



BHUTAN & BEYOND

Thimphu Festival Tour – 12 days/11 nights 03 – 14 October 2025

After the awesome flight into Paro experience the 5 valleys of Paro, Thimphu, Punakha, Phobjikha & Bumthang. You will be amazed by the colour & spectacle of the Thimphu & Gangtey Tshechu's. Furthermore, it features the most important sights in Thimphu city; the remote beauty of the Phobjikha valley & scenery of the central Bumthang region and the splendour of the magnificent Punakha Dzong. Finally, a special pilgrimage hike to Taktsang Monastery (Tigers Nest) in Paro.

In addition to witnessing the Thimphu & Gangtey Tshechu, this tour combines the very best sites the Kingdom of Bhutan has to offer in western & central Bhutan.

Tour Itinerary Overview.

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

Reasons To Book This Small Group Tour

- We only take a maximum of 8 persons on our tours.
- We guarantee our small group cultural tours will operate even if only 2 persons travel!
- Maximise your Bhutan experience with one of our top rated Bhutanese guides.
- Immerse yourself in the vibrant Buddhist culture of Bhutan.
- All hiking on this tour is optional, although you must be able to climb a steep set of stairs to gain entry to the magnificent Punakha Dzong.
- Witness the spectacle of the Thimphu & Gangtey Tshechu's. ([festivals](#))
- We tailor our tours for less driving & more sightseeing!
- Bhutan & Beyond offer our 22 years of experience, service & knowledge.
- Competitive pricing & well-constructed itinerary.
- We provide a comprehensive pre-departure planning guide.
- Experts at combining Bhutan with [India](#), & [Nepal](#).
- ATIA (formerly ATAS) Accredited via our parent company MTA Travel

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

Tour Inclusions:

- Professional guide, driver & private vehicle.
- All touring & transfers throughout your journey.
- Bhutanese style 3* hotels with private bathrooms for 9nts.
- 4* Gangtey Tent Resort with private bathrooms for 2nts
- All meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner) and two 500 ml bottles of water per person daily.
- All monument & entrance fees, hiking and sightseeing as per the itinerary.
- Bhutan visa fees & processing.



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- Bhutan & Beyond bank transfers for payments to Bhutan suppliers.
- Bhutan Sustainable Development Fee (SDF) & local taxes.
- Witness the Thimphu Tshechu & Gangtey Tshechu (festivals).(subject to scheduled dates being realised.)
- Professionally run by Bhutan Tourism Corp Ltd – BTCL.
- A comprehensive pre-departure trip planning guide.

Tour Exclusions:

- International flights to/from Paro are additional.
- Personal bank charges incurred making payments to Bhutan & Beyond.
- Personal items: phone calls, laundry, drinks etc.
- Tips – please refer to tipping suggestions in our Bhutan Visitor Info guide.
- Travel Insurance – is essential when travelling to Bhutan.
- Any COVID-19 PCR or RAT tests required.

Available On Request:

- Upgrade to Business Class on your flights.
- Ex-Australia airfares.
- Stopovers & additional Nepal & India arrangements.

Cancellation Conditions:

- 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.

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

Friday 03 October 2025;

Paro Airport to Thimphu (1 hr 30 mins drive time)

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 in Thimphu take lunch at a local Bhutanese restaurant. This afternoon visit the Centenary markets, the National Memorial Chorten and the Takin Preserve, home to Bhutan's most unusual national mammal.

Overnight Thimphu – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel



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Saturday 04 October:

Thimphu Sightseeing & Festival

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.

Before travelling north up the valley to the majestic Trashichhoe Dzong to witness the colour & spectacle of the Thimphu Tshechu. Take either a picnic lunch and dine at the festival with the locals, or lunch at a local restaurant.

This afternoon enjoy some free time to explore the festival markets in Thimphu city & make a visit to the Craft Bazaar which focuses on Bhutanese produced handicrafts

Overnight Thimphu – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel

Sunday 05 October:

Thimphu to Phobjikha Valley (5+ hrs)

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

When the Wangdue Phodrang Dzong comes into view, notice the large cacti that cover the hillside below which, 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 Phobjikha's primary cash crop and mainly 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.

Time permitting walk the Gangtey Nature Trail on arrival this afternoon. Alternatively undertake this tomorrow morning. This is an easy, mainly flat, walk through forest and pastures.

Overnight Phobjikha Valley – Gangtey Tent Resort.



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Monday 06 October:

Sightseeing & festival visit in Phobjikha

This morning you will visit the sacred Gangtey Goenpa (Monastery) to witness the Gangtey Tshechu, via an en-route wander through the very traditional Gangtey village.

