

NATURAL FOCUS

BHUTAN



THE MOUNTAIN KINGDOM

Travel to the far-away Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan and discover a Shangri-La of green valleys, snow-capped mountains and friendly people. Physically isolated in its mountain fortress, this mystical Buddhist nation was closed to outsiders until 1974 and even today regulates tourist numbers. Modernisation began in the 1970s but King Jigme Singye Wangchuck was determined to protect his country's rich culture and spiritual values, famously stating that Gross National Happiness was more important than Gross Domestic Product.

Bhutan is a deeply devout Buddhist country and religion is part of everyday life, evidenced by the sacred ceremonies performed by red-robed monks in ancient monasteries and the prayer flags which flutter over hills and villages. Sacred chortens (stupas) and carved colourful prayer wheels are everywhere. Traditional festivals or "Tsechus" are celebrated across the country throughout the year.

This is one of the most unique travel destinations on earth, and should only be embarked upon by those with a sense of adventure and a relaxed attitude. Accommodation is of a good standard but roads can be steep and winding with long drives between towns. Our tailor-made tours are offered on a private basis in air-conditioned vehicles with a choice of accommodation from simple to luxurious. Tours are accompanied by a local driver and an English-speaking guide.

Happy travelling,
Stephen and Sara Cameron
Stephen and Sara Cameron – Founders



BHUTAN TRAVEL BUREAU

Travellers to Bhutan are permitted entry only with a government endorsed tour operator. Bhutan Travel Bureau, our chosen ground operator, was established in 1991 and is one of the most experienced tour companies in Bhutan. They are renowned for their personalised service and pride themselves on their professionalism and attention to detail, utilising a team of seasoned guides, experienced drivers, modern vehicle fleet, and carefully selected hotels.



TOURIST TARIFF

Bhutan's tourism policy is based on a concept of "High Value & Low Impact". For this reason the number of tourists visiting Bhutan are kept to a socially and environmentally manageable level through a government regulated tourist tariff. This policy stipulates an all inclusive rate for foreigners for each night in Bhutan that covers all food, accommodation (excluding category A & B hotels), transport and guide services. A portion of the fee goes to the government to sustain the provision of free medical care and education. All tourists travelling to Bhutan are subject to this tariff, helping to preserve the monuments and society that make the destination so magical.

WHEN TO GO

Even though Bhutan is a year-round destination, the most popular times to visit are spring (March-May) and autumn (September-November). The weather is milder and many large festivals take place during these seasons. Spring can be cloudier and have more rain than autumn, but wildlife is profuse and flowers are at their most vivid. Winter (December-February) can be very cold, however the skies are usually clear, providing good photographic opportunities, and there are fewer tourists. The summer monsoon season (mid June-August) is not recommended due to high temperatures and monsoon rains.



Let the sights and sounds of Bhutan come to you.

Natural Focus Safaris, wilderness your way.

Natural Focus Safaris is a specialist tour company focusing on personalised itineraries to iconic wildlife and wilderness destinations. We are one of Australia's oldest independently owned travel companies, and for over 30 years with our parent company African Wildlife Safaris, have built up an enviable reputation for our in-depth expertise and professionalism. Our dedicated staff are all passionate travellers who between them have travelled to all our destinations, including Bhutan. Travelling to such a unique and mysterious country deep in the Himalayan mountains can seem a little daunting. That is where our expert team of specialised advisers can help. With their hands-on knowledge, they will help create the itinerary, trek or cultural experience you've been dreaming of.



