



BHUTAN & BEYOND

Traversing Bhutan West to East Itinerary – 16 nts

A 16 night fully comprehensive tour across Bhutan. The ultimate adventure.

This tour combines the very best the Kingdom of Bhutan has to offer in the east, west & central regions.

Please note this tour can be taken in either direction & it is possible to include domestic flights in Bhutan to avoid entering or exiting Bhutan to or from India.

Tour Itinerary Overview.

- 2 nights Thimphu with city & valley sightseeing, hikes & shopping.
- 2 nights Punakha valley with hiking, Lhakhangs & Bhutan's best Dzong.
- 2 nights Phobjikha valley with hiking, village, Gangtey Goemba & wildlife.
- 2 nights Bumthang valleys with Lhakhangs, hiking, sightseeing & Dzongs.
- 1 night Yongko la, sightseeing.
- 2 night Autsho, exploring, hiking & sightseeing.
- 2 nights Trashigang incl Radi Village weavers, Dzongs & Lhakhangs
- Domestic flight Trashigang – Paro
- 3 nights Paro valley with Dzong, Taktsang Monastery hike & shopping

CALL THE BHUTAN TRAVEL EXPERTS ON

AUS [toll free](#), James – [0412 416 111](#), Nicola – [0413 598 669](#)

Why Book with Bhutan & Beyond?

- 18 years experience, service & knowledge.
- We personally visit Bhutan regularly.
- 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
- Provision of our SHERPA app weblink for your COVID-19 requirements.
- Access to our exclusive travel app COMPANION

Your Bhutan Land Package Inclusions:

- Personal guide & driver with SUV or minibus.
- All touring & transfers throughout.
- Domestic flight Yonphula (Trashigang) – Paro.
- Additional vehicle & crew re positioning fee Trashigang to Thimphu.
- Traditional 3 star hotels with private bathrooms.
- All meals and bottled water daily.



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- All sightseeing & entrance fees.
- Bhutan visa fee & processing
- Sustainable development fee (SDF) & local taxes.
- Bank transfer & communications fees.
- Professionally operated by Bhutan Tourism Corp.
- Comprehensive Bhutan visitor guide & full support from Bhutan & Beyond.

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 @ US\$7.00 pp.
- Mountain bike hire in Paro & Thimphu from US\$25 pp per ½ day.
- Cooking class at Paro farmhouse & hot stone bath US\$25.00 per person
- Hot stone bath at Paro Farmhouse US\$18.00 per person.

Your Bhutan Land Package Excludes:

- Airfares to/from Bhutan.
- Personal items – laundry, drinks, designer coffee's, tel calls, tips etc.
- Travel Insurance – mandatory to enter Bhutan.
- Any COVID-19 PCR or RAT tests required.

COVID-19 Updates & Procedures:

Our Sherpa travel app will keep you updated with COVID-19 requirements pre, during & post travel. These include PCR, RAT & any other tests and where to get them, vaccination certificates & other documentation plus any tracing apps required at your destination and stopovers. Once your tour booking is confirmed and your air travel process commences, we will provide you with your personal Sherpa app web links to assist you manage the COVID-19 procedures that will be relevant at the time of travel.

Cancellation Conditions Land Tour:

- Deposit date until 35 days prior arrival in Bhutan - Land tour deposit is refundable less [B&B service fees](#).
- 35 days or less prior to arrival in Bhutan - No land tour refund permitted.

Please note: - These conditions cover land travel arrangements only, not airfares, which are subject to their own cancellation conditions.



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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 Chorten; the celebrated Royal Textile Academy (closed Sun/PH) and the Takin Preserve – home to Bhutan's most unusual national mammal.

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

Day 2:

Exploring in Thimphu.

Today we highly recommend you visit the following.

The Buddha Dordenma statue located at Kuenselphodrang (just outside the city). The statue is made of bronze and gilded in gold. It is considered the largest Buddha Shakyamuni statue in the world. There is also an excellent 3 km hike option through the adjacent Kuenselphodrang Nature Park which offers sensational valley views.

