



Monks leaving the main hall of Punakha Dzong © David Kneale



National Memorial Chorten, Thimphu © David Kneale

BHUTAN

The remote Kingdom of Bhutan is nestled in the Himalayas between India and Tibet. Its isolation has enabled its rich cultural traditions and Buddhist beliefs to remain relatively unchanged for centuries. It is a spectacular destination where magnificent fortresses command the hilltops and prayer flags flutter around ancient monasteries. Dramatic landscapes, from snow-capped peaks and forested slopes to raging rivers are home to many rare and endangered flora and fauna.

To improve infrastructure a daily tariff is levied on all visitors, making tours to Bhutan more expensive than to some neighbouring countries, helping to make Bhutan a special destination for the discerning traveller. Our ground operator in Bhutan is renowned for its professional VIP service with a team of seasoned guides and drivers and luxury vehicle fleet ensuring a personalised and unique travel experience into a world long past.

ACCOMMODATION

The standard range of hotels and guest houses in Bhutan (Cat B) are clean, comfortable and generally rated tourist class. For those who prefer to experience Bhutan in luxury we offer a boutique range of lodges and resorts (Cat A). We can easily mix and match accommodation to suit your style of travel.



BHUTAN E-BROCHURE

This is a small sample of our programs in Bhutan. View our full range of Bhutan tours, treks and festivals online in our 16 page Bhutan e-brochure: www.nfs.travel/bhutan



© Natural Focus Safaris

SPIRIT OF BHUTAN

8 days/7 nights

Hotels/Guest houses

Departs daily ex Bangkok

Price per person twin*	Cat A	Cat B
Sep-Nov 2010	\$8406	\$4214
Dec 2010	\$8229	\$4214
Jan & Jun 2011	\$8059	\$3987
Feb, Jul & Aug 2011	\$8229	\$4214
Mar-May 2011	\$8406	\$4214

*Minimum two people. Single travellers prices on request.

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

A Uma Paro, Taj Tashi, Amankora Punakha 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.

Discover the uniquely preserved culture and natural beauty of the kingdom of Bhutan. Touring the western valleys we visit historic fortresses (Dzong) and ancient monasteries and temples, set against a dramatic Himalayan backdrop.

Day 1 Thimphu

Early flight to Paro. Visit Ta Dzong Museum offering a great orientation in Bhutan's history, 17th century Rimpong Dzong and the cantilever wooden bridge. Transfer to Thimphu (2 hrs). LD

Days 2/3 Thimphu

Enjoy a sightseeing tour of Thimphu, capital of Bhutan including Changangkha Temple, the National Memorial Chorten, Zilukha Nunnery, Semtokha Dzong, built in 1627 and Tashichhodzong. On day 3 hike (45 min) to Tango Monastery, one of the most ancient monasteries in the Thimphu region. In the afternoon visit the Bhutanese School for Arts and Painting, the Folk Heritage Museum and The National Library featuring ancient Buddhist scripts. BLD

Days 4/5 Punakha

Drive to sub-tropical Punakha (3 hrs) via the Dochula Pass (3,050m) with its amazing views. Afternoon visit to the imposing Punakha Dzong, built in 1637. On day 5 visit Chimi Lhakhang – temple of the 'Divine Madman' followed by a hike to Khamsum Yuelley Namgyal Chorten with its complex Nyingmapa iconography. BLD

Day 6 Paro

We visit the busy market town of Wangdue and Wangduephodrang Dzong, before returning to Paro. Late afternoon is at leisure. BLD

Day 7 Paro

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

Day 8 Tour ends Bangkok

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



© David Kneale

Spectacular views from Dochu La Pass

DRAGON KINGDOM

11 days/10 nights

Hotels/Guest houses

Departs daily ex Bangkok

Price per person twin*	Cat A	Cat B
Sep-Nov 2010	\$13398	\$5384
Dec 2010	\$13221	\$5384
Jan & Jun 2011	\$12979	\$5058
Feb, Jul & Aug 2011	\$13221	\$5384
Mar-May 2011	\$13398	\$5384

*Minimum two people. Single travellers prices on request.

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

A Uma Paro, Taj Tashi, Amankora Punakha, Gangtey & 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.

Explore 'The Dragon Kingdom' on this in-depth tour offering an insight into the ancient way of life that still thrives in Bhutan today. The best time to visit is between Nov-Mar when the rare black-necked cranes are in Phobjikha.

