

## BHUTAN MAUJ

5 Nights / 6 Days - 2n phuentsholing, 1n-punakha/1n thimpu, 2n paro

### Description

Snuggled in the folds of Eastern Himalayas, Bhutan is the only country in the world where Vajrayana Buddhism is a way of every day life and is often known as “The Last Shangri-la”. Welcome to Bhutan – the happiest place on Earth! Famous for its concept of Gross National Happiness, Bhutan is the best place to visit when you want to break away from the monotony of a hectic, stressful lifestyle. Be it the beauty of the spectacular Himalayas and wide landscapes dotted with rice-fields or the magnificent architecture of age-old monasteries and houses, Bhutan is a treat for your eyes, mind, body and soul.

The two main cities are Thimphu, the capital city and Paro, the city with only international airport in the country. The other important city is Phuentsholing which is an Indo-Bhutan border town and is one of the entry point to Bhutan by surface from India.

### Tour Highlights

#### Phuntsholing

While exiting from Phuentsholing you will have to surrender original entry permit which was given to you while entering Bhutan at immigration office, Karbandi, which is 5 km before Phuentsholing. You will not be allowed to leave the country without surrendering this paper permit in original, issued at Paro / Phuntsholing.

#### Thimphu (Altitude: 2,350 Metres):

Thimphu is the capital and the largest city of Bhutan. The capital has an interesting combination of tradition and modernity, and includes some of the most advanced and remotest parts of the kingdom. It is the only capital city in the world that does not have traffic lights. It is the main center of Commerce, Religion and Government in the country. It is most modern city of Bhutan and has abundance of restaurants, internet cafes, nightclubs and shopping center. It is one of the few cities of Bhutan having ATM facilities.

#### Paro (Altitude: 2,280 Metres):

The beautiful valley is home to many of Bhutan’s oldest monasteries & temples. The country’s only international airport situated is in Paro. The valley is also home to Mount Jhomolhari (7300 meters.) situated at the northern end of the valley whose glacier, water forms the Pa Chu which is flowing through the valley. The valley has many isolated small villages and is known for red rice.

## **Punakha (Altitude: 1,310 Metres):**

Punakha served as the capital of Bhutan until 1955. It's the winter seat of the Je Khempo (Chief Abbot) & the monk body. It has a temperate climate & its rich fertile valley is fed by the Pho Chu & Mo Chu rivers. It is one of very few places in Bhutan which offers Rafting facilities.

## **Attractions and Shopping Tips**

### **Thimphu**

**Memorial Chorten:** Also known as the Thimphu Chorten, it is situated in the center of Thimphu City. It is in a form of Stupa built in 1974 to honor the third Druk Gyalpo, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. It is built in Tibetan Style pattern on design of Classical Stupa. The Chorten depicts images of wrathful deities with their female consorts. Every morning till night old people and young people circumambulate the Chorten. It is popularly known as "the most visible religious landmark in Bhutan"

**Changangkha Monastery:** Changangkha Lhakhang is one of the oldest monasteries in the Thimphu valley. It was built in the 15th century by a descendant of Lama Phajo Drugom Zhipo, the man who spread the Sect Drukpa Kagyu in Bhutan. The main statue at the temple is of Avalokiteswara (the eleven-headed Buddha manifestation with 1000 arms and 1000 eyes). The temple courtyard offers good views over the city of Thimphu.

**National Zoo:** Popularly known as "Takin Reserve", is one of the few places in Bhutan where we can see Takin, the National Animal of Bhutan and a unique combination of Goat and an Antelope

**National Library:** The National Library was established in 1967 to preserve many ancient Dzongkha and Tibetan texts. (9am – 4pm, Closed on Sunday, Monday & National Holidays)

**BBS Tower:** It offers panoramic view of Thimphu Town and is situated at an elevation of 2,685 m. The place is perfect to have view of whole Thimphu valley and is also an ideal place for photography. In order to reach the Point, one has to walk through hundreds of colorful prayer flags that dot the hill overlooking the Thimphu valley.

