

Bhutan Wildlife & Birding Tour: Phobjikha & Jigme Dorji

Prepared by TourGrids



Destination
Bhutan



Duration
5 Nights 6 Days



Starting from
Rs. 60,000 / person

ITINERARY ROUTE

↙ **Paro · 2N**

↙ **Thimphu · 1N**

↙ **Phobjikha · 2N**

Overview

A focused 5-night, 6-day Bhutan tour package ideal for nature lovers, birdwatchers and those seeking serene Himalayan valleys. This Bhutan Pilgrimage tour package blends wildlife and spiritual highlights across Phobjikha (Gangtey) and the scenic corridors of Jigme Dorji National Park, offering excellent birding, wetland ecology, and cultural encounters.

Highlights:

- Phobjikha Valley (Gangtey) – renowned for its wetlands and black-necked cranes
- Jigme Dorji National Park viewpoints and easy forest trails
- Dochu La Pass panoramas with Himalayan views
- Gangtey / Gangtey Monastery (Gangtey Goenpa)
- Paro Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) and Paro valley cultural sites
- Birding: opportunities to spot Black-necked Crane, Himalayan monal, Tripple species, and mixed forest birds

This 5-night, 6-day Bhutan Pilgrimage package is designed for small groups and private travelers seeking an immersive wildlife & birding experience with cultural context.

✓ What's Included

- ✓ Accommodation for 5 nights in listed hotels or similar (twin/double basis)
- ✓ All meals as per itinerary (breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- ✓ Private vehicle, fuel and drivers throughout the tour
- ✓ Experienced English-speaking guide with local birding/wildlife knowledge
- ✓ All domestic transfers and sightseeing as mentioned
- ✓ National park and wetland entry fees where applicable
- ✓ Permits and administrative fees included (visa support)
- ✓ Basic first-aid kit and emergency assistance
- ✓ Note: Customization for private or small-group birding leaders available on request.

✗ Not Included

- ✗ International airfare to/from Bhutan
- ✗ Bhutan visa fee and any required Sustainable Development Fee or government royalties (if applicable) – to be paid as per Bhutan government regulations
- ✗ Travel insurance and personal expenses (drinks, tips, laundry, phone calls)
- ✗ Optional activities (e.g., full Tiger's Nest hike porter fee, horseback rental) unless specified
- ✗ Camera/video permits where required
- ✗ Any COVID-19 testing, vaccination certificates, or other health-related requirements
- ✗ Important: Please check up-to-date visa and health entry requirements before travel.

Day-by-Day Itinerary

Day

1

Arrival in Paro & Orientation

Arrive at Paro International Airport. Meet your guide and transfer to your hotel. Afternoon orientation walk in Paro town visiting Paro Dzong (Rinpung Dzong) and the traditional market. Pre-trip briefing and equipment check for birding/trekking gear.

Tip: Light walking shoes and layered clothing are recommended as temperatures can vary by altitude.

Day

2

Paro: Cultural Sites & Valley Birding

Half-day birding in the Paro valley early morning searching for resident hill birds and forest edge species. After lunch, visit the iconic Paro Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) viewpoint (or short hike to the base viewpoint depending on time and fitness). Evening free for rest or optional village walk.

Important: The full hike to Tiger's Nest takes 3–4 hours round trip; consider acclimatization and a slow pace.

Day

3

Drive to Phobjikha via Thimphu, Dochu La & Punakha

Drive to Thimphu with a short city visit to see Tashichho Dzong and the Buddha Dordenma viewpoint. Continue to Dochu La Pass (3,100 m) for panoramic Himalayan scenes. Descend via Punakha valley and onward to Phobjikha (Gangtey). Evening introduction to the valley wetlands—ideal for dusk bird activity and a first look for migratory species.

Note: Long scenic drive (6–7 hours total). Breaks and birding stops included.

Day

4

Full Day: Phobjikha Valley & Gangtey Monastery Birding

Full day dedicated to birding the Phobjikha wetlands and surrounding conifer forests inside the Jigme Dorji ecological corridor. Guided walks on valley trails, visit Gangtey Monastery (Gangtey Goenpa), and explore Pelri or nearby local meadows. Focus on spotting the iconic Black-necked Crane (seasonal), raptors, woodpeckers, and Himalayan passerines.

Special: Early morning and late afternoon are prime birding windows; bring binoculars and a field guide.

Day

5

Morning Birding & Return to Paro

Early morning birding session in Phobjikha for any missed species. After breakfast, drive back to Paro with stops for landscape photography and short walks in forest pockets along the route. Evening at leisure in Paro—final souvenir shopping or an optional cultural program.

Tip: Keep cameras and optics accessible during the drive for roadside birding opportunities.

Day

6

Paro: Departure or Extra Pilgrimage Options

Depending on your flight schedule, morning options include a guided short hike to the Tiger's Nest (if not done earlier), a visit to Kyichu Lhakhang, or a final birding session in the Paro valley. Transfer to Paro International Airport for departure.

Optional extension: Combine with a 5 or 6 Bhutan Pilgrimage tour package add-on visiting Punakha, Dochula, and sacred temples for deeper spiritual exploration.

? Frequently Asked Questions

? What is the best time to visit Bhutan?

The best time to visit Bhutan is during spring (March–May) and autumn (September–November). Spring offers blooming rhododendrons, wildflowers, and pleasant temperatures (12–24°C), making it perfect for trekking and photography. Autumn provides crystal-clear skies with stunning Himalayan views, major festivals like Thimphu and Paro Tshechus, and excellent weather for sightseeing. Winter (December–February) is ideal for those seeking snow-capped landscapes, fewer crowds, and cozy lodge stays, though temperatures can drop to -2°C in valleys. Monsoon season (June–August) brings lush greenery and better hotel rates but frequent rainfall. For first-time visitors, autumn is recommended for clear mountain views and cultural festivals.

