



## Mountain Biking in Bhutan

<b>Trip code</b>	
<b>Package name</b>	Mountain Biking 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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**With the most suitable trail, Bhutan offers you the best cycling tour without having to ride in too steep or descending trail.**

Along with the adventure, the riders can observe stunning Mountain views, lush green valley, traditional culture, ancient valleys, Monasteries and Gompa and many more. Each of the Bhutanese people welcomes you with a warm hospitality and smile on their face. Our journey begins with a scenic flight over the Dragon kingdom of Bhutan. The biking journey starts from Paro following a single paved road that meets up further with steep, narrow, rocky and muddy paths through several alpine passes, or extreme washboard caused by cattle or yak. You make several ascents and descents stretching before you a real picture of Bhutanese Lifestyle. Visit medieval fortresses,

monasteries, climb countless mountain passes and enjoy countless cruising descents, be in pristine nature. Uncover Bhutan's many surprises as you rise to the challenge of crossing this Himalayan country by bike. For those who love to climb, this is a tour with no flat sections, only gradual uphill and downhill. One of our famous rides, your legs and lungs will surely be a bit strengthened at journey's end. But your heart will be warm and open from your encounters and experiences with the genuine and genuinely enlightened Bhutanese local.

## Trip Itinerary

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### **Day 1 : Arrival at Paro (2,250m / 7,382ft). Upon arrival, transfer to your respective hotel.**

Embarking our tour, we fly in Bhutan. We fly over passing by Mountains of 5500 meters to Paro. Paro is a beautiful valley and is home to many of Bhutan's oldest monasteries and temples, and the country's only international airport. 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 where there will be an orientation on Bhutanese etiquette by your guide.

Afterwards, Then we will visit Rinpung Dzong, meaning 'fortress of the heap of jewels' to see the painting of the great saint Milarepa, considered as the master of meditation by the Bhutanese and believed to have attained enlightenment in a lifetime. The Dzong was built in 1645 to defend the valley against Tibetan invaders and is recently used as an

administration center and school for monks. Then walk down to Rimpung Bridge (Traditional Bridge), one of the oldest bridge in Bhutan. The next spot we are going to visit today is Kichu Lhakhang, the oldest temple in the country built in 7th Century. This temple is one of the 108 temples built by the Tibetan King Songsten Gampo. According to the legends, there was a giant demoness laying across the whole area of Tibet and the Himalayas and was preventing the spread of Buddhism. To overcome her, King Songtsen Gampo decided to build 108 temples, which would be placed on all the points of her body. Among these 108 temples, 12 were built in accordance with precise plans. Thus, it happened that in about the year AD 638 the temple of Jokhang in Lhasa was built over the very heart of the demoness.

### **Day 2 : Ride from Paro to Thimphu (2,320m/7,424ft) – 3/4 hrs. ride**

Our cycling tour starts from this day after we have our breakfast on the respective hotel. At first we will pass through the Shaba village. Crossing the confluence of Paro and Thimphu River, we will pass through gradient of the road which is favorable for cycling. There is no steep climb or descending trail. After we arrive on Thimphu, we get refreshed in our respective hotel.

Then we will proceed for the sightseeing tour in Kuenselphodrang, where the Largest Buddha's statue is perched on the hillock overlooking entirely Thimphu valley. Then we visit National Memorial Chorten. This temple was first initiated by the Third King as a protection from the negative elements of

modernization, and as a monument to world peace. The Royal Queen Mother completed it as a memorial Stupa for the Third King who passed away in 1972. Then we will continue our visit to 12th century Changangkha Temple and Drubthob monastery housing the Zilukha Nunnery. If you want to see Takin, the national animal of Bhutan then you can proceed onto mini-zoo. After sightseeing of these sites, if you still have some time left then you can visit to National Library, the priceless collection of Buddhist manuscripts and few English version books; Folk and Heritage Museum, which displays day to day livelihood of typical Bhutanese farmers in medieval period and their accessories; Late King's Memorial Stupa, built for the world peace and Traditional Handmade Paper Factory; Painting School, which preserves our traditional paintings, sculpturing and wood curving and National Handicraft Emporium, the best place to look for souvenir from Bhutan. Some of the landmarks are closed on the weekend (Saturdays and Sundays). Therefore, if your visit to Thimphu coincides with the weekend, you can walk through the Thimphu Market to see the variety of food of Bhutan, including basket upon basket of fiery chillies, cheese and a variety of greens. (This market is open only from Friday-Sunday).

