



## Bhutan Cultural Tour

<b>Trip code</b>	
<b>Package name</b>	Bhutan Cultural Tour
<b>Duration</b>	5
<b>Max. elevation</b>	3150 m
<b>Level</b>	EASY
<b>Transportation</b>	Private vehicals for all round trip.
<b>Accomodation</b>	3***hotel twin sharing bed basis during the tour.
<b>Starts at</b>	Paro
<b>Ends at</b>	Paro
<b>Trip route</b>	Paro - Thimphu - Punakha - TigerNest - paro
<b>Cost</b>	USD 1,299 per person

## Highlights

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## Overview

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Bhutan is known as the land of “Thunder Dragon” due to Bhutanese mythology and national symbol. In the national flag of Bhutan, we can see a Druk holding jewels to represent wealth. Thus, Bhutan is also known as the land of Druk and the Bhutanese Gyalpo which means “Thunder Dragon Kings”. This unique identity makes Bhutan distinct from other countries. Idiosyncratic culture of Bhutan plays an important role to make it renowned in the whole world. This country claims that the kingdom is ecological museum of Asia.

Each and every country has its own culture and tradition. Culture plays a vital role for every country to make it renowned to the whole world. The ancient culture, customs and tradition makes the country unique and rich in preservation of their ancestry. Culture shows the real face of their citizen, their daily life style, hospitality and it also plays a vital role to prospect their lifestyle back in the past years. Bhutan also has an extraordinary place hardly touched by the hands of time. Bhutan will bestow an opportunity to know the Bhutanese traditions and cultures jointly with the arresting natural beauties. Nestling in the heart of the great Himalaya, it remained in self-imposed isolation for centuries, aloof from the rest of the world. Since its doors were cautiously opened in 1974, visitors have been mesmerized: the environment is pristine, the scenery and architecture awesome, the people are hospitable and charming, and the culture unique in its purity. With one foot in the past and one in the future, it strolls confidently towards modernization, on its own terms, fiercely protecting its ancient culture, its natural resources and its deeply Buddhist way of life. Despite being a small country, it offers you different antique visits to different traditional and beautiful places which have historical significance. Bhutan is predominantly a Buddhist country with Vajrayana Buddhism being Bhutan's state religion. Hinduism is Bhutan's second-largest religion mostly followed by the Nepali speaking Bhutanese in the south.

Bhutan is the land of cultural diversities and natural beauty. It is a country rich in culture and its unique cultural heritage is famous worldwide. This Bhutan Cultural Tour of five days covers major highlighted spots of Paro, Thimphu and Lobesa and offers several opportunities to enjoy the cultural grandeurs, natural splendors, adventures, and history. The highlight of tour will be visit to Simtokha Dzong within the tiny capital township of Thimphu and the Taktsang Monastery that clings to a sheer 3,000 foot rock face cliffs. It is believed that Buddhism spread wide in Bhutan from this valley. Actually the hikers would enjoy the valley. Explore the remote and warm villages and marvel at the beautiful Himalayas of Bhutan. Discover the delightful city of Thimphu, which is famously known as the only capital city in the world without traffic lights. Apart from exceptional art and architectures of monasteries, you will also spot Bhutan's national animal, Takin. This tour can also be termed as pilgrimage tour for people who devoted Buddhist. This tour is an ideal tour for the person who loves to see the Bhutanese Culture, society, glorious mountains scenery as well as low land with dense forest and you can click on main images of Bhutan while doing this tour. Your visit will feature on exploration of authentic culture and lifestyle of Bhutanese, which is so close to nomadism. You will witness and capture the moments firsthand up close on how people live and work in the Land of Thunder Dragon.

## Trip Itinerary

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### Day 1 : Drive to Paro (2,250m / 7,382ft) airport.

Embarking our tour, we fly over to the dragon kingdom Paro. We fly over passing by Mountains of 5500 meters to Paro. Paro is a beautiful valley and is home to many of Bhutan's oldest monasteries and temples, and the country's only international airport. The flight to Paro is one of the most spectacular mountain flights in the world, with a constantly changing panorama of some of the highest mountains on earth including Chomolhari and Jitchu Drake peak. Paro Airport has been described as "the most difficult commercial airport in the world". 1980meter runway length presents a double challenge, due to the extremely low density altitude at the site. So, only a handful of well experienced pilots are certified to operate commercial airplanes here thus, making least number of flights in a day. After immigration and

custom formalities, check out from the departure lounge. There you will meet one of the representatives of Nature Trail Travels & Tours, Trekking & Expedition who will greet you and then escort you to your respective hotel where you will stay overnight. Before dinner at the hotel there will be an orientation on Bhutanese etiquette by your guide.