View the majestic Trashichhoe Dzong (visits are only possible after business hours on weekdays or at the weekend) and visit the (nearby) beautiful Tara Lhaden Zhingkhams lhakang (temple).

Visit the 'Simply Bhutan' display village including a traditional Bhutanese lunch. At 'Simply Bhutan' you can experience ara tasting (local spirit); suja tasting (butter tea); try your hand at archery and enjoy a cultural performance of song & dance during the lunch, plus much more.

Other recommended places to visit, depending on your preference, & in consultation with your guide are.

- Zorig Chusum – the Institute of the 13 Arts & Crafts of Bhutan (closed Sat/Sun/PH & sometimes closed to visitors at other times)
- The National Library, which holds a vast collection of ancient Buddhist manuscripts. (closed Sat/Sun & PH)
- Hand-made paper making factory. (closed Sat/Sun & PH)
- Visit the Thimphu Post Office to get your personalized postage stamp printed. (Mon-Fri & Sat am)
- The weekend market (Fri-Sun) where everyone goes to buy an array of fresh fruits & vegetables; home-wares, handicrafts and clothes.
- Take a wander along Thimphu's main street, Norzin Lam, which offers good shopping and the Craft Bazaar.
- For those interested in quality weavings and local art visit the Gagyel Lhundrup weaving centre. Here you can interact with the weavers.



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- The adjacent S. Bishwa art gallery is also worth a visit. (both closed Sat/Sun)
- The city bars & coffee shops are also worth checking out. 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.
- Travel up the valley & hike to Tango Monastery which houses a university of Buddhism for monks.
- There are other 1/2 day/ day hikes possible in the Thimphu valley & your guide will recommend suitable hike options depending on the season and your prior hiking experience.

Overnight Thimphu – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel.

Day 3:

Thimphu to Punakha Valley. (3+ hrs)

This morning you will be transferred by road eastwards to the Punakha Valley. En-route pass the Semtokha Dzong built in 1629, the oldest fortress of its kind that guarded the Thimphu valley, and which today 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 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.

Punakha holds the title as the winter capital because of its more temperate climate. Arriving into the valley take lunch at a local restaurant before a visit to Chimi Lhakhang, a monastery built by Lama Drukpa Kuenley (also known as the Divine Madman), 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 with a visit to the nunnery and an excursion along a scenic country lane to the small village of Talo to wander the beautiful & peaceful gardens of the local temple.

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

Day 4:

Sightseeing and hiking in Punakha today.

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 & an excellent example of how a medieval fortress & a centre of both monastic and administrative functions, has adapted & evolved for modern day use.

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

Overnight Punakha Valley – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel.



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Day 5:

Punakha Valley to Phobjikha Valley. (3-4 hrs)

Departing Punakha this morning for the Phobjikha valley via Wangdue Phodrang. When the ruins of Wangdue Phodrang Dzong, tragically destroyed by fire in June 2012, (under reconstruction) come 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. 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 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 boars, sambar, Himalayan black bear, leopard and red fox.

Overnight Phobjikha Valley - [Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel](#) or option for a [Farm Stay](#).

Day 6:

Phobjikha Valley at leisure

While you are in Phobjikha you will visit the Black Crane nature information centre and the sacred Gangtey Monastery plus enjoy time to wander through quaint Gangtey village and hike along the Gangtey Nature Trail on the valley floor. Other longer hikes are available in this area and your guide will arrange these for you.

Overnight Phobjikha Valley - [Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel](#) or option for a [Farm Stay](#).

Day 7:

Phobjikha Valley to Choekhor Valley. (4 hrs 30 mins)

Depart eastwards to Bumthang this morning, 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).

