

BHUTAN & BEYOND

Bhutan Luxury Travel Experience – 10 nights

Private Tour Introduction:

After the awesome flight into Paro experience the 4 valleys of Paro, Thimphu, Phobjikha & Punakha. This private tour 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 private tour offers daily departures and includes accommodation at some of Bhutan's best luxury lodges & resorts.
- This tour is designed to give you a 3rd night in 3 valleys, affording more time to enjoy the fabulous ambience of the lodges, and to fully explore the local regions.

Experience a wonderfully unique, intimate and very rewarding journey through Bhutan, the jewel of the Himalaya.

Tour Itinerary Overview.

- 1 night Thimphu (CBD) with exploring & shopping options.
- 3 nights Phobjikha valley for hiking and exploring.
- 3 nights Punakha valley with hiking, monastery & Dzong visits.
- 3 nights Paro valley with Taktsang Monastery hike, shopping & exploring.

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

Why Travel With Bhutan & Beyond?

- Bhutan & Beyond are Bhutan experts with 22 years' experience, service & knowledge.
- Bhutan & Beyond has access to Bhutan's very best Bhutanese guides.
- This private tour affords you time to immerse yourself in the vibrant Buddhist culture of Bhutan.
- Competitive pricing and best mix of luxury options.
- Exceptionally well-constructed & flexible itineraries ensuring less driving & more exploring.
- We provide a comprehensive pre-departure Bhutan visitor guide which is regularly updated.
- Experts at combining Bhutan with [India](#) & [Nepal](#).
- ATIA (formerly ATAS) Accredited via our parent company MTA Travel
- Access to our exclusive and celebrated travel app COMPANION

Bhutan Luxury Travel Experience Inclusions:

- Same personal English speaking guide & driver with private SUV for whole tour.
- All touring & transfers throughout your journey.
- 5* Le Meridien Hotel, Thimphu CBD – for 1 night
- Luxury Gangtey Lodge, Phobjikha – for 3 nights
- Luxury COMO Uma Resort, Punakha – for 3 nights
- Luxury COMO Uma Resort, Paro or Zhiwa Ling Resort, Paro for 3 nights



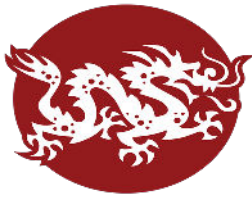
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- All meals (often gourmet) & bottled water daily.
- Breakfasts & dinners taken at luxury hotels.
- Lunches taken at local restaurants exc 1 lunch at Gangtey Lodge.
- All entrance fees, hiking and sightseeing.
- Bhutan visa fees & processing.
- Bhutan Sustainable Development Fee (SDF) & local taxes.
- Bhutan & Beyond bank transfers for payments to Bhutan suppliers.
- Professionally operated by Bhutan Tourism Corp Ltd (BTCL) for entire tour.

Bhutan Luxury Travel Experience Exclusions:

- Airfares to/from Bhutan.
- Personal bank charges incurred making payments to Bhutan & Beyond.
- Personal items – laundry, drinks (except Gangtey Lodge), tel calls, tips etc.
- Designer Coffees always at extra cost.
- [Travel Insurance](#) is essential when travelling to Bhutan.

Cancellation Conditions:

- Deposit date until 60 days prior arrival in Bhutan – Land tour deposit is refundable less [B&B service fees](#).
- For this luxury tour, additional deposits will be required by each hotel & we will provide you with the hotel's own terms & conditions should you need to cancel prior to your final payment due date.
- 60 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.

Day 1:

Paro Airport to Thimphu City. (1 hr 20 mins drive time, altitude 2350m)

After clearing immigration and customs you will be greeted by your BTCL guide and driver. Transfer to Bhutan's capital Thimphu, travelling through the spectacular countryside. En-route make a stop at the Tachogang Lhakhang (iron bridge). All the houses and buildings in the Kingdom are painted and constructed in traditional Bhutanese style. On arrival into Thimphu take lunch at a local restaurant.

This afternoon visit the celebrated Royal Textile Academy (closed Sun/Mon & PH) & visit the National Memorial Stupa and the Takin Preserve – home to Bhutan's most unusual national mammal. Time permitting, enjoy a wander along Thimphu's main street Norzin Lam and visit the Craft Bazaar which focuses on Bhutanese produced handicrafts, before check-in at your hotel.

Overnight Thimphu – [Le Meridien](#) – Deluxe room.



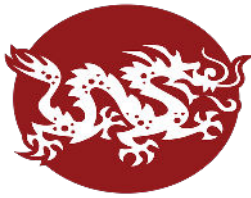
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Day 2:

Thimphu to Phobjikha Valley (5+ hrs drive time, altitude 2900m)

This morning, en-route from Thimphu to the Phobjikha valley, visit 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.

Continue your drive eastwards to the Phobjikha Valley passing the Semtokha Dzong, built in 1629 & the oldest fortress of its kind that guarded the Thimphu valley, which today it is a monastery. Ascend to Dochu La (pass-3110m) 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 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.

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. 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).

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.

Potatoes are this region's primary cash crop and mainly exported to India.

The delightful Gangtey Lodge offers a very personalized and intimate experience. With wonderful valley views, gourmet dining and just 12 very large farmhouse suites you will feel very much at home in this special valley which offers some excellent hiking & Buddhist cultural opportunities.

Overnight Phobjikha Valley - [Gangtey Lodge](#) – Farmhouse Suite

Day 3:

Exploring in the Phobjikha Valley.

While you are in Phobjikha visit the Black Crane nature information centre and the sacred Gangtey Monastery. Furthermore enjoy time to wander through Gangtey village and hike the Gangtey Nature Trail. There are many additional hikes available in this beautiful valley and your guide will advise you the best options. Or just soak up the ambience, spa and cuisine at the lodge.

