



## The Druk Asia Advantage

### Guides & Suggested Itineraries

**Our first tip:** always go to your guide for discussions big and small. Whether you're a fast walker/climber, prefer going slow to have a feel of the land, wish to swap a place out for another – do share, so we've time to make arrangements. Do note that your final itinerary is still subject to changes, perhaps due to ad-hoc local events or weather conditions etc.

**Two:** this itinerary is best used as a reference, rather than a fixed guide. Seen enough of monasteries and dzongs (fortresses)? Your guide could arrange a trek. Feeling like a change of pace? A hot stone bath could replace the archery session. Or you could be really lucky; like one of our guests who bumped into the King of Bhutan while descending from Taktsang Monastery. Having only opened her doors to the world in 1974, do note that while a trip to say, a museum may not carry the same standards as the Louvre, France – Bhutan's people are one of the friendliest and jolliest you'll meet.

**Three:** Yours is an exclusive holiday, not to be combined with other groups at any point of stay. This explains the freedom to be flexible on this trip of a lifetime – time and weather permitting, and to the final professional discretion of your guide.

### Using our Travellers Portal (<https://www.drukasia.com/travellers/>)

#### First Two Days

We know that the time you spend in Bhutan is important and with over 13,000 trips already clocked by our guides – your satisfaction remains top priority. On the off chance that a change of guide is requested, local contacts are available in the Travellers Portal (or visa approval email) – as part of our sincere desire to maintain the level of customer service that our visitors have come to rely upon.

#### Traditional Clothes

We advise to avoid wearing traditional gear to official places & dzongs – as entry requires additional scarves, and knee-high socks for men. Still, these are available for purchase locally.

#### Hotels, Itinerary, Tips

Do share your preferred hotel(s) during discussions with our agents prior to payment. If not indicated, selections are made based on the best options as shared by our guests' reviews. Certain hotels may charge additional fees on top of the standard normal rate. Accommodations are typically confirmed within 2 weeks of down payment (please allow buffer for peak seasons). Use the portal to view hotel booking status, daily itinerary, and travel tips exclusive to Druk Asia travellers.

#### Requests

Indicate meal restrictions, allergies, special specifications for guides etc (if any) should be raised at least 7 days before departure (to the best of our abilities). All requests after this timeline will be subject to availability.





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## Your Travel Package Details

Upon arrival at Paro International Airport, you'll find our guide and driver holding Druk Asia's signboard with your name(s) on it and a big smile on their faces, all the way till your last day at the departure hall. Lookout for your Visa approval email five days prior to departure, which includes: your guide and driver's contacts, Visa, flight E-ticket, finalised hotel list and trip itinerary.

### Your Bhutanese Journey

INCLUDES:	EXCLUDES:
1) Visas for Bhutan	1) Flight to Bangkok/Kathmandu/India/Singapore to connect to Drukair flights.
2) A qualified & licensed English speaking guide	2) Hotel Stay outside Bhutan (e.g. to catch a flight to Bhutan)
3) An experienced driver	3) Travel Insurance
4) A tour vehicle	4) Lunch & Dinner outside selected restaurants (e.g. 5-star resorts)
5) All meals on tour	5) Tips for guide and driver
6) Accommodation at 3 star hotels (subject to availability)	6) Alcoholic drinks
7) Taxes, surcharges, government contribution	7) Expenditure of personal nature (e.g. shopping and hot stone bath)
8) Mineral water for the duration of the stay	
9) Traditional costume set - Gho / Kira - for use throughout your stay in Bhutan. To be returned to the guide on the last day of tour.	

### For Your Peace of Mind

Druk Asia handles the entire booking process for our guests, including Drukair flights and visa applications (included in the package) – but it is advisable to book well in advance to secure preferred accommodation and seats on the only national carrier into Bhutan: Drukair.

