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Shangri-La Tour

URL: https://himalaya-discovery.com/trip/shangri-la-tour/

Destination
Bhutan

Activity
Bhutan Tours

Trip Overview

The **Shangri-La Tour** nestled high in the quiet Himalayas, the Kingdom of Bhutan is a haven for rich biodiversity, vibrant religion, unique arts, rich history, cultural splendor, heritage, and scenic grandeur. It is an intriguing land where time has stood still and maintained this mystical country's magnificent beauty.

The vegetation ranges from tropical broadleaf forests to alpine shrubs and lush meadows over very short distances. Bhutan has exotic mammals like Takin (a big, musk-ox-like animal), Black-necked Crane, Golden Langur, Royal Bengal tiger, clouded leopards and red pandas. Bird species range from the black-eagle of the Himalayas to the boreal owl of the Tiny black-throated parrot.

Our Shangri-La tour provides one of the best opportunities to experience most if not all of the Bhutanese lifestyle in all its glory.

Getting to Bhutan

There are flights from Kathmandu, Bangkok, Delhi, Kolkata, Bagdogra, Bodh Gaya, Dhaka, Guwahati, Singapore, and Mumbai to Bhutan.

Paro is located at 2,225 m (7300 ft) above sea level and surrounded by hills as elevated as 4,876 m (16,000 ft) above sea level. Two carriers currently operate to Bhutan Airlines, Drukair and Bhutan. In eastern Bhutan, Bumthang in central Bhutan, and Gelephu in south-central Bhutan, there are also domestic airports in Yonphula.

Flying to Paro International Airport in Bhutan is typically an interesting experience as the descent into Paro Valley takes you closer to the tops of the mountains than most other flights around the globe. The flight between Paro and Kathmandu is one of the most exciting as the aircraft goes over four of the world's five highest mountains. You can appreciate the amazing view of Mt. Everest, Lhotse, Makalu and Kangchenjunga at its best in good weather as you soar higher up.

Itinerary

Day 01: Arrive in Paro Airport.

You will be met on arrival and transferred to the hotel. After the formalities, we take a short drive to Paro town to stroll through Bazaar, Overnight at hotel.

Day 02: Sightseeing around Paro then evening drive to Thimphu.

We visit the Ta Dzong which houses the National Museum and visit Paro's Rimpung Dzong , on the way down we cross the 16th century cantilever bridge.Also visiting the Drugyel Dzong victory fortress, built in 1647 which is 18 kilometres from the Paro town. Explore the magnificent ramparts of the erstwhile fortress which defended the country against several incursions. On a clear day one can also view the sacred Mount Jomolhari, from the northern battlements. We take a visit to a farm house and observe the traditional Bhutanese way of life & living, Overnight at hotel.

Day 03: Sightseeing in and around Thimphu.

Early morning we take a scenic drive to Bhutan's capital, Thimphu, approx 90 mins drive from Paro. Sightseeing in and around Thimphu Valley we visit the National Library, which holds a collection of ancient Buddhist texts and manuscripts, as well as the institute for Zorig Chusum commonly known as Painting School, textile and Folk Heritage Museum which provides an insight into Bhutanese material culture and everyday way of life.

Also visiting the National Memorial Chorten, Trashichho dzong an impressive monastery, Bhutanese Handicrafts displaying a wide range of beautifully hand-woven textiles and craft products. In the evening we explore the vibrant Thimphu Bazaar, Overnight at hotel.

Day 04: A long drive from Thimphu to Gangtey / Phobjikha.

Drive to the glacial valley of Phobjikha via Dochula, this pass offers the panoramic view of Bhutan's Himalayan Ranges. Along the slopes is the great monastery of Gangtey, established in the 17th century.

This quiet and remote valley is the winter home of the black necked cranes. Explore Gangtey village and Phobjikha valley. The unique black necked crane festival is held on the valley floor every November. Overnight at hotel.

Day 05: Drive from Gangtey to Bumthang.

After an early breakfast, drive to Tongsa across Pele-la pass (3,300meters). The pass is marked by a white chorten and many prayer flags. There is an abrupt change in vegetation with mountain forest replaced by high altitude dwarf bamboo.

Stop at Chendebji Chorten. You can see the chorten with eyes painted at the four cardinal points. It was

built in the 18th century by Lama Shida from Tibet, to cover the remains of evil spirit that was subdued at this spot. Finally reaching towards Trongsa you can view the stunning Trongsa Dzong from a distance.

Bumthang, 68 km away from Trongsa, a journey of about 3 hours, over the Yutong-la pass (3,400meters). 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. Stopping in Chumey village there are many shops selling yathra, a woolen textile.

