SIX SENSES BHUTAN

Six Senses Bhutan is located within the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan known for its rich diversity of flora and fauna along with omnipresent spirituality and colorful culture. Geographically, Bhutan descends from the highest Himalayan peaks, exceeding 33,000 feet (7,000 meters) in height to the plains in the south at an altitude of just 1,000 feet (300 meters). To the north lies Tibet while to the west, south and east sits India. Through this dramatically descending landscape, the rivers run from north to south and over the years have forged deep valleys and ravines that are separated by lofty ridges and mountain passes. Each of these valleys has a scenic beauty that is unique, providing the opportunity for an enchanted journey through the Kingdom.

Scattered throughout the western and central valleys of Bhutan are five lodges, collectively referred to as Six Senses Bhutan. Each of the lodges offers its own character, environment and experiences.

Guests may visit one of the lodges or we can plan a tailor-made journey that will include a combination of the lodges located in Thimphu, Punakha, Gangtey, Bumthang and Paro. The lodges range in size and facilities, however all embrace the Six Senses guiding principles which include wellness, healthy eating, comfort in sleep in addition to providing a journey of self-discovery.

SIX SENSES THIMPHU

At an altitude of 7,700 feet (2,200 meters), Thimphu lies in a steep valley surrounded by richly forested mountains dotted with ancient monasteries and *lhakhangs* (temples), and to this day remains the world's only capital without a single traffic light. The town is centered on a quaint clock tower, surrounded by lanes of shops, fruit and vegetable markets, and assorted local restaurants. Thimphu is the largest center in Bhutan with a population of about 100,000.

Situated within beautiful apple orchards to the north and young pine forests to the south, Six Senses Thimphu is strategically perched on a hillside due south of the town at an elevation of 8,695 feet (2,650 meters). Spectacular views overlook the 170 foot (52 meters) high Buddha Dordenma. This location provides a comfortable escape from the bustling capital, while remaining close enough to easily access its many attractions. With its grand design, floor to ceiling windows and lobby ponds that reflect the changing colors of the clouds, Six Senses Thimphu is affectionately referred to as "The Palace in the Sky."

Lodge features:

- 20 Suites measuring 721 sq.ft. indoors (67 sq.m.) and 97 sq.ft. outdoors (9 sq.m.)
- 3 One-Bedroom Villas measuring 1,453 sq.ft. indoors (135 sq.m.) and 344 sq.ft. outdoors (32 sq.m.)
- 1 Two-Bedroom Villa measuring 2,798 sq.ft. indoors (260 sq.m.) and 398 sq.ft. outdoors (37 sq.m.)
- 1 Three-Bedroom Villa measuring 3,358 sq.ft. indoors (312 sq.m.) and 398 sq.ft. outdoors (37 sq.m.)
- Living Room for 48 guests
- Namkha restaurant for 60 guests indoors and 16 guests outdoors
- Private Dining Room for 10 guests
- Bar and Lounge for 29 guests
- Banquet facilities for 60 guests
- Six Senses Spa and Wellness Center with five single rooms, one double room, gym, manicure and pedicure room
- Indoor heated pool
- Boutique
- Prayer Pavilion
- Business Center
- Sunken outdoor terrace
- Parking
- Altitude: 8,695 feet (2,650 meters)
- Lodge land: 15 acres (6.1 hectares)
- GPS: 27°25'06.0"N 89°39'45.8"E

Thimphu highlights:

Thimphu, being the capital, is home to many attractions. The National Textile Museum and Folk Heritage Museum, where Bhutanese craftsmen continue to pursue traditional art forms, all offer insights into Bhutan's culture. Further up the valley the Tashichho Dzong (fortress) houses the seat of government and religion.

Nearby, one can visit Pangri Zampa, a monastic center that is home to an astrology training school. At the head of the valley, a walk across one of the country's oldest cantilever bridges leads to Cheri Goemba where the Kingdom's first Buddhist community was based. Closer to town, Thimphu's main street provides the opportunity to browse Himalayan jewelry and Bhutanese handicrafts and textiles.

SIX SENSES PUNAKHA

Punakha Valley is the warmest valley in the Kingdom with summer temperatures reaching up to 86°F (32°C). The road to Punakha winds through pine forests and passes streams, waterfalls, chortens and prayer flags, climbing to Dochu La Pass, with its wonderful vistas, at an elevation of 10,200 feet (3,100 meters). With a temperate climate, Punakha is the market garden of the country, where produce grows year round and many Bhutanese reside during the cooler winter months.

