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Bhutan Cultural tour - 8 Days

Take a cultural tour to Bhutan, the only last Buddhist Kingdom in the world, the happiest country in the world, and the only carbon-negative country in the world!! Take scenic drives and visit remote Buddhist shrines and temples in the countryside. Immerse yourself in local culture while staying in local people's homes.

During our Bhutan Cultural Tour, we land in Paro and drive to Thimphu, the beautiful capital city of the sovereign nation, which lies in a valley and is surrounded by tall mountains and beautiful farmland. We tour a lot of tourist attractions in Thimpu. Next, we take a scenic drive to Punakha and stop at several places to observe things along the trail. Finally, we stop at Dochula pass (3150m) and immerse ourselves in the natural beauty and vista offered by the place. One of the highlights of this Bhutan cultural tour is spending a night in local people's house (in Punakha) to experience the local culture and way of life of people there. Upon returning to Paro, we take the most awaited hike to Tiger's Nest Monastery and end the Bhutan Cultural Tour with your flight back home.

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PRICE INCLUDES

- All ground transfers in comfortable private vehicle including airport/hotel transfers
- Bhutanese Visa Fee
- Accommodation in The government approved 3 star category hotels on twin- shared basis
- Three meals per day, including tea, water (bottled or boiled) and snacks
- English speaking, trained and experienced local guide and staff
- All entrance and permit fees for visits to monuments and museums
- Company services and all required Bhutanese government taxes/royalties

PRICE EXCLUDES

- Airfare for international flights to and from Bhutan
- Items of personal nature (personal trekking gear, telephone calls, alcoholic beverages, internet, laundry, etc.)
- Personal gears
- Travel/trip cancellation and medical/evacuation insurance
- Tips for staff
- Any optional activities besides the itinerary during free time
- Services not mentioned in the ‘Trip Cost Included’ section

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ITINERARY IN DETAIL

Day 1: Paro Arrival drive to Thimphu

While flying into Paro, observe the Himalayan peaks from your window pane. Upon landing at Paro Airport, you will be picked up and transferred to your hotel in Thimphu. During the drive, you will visit the magnificent 15th-century temple called Taachog Lhakhang, built by great iron builder Drupthop Thangthong Gyalpo. You can take a short walk down the river to see a 15-century-old iron chain bridge built by the same builder. After you arrive at Thimphu, you can take a leisurely walk around the town to feel the atmosphere of the capital of Bhutan.

Dinner and night halt at Thimphu.

Day 2: Thimphu Sightseeing

Today we will do sightseeing tours to Thimpu's significant attractions, including the Memorial Chorten of late King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, the School of Arts and Crafts (also known as the painting school), and the National Institute of Traditional Medicine, Jungshi Handmade Paper Factory. We also visit Great Buddha Dordenma (also known as Buddha Point), a gigantic Shakyamuni Buddha statue sitting over the hill overlooking Thimpu. The Great Buddha Dordenma is sited amidst the ruins of Kuensel Phodrang, the palace of Sherab Wangchuk, and the thirteenth Druk Desi. Inaugurated on the 60th anniversary of fourth king Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the statue houses over one hundred thousand smaller Buddha statues made of Bronze and gilded in gold, each of which, like the Great Buddha Dordenma itself. We will also visit Motithang Takin Preserve. In the evening, we will visit Trashichho dzong, a beautiful fortress that houses most of the Government's offices and the King's Throne room. It is also the summer residence of Je Khenpo, the Chief Abbot. Dinner at night halts at Thimphu.

Day 3: Thimphu to Punakha

After breakfast, you will drive to Punakha, which is about 4 hours drive from Thimphu. You will stop at Dochula pass (3150m) on the way, and there you can see 108 Druk Wangyel Chorten. If may enjoy tea and snacks at the nearby café at this site. You will then drive down further through temperate forests into semitropical land full of cactuses. Upon reaching Punakha we will tour around Punakha dzong, built on the convergence of Phochu (Male River) and Mochu (Female River). Punakha Dzong is the winter residence of the Je- khenpho, the chief abbot, and serves as the administrative center of the Punakha district. Next, we will hike about an hour to Khamsum Yuelley Namgyel Chorten, from where you will have a stunning view of Kabesa Village and the Mochu River, with all the paddy fields at the back of the rivers. Finally, we will spend a night in local people's houses and get a close observation and cultural exchange with the local people of Bhutan. Overnight at Punakha in a Homestay.

Day 4: Punakha to Gangtey

After breakfast, we will drive towards Wangduephodrang and, on the way, will visit Chimi Lhakhang, which Lama Drukpa Kuenley built in the 15th century (This monk is popularly known as the Devine madman for his philosophy, “Salvation through sex”). He subdued the demons with his “Magical Thunder bolt.” The Temple is also known as “The Temple of Fertility.”

After that, we will continue to drive to Gangtey; in the evening will make a beautiful Gangtey Trail. Dinner and night halt at Gangtey.

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Day 5: Gangtey to Paro

After breakfast, you will visit the Gangtey monastery. And then we will continue to drive to Paro. En route, you will visit Royal Botanical Garden and Druk Wangyal Monastery. We will have lunch on the way. Dinner and Night halt at Paro.

Day 6: Day Excursion to Chelela

After early breakfast, drive to Chelela, the highest motorable road in Bhutan, and the altitude here is 3988 m from sea level. And it is about 2 hours drive. As it is in winter, there is a high chance of seeing the snow on the pass. If the weather is favorable will see some of the snow-capped mountains, including Mt. Jomulhari, the second highest peak in Bhutan. After that, drive back to Paro and, after lunch, will visit Ta dzong (watch tower) built in 1949 to use as a watch tower to defend Ringpung dzong and Paro valley during wartime. Still, in 1968, it was renovated and converted into national museum in which recorded in UNESCO world heritage. Unfortunately, the original museum was destroyed by the earthquake in September 2011. However, one can still see magnificent Bhutanese artifacts like costumes, religious Thangka paintings, arm weapons, and a fascinating collection of Bhutan stamps in the new gallery. Then will visit Paro Ringpung dzong, one of the finest examples of Bhutanese architecture. It houses the district Monastic Body and government administrative offices of Paro Dzongkhag. You can even take a short walk down the cantilever bridge—dinner and Night Halt at Paro.

Day 7: Hike to Taktshang

Towards the end of our Bhutan Cultural Tour, it's time to commence the most awaited thing, i.e., the hike to Tiger's Nest Monastery (Paro Taktsang). It was built in 1692 around the Taktsang Senge Samdup, a cave where Guru Padmasambhava is said to have meditated for three months in the 8th century. It is believed that Guru Rinpoche (Guru Padmasambhava) flew to this location from Khenpajong, Tibet, on the back of a tigress and subdued a demon. He then performed meditation in one of the caves here, emerged in eight incarnated forms (manifestations), and blessed the place. Subsequently, the place is popularly known as the "Tiger's Nest." Guru Padmasambhava is known for introducing Buddhism to Bhutan. Today, Paro Taktsang is the best known of the thirteen caves in which he meditated.
In the afternoon will visit Drugyel Dzong, the fortress built to commemorate a victory over Tibet. Late afternoon we will visit Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the oldest temples in Bhutan.

In the evening we will stroll in Paro town. Dinner and overnight at Paro.

Day 8: Paro Airport and Departure

After breakfast will drive to Paro International airport for your flight to your next destination. Our driver and tour guide will bid farewell.