

SCENIC BHUTAN, PARO FESTIVAL

09 NIGHTS/ 10 DAYS



★ Anglo Indiago Travels (P) Limited ★

Highlights. Paro – Thimpu – Punakha – Phobjikha – Paro Festival – Departure

This tour has been designed to enjoy Paro Festival in April.

Day 01: Arrive Paro and to Thimpu

Upon arrival at Paro airport, you will be greeted with a traditional welcome. Departure by road to Thimphu (2400 meters), the capital of the Himalayan country and the largest city. The road to Thimphu first follows the Pa-chu (river) to the confluence where Thimphu joins. In the afternoon visit the Chorten Memorial (Stupa) built in memory of the deceased King and walk on the main street of Thimphu. Overnight Thimphu.

Day 02: Thimphu (Phajoding hike)

After your early breakfast, our guide and driver will pick you up to begin your hike above the motithang. The hike to Phajoding monasteries is not only historical and religious; it's also amazingly picturesque, since you can have dramatic view of Bhutan's capital and its development. Upon reaching at the clustered monastery, you will eat hot picnic lunch in one of the monasteries or outside in the beautiful meadows. After your nice lunch you will hike another 45 minutes uphill to Thujidra Monastery which is built on a cliff on top of all the monasteries at Phajoding. From the monastery you will have a stunning view of the entire Thimphu valley. Visit the monastery, which was founded by a great saint or Lama, Phajo Drugom in the 12 century, and enjoy the views and tranquility for a while before you start hiking back downhill. Your can will be waiting at the BBS tower and then drive back to your hotel or place. Overnight Thimphu.

Day 03: Thimphu - Punakha

After early breakfast drive to Thimphu and take a short hike to Tanga Goempa monastery, initially built in the 13th century, but perfected by the 4th Temporal Ruler in 1688. Tanga literally translates to 'horse head' in honour of the main idol, Hayagriva, consecrated in the monastery. Legend has it that a lama heard the echo of a horse neigh in the direction of the cliffs, only for the crags to take the form of the god Tandin, consumed by flames. It was prophesized that a monastery and temple would be built at the site and dedicated to meditation and prayer. The temple is a short 30-minute drive from Thimphu, followed by an hour long walk through an iridescent violet and crimson rhododendron cloaked woodland. The monastery has a rich history, where colorful lamas added to the structure over centuries, and venerated saints meditated within its walls at times of war.

Later drive to Punakha via the Dochu la pass. An hour's drive from Thimphu will take you to this pass (3100 m) where one can have a superb view of the Eastern Himalayas on a clear day. Visit the beautiful 108 chortens built on the hill by Her Majesty Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck for the security and wellbeing of His Majesty the King of Bhutan. Continue to Punakha for night stay.



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Day 04: Punakha - Phobjikha

After breakfast visit the Punakha Dzong, placed strategically at the junction of the Pho Chu and Mo Chu rivers; the dzong was built in the 17th century by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal to serve as the religious and administrative seat of the region. It was here that the dual system of government was introduced and in 1907, enthroned the first King Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck. Damaged over the centuries by four catastrophic fires and an earthquake, the dzong has been fully restored in the recent years by the 4th King Jigme Singye Wangchuck. At the Dzong enrich your trip with the opportunity to see the highest standards in woodwork. Do not miss the massive Kuenray, the Coronation Hall of all Bhutanese kings. Punakha the old capital of Bhutan and presently the winter residence of the central monk body. Continue to drive to Phobjikha with stop at Lobesa to visit the Divine Madman's Monastery-ChhimiLhakhang, famously known for its fertility shrine, where couples unable to conceive come here for blessing. On arrival at Gangtey, check in your hotel. Later visit Gangtey Monastery and Black Necked crane center. Overnight Phobjikha.

Day 05: Phobjikha - Paro

After early breakfast we will travel back to travel to Paro. On the way to Paro visit Simtokha Dzong meaning atop of Demon, the oldest fortress of the country constructed by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in 1926. At Paro visit the National Museum which is now being housed at a hall near the Ta Dzong (National Museum) as it is now closed to the visitors due to major cracks formed during the September 2011 earthquake that hit Bhutan quite hard. In the evening stroll around the Paro town, free mingle with people. Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight in Paro.

