

08 NIGHTS/ 9 DAYS

BHUTAN YATRA, DRUK WANGYAL FESTIVAL



★ Anglo Indiago Travels (P) Limited ★

Highlights: Paro – Gangtey - Punakha – Thimpu - Departure

This tour has been designed to enjoy Druk Wangyal Festival in Thimpu in Dec.

Day 01: Arrive Paro (Elevation: 2200m)

Arrive at Paro airport. After immigration formalities and baggage collection, you will be met by our representative along with your driver and transfer to hotel for night stay.

The flight to Paro is one of the most spectacular in entire Himalayas. Flying along the Himalayan range from Kathmandu, the journey offers fascinating views and an exciting descent into the Kingdom. Bhutan's first gift to you as you disembark from the aircraft will be cool, clean fresh mountain air.

After a little rest, we will visit **Paro Dzong**, a fine example of Bhutanese historic architecture. It is also known as the **Rinpung Dzong** which means a "fortress that sits on a heap of jewels". This imposing dzong located above the Paro river is a fine example of Bhutanese architecture with its inward sloping walls that rise to an impressive height. The dzong was built in the 16th century on the foundation of a monastery built by Guru Rinpoche (who is regarded as the "second Buddha.") .From the Dzong, walk further down to **Nyamai Zampa**, an oldest traditional cantilever bridge in Bhutan and also 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. Overnight in Paro.

Day 02: In 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.

Later visit **Kichu temple**, one of the 108 temples built in the 7th century by the Tibetan King Songsten Gampo. The story goes that a giant demon lay across the whole area of Tibet and the Himalayas and was preventing the spread of Buddhism. To overcome her, King Songsten Gampo decided to build 108 temples, which would be placed on all the points of her body. Of these 108 temples, 2 were built in Bhutan. In the evening relax and overnight in Paro.



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Day 03: Paro to Gangtey (altitude 3000m) (4 h 30 min (169.6 km))

After early breakfast you will travel to Gangtey, Phobjikha. The valley of Gangtey, is one of the most beautiful and unspoiled places in Bhutan. Gangtey Goemba, perched on a ridge overlooking the valley. It is directed by Gangtey Trulku the ninth reincarnation of Pema Lingpa. Night stay at Gangtey

Day 04: In Gangtey

After breakfast visit Phobjikha valley, winter home of black necked cranes that migrate from the arid plains in the north to pass winter in milder and lower climate. Then visit Black Neck Crane Information Centre, has an observation room equipped with high power telescope and spotting scopes for catching the best view of the cranes. Overnight at Gangtey

Day 05: Gangtey to Punakha (2 h 15 min (74.4 km))

After breakfast travel to Punakha. Stop at Lobesa you walk through the paddy fields for about 20 minutes to visit Divine Madman's monastery known as **Chimmi Lhakang**, popular for its fertility shrine. **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. Night in Punakha.

Day 06: In Punakha

After breakfast visit upper valley Punakha. Then visit the **Khamsum Yulley Temple**. There is no temple in Bhutan built elaborately as this. This fascinating temple was built by the Queen Mother of the 5th King to bring universal peace in this world. The best of the spiritual art works is painted on the inner walls. There are also paintings of Buddhist teachers and tutelary deities of the country. This is a great temple to study the symbolic meanings from frescoes and sculptures. **Punakha suspension bridge** which is considered as the longest suspension bridge in Bhutan. Overnight at Punakha

Day 07: Punakha to Thimphu (Druk Wangyal Festival) (2 h 27 min (85 km))

After early breakfast you will travel to Thimphu en-route stop at Dochu La to witness the Druk Wangyal Festival. Druk Wangyal Tsechu, is commissioned by the Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck in 2011. This is a unique festival as the festival is fully performed by the Royal Bhutan Army rather than the monastery. The soldiers have been given three months training in folk and mask dance. Overnight at Thimphu



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Day 08: In Thimphu

After breakfast visit The Memorial Chorten which was constructed in 1974 as a memorial for the third King of the country, King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, who is widely regarded as the father of modern Bhutan.

- **The Simply Museum**, an outdoor museum that gives an insight into rural life in Bhutan.
- **ChangankhaLhakhang**(temple): This temple situated atop a small mound overlooking the Thimphu valley was built in the 13th century by the illustrious Lam PhajoDugomZhigpo. The temple is considered the spiritual home of children born in the Chang valley.
- **Kuenselphodrang** where **largest Buddha** statue in the country is perched on the hillock overlooking the Thimphu valley and if interested/if time permits, take a leisure walk through Kuenselphodrang Nature park and enjoy the nice view of the entire Thimphu valley below.
- **Centenary Farmers' market**(if tour coincides with Thu-Sun) where farmers would be selling their wide range of farm produces (vegetables from farms and wild ferns or bamboo shoots collected from forest, flour, rice, roasted rice, rice flakes, spices, yams both cultivated and wild ones collected from forests, fruits, etc) and livestock products (mainly cheese and butter). Free interaction with people from town as well as from villages come to this weekend market. Weekend market is from Thursday-Sunday (4 days).
- **Takin Preserve**, which houses the national animal Takin (budorcastaxicolor white) the national animal of Bhutan.
- **Archery Match (National game of Bhutan)**: During the visit drop by at one of the archery field to watch locals play archery. (sometimes you won't be able to see as it depends on the season and tournaments of archery)

Day 09: 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.