



Bhutan Handicraft and Textile Tour

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| Trip code | |
| Package name | Bhutan Handicraft and Textile Tour |
| Duration | 11 |
| Max. elevation | 3150 m |
| Level | MODERATE |
| Transportation | Private vehicals for all round trip. |
| Accomodation | 3***hotel twin sharing bed basis during the tour. |
| Starts at | paro |
| Ends at | Paro |
| Trip route | Paro - Thimphu - Punakha - Phobjikha - Trongsa - Bumthang - Paro. |
| Cost | USD 2,550 per person |

Highlights

Overview

Bhutan's weaving of beautiful textiles is one of its most important forms of art. The country is well known for its exquisite textiles.

Bhutan Handicraft and Textile Tour is a 10 days tour which will let you observe the beautiful textile done by weaving in Bhutan. Intricate woven patterns and designs with vibrant color and textures exhibits the unique and magnificent textile art of Bhutan that has been passed down for countless generations. Although the skills and arts of weaving are widespread, it is mostly seen in the central and eastern part of Bhutan. Bhutanese unique designs represent the most intricate patterning of any textile art in the world. Enjoy how Bhutanese textiles serve as a cultural repository which, having

developed over the centuries, still plays a critical role in all religious, official and social events. These textiles possess great spiritual significance. Buddhist scholars believe that symbols and design elements found on Bhutanese textiles represent glyphs manifesting ancient wisdom.

Our tour begins with a scenic flight to the Dragon Kingdom; Paro. The flight offers you a mesmerizing aeronautical feat and offers exciting descent into the kingdom. Paro is a beautiful valley and is home to many of Bhutan's oldest monasteries and temples, and the country's only international airport. The first day in Bhutan will be well spent with a visit to the Bhutanese textile and handicrafts shops around the Paro. Afterwards visit a carpet weaving factory. Interact with the weavers and appreciate the creativity of the weavers whereby threads are put together to form new creations. The next day, we will drive for about two hours to the capital town, Thimphu followed by sightseeing tour around Tamchog Lhakhang. Upon arrival, visit National Memorial Chorten, Textile Museum, and Institute for Zorig Chusum, Kuensel Phodrang and Tashichho Dzong. Then we will continue our tour towards Punakha, Phobjikha, Trongsa, Bumthang, Wangdue Phodrang and Paro respectively. This tour is a combination of Cultural and Bhutan Textile tours.

Trip Itinerary

Day 1 : Arrival at Paro (2250 m). Upon arrival, transfer to hotel. Overnight at Paro

Fly over to the dragon kingdom Paro passing by Mountains of 5500 meters to Paro. This flight offers you a mesmerizing aeronautical feat and offers exciting descent into the kingdom. Paro is a beautiful valley and is home to many of Bhutan's oldest monasteries and temples, and the country's only international airport. The flight to Paro is one of the most spectacular mountain flights in the world, with a constantly changing panorama of some of the highest mountains on earth including Mount Everest, Mount Kanchenjunga, and Mount Chomolhari and Jitchu Drake peak. Paro Airport has been described as "the most difficult commercial airport in the world". 1980 meter runway length presents a double challenge, due to the extremely low density altitude at the site. So, only a handful of well experienced pilots are certified to operate commercial airplanes here thus, making least number of flights in a day. After immigration and custom formalities, check out from the departure lounge. There you will meet one of the representatives of Nature Trail Travels & Tours, Trekking & Expedition who will greet you and then escort you to your respective hotel where you will stay overnight. After lunch, at the hotel there will be an orientation on Bhutanese etiquette and description about the trip by our guide.

Today's evening will be well spent with a visit to the Bhutanese textile and handicrafts shops around the Paro and have your first introduction to the Bhutanese textiles. Afterwards visit a carpet weaving factory. Interact with the weavers and appreciate the creativity of the weavers whereby threads are put together to form new creations. Overnight in Paro

Day 2 : Drive Paro to Thimphu (2350 m) – 2 hrs. drive

After breakfast, you will drive to Thimphu, the capital city of Bhutan. Enroute you can visit Tamchog Lhakhang which was built in the 13th century by Thangthong Gyalpo. He is also known as the Iron bridge

builder. Situated on a hill top, we have to cross an ancient style bridge to reach the temple. It is owned by the descendants of Thangthong Gyalpo.

Upon arrival at Thimphu, you can visit the National Memorial Chorten, which was built in the honor of the Third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, also known as “The Father of Modern Bhutan”. This Chorten was built in 1974 in a typical Tibetan style. This Chorten is also a center of worship for the people living in Thimphu and contains many religious paintings and tantric statues. Explore the textile museum which is operated by the National Commission for Cultural Affairs of Bhutan. The Museum was established in the year 2001 and has a good collection of exclusive and antique Bhutanese textile artifacts. The museum was set up with an objective to promote encourage weavers to continue the weaving of traditional Bhutanese textile, Promote Bhutan in the field of textile art and to preserve and promote the history and tradition of Bhutan. You can also visit the Institute for Zorig Chusum where students are taught the 13 traditional arts and crafts of Bhutan in this institute. Also explore Kuensel Phodrang, a place for refreshing with a huge statue of Buddha on the top of the Kuensel Phodrang. The area also gives a very good view of the Thimphu valley from the west. If time permits, you can discover Tashichho Dzong (Fortress of the Glorious Religion); a Doom (Blue Stone) Dzong was built on the hill above Thimphu in 1216 the lama Gyalwa Lhanampa. A few years later Lama Phajo Drugom Shigpo, who brought the Drukpa Kagyu lineage to Bhutan, took over Dohon Dzong. Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (The one who unified the country) acquired the Dzong in 1641 from the descendants of lama Phajo and renamed it as Trashi Chhoe Dzong. The Dzong is the seat of the national government and the Central Monastic Body, including the summer residence of the Je Khenpo (Chief Abbot of Bhutan) at present. Overnight in Thimphu