Bumthang is famous for yathra a distinctive strip of woven woolen fabric in numerous colours and patterns mostly made using ancient dyeing techniques .The Road follows the valley down and it climbs through blue pine forests to Kiki La (2860meters). We then descent down to the Choekor Valley or central of Bumthang, Overnight at hotel.

Trek Duration

6 hrs

Day 06: Sightseeing in and around Bumthang.

Bumthang valley comprises of a combination of four valleys – Chumey, Choekhor, Tang and Ura with altitudes varying from 2,600meters to 4,000metersHome to many of prominent Buddhist temples and monasteries. Visiting the Jakar Dzong built in 1667 and it`s seat of district administration and regional monastic body of Bumthang.

Jambay Lhakhang founded in 7th century by the Tibetan king Songsen Gampo it is one of the oldest monasteries in the country. Kurje Lhakhang, where the patron saint of Buddhism in Bhutan subdued a local demon and left his body imprint. Tamshing founded in 1501 by Terton (Treasure Revealer) Pema Lingpa the incarnation of Guru Rinpoche. The monastery has very ancient religious paintings like 1000 Buddhas and 21 Taras (female form of Buddhisattvas) in Bhutan.

Visit a farmer’s house for refreshments and observe the traditional way of living. We also visit a Swiss farm which produces cottage, swiss cheese, honey, a large variety of fruit juice and spirits. The Brewery that manufactures the famous Red Panda Beer (weiss beer) also located here. Take a leisurely walk in Chamkhar town, Overnight at hotel.

Day 07: Leaving Bumthang driving through Trongsa to Punakha.

Leaving Bumthang we head for Trongsa where we will visit the Trongsa Dzong which was built in 1648 it is the biggest of all the fortresses in the country. Drive to Punakha via Wangdiphodrang after which we take a stroll through the Wangdi market, Overnight at hotel.

Day 08: Sightseeing in Punakha with overnight accommodation in Paro.

Drive north to visit the majestic Punakha Dzong, built in 1637 which strategically occupies the land between the two rivers Phochu and Mochu. At Present the Dzong serve as the district administration and judiciary office as well as the winter home for Bhutan’s spiritual leader Je Khenpo and the monks of

Thimphu and Punakha.

We then drive onto Lobesa where you take a short hike to Chimi Lhakhang Temple. This temple is on a hill top and it is dedicated to the great Yogi known as Drukpa Kuenley or popularly known as “Divine madman” of the 14th century. It is believed that this temple blesses women who seek fertility, Overnight at hotel.

Day 09: Sightseeing around Paro.

Excursion to Taktsang Monastery (Tigers Nest). The trail to the monastery climbs through beautiful Pine and rhododendron forests. We stop at the tea house for rest and refreshments ,the tea house offers magnificent up close view of the tigers nest and continue the hike for short while until you see, clearly and seemingly within reach, the imposing Taktsang monastery. Built in 1600s, this incredible monastery clings to the edge of a sheer rock cliff that plunges 900 meters into the valley below.

History states that Guru Padmasambhava, the Tantric mystic who brought Buddhism to Bhutan, landed here on the back of a flying tiger and meditated here for three months. It is regarded to be one of the most venerated cultural heritage sites in Bhutan. People from all over the Himalayan Diaspora frequent this place on the pilgrimage trail to Bhutan, Overnight at hotel.

Day 10: Fly to home.

After breakfast, our Airport representative will drop you to the Paro International Airport, flight to your home.

Price Includes

- Airport transfers pickup and drop-off.
- A standard government approved accommodation (in twin share rooms) for the duration of the tour.
- Service of licensed English speaking Bhutanese Tour Guides.
- All sightseeing tours, Monument / Museum entrance fees as per itinerary.
- All meals fixed breakfast, lunch & dinner with Tea & Coffee hot chocolate during the tour
- Country presentation & tour briefing on day 1 evening with welcome drinks.
- Cultural afternoon/evening consisting of traditional mask dances & folk dances (with beverages) ~ For Group Tours
- Mineral water supply for the tour.
- Government Royalty (which is 35% of $ 200) this goes to the country’s health & education projects.
- Private transport & driver within Bhutan. (Imported Prado’s, Micro Buses & Toyota Coaster Buses)
- Toyota 4 X 4 luggage vans & light trucks for group travel.
- All our government taxes
- Tourist service charge
- Bhutan Visa fees and Visa processing assistance

Price Excludes

- Drink, room service and al-a-cart meals
- International airfare and travel insurance
- Photography charges (if and when applicable).
- Personal equipment.
- Tips for the staff. (Tipping is expected.)
- Any others expenses which are not mentioned on ‘Price Includes’ section.
- Druk Air flights (Please contact us for the Druk air flight booking)

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