



Performers wearing the traditional Mahakala mask © Bhutan TCB

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 without overcrowding. If these departure dates do not suit you, contact us as festivals are held throughout the year in almost every district.

WANGDUE TSECHU

7 days/6 nights

Hotels/Guesthouses

Departs Mon 03 Oct 2011

Ex Bangkok

Tour Cost Twin (Min 2)**	Cat A	Cat B
Monday 03 Oct 2011	\$6403	\$3184

*Prices for single travellers and groups consisting of 3 or more passengers available on request.

Note: Airfares to/from Paro subject to change with Druk Air.

#Prices subject to change due to possible introduction of festival hotel supplements. Contact us for details.

A Uma Paro, Taj Tashi Thimphu & Amankora Punakha.

B Standard range of accommodations.

Price per person includes: Airfare Bangkok/Paro return including taxes, Bhutan visa fee, accommodation, all meals, excursions, transfers by air-conditioned private vehicle, services of a local English speaking guide, 1 bottle of water per person per day for all surface travel.

Price excludes: Airfares Australia - Bangkok return and accommodation in Bangkok.

Discover the rich pageantry and festive atmosphere of the Wangdue Tsechu whilst exploring the western valleys of Paro, Thimphu and Punakha.

Day 1 Thimphu

Early morning flight to Paro. Drive to Thimphu, capital of Bhutan (2 hrs) via Semtokha Dzong, the oldest fortress in the kingdom built in 1627. Afternoon at leisure. LD

Day 2 Thimphu

Full day sightseeing tour of Thimphu including the Memorial Chorten, the Folk Heritage Museum, The National Library, the Bhutanese School for Arts and Painting, Tashichhodzong and Changangkha temple. BLD

Days 3/4 Punakha

Drive to Punakha (3 hrs) via the Dochula Pass (3,050m). Afternoon visit to the imposing Punakha Dzong and Chimi Lhakhang. Next day, visit Wangdue Dzong to witness the masked religious and cultural dances amongst colourful Bhutanese villagers. Performers wear elaborate costumes as they honour Guru Rimpoche and commemorate their history in drama and song. BLD

Day 5 Paro

Drive to Paro (5 hrs). Visit the Ta Dzong Museum and the Rimping Dzong built in 1645. BLD

Day 6 Paro

Morning walk (1.5 hrs) up to the famous Taksang Monastery (Tiger's Nest), perched on a rocky ledge above a 900m drop. After lunch visit the historic ruins of the Drukgyel Dzong. BLD

Day 7 Tour ends Bangkok

Early morning transfer to airport for flight to Bangkok. Tour ends. B



© David Kneale

Dramitse Ngacham- "Dance of the Drum Beaters"



© Bhutan TCB

Elaborate Tsechu performance

BUMTHANG FESTIVALS

12 days/11 nights

Hotels/Guesthouses

Departs Sun 06 Nov 2011

Ex Bangkok

Tour Cost Twin (Min 2)** Cat A Cat B
 Sunday 06 November 2011 \$12417 \$4659

*Prices for single travellers and groups consisting of 3 or more passengers available on request.

^Airtfares to/from Paro subject to change with Druk Air.

#Prices subject to change due to possible introduction of festival hotel supplements. Contact us for details.

A Uma Paro, Taj Tashi Thimphu, Amankora Punakha & Bumthang resorts.

B Standard range of accommodations.

Price per person includes: Airfare Bangkok/Paro return including taxes, Bhutan visa fee, accommodation, all meals, excursions, transfers by air-conditioned private vehicle, services of a local English speaking guide, 1 bottle of water per person per day for all surface travel.

Price excludes: Airfares Australia - Bangkok return and accommodation in Bangkok

Enjoy two intimate Tsechu experiences in the Bumthang Valley, Bhutan's spiritual heartland. Villagers gather to witness unique masked dances and celebrations. Also visit sacred sites in Paro, Thimphu, Punakha and Phobjikha Valley, winter home to the endangered Black-Necked Cranes.

Days 1/2 Thimphu

Early flight to Paro. Visit the Ta Dzong Museum and the 17th century Rimping Dzong before driving to Bhutan's capital, Thimphu (2 hrs). On day 2 explore the highlights of Thimphu including the National Library featuring ancient Buddhist scripts, Memorial Chorten, Tashichhodzong and the Zilukha nunnery. 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. On day 4 visit Chimi Lhakhang – temple of the 'Divine Madman' followed by a hike through farmland to Khamsum Yuelley 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. Stay awake until midnight to catch the opening proceedings of the Jambay Lhakhang Drup Festival, including an unusual naked dance performed to sanctify the region. On day 6 witness the 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.



© Bhutan TCB

Incredible costume of the Tsechu

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 the 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 hrs) up to Takstang Monastery. BLD

Day 12 Tour ends Bangkok

Early morning transfer to airport for flight to Bangkok. Tour ends. B



© David Kneale

Dramitse Ngacham- "Dance of the Drum Beaters"

BLACK-NECKED CRANE FESTIVAL

11 days/10 nights

Hotels/Guesthouses

Departs Sun 06 Nov 2011 ex Bangkok

Attend the unique Black-Necked Crane Festival in the beautiful Phobjikha Valley. Activities include visiting the cranes' roost, strolling through handicraft and game stalls and witnessing dances in honour and praise of the Black-necked Cranes. Following the festival, explore some of the valleys nature trails.

Tour Cost Twin (Min 2)** Cat A Cat B
 Sun 06 November 2011 \$10938 \$4379

*Prices for single travellers and groups consisting of 3 or more passengers available on request.

Note: Airtfares to/from Paro subject to change with Druk Air.

#Prices subject to change due to possible introduction of festival hotel supplements. Contact us for details.

Price per person includes: Airfare Bangkok/Paro return including taxes, Bhutan visa fee, accommodation, all meals, excursions, transfers by air-conditioned private vehicle, services of a local English speaking guide, 1 bottle of water per person per day for all surface travel.

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Majestic Black-necked Cranes



© David Kneale

Gangtey Goempa Monastery, Phobjikha Valley