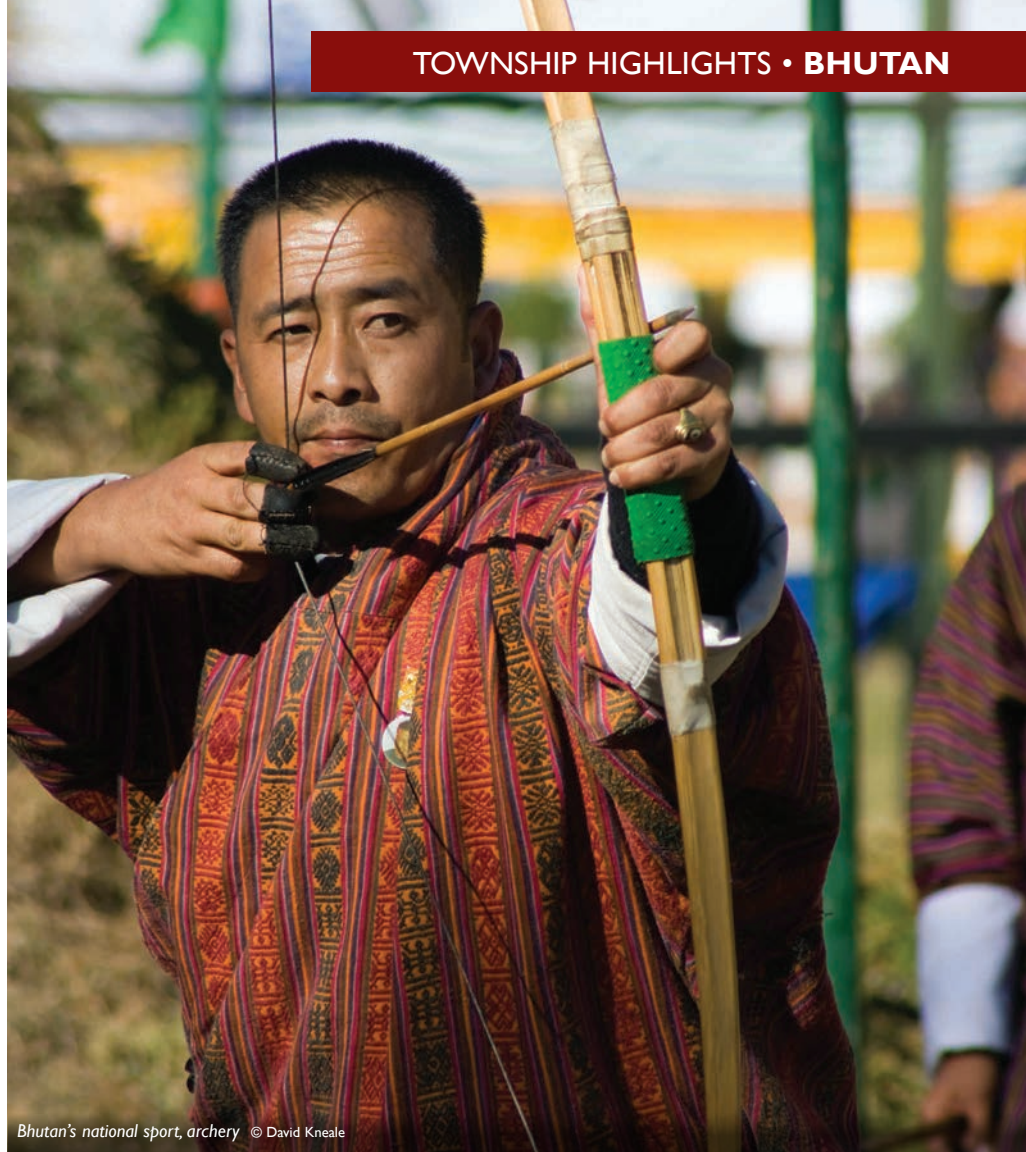
NATURAL FOCUS





TOWNSHIP HIGHLIGHTS
Bhutan's spectacular scenery forms a backdrop to every town, village and remote monastery that dots the landscape. The population is mainly concentrated in the towns and villages and it is in these fascinating places that you can really discover the spirit of the Bhutanese people.

Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest), Paro © Taj Tashi



Bhutan's national sport, archery © David Kneale

PARO
Paro (2,250m), the site of Bhutan's international airport, is set amid the pastoral beauty of the Paro Valley. The highlight of this valley is the incredible Taktsang ('Tiger's Nest') Monastery, precariously perched on a sheer rock ledge above a 900m drop. It was first built in 1692 at a cave where Guru Rimpoche meditated in the 7th century.
The National Museum located above Rimping Dzong offers a great introduction to Bhutanese history with a fascinating collection of art, relics, religious thankha paintings and exquisite postage stamps. Other sights include the ruins of Drukgyel Dzong (fortress of the victorious Drukpas) with its magnificent views of Mount Jumolhari and the 7th century Kyichu Temple.

THIMPHU
Bhutan's capital city – Thimphu (2,350m) – is a fascinating blend of ancient and modern. Zoning regulations require adherence to the forms and motifs of traditional architecture giving the city a wonderful structural harmony. Amongst the capital's most striking visual landmarks are the 52m tall Buddha Dordenma statue overlooking the city, the magnificent Tashichhodzong, housing the seat of the Government and Central Monastic Body, and the National Memorial Chorten.
Other highlights include Semtokha Dzong, the kingdom's oldest Dzong, 12th century Changangkha Temple, Tango Monastery, the National Library housing a rare collection of Buddhist scriptures, and the weekend market.

PUNAKHA
Punakha (1,310m) is Bhutan's ancient capital and the winter seat of the Central Monastic Body due to its sub-tropical climate. The Punakha Dzong, built in 1637 by the Shabdrung (the unifier of Bhutan), is situated on a triangular spit of land at the confluence of two rivers. The body of the Shabdrung, who died in 1651, is entombed at the Dzong. Its main temple is breathtaking with four intricately embossed entrance pillars crafted from cypress and decorated in gold and silver.
Other highlights include the incredible sweeping valley views from Khamsum Yuelley Namgyal Chorten and Chimi Lhakhang, dedicated to Bhutan's popular saint Drukpa Kuenley, otherwise known as the "divine madman" due to his unorthodox methods of religious teaching.



Idyllic rural setting of Bhutan © Shutterstock

GANGTEY/ PHOBJIKHA
Phobjikha Valley (2,900m) is often described as "the most beautiful valley in the most beautiful country in the Himalayas". Every winter, the rare and graceful black-necked cranes return from Tibet to the safety of this remote valley. Gangtey, located above the valley has a very interesting 17th century Nyingmapa monastery, the only one of its kind west of the Black Mountains.
TRONGSA
Ancestral home of Bhutan's ruling dynasty, Trongsa is a strategically located town on the east-west route. The magnificent Trongsa Dzong is one of Bhutan's most impressive fortresses, located high on a spur with spectacular views whilst the Ta Dzong Museum houses an incredible collection of artefacts from the royal family.

BUMTHANG
Bumthang is the spiritual heartland of Bhutan. It is distinguished in history as the first place Buddhism was introduced to Bhutan by Guru Rimpoche. Its undulating green valleys are renowned for their natural beauty, historic palaces and many of Bhutan's oldest temples and monasteries. Some of these include Kurje Lhakhang, home to a rock featuring the imprint of Guru Rimpoche's body, 7th century Jambay Lhakhang and the Tamshing Monastery containing some of the oldest wall paintings in Bhutan. Tales of Guru Rimpoche and the tertons ('religious treasure-discoverers') linger throughout this sacred region. Another highlight is Ugyenchholing Palace, an exquisite private mansion housing a small eco-museum.



Welcoming school children © David Kneale

TRASHIGANG
Trashigang (3,773m) is the largest urban centre in eastern Bhutan. It is known for its woodwork and fine weaving. Trashigang Dzong commands a spectacular view over the valley and the Gong River below. In winter, semi-nomadic people from the north-eastern glacial valleys of Merak and Sakteng, dressed in their characteristic burgundy jackets, come here to sell their cheese, butter and yak wool.
SAMDRUP JONGKHAR
Located in the scenic south-east of Bhutan, the border town of Samdrup Jongkhar is the eastern overland gateway to Bhutan. From here you can access the airport at Guwahati in the Indian state of Assam, from where you can fly to Delhi or Kolkata.

PHUENTSHOLING
The bustling frontier trading town of Phuentsholing in the south is the gateway to Bhutan for overland travellers from India and Sikkim. From Phuentsholing, the road winds north over the southern foothills, through lush forested valleys and around the rugged north-south ridges of the inner Himalayas to the western valleys of Thimphu and Paro.