Situated a short 15-minute drive north of Punakha's grand Dzong, along the Mo Chhu River and nestled several hundred meters above the valley floor at an elevation of 4,595 feet (1,400 meters) sits Six Senses Punakha. Referred to as "The Flying Farmhouse Amidst the Rice Fields", this spectacular lodge takes on a more rustic feel in keeping with the warmer climate of its rural surroundings.

Lodge features:

- 16 Suites measuring 721 sq.ft. indoors (67 sq.m.) and 398 sq.ft. outdoors (37 sq.m.)
- 1 One-Bedroom Villa measuring 1,312 sq.ft. (122 sq.m) indoors and 344 sq.ft. (32 sq.m) outdoors, with private pool
- 1 Two-Bedroom Villa measuring 2,454 sq.ft. indoors (228 sq.m) and 969 sq.ft. (90 sq.m) outdoors, with private pool
- 1 Three-Bedroom Villa measuring 2,949 sq.ft. indoors (274 sq.m) and 969 sq.ft. (90 sq.m) outdoors, with private pool
- Living Room and Lounge for 16 guests
- Ari restaurant for 38 guests indoors and 16 guests outdoors
- Boutique
- Six Senses Spa and Wellness Center with three single rooms, gym, two meditation huts, yoga facilities
- Outdoor heated pool
- Parking
- Altitude: 4,595 feet (1,400 meters)
- Lodge land: 10 acres (4 hectares)
- GPS: 27°37'28.0"N 89°48'04.6"E

Punakha highlights:

Punakha has an interesting history, as it was the Kingdom's capital for a period of 300 years until Thimphu was declared the official capital in the 1950s. It is the site of one of Bhutan's most historically important dzongs, the magnificent 17th century Pungthang Dewa Chhenbi Phodrang Dzong, a masterpiece of Bhutanese architecture.

Beyond the dominating dzong, a visit to Chimi Lhakhang is a must to take in the history of the fertility temple and its ritual phalluses. Chimi Lhakhang is dedicated to the monk Drukpa Kinley who in the late 15th century used humor, songs and outrageous behavior to dramatize his teachings. Closer to the lodge a beautiful morning hike takes one to the regal Khamsum Yuelley Namgyel Chorten, which was built to remove negative forces and promote peace, stability and harmony in the changing world.

SIX SENSES GANGTEY

From Punakha, traveling east, the road passes through the village of Wangdue Phodrang and climbs past deep ravines with dizzying drops to the Phobijkha Valley that is home to the quaint settlement of Gangtey. At an elevation of 9,500 feet (2,900 meters) on the western slopes of the Black Mountains, the glacial valley is a designated conservation area and winter home for the endangered cranes that migrate from Tibet each year between the months of October and March.

Driving southwards through the open valley past fields dotted with prayer flags and farms, guests arrive to the western slopes where Six Senses Gangtey is strategically positioned to showcase a 180 degree view of the valley and all its beauty. The lodge is situated directly above the Crane Conservation Center, and the lodge's main building, the "Traditional Bird Watching Bridge" provides the perfect place for crane spotting in season.

Lodge features:

- 8 Suites measuring 690 sq.ft. indoors (65 sq.m.) and 120 sq.ft. outdoors (10 sq.m.)
- 1 Two-Bedroom Villa measuring 2,260 sq.ft. indoors (210 sq.m.) and 205 sq.ft. outdoors (20 sq.m.)
- Arrival Terrace for 10 guests
- Library
- Living Room and Lounge for 16 guests
- Baa Zam Restaurant for 20 guests indoors
- Fire Pit Relaxation Area for 17 guests
- dining for 4 guests
- Six Senses Spa with two single treatment rooms two Swedana steam areas, male and female changing facilities
- Parking
- Altitude: 9,678 feet (2,950 meters)
- Lodge land: 5 acres (2 hectares)
- GPS: 27°27′45.2″ N 90°10′08.1″E

Gangtey highlights:

One of the highlights of a visit to Phobjikha Valley is a sighting of the black-necked cranes which can often be viewed with binoculars from the suites and the main lodge building. At the heart of Gangtey Village is the 16th century Gangtey Goemba, a monastery that houses a school and living quarters for monks as well as meditation facilities. It is also the site of the colorful Black-necked Crane Festival each November and home to the mind reincarnation of Pema Lingpa, one of the region's most historically important Buddhist figures.