Please read this document in conjunction with your confirmation letter and pre-departure information (available on [www.drukasia.com/travellers](http://www.drukasia.com/travellers)). For more information on Druk Asia, including the full range of itineraries (i.e. overnight camping treks) and services (i.e. tailor making, groups and hosting of special events) we offer, log on to [www.DrukAsia.com](http://www.DrukAsia.com)





Facts & Figures	
Population	800,000
Time Zone	GMT +6
Currency	Ngultrum (Nu)
Country Dial Code	+975
Languages	Dzongkha, English
International Airports	Paro Airport (PBH) 90-mins by car to capital, Thimphu
Domestic Airports	Bumthang (BUT), Gelephu (GLU), Yongphulla (YON)
National Airline	Drukair (KB) also known as Royal Bhutan Airlines Flies from Bagdogra, Bangkok, Delhi, Dhaka, Guwahati, Kolkata, Kathmandu, and Singapore.
Visa	Yes, except Indian, Bangladeshi and Maldivian Nationalities
Visitors	71,417 in 2017
National Animal	The takin – a rare mammal which feeds on bamboo, and found only 4000m above sea level.
National Sport	Bhutan was represented in the 2016 Summer Olympics for archery, also a national pastime where local archers are known for their long distance skills, hitting targets that are a football field-and-a-half away!





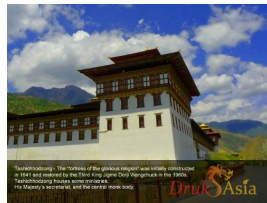
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## Day 1: PARO – THIMPHU

Elevation 2,320m | [Weather in Thimphu](#) | Drive time 1 hours



The National Animal of Bhutan - The Takin



Sangaygang (BBS Tower) - The tallest of the broadcast towers stands prominently in Thimphu and is used by the Third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck in his Majesty's secretariat, and the central monk body.



Tashichhodzong - The fortress of the glorious religion, which was constructed in 1641 and restored by the Third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck in the 1960s. Tashichhodzong houses some ministries, His Majesty's secretariat, and the central monk body.



Centenary Farmers' Market - Most of the Thimphu population congregates on the banks of Wangchhu River where the weekend market is held. Villagers from the Valley and other nearby places come to sell their wide range of agriculture products in the market. The market is by far the largest domestic market in Bhutan. A visit to the market provides great photo opportunities, as well as the chance to mingle with local people and perhaps buy souvenirs. [Operating hour: Every Fridays to Sundays 07:00 AM - 07:00 PM]



Thimphu City - The capital of Bhutan, Thimphu is a beautiful city with a mix of traditional and modern architecture. It is a great place to experience the Bhutanese culture and enjoy the scenic views of Thimphu City.

Welcome to Bhutan, the Land of the Thunder Dragon. Touching down at Paro International Airport, you will be greeted by your guide upon exiting the arrival hall. Today, we will take it easy to acclimatise to the altitude. Drive to Thimphu, check in to the hotel and let's have your first taste of Bhutanese cuisine.

**Takin Enclosure** [1 hrs] - On the way to the viewpoint over Thimphu is the home of Bhutan's national animal, the Takin, a strange looking beast some say looks like a bee-stung moose.

**Sangaygang (BBS Tower)** [2 hrs] - Drive about 15 minutes from the main city to a hillock where the Bhutan Broad Casting Tower is stationed. From there you can relish the beautiful scene of the whole of Thimphu City. On the way up or down from the hillock, you can also see Takin the national animal of Bhutan. It is also possible to request for the early morning walk up to this viewpoint.

**Centenary Farmers' Market** [1.5 hrs] - Most of the Thimphu population congregates on the banks of Wangchhu River where the weekend market is held. Villagers from the Valley and other nearby places come to sell their wide range of agriculture products in the market. The market is by far the largest domestic market in Bhutan. A visit to the market provides great photo opportunities, as well as the chance to mingle with local people and perhaps buy souvenirs. [Operating hour: Every Fridays to Sundays 07:00 AM - 07:00 PM]

**Tashichhodzong (Thimphu Dzong)** [1 hrs] - The "fortress of the glorious religion" was initially constructed in 1641 and restored by the Third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck in the 1960s. Tashichhodzong houses some ministries, His Majesty's secretariat, and the central monk body.

