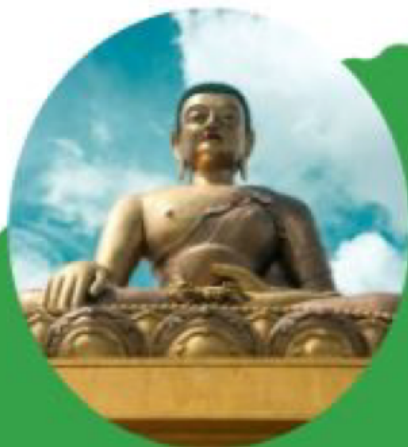




BHUTAN

TRIP ITINERARY

8 Days



DAY 1:	Arrival at Jaigoan
DAY 2:	Tour De Thimphu
DAY 3:	River Rafting
DAY 4:	Punakha Dzong
DAY 5:	Paro Valley
DAY 6:	Hike to Tigers Nest
DAY 7:	Cultural Festival
DAY 8:	Departure with memories





Day 1

**PHUNTSHOLING TO THIMPHU
(160 KM 4.5hs Drive)
Elevation : 300M - 2300M**

Upon arrival in Phuntsholing from Bagdogra, you will be traditionally greeted by the representatives from Bhutan Travelplus. Do the immigration formalities and drive to Thimphu

Phuntsholing Town: The town occupies parts of both Phuentsholing Gewog and Sampheling Gewog. Phuentsholing lies opposite the Indian town of Jaigon and cross-border trade has resulted in a thriving local economy. For example, the town serves as headquarters for the Bank of Bhutan. In 2005, Phuentsholing had a population of 20,537 and has been growing since.

Drive to Thimphu and Thimphu town at leisure. Dinner and overnight at hotel in Thimphu.

Day 2

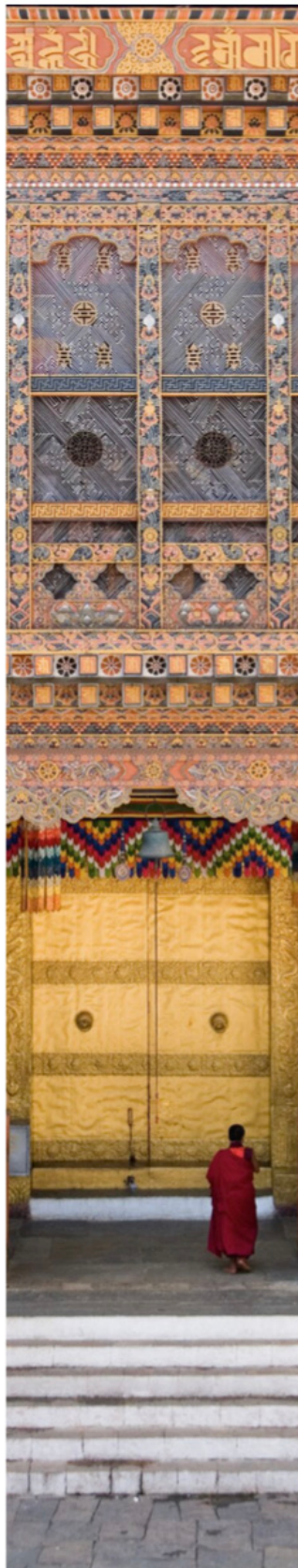
**EXPLORE THIMPHU
Elevation : 2350M**

Thimphu : The Kingdom's capital city is home to approximately over 100,000 inhabitants including the Royal family. This bustling little city is the main centre of commerce, religion and government in the country. The juxtaposition of ancient tradition and modernity make Thimphu the ideal location for visitors to break away from their tour itinerary to immerse themselves in the contemporary Bhutanese lifestyle. Thimphu is the most modern city in Bhutan with an abundance of restaurants, internet cafes, nightclubs and shopping centres. However, it still retains its' cultural identity and values amidst the signs of modernization. The culture of Bhutan is fully reflected in Thimphu in respect of religion, customs, national dress code, the monastic practices of the monasteries, music, dance, literature and the media. One of the most curious features of Thimphu is that it is the only capital city in the world that does not use traffic lights. Instead, a few major intersections have policemen standing in elaborately decorated booths.