The Trongsa Dzong is perched at the end of a ridge and seems to hang in space at the head of the valley. The Dzong's 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. This Dzong is the ancestral home of the Royal Family of Bhutan and has added an excellent museum (closed Sun/PH) into its ancient watchtower which you can visit followed by Lunch.



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Day 7 - continued

Continue onto the central Bumthang region comprising the 4 valleys Choekhor, Tang, Ura and Chhume. If you are interested in the opportunity to shop for excellent local handicrafts and textiles stop in Chhume as this region is renowned for its exceptionally high-quality weavings.

On arrival in the Bumthang region notice the large fields of buckwheat that cover the valleys....buckwheat noodles and pancakes are a Bumthang speciality. Enjoy the remainder of the afternoon at leisure. There are short walks and hikes to choose from and your guide will be happy to make recommendations.

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

Day 8:

Sightseeing in the Bumthang region.

Today your sightseeing includes visits to the Wangdicholing Palace and one or both of the Jambay & Kurje Lhakhangs. These are the oldest two monasteries in the kingdom and all the Kings of Bhutan are cremated at Kurje Lhakhang. You can take the option to hike back from the Lhakhangs to your hotel or local restaurant for lunch.

This afternoon other options include 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 take a wander through nearby Chamkhar town. The Jakar Dzong is close by and also worth a visit.

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

OPTION: Head eastwards to Ura valley this afternoon (2 hrs) and hike down into the valley for a picnic lunch at the local temple. Then wander the ancient stony paths of the village that give the area an almost medieval feel. Meet up with a local family and spend the night in their farm-stay accommodation.

Day 9:

Choekhor Valley to Yongko La (pass) area. (up to 6+ hours drive time)

This morning drive eastwards to the Ura valley to wander the ancient stony paths of the village that give the area an almost medieval feel. The older women of this region still wear sheepskin shawls on their backs which double as a blanket and cushion. Ura is recognized as the cradle of Buddhism in Bhutan and believed by some to have been the home of Bhutan's earliest inhabitants. It is also the highest valley at 3100 m on the eastern side.

When travelling though eastern Bhutan the dominant language is Sharchop which is different enough from Dzongkha (the national language of Bhutan) that eastern and western Bhutanese usually have to use English or Nepali to communicate. The towns between west and east Bhutan also differ as in western Bhutan most towns are situated in valleys whereas in eastern Bhutan most towns, including Mongar, are situated at the tops of hills or ridges.



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Day 9 - continued

Continue to drive south-eastwards on what is one of the most scenic stretches of road in the Kingdom. When crossing the Thrumshing La (eastern Bhutan's highest pass at 3780 m) you are now officially departing western Bhutan & entering eastern Bhutan, albeit in the central region of the country. The region from the pass to the next major town of Mongar is celebrated as being one of the best bird-watching areas in all the Asia-Pacific region.

Tonight you will overnight at the only hotel in this scenic, bird-watching area.

Overnight Yongko La area – Trogon Villa. Bhutanese 3* Hotel

Day 10:

Yongko La to Autsho (3+ hours drive)

This morning take a short scenic bird-watching hike to the ruins of the Shongar Dzong a few kms from your hotel. Then drive eastwards and visit the Jarung Khashor chorten, modelled on the Nepali chorten of the same name in Kathmandu, followed by the Lemongrass Oil Unit at Kuri Zampa. Take lunch at a local restaurant and, just before the town of Mongar, leave the main east-west road that traverses Bhutan and head north to Autsho. Here will be your base for the next 2 nights

and facilitate your excursion further north to the remote Lhuentse region. Travelling through the valley of the Kuri Chhu you pass extensive cornfields and, at the valley floor, rice terraces and tropical fruits such as mango and pineapples flourish. Take a wander through Autsho village and relax in your Autsho hotel on the banks of the Kuri Chhu (river) where macaques, langurs & bird-life can be found.