**Folk Heritage Museum:** It is a traditional house replicating a farmhouse giving an insight to the Bhutanese lifestyle, and artifacts from the rural households. The museum also organizes regular demonstrations of rural traditions, skills, habits and customs as well as hosting educational programs for children. The house design and many of the artifacts are also reminders of rural Bhutanese life. One should carry a torch (flashlight) as some of the rooms are quite dimly lit.

**National Textile Museum:** This museum is worth a visit to get to know the living national art of weaving. Exhibitions introduce the major weaving techniques, styles of local dress and textiles made by Bhutanese. (Everyday 9am – 4pm & Saturday 1pm – 4pm, Sunday 10am – 3pm, Closed on Monday & National Holidays)

**Institute of Zorig Chusom:** It is a Premier institute of traditional arts and crafts in Thimphu established with an objective of preserving "thirteen arts and crafts of Bhutan". It is commonly known as Arts & Crafts School or Painting School. One of the 13 Arts is Tshem Zo which is the art of working with needles, threads and other necessary items to make clothes, boots, thankas, and other items used for decorations and other household needs. (Everyday 2pm – 4pm & Saturday 9am – 12noon, Closed on Sunday & National Holidays)

**National Institute of Traditional Medicine:** This institute was established in 1978. It prepares and dispenses traditional herbal and other medicines. There is an impressive laboratory and production facility that manufactures quality products. All kinds of pills, tablets, ointments and medicinal teas from here are distributed to regional health-care units around the country.

**Jungshi Handmade Paper Factory:** It is a 1 km drive from main city of Thimphu to the factory. The factory manufactures the traditional Bhutanese paper using the bark of two tree species in the manufacture of traditional paper the Daphne tree and Dhekap. The entire process of traditional manufacturing of the handmade paper can be observed. It was previously operated by the government. Now it is run by a private entrepreneur.

**Kuensel Phodrang:** It is a gigantic Buddha Dordenma Statue located atop a hill in Kuensel Phodrang Nature Park. One

can get good view of Thimphu Valley from here. The construction was completed on September 25th 2015 to celebrate their 60th anniversary of fourth king Jigme Singye Wangchuck.

### **Optional sightseeing with additional cost**

**Tashichho Dzong:** Also known as "Fortress of the Glorious Religion", it was built on the hill above Thimphu in 1216 by the lama Gyalwa Lhanampa. It was rebuilt in the 1960s during the reign of Bhutan's third king in the traditional style, without plans or nails. It houses some ministries, His Majesty's secretariat, and the central monk body and opens after 5 PM. This Dzong is a perfect example of how grand and intricate Bhutanese architecture is.

### **Paro**

**Ta Dzong:** It is an ancient watch tower overlooking Rimpung Dzong built in 1951 which is now converted into national museum. It has an amazing collection of art, antiques and religious Thangkas. The round building is said to be in the shape of a conch shell. It has 2.5m-thick walls and was completed in 1656. Inside you can see Thangkas (Tibetan Buddhist painting on cotton, or silk usually depicting a Buddhist deity, scene, or mandala) depicting important saints and preachers. (9am – 4pm, Closed on Sunday, Monday & National Holidays)

**Rimpung Dzong:** This "fortress of a heap of jewels" was built by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in 1646. It houses Paro Monastic Body and also has the offices of civil administration of Paro. The Annual Paro Tshechu is held here. It is one of the finest example of Bhutanese Architecture. Here you can see intricate wood work, large beams fitted into each other and held together without nails. The Tower of the Dzong is one of the most beautiful in Bhutan with its magnificent wood work.

**The Ruin of Drukgyel Dzong:** The Dzong was built in 1646 by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal to commemorate the victory over the Tibetan Invaders. This fort is fifteen minutes' drive from Zhiwaling and set on a hill with a spectacular view of the valley. It provides a wonderful architectural insight to the structure of forts in Bhutan. The Dzong was destroyed by fire in 1951 and is now preserved as a heritage site. The Dzong is situated in Drukgyel, overlooking the beautiful village with Mountain Jomolhari in the background. Drukgyel is also the starting point of Bhutan's most famous trekking routes.

