



BHUTAN & BEYOND

Traversing Bhutan – 16 nights

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.

Tour Itinerary Overview.

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

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?

- 19 years experience, service & knowledge.
- We personally visit Bhutan at least once every year.
- We offer the option to choose between **HALF BOARD** or **FULL BOARD** land package.
- 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
- Provision of our SHERPA app weblink for your COVID-19 requirements.

Your Bhutan HALF BOARD Land Package Inclusions:

- Professional guide & driver with SUV/minibus.
- All touring & transfers throughout your journey.
- Additional vehicle & crew re positioning fee Thimphu to Trashigang.
- Domestic airfares & taxes Paro – Yonphula. (Trashigang)
- Traditional [3 star hotel](#) accom with private bathrooms.
- Breakfast & Dinner and two bottles of water daily.
- Sightseeing & hiking as per your itinerary.
- Visa fees & processing.
- Bhutan 'Sustainable Development Fee' (SDF) & local taxes.



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- Bank transfer & communications fees.
- Comprehensive Trip Planner & full support from Bhutan & Beyond.
- Professionally operated by Bhutan Tourism Corporation.
- Option to substitute [3*](#) hotels for [farm stays](#) in some valleys.
- OPTION to take this itinerary in reverse.

Your Bhutan HALF BOARD Land Package EXCLUDES:

- International flights to/from Paro are additional.
- **Lunch at own expense budget @US\$10-12 pp per day**
- **Monument & entrance fees are at your own expense.**
- Personal items: phone calls, laundry, drinks, designer coffees & snacks between meals etc.
- Tipping – we will advise your tipping regime.
- [Travel Insurance](#) & proof of COVID-19 vaccination – are both mandatory to be granted a visa to enter Bhutan.
- Any COVID-19 PCR or RAT tests required.

Your Bhutan FULL BOARD Land Package Inclusions:

- Professional guide & driver with SUV/minibus.
- All touring & transfers throughout your journey.
- Additional vehicle & crew re positioning fee Thimphu to Trashigang.
- Domestic airfares & taxes Paro – Yonphula. (Trashigang)
- Traditional [3 star hotel](#) accom with private bathrooms.
- All meals (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner) & two bottles of water daily.
- All Monument & Entrance Fees.
- Sightseeing & hiking as per your itinerary.
- Visa fees & processing.
- Bhutan ‘Sustainable Development Fee’ (SDF) & local taxes.
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- Comprehensive Trip Planner & full support from Bhutan & Beyond.
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- Option to substitute [3*](#) hotels for [farm stays](#) in some valleys.
- OPTION to take this itinerary in reverse.

Your Bhutan Land Package Excludes:

- International airfares to & from Paro (Bhutan)
- Personal items – laundry, designer coffee’s, drinks, tel calls, tips etc.
- Tipping – we will advise your tipping regime.
- [Luxury hotel](#) upgrades are additional costs.
- [Travel Insurance](#) & proof of COVID–19 vaccination are both mandatory to be granted a visa to enter Bhutan.
- Any COVID-19 PCR or RAT tests that are required.



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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 @ 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 Paro (Bhutan)
- Personal items – laundry, drinks, designer coffee's, tel calls, tips etc.
- Any luxury hotel upgrade costs are additional.
- 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 45 days prior arrival in Bhutan - Land tour deposit is refundable less [B&B service fees](#).
- 45 days or less prior to arrival in Bhutan - No land tour refund permitted.

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

Day 1

Paro Airport to Paro Town (20-30 mins)

After clearing immigration and customs you will be greeted by your BTCL guide and driver and transferred to your nearby Paro hotel. All the houses and buildings in the Kingdom are painted and constructed in traditional Bhutanese style. 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 2:

Fly Paro - Trashigang, afternoon sightseeing

Fly Paro – Trashigang.

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

The remainder of the day spend 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 3:

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 well worth a visit.

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 4:

Trashigang to Autsho (4-5 hrs)

This morning journey westwards to Autsho via Mongar today. When you descend into 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 lunch at a local restaurant in Mongar & visit the Mongar Dzong and take a wander through the old part of town to the park with its clocktower and prayer wheel before continuing onto Autsho. Here will be your base for the next 2 nights and facilitate your excursion further north to the remote Lhuentse region.



