

Bhutan Heritage & Nature: Dzongs, Monasteries & Crane Valley

Prepared by TourGrids



Destination
Bhutan



Duration
7 Nights 8 Days



Starting from
Rs. 1,10,000 / person

ITINERARY ROUTE

↙ **Paro · 3N**

↙ **Thimphu · 1N**

↙ **Punakha · 2N**

↙ **Phobjikha · 1N**

Overview

Bhutan Heritage & Nature: Dzongs, Monasteries & Crane Valley – an immersive 7 nights / 8 days Bhutan tour package that blends spiritual pilgrimage, historic dzongs, and pristine highland nature. This Bhutan Pilgrimage tour package is ideal for travelers seeking Bhutan’s living culture, majestic monasteries, and the famous Phobjikha (Crane) Valley. Highlights include the iconic Taktsang (Tiger’s Nest Monastery), the imposing Punakha Dzong, panoramic views at Dochula Pass, and the tranquil Gangtey Monastery in the Crane Valley.

Highlights:

- Taktsang (Tiger’s Nest Monastery) hike and viewpoint
- Punakha Dzong and Punakha suspension bridge
- Dochula Pass panoramic lookout and 108 memorial chortens
- Gangtey Monastery & Phobjikha (Crane) Valley nature walk
- Cultural visits: Paro Dzong, Tashichho Dzong, local markets and traditional farmhouse visit

This 7 nights 8 days Bhutan Pilgrimage package balances cultural sight-seeing with gentle nature walks. Best practiced with moderate fitness for hikes.

✓ What’s Included

- ✓ Accommodation for 7 nights in 3/4 hotels or lodges on twin/shared basis (upgrade options available)
- ✓ All airport transfers and land transportation in an air-conditioned vehicle
- ✓ Licensed English-speaking Bhutan guide for the entire tour
- ✓ All sightseeing, entrance fees, and standard permits required for the itinerary
- ✓ Daily breakfast, 4 lunches and 5 dinners (as per itinerary)
- ✓ Traditional welcome ceremony and cultural program (subject to availability)
- ✓ Government taxes and local levies
- ✓ Optional upgrades (hotels, private transfers) can be arranged on request.

✗ Not Included

- ✗ International flights to/from Bhutan
- ✗ Bhutan visa/permit processing fees if not arranged by the operator; personal travel insurance
- ✗ Meals not specified in inclusions and all beverages
- ✗ Tips/gratuities for guide and driver
- ✗ Optional activities and personal expenses (laundry, phone calls, etc.)
- ✗ Any emergency costs, medical evacuation, or COVID-related testing/quarantine charges
- ✗ Please note: Travelers should carry valid passports and any required health documents.

Day-by-Day Itinerary

Day

1

Arrival in Paro & Heritage Orientation

Arrive at Paro International Airport. Meet your English-speaking Bhutanese guide and transfer to your hotel. After freshening up, enjoy a relaxed orientation walk in Paro town: visit Paro Dzong and the National Museum (watchtower) with panoramic views over the valley. Evening briefing about the pilgrimage elements of the tour and Bhutanese customs.

Overnight in Paro.

Day

2

Hike to Taktsang (Tiger's Nest Monastery)

Full day devoted to the iconic Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest). Drive to the trailhead and begin a scenic hike (approx. 2–3 hours one-way, moderate). Stop at the cafeteria viewpoint for the classic photograph of the monastery perched on the cliff. Explore the monastery complex and attend brief prayers if available. Return to Paro with optional visit to a local farmhouse for a cultural exchange.

Important: The hike is moderate — bring comfortable walking shoes and layered clothing.

Day

3

Scenic Drive to Thimphu — Capital Sights

Drive from Paro to Thimphu (approx. 1.5–2 hours). En route, stop at Simtokha Dzong (if open). In Thimphu, visit the Memorial Chorten, Tashichho Dzong (administrative & monastic fortress), the giant Buddha Dordenma statue (viewpoint), and the Folk Heritage Museum. Evening stroll through Thimphu market; enjoy traditional Bhutanese dinner.

Overnight in Thimphu.

Day

4

Dochula Pass, Chimi Lhakhang & Drive to Punakha

Depart Thimphu for Punakha, crossing the scenic Dochula Pass (3,100m) with 108 chortens and Himalayan views (weather permitting). Continue to Wangdue Phodrang to visit the town viewpoint, then to Chimi Lhakhang — the Fertility Temple — where pilgrims receive blessings. Arrive in Punakha and visit the riverside Punakha Dzong at sunset when the light is spectacular.

Note: Altitude is moderate at Dochula; carry water and a light jacket.

Day

5

Punakha Valley — Dzong, Suspension Bridge & Local Villages

Morning visit to Punakha Dzong (if not visited the previous day) and walk across the hanging suspension bridge to the opposite bank. Explore traditional rice terraces and visit a nearby village and farmhouse for a cultural immersion and home-cooked tea. Optional short hike to the Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten for views over the valley.

Overnight in Punakha.

Day

6

Drive to Phobjikha (Crane Valley) & Gangtey Monastery

Drive to the highland Phobjikha Valley (approx. 3–4 hours). Enter the pristine wetland valley known for the endangered Black-necked Cranes (seasonal, Nov–Feb). Visit the impressive Gangtey Monastery and enjoy a guided nature walk across the valley floor to learn about crane conservation and local ecology. Evening cultural talk about the valley's spiritual importance.

Seasonal note: Crane sightings are more likely between November and February.

Day

7

Return to Paro — Final Cultural Stops

Drive back to Paro (long scenic drive of approx. 5–6 hours) with stops en route for rest and photographs. Arrive in Paro in the late afternoon; free time for last-minute shopping at the handicraft shops and a farewell dinner featuring traditional Bhutanese cuisine and a cultural performance (subject to availability).

Overnight in Paro.

Day

8

Departure from Paro — Farewell Bhutan

Transfer to Paro International Airport for your departure flight. If time allows, quick visit to any missed local sites or a short walk in Paro town.

Safe travels — end of 7 nights / 8 days Bhutan Pilgrimage package.

? 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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