



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 13 Sep 2010  
Ex Bangkok

<b>Tour Cost Twin (Min 2)**</b>	Cat A	Cat B
Monday 13 September 2010	\$7645	\$3826

\*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.

**D**iscover 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 Taktsang 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



© Bhutan TCB

An incredible costume of the Tsechu

**BUMTHANG FESTIVALS**  
12 days/11 nights  
Hotels/Guesthouses  
Departs Mon 18 Oct 2010  
Ex Bangkok

<b>Tour Cost Twin (Min 2)**</b>	Cat A	Cat B
Monday 18 October 2010	\$14618	\$5416

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

^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 & 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

**E**njoy two intimate Tsechu experiences set 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 Gangtey.



© David Kneale

Dramitse Ngacham - "Dance of the Drum Beaters"



© Bhutan TCB

Elaborate Tsechu costumes

## 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.**

### Days 1/2 Thimphu

Early flight to Paro. Visit the Ta Dzong Museum and the 17th century Rimpong Dzong before driving onto 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 a to the Chumey Valley to participate in the Prakar Festival. BLD

### 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



Majestic Black-necked Cranes © Bhutan TCB

## BLACK NECKED CRANE FESTIVAL

11 days/10 nights  
Hotels/Guesthouses  
Departs Sat 06 Nov 2010  
Ex Bangkok

**Tour Cost Twin (Min 2)\*\*** Cat A Cat B  
Thursday 06 November 2008 \$13288 \$5384

\*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 & Gangtey 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

**Attend the unique Black Neck Crane Festival in the beautiful Phobjikha Valley, winter home to the magnificent Black-necked Cranes. 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.**

### Day 1 Paro

Early morning flight to Paro. After lunch, visit the Ta Dzong Museum, Rimpong Dzong built in 1645 and the beautiful cantilever wooden bridge. LD

### Day 2 Paro

Walk 1.5 hrs up to the viewing point below the famous Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest), perched on a rocky ledge above a 900m drop. Visit the historic ruins of the Drukgyel Dzong and the 7th century Kyichu Temple. BLD

### Days 3/4 Thimphu

Drive to Thimphu (2 hrs) via the 17th century Semtokha Dzong. Over the next two days explore Thimphu, including the Memorial Chorten, The National Library featuring ancient Buddhist scripts, Changangkha temple, the Bhutanese School for Arts and Painting and the Zilukha nunnery. BLD

### Day 5 Punakha

Drive to Punakha (3 hrs) across the spectacular Dochula Pass (3,050m). Afternoon tour of the imposing Punakha Dzong. BLD

### Day 6 Gangtey/Phobjikha

Morning departure for the market town of Wangdue before continuing on to Gangtey. This beautiful glacial valley is the chosen winter home of Black-necked Cranes (Nov - Mar) migrating from the Tibetan plateau. Visit Gangtey Goempa Monastery and explore Phobjikha Valley. BLD



Gangtey Goempa Monastery



Black-necked Cranes, Phobjikha Valley

### Days 7/8 Gangtey/Phobjikha

Attend the Black-Necked Crane Festival which features numerous cultural programs organised by the local community. These include masked and costumed crane dance performances and stalls offering many colourful local items such as yak tail dusters, butter tea cups and different Bhutanese handicrafts. There will also be ample time to view the Black-necked Cranes and visit the Information Centre. On day 8, enjoy some of the many beautiful nature trails dotted throughout the valley. BLD

### Day 9 Punakha

Drive to Punakha to visit Chimi Lhakhang, temple of the Drukpa Kuenley who is also known as the Divine Madman. BLD

### Day 10 Paro

After breakfast, enjoy a hike through farmland up to Khamsum Yuelley Namgyal Chorten with its complex iconography belonging to the Nyingmapa tradition before returning to Paro. BLD

### Day 11 Tour ends Bangkok

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