Day 1 Thimphu

Early flight to Paro. Visit the Ta Dzong Museum featuring a fascinating collection of art and relics, and the 17th century Rimping Dzong. Drive to Bhutan's capital, Thimphu (2 hrs). LD

Days 2/3 Thimphu

Explore Thimphu's highlights including the National Library featuring ancient Buddhist scripts, Memorial Chorten and Tashichhodzong. On day 3 enjoy a day excursion to Tango Monastery, a sacred and ancient Buddhist college. BLD

Days 4/5 Punakha

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



© Taj Tashi

Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest), Paro

Days 6/7 Bumthang

Early departure for Bumthang (8 hrs), the spiritual heartland of Bhutan via Wangdue and the Trongsa Dzong. Explore Bumthang's many sacred sites such as Kurje Lhakhang, the 7th century Jambay Lhakhang and Tamshing Monastery, featuring some of Bhutan's oldest wall paintings. BLD

Day 8 Gangtey/Phobjikha

Depart for Gangtey (6 hrs), home of the historic 17th century Gangtey Goempa Monastery. BLD

Day 9 Paro

Visit the Phobjikha Sanctuary, famous for its endangered black-necked cranes (Nov - Mar). Explore Gangtey before returning to Paro. BLD

Day 10 Paro

Walk (1.5 hrs) up to the spectacular Taktsang Monastery, perched on a rocky ledge over a 900m drop, visit the ruins of the Drukgyel Dzong and Kyichu Temple. BLD

Day 11 Tour ends Bangkok

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



© David Kneale

Bhutan's national Sport, Archery

BHUTAN FESTIVALS

Tsechus (festivals) are one of the best ways to experience the ancient culture of Bhutan. Local people gather in a spirit of celebration and faith to witness the religious and cultural dances by performers wearing elaborate costumes in honour of Guru Rimpoche. We have a range of suggested festival itineraries that have been carefully selected to ensure the most genuine festival experience without overcrowding. Tsechus are held throughout the year in almost every district. Contact us for full details.



GATEWAY TO BHUTAN

7 days/6 nights

Hotels/Guest houses

Departs daily ex Siliguri or Bagdogra

This tour is ideal for those wishing to enter Bhutan overland from the Indian state of Western Bengal via Phuentsholing. Enjoy breathtaking views of the Himalayan foothills en route to Thimphu, followed by visits to Punakha, Wangdue and Paro. Explore spectacular dzongs, serene monasteries, remote villages and ancient sacred sites. We highly recommend combining this tour with a visit to the renowned hill station of Darjeeling and Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim.

Price per person twin*	Cat A	Cat B
Sep-Nov 2010	\$5671	\$3159
Dec 2010	\$5553	\$3159
Jan & Jun 2011	\$5407	\$2964
Feb, Jul & Aug 2011	\$5553	\$3159
Mar-May 2011	\$5671	\$3159

*Minimum two people. Single travellers prices on request.

Note: Includes one way airfare Paro-Bangkok. Airfare subject to change with Druk Air.



© David Kneale

Rural family portrait



© David Kneale

Ta Dzong Museum, Paro



Beautiful Punakha © David Kneale



An unforgettable view © David Kneale

JOURNEY ACROSS BHUTAN

15 days/14 nights

Hotels/Guest houses

Departs daily ex Bangkok

Price per person twin*	Cat A	Cat B
Sep-Nov 2010	\$13808	\$6327
Dec 2010	\$13690	\$6327
Jan & Jun 2011	\$13349	\$5873
Feb, Jul & Aug 2011	\$13690	\$6327
Mar-May 2011	\$13808	\$6327

*Minimum two people. Single travellers prices on request.

Note: Airfare to Paro subject to change with Druk Air.

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

B Standard range of accommodations.

Price per person includes: Airfare Bangkok-Paro including taxes one-way, 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 from Guwahati airport and Australia - Bangkok return and accommodation in Bangkok.

This unique tour is designed for the enthusiastic traveller who wants to gain a deeper insight into Bhutan's culture and its landscapes. It begins in the gentle valleys of the west and journeys across spiritual central Bhutan before exploring the historical towns of Mongar and Trashigang in the rugged east.

