

Day 1: Arrival in Paro, head to Thimphu



Welcome to Bhutan, the Land of the Thunder Dragon. Touching down at Paro International Airport, you will be greeted by your guide upon exiting the arrival hall. Today, we will take it easy to acclimatise to the altitude. Drive to Thimphu, check in to the hotel and let's have your first taste of Bhutanese cuisine.



Buddha Point - Located at Kuenselphodrang Nature Park, the 169 feet bronze statue of Buddha Dordenma, Vajra Throne Buddha makes it one of the largest statue of Buddha in the world. The Buddha Dordenma symbolizes indestructibility, and it is said to emanate an aura of peace and happiness to the entire world. The Buddha statue will be completed soon, currently awaiting for the completed paintings but visitors can drive up to the Buddha point and view the tallest statue of Lord Buddha.



National Memorial Chorten- Meet the elderly generation in circumambulation at the National Memorial Chorten.

Chorten means 'Seat of Faith' and Buddhists often call such monuments, the 'Mind of Buddha'. Treat yourself with the fantastic depiction of Buddhist teachings in the form of paintings and sculptures at this temple. As the name denotes this National Memorial Chorten was consecrated on July 28, 1974, in memory of the Third King.

Shop and walk around Thimphu town.

Hotels in Thimphu

Head to Dochula Pass early in the morning. We head down to Punakha, the ancient capital of Bhutan, about 2 1/2 hours

drive from Thimphu across Dochu-la pass. Once you cross the pass, you wind down into a warm fertile valley and meander

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Dochula Pass - At 3,050 meter, this beautiful pass located on the way to Punakha from Thimphu offers a stunning 360-degree panoramic view of Himalayas mountain range with its 108 chortens that was

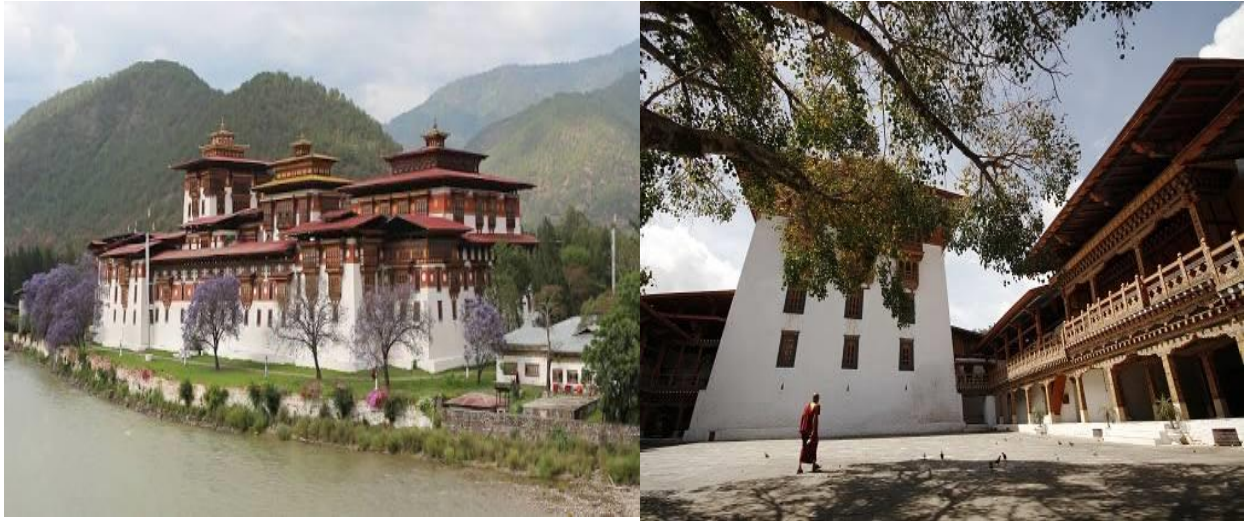


built by Her Majesty The Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck. The pass is also a popular spiritual destination for both locals and tourists.



Chhimi Lhakhang- The Divine Madman, Drukpa Kinley is a famous teacher with whom the phallic symbol is associated. Tales told by your guide would have excited you to visit Chhimi Lhakhang. The Divine Madman sits there though a statue this time. Do not miss the master's deeds painted on the walls. Japanese and

several American couples visited
this temple and were blessed miraculously with children.



Punakha Dzong - Placed strategically at the junction of the Pho Chu and Mo Chu rivers, the Dzong was built in 1637

by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal to serve as the religious and administrative seat of the region. It was here that the dual system of government was introduced in the 17th century and in 1907, enthroned the first King Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck.

Damaged over the centuries by four catastrophic fires and an earthquake, the Dzong has been fully restored in the recent years by the 4th King Jigme Singye Wangchuck.

