

BHUTAN with TRIBAL TRUST

TRIP DATES:

October 10th to October 18th, 2025



Day 1 – Oct 10 (Friday): Arrive Paro (7,600ft) • Flight - BANGKOK/PARO

Today, we depart to Bhutan and as we near Bhutan (and if the weather is clear), we can see the massive peaks of the eastern Himalayas, including Kanchenchunga - 28,169ft (third highest mountain in the world) and Bhutan's own holy mountain, Chomolhari - 24,035ft.

Upon arrival in Paro, your Bhutan visa will be stamped into your passport. Our guide & driver will receive you at the exit point with your name placard. We will drive you straight to Thimphu for an hour & check into your hotel where we will check you in to freshen up and also have lunch in the hotel.

Our first stop after lunch will be the **Royal Textile Academy & the Museum** – The institution is dedicated to preserve and promote the Bhutanese textiles in particular and the thirteen arts in general as well as strive to promote the unique culture and traditions of Bhutan by creating international awareness and encouraging international collaboration to promote mutually beneficial exhibits and educational programs.

Next visit the Bhutan's post office next to the Bhutan National Bank office. A visit to the **Bhutan Post Office** headquarters is a must if you are a stamp lover. Bhutan is believed to have some of the best postage stamps in the world. You can also get personalized postage stamps, just take along a Pen Drive with photo/s or the officer there will click your photo and print the stamps for you to mail a postcard to your loved ones at home. You can also buy lovely stamp albums for souvenirs.

In the evening, at the hotel Lobby over a cup of tea/coffee, your guide will have an orientation of the tour to Bhutan which will cover all aspects of the tour including sharing your interest and customize your trip as per your need & experience Bhutan

Overnight at Amankora, Thimphu (1 night)

Day 2 & 3 – Oct 11 & 12 (Sat & Sun): Drive to Gangtey (9,500ft) – 4 hours' drive

After breakfast, drive to Gangtey for next 4 hours, a dramatic drive following the course of the Thimphu Chu and Wang Chu (Wang River) on to the high mountain pass of Dochu La (10,334ft) which in good weather offers 360-degree vistas across 200 miles of Himalayan peak, Sights on the way include the view of one of Bhutan's first fortress monasteries, the 17th century Simtokha Dzong. Onward journey begins and drive via the picturesque Wangdiphodrang Dzong, carrying on the highway follows the scenic Dang Chhu before climbing through the forests of bamboo and oak, a small side road splinter off to the hidden Phobjikha Valley. The valley is named after the impressive Gangtey Monastery of the Nyingmapa Buddhist sect in central Bhutan, where the graceful Black-necked Cranes in Bhutan (*Grus nigricollis*) from the Tibetan Plateau visit the valley during the winter season to roost. These endangered birds arrive in the last week of October and they circle the Gangtey Monastery three times and also repeat the process while returning to Tibet in March. Enroute we will **hang our prayer flags** over Lawala Pass just before descending down to the valley of Gangtey filled with rhododendrons and dwarf bamboos thickets.

The broad valley with its best-known marshland in Bhutan, is popular for its scenic splendor and cultural uniqueness. The valley is rich in faunal biodiversity and has, apart from the globally threatened Black-necked Cranes *Grus nigricollis*.

Option to embark on a beautiful easy **Nature Trail Hike; Forest Bathing**

WALKING DISTANCE: 3.5 KM

WALKING HOURS: 2 HRS LEISURELY

ELEVATION LOSS: 400 M

The trail hike starts from the Mani stone wall to the north of the Gangtey Gonpa and ends in Khewa Lhakhang. This hike which takes you through the pine forest and small bamboo plants secured with lichens, offering you a spectacular view of the Phobjikha Valley and the wetlands here with Black Necked cranes flocking over and around in the months of November till end of February. We will come across some rural white washed farmhouses, walk through the pine woods and then follow the ridgeline and descend down the valley. We will visit the **Crane Centre** to learn more about these revered birds and how the people are coexisting and living in harmony with them.

