



BHUTAN & BEYOND

Central Bhutan Fly/Drive Itinerary – 10 nights

Private Tour Introduction

- This private tour visits 5 different valleys Thimphu, Phobjikha, Bumthang, Punakha & Paro along with Trongsa the location of Bhutan's very best museum. This tour features the most important sights in Thimphu city; the remote beauty of the Phobjikha & Bumthang valleys & the splendour of the magnificent Punakha Dzong. Finally a special pilgrimage hike to Taktsang Monastery (Tigers Nest) in Paro.
- This tour optimises valuable time to see the best sites in each valley & designed to reduce the amount of driving with the inclusion of a domestic flight into Bumthang in central Bhutan.
- The itinerary detailed below is designed for private travellers and can be tailored to suit your exact requirements.
- All hiking is optional, though you must be able to climb a steep set of stairs to gain entry to the magnificent Punakha Dzong.

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
- One-way domestic flight Paro-Bumthang
- 2 nights Bumthang valleys – Lhakhangs, monasteries, hiking & weaving
- 2 nights Phobjikha valley for hiking and exploring
- 2 nights Punakha valley with exploring, monastery & Dzong visits & hiking
- 2 nights Paro valley with Taktsang Monastery hike, exploring & shopping

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

Why Book 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.
- Immerse yourself in the vibrant Buddhist culture of Bhutan.
- We offer the option to choose between [HALF BOARD](#) or [FULL BOARD](#) land package.
- Exceptionally well-constructed & flexible itineraries ensuring less driving & more exploring.
- Competitive pricing & [luxury hotel](#) upgrade options.
- Option to substitute [3*](#) hotels for [farm home stays](#) in some valleys.
- We provide a comprehensive pre-departure planning kit, regularly updated.
- Full support from Bhutan & Beyond throughout.
- Experts at combining Bhutan with [India](#) & [Nepal](#).
- ATIA (formerly ATAS) Accredited via our parent company MTA Travel.
- Access to our exclusive & celebrated travel app COMPANION.



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Your Bhutan FULL BOARD Land Package Inclusions:

- Professional guide & driver with SUV/minibus.
- All touring & transfers throughout your journey.
- Domestic Drukair airfare Paro-Bumthang or vv.
- Traditional [3-star hotel](#) accom with private bathrooms.
- All meals (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner) & two 500ml bottles of water per person daily.
- All Monument & Entrance Fees.
- Sightseeing & hiking as per your itinerary.
- Visa fees & processing.
- Bhutan 'Sustainable Development Fee' (SDF) & local taxes.
- Bhutan & Beyond bank transfers for payments to Bhutan suppliers.
- 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 FULL BOARD Land Package Excludes:

- International airfares to & from Paro (Bhutan)
- Personal bank charges incurred making payments to Bhutan & Beyond.
- Personal items – laundry, designer coffee's, drinks, tel calls, tips etc.
- [Luxury hotel](#) upgrades are additional costs.
- [Travel Insurance](#) is essential when travelling to Bhutan.
- Any COVID-19 PCR or RAT tests that are required.

The additional exclusions when travelling on a [HALF BOARD](#) basis is **lunch is at your own expense** (please budget @US\$ 10-12 pp per day) along with all [monument and entrance fees](#).

Optional Activities: (Please ensure your travel insurance covers you for these activities.)

- Archery in Paro @ US\$7.00 pp.
- Mountain bike hire in Paro & Thimphu from US\$25 pp per 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)

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.*



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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 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 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 Zhingkhram lhakhang (temple).

