



DEEP IN THE DRAGON KINGDOM

For 13 days

The tour reveals the beautiful landscape and lovingly preserved Tibeto-Buddhist culture of Bhutan. With almost two-thirds of the country under forest cover; Bhutan is considered one of the world's bio-diversity hotspots. As spectacular as its natural beauty are its dzongs (fortresses), monasteries, temples and simple village homes, in addition to its lively festivals.

Begin at the capital, Thimphu, and explore its museums and gardens, while getting the feel of local life. Next, you enjoy exhilarating drives through the lovely valleys and breathtaking vistas through to Gangtey, located in the Phobjika valley. Bumthang is the religious and cultural heart of Bhutan and has several monasteries and spiritual sites. Punakha, the most fertile region in the country, is replete with natural beauty and Buddhist culture including the Chimi Lakhang (Temple of the Divine Madman). Your last stop is Paro, home to the magnificent Tiger's Nest monastery. Treks, hikes and walks are an essential feature of this tour; the best way to explore this heart-stoppingly beautiful and pristine country.

DAY 1 | ARRIVE PARO/ DRIVE TO THIMPHU

Arrive in Paro (alt 2,200m) today via a Druk Air flight and drive to Thimphu (54 km/1.5 hours/alt 2,400m). The first views of the formidable mountains and terraced rice fields are compelling. Rest of the day at leisure to acclimatise before beginning your explorations of this medieval kingdom.

ACCOMMODATION

[Connoisseur : Taj Tashi](#)

[Explorer : Hotel River View](#)

DAY 2 | THIMPHU

A full day tour of the old and new capitals of Bhutan. Standing alongside one another, the dzongs, monasteries, institutional buildings and markets are emblematic of the old and the ongoing Thimphu Structural Plan that epitomises the new, while preserving the spirit and tradition of Bhutan.

DAY 3 | THIMPHU/ GANGTEY

Leave Thimphu this morning for Gangtey (157 km/5 hours plus stops, alt 2,900m), driving over the Dochu La Pass (alt 3,088m) before descending into the subtropical Punakha valley and then resuming the climb to Gangtey to reach there late afternoon.

ACCOMMODATION

[Connoisseur : Amankora Gangtey](#)

[Explorer : Dewachen Hotel](#)

DAY 4 | GANGTEY

Site of the sheltered Phobjika valley, wintering ground of the rare black-necked crane, the day's sightseeing takes in the revered 16th century Gangtey monastery, villages and grand scenery.

You may choose to explore the area on foot, with a picnic lunch.

DAY 5 | GANGTEY/ TRONGSA/ BUMTHANG

Drive further east to Bumthang (164 km/6 hours plus stops, alt 2,575m - 4,500m), the journey marked by the crossing of two spectacular passes, Pele La (3,420m) and Yutong La (3,400m).

Pause en route at Trongsa, home of the Wangchuk dynasty who have ruled Bhutan since 1907.

Visit the 16th century Trongsa Dzong, the dynasty's seat of power and the 15th century Trongsa monastery.

DAY 6 & 7 | BUMTHANG

The junction of four high valleys, Bumthang is the religious and cultural heart of Bhutan highlighted by the ancient and now restored 7th century Jambey Lhakhang monastery, the great Jakar Dzong, villages, markets and fine hand woven textiles. Explore the valleys where nomadic herders and caravans may be seen, and take optional walks with picnic lunches.

ACCOMMODATION

[Connoisseur : Amankora Bumthang](#)

[Explorer : Mountain Lodge](#)

DAY 8 | BUMTHANG/ PUNAKHA

Head back west, driving through the day to Punaka (218 km/7 hours, alt 1,300m).

DAY 9 | PUNAKHA AND WANGDIPHODRANG

Explore Punakha, national capital till 1955, situated idyllically along the confluence of the Mo Chu and Pho Chu rivers and dominated by the Punakha Dzong, probably Bhutan's grandest. Amidst the rice paddies is Chimi Lhakang, the temple of the Divine Madman, the essence of Punakha.

ACCOMMODATION

[Connoisseur : Uma Punakha](#)

[Explorer : Meri Puensum Resort](#)

DAY 10 | PUNAKHA/ PARO

Drive across the Dochu La Pass once more, and via Thimphu, en route to Paro (131 km/5 hours plus stops).

DAY 11 | PARO

Morning viewing of the awesome Taktsang, the Tiger's Nest monastery, with an optional walk to its breathtakingly precipitous location - an unforgettable accomplishment. Afternoon tour of the excellent Ta Dzong National Museum and the 7th century Kyichu Lhakhang monastery, the oldest in Bhutan and the harbinger of Buddhism.

ACCOMMODATION
[Connoisseur : Zhiwa Ling](#)
[Explorer : Udumwara Resort](#)

DAY 12 | PARO/ HA/ PARO

Day excursion to the recently opened western valley of Ha (alt 2,850m, 120 km roundtrip/3 hours' drive each way), crossing the breathtaking Chele La Pass (3,810m) on the outward and return journeys. Remote and deep, it is the second of Bhutan's least populated areas and is settled by farmers and herders.

DAY 13 | DEPART PARO

Depart Paro on Druk Airways for your onward destination.

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