### **Day 3 : Ride Thimphu to Cheri Mountain (2850m)**

On the following day, we will ride towards the base of Cheri monastery which will take around one and half hour. You can perceive some stunning work of Bhutanese architecture before the main zigzag trail to Cheri. Upon arrival, we will hike up to Cheri Monastery. The hike is through the shades of pines and firs. Then hike for about 1 ½ hours gently passing through paddy fields and woodland following the Wangchu River to reach Cheri monastery. Cheri Monastery is considered very sacred as it contains the remains of Tempi Nima, the father of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. Zhabdrung built the monastery in 1620 in memory of his father and spent three years in strict retreat at the monastery and it's a renowned meditation place even today. The first community of monks in Bhutan was established here. The monastery is now a major teaching and retreat center of the Drukpa Kagyu sect, and serves as the monastic school for study of Buddhist Philosophy and other Buddhist studies. Many of the important priests of Drukpa Kagyu lineage passed periods here, and so it is an important pilgrim site for Bhutanese. You might spot goral (wild goat) jumping and walking the rocky cliffs nearby the monastery. At evening, return to Thimphu and stroll around the town and visit local handicraft stores. You can buy some souvenir as well.

### **Day 4 : Drive Thimphu to Punakha (1,250m/4,100ft) – approx. 3 hrs. drive**

On the following day, we will be driving to Punakha via Dochu La Pass (3,100m). Dochu la pass is situated 10,000 feet above sea level. You can have magnificent view of eastern Himalayas from this pass which includes Bhutan's highest mountain Mount Gangkhar Puensum (7550 m). From the pass, we drive downhill through the rhododendron, fir and hemlock forests. We then pass through rice fields along river banks and reach Punakha. In Punakha, we visit Punakha Dzong which was built between 1637/1638 and is the second oldest and the second largest Dzong in Bhutan. Overnight in Punakha

### **Day 5 : Drive Punakha to Wangdue Phodrang and after sightseeing further drive to Thimphu – approx. 3 hrs. drive**

Today, we drive for about half an hour in order to reach Wangdue. Wangdue Phodrang Dzong is perched on a spur at the confluence of two rivers. Wangdue Phodrang represents an important gateway to Eastern Bhutan. High on a promontory overlooking the river, this Dzong, founded in 1639, controlled the routes to Trongsa, Punakha, Dagana, and Thimphu. The position of the Dzong is remarkable as it completely covers the spur and commands an impressive view over both the north-south and east-west

roads. Punakha and Wangdue Phodrang are administrative centers of their respective Dzong khang or districts. Compared to Thimphu or Paro, the valley is at much lower elevation at about 1250 meter above sea level. Therefore it enjoys subtropical climate with warm summers and pleasant winters. The valley boasts at least two crops a year and subtropical plants like Cactuses, Mandarin, and Bananas grow here. The town of Punakha was relocated recently to Khuruthang from its location near Punakha Dzong. Punakha was former winter capital of Bhutan, the tradition that is still kept by the monastic body, who moves their capital to Thimphu in the summer and return to Punakha Dzong in the winter. It is around half hour drive between Punakha and Wangdue Phodrang. The small township of Wangdue with clusters of small shops tightly packed together, surrounding a truck stop is quite interesting to visit. Across the river, on the opposite ridge is the village of Richen gang, known for cluster of houses connected to one another. After sightseeing tour, we drive to Thimphu for our overnight stay.

## **Day 6 : Drive Thimphu to Paro (2,320m/7,424ft): 2 hrs. drive and hike to Taktsang monastery**

After breakfast, we follow the same way back to Paro and then hike towards Taktsang monastery. Taktsang is 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 and considered to be the most sacred place. 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 for 3 months. When the Guru finished his meditation, he instructed to build the monastery. 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 descend down to the valley for our overnight stay.

## **Day 7 : Departure**

Concluding our trip, we depart from Paro. Following breakfast you are transferred to the airport depending upon your flight schedule where your tour comes to an end.

## **Inclusions**

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**What is included?**

**What isn't included?**

**Complimentary**