Visit the 'Simply Bhutan' display village including a traditional Bhutanese lunch. At 'Simply Bhutan' you can experience a tasting (local spirit); suja tasting (butter tea); try your hand at archery and enjoy a cultural performance of song & dance 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 Sun & PH)
- Nado incense factory (closed Sat/Sun & PH)
- Institute of Traditional Medicine – visitors only permitted to the museum & library. (closed Sat/Sun & PH)
- Visit the Thimphu Post Office to get your personalized postage stamp printed. (Mon-Fri & Sat am)



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- The daily Centenary farmer's market for fresh produce includes the sale of clothing & homewares & souvenirs (Fri-Sun).
- Take a wander along Thimphu's main street, Norzin Lam, which offers good shopping
- The Craft Bazaar which focuses on Bhutanese produced handicrafts
- The Folk Heritage Museum open daily (closed PH)
- For those interested in quality weavings and local art visit the Gagyel Lhundrup weaving centre. Here you can interact with the weavers. (closed Sun & PH)
- The S. Bishwa art gallery is also worth a visit.
- The city bars & coffee shops are also worth checking out. Your guide will advise you the best options.
- 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:

Domestic Flight & Sightseeing in the Bumthang region.

Transfer to Paro airport early this morning for your short, and very scenic, 40 min flight to the Bumthang region of central Bhutan and you will be accompanied by your guide. Bumthang includes the 4 valleys of Choekhor, Tang, Ura and Chhume. Meet your permanent driver on arrival and transfer to your hotel for check-in and lunch.

This afternoon visit the Jakar Dzong; the Wangdicholing Palace (external area only) and enjoy a wander through nearby Chamkhar town and consider a visit to the nearby Swiss Farm to sample local cheese and wheat beer.

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

Day 4:

Sightseeing & Leisure in the Bumthang region.

Today enjoy visits to the Jambay & Kurjey Lhakhangs. These are the oldest two monasteries in the kingdom and all the Kings of Bhutan are cremated at Kurjey Lhakhang. Choose to hike back to Chamkhar town for lunch at a local restaurant.

This afternoon visit 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 Today also make a visit to Membartsho (burning lake) a revered holy site in the Tang valley. Alternatively enjoy one of the hikes available in this region or find a nice quiet spot at the hotel to catch up on some reading.

Overnight Choekhor Valley – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel



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Day 5:

Choekhor Valley to Phobjikha Valley (4-5 hrs)

Today transfer to Phobjikha, via the Chhume valley for the opportunity to shop for local handicrafts and textiles. This region is renowned for its exceptionally high-quality weavings. 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 during your lunch stop.

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

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 6:

At Leisure in Phobjikha Valley

While you are in Phobjikha you will visit the Black Crane nature information centre and the sacred Gangtey Monastery. Also 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. One is the remote Phobji area further up the valley. Here you can take an easy, flat hike through temples, farmhouses and small villages.

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



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Day 7:

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](#).

Day 8:

Sightseeing & hiking in Punakha today.

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 Dzatsheng (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, one of the 4 former Queens.

Overnight Punakha Valley – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel.

Day 9:

Punakha Valley to Paro (4-5 hrs)

This morning transfer by road to Paro, via Dochu La (pass) at 3018 m. 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 –



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Day 9 - continued

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 through the forest to nearby Lungchuzay Temple. Descending from the pass drive past the Semtokha Dzong, built in 1629, the oldest fortress of its kind that guarded Thimphu and today is a monastery.

This afternoon enjoy an orientation tour of the major features in Paro town including Paro Dzong with its cantilever bridge and the National Museum to view the fine collection of ancient Thangka paintings, textiles, weapons and other artefacts, before a visit to the CSI daily market which offers locally produced goods from cottage and small industries in Bhutan.

Finally (time permitting) we recommend a wander along the main street which offers good shopping for jewellery and handicrafts.

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

Day 10:

Paro Valley Hiking & Sightseeing

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. Choose between a 1.5 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.

After lunch at the Taktsang Viewpoint Cafe, returning from the hiking trail, continue down the valley to view the recently restored Drugyel Dzong (14km from Paro). This is the historical site of the Fort of Drukpa Victory, from which the Bhutanese used to repel the Tibetan invaders again and again. Followed by a visit to Kyichu Lhakhang – one of Bhutan's oldest and most beautiful temples boasting an orange tree that perpetually bears fruit.

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

Day 11:

Day of departure

Sadly, prepare for your departure to Paro airport this morning in time to check-in for your onward flight.

END OF TOUR



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