**Kyichu Lhakhang (Monastery):** It is one of the oldest monasteries in the country built in the 7th century by the Tibetan King Songsten Gampo. The story goes that a giant demoness lay 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. According to the legend, he established a temple here on the left knee of an ogress in order to subdue her. This is one of the oldest monasteries in Paro district. There's a belief that the two orange trees here in Kyichu Lhakhang miraculously bears fruits throughout the year.

**Taktsang Monastery (Full Day):** It is the abode of gods and monks situated at an altitude of 3100m on the Upper Paro Valley, Bhutan. As per the legend, Guru Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche), the tantrum mystic who brought Buddhism to Bhutan, came in the form of Dorje Drolow riding a flying tigress to subdue the demon that was obstructing the spread of Buddhism in the Himalayas. This incredible monastery clings to the edge of a sheer rock cliff that plunges 900 meters into the valley below. On the left side of the monastery is the retreat place where the famous Tibetan Yogi Mache Lhabdenma attained enlightenment. During the hike, one can see you're likely to see locals displaying handicrafts for sale along the route to the monastery—evidence of individual enterprise rarely seen until the past few years. The hike is moderate to strenuous. It is also known as "Tigers Nest". The cave is said to be the origin of Buddhism in Bhutan.

### **Optional sightseeing with additional cost**

**Chele-La-Pass (Full Day):** Chele-La-Pass, at an elevation of 13,088 ft., is considered to be one of the highest motorable pass in Bhutan. About an hour's drive from Zhiwa Ling it passes through lush valleys, pine and rhododendron forest. The pass provides stunning views of the sacred mountain Jomolhari and Jichu Drake.

### **Punakha**

**Dochu-La-Pass:** It is the most known pass in Bhutan and is about 30 km drive from the Capital City Thimphu on the way to Punakha/Wangdue Phodrang. It lies at an elevation of around 3,150 Metres. On a clear day, spectacular view of the mighty Himalayas mountain ranges can be seen. From here you can admire the sterling view of snow-capped Himalayas and the hundreds of "broadcasting" prayer flags. During winters, road to Dochula pass is covered with mild snow. Prime

attraction to visit Dochula pass is 108 chortens / stupas built under the patronage of Queen Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuk.

**Chimi Lhakhang:** It is a very popular temple built in 15th century and revered temple that lies on the periphery of the fertile valley of Lobesa, where the borders of Thimphu, Punakha and Wangdue Phodrang districts meet. Being dedicated to Lama Drukpa Kuenley, the Divine Madman, the temple is popularly considered to be a temple of fertility. The Lhakhang has a row of prayer wheels and its exterior walls are embedded with slates carved with images of saints. Images of Shabdrung, Sakyamuni Buddha and Chenresig are also deified in the monastery.

**Punakha Dzong:** The Punakha Dzong was known in ancient times as the Druk Pungthang Dechhen Phrodang or “the palace of great happiness”. It was built in 1637 at the confluence the Pho Chu and Mo Chu Rivers. This gigantic Dzong was damaged 6 times by fire, once by flood and once by an earthquake. It is the second Dzong to be built in Bhutan and was the seat of government when Punakha was the capital of Bhutan. Today, the Dzong is the winter home for the clergy. Closed in winter months when the monk body is in Punakha. The annual Punakha Tsechhu (Festival) is held here.

**Wangdue Dzong:** It's an easy drive to the very impressive 17th century Wangdue Phodrang dzong, home of over 200 monks and a monastic school. The Dzong is the largest wood roofed dzong in Bhutan and the style and architecture is very grand.

#### **Optional sightseeing with additional cost**

**Gantey Gompha & Phobjika Valley (Full Day):** Situated south of the road and east of Wangdue Phodrang, is Gantey Gompa, an old monastery dating back to the 17th century. The gompa, on the valley floor, is the village of Phobjika. This is the winter home of the famous black-necked cranes. The cranes migrate from the high plains of the Tibetan plateau in winter to the milder climate of Phobjika.