Black-necked cranes in flight © Tourism Council of Bhutan

FLEXIBLE, INDEPENDENT, TAILOR MADE TOURS

We understand that every traveller is different, so we like to provide a broad range of travel options. All of the suggested itineraries featured in this brochure are flexible, and can be easily tailored to suit your specific interests and budget. They are also totally independent, ensuring your trip to Bhutan is an entirely personalised and unique experience.



Stunning valley views, Uma Punakha © Como Hotels & Resorts



Deluxe Room, Taj Tashi, Thimphu © Taj Tashi



Courtyard, Amankora, Bumthang © Amankora

ACCOMMODATION

With a number of international hotel companies now operating in Bhutan there is a wide choice of accommodation, from cosy Bhutanese guesthouses to luxurious resorts. Together with our operator, we have carefully selected government approved accommodations with the best location, service, ambience and cuisine. Our standard range of hotels and guesthouses (listed as Category C) are clean, comfortable, simply furnished and generally rated 'tourist class'. For those travellers who prefer a higher level of comfort we offer a range of superior, deluxe hotels (Category B), as well as luxurious lodges and resorts with spa and yoga facilities (listed as Category A). We can mix and match accommodation types to suit your itinerary and budget, complementing your style of travel. It is important to note that during festivals hotels/ lodges are in high demand and accommodation can be difficult to secure.



Uma Paro Villa © Como Hotels & Resorts



CAT A: TAJ TASHI THIMPHU
Located in the heart of Bhutan's capital, Taj Tashi features 66 elegant, expansive and luxuriously appointed rooms and suites with dramatic hand-painted walls and sweeping views of the surrounding mountains and township. The hotel maintains a delicate balance of traditional Bhutanese design with contemporary elegance reflecting the charm and sensibilities of Bhutan's rich heritage. Modern comforts include a wellness spa, swimming pool and multi-cuisine dining.



CAT A: COMO UMA PARO
Built by classically trained Bhutanese artisans, COMO Uma Paro is infused with modernism's clean lines whilst maintaining the feel of a Bhutanese village set in a pine forest on the cliffs above. It is located amongst 38 private acres overlooking Paro, and features 29 beautifully appointed rooms and suites. In-room facilities include complimentary wifi access, satellite TV, DVD player, an electronic personal safe, yoga mats and minibar.



CAT A: AMANKORA LUXURY LODGES
These small, luxurious 5 star lodges are ideally located in the western and central valleys of Paro, Thimphu, Punakha, Gangtey and Bumthang. Amankora Resorts combine contemporary design with traditional features, along with an indulgent spa and impeccable dining. Wood-panelled guest suites feature a combined lounge and bedroom furnished with a king-size bed, Bukhari (wood-burning stove) and a large terrazzo-clad bath.



CAT A: COMO UMA PUNAKHA
COMO Uma Punakha is an intimate, luxury lodge situated on a bend along the Mo Chu River, shrouded in the alpine stillness of the Punakha Valley. COMO Uma Punakha offers guests 9 hillside Valley View rooms, and 2 free-standing luxury private villas (one One-Bedroom Villa and one two-bedroom COMO Villa). The onsite Bukhari restaurant serves both local and international cuisine, while the standalone COMO Shambhala Retreat offers traditional holistic therapies.



CAT B: HOTEL OSEL THIMPHU
One of the few properties within city limits with amazing views of Thimphu Valley, Osel is a brilliant choice for visitors to the capital. The 35 spacious ensuite rooms are contemporary in design, with Wi-Fi access, cable TV and sweeping views of either the sitting Buddha or Tashicho Dzong. The onsite restaurant provides a taste of fiery local cuisine, while a coffee shop and bar serve international fare.



CAT B: NAKSEL BOUTIQUE HOTEL & SPA PARO
This eco-friendly property boasts elaborate hand-carved pillars and exquisite stonework alongside LED lighting and underfloor heating. Generous ensuite guestrooms feature beautiful arched windows offering stunning mountain and valley views. The property also has a restaurant, bar and day spa. Beyond its mud walls are plentiful walking trails whilst bustling Paro Town is just ten minutes by car.



CAT B: RKPO GREEN RESORT PUNAKHA
This environmentally sensitive Punakha property harvests rainwater and has an organic kitchen garden, which supplies the onsite restaurant. While the property facade is distinctly Bhutanese, rooms are modern, with large ensuite bathrooms and high-speed Wi-Fi access. The resort also has a bar and provides guests the opportunity to participate in cultural dance programs and traditional sports such as archery.



CAT B: RINCHENLING RESORT BUMTHANG
Family-run Rinchenling embodies the timeless spirit of Bhutan, with its peaceful setting, humble hosts and holistic facilities. Rinchenling features 30 comfortable wood-panelled rooms with modern facilities. Aside from an onsite restaurant and bar, there is also a hot stone herbal bath and a meditation hall for spiritual exercise or yoga. Kurje and Tamshing Lhakhangs are just minutes from this property.



CAT C: STANDARD RANGE OF HOTELS & GUESTHOUSES
Comfortable hotels and guesthouses are available in all major Bhutanese towns. Travellers should be aware that the standard range of accommodation is generally rated tourist class, and is simple, charming and hospitable. Guests can expect rooms combining traditional Bhutanese style with features such as hot and cold running water, electricity, heating, telephones, and in major townships, television. Western and central towns such as Thimphu, Paro, Punakha and Bumthang have good standard hotels whilst accommodation in the east is more rudimentary but clean, comfortable and infused with warm Bhutanese hospitality. Many hotels and lodges are family-owned and run, and provide you with an intimate experience of local culture. Generally, hotels feature restaurants providing traditional Bhutanese cuisine tempered for western tastes. In Paro and Thimphu, there is usually also western and Indian cuisine on offer. Meals are usually served buffet style.