At the Dzong enriches your trip with the opportunity to see the highest standards in woodwork. Do not miss the massive

Kuenray, the Coronation Hall of all Bhutanese kings, the Dzongchung at the entrance to the Dzong and the cantilever bridge over the Mochu that has been recently renovated.



Pho Chhu Suspension Bridge- The 160 metres Pho Chhu Suspension Bridge is known for the longest suspension bridge in Bhutan, which gives you spectacular views of Punakha Dzong and the Pho Chhu Valley.

Hotels in Punakha

Paro Valley - The beautiful valley is home to many of Bhutan's old monasteries and temples. The valley is also home to Mount Chomolhari (7,300 meters) situated at the northern end of the valley whose glacier water forms the Pachu flowing through the valley.



Paro Dzong (aka Ringpung Dzong)- Explore the Rinpung Dzong, which the locals call the 'fortress of a heap of

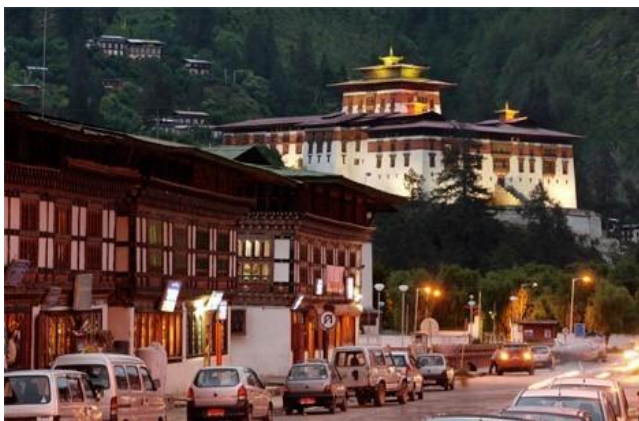
jewels'. Built in 1646 by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, the dzong stands on a hill above Paro Township. It is linked by the traditional cantilever bridge (called the Nemi Zam) over the Pa Chu where one may pose a photograph. Experience a walk up a stone paved path running alongside the imposing outer walls. Once inside the Dzong, you will be welcomed by the monks, architecture and the ancient frescoes.



National Museum (Ta Dzong)- On a ridge immediately above Rinpung Dzong is Ta Dzong, originally built as a watchtower. In 1968, Ta Dzong was inaugurated as the first National Museum, and now holds a fascinating collection of art, relics, religious thangka paintings, Bhutan's exquisite postage stamps, coins and handicrafts, together with a small natural history collection. Start or end your trip with a visit to this marvellous museum.



Kyichu Lhakhang - Also known as Kyerchu Temple or Lho Kyerchu, is the oldest temple in Bhutan. Just like Jambhay Lhakhang in Bumthang, it is one of the 108 temples built by the Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo to subdue and pin down an ogress that was obstructing the spread of Buddhism. According to legend, all 108 temples were built in a single night. Go back in time and history and visit the 7th century Kyichhu temple. As the name suggests, the temple is a reservoir of peace, where you will feel at peace here. Next to the temple is the house that is turned into a museum dedicated to the late Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. One can come across photographs and other artifacts belonging to Rinpoche.



Paro Town - Explore the main street of Paro town and check out if there's anything you will like to pick up as a souvenir!
Hotels in Paro

Day 4: Paro



One of the highlights of the trip, is the hike to Taktsang Monastery, the most sacred monastery in Bhutan. To conquer this hike, all you need is good stamina and the will and at the end of the hike, you can relax by taking a hot stone bath

Taktsang Monastery- Often called the Tiger's Nest, perched on the cliffs, has awestruck many a visitor. "Trip to Bhutan is never complete without climbing to Taktsang", says one tourist. Indeed, it's true as the journey there fills you with spiritual bliss. For those not choosing the spiritual side, it is the dramatic, artistically built monument that becomes a hiker's

delight. Take a trip to this dramatically set Buddhist relic hanging from a cliff. Experience the uphill climb as you ascend

more than two thousand feet from the valley floor.

A prominent Himalayan Buddhist sacred site and temple complex located on the cliff side of Paro Valley. According to

legends, it is believed that Guru Rinpoche flew to this location from Tibet on the back of a Tigress (his consort Yeshey

Tshogyal) and meditated in one of the caves. Guru Rinpoche performed meditation and emerged in eight manifestations,

and the place became holy, thus gaining the name Tiger's Nest.



Hot Stone Bath- You can go for a locally own Hot Stone Bath, which can take four people at one time. This bath will help loosen your joints, release muscle tension and invoke a profound sense of relaxation. The cost is approximately USD 25 per person.

Hotels in Paro

Day 5: Departure