Day 3 : Drive Thimphu to Punakha (76 km, 1310 m) – approx. 2/3 hrs. drive

On this day, after breakfast drive for about 30 kilometer towards Dochula pass (3150 m). Dochula pass is the most known pass in Bhutan. On a clear day, spectacular view of the mighty Himalayas mountain ranges can be seen from this sight. The pass also has 108 Druk Wangyal Khangzang Chorten which is believed to bring multi fold merit to all sentient beings and which make the pass a must visit place. Enroute there is a temple Chimi Lhakhang, which is also known as the temple of fertility and was built by Lama Drukpa Kuenley in the 15 century. Lama Drukpa Kuenley was also known as the Divine Madman.

Upon arrival at Punakha, you can visit Punakha Dzong which was built by the Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in 1637. It is built at the junction the Pho Chu and Mo Chu Rivers. The annual Punakha Tshechu is held here. The monk body resides in this Dzong in winter. At evening, you can walk around the town by yourself. Overnight at Punakha.

Day 4 : Drive Punakha to Phobjikha (70 km, 2900 m) – approx. 2/3 hrs. drive

Drive a distance of 13 kilometer for about 45 minutes to Wangdue Phodrang. Enroute visit the ruined site of Wangdue Phodrang Dzong by fire in late June 2012, which is perched on a ridge overlooking the Punatshangchhu and Dangchhu River. We then continue a scenic drive for a distance of further 65 kilometers for about 3 hours to Gangtey in the beautiful glacial valley of Phobjikha at an altitude of 3000 meters. Phobjikha valley is one of the most beautiful glacial valleys in the Himalayas winter roosting grounds of the rare Black-necked Cranes, where they come in hundreds after spending their summer in Tibet and then migrates to the Himalayas of Bhutan to spend their winter Travelling November through

February shall give you the rare opportunity to see the black necked cranes. Admire splendid flora and trees, hopefully Dendrobiums along the highest motorable pass through dense spruce and larch forests. Afterwards, visit the picturesque Gangtey Gompa (monastery) and take in breathtaking views of this beautiful upland plain, stroll through the village and along a nature trail of the Phobjikha valley. In evening, visit the local weavers and interact with them. Try weaving for yourself! Overnight in Phobjikha

Day 5 : Drive Phobjikha to Trongsa (120 km, 2300 m) – approx. 4/5 hrs. drive

On the following day, we drive to Trongsa. Trongsa is the gateway to central Bhutan at 2,180 metres. Set amid spectacular scenery, Trongsa Dzong, the ancestral home of Bhutan's royal family, commands the eye from miles away. Experience a journey through a warm broad leaved forest passing by the Black Mountains up to Pele La Pass at 3300 meter. This stretch covers a range of habitat from tall, dense, evergreen forest characterized by moss and lichen, covered oak and rhododendron together with broad-leaved trees such as horse-chestnuts, laurels, maples and alders. At higher elevation, the composition changes perceptibly with conifers such as fir, spruce, larch, hemlock and juniper. Bamboo is another important habitat in this region, holding number of special but elusive species. It is not very prominent birding area. After arrival at Trongsa, you can visit Trongsa Dzong, the most impressive Dzong in Bhutan. The Dzong was built by Chogyal Minjur Tempa, the official who was sent by Zhabdrung to unify Eastern Bhutan. It was enlarged at the end of the 17th century by Desi Tenzin Rabgay. Trongsa Dzong is the ancestral home of the present Royal Family. The first two hereditary kings ruled Bhutan from this Dzong. Further, move on to Ta Dzong, an ancient watch tower. The chapel inside is said to be dedicated to the Trongsa Penlop Jigme Namgyal. Overnight in Trongsa.

