A Week in Western Bhutan

Explore Bhutan's Western World

8 DAYS / 7 NIGHTS

This trip offers a relaxed holiday covering western Bhutan. Western Bhutan is known for its stunning beautiful scenery with rice paddy and apple orchards with rivers flowing down the mountain valleys. Most of the houses are painted with traditional designs and offers the visitor the opportunity to discover arts, architecture and the way of day to day activities of the Bhutanese. The trip covers spectacular Dzongs (fortresses) and Monasteries in Paro, Thimphu and Punakha.

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE LOCATION	Paro International Airport, Paro, Bhutan
Please arrive at least 2 hours before the flight	

PACKAGE INCLUDES	Bhutan Tourist VISA fee
	3 Star Hotels & Resort
	All Meals [B,L,D]
	Tax & Tariff
	All Transportation
	Professional guide
	All Entrance Fees

NOT INCLUDED	Air Fares
	Insurance Premiums
	Cost incurred due to weather, strikes etc.
	Tips & Bellboy charges

DAY 1

Arrive Paro - Thimphu

Arriving at Paro International airport and upon clearing immigration and customs, you will meet with your guide and driver. Drive about 1 hour 30 minutes to Thimphu (2,286m), the capital of Bhutan.

After lunch at the hotel, visit the Memorial Chorten, built in 1974 in loving memory of the Third King, His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, where a multi-storied Stupa and numerous paintings are exhibited providing an insight into Buddhist philosophy.

Visit Changangkha Lhakhang, an ancient temple built in the thirteen century by Lam Phajo Dugom Zhigpo, situated on a ridge above the city. Visit the Takin Preserve, where you can see the national animal of Bhutan (Takin).

In the evening, you will visit Tashichho Dzong (the fortress of the glorious religion). Tashichho Dzong houses His Majesty's Secretariat and the Central Monk Body. You can see the National Assembly building across the river.

DAY 2

Thimphu Tour

Visit the National Library, established in the 1960s, which holds a vast collection of ancient Buddhist manuscripts and a small collection of books.

Institute of Zorig Chusum (commonly known as the Painting School) where you can see young children learning and practicing the ancient arts and crafts of Bhutan. Zorig Chusum literally means the "thirteen traditional arts and crafts".

Visit the Royal Textile Academy, which provides an excellent introduction about the techniques, style of various textiles woven in the country along with exhibitions of the national dress 'gho' for men and 'kira' for women.

If your visit falls from Friday till Sunday, then visit the weekend vegetable market held at the Centenary Farmers Market. The market provides an opportunity to mingle with the local people and sample local organic produce. Local arts and crafts are also available.

Thimphu - Punakha Sightseeing

The first stop after leaving Thimphu is Dochula pass at 10,500 ft. (23km from Thimphu – 45 minutes drive), where you can see one of Bhutan's most enchanting views. If weather permits, from this pass, the breathtaking peaks of Bhutan's northern border can be viewed.

DAY 3

At Dochula, you will also see a unique cluster of 108 Namgyel Khangzang Chortens that spiral up to the main Chorten known as the "Druk Wangyal Khangzang Chortens". Her Majesty The Queen Mother, Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck, dedicated these chortens as a tribute and monument to the selfless service and visionary leadership of our Fourth King, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck. The Chortens are also a celebration of the stability and progress that His Majesty the King brought to the nation. These chortens are a new landmark for travelers as they cross Dochula, the first mountain pass into the interior of the country.
Reaching the village of Sopsokha, you can walk about 20 minutes across the rice fields up to the monastery, Chimi Lhakhang. It was built by Lama Drukpa Kuenley (also known as the Divine Madman by the West). It is believed that childless women who visit the monastery will conceive after receiving the 'wang' (blessing).

Blessed with a temperate climate and drained by the Phochu and Mochu rivers, is the fertile valley of Punakha. The District has hosted several historical events such as serving as the Capital of Bhutan since 1651 till 1956. The First King, Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck was enthroned in 1907 and the first session of the National Assembly was held in 1955. It is still the winter residence of His Holiness the Je Khenpo (Chief Abbot of Bhutan) and Zhung Dratshang (the Central Monk Body).

DAY 4

Punakha Sightseeing

Drive towards Nezergang and hike about 1hour 30 minutes to Khamsum Yueley Namgyel Chorten, built by The Queen Mother, Her Majesty Ashi Tshering Yangdon Wangchuck, in 1999 for the protection of the country and universal peace in the world.