Tashi Chodzong : Tashichho Dzong has been the seat of the government since 1952 and presently houses the throne room and offices of the king, the secretariat and the ministries of home affairs and finance. Other government departments are housed in buildings nearby.

It was first constructed in 1216 A.D. by Lama Gyalwa Lhanangpa where Dechen Phodrang now stands above Thimphu. In 1641, Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal acquired it but finding it too small, he built another one, known as the lower Dzong. The original dzong was destroyed by fire in 1771 and everything was moved to the lower dzong. It was damaged during an earthquake in 1897 and rebuilt in 1902..

Buddha Point : The Buddha Dordenma is located atop a hill in Kuenselphodrang Nature Park and overlooks the Southern entrance to Thimphu Valley. The statue fulfils an ancient prophecy dating back to the 8th





century A.D that was discovered by Terton Pema Lingpa and is said to emanate an aura of peace and happiness to the entire world. This massive statue of Shakyamuni measures in at a height of 51.5 m, making it one of the largest statues of Buddha in the world. The statue is made of bronze and is gilded in gold. 125,000 smaller Buddha statues have been placed within the Buddha Dordenma statue; 100,000 statues of which are 8-inches-tall and 25,000 statues of which are 12 inches tall. Each of these thousands of Buddhas have also been cast in bronze and gilded.

Simply Bhutan Museum : A live museum which will showcase and demonstrate typical Bhutanese culture and traditions, including a glimpse of festivals and folk dances.

Takin Preserve Center : One of the most endangered species found only in the Himalayas and Tibetan plateaus, Takin, is the national animal of Bhutan. Hear the mythical story behind the creation of this animal from your guide while visiting.

Free stroll at leisure in Thimphu town including Crafts baazaar, Clock tower square, Changlimithang stadium. Overnight at hotel in Thimphu

Day 3

THIMPHU TO DOCHULA PASS AND PUNAKHA

84KM 1Hrs 30 Mins Drive
Elevation : 1800M

Memorial chorten : The National Memorial Chorten was built in memory of Third Druk Gyalpo and is dedicated to World Peace. The chorten is a large white structure crowned with a golden spire. Visitors will find elderly Bhutanese people circumambulating the Chorten throughout the day. Chorten literally means 'Seat of Faith' and Buddhists often call such monuments, the 'Mind of Buddha'. The Chorten is an extraordinary example of Buddhist architecture and artwork with its gorgeous paintings and intricate sculptures.

Painting School : This institute, commonly known as 'the painting school', operates four- to six-year courses that provide instruction in Bhutan's 13 traditional arts. Students specialise in painting (furniture, thangka s – painted religious pictures, usually on canvas), woodcarving (masks, statues, bowls), embroidery (hangings, boots, clothes) or statue-making (clay).

Royal Textile Academy (optional): With the aim to preserve and promote this living art, the Royal Textile Academy of Bhutan was instituted in May 2005 under the patronage of Her Majesty Ashi Sangay Choden Wangchuck as a non-government, non-profit organization. It will be established as an educational centre for the training of individuals in the traditional art of weaving, thereby preserving and conserving the culture of Bhutanese Textiles.

Drive to Dochula pass, which will take around 50 mins :





Dochula Pass : Dochula pass is located on the way to Punakha from Thimphu. The pass is a popular location among tourists as it offers a stunning 360 degree panoramic view of the Himalayan mountain range. The view is especially scenic on clear, winter days with snowcapped mountains forming a majestic backdrop to the tranquility of the 108 chortens gracing the mountain pass. Bhutanese families enjoy visiting the pass during holidays and weekends to picnic and simply enjoy the scenery.

Chimi Lhakang : known to the English speaking world as The Fertility Temple, is a Buddhist monastery, in the Punakha District of Bhutan, idyllically placed on a rotund hill. The temple was built over half a millennium ago by Ngawang Choegyel, the 14th Drukpa hierarch. The stupa, meditation hall, was constructed by the “Divine Madman,” the eccentric Yogi and saint Drukpa Kunley, who blessed the entire grounds. The monastery is renowned throughout Bhutan as a fertility inducing magnet, pledging that all who wish to conceive will find guidance at the temple. Thousands pilgrimage to The Fertility Temple in the hopes of having a child, as well as receiving a wang, blessing, from the saint with the ‘magic thunderbolt of wisdom.

