14 Days Bhutan Tour

Fourteen days is the traverse - our only itinerary that crosses the entire kingdom, from Paro's international runway to Trashigang in the far east, over the 3,780-metre Thrumshingla Pass and down through landscapes most Bhutan visitors never see. The east is a different country: Lhuentse, ancestral home of the royal family, where weavers produce Bhutan's finest textiles; Drametse, source of the drum dance performed at every tshechu; Trashiyangtse's giant chorten built in the Nepali style. Fewer than one traveller in twenty gets here. You'll earn it with real road days - this is a journey for the traveller who measures a trip by what they saw that others didn't - and finish back west with the Tiger's Nest hike, a fortnight of the Himalaya behind you.

LOCATION	DURATION
Paro, Thimphu, Punakha, Phobjikha, Trongsa, Bumthang, Mongar, Lhuentse, Trashigang, Trashiyangtse	**14**

Highlights

- Ta Dzong - National Museum of Bhutan
- Rinpung Dzong (Paro Dzong)
- Tiger's Nest Monastery hike (2,600m to 3,100m)
- Kyichu Lhakhang - 7th century temple
- Buddha Dordenma - 51m tall statue
- Takin Preserve Center
- School of 13 Arts and Crafts
- Dochula Pass - 108 chortens (3,140m)
- Chimi Lhakhang - Temple of Fertility
- Punakha Dzong - Palace of Great Happiness
- Phobjikha Valley - Black-necked Crane habitat
- Gangtey Gompa
- Trongsa Dzong - Royal ancestral home
- Trongsa Museum (Ta Dzong)
- Jakar Dzong - Castle of White Bird
- Jambay Lhakhang - 7th century temple
- Kurjey Lhakhang - Body print of Guru Rinpoche
- Tamshing Lhakhang - Founded by Pema Lingpa
- Burning Lake (Mebar Tsho)
- Ura Valley
- Thrumshingla Pass (3,750m)
- Lhuentse Dzong
- Khoma Village - Kishuthara weaving

- Tallest Guru Rinpoche statue - Takila
- Drametse Monastery
- Trashigang Dzong
- Gom Kora
- Chorten Kora
- Trashiyangtse Dzong
- Zorig Chusum (Eastern)

Day-by-Day Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Paro - Valley Exploration

Paro | 2,280m | — | —

You will be received by a representative from Byways Tours and Travels at the airport and transferred to your hotel.

After lunch, visit **Ta Dzong**, an ancient watchtower built in 1656, renovated in 1968, and converted into the **National Museum of Bhutan**. Then visit **Rinpung Dzong (Paro Dzong)**, built in 1646 by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. The Dzong currently houses the administrative offices of Paro District and a monastery. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

Meals: L/D | Hotel in Paro

Day 2: Paro to Thimphu - City Tour

Paro to Thimphu | 2,350m | 1.5 hrs | 55 km

After breakfast, drive from Paro to Thimphu (approximately 1.5 hours), stopping en route at **Tamchog Lhakhang**, the 15th-century temple of the famed iron-bridge builder Thangtong Gyalpo. On arrival, visit **Buddha Dordenma**, the tallest Buddha statue in the world at 51 meters. Then visit the **Takin Preserve Center** to see Bhutan's national animal, followed by the **Nunnery** and the **School of 13 Arts and Crafts (Zorig Chusum)**, famous for traditional carving and freehand art. Here you will find students whose aptitude is more artistic than academic. Lunch will be served at a tourist restaurant in the city center.

After lunch, visit the **authentic Bhutanese Craft Market**. In the evening, stroll around Thimphu City for shopping. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

Meals: B/L/D | Hotel in Thimphu

Day 3: Thimphu to Punakha via Dochula Pass

Thimphu to Punakha | 1,200m | 3 hrs | 77 km

After breakfast, drive to Punakha Valley via **Dochula Pass (3,140m)**. We stop at the pass to admire the 108 memorial chortens, and if the weather is clear, you will enjoy spectacular views of the Himalayan

ranges.

Upon reaching Punakha Valley, visit **Chimi Lhakhang**, also known as the Temple of Fertility, built by Lama Drukpa Kuenley (the Divine Madman) in the 15th century. Then visit **Punakha Dzong**, built in 1637 by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, beautifully situated at the confluence of the Pho Chu (Male River) and Mo Chu (Female River). The Dzong was named **Druk Pungthang Dechen Phodrang**, meaning Palace of Great Happiness. Punakha remains the winter residence of the **Chief Abbot (Je Khenpo)**. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

Meals: B/L/D | Hotel in Punakha

Day 4: Punakha to Phobjikha Valley

Punakha to Phobjikha | 2,900m | 3 hrs | 78 km

After breakfast, drive to **Phobjikha Valley** (approximately 2 hours 30 minutes) via **Wangduephodrang**. Along the way, stop to photograph the reconstruction of **Wangduephodrang Dzong**, which was destroyed by fire in 2012.

