

Bhutan - Happiness is a Place **(06 Nights/07 Days)**

DAY 01: ARRIVAL PARO / THIMPU

BY FLIGHT/ SURFACE

(-/-/D)

Arrive at Paro International Airport, After immigration formalities you will be welcomed by our representative with a “**Tashi Khaddar**” (white scarf offering to the guest which is an auspicious way to welcome guest .After the welcome ceremony, board the vehicle and drive to Thimphu, the capital town of Bhutan, the road leads through the Paro valley to the confluence of Paro and Thimphu rivers at Chuzom (confluence) (55km, approx. 1.1/2-hour drive).



Arrival in Thimphu and check in at your hotel.

Thimphu is a unique city with unusual mixture of modern development alongside ancient traditions. Although not what one expects from a capital city, Thimphu is still a fitting and lively place. Home to civil servants, expatriates and monk body, Thimphu maintains a strong national character in its architectural style.

Overnight stay at the hotel.

DAY 02: THIMPU

BY SURFACE

(B/L/D)

After breakfast, take a short drive to northern end of town-built 12th century **Changangkha Lhakhang**: It is a fortress like temple and monastic school perched on a ridge above Thimphu, south of Motithang.

Later visit **Takin Preserve**: The Takin is the national animal of Bhutan, and looks like a cross between a cow and a goat. Legend has it that the animal was created by the great Buddhist yogi, Drupa Kunley, and it can be found only in Bhutan and nearby areas. Taxonomists place the animal in a category of its own as it is not similar enough to any other animal to fit established categories.

Later visit Simply Bhutan which offers live show for Bhutan dance and cultures.

Later visit to **King's Memorial Chorten** continuously circumambulated by people, murmuring mantras and spinning their prayer wheels. Construction of this landmark was the idea of Bhutan's third king, His



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Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuk (“the father of modern Bhutan”) who has wished to erect monument to world peace and prosperity. Completed in 1974 after his untimely death, it serves both as a memorial to the Late King and as a monument to peace.

Drive further up to visit **Trashichhoedzong**, “fortress of the glorious religion”. This is the center of government and religion, site of monarch’s throne room and seat of Je Khenpo or Chief Abbot. Built in 1641 by the political and religious unifier of Bhutan, Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, it was reconstructed in 1960s in traditional Bhutanese manner, without nails or architectural plans.

Overnight stay at the hotel.

DAY 03: THIMPU –PUNAKHA

BY SURFACE

(B/L/D)

After breakfast at hotel, Drive to Punakha (75 KMS/3 HRS DRIVE) across **Dochula pass** (3080m). In Bhutan, the passes are marked by a large Bhutanese Chorten and prayer flag. Dochula pass offers the most spectacular view over the high peaks of the eastern Himalayas on a clear day.

Later in the day excursion to **Chimi Lhakhang** (from hotel it is about 15 minutes’ drive till motorable road and then walk starts through paddy fields and villages. This is total about 1½ hour walk, including both way). The Chimi Lhakhang, situated on a hillock in the centre of the valley, also known as the temple of fertility. It is widely believed that couples who do not have children and wanting one, if they pray at this temple, they are usually blessed with a child very soon. The trail leads across rice fields to the tiny settlement of Pana, meaning ‘field’. A walk through the village near the temple will give you rare glimpses into the daily life and lifestyle of the villagers.



After checking into hotel, proceed to visit **Punakha Dzong**, a massive structure built at the junction of two rivers. It was the capital of Bhutan until 1955, and still serves as the winter residence of the monk body.

Overnight stay at the hotel.

DAY 04: PUNAKHA

BY SURFACE

(B/L/D)

After breakfast hike up through fields of chilies, cabbages and rice along the banks of the Mo Chhu to **Khamsum Yuelley Namgyal Chorten**, a stunning monument recently built by the Queens and consecrated in 1999.

Later visit to **Sangchhen Dorji Lhuendrup Lhakhang Nunnery**. Perched on a ridge amid pine trees and overlooking valleys of Punakha and Wangdue Phodrang, gleams the magnificent structures of Sangchhen Dorji Lhuendrup Lhakhang(Temple). The temple houses a 14-foot main bronze statue of Avalokiteshvara

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(Chenrigzig chagtong chentong). Other statues include those of Guru Padma Sambawa, Gautama Buddha, Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel, Tsela Namsum, the 21 Taras and Tsepamay (Buddha of longevity). The Avalokiteshvara statue, one of the biggest in the country, was the handiwork of entirely local Bhutanese artisans. The temple complex also houses a permanent higher learning and meditation centre for nuns where, apart from religious trainings, it provides life skill training such as tailoring, embroidery, statue making and thangka painting.



Overnight stay at the hotel.

DAY 05: PUNAKHA– PARO

BY SURFACE

(B/L/D)

After breakfast, check-out from the hotel and drive to Paro (120 KMS / 4½ HRS DRIVE APPROX) along scenic highway, en-route visit **Simtokha Dzong**, the oldest fortress of the country built in 1627 which now houses the School for Buddhist studies.

On arrival in Paro, check into the hotel. After lunch, proceed to visit **Ta Dzong**, originally built as Watchtower, which now houses National Museum. The extensive collection includes antique Thangka paintings, textiles, weapons & armour, household objects and a rich assortment of natural and historic artifacts.



Ta Dzong visit immediately followed by a short walk down the trail to visit **Rinpung Dzong** (ParoDzong), meaning (“fortress of the heap of jewels”), which has a long and fascinating history. Along the wooden galleries lining the inner courtyard are fine wall paintings illustrating Buddhist lore such as four friends, the old man of long life, the wheel of life, scenes from the life of Milarepa, Mount. Sumeru and other cosmic Mandala.

Evening, enjoy the herbal traditional hot stone bath at farm house (additional cost). The traditional Bhutanese hot stone bath, known as Dotsho in local language has been practiced in Bhutan for centuries as a medicinal soak. Many Bhutanese believe that the bath helps in curing joint pains, helps in relaxing and other medical problems. River stones are heated and then put in water to heat the water; sometime medicinal herbs are added to the water before it is ready for the soak.

Overnight stay at the hotel.

**DAY 06: PARO****BY SURFACE****(B/L/D)**

After breakfast excursion to **Taktshang Monastery** or Tiger's Nest (approx. 5 hours walk): It is one of the most famous of Bhutan's monasteries, perched on the side of a cliff 900m above the Paro valley floor. It is said that Guru Rinpoche arrived here on the back of a tigress and meditated at this monastery and hence it is called 'Tiger's Nest'. This site has been recognised as a most sacred place and visited by ShabdrungNgawangNamgyal in 1646 and now visited by all Bhutanese at least once in their lifetime. On 19 April, 1998, a fire severely damaged the main structure of building but now this Bhutanese jewel has been restored to its original splendour.



Later, visit the 7th century **Kyichu Lhakhang**, one of the 108 temples built in the Himalayas by Tibetan King, Songtsen Gampo. The building of this temple marks the introduction of Buddhism in Bhutan.

Overnight stay at the hotel.

DAY 07: PARO DEPARTURE**by Flight****(B/-/-)**

After breakfast at the hotel, drive to the airport for flight to your onward destination. Our representative will help you with exit formalities and then bid you farewell.

TOUR END