Opening hour:

Weekday 05:00 PM - 06:00 PM

Weekend 09:00 AM - 06:00 PM

Winter 04:00 PM - 06:00 PM

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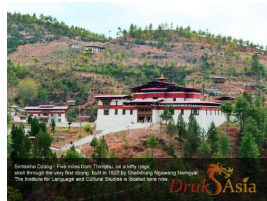
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## Day 2: THIMPHU

Elevation 2,320m | [Weather in Thimphu](#)



Situated at an altitude of 2400m, Thimphu is the centre of government, religion and commerce. The capital has an interesting combination of tradition and modernity, and includes some of the most advanced and remotest parts of the kingdom. It is home to the Kings and the Royal family members, civil servants, expatriates, politicians, business persons and monks. Enjoy this cultural mix based on livelihood. Of culture we will take you through temples, dzongs, chortens, museums, handicraft stores, nunneries, parks and many more. Allow yourself to meet both traditional and contemporary artist.

**Buddha Point** [1 hrs] - Located at Kuenselphodrang Nature Park, the 169 feet bronze statue of Buddha Dordenma, Vajra Throne Buddha makes it one of the largest statue of Buddha in the world. The Buddha Dordenma symbolizes indestructibility, and it is said to emanate an aura of peace and happiness to the entire world. The Buddha statue will be completed soon, currently awaiting for the completed paintings but visitors can drive up to the Buddha point and view the tallest statue of Lord Buddha. The view of Thimphu valley from the Buddha point is spectacular and beautiful., especially at night.

**Simtokha Dzong** [0 hrs] - Five miles from Thimphu, on a lofty ridge, stroll through the very first dzong, built in 1627 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. The Institute for Language and Cultural Studies is located here now. Enthral yourself with the most noteworthy artistic feature in from of over 300 finely worked slate carvings behind the prayer wheels in the courtyard.

**Craft Gallery** [0 hrs] - The Craft Gallery is a global platform for authentic Bhutanese craft. Find original works by skillful Bhutanese women who put their hearts in the process (weaving for as long as 7 hours a day) and discover Bhutan through “textile” sensory. Similar to the five elements, the spirit of Bhutan is manifested in these works, namely needlework, papermaking, wood and metal making and painting. Craft Gallery advocates and supports the empowerment of women with RENEW and the continued sustainability of the arts in Bhutan.

Witness the finest products by the Kingdom of Bhutan here at the Craft Gallery

**National Memorial Chorten** [1 hrs] - Meet the elderly generation in circumambulation at the National Memorial Chorten. Chorten means ‘Seat of Faith’ and Buddhists often call such monuments, the ‘Mind of Buddha’. Treat yourself with the fantastic depiction of Buddhist teachings in the form of paintings and sculptures at this temple. As the name denotes this National Memorial Chorten was consecrated on July 28, 1974, in memory of the Third King.

**Simply Bhutan** [1 hrs] - A living museum and a photo studio with a mission to engage and empower youth entrepreneurs through preservation, promotion and showcasing of Bhutanese tradition and cultural diversity.

[Opening hour Summer 09.00 AM - 17.00 PM, Winter 10.00 AM - 16.00 PM]



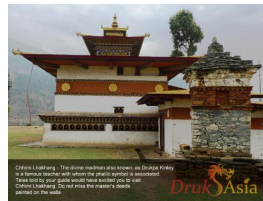
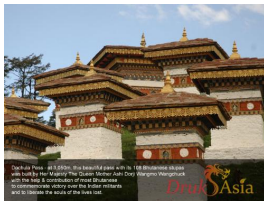
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**Changangkha Monastery** [1 hrs] - Built in the 12th century, Changangkha Lhakhang is the oldest temple in Thimphu. It is hovering over a ridge above Thimphu, near Motithang. Lama Phajo Drukgom Zhigpo, who came to Bhutan from Ralung in Tibet, chose this site to build this Lhakhang. The Lhakhang houses Chenrizig: an 11-headed, thousand-armed manifestation of Avolokitesawara as the central statue.