## **Day 2 : Hike to Taktsang monastery (3180 m) and drive to Thimphu(2,320m/7,610ft) – 2 hrs. drive.**

On this day, you will have a short hike up to Taktsang monastery. Taktsang is a prominent sacred Buddhist site and temple complex perched on the edge of upper Paro Valley. It is also known as the Tiger's Nest. This magical monastery clings to a vertical granite cliff 300 meter above the valley. Legend has it that the great Guru Padmasambhava flew to this spot on back of a tigress and meditated in a cave during the 8th century. When the Guru finished his meditation, he instructed that the monastery to be built. The temple was built around the cave and is a hallowed shrine for Bhutanese pilgrims. The spectacular view along the way and the historical sites draw many tourists to this imposing monastery. There are also a number of temples scattered along the route. Later we'll turn to the Paro Dzong, a large Buddhist monastery and fortress, which is considered the best example of Bhutanese architecture. Now it also houses the district Monastic Body and government administrative offices. On the hill above the Dzong stands an ancient watchtower called Ta Dzong, which is the National Museum of Bhutan. Visit Ta Dzong Museum housing many religious relics, works of art and handicrafts offering a great orientation into Bhutan's historical, cultural, and religious past. This Dzong was converted into the National Museum in 1968. The museum boasts antique thangkhas, textiles, weapons and armor, household objects and rich assortment of natural and historic artifacts. Here you can also learn about Bhutan's history. After this hike and a short sightseeing tour, we drive to Thimphu following the Pachu River. Once a rustic village sitting in a broad, fertile river valley, Thimphu is today the nation's bustling capital. We will stay overnight at Thimphu.

## **Day 3 : Thimphu sightseeing.**

After appetizing breakfast, we visit National Memorial Chorten. This temple was first initiated by the Third King as a protection from the negative elements of modernization, and as a monument to world peace. The Royal Queen Mother completed it as a memorial Stupa for the Third King who passed away in 1972. Then we will continue our visit to 12th century Changangkha Temple and Drubthob monastery housing the Zilukha Nunnery. If you want to see Takin, the national animal of Bhutan then you can proceed onto mini-zoo. The Takin (a goat-antelope) was declared the national animal of Bhutan because it is strongly associated with the country's religious history and mythology. After sightseeing of these sites, if you still have some time left then you can visit to National Library, the priceless collection of Buddhist manuscripts and few English version books; Folk and Heritage Museum, which displays day to day livelihood of typical Bhutanese farmers in medieval period and their accessories; Late King's Memorial Stupa, built for the world peace and Traditional Handmade Paper Factory; Painting School, which preserves our traditional paintings, sculpturing and wood curving and National Handicraft Emporium, the best place to look for souvenir from Bhutan. You can also visit the Rinpung Dzong, meaning 'fortress of the heap of jewels' to see the painting of the great saint Milarepa, considered as the master of meditation by the Bhutanese and believed to have attained enlightenment in a lifetime. The Dzong is now used as an administration center and school for monks. Dzong's are large monasteries and district administrative centers, which were once strategic forts. Some of the landmarks are closed on the weekend (Saturdays and Sundays). Therefore, if your visit to Thimphu coincides with the weekend, you can walk through the Thimphu Market to see the variety of food of Bhutan, including basket upon basket of fiery chilies, cheese and a variety of greens. (This market is open only from Friday-Sunday).

#### **Day 4 : Drive Thimphu to Punakha (1,250m/4,100ft): 76 km, 2-3 hours.**

On the following day, we will be driving to Punakha via Dochu La Pass (3,100m). Dochu la pass is situated 10,000 feet above sea level. You can have magnificent view of eastern Himalayas from this pass which includes Bhutan's highest mountain Mount Gangkar Punsum (7550 m). From the pass, we drive downhill through the rhododendron, fir and hemlock forests. We then pass through rice fields along river banks and reach Punakha. In Punakha, we visit Punakha Dzong which was built between 1637/1638 and is the second oldest and the second largest Dzong in Bhutan. Overnight in Punakha.

#### **Day 5 : Drive Punakha to Paro (2,250m/7,382ft) – 4 hrs. drive.**

Concluding our trip, today we drive to Paro today after having breakfast. A drive for about four hours will take you to Paro. After arrival, you can spend the rest day by self-exploration or you could also visit some remaining sightseeing spots which you weren't able to visit before. Stay overnight at Paro.

## **Inclusions**

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### **What is included?**

Airport pick up & drop by private vehicle as your require.

Private vehicals for round trip.

Standard accommodation twin sharing bed basis for the duration of tour.

All meals fixed breakfast, lunch & dinner with Tea and Coffee for whole duration of your stay in Bhutan.

Mineral water supply for the trip.

Local licensed English speaking Bhutan Tour Guides.

All sightseeing tours, Monument /Museum entrance Fees as per itinerary.

Country Presentation & Tour Briefing on arrival evening.

Bhutan Visa Fees and Visa Processing assistance.

The required number of trekking & touring staff.

All trekking access, route permits logistics & fees.

Government tax which goes to the country's health & education projects.

### **What isn't included?**

Your travel insurance.

Bottled/alcoholic/cold drinks room service.

International airfares and airport departure tax.

Personal Equipment.

Tips to staffs-Tipping is expected.

Any others expenses which are not mentioned on Price Includes section.

### **Complimentary**