There are also numerous nature treks and mountain bike trails winding through pine groves, alongside bubbling trout-filled streams. The Longtey Trail to the Goemba which winds through a small village before continuing through a rhododendron forest with thick dwarf bamboo growing in abundance is one the valley's best. It is not unusual to encounter yaks and yak herders while exploring in Gangtey and its environs.

SIX SENSES BUMTHANG

Bumthang is the most easterly-located of the Six Senses lodges and from Gangtey guests will enjoy a memorable drive through a dramatic landscape of terraced farmland, deep river valleys and precariously perched farmhouses viewed from the only east-west highway in the Kingdom, ingeniously carved out of the mountainside. The drive also passes through Trongsa, with its impressive Dzong, over the picturesque Yotong La Mountains and down into Chhume Valley, home of Bhutan's famous Yathra weaving.

Set in a pine forest on a hillside above a rushing stream, Six Senses Bumthang was built to immerse guests in the natural beauty of its surroundings, history and traditions, honoring the natural environment rather than impacting it. As such, the lodge takes its name "The Forest in a Forest" from its setting. In total there are eight suites and one two-bedroom villa featuring spacious balconies and calming forest views across the valley.

Lodge features:

- 8 Suites measuring 780 sq.ft. indoors (73 sq.m.) and 205 sq.ft. outdoors (20 sq.m.)
- 1 Two-Bedroom Villa measuring 2,400 sq.ft. indoors (225 sq.m.) and 365 sq.ft. outdoors (35 sq.m.)
- Living Room and Lounge for 24 guests
- Tongtshang Restaurant for 24 guests indoors and 12 guests outdoors
- Six Senses Spa with two single treatment rooms, Hot Stone Bath facilities
- Parking
- Altitude: 8,860 feet (2,700 meters)
- Lodge land: 3 acres (1.2 hectares)
- GPS: 27°34'31.5" N 90°44'33.1" E

Bumthang highlights:

Bumthang provides the perfect base for a range of activities including half and full-day treks to the valley's most important sites as well as opportunities to bike and horseback ride. Other activities include visits to local villages, archery lessons and mushroom foraging.

Bumthang is home to some of the Kingdom's most revered pilgrimage sites. Kurjey Llakhang for one is believed to have been the resting place of Guru Rinpoche while Jambay Llakhang is home to a winter festival that draws thousands of Bhutanese for their annual blessings. The 19th century Wangdichhoeling Palace is a wonderful example of traditional Bhutanese architecture and well worth a visit.

Guests can also stop at the Red Panda brewery for a taste of icy-cold, locally-brewed wheat beer. There are regular domestic flights between Bumthang to Paro.

SIX SENSES PARO

Bordered by forested mountain peaks, Paro Valley is surely one of the most scenic settings within the Six Senses Bhutan journey. At an elevation of 7,200 feet (2,250 meters) Paro is a mix of small villages, historic buildings, monuments and terraced fields growing crops of rice, barley and wheat. The Paro Chhu river runs through the valley and nearby is the quaint town of Paro. Established in the 1970s, Paro has just just one main street lined with traditional buildings perfectly capturing the essence of provincial Bhutanese life.

Perched directly above Paro National Museum at an elevation of 9,412 feet (2,869 meters), Six Senses Paro enjoys views of the valley and the Himalayan range in the distance. Built on the site of an abandoned 16th century stone fortress that inspired the name of the lodge "Stone Ruins" and its design which incorporates locally-cut stone throughout. With stunning views and an expansive outdoor terrace, Six Senses Paro offers some wonderful destination dining experiences.