Day 06: Paro Taktsang hike

Today you will hike to Taktsang Goempa (Tiger's Nest Monastery), the most famous tourist destination in Bhutan. It takes around 30 minutes' drive from Paro town to the Parking lot. The hike up to the viewpoint will take about 1 1/2 hours from the parking lot and from there you will enjoy a spectacular view of the monastery clinging to the side of the cliff. You will stop here for refreshments and then hike further up to the monastery which should take another 1 1/2 hours. It was first built in 1692, around the Taktsang Senge Samdup, a cave where Guru Padmasambhava is said to have meditated for three months in the 8th century. It is believed that Guru Rinpoche (Guru Padmasambhava) flew to this location from Khenpajong, Tibet on the back of a tigress and subdued a demon. He then performed meditation in one of the caves here and emerged in eight incarnated forms (manifestations) and blessed the place. Subsequently, the place came to be known as the "Tiger's Nest". Guru Padmasambhava is known for introducing Buddhism to Bhutan. Today, Paro Taktsang is the best known of the thirteen caves in which he meditated. After visiting the monastery, walk back downhill to the road with lunch at the viewpoint cafeteria. **If you can finish the hike early, you can attend the Paro festival. Overnight Paro.**

Day 07: Paro festival

After breakfast, witness the festival (Full day). The festival is an interesting and cultural experience of the celebration of life the Bhutanese way. Masked dancers perform ritualized reenactments of mythical struggles between good and evil forces. Accompanied by Tibetan musicians and the antics of the sacred clowns (apsaras), the Tsechu is a fascinating visual and cultural spectacle unique to Bhutan. Night in Paro.



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Day 08.: Paro festival

Today early morning attend the last day of Paro festival, Tsechu ends with the unfurling of the giant Thangka of Guru Rinpoche between 3-4am in the morning and stays up till the sun rise and the belief behind witnessing and receiving blessing is that one's sins get "Liberation By Sight" and it had been a tradition that His Majesty The Fifth King of Bhutan had been always present on this day for both offering prayers for the well-being of the Nation and World at large and for Peace. Later drive back to your hotel for breakfast and till midday. Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight Stay at Paro.

Day 09: Paro Chumphu Ney Hike

Today after your early breakfast bump of the car against the rough road heading away from Paro towards chumbu to the monastery of floating goddess. After 30 minutes of drive now you start your journey towards the starting point of the hike to Chumophug Nye (Nye- sacred site). A Nye is simply a rock with some patterns or maybe none, which could seem nonsensical for some but for an enlightened being it's very sacred. The first 2 hours of the journey to Chumophug Nye will be gradual ascent from 2450m. Walking along the gushing turquoise Pa Chhu with the dark green leaves of the forest and the birds chirping, the trail leading to the Lhakhang (Temple) is filled with many Nyes of Guru Rinpoche and the floating goddess. And you will be blessed to see the multiple Ters (hidden treasures) and the holy sites where Guru Rinpoche subdued demons. But the most sacrosanct Nye to witness was the meditation cave of Dorji Phagmo (floating goddess. From the roof of the cave dripped holy water due to the immense blessed value it holds. The last hour of the hike is a steep hike towards the temple. It will be a fascinating journey and once when you reached to the temple you can spend some time doing mediation inside the Temple. From 2308m now you ascended 783m. The white temple and a few meditation homes enveloped with the vast green hills seemed majestic. Chumophug Nye lies at an altitude of 3100m above the sea level. After lunch, picnic lunch will be served at Chumphu, you will see the main relic of Chumophug Nye—the floating goddess, Dorji Phagmo (Vajravarahi). It is an astonishing experience to visit this sacred relic. This bronze, brass statue built in the 17th century lay 4-5mm off its base, floating. The story behind the name Chumophug (Chumo-rice and phug- Hill) is that grains of rice are hidden in the form of a Ter on the large rock below the hill. From the monastery you will walk walked 5 to 10 minutes to see the lake at the base of the waterfall where Guru Rinpoche bathed in. The lake wasn't large in diameter, but it seemed rather deep. We went down a different route and were once again faced with many more Nyes along the way. After this will hike back from the same route. Tea coffee will be ready at car park. Overnight at Paro

Day 10: Departure

Day free till final departure. In time transfer at Paro airport for onward journey.

End of our services....

Note:

1. This tour can be modified as per your requirements.
2. You can combine Bhutan Tour with India as well as with Tibet and Nepal.