## Itinerary

### **Day 01: Paro Airport – Thimphu (65 kms / 2 hrs)**

Meet & Greet on arrival at Paro Airport and transfer to Thimphu (7,710 ft.) the capital city of Bhutan. On arrival check in at the hotel. Overnight at Thimphu.

### **Day 02: Thimphu Sightseeing**

Thimphu the capital of Bhutan is a home of Royal family .After breakfast visit Tashichhodzong ,the main secretariat building which houses the throne room of His Majesty,the king . View of the Thimphu valley from BBS Tower is very captivating and will prove to be the perfect introduction to Thimphu. Some of the sites of religious nature are National Memorial Chorten; built in 1974 it was raised in the memory of third King. Next visit one of the oldest monasteries in the valley- Chang Gangkha Monastery. The nature and wildlife lovers should not miss a visit to National Zoo which also houses national animal takin. National Library (collections of holy scripts) & in the evening visit Buddha point.Overnight at Thimphu.

### **Day 03: Thimphu – Punakha / Wangdue Sightseeing (77 kms / 3 hrs)**

After breakfast drive to Punakha / Wangdue Phodrang (4,300 ft.), via Dochu-La-Pass (10,170 ft.). Continue towards Punakha visit Chimi Lhakhang - The Temple of Fertility built in 15th century. Also visit Punakha Dzong. On arrival check in at the hotel. Evening free for leisure. Overnight at Punakha.

### **Day 04: Punakha – Paro (140 kms / 5 hrs)**

Visit the Ta Dzong, once a fortified lookout tower that is now the National Museum. Then walk down the trail to visit the Rinpung Dzong meaning "fortress of the heap of jewels". Next visit Kichu Lhakhang, the oldest temple in the country. From there you will be taken to the Drugyal Dzong (Bhutan Victory Fort), which was built in 1646 to commemorate Bhutan's victory over Tibetan invaders during the 1600s. On a clear day you can see Mount Jumolhari, Bhutan's second-highest mountain at 7,314meters.. Evening is free for leisure. Overnight stay at Paro.

### **Day 05: Paro Sightseeing**

After breakfast hike to Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) Monastery, which is Bhutan's most famous monastery situated at 3180 meters. Guru Rinpoche (the great spiritual master) is said to have flown on the back of a tigress to meditate in a cave where Taktsang Monastery now stands. The monastery is perched on the edge of a steep cliff, about 900 meters above Paro Valley.Overnight stay at Paro.

### **Day 06: Paro Airport**

After breakfast check out from hotel and drop at Paro Airport for your onward journey.

## Price

NO OF PAX		DELUXE	STANDARD
(COST PER PERSON)	PREMIUM		
02 PAX	34563	30627	20541
04 PAX	25773	21780	15730
06 PAX	24990	21182	14518

Hotel Used

DESTINATIONS	HOTEL DETAILS		
	LUXURY	DELXUE	STANDARD
THIMPHU	HOTEL MIGMAR /SIMILAR	PEACEFUL RESORT/SAMBHAV	SHANTIDEVA / SINGYE / SIMILAR
PUNAKHA/	DRUBCHHU RESORT/	AMODHRA/SIMILAR PEMA KARPO/LOBESA/	KINGALING/LO BESA/
WANGDUE	SIMILAR	SIMILAR	SIMILAR
PARO	UDUMWARA /TASHI NAMGAY RESORT SIMILAR	MANDELA RESORT / NAMSECHOLING / SIMILAR	REMA RESORT / CITY HOTEL / SIMILAR

## Inclusions

- Accommodation on twin sharing basis
- Transportation
- Sightseeing as per itinerary.
- All local taxes
- Entry permits & Special permit for restricted area
- MAP Plan (Fixed Menu)

## Exclusions

- Air/Train fare
- GST 3.625%(Govt Tax)
- Personal expenses such as trips, telephone calls, laundry, liquor etc
- Entry fees to the Monuments & Museum
- Travel Insurance
- Expenses caused by factors beyond our control like rail and flight delays, roadblocks, and vehicle malfunctions, political disturbances etc.

## Cancellation Policy