Lodge features:

- 16 Suites measuring 645 sq.ft. indoors (60 sq.m.)
- 2 One-Bedroom Villas measuring 1,400 sq.ft. indoors (130 sq.m.) and 325 sq.ft. indoors (30 sq.m.)
- 1 Two-Bedroom Villa measuring 2,800 msq.ft. indoors (260 sq.m.) and 1,055 sq. ft. outdoors (98 sq.m.)
- 1 Three-Bedroom Villa measuring 3,680 sq.ft. indoors (342 sq.m.) and 1,055 sq.ft. outdoors (100 sq.m.)
- Living Room for 25 guests indoors and 35 outdoors
- 'Jangkho' restaurant for 56 guests and 14 guests outdoors
- Bar for six guests
- Banquet facilities for 32 guests
- Dining within the stone ruins on the lodge's grounds
- Six Senses Spa with four single treatment rooms, gym, outdoor sauna and cool dip, yoga room, meditation and relaxation areas
- Indoor heated pool
- Library
- Bar for 8 guests
- Parking
- Altitude: 8,780 feet (2,675 meters)
- Lodge land: 15 acres (6.1 hectares)
- GPS: 27°25'22.7"N 89°26'17.2"E

Paro highlights:

Paro Valley has a number of monasteries and monuments but none as dramatic as Taktsang Lhakhang, or Tiger's Nest. A highly revered monastery built on a sheer cliff face at a height of 10,000 feet (2,950 meters), this is the spot where Guru Rinpoche is believed to have arrived on the back of a flying tigress from Tibet bringing Buddhism to Bhutan. The monastery marks the place where the saint meditated in a cave and is visible from the floor of Paro Valley. An excursion to the monastery is a highlight of every trip to Bhutan.

Paro Town itself is well worth a stroll to visit the shops and local market and just above the town sits the impressive Paro Dzong. Just a short walk over a traditional cantilevered bridge brings you up to the dzong, an excellent example of Bhutanese architecture. The Paro National Museum is located nearby as well and displays an intriguing collection of artifacts that illustrate the rich culture and heritage of the Kingdom.

Paro Valley also offers a number of interesting hikes and treks catering to all ability levels, from short hour-long valley floor walks to more strenuous full-day hikes over mountain trails frequented by wild mountain goats, langur and monkeys. The leopards that inhabit this area are rarely seen but their tracks may be visible en route.

WELLNESS: START YOUR HEALING JOURNEY

Health, according to ancient Bhutanese healing practices, comes from the balance between body, mind and spirit, and understanding how one affects the other. The relationship between each of us and our surroundings is also key to achieving optimal wellness.

Six Senses Bhutan provides opportunities to improve your health and continue on the wellness journey post departure. We focus on boosting the immune system and helping to open the mind and expand consciousness to aid spiritual healing. A combination of massage and relaxation therapies, yoga and meditation programs as well as fitness facilities that include heated pools, gyms, hot stone baths and a sauna are available, helping to promote happiness and well-being. Each lodge offers its own treatments, ensuring the path to wellness is as varied as the journey itself.

Six Senses Thimphu

For most visitors to Bhutan, the journey starts in Thimphu which is why our signature wellness screening is offered here, enabling us to measure key biomarkers of health to understand how your physical and mental states are affecting your body. Based on the results, our experts will guide you towards making the changes you wish to see throughout your time in the Kingdom.

Six Senses Punakha

A restorative journey continues in Punakha with treatments designed around reducing tension and stress and on boosting vitality and stamina. Wellness rituals here begin with a footbath infused with local herbs to nourish the senses and draw awareness away from any worries followed by Bhutanese chanting and singing bowls. Shirodhara, an Ayurvedic treatment where warm oils are poured over the third eye to sooth and calm the nervous system, is another highlight.

Six Senses Gangtey

The signature treatment in Gangtey is the Swedana steam therapy. As the body receives the healing benefits of Bhutanese herbs in the Swedana, you'll have a view to the serene landscape of the Phobjika Valley below, encouraging meditative thought and release. The deep tissue massage relieves muscles sore from long walks in nature.

Six Senses Bumthang

At Six Senses Bumthang, we focus on bringing happiness by enveloping the Bhutanese culture into our treatments and rituals. De-stress and invigorate the body and mind with the Hingsangsa Zoni Bathing Ritual and Cleanse.

This locally-inspired treatment starts with exfoliation using Himalayan salts to gently stimulate the circulation and encourage lymphatic drainage, followed by a traditional Dotsho stone bath to encourage the body to release toxins before a luxurious, personalized full body massage.

Six Senses Paro

The journey to health starts by knowing and accepting our body's condition and understanding the behaviors that led to it. At Six Senses Paro, which for many, will be the last lodge on the journey, we focus on setting intentions for going back to life at home and for the future through breathing and meditation to leave an imprint of Bhutan deep within. This is followed by Bhutanese chanting and singing bowls, promoting stillness, happiness and well-being.