Spectacular Punakha Dzong © Shutterstock

SPIRIT OF BHUTAN

8 days/7 nights
From \$2834 per person twin share
Departs daily ex Paro

Price per person from:*	Twin
A Taj Tashi, Uma Punakha, Uma Paro	\$5962
B Hotel Osel Thimphu, RKPO Resort Punakha, Naksel Boutique Hotel & SPA Paro	\$4214
C Standard range of accommodations	\$2834

*Based on two people sharing, singles on request.

INCLUSIONS

Accommodation, all meals, transfers by air-conditioned private vehicle, sightseeing including entrance fees, services of a local English speaking guide and driver, 1 bottle of water per person per day for all surface travel, Bhutan visa fee.

Discover the uniquely preserved culture and natural beauty of the kingdom of Bhutan. Touring the western valleys, you will discover historic fortresses, ancient monasteries and ornate temples set against a dramatic Himalayan backdrop.



Bhutanese pilgrim in Gho © David Kneale

Day 1 Thimphu

Arrive by air into Bhutan (not included) where you will be met by your guide and driver. Visit the National Museum and the historic 17th century Rimping Dzong. Transfer to Thimphu (1 hr). LD

Days 2/3 Thimphu

Enjoy a sightseeing tour of the capital Thimphu, including the giant Buddha Dordenma statue overlooking the city, Changangkha Temple, the National Memorial Chorten and Tashichhodzong. On Day 3 hike to Tango Monastery (45 min), one of the region's oldest monasteries. After lunch visit the Bhutanese School for Arts and Painting, the Folk Heritage Museum and The National Library featuring age-old Buddhist scripts. BLD

Days 4/5 Punakha

Drive to Punakha (3 hrs) via Dochula Pass (3,050m) with its amazing Himalayan views (weather permitting). Afternoon visit to Punakha Dzong, built in 1637. On Day 5 visit Chimi Lhakhang, temple of the 'Divine Madman' followed by a hike through beautiful farmland to Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten with its complex Nyingmapa iconography and sweeping valley views from its rooftop. BLD



Prayer wheel on the path up to Taksang Monastery, Paro © Shutterstock

Days 6/7 Paro

After a leisurely morning in Punakha, return to Thimphu for lunch visiting Bhutan's oldest Dzong, Semtokha Dzong enroute. Afterwards drive to Paro. On Day 7 enjoy a morning walk (3-4 hrs) up to the viewing point of the famous Taksang Monastery, perched on a rocky ledge above a 900m drop. Later we visit the historic ruins of the Drukgyel Dzong, and 7th century Kyichu Temple. BLD

Day 8 Tour ends Paro

Early morning transfer to airport for your onward flight (not included). Tour ends. B



© Natural Focus Safaris

DRAGON KINGDOM

12 days/11 nights
From \$4368 per person twin share
Departs daily ex Paro

Price per person from:*	Twin
A Taj Tashi, Uma Punakha, Amankora Bumthang & Gangtey resorts, Uma Paro	\$12860
B Hotel Osel Thimphu, RKPO Resort Punakha, Rinchenling Lodge Bumthang (Deluxe Room), Naksel Boutique Hotel & SPA Paro	\$5884
C Standard range of accommodations	\$4368

*Based on two people sharing, singles on request.

INCLUSIONS

Accommodation, all meals, sightseeing including entrance fees, transfers by air-conditioned private vehicle, services of a local English speaking guide and driver, 1 bottle of water per person per day for all surface travel, Bhutan visa fee.

Discover the ancient Buddhist way of life that still thrives in Bhutan today. This in-depth tour visits the historic and picturesque valleys of Paro, Thimphu, Punakha and Gangtey, as well as Bhutan's spiritual heartland, Bumthang.

Day 1 Thimphu

Arrive by air into Bhutan where you will be met by your guide and driver. Visit the National Museum which features a fascinating collection of art and the 17th century Rimping Dzong before driving to Bhutan's capital, Thimphu (1 hr). LD

Days 2/3 Thimphu

Explore Thimphu's many highlights including the Buddha Dordenma statue, the Memorial Chorten and Tashichhodzong. On Day 3 enjoy a hike through forested hills to Tango Monastery. BLD



Buddha Dordenma statue, Thimphu © Shutterstock



Rock mural of Guru Rinpoche, Thimphu © David Kneale

Days 4/5 Punakha

Drive to Punakha (3 hrs) via Dochula Pass. Spend two days exploring. Tour Chimi Lhakhang and Punakha Dzong, and take a short hike to Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten. BLD



Bhutan family portrait © David Kneale

Days 6-8 Bumthang

Depart for Bumthang (8 hrs), the kingdom's spiritual heartland. Explore the valleys many sacred sites and monasteries including the 16th century Tamshing Monastery, Kurje Lhakhang containing a rock imprint of Guru Rinpoche's body, Jambay Lhakhang and visit 16th century Tang Ugyen Chholing Palace featuring a museum containing an excellent overview of traditional rural life in Bhutan. BLD

Day 9 Gangtey/Phobjikha

Drive to Gangtey (6 hrs), home of the historic 17th century Gangtey Goempa Monastery. See the impressive Trongsa Dzong en route. BLD

Days 10/11 Paro

Visit the Phobjikha Sanctuary, famous for its endangered Black-necked Cranes (Nov - Mar) before driving to Paro. On Day 11, walk up to the spectacular Taksang Monastery (3-4 hrs), perched on a rocky ledge over a 900m drop. Also visit the ruins of Drukgyel Dzong and Kyichu Temple. BLD

Day 12 Tour ends Paro

Early morning transfer to the airport for your onward flight. Tour ends. B



Young monks practicing Buddhist horns © David Kneale



Rice fields and traditional farm houses © David Kneale



Ornate entrance to the main hall of Punakha Dzong © David Kneale



Picturesque Bhutanese landscape © Shutterstock



Pilgrim at the National Memorial Chorten © David Kneale



Buddhist monk at the National Memorial Chorten © Shutterstock



Contemplation from a remote mountain monastery © David Kneale

GATEWAY TO BHUTAN

7 days/6 nights
From \$2541 per person twin share
Departs daily ex Siliguri or Bagdogra

Price per person from:*	Twin
A Taj Tashi, Uma Punakha, Uma Paro	\$4737
B Hotel Osel Thimphu, RKPO Resort Punakha, Naksel Boutique Hotel & SPA Paro	\$3566
C Standard range of accommodations	\$2541

*Based on two people sharing, singles on request.