Overnight Autsho – Phayul Resort – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel

Day 11:

Lhuentse Day Excursion (4+ hours driving)

Lhuentse is the ancestral home of Bhutan's royal family and also home of Bhutan's kushutara weaving tradition. The road north to Lhuentse is undergoing widening for the next year or so. It could be slow going on some stretches albeit spectacular. Reach the peaceful valley of Khoma to immerse yourself in village life and allow time to explore the heartland of Bhutan's most treasured textiles.

Take a gentle stroll between the traditional farmhouses and discover cobbled courtyards and weavers working on veranda's. Wander over to the Lhakhang (temple) perched in the bend of the river. Take a picnic lunch or take lunch at a local farm house.

There is an option to hike to Khoma village (1 hr).

Overnight Autsho – Phayul Resort



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Day 12:

Autsho to Trashigang. (4-5 hrs)

This morning continue eastwards via Mongar to Trashigang. When you descend into the valley of the Kuri Chhu you will pass extensive cornfields and at the valley floor rice terraces and tropical fruits such as mango & pineapples, flourish.

This afternoon spend time exploring Trashigang town or to take a short hike. The Dzong is worth visiting and offers excellent views from a high promontory overlooking the confluence of the Drangme Chhu (river) and Gamri Chhu. Up until the beginning of the 20th century all of eastern Bhutan was governed from this Dzong. Trashigang is a lively and interesting town and the bars are worth a visit this evening although they do close early at 8.00 pm.

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

Day 13:

Sightseeing in the Trashigang region.

Eastern Bhutan is the heartland of weaving in the Kingdom and Bhutanese weavings and textiles are generally acknowledged as amongst the finest in the world. You will have an excellent opportunity to both shop and interact with the weavers themselves on today's excursion to the weaving village of Radi, approx 2.5 hours (each way) eastwards from Trashigang. The Druk Deothjung Eastern Rural Handicraft Centre in Trashigang is the last opportunity for quality weavings & handicrafts if you don't take the Radi option today.

Alternatively take a scenic excursion north up to the small town of Trashiyangtse and visit the Chorten Kora. Constructed in 1740 this chorten is modelled on the Bodnath stupa in Kathmandu although is not as large. This drive is approx 3 hours round trip.

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

Day 14:

Fly Trashigang – Paro.

This morning transfer to Yonphula Airport in Trashigang for your flight to Paro.

Take lunch on arrival in Paro and this afternoon enjoy an orientation tour of the major features in Paro town including Paro Dzong with its cantilever bridge, the National Museum and Kyichu Lhakhang, a revered temple boasting an orange tree that perpetually bears fruit.

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



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Day 15:

Sightseeing & hiking in the Paro Valley:

This morning take a pilgrimage hike to the Taktsang Monastery, also known as Tigers Nest. All Bhutanese Buddhists desire to visit Taktsang at least once in their lives and each step along the trail accrues merit points towards their future life.

Choose between a 2 hour round trip hike to the Monastery viewpoint or a longer 5 hour and more strenuous, but rewarding, hike into the Monastery itself. Tigers Nest clings impossibly to a cliff of rock at nearly 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.

Remainder of the day at leisure, perhaps enjoy a relaxing hot stone bath at a Paro farmhouse or try your hand at a game of archery. (cost additional)

Overnight Paro Valley – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel.

Day 16:

Sightseeing in the Paro Valley and excursion to Chele La.

This morning take an excursion to Chele La (pass-3988 m) on Bhutan's highest motorable road which can afford spectacular mountain vistas on a clear day. From the pass the more energetic can enjoy a hike to Kila Nunnery (otherwise drive in), the oldest in Bhutan. *Please note this excursion is not possible in winter between late NOV and early MAR!*

Returning to Paro stop for lunch at a local restaurant and enjoy a wander along Paro main street which offers some great shopping for handicrafts and local jewellery.

Overnight Paro Valley – Bhutanese Style 3*Hotel.

Day 17:

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, Guwahati or Dhaka.



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