Further walk towards Male River to swing on the Longest suspension bridge of Bhutan. Overnight in Punakha.

Day 4

PUNAKHA TO PARO
(122KM 3.5 hrs drive)
Elevation : 2600M

Punakha Dzong : Punakha Dzong is arguably the most beautiful dzong in the country, especially in spring when the lilac-coloured jacaranda trees bring a lush sensuality to the dzong's characteristically towering whitewashed walls. This dzong was the second to be built in Bhutan and it served as the capital and seat of government until the mid-1950s. All of Bhutan's kings have been crowned here. The dzong is still the winter residence of the dratshang (official monk body). A smaller building called Dzong Chug (Small Dzong) housed a statue of the Buddha here as early as 1326. Construction on the current dzong began in 1637 and was completed the following year, when the building was christened Pungthang Dechen Phodrang (Palace of Great Happiness). Later embellishments included the construction of a chapel to commemorate the victory over the Tibetans in 1639. The arms captured during the battle are preserved in the dzong.

Paro : Paro valley extends from the confluence of the Paro Chhu and the Wang Chhu rivers at Chuzom up to Mt. Jomolhari at the Tibetan border to the North. This picturesque region is one of the widest valleys in the kingdom and is covered in fertile rice fields and has a beautiful, crystalline river meandering down the





valley. Accentuating the natural beauty are the elegant, traditional-style houses that dot the valley and surrounding hills. One of the distinctive features of Paro town is that it is situated in a flat valley bottom and follows a grid-like pattern. The central plaza is adorned with a large prayer wheel and a small amphitheater where events are held throughout the year.

Paro National Museum : The museum is set in Paro Ta Dzong, an ancient watchtower that now displays hundreds of ancient Bhutanese artifacts and artwork including traditional costumes, armour, weaponry and handcrafted implements for daily life. The collection at the National Museum preserves a snap-shot of the rich cultural traditions of the country.

Dinner and overnight at hotel in Paro

Day 5

PARO TIGER'S NEST HIKE (2200M - 3000M)

After early breakfast from the hotel , drive to north of Paro for most exciting point of the interest of Bhutan tour: **Taktsang Lhakhang** : is Bhutan's most iconic landmark and religious site. The name Taktsang translates to "The Tiger's Nest". This temple is one of the most holy sites in the kingdom and clings impossibly to a sheer cliff face 900 meters above the Paro Valley. It was first built in 1692 at a cave where Guru Rimpoche meditated in the 7th century A.D. Legend states that Guru Rimpoche flew to the site atop the back of a tigress and meditated in the cave for 3 years, 3 months, 3 days and 3 hours in order to subdue evil demons residing within it. The cave has been considered a sacred

site ever since and many famous saints have travelled to meditate in it. You could do a meditation session in the inner temple for few hours as well. Taktsang Lhakhang is located approximately 10 km north of Paro town at an altitude of 3.120 m. In order to arrive at the temple visitors must trek for around 2-3 hours through beautiful, shady pine forests. No trip to Bhutan would be complete without a visit to this remarkable heritage site.

Kichu Temple : The temple dates back to the 7th century. According to the Bhutanese legend, Songtsen Gempo, the first Buddhist King of Tibet, established a temple here on the left knee of an ogress in order to subdue her. The temple was restored in the 19th century and a similar one was added in 1968 by Ashi Kesang, the grand Queen Mother of Bhutan.





Day 6

PARO TO PHUNTSHOLING (Night Halt in Jaigoan)
(198KM 5.5 Hrs Drive)
Elevation 300m

In the morning do all the remaining sightseeing's in Paro including Duntse Lhakang, witness a traditional national game match and also try a pose with traditional Bhutanese attire.

After a last lunch in typical Paro town drive to Phuntsholing, stroll around Phuntsholing town including Zangdopelri Temple, Kharbandi temple and crocodile breeding center.

Overnight at hotel in Phuntsholing

Day 7

Depart JAIGOAN

Elevation 300M

Today, you will bid a farewell to this beautiful country. You now must have lots and memories and friends in Bhutan. We look forward to see you again in Bhutan.

Take a cab to your transit point for onward destination.

END OF THE TOUR *** TASHI DELEK

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