INCLUSIONS
Accommodation, all meals, transfers by air-conditioned private vehicle, sightseeing including entrance fees, services of a local English speaking guide and driver, 1 bottle of water per person per day for all surface travel, Bhutan visa fee.

This tour is ideal for those wishing to enter Bhutan overland from the Indian state of Western Bengal. Enjoy breathtaking views of the Himalayan foothills en route to Bhutan's spectacular western valleys visiting ancient Dzongs, remote villages and many sacred sites. We recommend combining this tour with a visit to the hill station of Darjeeling and Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim.

Day 1 Phuentsholing
A representative will meet you on arrival at either Siliguri or Bagdogra airport in the Indian state of West Bengal. Travel by road (approx 3 hrs) through green tea estates to Phuentsholing, the gateway to Bhutan, for dinner and overnight. LD



Gateway to Bhutan, Phuentsholing © Stephen Cameron

Days 2/3 Thimphu
Drive to Thimphu, capital of Bhutan (6-7 hrs), stopping to appreciate the view of the Indian plains, mountain jungle and alpine forests. Also stop at the beautiful Kharbandi Gumpa. Afternoon at leisure to explore the bustling township. On Day 3 visit Thimphu's highlights including the 52m tall Buddha Dordenma statue, the National Library featuring ancient Buddhist scripts, the National Memorial Chorten, Changangkha Temple and Tashichhodzong. BLD

Day 4 Punakha
After breakfast, drive to Punakha (3 hrs) across Dochula Pass (3,050m). Visit the imposing Punakha Dzong, built in 1637 and featuring a stunning three storey temple, and Chimi Lhakhang, the temple of the 'Divine Madman'. BLD

Days 5/6 Paro
Enjoy a short hike through orange orchards to Khamsum Yuelley Namgyal Chorten. Afterwards drive to Paro. On Day 6 walk 1.5-2 hrs up to the famous Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest), perched on a rocky ledge over a 900m drop. Afterwards visit the ruins of the Drukgyel Dzong, and the National Museum. BLD

Day 7 Tour ends Paro
Early morning transfer to airport for your onward flight. Tour ends. B



Paro Dzong and National Museum © Shutterstock



INDIA BROCHURE

Bhutan is ideally located to combine with a tour of India or Nepal. With overland access and short direct flights available to a number of cities across India, as well as Kathmandu in Nepal, we can easily tailor design an itinerary featuring the many highlights that this incredible region has to offer. Visit our website for inspiration, or contact us for more details.

www.naturalfocussafaris.com.au/india/

JOURNEY ACROSS BHUTAN

15 days/14 nights
From \$5610 per person twin share
Departs daily ex Paro

Price per person from:*	Twin
A Uma Paro, Taj Tashi, Uma Punakha, Amankora Bumthang & Gangtey resorts	\$12380
B Naksel Boutique Hotel & SPA Paro, Hotel Osel Thimphu, RKPO Resort Punakha, Rinchenling Lodge Bumthang (Deluxe Room)	\$6908
C Standard range of accommodations	\$5610

*Based on two people sharing, singles on request.

INCLUSIONS
Accommodation, all meals, transfers by air-conditioned private vehicle, sightseeing including entrance fees, services of a local English speaking guide and driver, 1 bottle of water per person per day for all surface travel, Bhutan visa fee.

This comprehensive tour is designed for those who want to gain a deeper insight into Bhutan's culture and its stunning and varied landscapes. It begins in the gentle valleys of the west, crossing spiritual central Bhutan before exploring the historical towns of Mongar and Trashigang in the rugged east.



17th century chain bridge near Paro © Shutterstock

Days 1/2 Paro
Arrive by early flight into Bhutan (not included). Afternoon visit to the National Museum and Rimping Dzong, built in 1645. On Day 2 walk up to the viewing point below Taktsang Monastery (3-4 hrs return), perched on a rocky ledge above a 900m drop. Also Visit the ruins of the Drukgyel Dzong and Kyichu Temple. LD/BLD

Days 3/4 Thimphu
Drive to Thimphu (1 hr). Explore the capital's highlights, including the Buddha Dordenma statue, the National Memorial Chorten, the National Library, the Bhutanese School for Arts and Painting and Changangkha Temple. BLD

Days 5/6 Punakha
Drive to Punakha (3 hrs) along the spectacular Dochula Pass (3050m). Clear weather reveals stunning Himalayan views. Afternoon tour of the imposing Punakha Dzong. On Day 6 visit Chimi Lhakhang– temple of the 'Divine Madman' and enjoy a walk through beautiful terraced farmland up to Khamsum Yuelley Namgyal Chorten. BLD

Day 7 Gangtey/Phobjikha
Morning departure for the Phobjikha Valley, home of the 17th century Gangtey Goempa Monastery and Phobjikha Sanctuary, famous for its endangered black-necked cranes which fly here for the winter from Nov-Mar. BLD

Day 8 Trongsa
Drive to Trongsa, the ancestral home of the ruling dynasty. Visit Trongsa Dzong, one of Bhutan's most impressive monuments and The National Museum housing historical artefacts of the royal family. BLD

Days 9/10 Bumthang
Drive to Bhutan's spiritual heartland, the Bumthang Valley (2.5 hrs), through forests and stunning mountain passes. See highlights including Kurje Lhakhang containing a rock imprint of Guru Rimpoche's body, Jambay Lhakhang, one of the oldest temples in Bhutan and Tamshing Lhakhang containing ancient Buddhist wall paintings. BLD



School children in traditional dress © David Kneale

Day 11 Mongar
Continue eastwards to Mongar (6 hrs) through Ura Village before climbing sharply to the highest point of Bhutan's road network, Thrumsing-La Pass (4,000m). From here traverse through an alpine valley, pine forests and maize fields to reach the town of Mongar. BLD