Overnight Phobjikha Valley - Gangtey Lodge – Farmhouse Suite



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Day 4:

At leisure in the Phobjikha Valley.

A lodge, and a valley, as wonderful as these, deserves a 3-night stay. Chill out in the lodge with massage treatments or take a bike ride through the valley. There are also a wide range of special activities the lodge can organize for you.

For those who enjoy light cultural hiking take an excursion down the valley to the remote Phobji region. Here you can wander along a flat valley floor through small hamlets, farmhouses and temples. It's a wonderful experience.

Overnight Phobjikha Valley - Gangtey Lodge – Farmhouse Suite

Day 5:

Phobjikha Valley to Punakha Valley. (3+ hrs, alt 1310 m)

Depart this morning to the Punakha Valley which holds the title as the winter capital because of its more temperate climate. The temperature here is much warmer than surrounding valleys, due its lower altitude.

Arriving into the Punakha valley visit Chimi Lhakhang, a monastery built by Lama Drukpa Kuenley (also known as the Divine Madman or Mad Monk) who has a very colourful history. It is believed that childless women who visit the temple will conceive after receiving a “wang” (blessing) from the resident monk.

After lunch enjoy an orientation tour of the valley including a visit to the Sangchen Dorji Lhuendrup Lhakhang & Nunnery, before arriving for some relaxation at your resort.

The COMO Uma Punakha resort has one of the best aspects in Bhutan, looking northwards up the valley towards the main eastern Himalaya range. Enjoy the stunning views from your room, the restaurant and the terrace. Offering full spa facilities and attention to detail this resort will be another major highlight of your journey in Bhutan.

Overnight Punakha Valley - [COMO Uma Resort](#) – Valley View room

Day 6:

Exploring & hiking in Punakha.

This morning you have the option of a hike across the Punakha suspension bridge, the longest in Bhutan, before visiting the dramatic Punakha Dzong, which formerly 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. Don't forget to visit Kaja Throm local daily produce market, before lunch at a local Bhutanese restaurant.



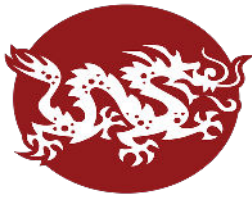
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Day 6 - continued

This afternoon we recommend a fascinating hike to Khamsum Yulley Namgyel Chorten through fields of vegetables, rice paddies 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 - COMO Uma Resort – Valley View room

Day 7:

Exploring & Relaxing in Punakha Valley.

This morning, we recommend an excursion to the traditional villages of Nobgang & Talo. Nobgang is home to the 4 Queens of the 4th King (all sisters!). Talo offers the opportunity to stroll the serene grounds & beautiful gardens of the local monastery. There is also a good hiking option back down to the valley floor.

After lunch at a local restaurant take the afternoon to relax and enjoy the resort facilities.

Overnight Punakha Valley - COMO Uma Resort – Valley View room

Day 8:

Punakha Valley to Paro Valley (4 hrs + drive time, alt 2250m)

Depart Punakha mid-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.

Alternatively, head back to the capital Thimphu for lunch and further exploring & shopping, before continuing on to Paro in the late afternoon.

Enjoy the rest of the day at the COMO Uma Paro resort.

Overnight Paro Valley - [COMO Uma Resort](#) - Valley View room or [Zhiwa Ling Heritage Resort](#) – Junior Suite Room

Day 9:

Exploring & hiking in the Paro Valley.

Early this morning take a pilgrimage hike to the very revered Taktsang Monastery, also known as Tigers Nest. All Bhutanese Buddhists strive to make this pilgrimage at least once in their lives and each step they take on the trail counts towards credits for their future.



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Day 9 - continued

Choose between a 1.5 hour round trip hike to the Monastery viewpoint or a longer 5 hour, and a more strenuous hike, into the Monastery itself. Tigers Nest clings impossibly to a rock cliff at 800 m above the valley floor. This is 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.

Returning to Paro valley visit Kyichu Lhakhang – one of Bhutan's oldest and most beautiful temples boasting an orange tree that perpetually bears fruit.

This afternoon choose to undertake more exploring of Paro town OR relax at the lodge & spa.

If exploring Paro, check out the National Museum, located in an ancient watchtower above the dzong, to view the fine collection of historical Thangka paintings, textiles, weapons and other artefacts. Next walk down into the Rinpung Dzong itself before a visit to the CSI daily market which offers locally produced goods from cottage and small industries in Bhutan. Finally, time permitting take a wander along the main streets which offer good shopping for jewellery and handicrafts.

Overnight Paro Valley - COMO Uma Resort - Valley View room or Zhiwa Ling Heritage Resort – Junior Suite Room

Day 10:

Half day trip to Chele La or full day trip to Haa Valley (not available in winter).

Weather permitting enjoy a trip to Chele La (pass) on Bhutan's highest motorable road at 3988 metres. Consider the option of continuing down into the remote valley of Haa, a very beautiful valley that only opened up to tourist visitors in 2004. Alternatively enjoy one of the ridge top hikes near the pass which can afford spectacular mountain vistas on a clear day. In the warmer months you can visit the nearby Kila Nunnery, the oldest in Bhutan.

This afternoon choose between exploring Paro town (as per Day 9) or relax and enjoy the facilities on offer at COMO Uma Paro.

Overnight Paro Valley - COMO Uma Resort - Valley View room or Zhiwa Ling Heritage Resort – Junior Suite Room

Day 11:

Day of departure.

Early morning departure from your hotel to Paro Airport for your onward flight.

END OF TOUR



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