

Grand Bhutan Panorama: Eastern Highlands & Cultural Treasures

Prepared by TourGrids

 Destination
Bhutan

 Duration
9 Nights 10 Days

 Starting from
Rs. 1,80,000 / person

ITINERARY ROUTE

 Paro · 2N

 Thimphu · 2N

 Punakha · 2N

 Bumthang · 2N

 Trashigang · 1N

Overview

A curated 9-night / 10-day Bhutan Adventure tour package designed for travelers seeking the perfect blend of highland adventure, spiritual landmarks, and living cultural heritage. This Bhutan Adventure package covers the iconic western highlights and extends deep into the Eastern Highlands, offering panoramic mountain views, dzongs, ancient temples, and traditional villages.

Highlights:

- Hike to Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) – Paro
- Buddha Dordenma & Thimphu cultural trail – Thimphu
- Dochula Pass & Punakha Valley – Punakha
- Historic Trongsa Dzong & Bumthang valleys – Trongsa & Bumthang
- Eastern Highlands experience (Trashigang region) – Eastern Bhutan

Important: Internal flight schedules and mountain weather can affect the route; flexibility is built into the itinerary.

✓ **What's Included**

- ✓ Accommodation for 9 nights in comfortable 3/4 hotels and traditional lodges (twin/double basis)
- ✓ Daily breakfast and selected meals as per itinerary
- ✓ All ground transportation in Bhutan with private vehicle and driver
- ✓ Experienced English-speaking Bhutanese guide
- ✓ Entrance fees, cultural site permits and local taxes
- ✓ Bhutan visa processing and government clearance (and applicable Sustainable Development Fees where included) – subject to government policy and seasonal changes
- ✓ Domestic transfers within Bhutan as per itinerary
- ✓ Emergency assistance and 24/7 local support

✗ **Not Included**

- ✗ International flights to/from Bhutan
- ✗ Travel insurance (mandatory)
- ✗ Visa for entry to India/Bhutan where applicable (if not included)
- ✗ Personal expenses, laundry, and gratuities
- ✗ Optional activities (white-water rafting, special cultural experiences) unless specified
- ✗ Any government fees or taxes introduced after booking
- ✗ Meals not specified in the itinerary

Day-by-Day Itinerary

Day

1

Arrival in Paro & First Impressions

Arrive at Paro International Airport, meet your guide and transfer to the hotel. Spend the afternoon relaxing and take an introductory walk around Paro town. Visit the Paro Dzong (Rinpung Dzong) and the National Museum to get a primer on Bhutanese art, history and royal heritage.

Meals: Dinner included. Tip: Allow time to acclimatize to altitude (2,200 m).

Day

2

Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) Hike – Paro's Iconic Landmark

A morning hike to the sacred Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest) – Bhutan's most iconic pilgrimage site perched dramatically on a cliff. Enjoy panoramic views of the Paro valley and learn the legend behind Guru Rinpoche. Afternoon at leisure for optional village walks or traditional farmhouse visit.

Fitness note: The hike is moderately challenging (3–4 hours round trip). Wear sturdy shoes and carry water.

Day

3

Drive to Thimphu via Scenic Route

Depart Paro and drive to Thimphu, the capital city. En route stop at the viewpoint for Wangchuck Centennial Park and enjoy views of the Himalayan foothills. Afternoon visit to Tashichho Dzong, Buddha Dordenma statue, and the bustling handicraft market.

Highlight: Sunset views from the Buddha Dordenma overlook are spectacular.

Day

4

Thimphu Cultural Immersion

Full day exploring Thimphu's cultural treasures: National Memorial Chorten, Folk Heritage Museum, Takin Preserve, and local artisan workshops for weaving, woodcarving and painting. Evening free to stroll the lively core of town.

Note: Engage with local artisans – many workshops welcome visitors and small donations support community crafts.

Day

5

Dochula Pass & Transfer to Punakha

Drive east across the dramatic Dochula Pass (3,100 m) with its 108 chortens and vast panoramic views of the eastern Himalaya. Continue down to the fertile Punakha Valley. Visit the historic Punakha Dzong, located between two rivers, an architectural gem and former winter capital.

Photography tip: Early morning clears at Dochula offer the best Himalayan vistas.

Day

6

Punakha Valley & Chimi Lhakhang

Morning walk or optional rafting on the Mo Chhu (subject to season). Visit Chimi Lhakhang (Fertility Temple) via a scenic short hike through rice paddies. Afternoon free to explore rural villages and river banks.

Optional activity: Gentle river rafting on Mo Chhu (seasonal, extra cost).

Day

7

Journey to Bumthang via Trongsa – Heartland of Bhutanese Culture

Drive east to central Bhutan, passing through Trongsa. Visit Trongsa Dzong and the impressive museum at the old watchtower. Continue to Bumthang, the spiritual heartland with ancient temples, sacred sites, and tranquil valleys.

Note: Long driving day with beautiful mountainous scenery; breaks included for comfort.

Day

8

Bumthang Valleys & Temple Trail

Full day exploring the four valleys of Bumthang. Visit Jakar Dzong, Kurje Lhakhang, Jambay Lhakhang, and local cheese and weaving workshops. Learn about ancient Buddhist lineages and local traditions.

Highlight: Traditional farmhouse visit and local cuisine tasting available on request.

Day

9

Bumthang to Trashigang – Entering the Eastern Highlands

Set out early for a scenic drive into the Eastern Highlands, traveling through remote mountain passes and traditional villages. Arrive in the Trashigang/Mongar region and explore the local market and viewpoints. This is a deep-cultural experience away from the main tourist route.

Important: Roads can be narrow and mountainous; travel times may vary.

Day

10

Final Day & Departure from Eastern Bhutan

Morning at leisure to explore the eastern town, visit a final local shrine or a traditional weaving center. Transfer to the nearest regional airport or border gateway for onward travel.

Departure note: Domestic flight schedules (Yonphula) or road transfers to exit points are subject to availability. Our team will coordinate the best onward option.

? 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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