**Walk Around Thimphu Town** [1 hrs] - Shop and walk around Thimphu town.

## Day 3: THIMPHU – PUNAKHA

Elevation 1,300m | [Weather in Punakha](#) | Drive time 3 hours



We will set off early from Thimphu after breakfast, perhaps with a visit to the weekend market first. Then proceed to Punakha, the ancient capital of Bhutan, about 2 1/2 hours drive from Thimphu across Dochu-la pass. Once you cross the pass, you wind down into a warm fertile valley and meander along a gently flowing aquamarine river that leads you to the Punakha Dzong, the second dzong to be built in Bhutan.

**Dochula Pass** [2 hrs] - At 3,050 meter, this beautiful pass located on the way to Punakha from Thimphu offers a stunning 360-degree panoramic view of Himalayas mountain range with its 108 chortens that was built by Her Majesty The Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck. The pass is also a popular spiritual destination for both locals and tourists.

**Druk Wangyal Chortens** [0 hrs] - The construction of 108 chortens was commissioned by Her Majesty The Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck to commemorate the victory over the Indian militants and to liberate the souls of the lives lost.

**Chhimi Lhakhang** [2 hrs] - The Divine Madman, Drukpa Kinley is a famous teacher with whom the phallic symbol is associated. Tales told by your guide would have excited you to visit Chhimi Lhakhang. The Divine Madman sits there though a statue this time. Do not miss the master's deeds painted on the walls. Japanese and several American couples visited this temple and were blessed miraculously with children. Ask yourself, do I need this Fertility Tour or not?

**Sangchen Dorji Lhuendrup Lhakhang** [0 hrs] - A temple and nunnery perched on a ridge and overlooking Toebesa, Punakha and Wangduephodrang valleys. The temple is consecrated by His Holiness and was attended by His Majesty the King, the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, members of the royal family along with hundreds of people from Punakha. The temple is dedicated to the bodhisattva of compassion.

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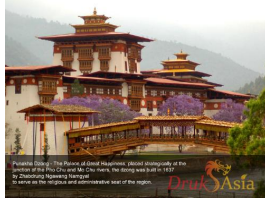
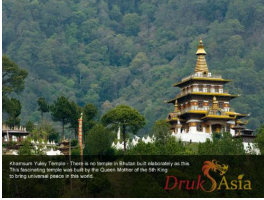




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## Day 4: PUNAKHA

Elevation 1,300m | [Weather in Punakha](#) | Drive time 4 hours



**Punakha Dzong** [2 hrs] - Placed strategically at the junction of the Pho Chu and Mo Chu rivers, the Dzong was built in 1637 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 in the 17th century 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 enriches your trip with the opportunity to see the highest standards in woodworking. Do not miss the massive Kuenray, the Coronation Hall of all Bhutanese kings, the Dzongchung at the entrance to the Dzong and the cantilever bridge over the Mochu that has been recently renovated.

**Pho Chhu Suspension Bridge** [1 hrs] - The 160 metres Pho Chhu Suspension Bridge is known for the longest suspension bridge in Bhutan, which gives you spectacular views of Punakha Dzong and the Pho Chhu Valley.

**Khamsum Yuley Temple** [3 hrs] - [Duration 2 hour, 1 hour to ascend and 1 hour to descend]

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 are 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.



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## Day 5: PUNAKHA - PARO

Elevation 2,280m | [Weather in Paro](#)



**Paro Valley** [0 hrs] - The beautiful valley is home to many of Bhutan's old monasteries and temples. The valley is also home to Mount Chomolhari (7,300 meters) situated at the northern end of the valley whose glacier water forms the Pachu flowing through the valley.

