

# Sacred Spaces Bhutan

A Cultural and Walking Journey

PATHS TO ONE WORLD

NOV 4 TO 14, 2024





## Trip Highlights

On this enchanting cultural and walking odyssey to Bhutan, travelers will be woven into the tapestry of Western Bhutan's cultural splendor. Amidst the vibrant hues of the **Black-necked Crane Festival**, an annual cultural gathering celebrating the arrival of this endangered and majestic bird, which becomes an inseparable part of their daily lives during the winter months. Embark on a historical journey as you tread upon the time-honored **Trans Bhutan Trail**.

This centuries-old route has been instrumental for pilgrims, messengers, armies, and traders. During your exploration, you'll traverse two sections of this historic trail. The journey concludes as participants find themselves immersed in a spiritual odyssey to **Taktsang Monastery**, affectionately known as "**The Tiger's Nest**" – a celestial sanctuary where the ethereal whispers resonate with the soulful mystique of Bhutan's timeless beauty.

## Tigers Nest

**TAKTSANG Monastery Tiger's Nest - 10,200FT.** Bhutan's most iconic landmark and religious site. The name Taktsang translates to "The Tiger's Nest". This monastery is one of the most holy sites in the Kingdom and clings impossibly to a sheer cliff face about 3,000 feet above the Paro Valley. It was first built in 1692 at a cave where Guru Rimpoche meditated in the 7th century A.D. Legend states that Guru Rimpoche flew to the site atop the back of a tigress and meditated in the cave for 3 years, 3 months, 3 days to subdue evil demons residing within it. No trip to Bhutan would be complete without a visit to this remarkable heritage site.

## Punakha

**PUNAKHA (4,265 FT) The Ethereal Ancient Capital:** Punakha has been inextricably linked with momentous occasions in Bhutanese history. On October 13, 2011, the district of Punakha was home to the auspicious and historical Royal wedding. Punakha served as the capital of the country from 1637 to 1907 and the first national assembly was hosted here in 1953. The Punakha Dzong (Fort) is the second oldest and second largest in Bhutan and one of the most majestic structures in the country.

## Black-necked Crane Festival

**Black-necked Crane Festival, an annual cultural gathering celebrating the arrival of this endangered and majestic bird, which becomes an inseparable part of their daily lives during the winter months.**

## Trans Bhutan Trail

**Embark on a historical journey as you tread upon the time-honored Trans Bhutan Trail. This centuries-old route has been instrumental for pilgrims, messengers, armies, and traders. During your exploration, you'll traverse two sections of this historic trail.**

## Thimphu

**THIMPHU (7,800 FT)** The Kingdom's capital city is home to approximately 100,000, including the Royal family. This bustling little city is the main center of commerce, religion, and government in the country. One of the most curious features of Thimphu is that it is the only capital city in the world that does not use traffic lights. Instead, a few major intersections have policemen standing in elaborately decorated booths (small pavilions), directing traffic with exaggerated hand motions. The juxtaposition of ancient tradition and modernity makes Thimphu the ideal location for visitors to immerse themselves in the lifestyle of contemporary Bhutanese.

## Gangtey

**GANGTEY - The Phobjikha Valley (9,845FT):** Phobjikha is a wide alpine wetland valley that is considered the largest and the most significant wetland in the country. It is often cited for the harmonious co-existence of its inhabitants with nature and the valley also holds great cultural significance. The valley is the most significant wintering ground of the rare and endangered Black-necked cranes in Bhutan. Every year, over 300 of the estimated 500 cranes that migrate to Bhutan, spend their winter months (late October to mid February) in this valley.

## Haa Valley

**HAA Valley (8,894 FT:** Haa is the smallest Dzongkha (district) in the country. This tiny region is one of the most beautiful and isolated areas in the kingdom, adorned with pristine alpine forests and tranquil mountain peaks. Haa is the ancestral home of the Queen Grandmother and the illustrious Dorji family. This valley remains one of the least visited areas in the country and retains the air of an unspoiled, primeval forest. The wooded hills of Haa provide an ideal location for hiking.