Days 12/13 Trashigang
Drive to remote Trashigang (3 hrs) through forests filled with ferns and over Kori-La Pass (2,450m) before descending through cornfields and banana groves. Highlights include the Trashigang Dzong, the temple of Gom Kora and Doksum Village. On day 13 visit Trashiyantse Dzong and the dazzling white stupa of Chorten Kora. BLD

Day 14 Samdrup Jongkhar
Drive to the south-east border town of Samdrup Jongkhar (6 hrs). Afternoon at leisure. BLD

Day 15 Tour ends Guwahati, India
Transfer to Guwahati Airport. Tour ends. B



BHUTAN FESTIVALS
Tsechus (festivals) are one of the best ways to experience the ancient living culture of Bhutan. A Tsechu is a Buddhist festival in honour of Guru Rimpoche, the saint who brought Buddhism to Bhutan. Local people gather in a spirit of festivity, celebration and deep faith. Our two suggested itineraries have been carefully selected to ensure the most genuine festival experience. If these departure dates do not suit you, please contact us as festivals are held throughout the year in almost every district.

PARO TSECHU

7 days/6 nights
From \$2780 per person twin share
Departs Tuesday 19 March 2019
Ex Paro

Price per person from:*	Twin
A Uma Paro, Taj Tashi, Uma Punakha	\$6393
B Naksel Boutique Hotel & SPA Paro, Hotel Osel Thimphu, RKPO Resort Punakha	\$4113
C Standard range of accommodations	\$2780

*Based on two people sharing, singles on request. Prices are based on provisional rates and are subject to change.

INCLUSIONS
Accommodation, all meals, transfers by air-conditioned private vehicle, sightseeing including entrance fees, services of a local English speaking guide and driver, 1 bottle of water per person per day for all surface travel, Bhutan visa fee.

Discover the spiritual pageantry and festive atmosphere of one of the most popular festivals in Bhutan, the Paro Tsechu. This tour also includes the many highlights of Bhutan’s rich cultural and scenic western valleys, including Taktsang Monastery, Punakha Dzong and the many sites of Bhutan’s capital, Thimphu.

Days 1/2 Paro
Arrive by air into Bhutan. After lunch, visit the National Museum, Drukgyel Dzong ruins and Kyichu Temple, one of the oldest in Bhutan. LD
On Day 2 enjoy a morning walk (1.5-2 hrs) up to the famous Taktsang Monastery (Tiger’s Nest), perched on a rocky ledge above a 900m drop. Spend the afternoon at the Rimping Dzong viewing the fascinating masked religious and colourful cultural dances of the Tsechu. Performers wear elaborate costumes as they honour Guru Rimpoche and commemorate their history in drama and song. BLD

Days 3/4 Thimphu
Wake up very early at 2.30am to witness the thongdroel ceremony where a large religious painting of Guru Rinpoche is unfurled on the side of the Dzong. This event signifies the final day of the annual festival. After some time spent resting back at the hotel, drive to the capital, Thimphu (1.5 hrs). Remainder of the day at leisure. BLD
On Day 4 explore Thimphu’s highlights including the 52m-tall Buddha Dordenma statue overlooking the city, the National Library featuring ancient Buddhist scripts, the National Memorial Chorten and Tashichhodzong. BLD
Day 5 Punakha
Drive to sub-tropical Punakha (3 hrs) via the Dochula Pass (3,050m) with its amazing views of the Himalaya range (weather permitting). Afternoon visit to Punakha Dzong, built in 1637, and Chimi Lhakhang – temple of the ‘Divine Madman’. BLD



Day 6 Paro
Enjoy a hike through peaceful farmland to Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten with its complex Nyingmapa iconography and sweeping valley views from its rooftop. Afterwards drive back to Paro for overnight. BLD
Day 7 Tour ends Paro
Early morning transfer to airport for your onward flight. Tour ends. B



BUMTHANG FESTIVALS

12 days/11 nights
From \$4970 per person twin share
Departs Saturday 20 October 2018
Ex Paro

Price per person from:*	Twin
A Taj Tashi, Uma Punakha, Amankora Bumthang & Gangtey resorts, Uma Paro	\$14278
B Hotel Osel Thimphu, RKPO Resort Punakha, Rinchenling Lodge Bumthang (Deluxe Room), Naksel Boutique Hotel & SPA Paro	\$6487
C Standard range of accommodations	\$4970

*Based on two people sharing, singles on request. Prices are subject to change. Festival surcharges may apply.

INCLUSIONS
Accommodation, all meals, transfers by air-conditioned private vehicle, sightseeing including entrance fees, services of a local English speaking guide and driver, 1 bottle of water per person per day for all surface travel, Bhutan visa fee.

Enjoy two intimate Tsechu experiences in the Bumthang Valley, Bhutan’s spiritual heartland where villagers gather to witness unique masked dances and celebrations. Also visit sacred sites in Paro, Thimphu, Punakha and beautiful Phobjikha Valley.

Days 1/2 Thimphu
Arrive by air into Bhutan where you will be met by your guide and driver. Visit the National Museum and the 17th century Rimping Dzong before driving to Bhutan’s capital, Thimphu (1 hr).
On Day 2 explore Thimphu’s highlights including the National Library, Changangkha Temple, the National Memorial Chorten, the Buddha Dordenma statue and Tashichhodzong. LD/BLD
Days 3/4 Punakha
Drive to Punakha (5 hrs) via the spectacular Dochula Pass (3,050m). On arrival, visit the impressive 17th century Punakha Dzong featuring a stunning three storey temple. On Day 4 visit Chimi Lhakhang – temple of the ‘Divine Madman’ followed by a hike through terraced farmland to Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten. BLD
Days 5-7 Bumthang
Depart for Bumthang (3 hrs), the spiritual heartland of Bhutan. Visit Tamshing Monastery featuring some of Bhutan’s oldest wall paintings and Kurje Lhakhang containing a rock imprint of Guru Rimpoche’s body. Stay awake until midnight to catch the opening proceedings of the Jambay Lhakhang Drup Festival, including a sacred naked dance performed to sanctify the region.
On Day 6 witness colourful masked dances and cultural festivities at 7th century Jambay Lhakhang. On Day 7 drive to the Chumey Valley to participate in the Prakar Festival. BLD

FESTIVAL SEASON
NOTE: As Tsechu dates are determined by the lunar calendar, the dates of the featured itineraries may change. We strongly recommend that you book 3-6 months in advance for travel to Bhutan during festivals due to difficulties in securing accommodation and flights. Please contact us for further details.



