



## Kayaking and Rafting in Bhutan

<b>Trip code</b>	
<b>Package name</b>	Kayaking and Rafting in Bhutan
<b>Duration</b>	7
<b>Max. elevation</b>	m
<b>Level</b>	beginner
<b>Transportation</b>	
<b>Accommodation</b>	
<b>Starts at</b>	
<b>Ends at</b>	
<b>Trip route</b>	
<b>Cost</b>	USD 0 per person

## Highlights

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## Overview

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**Rivers in Bhutan offers a great potential for Kayaking and Rafting. The clean and clear rivers of Bhutan are one of the kingdom's best assets along with the Mountain ranges and green valleys.**

Most of the rivers of Bhutan are very steep and highly rushing with limited road access which makes it considerable unsuitable for water rafting. Thus, very few of them are permitted for river rafting and kayaking. Major rivers of Bhutan includes: Wang Chhu in Thimphu, Puna Tsang Chhu in Punakha, Mangde Chhu in Trongsa, Kuri Chhu in Mongar and Dangme Chhu in Trashigang and their tributaries. These rivers have been categorized the best spot for rafting and kayaking. Depending upon owns experience, these river courses has something to offer to its visitors be it the beginner or

an expertise. These river cut through high valleys and low plains to meet up with the Brahmaputra River which is located in India. The natural setting and the sheer variety of the rivers' courses makes up for a unique opportunity to explore Bhutan's beautiful wilderness. It is more than a teaser and an invitation to anyone interested in adventure travels. The rivers are plentiful with high currents and depth reaching a maximum of about five meters; at places it passes gently on and in others the rivers rage through loudly, dominating the environs. Although adventure sports and tourism are relatively recent introductions, it is gaining on in popularity.

Our Bhutanese Kayaking and Rafting guides are well trained and will do everything to ensure that you enjoy the adventure while minimizing the risks. Rafting and Kayaking in Bhutan provides the unique opportunity to explore Bhutan's beautiful wilderness. Adventurous travelers will not be disappointed by the rugged, untamed water ways of Bhutan. The rivers are plentiful with high currents and depths reaching a maximum of about five meters; at places it passes gently on and in others the rivers rage through loudly.

## Trip Itinerary

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### **Day 1 : Flight to Paro (2250 m). Upon arrival, transfer to hotel for overnight stay.**

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, 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.

### **Day 2 : Hike to Taktsang monastery (3180 m) and drive to Thimphu (2,320m/7,610ft) – 2 hrs. drive**

You will have a short hike up to Taktsang monastery, a prominent sacred Buddhist site and temple complex perched on the edge of upper Paro Valley. It is also known as the Tiger's Nest. This magical monastery clings to a vertical granite cliff 300 meter above the valley. Legend has it that the great Guru Padmasambhava flew to this spot on back of a tigress and meditated in a cave during the 8th century. When the Guru finished his meditation, he instructed that the monastery to be built. The temple was built around the cave and is a hallowed shrine for Bhutanese pilgrims. The spectacular view along the way and the historical sites draw many tourists to this imposing monastery. There are also a number of temples scattered along the route. Later we'll turn to the Paro Dzong, a large Buddhist monastery and fortress, which is considered the best example of Bhutanese architecture. Now it also houses the district Monastic Body and government administrative offices. On the hill above the Dzong stands an ancient

watchtower called Ta Dzong, which is the National Museum of Bhutan. Visit Ta Dzong Museum housing many religious relics, works of art and handicrafts offering a great orientation into Bhutan's historical, cultural, and religious past. This Dzong was converted into the National Museum in 1968. The museum boasts antique thangkas, textiles, weapons and armor, household objects and rich assortment of natural and historic artifacts. Here you can also learn about Bhutan's history. After this hike and a short sightseeing tour, we drive to Thimphu following the Pachu River. Once a rustic village sitting in a broad, fertile river valley, Thimphu is today the nation's bustling capital. We will stay overnight at Thimphu.

### **Day 3 : Drive Thimphu to Punakha (1310 m) via Dochula (3100 m) – approx. 3 hrs. drive**

On the following day, we will have an appetizing breakfast at the hotel. Afterwards, we will proceed for the drive towards another beautiful town called Punakha Dzong. Enroute we will pass through Dochula Pass, one of the most beautiful pass in Bhutan situated at an altitude of 3100 meter. Visit 108 Druk Wangyel Chortens, built over the pass by queen mother in 2003 marks the pass more important than another passes. When the weather permits one can enjoy a spectacular view of the highest mountains of Bhutan at a site that stretches almost 180 degrees. After a short break, we will continue our drive to warm valley of Punakha.

Upon arrival at Punakha, you will check into your respective hotel for refreshment and then proceed for Punakha tour. During the tour, we will visit Punakha Dzong, a beautiful Dzong that houses the most elaborated temple in the country. This Dzong, showcase the finest example of the arts and crafts of Bhutan. Further, if the time permits, we will visit Chimi Lhakhang, which is about two hours walk from motor able road through paddy fields and villages. Chimi Lhakhang is situated on a hillock in the centre of the valley. This temple is also known as the temple of fertility. A walk through the village near the temple will give you rare glimpses into the daily life and lifestyle of the villagers.

### **Day 4 : Drive Punakha to Tashithang – approx. 2 hrs. drive**

Your actual rafting/kayaking tour starts on this day. For those who like adventurous activities, our kayakers will take on the Tashithang Devil's gorge today, a Class V rapid. It's a 12km stretch taking 5 -7 hours with scouting. Higher than medium flows makes this run dangerous. And for those who don't want to raft in such a high water speed then we can organize you a tour either in Pho Chu or Mo Chu River. A high water run is not recommended. There is a short stretch of flat water about six kilometers down, the end of which marks the start of the Devil's Gorge, a step up from the whitewater above. There is little access to the road, so paddlers attempting this section of river should be ready to commit to the whole thing. After the raft, you will have lunch and then driven back to your respective hotel for overnight stay.

### **Day 5 : Drive Punakha to Wangdue Phodrang – approx. 2/3 hrs. drive**

Drive a distance of 13 kilometer towards Wangdue Phodrang. You drive through serene dense forests of Oak and Rhododendron before reaching 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

migrate 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 Wangdue Phodrang.

## **Day 6 : Drive Wangdue Phodrang to Paro**

On this kayaking and rafting tour, you can experience a short hike on this day. You can 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. Throughout the journey, you will meet an interesting range of growers across Bhutan, learn about their challenges and their joys, and come to appreciate the deep connections between the land, the people, and the foods of Bhutan.

## **Day 7 : 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**

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**What is included?**

**What isn't included?**

**Complimentary**