time at the festival.

Jambay & Kurjey Lhakhangs are the oldest two monasteries in the kingdom and all the Kings of Bhutan are cremated at Kurjey Lhakhang.

Overnight Choekhor Bhutan Style 3* Hotel



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Saturday 23 October:

Exploring & Hiking (optional) in the Ura Valley (4 hrs)

Take a scenic excursion to remote Ura Valley today. Ura is the cradle of Buddhism in the Kingdom. Enjoy an easy downhill hike to the valley floor for a picnic lunch at the village Lhakang. Take a wander through the village which has an almost medieval feel with its stony paths. Meet up with your driver and return to Choekhor valley mid-afternoon and enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure or perhaps take time to visit the Jakar Dzong and wander along the lively main streets of nearby Chamkhar town.

Overnight Choekhor Bhutan Style 3* Hotel

Sunday 24 October:

Choekhor Valley to Trongsa (2 hrs)

Enjoy a more leisurely start today before transferring westwards today to Trongsa, en-route visiting the Chhume weaving centre for the opportunity to shop for excellent local handicrafts and textiles. This region is renowned for its exceptionally high quality weaving's.

Take lunch at a local restaurant on arrival in Trongsa. Trongsa Dzong is the ancestral home of the Royal Family of Bhutan. This afternoon enjoy an excursion to the Dzong itself or take one of the hiking options available in this region.

Overnight Trongsa – Bhutan Style 3* Hotel

Monday 25 October:

Trongsa to Punakha Valley (4 + hours)

Depart early this morning on a very scenic drive to the Punakha Valley, which holds the title as the winter capital because of its more temperate climate, taking lunch on arrival in Punakha.

This afternoon, take an orientation tour of the valley including the markets at Lobesa and the nearby Chimi Lhakhang, a monastery built by Lama Drukpa Kuenley (also known as the Divine Madman or Mad Monk) with a very colourful history. It is believed childless women who visit the temple will conceive after receiving a 'wang' (blessing) from the resident monk. The walk across rice paddy fields takes about 20 minutes each way.

Overnight Punakha-[Bhutan Style 3* Hotel](#)



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Tuesday 26 October:

Exploring in the Punakha Valley.

This morning visit the dramatic Punakha Dzong, which formally served as the seat of the government and is still the winter residence of the Dratsheng (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.

Continue on and visit the Sangchen Dorji Lhuendrup Lhakhang & Nunnery followed by an excursion along a delightful country lane the very traditional village of Talo where you can wander the beautiful & serene gardens of the local monastery.

Choose to enjoy a relaxing afternoon at leisure or travel up the valley & take a fascinating hike to Khamsum Yulley Namgyel Chorten through fields of vegetables, rice paddies and tiny hamlets. This Chorten hold 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.

Overnight Punakha – Bhutan Style 3* Hotel

Wednesday 27 October:

Punakha Valley to Paro Valley (4+ hrs)

Depart Punakha early morning for your transfer westwards to the Paro Valley, once again traversing Dochu La, and arriving in Paro town in time for a late lunch at one of the local restaurants.

This afternoon enjoy an orientation tour of the major features in Paro town including Paro Dzong with its cantilever bridge and the National Museum in Paro to view the fine collection of ancient Thangka paintings, textiles, weapons and other artefacts. Finally we recommend a wander along the main streets which offers good shopping for jewellery and handicrafts.

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



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Thursday 28 October:

Exploring & Hiking in the Paro Valley.

This morning hike to the Taktsang Monastery, also known as Tigers Nest. This is Bhutan's most revered monastery and all Bhutanese strive to make the pilgrimage here at least once in their lives. This visit is much more than 'just a hike' and each step gains merit points for the next part of life's journey. Choose between a 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 at 800 m above the valley floor and where Guru Rinpoche flew on the back of a tigress to subdue the local demons 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 and consecrated by the 4th King in 2005.

Take lunch at the Viewpoint Cafe on the hiking trail and this afternoon visit Kyichu Lhakhang – one of Bhutan's oldest and most beautiful temples, boasting an orange tree that perpetually bears fruit. Take the remainder of the day at leisure or return to Paro town for shopping.

Overnight Paro -Bhutan Style 3* Hotel

Friday 29 October:

Day of departure.

Morning departure from your hotel to Paro Airport for your onward flight.



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