



WORLD DISCOVERY  
— HISTORY CULTURE WILDLIFE —

## Bhutan Odyssey



Prayer Flags

### DAY 1 - Depart UK.

### DAY 2 – Arrival in Kathmandu (Nepal).

On arrival in Kathmandu you will be met by a representative of World Discovery outside immigration and customs. You will then be taken by private car direct to your hotel.

### DAY 3 – Fly to Paro. Drive to Thimphu.

Transfer to the airport for the morning flight to **Paro**, gateway to Bhutan. In clear weather, Druk Air's flight to Bhutan provides a wonderful view of the Himalayan scenery, culminating in an exciting descent past forested hills into the kingdom. On arrival at Paro airport, you will be met by a World Discovery representative. On completion of airport formalities, there will be an interesting drive of about 2 hours' duration to **Thimphu**, the capital of Bhutan. The rest of the day is at leisure.

**Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.**

### DAY 4 - Thimphu.

Thimphu, perhaps the most unusual capital in the world, is the Bhutanese seat of government. Morning visit to **Tashichho Dzong**, the main secretariat building which houses the throne room of the King of Bhutan. Proceed to the **National Library**, which houses an extensive collection of Buddhist literature, with some works dating back several hundred years. Visit (outside only) the **National Institute of Traditional Medicine**, where the medicinal herbs abundant in the kingdom are compounded and dispensed. After lunch, visit the **National Memorial Chorten** dedicated to Bhutan's third king, His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck ("the father of modern

Bhutan"). Completed in 1974 after the king's untimely death, it is both a memorial to the late king and a monument to peace. Spend some time visiting craft shops offering a wide range of handcrafted products, including the splendid thangkha paintings and exquisitely woven textiles for which Bhutan is famous.

**Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.**

## DAY 5 - By road to Punakha.

After an early breakfast drive up to the **Dochu-la Pass** (3,088m/10,130ft) from where on a clear day you can view the glory of the high Himalayan peaks including Gangkar Puensum, the highest peak in Bhutan at 7,497m. Continue to Punakha, where you will visit **Punakha Dzong**, a massive structure built at the junction of two rivers. Punakha was Bhutan's capital until 1955, and Punakha Dzong still serves as the winter residence of the central monastic body. Bhutan's first king, Ugyen Wangchuck, was crowned here in 1907. The fortress has withstood damage from fire, earthquake and flood over the centuries. The latest flood, in October 1994, caused great damage to the fortress but miraculously spared its most holy statue.

**Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.**

## DAY 6 - Via Wangdephodrang to Gangtey.

Continue eastwards, reaching **Wangdephodrang** in time for lunch. In the afternoon drive through dense forests of oak and rhododendron trees to the town of **Gangtey** (Phobjikha). In the evening take a walk around Gangtey village and visit Gangtey Monastery.

**Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.**

## DAY 7 - Gangtey to Trongsa.

In the morning explore Phobjikha Valley which is famous during the winter months for **black-necked cranes**. The cranes migrate here from the Central Asiatic plateau to escape its harsh winters (roughly October to February). After lunch drive to Trongsa across the **Pele-la Pass** (3,300m/10,830ft), the traditional boundary between east and west Bhutan. The pass is marked by a large white chorten and prayer flags. There is an abrupt change in vegetation at this point, with mountain forest replaced by high altitude dwarf bamboo.

**Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.**

## DAY 8 - Trongsa to Bumthang.

After breakfast there will be a visit on foot to the Trongsa Dzong (built in 1647) before you set off for **Bumthang**, a journey of about 3 hours, over the **Yutong-la Pass** (3,400m/11,155ft). The road winds steeply up to the pass, then runs down through coniferous forest into a wide, open, cultivated valley known as the Chumey Valley. Arrive in Bumthang in the early afternoon. There is ample time today to stroll in the village, visit the little handicrafts shop at the entrance to the town, and perhaps take refreshments at a local restaurant.

**Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.**

## DAYS 9 AND 10 - Bumthang.

Two days of sightseeing and relaxation in the beautiful Bumthang region, the spiritual heartland of Bhutan. Visits will include **Tamshing Monastery** (housing some of the oldest wall paintings in Bhutan), **Jakar Dzong**, the administrative centre of the region, built in 1667, and the extensive 19th century **Wangdichholing Dzong**, a former royal palace that is now used as a school for young novices. Bumthang is also an excellent location for hiking in the hills, valleys and forests; a favourite half day walk is to the small monastery of Pelseling, which offers some glorious views of the valley.

**Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner each day.**

## DAY 11 - Bumthang to Paro.

A long journey today as you return westwards along the central highway to Paro. Stop for lunch at a local restaurant in Trongsa, then visit the imposing **Wangdephodrang Dzong**, before finally reaching **Paro** in the early evening.

**Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.**

## DAY 12 - Paro.

The valley of Paro contains a wealth of attractions. In the morning, visit **Ta Dzong**, a former watchtower which is now Bhutan's National Museum. Afterwards, walk down a hillside trail to visit **Rinpung Dzong**, which has a long and fascinating history. After lunch, drive up the valley to view the ruins of **Drukgyel Dzong**, 18 km. from Paro town on the north side of the valley. It was from here that the Bhutanese repelled several invading Tibetan armies during the 17th century. Also visit **Kyichu Lhakhang**, one of the oldest and most sacred shrines of the kingdom. In the evening, visit a traditional farmhouse for an opportunity to interact with a local family and learn something of their lifestyle. Later on, take an evening stroll along the main street, and perhaps visit a few handicrafts shops, or take refreshments at a local café or bar.

**Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.**

## DAY 13 - Paro. Tiger's Nest Monastery.

This morning you will walk up the steep hillside, through a pine forest, to view the spectacular 'Tiger's Nest' Monastery, perched precariously on a sheer cliff face overlooking the Paro Valley. This 300 year old monastery is visited by pilgrims from all over Bhutan. The afternoon is at leisure.

**Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.**

## DAY 14 – Fly to Kathmandu. Special 6-course Nepali dinner.

After breakfast, drive to Paro airport for the flight to Kathmandu. The rest of the day is at leisure. In the evening you will be taken to the unique Dwarika's Kathmandu Hotel for a special farewell banquet.

**Meals included: Full breakfast, dinner.**

## DAY 15 – Homeward flight.

Private transfer to the airport for your homeward flight.

**Meals included: Full breakfast.**