



BHUTAN & BEYOND

Luxury Amankora Journey – 10 nights

The Ultimate Journey in Bhutan.

This sensational 10 night luxury journey through Bhutan features a complimentary domestic air flight between central Bumthang & Paro therefore reducing driving times to a minimum. Furthermore it offers a complimentary traditional Bhutanese therapeutic hot stone bath in the delightful Phobjikha valley.

The Bhutan & Beyond team have had the great fortune to have personally experienced all 5 of the wonderful Amankora luxury lodges. Amankora is the pinnacle Bhutan has to offer the discerning traveller. This tour combines the very best the Kingdom of Bhutan will reward you with in the west & central regions.

Amankora Journey 10 night Itinerary Overview.

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

CALL THE BHUTAN TRAVEL EXPERTS ON

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

Amankora Luxury 10 Night Journey Inclusions.

- 10 nights luxury suite accommodation.
- All gourmet meals & snacks incl a range of house beverages.
- All transfers, extensive sightseeing, hiking & touring.
- Bhutan visa processing..
- Private SUV with personal English-speaking guide & driver.
- Complimentary laundry
- Complimentary 60 min holistic massage per person during your stay.
- Bhutan Sustainable Development Fee (SDF) & local taxes.
- Bank transfers and communications charges.
- A comprehensive pre-departure trip planning guide.
- Access to our exclusive travel app COMPANION.
- ATAS Accredited via our parent company MTA Travel.

Special Complimentary Inclusions:

- Free domestic air flight Bumthang-Paro valued at US\$245 per person
- Free Traditional Hot Stone Bath at Amankora Gangtey valued at US\$100 per person



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Your Amankora Luxury Journey Exclusions:

- International airfares to/from Bhutan.
- Personal items –souvenirs, telephone calls, tips etc.
- Designer coffees, drinks, between meals and taken outside of Amankora lodges.
- Travel Insurance which is mandatory to enter Bhutan.

Cancellation Conditions

- 10% deposit payment due, on written confirmation of your Amankora booking.
- Deposit date until 60 days prior arrival in Bhutan - Land tour deposit is refundable less [B&B service fees](#).
- 45-60 days prior to arrival in Bhutan your Amankora deposit is non-refundable.
- 45 days prior to arrival in Bhutan – your final payment is due & immediately becomes non-refundable.

Please note - Your airfares, will be subject to their own, terms & conditions.

Day 1:

Paro Airport to Thimphu city. (1.5 hrs drive)

Your flight to Bhutan offers a wonderful introduction as it weaves through the valley before landing at Paro Airport. After clearing customs & immigration meet your private Amankora professional guide & driver for a 1.5 hour SUV transfer to Amankora Thimphu, a 16-suite lodge. Amankora Thimphu lies in a steep pine forested valley, above Thimphu city, and at an altitude of 2,350 metres (7,709 feet).

Take an afternoon orientation tour of Thimphu city. Options include the celebrated Royal Textiles Academy; a “kora” at the National Memorial Chorten and the Takin Preserve. This is home to Bhutan’s most unusual national mammal. Alternatively relax and sample the delights of the lodge and its spa.

Overnight – [Amankora Luxury Lodge Thimphu](#)

Day 2:

Experiences in Thimphu.

This morning visit the awesome Buddha Dordenma statue located at Kuenselphodrang. 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 Kuenselphodrang Nature Park which offers sensational valley views. Next head north up the valley to view the majestic Trashichhoe Dzong and visit the Tara Lhaden Zhingkhams lhakang (temple).



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Day 2 - continued

This afternoon other places of interest to visit are Zorig Chusum – the Institute of the 13 Arts & Crafts of Bhutan (where you can interact with the students); the Folk Heritage Museum; the Craft Bazaar and the National Library, which holds a vast collection of ancient Buddhist manuscripts. The weekend market (Fri-Sun) is a colourful affair where everyone goes to buy an array of fresh fruits & vegetables, local handicrafts & home-wares and clothing..

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.

Overnight – Amankora Luxury Lodge Thimphu

Day 3:

Thimphu to Punakha Valley. (3+ hrs)

Depart Thimphu and drive eastwards over Dochu La (pass-3116m) viewing the 108 stupas. On clear days witness the magnificent eastern Himalaya vista.

Descending into the Punakha valley visit the Chimi Lhakhang, also known as the 'monastery of the Mad Monk'. This auspicious fertility monastery built in 1499 enjoys a very colourful history which your guide will explain to you. It is still a place of important cultural significance today where females come to receive a 'wang', a fertility blessing to aid pregnancy.

At an altitude of 1,300 metres (4,265 feet), Punakha Valley is one of the lowest lying valleys in Bhutan and enjoys a warmer climate. Amankora Punakha is accessed via a suspension bridge over the Mo Chhu (river) and a short ride by buggy takes you to the lodge. The facilities comprise a former royal farmhouse combined with modern 12 suite accommodation and spa facilities. All set among delightful paddy fields and fruit plantations.

This afternoon enjoy a short hike or horse ride in the valley, spend time mixing with the locals in the town or relax and enjoy the delights of the lodge and spa.

Overnight – [Amankora Luxury Lodge Punakha](#)



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Day 4:

Punakha Valley Experiences.

The day in Punakha Valley begins with a hike through terraces of rice, chillies and cabbage along the banks of the Mo Chhu (river) to the upper end of the valley. Here you will find the Khamsum Yuelley Namgyal Chorten. This is a stunning monument built by a former Queen of Bhutan to protect the current 5th King from perceived misfortunes.