Day 8 Gangtey/Phobjikha
Morning drive to the valley of Phobjikha, home of the historic 17th century Gangtey Goempa and Phobjikha Sanctuary, winter residence of black-necked cranes (Nov-Mar). BLD
Day 9 Thimphu
Drive to Thimphu with lunch en route. BLD
Days 10/11 Paro
Drive to Paro with lunch en route. On Day 11 walk (1.5-2 hrs) up to Taktsang Monastery. BLD
Day 12 Tour ends Paro
Early morning transfer to airport for your onward flight. Tour ends. B



TREKKING IN BHUTAN

One of the best ways to experience the heart and soul of this extraordinary destination is to incorporate a trek into your itinerary. With much of the kingdom covered with primeval forests and high alpine meadows, a trek will not only bring you closer to nature but provide you with the opportunity to meet rural people. Whilst you will need to be physically fit and used to long walks, our trekking itineraries have been designed to travel at a gentle pace. You will be accompanied by a local trekking guide, cook and camp hands who will look after the transportation of luggage and camping equipment. The crew take care of all camp chores and the cook will provide you with simple but wholesome meals along the way.

DRUK PATH TREK

11 days/10 nights (6 day trek)
From \$4531 per person twin share
Hotels/Lodges/Camping
Departs Daily ex Paro
SEASON: Sep-Nov & Mar-May
GRADE: Moderate-Challenging

Price per person from:*	Twin
A Uma Paro, Taj Tashi, Uma Punakha, Amankora Bumthang, farmhouses	\$7352
B Naksel Boutique Hotel & SPA Paro, Hotel Osel Thimphu, camping	\$5619
C Standard range of accommodations	\$4531
*Based on two people sharing, singles on request.	

INCLUSIONS
Accommodation, all meals, transfers by air-conditioned private vehicle, sightseeing including entrance fees, services of a local English speaking guide and driver, 1 bottle of water per person per day for all surface travel, Bhutan visa fee.

This adventurous itinerary includes a 6 day trek commencing in either Paro or Thimphu. The route crosses a chain of beautiful mountains that separates the two valleys. Along the way there are wonderful lakes teeming with fish, spectacular rhododendron forests and unforgettable mountain views.

Days 1/2 Paro
Arrive by air into Bhutan. Visit the National Museum and the 17th century Rimping Dzong. On Day 2 walk to the Taktsang Monastery (3-4 hrs return), perched on a rocky ledge over a 900m drop, then visit the historic ruins of the Drukgyel Dzong, and the Kyichu Temple. LD/BLD

Day 3 Paro - Jele Dzong 8km, 4 to 5 hours
Accompanied by your guide, meet your camp crew and begin your 6-day trek walking slowly up to the campsite at Jele Dzong. Enjoy stunning views of the Paro Valley surrounded by snow capped mountains (weather permitting). Overnight camping. Altitude 3,480m. BLD

Day 4 Jele Dzong - Jangchulakha 10km, 3 to 4 hours
The day begins with a 1.5 hr climb and then a gentle ascent through thick alpine forests and rhododendrons. Overnight camping. Altitude 3,770m. BLD

Day 5 Jangchulakha - Jimilangtsho 11km, 4 hours
The trail follows a ridge with incredible mountain views on a clear day. The campsite is close to the Jimilangtsho lakes, famous for giant trout. Overnight camping. Altitude 3,870m. BLD



Day 6 Jimilangtsho - Simkota 11km, 4 hours
Today's walk will take you through dwarf rhododendron forests, along the shores of Lake Janeetsho and past yak herders' camps. Overnight camping close to Lake Simkota. BLD

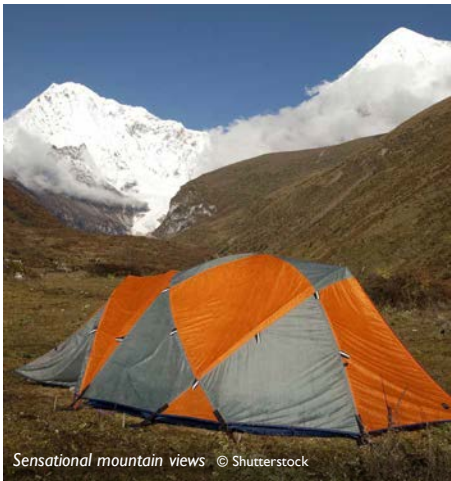
Day 7 Simkota - Phajoding 10km, 4 hours
A gradual climb that offers majestic views of the highest peak in Bhutan, Mt Gangkar Puensum (weather permitting). The trail slowly descends through juniper trees to your campsite. Overnight camping. Altitude 3,610m. BLD

Day 8 Phajoding - Thimphu 5km, 3 hours
The hike to Thimphu is all downhill, passing through a forest of blue pine. After reaching Thimphu, remainder of the day is at leisure. BLD

Day 9 Thimphu
Explore the highlights of Thimphu including the National Library featuring ancient Buddhist scripts, the 52m tall Buddha Dordenma statue overlooking the city, the National Memorial Chorten, the Bhutanese School for Arts and Painting, Tashichhodzong and 12th century Changangkha Temple. BLD

Day 10 Paro
Enjoy a hike (45 min) to Tango Monastery, one of Thimphu's oldest monasteries. Late afternoon departure for Paro. BLD

Day 11 Tour ends Paro
Early morning transfer to airport for your onward flight. Tour ends. B



BUMTHANG PILGRIM TREK

11 days/10 nights (3 day trek)
From \$4532 per person twin share
Hotels/Lodges/Camping
Departs daily ex Paro
SEASON: Sep-Nov & Mar-May
GRADE: Moderate

Price per person from:*	Twin
A Uma Paro, Taj Tashi, Uma Punakha, Amankora Bumthang, farmhouses	\$9881
B Naksel Boutique Hotel & SPA Paro, Hotel Osel Thimphu, RKPO Resort Punakha, Rinchenling Lodge Bumthang (Deluxe Room), farmhouses	\$5719
C Standard range of accommodations	\$4532

*Based on two people sharing, singles on request.