? How can Indian travelers reach Bhutan?

Indian travelers can reach Bhutan by road or air. By road (most popular): Enter at Phuentsholing border (adjacent to Jaigaon, West Bengal). From there, it's 5–6 hours to Thimphu or Paro. Take train to Hasimara (17km from border), New Alipurduar, or New Jalpaiguri, then taxi to the border. By air: Fly into Paro International Airport from Delhi, Kolkata, Guwahati, or Bagdogra via Drukair or Bhutan Airlines (seasonal schedules). Other road entry points include Gelephu and Samdrup Jongkhar from Assam. The road journey offers scenic mountain views, while flying provides dramatic Himalayan aerial views during the approach to Paro's challenging runway.

❓ **Do Indian citizens need a visa for Bhutan?**

Indian citizens don't need a visa but require permits and pay a Sustainable Development Fee (SDF). Required documents: valid passport or voter ID and recent passport photos. Minors need birth certificates. Entry permits cover Thimphu and Paro, while route permits are needed for other areas like Punakha, Phobjikha, or Bumthang. Permits can be arranged at entry points or through the official online system via licensed operators. The SDF is charged per person per night (rates vary – check latest official guidelines). Travel insurance is strongly recommended. Carry multiple photocopies of documents and permits for smooth checkpoint processing throughout your journey.

❓ **What are the local transportation options in Bhutan?**

Local transportation in Bhutan includes taxis (readily available in major towns with point-to-point fares), city and intercity buses (budget-friendly with fixed schedules), and private cars with drivers (most comfortable for multi-stop itineraries). Shared taxis are common for intercity routes. Limited domestic flights operate seasonally to places like Bumthang, weather permitting. Self-drive is possible but less common due to challenging mountain roads requiring experience. For tourists, hiring a private vehicle with driver is recommended for flexibility and comfort, especially when traveling between valleys. Mountain roads are winding with stunning views but require buffer time for transfers.

❓ **Where should I stay in Bhutan and what accommodation options are available?**

Bhutan offers accommodations across all budgets. Luxury options include Six Senses (eco-chic in multiple valleys), COMO Uma (boutique luxury in Paro/Punakha), Amankora lodges, and Taj Tashi Thimphu. Mid-range choices include Le Méridien properties, Naksel Boutique Hotel Paro, and Dewachen Hotel Phobjikha. Budget travelers can choose Hotel Norbuling Thimphu or local guesthouses. Stay in Paro for Tiger's Nest access, Thimphu for urban experiences, Punakha for riverside tranquility, and Phobjikha for nature immersion. Many properties offer traditional architecture, valley views, and cultural experiences. Book advance during peak seasons (spring/autumn) and festivals. Most hotels provide heating in winter and arrange cultural programs.

🔍 What are the must-visit attractions in Bhutan?

Must-visit attractions include Paro Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) – the iconic cliffside monastery requiring a scenic half-day hike. Punakha Dzong is a stunning fortress at river confluence, while Dochula Pass offers 108 chortens and Himalayan panoramas. Buddha Dordenma in Thimphu provides valley views, and Phobjikha Valley is perfect for black-necked crane spotting (winter) and tranquil walks. Don't miss Chimi Lhakhang fertility temple via village walks, Chele La Pass (highest motorable pass), and Tashichho Dzong in Thimphu. Bumthang valleys offer spiritual sites and traditional culture. The National Museum in Paro showcases Bhutanese heritage. Plan 7-10 days for a classic Paro-Thimphu-Punakha-Phobjikha circuit.

🔍 What local food should I try in Bhutan?

Bhutanese cuisine is known for its spiciness and cheese-based dishes. Must-try dishes include Ema Datshi (chilies with cheese – the national dish), Kewa Datshi (potatoes with cheese), and Shamu Datshi (mushrooms with cheese). Try Phaksha Paa (pork with chilies), Jasha Maru (spicy minced chicken), and regional specialties like Hoentay buckwheat dumplings from Haa and Puta buckwheat noodles from Bumthang. Enjoy red rice, suja (butter tea), and local ara (spirit). Bumthang is famous for cheese and honey. Note that Bhutanese food is quite spicy – chilies are considered vegetables, not just spices. Most restaurants also serve Indian, Chinese, and continental options for those preferring milder flavors.

★ Traveller Reviews



Nisha Awasthi

★★★★★ 5/5

Discovering the Spirit of Bhutan

Exploring the monasteries and learning about Buddhism here was enlightening. This package offers a great spiritual experience.



Vikas Bansal

★★★★☆ 4/5

Serene Himalayan Escape

The tranquility and beauty of Bhutan was such a peaceful escape from the hustle of daily life. It's truly a gem!



Radha Shetty

★★★★★ 5/5

A Fantastic Discover of Bhutanese Culture

This was a fantastic tour that let us discover Bhutanese culture in depth. We participated in a local festival—unforgettable!



Vinay Malhotra

★★★★★ 5/5

Bhutan: Truly the Land of the Thunder Dragon

I was captivated by Bhutan's rugged beauty and rich traditions. Each experience was enriched by our guide's storytelling. Loved it!



Chaitanya Joshi

★★★★☆ 4/5

Well-Structured Travel Itinerary

The itinerary was perfect, balancing sightseeing and relaxation. With so much to explore, this package was excellent value.

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