**National Museum (Ta Dzong)** [1 hrs] - On a ridge immediately above Rinpung Dzong is Ta Dzong, originally built as a watchtower. In 1968, Ta Dzong was inaugurated as the first National Museum, and now holds a fascinating collection of art, relics, religious thangka paintings, Bhutan's exquisite postage stamps, coins and handicrafts, together with a small natural history collection. Start or end your trip with a visit to this marvellous museum.

**Paro Dzong (aka Rinpung Dzong)** [2 hrs] - Explore the Rinpung Dzong, which the locals call the 'fortress of a heap of jewels'. Built in 1646 by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, the dzong stands on a hill above Paro Township. It is linked by the traditional cantilever bridge (called the Nemi Zam) over the Pa Chu where one may pose a photograph. Experience a walk up a stone paved path running alongside the imposing outer walls. Once inside the Dzong, you will be welcomed by the monks, architecture and the ancient frescoes.

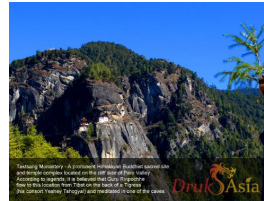
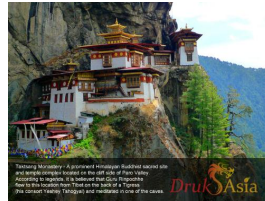
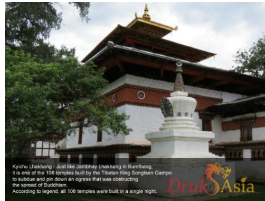
**Paro Town** [2 hrs] - Explore the main street of Paro town and check out if there's anything you will like to pick up as a souvenir!





## Day 6: PARO

Elevation 2,280m | [Weather in Paro](#)



Are you ready? We will be making the hike up to one of the key highlights in Bhutan today! Tiger's Nest aka Taktsang Monastery

**Taktsang Monastery** [6 hrs] - Often called the Tiger's Nest, perched on the cliffs, has awestruck many a visitor. "Trip to Bhutan is never complete without climbing to Taktsang", says one tourist. Indeed, it's true as the journey there fills you with spiritual bliss. For those not choosing the spiritual side, it is the dramatic, artistically built monument that becomes a hiker's delight. Take a trip to this dramatically set Buddhist relic hanging from a cliff. Experience the uphill climb as you ascend more than two thousand feet from the valley floor.

A prominent Himalayan Buddhist sacred site and temple complex located on the cliff side of Paro Valley. According to legends, it is believed that Guru Rinpoche flew to this location from Tibet on the back of a Tigress (his consort Yeshey Tshogyal) and meditated in one of the caves. Guru Rinpoche performed meditation and emerged in eight manifestations, and the place became holy, thus gaining the name Tiger's Nest.

**Kyichu Lhakhang** [1 hrs] - Also known as Kyerchu Temple or Lho Kyerchu, is the oldest temple in Bhutan. Just like Jambhay Lhakhang in Bumthang, it is one of the 108 temples built by the Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo to subdue and pin down an ogress that was obstructing the spread of Buddhism. According to legend, all 108 temples were built in a single night.

Go back in time and history and visit the 7th century Kyichhu temple. As the name suggests, the temple is a reservoir of peace, where you will feel at peace here. Next to the temple is the house that is turned into a museum dedicated to the late Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. One can come across photographs and other artifacts belonging to Rinpoche.





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## Day 7: DEPART PARO

### Weather in Singapore

Today we will bid fond farewell to this beautiful Himalayan country and take an early flight back. We hope by now you would have made some friends and also kept many photos and beautiful memories of Bhutan! And we look forward to seeing you again in this beautiful land of endless Enchantments! Tashi Delek!

**Remarks** [0 hrs] - Seasonal attractions are subject to change due to weather conditions. The sequence of itinerary is subject to change without prior notice. If a place of visit is closed to visitors, it will be replaced with an alternative. During major events, accommodation may not be in the city mentioned.