

Punakha Heritage Retreat: Punakha Dzong & Suspension Bridge

Prepared by TourGrids



Destination
Bhutan



Duration
4 Nights 5 Days



Starting from
Rs. 42,500 / person

ITINERARY ROUTE

↖ **Thimphu · 1N**

↖ **Punakha · 2N**

↖ **Paro · 1N**

Overview

Punakha Heritage Retreat: Punakha Dzong & Suspension Bridge – A curated 4-night, 5-day Bhutan tour package blending cultural heritage, scenic drives, and gentle pilgrimage experiences. This Bhutan Pilgrimage tour package is ideal for travelers seeking the serene valley temples, historic dzongs, and iconic suspension bridges. Perfectly positioned for those searching for a Bhutan Pilgrimage package or a 4 and 5 Bhutan Pilgrimage tour package, this itinerary covers Thimphu, Punakha, and Paro with comfortable pacing and rich cultural immersion.

Highlights:

- Punakha Dzong (the majestic 'Palace of Great Happiness')
- Punakha Suspension Bridge (longest & most scenic in the valley)
- Dochula Pass panoramic Himalayan views and 108 stupas
- Chimi Lhakhang (Fertility Temple of Bhutan)
- Thimphu city sights: Tashichho Dzong, Memorial Chorten, Folk Heritage Museum
- Paro cultural sites and option to visit the iconic Tiger's Nest (Paro Taktsang)

Note: This package is paced to allow cultural visits, short hikes, and relaxation – suitable for moderate fitness levels.

✓ What's Included

- ✓ Accommodation in 3-star/4-star properties (twin/double sharing)
- ✓ Daily breakfast and 3 dinners (as per itinerary)
- ✓ All ground transportation in a private vehicle with an experienced driver
- ✓ Licensed English-speaking guide throughout the trip
- ✓ Permit, entry fees to listed dzongs/monasteries (as per itinerary)
- ✓ Welcome meet & assist on arrival and airport transfers
- ✓ Bottled water in vehicle during sightseeing
- ✓ Note: Accommodation upgrade, additional meals, or private activities can be arranged on request (supplement applies).

✗ Not Included

- ✗ International airfare to/from Bhutan
- ✗ Bhutan visa processing fee and the mandated Sustainable Development Fee (SDF) for un-govt-authorized tours (if applicable)
- ✗ Lunches and dinners not specified in inclusions
- ✗ Optional activities such as river rafting, pony rental for Tiger's Nest, or additional local guides
- ✗ Travel insurance, personal expenses, tips/gratuities, and any items of personal nature
- ✗ Any government taxes or charges introduced after booking
- ✗ Tip: Purchase travel insurance that covers hiking and high-altitude activities if you plan to hike to Tiger's Nest.

Day-by-Day Itinerary

Day

1

Arrival, Transfer to Thimphu & City Introduction

Arrive at Paro International Airport. Meet your guide and driver, complete immigration formalities, and enjoy a scenic drive to Thimphu (approx. 1–1.5 hours). After hotel check-in, begin with relaxed city orientation: visit Tashichho Dzong (guardian monastery and government seat), the iconic Memorial Chorten, and the Folk Heritage Museum to understand Bhutanese daily life. Evening at leisure to stroll Thimphu town and explore local markets.

Tip: Carry a light jacket—evenings in the valley can be cool.

Day

2

Dochula Pass & Arrival in Punakha — Punakha Dzong

Drive from Thimphu to Punakha via the scenic Dochula Pass. Stop to enjoy panoramic Himalayan views and the 108 memorial chortens. Continue down to the lush Punakha Valley. In the afternoon, visit the spectacular Punakha Dzong – one of Bhutan’s most beautiful dzongs sitting at the confluence of Pho Chhu and Mo Chhu rivers. Enjoy photography and learn about its historical and spiritual significance.

Special Note: Weather at Dochula can change quickly; carry sunscreen and a rain layer.

Day

3

Punakha Local Sacred Sites & Suspension Bridge Experience

Explore Punakha’s sacred and scenic highlights. Start with a visit to Chimi Lhakhang (Fertility Temple) – a short, pleasant walk from the base monastery area. Return to experience the Punakha Suspension Bridge, one of the valley’s most photogenic bridges, and enjoy riverside time or optional short river rafting (seasonal/extra). Afternoon at leisure to wander village lanes, interact with locals, or relax at the hotel.

Tip: Wear comfortable footwear for the short walks and bridges. If interested in rafting, inform us in advance so arrangements can be made.

Day

4

Return to Paro via Thimphu — Paro Intro

After breakfast, depart Punakha and drive back toward Paro, stopping for photos or short visits in Thimphu if desired (additional visits subject to time). Continue to Paro and check into your hotel. Time permitting, explore Paro Rinpung Dzong and the traditional town markets. Prepare for an early start if planning the Tiger’s Nest visit on Day 5.

Note: Driving times vary with road conditions; this day includes several scenic stops so expect a half-day transit.

Day

5

Paro Cultural Morning & Departure (Optional Taktsang Visit)

Choose between a morning visit to the iconic Tiger's Nest (Paro Taktsang) – a 3–4 hour moderate hike to the monastery perched on the cliff (allow 4–5 hours round-trip including time at the monastery) – or a relaxed cultural morning in Paro visiting Kyichu Lhakhang and local crafts shops. Transfer to Paro International Airport for your onward flight.

Important: Tiger's Nest hike requires moderate fitness and comfortable hiking shoes. If your flight is late afternoon/evening, plan the hike early. Inform the guide of your preference in advance.

? 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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