In Phobjikha, visit **Gangtey Gompa**, founded in 1613 by Gyaltse Pema Thinley, the grandson and mind reincarnation of Pema Lingpa. If interested, enjoy a beautiful 45-minute hike from Gangtey Gompa to the valley floor. Then visit the **Black-Necked Crane Center**, where you can observe these rare migratory birds through telescopes. Black-necked cranes winter in Bhutan and return to the Tibetan Plateau in summer. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

Meals: B/L/D | Hotel in Phobjikha

Day 5: Phobjikha to Trongsa

Phobjikha to Trongsa | 2,180m | 4 hrs | 128 km

After breakfast, drive to Trongsa. Visit **Trongsa Museum (Ta Dzong)**, a former watchtower converted into a museum in 2008. Then visit **Trongsa Dzong**, built in 1643 by Chogyel Minjur Tempa. The official name is **Chhoekhor Raptentse Dzong**, also known as **Choetse Dzong**. Trongsa Dzong is the ancestral home of Bhutan's royal family. The first two hereditary kings ruled from here, and tradition dictates that the crown prince serve as Trongsa Penlop before ascending to the throne. The current king became Trongsa Penlop in 2004. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

Meals: B/L/D | Hotel in Trongsa

Day 6: Trongsa to Bumthang

Trongsa to Bumthang | 2,580m | 2.5 hrs | 68 km

After breakfast, drive to Bumthang. Visit **Jakar Dzong** (Castle of White Bird). Legend has it that when lamas assembled in 1549 to select a monastery site, a large white bird rose and settled on a hill spur. The

current structure was built in 1667 with a circumference of over 1,500 meters.

Visit **Jambay Lhakhang**, believed to have been built in 659 AD by Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo. Continue to **Kurjey Lhakhang**, named after the body print of Guru Rinpoche (**Kur** means body, **Jey** means print).

After lunch, visit **Tamshing Lhakhang**, established in 1501 by the great saint Pema Lingpa. Also known as **Tamshing Lhendup Chholing** (Temple of Good Message), it is one of the most important Nyingma monasteries in the kingdom. Finally, visit the **Burning Lake (Mebar Tsho)**. Stroll around the small town of Bumthang in the evening. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

Meals: B/L/D | Hotel in Bumthang

Day 7: Bumthang to Mongar via Thrumshingla Pass

Bumthang to Mongar | 1,100m | 7 hrs | 200 km

After breakfast, drive to Mongar (193 km, approximately 9 hours). Stop at **Ura Valley** to enjoy the scenic views. Then continue via **Thrumshingla Pass (3,750m)**, the gateway to eastern Bhutan.

Lunch will be served en route at **Sengor**, 22 km from Thrumshingla Pass. After lunch, continue driving to Mongar. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

Meals: B/L/D | Hotel in Mongar

Day 8: Day Trip to Lhuentse

Mongar to Lhuentse to Mongar | 1,400m | 3 hrs | 77 km

After breakfast, embark on an excursion to Lhuentse (63 km). Visit **Lhuentse Dzong**, dramatically perched above the Kuri Chhu river.

On the way back, visit **Khoma Village**, famous throughout Bhutan for its production of **Kishuthara** textiles. The origin of Kishuthara weaving traces back to a wealthy Tibetan merchant named Tshongpoen Norbu Zangpo, who gifted an intricately patterned cloth to a woman from Khoma named Yoesel Dema. She began weaving similar patterns using nettle fiber, naming the textile Kishuthara (Ki-shu for nettle fiber, Tha-ra for weave). Today, this textile remains the primary source of income for Khoma villagers.

Enjoy lunch at a farmhouse in Khoma Village. On the drive back to Mongar, visit the tallest statue of **Guru Rinpoche** at Takila Village. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

Meals: B/L/D | Hotel in Mongar

Day 9: Mongar to Trashigang via Drametse

Mongar to Trashigang | 1,150m | 3 hrs | 91 km

After breakfast, drive to Trashigang. Detour 18 km from the main road to visit **Drametse Monastery**, the biggest and most important Nyingma monastery in eastern Bhutan. About 60 gomchen (lay or married Nyingma monks) reside here. The monastery was founded in 1511 by Ani Chhoeten Zangmo, the great-granddaughter of Pema Lingpa, and her husband Yeshey Gyalpo, in a place she named Drametse, meaning **The Peak Where There is No Enemy**.