# TRIP OVERVIEW

**COST:** US\$5,820 PER PERSON

**GROUP SIZE:** 6 - 12

## PAYMENT TERMS

- \$1000 ON BOOKING
- \$4,820 DUE SEPT 03

## INCLUDED

- US TOUR LEADER
- DESTINATION MANAGEMENT SERVICES.
- BHUTAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FEE.
- ALL MONUMENT FEES INCLUDED.
- BHUTAN VISA SERVICES.
- ACCOMMODATIONS: CAREFULLY CURATED OPTIONS OF 3/4 STAR HOTELS.\*
- MEALS: ALL MEALS ON TOUR. CHOICE OF GOOD LOCAL DINING ESTABLISHMENTS.
- A HIGHLY EXPERIENCED AND LICENSED ENGLISH-SPEAKING GUIDE.
- TRANSPORT AND TRANSFERS IN BHUTAN.
- PURIFIED DRINKING WATER FOR THE DURATION OF THE JOURNEY.

## NOT INCLUDED

- FLIGHTS (ORGANIZED ON REQUEST).
- APPROX. BANGKOK/PARO RT US\$950
- TRANSFERS OUTSIDE BHUTAN.
- MEALS AT LUXURY HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS.
- LAUNDRY, SPA TREATMENTS, AND OTHER MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES.
- BEVERAGES: ALCOHOLIC AND NON-ALCOHOLIC.
- SINGLE ROOM: \$550 ADDITIONAL
- GRATUITY TO GUIDE AND DRIVER.
- TRAVEL INSURANCE.

## CANCELLATION

- 10 % DEPOSIT NON REFUNDABLE
- NO REFUND 60 DAYS TO ARRIVAL

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## NOV 04: ARRIVE PARO - DRIVE TO HAA

- ARRIVE PARO, BHUTAN
- KILA NUNNERY
- CHELELA PASS - 13,083FT
- EXPLORE HAA TOWN

## NOV 05: EXPLORE HAA

- LECHUNA VILLAGE
- LHAKHANG KARPO (WHITE TEMPLE)
- HIKE TO JAMTEY MOANSTERY

## NOV 06: HAA TO PARO - TRANSBHUTAN TRAIL

- TRANS BHUTAN TRAIL TO PARO - 8.9 MILES
- DRIVE TO THIMPHU

## NOV 07: EXPLORE THIMPHU

- HIKE TO CHERI MONASTERY
- FOLK HERITAGE CENTRE
- ROYAL TEXTILE MUSEUM
- BUDDHA DORDENMA

## NOV 08: TRANS BHUTAN TRAIL TO PUNAKHA

- DOCHULA PASS - 10,00 FT
- 108 DRUK WANGYEL CHORTENS
- TRANS BHUTAN TRAIL TO PUNAKHA - 5.7 MILES
- CHIMI LHAKHANG - DEVINE MADMAN TEMPLE

## NOV 09: EXPLORE PUNAKHA

- KHAMSUM YULLEY MONASTERY HIKE
- PUNAKHA DZONG
- MENGAGANG SUSPENSION BRIDGE

## NOV 10: PUNAKHA TO GANGTEY

- HIKE GANGTEY TRAIL
- GANTEY MOANSTERY
- EXPLORE GANGTEY TOWN.

## NOV 11: PUNAKHA TO GANGTEY

- BLACK NECKED CRANCE FESTIVAL
- EXPLORE GANGTEY TOWN.

## NOV 12: GANGTEY TO PARO

- EXPLORE PARO SIGHTS

## NOV 13: HIKE TO TAKTSANG MONASTERY

- HIKE TO TAKTSANG MONASTERY
- EXPLORE PARO TOWN

## NOV 14: DEPART BHUTAN.

**Note on Itinerary:** The day-to-day plan provides a flexible structure, recognizing that not all listed sites may be visited due to time and other constraints. Opportunities for additional activities may arise. Upon arrival in Bhutan, we can adjust plans based on your preferences. Some sites may be closed on public holidays, but we'll try to reschedule. Once finalized, the only unchangeable aspect is the overnight stay due to advance hotel payment. Times/distances in the itinerary are approximate. \*Hotels will be a mix of 3/4 Star.