Day 1 Paro

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

Day 2 Paro

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

Days 3/4 Thimphu

Drive to Thimphu (2 hrs) via 17th century Semtokha Dzong, the oldest fortress in the kingdom. Spend 2 days exploring the highlights of Thimphu, including the National Memorial Chorten, Folk Heritage Museum, the National Library containing ancient Buddhist scripts, the Bhutanese School for Arts and Painting, Changangkha temple, Zilukha nunnery and Tashichhodzong. BLD

Days 5/6 Punakha

Drive to Punakha (3 hrs) across the spectacular Dochula Pass (3050m). Clear weather reveals 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 farmland up to beautiful Khamsum Yuelley Namgyal Chorten. BLD



Punakha Dzong



Black necked cranes in flight

Day 7 Gangtey/Phobjikha

Morning departure for the market town of Wangdue before continuing on to Gangtey. This beautiful valley is the home of the historic 17th century Gangtey Goempa Monastery and Phobjikha Sanctuary, famous for its endangered black-necked cranes which arrive here in November and stay until March. BLD

Day 8 Trongsa

Drive to Trongsa via the 18th century Chendibji Chorten. In Trongsa, the ancestral home of the ruling dynasty, visit Trongsa Dzong, one of the most impressive monuments in Bhutan built in 1543. Afterwards explore Ta Dzong museum housing historical artefacts of the royal family and a range of traditional armour. BLD

Days 9/10 Bumthang

Depart for Bumthang (3 hrs), the spiritual heartland of Bhutan. Spend the next two days exploring the surrounding areas ancient monasteries and sacred Buddhist sites. Highlights include Kurje Lhakhang, containing a rock imprint of Guru Rimpoche's body, Jambay Lhakhang (7th century) and Tamshing Monastery. BLD

Day 11 Mongar

Continue eastwards to Mongar (6 hrs) over the Thimshing-La Pass (4,000m). From here, the road descends through a beautiful alpine valley before the vegetation changes to subtropical. Climb through pine forests, maize fields and eastern hamlets to reach the town of Mongar. BLD

Days 12/13 Trashigang

Drive to remote Trashigang (3 hrs). Highlights include the Trashigang Dzong and the temple of Gom Kora. Visit the Doksum village where women busily weaving traditional Bhutanese fabric. On day 13 visit Trashiyangtse Dzong. 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

Transfer to Guwahati Airport. Tour ends. B



Bhutanese pilgrim in Gho

BUMTHANG PILGRIM TREK

11 days/10 nights (3 day trek)

Hotels/Lodges/Camping

Departs daily ex Bangkok

SEASON: Mar-May & Sep-Nov

GRADE: Moderate

Price per person twin*	Cat A	Cat B
Sep-Nov 2010 & Mar-May 2011	\$8962	\$5384

*Minimum two people. Single travellers prices on request.

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

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

B Standard range of accommodations, camping.

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.

The beautiful 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.

Day 1 Paro

Early morning flight to Paro. After lunch we visit the Ta Dzong National Museum and the 17th century Rimpong Dzong. LD

Day 2 Paro

Walk (1.5 hrs) up to the Taktsang Monastery, perched on a rocky ledge over a 900m drop, then visit the historic ruins of the Drukgyel Dzong, and the 7th century Kyichu Temple. BLD

Day 3 Thimphu

Morning drive to Thimphu, Bhutan's capital. Highlights include the Memorial Chorten, Folk Heritage Museum, the National Library containing ancient Buddhist scripts, Tashichhodzong and the Changangkha temple. BLD



Prayer flags can be seen regularly on trekking routes



Walking against a beautiful Himalayan backdrop



Beautiful entrance to the main hall of Punakha Dzong

Day 4 Trongsa

Drive to Trongsa (7 hrs) via the market town of Wangdue and Chendibji Chorten, modelled on Kathmandu's Swyambhunath Stupa. BLD



Pilgrim women in Bumthang

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 meet your camp crew and begin your 3 day trek. The walking route follows the Chamkhar River and will take you across open fields and through pine forests. Today's trail is at a leisurely pace with plenty of time for stopping at local villages and temples. Overnight camping. Altitude 2,900m. BLD

Day 7 Nang Lhakhang Ugyencholing (19km, 7-8 hrs)

It's 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). Your campsite is by the river close to the village. Altitude 2,670m. BLD

Day 8 Ugyencholing Bumthang (11km, 4 hrs)

In the morning, 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 one of Terton Pema Lingpa found religious treasures 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

Continue by road to Paro (5 hrs) via Semtokha Dzong, the oldest fortress in Bhutan. Remainder of day at leisure to stroll through downtown Paro. Overnight in Paro. BLD

Day 11 Tour ends Bangkok

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

BHUTAN TREKKING

With much of the kingdom covered with ancient 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. We have a range of trekking programs on offer from moderate walks through picturesque countryside and valleys to difficult hikes through mountainous Himalayan terrain. You will be accompanied by a local crew who take care of all camp chores, meals and look after the yaks and ponies that transport your luggage and camping gear. Contact us for more information.