After lunch visit the very impressive Punakha Dzong, Bhutan's best, and home to the remains of Bhutan's first ruler, Shabdrung Narwang Namgyal. It is also the winter residence of the Monk Body of Bhutan. If time permits drive to the nearby village of Talo, via a stop at the local nunnery, and wander through the beautiful grounds of the village temple.

Overnight – Amankora Luxury Lodge Punakha

Day 5:

Punakha to Phobjikha. (3 hrs)

Continue eastwards to Phobjikha via Wangdue Phodrang Dzong. The road follows the scenic Dang Chhu (river) before climbing through forests of bamboo and oak.

Finally a small side road splinters off into the very beautiful hidden Phobjikha Valley. At an altitude of 3,000 metres (9,842 feet), this glacial valley is home of the rural settlement of Gangtey. On a forested knoll close to the valley floor is the very special Amankora Gangtey, an intimate 8-suite lodge.

After lunch visit the striking Gangtey Goempa sitting at the head of the valley. After that take a stroll through the quaint Gangtey village.

Overnight – [Amankora Luxury Lodge Gangtey](#)

Day 6:

Phobjikha Valley Experiences.

This morning will start with a visit to the Black Neck Crane Centre. Depending on the season, time spent in the centre's nearby hide is a must to view the breeding cranes. The cranes are an endangered species who arrive from Tibet in late October and depart again in early March. After lunch hike the valley Nature Trail, a 1.5-2 hour easy walk along the valley floor.

Alternatively, we can start the day with a moderate grade hike across meadows and fields that ascend to the Tselela pass through mixed forest of Juniper, Bamboo, Magnolia and Rhododendron. Meet the people of Gogona who speak a language



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Day 6 - continued

called Bjopkha – the language of nomads. Their life in this isolated valley has encouraged them to continue using their ancient dialect. Visit the Gogona Goempa and after a picnic lunch, walk back the same route to Gangtey. Note – guests can shorten treks after a certain point and travel back by SUV to take late lunch at the lodge.

Overnight – Amankora Luxury Lodge Gangtey

Day 7:

Phobjikha Valley to Choekhor Valley (3-4 hrs)

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. Keep a watchful eye out for Rhesus Macaques (Brown Monkeys) on the side of the road.

Stop en-route at Trongsa and visit the excellent Tower of Trongsa Museum. 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 speciality.

Enjoy a picnic lunch and stop at the excellent weaving & textiles centre at Chhume valley. Here you can interact with the weavers and shop for a wide range of handicrafts for which this region is renowned for.

Take the remainder of the afternoon at leisure to enjoy the wonderful Amankora facilities & spa. Alternatively take a wander through nearby Chamkhar town; a lively spot to mingle with the locals.

Overnight - [Amankora Luxury Lodge Bumthang](#)

Day 8:

Bumthang Region Experiences

Today your sightseeing includes visits to the Wangdicholing Palace (exterior access only) and one or both of the Jambay & Kurje Lhakhangs. These are the oldest two monasteries in the kingdom and all the former Kings of Bhutan are cremated at Kurje Lhakhang. Other options include the Tamshing Monastery where about 95 Monks reside – most are under 15 and from poorer families who cannot afford to send their children to state school; the nearby Jakar Dzong or drop in at the Swiss Farm to taste sweet cheese, apple brandy and locally brewed wine and beer.



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Day 8 - continued

Alternatively enjoy one of the hikes available in this region; find a nice quiet spot at the lodge to catch up on some reading; or arrange a visit to the adjacent monastery. Just ask your guide.

Overnight - Amankora Luxury Lodge Bumthang

Day 9:

Choekhor Valley to Paro Valley. (35 mins flying time)

This morning Drukair will fly you on the final leg of your 'kora' back to Paro Valley. The flight is usually mid-morning and you will be in Paro before lunch time.

The Amankora Lodge is located further up the valley and sits at an elevation of 2,250 metres (7,382 feet).

Day 9 – continued.

A hidden pine forest trail leads you across a small brook and into a clearing where you will find the wonderful Amankora Paro. This 24-suite lodge and spa offers a range of unique healing and rejuvenating treatments. In the afternoon, there is an opportunity for a visit to the Paro Dzong & the National Museum.

Not far from the lodge is Kyichu Lhakhang, a revered temple with historic & cultural significance. Furthermore it features an orange tree that perpetually bears fruit.

Overnight – [Amankora Luxury Lodge Paro](#)

Day 10:

Taksang Monastery Hike.

Start the day with a pilgrimage hike to view one of Bhutan's most treasured monuments, the Taksang Monastery. More commonly referred to as the "Tigers Nest", Taksang is a most revered place and all Bhutanese Buddhists try to take the pilgrimage to this monastery at least once in their lives. Each step taken on the path counts as merit points for their future.

For those with limited time, or fitness, a 1.5 hour round trip hike to the monastery viewpoint is an excellent compromise and it offers a good cafeteria for lunch or refreshments.

The full 4-5 hour round trip hike into the monastery itself, perched on a cliff face 800 m above the valley floor, is very rewarding. However a good standard of fitness and ability to handle plenty of steep steps is essential. This hike will be one of your trip highlights and is a fitting end to your Bhutan experience. Amankora will pack you a picnic lunch as an option on this hike.



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Day 10 – continued.

In the afternoon take a visit to the town temple, built in 1525, to view ancient wall paintings. A wander along Paro main street for handicrafts and jewellery is a great way to end your journey. Alternatively, simply relax and enjoy your afternoon at the lodge and spa.

Overnight – Amankora Luxury Lodge Paro

Day 11.

Day of departure.

Your guide & driver will transfer you to Paro Airport after an early breakfast. The transfer time is approximately 30 minutes and you are advised to arrive at the airport two hours before your international flight departure.

Tashi Delek! You have completed your rewarding “kora”.



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