Visit Punakha Dzong located strategically at the junction of the Pho Chu and Mo Chu rivers, built in 1637 by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel. The Dzong served as the religious and administrative center of Bhutan until the mid-1950s. It was here that the dual system of government was introduced in the early 17th century and where the Bhutanese enthroned the First King.

DAY 5

Punakha to Paro

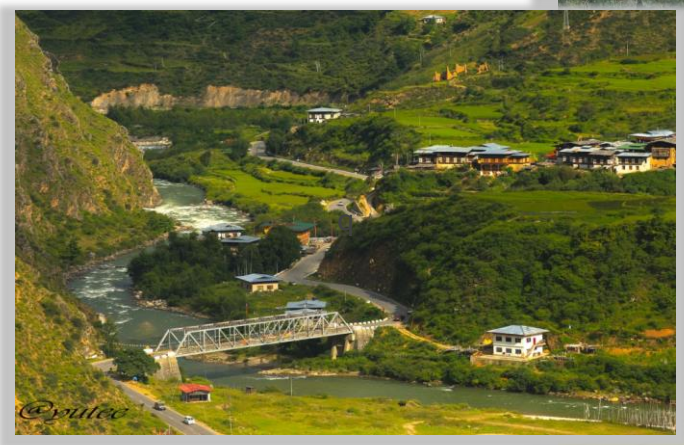
In Paro, visit Kyichu Lhakhang. It is said to have been built by King Songtsen Gampo of Tibet. According to legend, it is believed that the lhakhang holds down the left foot of an ogress, so large that it covers Bhutan and most of eastern Tibet. It is one of the 108 temples built by the Tibetan King in one day throughout the region of the Himalayas; according to legend. The temple also houses a museum dedicated to late Dilgo Khyentse Rimpoche and hosts a range of artefacts belonging to the Rimpoche.

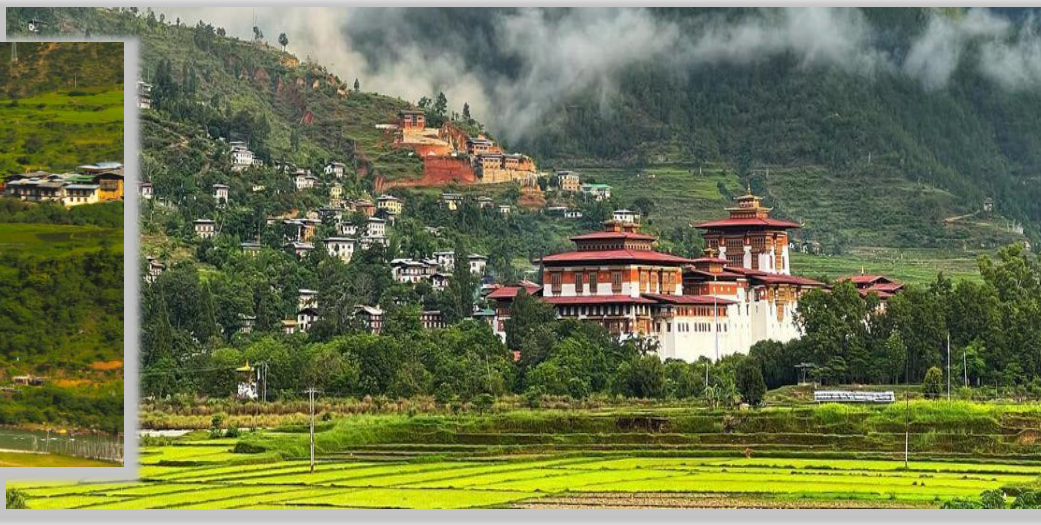
DAY 6

Paro Tour

Visit Rinpung Dzong (the fortress on a heap of jewels). The Dzong was built by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel in 1646.

Drive to the end of the valley and visit the ruins of Drugyel Dzong. It was built by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel in 1649 to commemorate the victory over the Tibetan invaders. The ruined fortress helped to defend Bhutan from numerous invasions in the 17th century.





DAY 7

Paro Taktshang Excursion

Day hike to Taktsang Monastery. Taktsang meaning “Tiger’s Nest”, is built around a cave in which Guru Rimpoche (also known as Guru Padmasambhava) meditated. The monastery clings seemingly impossible to a cliff at 914m above the valley floor. For the local people it is a place of pilgrimage, but for a tourist, a hike up to the viewpoint opposite the monastery is exhausting, thrilling and mystical. Legend has it that Guru Rimpoche is said to have flown to the site of the monastery on the back of a tigress and meditated there.

DAY 8

Departure

Transfer and departure from Paro International Airport.

Tashi Delek!

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