

Photographer's Bhutan: Mountain Passes, Valleys & Dzongs

Prepared by TourGrids



Destination
Bhutan



Duration
6 Nights 7 Days



Starting from
Rs. 85,000 / person

ITINERARY ROUTE

↖ **Thimphu · 2N**

↖ **Punakha · 1N**

↖ **Phobjikha · 1N**

↖ **Paro · 2N**

Overview

Photographer's Bhutan: Mountain Passes, Valleys & Dzongs is a focused 6 nights / 7 days Bhutan tour package designed for photographers and nature lovers. This Bhutan Adventure tour package covers iconic mountain passes, verdant valleys, ancient dzongs, and the dramatic cliff-hung Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) – delivering picture-perfect frames at dawn and dusk. Highlights include:

- Paro: Paro Dzong, Paro Ta Dzong (National Museum), and the approach to Taktsang
- Thimphu: Buddha Dordenma, Memorial Chorten, local markets and craft workshops
- Dochu La Pass: 108 chortens framed by Himalayan panoramas
- Punakha: The riverside Punakha Dzong and rice terraces; khamsum yulley namgyel chorten river hike
- Phobjikha (Gangtey Valley): Glacial valley, black-necked crane habitat, and Gangtey Monastery

This 6 and 7 Bhutan Adventure tour package is paced to allow golden-hour photography sessions, short hikes to vantage points, and cultural encounters. Early morning and late-afternoon shooting opportunities, variable high-altitude weather, and modest walking on uneven trails are to be expected.

✓ What's Included

- ✓ Accommodation for 6 nights in 3-4 hotels (single/twin/double options)
- ✓ Daily breakfast and 4 dinners
- ✓ All ground transportation in Bhutan with a private vehicle and driver
- ✓ Experienced English-speaking Bhutanese guide with photography-aware itinerary pacing
- ✓ Entrance fees to monuments and national museum
- ✓ One local SIM card and bottled water in vehicle
- ✓ All permits and government taxes required for standard tourist entry
- ✓ Assistance with domestic luggage transfers where possible

✗ Not Included

- ✗ International flights to/from Paro
- ✗ Bhutan visa and Sustainable Development Fee (SDF) if applicable (agent will advise)
- ✗ Travel insurance, personal expenses, meals not mentioned, camera hire
- ✗ Guide/driver gratuities (customary)
- ✗ Any additional activities or extensions not listed
- ✗ Drone permits and special photography permits where required
- ✗ Early check-in / late check-out charges unless pre-arranged

Day-by-Day Itinerary

Day

1

Arrival in Paro, Drive to Thimphu & Sunset Views

Arrive at Paro International Airport (morning or early afternoon). Scenic drive to Thimphu (approx. 1.5 hours) with photo stops along the valley. Check in to your hotel and rest. Late afternoon visit to Buddha Dordenma for panoramic sunset shots over the Thimphu valley, followed by a short stroll through the Thimphu market and handicraft shops. Light walking; acclimatize to altitude (2,320 m).

Day

2

Thimphu Cultural & Architectural Photography

Full day exploring Thimphu's cultural highlights: Memorial Chorten at dawn for peaceful light, the traditional Tashichho Dzong (official fortress), the weekend market (if applicable), and craft workshops for candid portraits. Afternoon visit to the Folk Heritage Museum and the Textile & Paintings Institutes. Plan for golden-hour shots along the dzong river banks. Drone use is restricted — check local rules.

Day

3

Drive to Punakha via Dochu La Pass — Mountain Pass Photography

Depart early and cross the scenic Dochu La Pass (3,100+ m) with its 108 chortens and panoramic Himalayan views — exceptional for wide-angle and panoramic shots. Descend into the subtropical Punakha Valley. Afternoon visit to Punakha Dzong set between the Pho Chhu and Mo Chhu rivers and an optional short riverbank walk to capture reflections and late light on the dzong. Weather can change fast at Dochu La; bring layers and rain protection for gear.

Day

4

Punakha: Dzong, Rice Terraces & Riverside Hike

Morning visit to Khamsum Yulley Namgyel Chorten (photogenic hilltop chorten) — the uphill approach offers framed valley views. Explore local villages and photogenic rice terrace patterns, and a riverside photography walk capturing local life and water reflections. Afternoon free for editing or optional short boat/river activities. Evening capture blue-hour shots of Punakha Dzong illuminated against the mountains. Modest uphill walks; comfortable footwear recommended.

Day

5

Phobjikha (Gangtey Valley): Scenic Drive & Valley Light

Drive to the glacial Phobjikha Valley (Gangtey) via scenic mountain roads and passes — ideal for telephoto and landscape photography. Afternoon exploration of Gangtey Monastery and valley vantage points at sunset. Capture sweeping valley panoramas, wetland habitats, and traditional farmsteads. If traveling in winter, watch for black-necked cranes; maintain distance and use long lenses.

Day

6

Return to Paro — Pre-Taktsang Prep & Cultural Stops

Drive back toward Paro with photo stops at mountain viewpoints and local villages. Afternoon visit to Paro Rinpung Dzong and the National Museum (Ta Dzong) to study artifacts and historical architecture for contextual shots. Prepare gear and energy for the next day's hike to Taktsang (Tiger's Nest)—check maps, porter availability, and weather. Start hydrating and rest early; the hike involves steep sections.

Day

7

Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) Hike, Final Shoots & Departure

Early-morning hike to Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) — arrive at dawn for the most dramatic light and crowd-minimized frames. Spend time shooting the monastery perched on the cliff edge and the layered valley below. After descent, final quick shoots in Paro town or a short drive for last-minute landscapes before transfer to Paro International Airport for late afternoon/evening departures. The Tiger's Nest hike is steep and can take 3–5 hours round-trip; plan for comfortable pace and sun/rain protection.

🔗 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.

⚡ Why Choose TourGrids?

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