This afternoon visit the Black-Necked Crane nature information centre & either choose to spend extra time at the Tshechu OR take an excursion further down the valley to the more remote Phobji region. Here you can enjoy an easy hike through villages, temples & farm houses.

Overnight Phobjikha Valley – Gangtey Tent Resort.

Tuesday 07 October:

Phobjikha to Choekhor Valley (4-5hrs)

Early this morning depart Phobjikha, via Trongsa, 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.

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 into its ancient watchtower which you can visit, followed by lunch.

On arrival in the Bumthang region notice the large fields of buckwheat that cover the valleys....buckwheat noodles and pancakes are a Bumthang specialty. 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.

Wednesday 08 October:

Exploring & hiking in the Choekhor Valley

Your morning exploring includes visits to the Kurjey Lhakhang & Jambay Lhakhang. These are the oldest two monasteries in the kingdom. All the Kings of Bhutan are cremated at Kurjey Lhakhang.

Take the option for an easy, flat hike (less than an hour) back to the hotel for lunch.



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This afternoon take an excursion to Tang Valley to visit the Ogyencholing Museum and the Membar Tsho (aka Burning Lake) and learn about its dark legend. Time permitting take a wander through nearby Chamkhar town & perhaps drop in at the Swiss Farm to taste sweet cheese, apple brandy and locally brewed wine and beer.

Overnight Choekhor Valley – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel.

Thursday 09 October:

Choekhor Valley to Punakha Valley (6+ hrs)

Early morning departure back westwards to the Punakha valley which holds the title as the winter capital because of its more temperate climate. En-route visiting the Chhume weaving centre for the opportunity to shop for excellent local handicrafts and textiles. This region is renowned for its exceptionally high quality weavings.

This afternoon, on arrival into Punakha, visit Chimi Lhakhang, a monastery built by Lama Drukpa Kuenley (also known as the Divine Madman or Mad Monk) with a very colourful history. It is believed childless women who visit the temple will conceive after receiving a 'wang' (blessing) from the resident monk. The walk across rice paddy fields takes about 20 minutes each way. Time permitting visit the Sangchen Dorji Lhuendrup Lhakhang & Nunnery.

Overnight Punakha Valley – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel

Friday 10 October:

Exploring & hiking in the Punakha Valley

This morning enjoy a scenic walk over the Punakha suspension bridge, Bhutan's longest, before a visit to the dramatic Punakha Dzong nearby, 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. Time permitting, wander through the Kaja Throm local produce market.

Choose to enjoy a relaxing afternoon at leisure, or travel up the valley & take 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 – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel



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Saturday 11 October:

Punakha to Thimphu (3 hrs)

This morning farewell beautiful Punakha and head back to the capital Thimphu, once again traversing Dochu La.

On arrival in Thimphu take lunch and this afternoon visit the celebrated Royal Textile Academy and the recently renovated Folk Heritage Museum. Take the remainder of the afternoon at leisure and perhaps explore the weekend markets, or experience Thimphu's Cafe culture.

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

Sunday 12 October:

Thimphu to Paro Valley (1 hr 30 mins)

This morning enjoy a leisurely start to the day, or hike along a reasonably flat scenic trail to the Wangditse Monastery, offering excellent views of Thimphu valley.

Late morning transfer to the Paro Valley. On arrival take lunch at a local restaurant.

This afternoon enjoy an orientation tour of the major features in Paro town. These include the Rinpung Dzong, with its cantilever bridge, and the National Museum (Ta Dzong). Here you will view the fine collection of ancient Thangkha paintings, textiles, weapons and other artefacts,

Alternatively, skip the museum and explore Paro's main streets which offer good shopping, including the CSI daily market for locally produced goods from cottage and small industries in Bhutan.

Overnight Paro Valley – Bhutanese Style 3* Hotel

Monday 13 October:

Hiking & exploring in the Paro Valley

This morning make a pilgrimage hike to the Taksang Monastery, also known as Tigers Nest. This is Bhutan's most revered monastery, and all Bhutanese Buddhists strive to make the pilgrimage here at least once in their lives. With each step, merit points are gained for the next part of life's journey.

Choose between a 2 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



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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. Take lunch at the viewpoint cafe which offers good Bhutanese vegetarian dishes.

On completion of your hike visit the nearby Kyichu Lhakhang – one of Bhutan’s oldest and most beautiful temples boasting an orange tree that perpetually bears fruit.

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Tuesday 14 October:

Day of departure

Morning departure from your hotel to Paro Airport for your onward flight.

END OF TOUR



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