

# 9 Days Bumthang Tour



## Introduction

### Trip Facts

Trip Duration	9 Days
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## Itinerary Details

### Day 01: Paro -Thimphu

A spectacular descent through mountainous valleys brings you into the Kingdom of Bhutan. The beautiful airport is your first glimpse of what's ahead. After clearing customs and visa control you are met by your driver and guide. A short drive along the valley brings you to Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan. This very picturesque drive past rural homes, hillside monasteries and chortens only takes 1.5 hours. Settle into your hotel and after lunch at a local restaurant start your sightseeing, visiting the Textile Museum, a traditional paper making factory and the Post office to see Bhutan's beautiful stamps which also depicts about our country's myths, traditions etc. Alternatively you can do less formal sightseeing and walk around the town with your guide. Dinner at a local Bhutanese restaurant. Overnight at Hotel Phuntsho Pelri or Hotel Wangchuk.

## **Day 02: Thimphu valley sightseeing and hike to Tango Monastery**

After breakfast drive at Sangaygang, a field of Bhutanese prayer flags, perched high above the city. Colored flags send prayers to the heavens and white flags honor the dead. Visit the Motithang Mini Zoo where you can see the National animal Takin research centre where these odd animals graze peacefully in a small protected park. Walk to the Zilukha Nunnery and then drive to the Tango Monastery for a picnic lunch. The hike to the monastery takes about 45 minutes. It is a 13th Century structure and today is home to about 150 monks studying Buddhist Philosophy and meditation. Thimphu sightseeing continues with the Folk Heritage Museum (a beautifully restored Bhutanese farmhouse from the last century) and the National Painting School. In the evening visit the National Memorial Chorten built in honor of our 3rd king Jigme Dorji Wangchuck (a wonderful opportunity to mix with the local population). All the buildings in Bhutan conform to national building principals and are beautifully carved and decorated. Dinner at Royal Golf Club. Overnight at hotel Phuntsho Pelri or Hotel Wangchuk.

## **Day 03: Thimphu ? Punakha**

Depart Thimphu and drive over the Docchu-La pass to Punakha. The teahouse at the pass offers beautiful views of the Himalayan range in the distance. This is a 3 hour drive with stops en route. Overnight at hotel Zangto-Pelri. Afternoon visit the magnificent Dzong spanning the . This is the winter residence of the monastic body and the Je Khenpo (chief Abbott). Dinner and overnight at hotel Meri Puensum.

## **Day 04: Punakha ? Gangtey**

This morning we travel to the Probjikha Valley stopping at Wangdue en route, a typical rural town, where locals buy and sell all manner of produce! We turn off the main road for the Probjikha Valley, arguably the most beautiful in Bhutan. The scenery changes dramatically and you will see dwarf bamboo and possibly grazing yaks. Continue to the bottom of the valley and see the Black Crane Institute and Research Centre. The migratory crane arrives in the valley in late October each year. Dinner and overnight at hotel Dewachen.

## **Day 05: Gangtey ? Trongsa - Bumthang**

Today our drive is spectacular and passes over many valleys. We stop at the Chendibji Chorten at the top of a highest pass of the Black mountains and then continue into Central Bhutan. The golden roofed Trongsa Dzong spans the valley that divides east and west Bhutan and is another architectural feat, which can be seen for 20 tantalising and winding miles before it is finally reached. Afternoon visit the impressive Trongsa Dzong and then drive to Bumthang via Yotongla pass (3,400 metres). Enroute visit the joint Australian/Bhutanese wool project at Chumey valley. Watch the single loom weaving process and buy yak wool rugs or scarves if you wish. There is also a wonderful selection of textiles from all over Bhutan on display and for sale at this roadside stop. You will probably see Yaks on the high passes on the way to Bumthang. Eventually the road winds down into the beautiful Bumthang valley, the cultural heart of Bhutan. Rice paddies give way to fields of barley and potatoes as the climate is too cold for rice. Dinner and overnight at Hotel Rinchenling Lodge.

## **Day 06: Bumthang Sightseeing**

This is one of the most spectacular valleys in Bhutan and also the heartland of Buddhism. The Guru and his lineage of Tertons (treasure finders), have led to the sprouting of many temples in the valley. In the morning we hike to visit the Tamshing Monastery (one of the oldest monastic schools built by Terton Pema Lingpa) and Kurjey Lhakhang (where the Guru Rinpoche subdued a local demon and left his body imprint on a rock). We also visit Jambay Lhakhang (one of the oldest temples in Bhutan built in 7th century) and Jakar Dzong (seat of the district administration). In the afternoon, hike to Thangbi valley across the suspension bridge and visit the Thangbi Lhakhang built in the 14th century, dinner and overnight at hotel or drive to Ura.

### **Day 07: Bumthang - Trongsa ? Gantey - Wangdue**

Today we depart to wangdue via Trongsa. In Trongsa visit the impressive Trongsa Dzong, ancestral home of the ruling dynasty. In olden days the dzong commanded the passage between East and West Bhutan and continue your drive to Gangtey over the Pelela pass (3,300 m.). In route visit gantey valley. Gangtey, lies in the flanks of the Black Mountains. There is an old monastery of Gangtey Gompa (under renovation) dating back to the 17th century. A few kilometers past the Gompa on the valley floor are the fascinating valley of Phobjikha. The gentle sloping hillsides of Phobjikha is described as "the most beautiful valley in the Himalayas". This is the winter home of black-necked cranes that migrate from the arid plains in the north to pass winter in milder and lower climate. After the visit drive to Wangdue. Dinner and overnight. 233 kms 8/9 hours.

### **Day 08: Wangdue ? Thimphu - Paro**

After early breakfast a short drive will take you into the valley of Wangdue and over Dochula Pass 3050 meters to Paro. After reaching Paro drive to Satsam Chorten to hike up to the Taktsang monastery (Tiger's nest). At the viewpoint enjoy the stunning view of the monastery, where Guru Padmasambhava landed on the back of a tigress in the 8th century. After lunch at the cafe walk back to the road point where your car will pick you up and then drive to visit Drukgyal Dzong, the ruined fort, which once defended this valley from Tibetan invasions. Evening stroll in town. Overnight at hotel. 135 kms 4/5 hours.

### **Day 09: Paro - Kathmandu (by Druk Air)**

In the morning our Bhutanese counterpart will escort and bid you farewell at Paro airport. Good-bye and happy journey back home.

### **Cost Includes :**

- English speaking guide, driver & private Vehicle.
- All touring & transfers throughout your journey.
- Bhutanese style 3 star hotels with private bathrooms.
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner from Hotel/ restaurant
- All entrance fees and sightseeing.
- Bhutan visa fees, Bhutan Govt royalties & local taxes.
- Camping equipment and haulage for trekking tours

## Cost Excludes :

- Drukair/ Bhutan Airlines flights to/from Paro.
- Personal items – phone calls, laundry, drinks etc.
- Travel Insurance – which is mandatory to enter Bhutan.