Day 6 : Drive Trongsa to Bumthang (68 km, 2600 m) – approx. 2/3 hrs. drive

Drive a distance of 68 kilometers to Bumthang via Yotong La Pass (3400 m) through temperate forests of Trongsa to coniferous and mixed alpine of Bumthang. Apart from being one of the most beautiful valleys of the kingdom, Bumthang is also the religious heartland of the nation. Observe Yathra, the most famous textile product of Bumthang. The Chumey Valley is known for the beautiful Yathra woven by the locals. Yathra is a hand woven fabric made from the wool of sheep or Yak. The wool is first spun into threads and then dyed before they are woven into Yathra with beautiful flower patterns and colors. The Yathra cloth is made into scarfs, jackets, table cloths and bags. Most of the women in this valley, especially in Zungye village, earn their lively hood by weaving Yathra which is supplied to various towns in Bhutan. The Yathra are designed with patterns unique to Bumthang, and you can even watch some of the weavers at their looms. The afternoon will be spent sightseeing in the area, including Jakar Dzong. Also visit woodcarving factory in Jakar; Jambay Lhakhang, one of the oldest monasteries in Bhutan, dating from the introduction of Buddhism in Bhutan; and Kurjey Lhakhang, one of the most sacred places, because Guru Rinpoche left his body imprint on the cave when he was meditating. In the evening you can visit some handicrafts shop while strolling through Bumthang town. Overnight at Bumthang.

Day 7 : Bumthang sightseeing

Start the day with a fulfilling breakfast as the events planned for you involves exploring many legendary monasteries and temples. The valley has more flatlands compared to other dzongkhags of the country but its different locations are perched at elevations ranging from 8,500ft to more than 13,000ft. Places you will visit include some of the most ancient and holy temples blessed by the eighth century saint Guru Padmasambhava. One such temple is the Jambay Lhakhang which was built by the Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo. He had built 108 Lhakhang to suppress a supine demoness, Jambay Lhakhang in

Bumthang and Kyichu Lhakhang in Paro are two among the 108.

Also, another Lhakhang blessed by Guru Rinpoche is the Kurje Lhakhang. Kurje means 'body print' and the Lhakhang displays an area where the Guru had left his print on the wall of a cave when he meditated in it. You will visit the two temples in the afternoon while you will be able to visit other lhakhangs just as holy and ancient as the two above. To name a few there's the Tamshing Lhakhang, which is a treasure house of interesting religious Buddhist paintings, Kenchogsum Lhakhang and Jakar Dzong, the administrative center of the valley. The place is also famous for the Bumthang Cheese, Bumthang Honey and Bumthang Bukhari (stove to warm yourself during winter). And one other product that. In the evening take a stroll through the Bumthang town and visit local handloom weaving house and opportunity to interact with the weavers. Overnight in Bumthang.

Day 8 : Drive Bumthang to Wangdue Phodrang – approx. 6 hrs. drive

Drive for about six hours in order to reach Gangtey. On the plus, however the fatigue of journey will be forgotten as you drive through serene dense forests of Oak and Rhododendron before reaching Gangtey (Wangdue Phodrang). Enroute, halt and visit again Bumthang famous wool fabric local handloom weaving center. You can also visit the Yathra shop for your shopping. Gangtey is situated at the height of 2,900 metres above sea level. On arrival, enjoy the immense views of the remote Phobjikha Valley and the Black Mountains. Move onto visit Gangtey Gompa (one of Bhutan's oldest and recently renovated monasteries) and explore the valley where the villagers continue to live a traditional Bhutanese rural lifestyle. This is the site where black-necked cranes visit in their hundreds in November of each year, after spending the summer in Tibet. Explore the colorful, recently-restored Gangtey Gompa, a monastic college famous for its annual festival to welcome the migration of black-necked cranes. Toward evening side, feel free to make a round of the quaint valley and its villages. Overnight at Wangdue Phodrang.

Day 9 : Drive Wangdue Phodrang to Paro

Hike up to the hilltop village of Rinchengang and learn about its interesting history. Rinchengang is picturesquely situated on a steep ridge near Wangdi and then drive to Paro. Upon arrival at Paro, you can visit impressive Paro Dzong, one of the finest examples of Bhutanese architecture.

Day 10 : Tiger Nest Hike

After breakfast, you will be hiking to the Taktsang Monastery. The name Taktsang means "Tiger's Nest". It is said that in the second half of the 8th century, Guru Padma Sambhava alighted here upon the back of a tigress. Lunch at Taktsang cafeteria. The round trip hike takes about 5 hours

Day 11 : Departure

Ending our trip, you will be transferred to the airport for your flight back to home. During the flight you will enjoy breathtaking views of the Himalayan peaks that include sacred Bhutanese mountains such as Jomolhari and Jitchu Drake.

Inclusions

What is included?

- Airport pick up & drop by private vehicle as your require.
- Private vehicals for round trip.
- Standard accommodation twin sharing bed basis for the duration of tour.
- All meals fixed breakfast, lunch & dinner with Tea and Coffee for whole duration of your stay in Bhutan.
- Mineral water supply for the trip.
- Local licensed English speaking Bhutan Tour Guides.
- All sightseeing tours, Monument /Museum entrance Fees as per itinerary.
- Country Presentation & Tour Briefing on arrival evening.
- Bhutan Visa Fees and Visa Processing assistance.
- The required number of trekking & touring staff.
- All trekking access, route permits logistics & fees.
- Government tax which goes to the country's health & education projects.

What isn't included?

- Your travel insurance.
- Bottled/alcoholic/cold drinks room service.
- International airfares and airport departure tax.
- Personal Equipment.
- Tips to staffs-Tipping is expected.
- Any others expenses which are not mentioned on Price Includes section.

Complimentary