Continue to Trashigang. Lunch will be served at the hotel. After lunch, relax briefly before visiting **Trashigang Dzong**. Enjoy an evening stroll around the small town of Trashigang. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

Meals: B/L/D | Hotel in Trashigang

Day 10: Day Trip to Trashiyangtse

Trashigang to Trashiyangtse to Trashigang | 1,850m | 2 hrs | 55 km

After breakfast, embark on an excursion to Trashiyangtse (53 km, 2.5 hours). Visit **Gom Kora**, an extraordinarily picturesque temple. The correct name is Gomphu Kora. **Gomphu** denotes a sacred meditation site of Guru Rinpoche, and **Kora** means circumambulation. Guru Rinpoche meditated here and left a body impression on a rock, similar to Kurjey Lhakhang in Bumthang.

Continue to Trashiyangtse (28 km further) and visit **Chorten Kora**, built in 1740 by Lama Ngawang Loday in memory of his late uncle. The lama traveled to Nepal and brought back a model of Boudhanath Temple carved in a radish, copying the design so locals could visit here instead of making the arduous trip to Nepal.

Visit the **New Trashiyangtse Dzong** and the **School of 13 Arts and Crafts (Zorig Chusum)**. Enjoy lunch near Chorten Kora or at a local restaurant. If time permits, visit the **Old Trashiyangtse Dzong** across the river. Drive back to Trashigang. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

Meals: B/L/D | Hotel in Trashigang

Day 11: Trashigang to Bumthang

Trashigang to Bumthang | 2,580m | 9 hrs | 291 km

Early morning after breakfast, drive to Bumthang. Today is a long drive of 285 km, approximately 10 hours. Lunch will be served en route. Dinner and overnight at the hotel in Bumthang.

Meals: B/L/D | Hotel in Bumthang

Day 12: Bumthang to Thimphu

Bumthang to Thimphu | 2,320m | 8 hrs | 270 km

After breakfast, drive directly to Thimphu. Today's journey covers 267 km and takes approximately 8-9 hours. Lunch will be served en route. Dinner and overnight at the hotel in Thimphu.

Meals: B/L/D | Hotel in Thimphu

Day 13: Thimphu to Paro & Tiger's Nest Hike

Thimphu to Paro | 3,120m | 5-6 hrs hike | 55 km + hike

After an early breakfast, drive from Thimphu back to Paro (approximately 1.5 hours). Then embark on an excursion to **Tiger's Nest Monastery (Taktsang)**. The total distance is **7.4 km (4.5 miles)** round trip and takes a **minimum of 5 hours**. The elevation at the starting point is **2,600m**, and the monastery sits at **3,100m** above sea level.

A 25-minute drive from the main town of Paro takes you to Satsam Chorten, where the trail begins. The path climbs through beautiful pine forests, with many trees festooned with Spanish moss and occasional groves of fluttering prayer flags. We stop for rest and refreshments at Taktsang Cafeteria, then continue until we see Tiger's Nest Monastery clearly within reach. The history dates back to the 8th century when Guru Rinpoche, a tantric master, flew to this place on the back of a flying tigress and meditated in a cave nearby. The temple was built in the 17th century by Penlop Gyaltse Tenzin Rabgye. This incredible monastery clings to the edge of a sheer cliff that plunges 600 meters into the valley below.

After lunch, visit **Kyichu Lhakhang**, one of Bhutan's oldest Buddhist temples, built in 659 AD by Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo. In the evening, celebrate the journey with a farewell dinner in Paro. Overnight at the hotel.

Meals: B/L/D | Hotel in Paro

Day 14: Departure

Thimphu to Paro Airport | 2,280m | 2 hrs | 65 km

Early morning, drive to Paro International Airport for your departure. Bid farewell to the Land of the Thunder Dragon. Tashi Delek!

Meals: B

What's Included

Included

+ Accommodation in 3* Hotels (1 Single room just for you).
+ All Three Meals (Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner). Lunch will be served in a local Tourist Restaurant.
+ Daily Tariff.
+ Visa Fee.
+ Royalty and Government Taxes.
+ SDF (Sustainable Development Fee) of USD 100 per night per person, which directly goes towards free education, Free Healthcare and infrastructure development.
+ Transportation from receive till drop.
+ Museum and Monument fee.
+ Bottle Water in Car.
+ Sightseeing.
+ English Speaking Guide.
+ Driver.

Not Included

- Air Fare.
- Insurance Premiums.
- Payment for service provided on a personal basis.
- Cost for any services not mentioned in the "Inclusive Head"
- Cost incurred due to mishaps, strikes, political unrest, sudden death etc.
- Personal expenses in items such as laundry, soft or hard drinks, camera charges, bottle water in restaurants or in hotels, Portage, bellboy charges.
- Tips to guide and driver.

Ready to Book?

Contact our Bhutan travel experts to customize this itinerary.

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