Overnight at Gangtey Lodge (2 nights)

Day 5 – Oct 14 (Tuesday): Explore Punakha – 3 hours' drive.

After breakfast, we will drive down to Punakha Valley. This district has been inextricably linked with momentous occasions in Bhutanese history. It served as the capital of the country from 1637 to 1907 and the first national assembly was hosted here in 1953. It is the second oldest and second largest dzong (fort) in Bhutan and one of the most majestic structures in the country. On October 13, 2011, the wedding of the King of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, and Queen, Jetsun Pema, was held at the Punakha Dzong.

Punakha valley has a pleasant climate with warm winters and hot summers. It is located at an average elevation of 1200 meters above sea level. Owing to the favorable climatic conditions, rice grows very well in this region and is the main cash crop cultivated here. Two major rivers in Bhutan the Pho Chhu and Mo Chhu converge in this valley.

We will reach the village of Sopsokha in Punakha where we will have lunch after which we will **hike to Chimi Lhakhang** which is an easy walk-through field and a clustered village homes and local souvenir shops filled with phalluses;

WALKING DISTANCE: 2 KM RETURN
ELEVATION GAIN: 50 M

WALKING HOURS: 2 HRS RETURN
ELEVATION LOSS: 50 M

Chimi Lhakhang was built in dedication to Drukpa Kuenley, the Divine Madman who was famed widely for his irreverent methods of teaching the dharma some 500 years ago. He is the saint who advocated the use of phallus symbols as paintings on walls and as flying carved wooden phalluses on house tops at four corners. There are souvenir shops around with many displays of phalluses and gifts to take back home.

DAY 7- OCT 15 (TUES) EXPLORE PUNAKHA

In the morning, we will drive further north to the Habisa Bridge spanning over the Mo Chhu (river) from where you will start your beautiful **Hike to Khamsum Yulley Namgyel Chorten** through fields of rice and organic gardens filed with beans and chillies and farmhouses scattered around. It's a gentle climb on a winding pathway up to the temple.

WALKING DISTANCE: 3.5 KM RETURN
RETURN

WALKING HOURS: 2 HOURS

ELEVATION GAIN: 200 M

ELEVATION LOSS: 200 M

The walk starts from the bridge and gradually winding through fields of paddies and beans and many white dotted Bhutanese houses in sight along the way through pine trees. Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten was built in dedication to the King, country and for the wellbeing of Bhutanese. It is a fine example of Bhutanese architecture majestically located in idyllic countryside north of Punakha. The temple is a 3 storied structure and is 30-meter (100-feet) tall with all sorts of deities imaginable inside the shrines! It took about eight and a half years to build. From the roof top of the shrine, you will have an amazing view the surrounding mountains with Mochhu meandering down the valley of Punakha. We walk back the same trail and then head out to enjoy your Picnic Lunch in the exclusive campsite by the riverside with a good view of the surrounding valley and the mountains around.

Afternoon we will drive down to visit the impressive **Punakha Dzong** built at the confluence of two rivers and is an especially beautiful sight on sunny days with sunlight reflecting off the water onto its whitewashed walls. In addition to its structural beauty, Punakha Dzong is notable for containing the preserved remains of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, the unifier of Bhutan as well as a sacred relic known as the Ranjung Karsapani. This relic is a self-created image of Avalokiteswara that miraculously emerged from the vertebrae of Tsangpa Gyarey the founder of the Drukpa School when he was cremated.

Overnight at River Lodge (2 nights)

Day 6 – Oct 15 (Wednesday): Towards the Capital, Thimphu (7,800ft)

Our drive today and we ascend up over winding roads across 10,000ft Dochula where on the clear day you will be treated with a visit of 108 stupas adorning the landscape and the amazing views of the eastern Himalayas of Bhutan in the backdrop.