INCLUSIONS
Accommodation, all meals, transfers by air-conditioned private vehicle, sightseeing including entrance fees, services of a local English speaking guide and driver, 1 bottle of water per person per day for all surface travel, Bhutan visa fee.

The stunning Bumthang Valley is the religious heartland of Bhutan and home to some of its oldest temples and monasteries. Incorporated into this itinerary is 3 days of moderate walking which will take you on an unforgettable journey through picturesque countryside and bring you closer to nature. Trekking accommodation includes a comfortable farmhouse, and a village guesthouse.

Day 1 Paro
Arrive by air into Bhutan. After lunch visit the National Museum and the 17th century Rimping Dzong. LD

Day 2 Paro
Walk to the famous Taktsang Monastery (3-4 hrs return), perched on a rocky ledge over a 900m drop, then visit the historic ruins of Drukgyel Dzong, and the 7th century Kyichu Temple. BLD

Day 3 Thimphu
Morning drive to Thimphu, Bhutan's capital. Highlights include the Memorial Chorten, the 52m tall Buddha Dordenma statue, Changangkha Temple, Folk Heritage Museum and the National Library. BLD

Day 4 Trongsa
Drive to Trongsa (7 hrs) via picturesque Dochula Pass and Chendibji Chorten, modelled on Kathmandu's Swayambhunath Stupa. BLD



A Buddhist pilgrim © Aman Resorts

Day 5 Bumthang
Early morning visit to Trongsa Dzong and then drive to Bumthang (3 hrs). Spend the afternoon exploring ancient monasteries and sacred sites, some dating back to the 7th century. BLD

Day 6 Bumthang Ngang Lhakhang (14km, 3-4 hrs)
Today with your guide, you will begin your 3 day trek. The walking route follows the Chamkhar River through open fields and pine forests. The trail is at a leisurely pace with plenty of time to stop at local villages and temples. Overnight in local farmhouse. Altitude 2,900m. BLD

Day 7 Nang Lhakhang Ugyencholing (19km, 7-8 hrs)
A full day's trek ascending gradually through the forest towards Phephe La Pass (3,360m) before descending into the Tang Valley, finally arriving at the village of Ugyencholing (2,850m). Overnight in guesthouse. Altitude 2,670m. BLD

Day 8 Ugyencholing Bumthang (11km, 4 hrs)
Walk up to Ugyencholing Palace, a beautiful mansion housing a small eco-museum. Later, travel back by vehicle to Bumthang, stopping at the Burning Lake where religious treasures were found in the 15th century. Overnight in Bumthang. BLD

Day 9 Punakha
Drive to Punakha (8 hrs), Bhutan's ancient winter capital. Overnight in Punakha. BLD

Day 10 Paro
Visit Punakha Dzong, built in 1637 before departing by road for Paro (5 hrs). Remainder of day at leisure to stroll through downtown Paro. Overnight in Paro. BLD

Day 11 Tour ends Paro
Early morning transfer to airport for your onward flight. Tour ends. B



INSPIRATIONAL JOURNEYS

Africa, Antarctica & The Arctic, Australia, Bhutan,
Canada & Alaska, India and South America.



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BOOKING CONDITIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Prior to making a payment, all clients should be fully aware of our complete *Booking Conditions & Responsibilities* as per our 2018/19 India, Bhutan, Nepal, & Sri Lanka brochure. A copy of these conditions will be sent with all quotations, and is available for download from our website www.naturalfocussafaris.com.au or available on request. Details of the most important conditions follow:

Trading Names

Natural Focus Safaris is a trading name of African Wildlife Safaris Pty Ltd (the company).

Booking Procedure/Security Deposit

The receipt of a security deposit will be taken as an understanding by the company that the participant has read, understands and agrees to abide by the full set of conditions set out in our 2018/19 India, Bhutan, Nepal & Sri Lanka brochure. To make a reservation please forward a non-refundable security deposit of 30% of the total tour cost.

Final Payment

Final Payment is due 60 days prior to departure.

Client Names - Exactly as per Passport

For security reasons, airlines and our tour operators require your name exactly as it appears in your passport. If you or your Travel Agent do not advise the correct information and we have to re-issue airline tickets or other documentation, then we will bill you for all costs incurred, such as airline cancellation charges, courier and administration fees.

Brochure "From" Prices and Tour Costs

The expression "from" with respect to tour prices stated in this brochure means prices are based on a per person basis in Australian Dollars based on twin share accommodation and travel during the low season. This cost is indicative only, is subject to change, and

based on ground costs, airfares and exchange rates as at 30/05/2018. Actual prices will vary with changes in costs and exchange rates at time of quotation.

Cancellations and Refunds

If it is necessary to cancel your holiday, you should notify us immediately in writing and this will take effect the day it is received by us. All monies will be forfeited as follows:

Number of days before departure:

More than 60 days	Loss of deposit
59 - 41 days	45% of fare*
40 - 31 days	65% of fare*
30 days or less	No refund*

* Except those amounts that can be refunded, such as airfares (less those amounts forfeited under airline regulations and the company loss of profit). Insurance premiums are non-refundable, but if the reason for your tour cancellation falls within the terms of the insurance cover, cancellation charges will normally be refunded by the insurance company. The non-issuance of an invoice or the non-payment and/or non-receipt of a security deposit or a major event such as a terrorist related incident or outbreak of a flu type epidemic will not exempt passengers from these cancellation and administration penalties. Cancellation fees are designed to cover the cancellation fees charged by overseas tour operators as well as Natural Focus Safaris loss of profit.