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Day 4:

When travelling through 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.

Overnight Autsho – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel.

Day 5:

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 farmhouse.

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

Overnight Autsho – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel.

Day 6:

Autsho to Yongko La (3+ hours drive)

This morning 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.

Mid morning depart to Yongko La visiting the Jarung Khashor chorten, modelled on the Nepali chorten of the same name in Kathmandu, followed by the Lemongrass Oil Unit at Kuri Zampa. On arrival in Yongko La take a short scenic bird-watching hike to the ruins of the Shongar Dzong a few kms from your hotel.

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

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



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Day 7:

Yongho La to Choekhor Valley Bumthang. (up to 6 hours + drive time)

This morning continue westward on what is one of the most scenic stretches of road in the Kingdom. When crossing the Thrumshingla La (eastern Bhutan's highest pass at 3780 m) you are now officially departing eastern Bhutan & entering western Bhutan, albeit in the central region of the country.

Continue onto the central Bumthang region comprising the 4 valleys Choekhor, Tang, Ura and Chhume. Enroute make a stop today in 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 and stop at Membartsho the 'Burning Lake' with a dark legend.

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 & Kurjey Lhakhangs. These are the oldest two monasteries in the kingdom and all the Kings of Bhutan are cremated at Kurjey Lhakhang. You can take the option of a hike back to your hotel from these Lhakhangs.

This afternoon perhaps visit 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.

Day 9:

Choekhor Valley to Phobjikha Valley (4 hrs 30 mins)

Today transfer to the Phobjikha valley make a stop the Chhume valley for the opportunity to shop for local handicrafts and textiles. 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 today followed by lunch.

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



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Traversing Bhutan – 16 nights

Day 9 - continued

surrounded by extensive fields of mustard, potatoes, barley and wheat and keep a watchful eye out for Rhesus Macaques.

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](#)

Day 10:

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 11:

Phobjikha Valley to Punakha Valley (3-4 hrs)

This morning depart westwards for the Punakha valley. As you pass the dramatic Wangdue Phodrang Dzong 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](#).



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Day 12:

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 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.

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 who was one of the 4 former Queens.

Overnight Punakha Valley – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel.

Day 13:

Punakha Valley to Thimphu (3 hrs)

This morning transfer by road to Thimphu, Bhutan's quirky capital, via Dochu La (Pass). 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 down to the Tibetan village of Hongtshu and your guide will advise you the best options. Pass the Semtokha Dzong built in 1629, the oldest fortress of its kind that guarded Thimphu, and today is a monastery.

On arrival into Thimphu take an orientation tour of the major city features the National Memorial Chorten, the celebrated Royal Textile Academy (closed Sun/PBH) and the Takin Preserve (home to Bhutan's most unusual looking national mammal).

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

Day 14:

Sightseeing 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.



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Day 14 - Continued

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 Zhingkhram lhakang (temple).

Visit the 'Simply Bhutan' display village including a traditional Bhutanese lunch. At 'Simply Bhutan' you can experience a ra 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.
- 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 15:

Thimphu to Paro (1.5 hrs)

Depart Thimphu at leisure for your short drive, to the Paro Valley with a few short stops for sightseeing en route. Take lunch at a Paro town restaurant followed by an orientation tour of Paro valley's main sights including the Rinpung Dzong with its cantilever bridge; the National Museum and Kyichu Lhakang, a most revered temple boasting an orange tree that perpetually bears fruit.

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



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Day 16:

Paro Valley Hiking & Sightseeing

This morning end your Bhutan adventure on a high with a pilgrimage hike to the majestic Taktsang Monastery, also known as 'Tigers Nest'. 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 bright future.

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.

Choose between a 1.5-2 hour round trip 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.

Time permitting we encourage a wander along Paro's main streets for some final handicraft and jewellery shopping. Alternatively, just chill out and admire the scenery, or take a spa treatment or a traditional hot stone bath, from your valley hotel.

Overnight Paro Valley – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel.

Day 17:

Day of departure.

Sadly, prepare for your departure this morning to your onward destination.



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