As we descend towards Thimphu, we can see the oldest fort the Simtokha Dzong built in 1637 by Zhabdrung Rinpoche, the Unifier of Bhutan, this massive fortress holds some of the most sacred relics including the preserved remains of Zhabdrung himself. The central monk body of Bhutan moves from Punakha to Thimphu every spring to take avoid Punakha's hot summer.

Upon arrival, we drive up to see the tallest seated Buddha statue in the world facing towards the East, bestowing infinite love and compassion to all sentient beings in the spheres. The statue houses an enormous meditational house in the base and two storied chapels on the top floors. You will be fascinated at fine art works crafted by the local artisans. The site also offers a good view of the valley below. Option for a scenic hike around the Buddha or visit the gorgeous Hidden Monk Village Dodedrak.

Overnight at Zhiwa Ling Ascent (1 night)

Day 7 – Oct 16 (Thursday): Explore the capital city in Thimphu

Local shops entice with traditional weavings; Tibetan and Bhutanese silverwork; coral and turquoise beads and prayer flags. A number of cottage industries, including metalworking and paper making, are found in Thimphu, and visitors often enjoy visiting their workshops to see artisans practicing their craft. Depending upon the interest of the group, there are couple of major sightseeing; National Textile Museum, where Bhutan's finest weavings and brocades are on display is a must see! There's also the School of Zorigchusum, where students undergo 4 years training in traditional arts and crafts and the Jungshi Paper Factory, where you can observe the delicate artistry involved in creating deh- sho, or locally handmade paper. Evening drive to Paro

OR

Drive to Paro valley and upon reaching the valley, ascend up to the most obvious National Museum of Bhutan located inside the Ta Dzong which once acted as the watch tower for the Paro Dzong below. The museum houses the historical and cultural artifacts, rich flora and fauna collections with a good view of the valley below. Few minutes' drive below is the Paro Rinpung Dzong. Admire the impressive architecture of the Paro Dzong, a stronghold that once defended the country from Tibetan invasions. Eventually, end your day with a walk down from the Dzong towards Buddhist Art Gallery where you may chance to see local artisans working on their paintings.

Afternoon, we visit the Duntse Lhakhang, one of the sacred temples built in the Himalayan region over the areas of Tibet and Bhutan by the Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo. This temple reflects the introduction of Buddhism in the kingdom. See the ancient murals on the walls still well preserved.

Evening – we participate in making of 'Tsa Tsa' - mini stupas, which we will take next day for our Tiger Nest hike and offer/place with brief prayers for oneself and all sentient beings.

Day 8 – Oct 17 (Friday): Taktsang “Tiger Nest” Excursion



After early breakfast, drive back to Paro and we embark on our hike to Taktsang-The Tiger's Nest. This serene monastery clings to a steep granite cliff about 700 meters above the valley floor. Legend has it that the Guru Padmasamhava flew to this rocky cave in the 8th century to meditate. He flew here on the back of a tigress hence the name. Being one of the most revered pilgrim sites, many thousands of pilgrims come here every year, some walking for a month to reach here. The surrounding area has many temples, monasteries and cells where many monks, nuns and lay people can meditate-some even for a life time. Although we are not allowed inside the monastery, we can hike up to the view point, where a cafeteria is situated. From here you can get a most spectacular and breath-taking view of Taktsang. It takes about 2 hours to get there and about 2 hours to return down (approx.).

Overnight at Zhiwa Ling Heritage (2 nights)

Day 9 – Oct 18 (Saturday): Depart Bhutan

- Flight - Paro/Bangkok

We bid farewell to our newfound friends of Bhutan. Your guide and driver will accompany you to the airport for your departure.

Tashi Delek!

Notes on itinerary:

This is a guideline for the travels across the Kingdom and the overall site seeing's are very flexible in terms of adding more cultural, religious and or nature/hiking experiences along the way in discussion with your guide.