



PARO SPRING FESTIVAL 8 DAYS

Detailed Itinerary

||Day 01|Arrival in Paro|

At the Paro International Airport, one of our representatives will receive you and escort you to the hotel. Rest of the will be at leisure.

Overnight at Hotel [-/L/D]

||Day 02|Hike to Taktsang, attend Paro Festival|

Hike Duration: 4.5 hours approx. (round trip)

Today we will hike to Taktsang Monastery and later attend Paro Festival and visit Drukgyel Dzong and Kyichu Lhakhang

Taktsang Monastery: Perched on the side of a vertical cliff at 3000 m altitude north of Paro, the beautiful Taktsang Monastery also known as the 'Tiger's Nest' is the most famous and an unofficial symbol of Bhutan.

Return to hotel for breakfast. Afterwards, attend the festival.

The Drukgyel Dzong was an administrative centre till 1951, until a fire caused by a butter lamp engulfed the Dzong and completely destroyed it. All that remains of the Dzong now are tokens of a haunted house, still robust walls and charred remains of gigantic wooden posts and beams.

Kyichu Lhakhang: Located close to the Paro Airport, the Kyichu Lhakhang is an important Himalayan Buddhist Temple. Built in the 7th century, this is one of Bhutan's oldest religious sites in Bhutan.

Overnight at Hotel [B/L/D]



||Day 03|Drive to Thimphu|

Distance: 53kms/ 32 miles

Drive Time: 1 hour approx.

Altitude: 2,350 m / 7,709 ft

Early morning rise to view the unfurling of the thongdrel (3-6 am), if it is to occur this year—it cannot be guaranteed. A thongdrel is a giant thangka. Most dzongs have one of their own which they exhibit only once a year or once in three years. We cannot know in advance if it will be shown this year. Viewing it is supposed to help accumulate great merit as well as liberate the viewer from the world of samsara (reincarnation or rebirth in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and other related religions). The thongdrel is unfurled before dawn and at the first rays of sunshine it is packed away. Afterwards, there are some dances and prayers.

After the unfurling, we return to the hotel for breakfast and drive to Thimphu. En route to Thimphu, visit **Simtokha Dzong**, which is believed to be the first dzong, built in Bhutan.

Once in Thimphu, check into the hotel. After freshening up visit the School of Traditional Arts and Crafts & the Memorial Chorten.

Visit the **School of Traditional Arts and Crafts**. The traditional crafts represent hundreds of years of knowledge and ability that has been passed down through generations. Visit the **National Institute of Traditional Medicine**: Established in 1988, the National Institute of Traditional Medicine strives to merge the allopathic and traditional systems of healing.

Also visit the **Memorial Chorten**, also known as the Thimphu Chorten is a large Tibetan-style Buddhist Monastery with golden spires and bells. It is a popular landmark and one of the most visible religious structures in Thimphu.

Overnight at Hotel [B/L/D]

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|Day 04| In Thimphu|

Today we will visit the following places in Thimphu

Visit the **Motithang Takin Preserve Center** and the **Kuensel Phodrang** or the Buddha point - the world's largest sitting Buddha statue, the statue is 167 feet high.

The National Library of Bhutan is a four-storied eight-cornered traditional building, which looks like the central tower temple of a Bhutanese Dzong.

The Folk Heritage Museum is set inside a 19th century three-storied traditional building and was established in 2001. The museum houses different tools, materials, objects, equipments and artifacts from rural Bhutanese households and gives a good insight of the traditional Bhutanese lifestyle.

Visit **Tashichho Dzong**. This dzong is an impressive building also known as 'the fortress of the Dharma Raja'. It has traditionally been the seat of the Druk Desi, the head of the Bhutan's civil government.

Note: Tashichho Dzong is open during weekdays after office hours (5pm onwards) and from 9am to 5pm on weekends.

Overnight at Hotel [B/L/D]

||Day 05| Drive to Punakha|

Distance: 76kms/ 47 miles

Drive Time: 3 hours approx.

Altitude: 1,300 m / 4,265 ft

Today we will visit the Dochula Pass, Chimi Lhakhang and Punakha Dzong.

On the way to Punakha from Thimphu, the Dochula Pass offers a 360-degree of beautiful panoramic view of the Himalayan mountain range, especially on clear winter days.

Once in Punakha visit **Chimi Lhakhang** flanked with hundreds of prayer flags seated on a round hillock near Punakha. The monastery, built in 1499 is dedicated to Lama Drukpa Kinley, also known as 'the Divine Madman' or the 'Mad Saint'.



Also visit the majestic **Punakha Dzong**, also known as 'the palace of great happiness or bliss' which is the second largest dzong in Bhutan.

Transfer to the hotel after the sightseeing.

Overnight at Hotel [B/L/D]

|| Day 06 | Day excursion to Gangtey |

Distance: 78kms/ 48 miles

Drive Time: 3 hours approx. (each way)

Altitude: 3,000 m / 9,842 ft

After an early breakfast, drive to Gangtey, a beautiful place situated at an altitude of 3000m. From Gangtey, one can closely view the picturesque black mountain ranges.

Visit Wangdue Dzong on the way.

Perched in a ridge overlooking the Punatsangchu and Dangchu rivers, **Wangdi Dzong** dominates the whole town of Wangdue Phrodang. The cultural wonders of the area also lie in the villages of Wangdi.

Once in Gangtey, explore the **Phobjika Valley**, a vast U-shaped glacial valley, also known as the Gangteng Valley named after the impressive **Gangteng Monastery**. It is the chosen winter home of the rare and graceful black necked cranes that flock here annually from the Tibetan plateau.

Transfer back to Punakha after the sightseeing.

Overnight at Hotel [B/L/D]



||Day 07|Drive from Punakha to Paro|

Distance: 143kms/ 88 miles

Drive Time: 4.5 - 5 hours approx.

Altitude: 2,250 m / 7,382 ft

Visit the National Museum and Paro Dzong.

The National Museum of Bhutan is a unique circular building also known as Ta-dzong which is an ancient watchtower above the Paro Dzong.

Paro Dzong, also known as Ringpung Dzong means 'Fortress on a heap of jewels'. This impressive dzong is the finest example of Bhutanese architecture and is one of the most popular and well known dzongs in Bhutan.

Evening is at leisure to stroll around in Paro.

Overnight at Hotel [B/L/D]

||Day 08|Final Departure|

Today you will be transferred to the airport for your onward journey.

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-End of Program-