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HIGHLIGHTS

Bhutan, a Buddhist kingdom on the Himalayas' eastern edge, is known for its monasteries, fortresses (or dzongs) and dramatic landscapes that range from subtropical plains to steep mountains and valleys. In the High Himalayas, peaks such as Jomolhari are popular trekking destinations. Paro Taktsang monastery (also known as Tiger's Nest) clings to cliffs above the forested Paro Valley.

DAY

01

Pick-up from Paro airport & transfer to Thimphu hotel. Overnight stay at Thimphu.

Fly with the wings of the Dragon to spectacular breath taking bird eye view of Paro International airport. Upon arrival in Paro, you will be greeted by the Driver. Driving across the Paachu river and Thimchu river will bring you closer to the nature. While you are fully engaged and lost with beauty of nature amongst the massive mountains, you arrive & check at hotel, Thimphu (altitude 2400m). Overnight stay at Hotel Thimphu.

Thimphusightseeings:

Tashichhoedzong (Outside) - Meaning: Fortress of the glorious religion. It was built in 1641 and rebuilt into present structure by late king Jigme DorjiWangchuk (Father of Modern Bhutan) in the year 1962-1969. It houses the secretariat building, the throne room and the office of the king, and the central monk body.

Memorial Chorten - It was built in 1974 in the memory of third king late Jigme DorjiWangchuk, who is regarded as the father of modern Bhutan. The temple inside gives good examples of trantric Buddhist and its philosophy.

DAY

02

Sightseeing Thimphu. Overnight stay at Thimphu.

Visit the following places:

Semtokha Dzong - Semtokha is 6 km from Thimphu; it is on a hill stand and was built in 1629 by Zhabdrung. It is the oldest fortress in the kingdom built by Zhabdrung. It now houses the cultural and Buddhist studies.

The Institute for ZorigChusum - It is also called as National Institute For *ZorigChusum*. The school teaches the paintings and also making of sculpture and statues. It offers an eight-year course, which provides instructions in many of Bhutan's traditional arts to boys and girls from throughout the country whose aptitude is more of artistic than academic

National Library – the National Library was established in 1967 to preserve many ancient Dzongkha and Tibetan texts. Besides the lot of collection of the religious texts, we do have the good collection of English –language books, modern academic texts and science.

The Folk Heritage Museum – This Folk Heritage Museum is a showcase the 19 century farm house and the living style of the



Morning transfer from Thimphu to Punakha/Wangdue (via Dochula Pass).

Late morning drive (70 kms / 2.30 hrs) to Wangduephodrang, with a stop en route for tea at Dochu La Pass (3,100 meters), where on a clear day you can get spectacular views of the Himalayas. In Wangdue, stop at Mehsina village & visit Chime Lhakhang - The Temple of Fertility built in 15th century by Lama Drukpa Kinley. (This monk is popularly known as the Devine madman for his philosophy, "Salvation through sex"). Afternoon drive to Punakha, the former capital of Bhutan, and visit Punakha Dzong, which is noteworthy both for being one of the most beautiful dzongs in Bhutan and also for having been built by the first Shabdrung in 1637. Overnight in Wangdue.

DAY

04

Morning transfer to Paro. Overnight stay at Paro.

Morning transfer (160 kms / 4 hrs) to Paro. After lunch, rest or stroll about in Paro town. .

This beautiful Paro valley is about 2250m above the sea level. Paro is believed to be one of the first valleys to have received the influences of the Buddhism. The beautiful valley with its rich terraced farmland is home to some of Bhutan's oldest temples & monasteries. The country's only airport is in Paro. The valley also offers the calm of the country side, the beautiful landscapes, scenic and scattered villages and other historic buildings. Overnight in Paro.

DAY

05

Sightseeing Paro. Overnight stay at Paro.

Drugyel Dzong - Situated in the north end of the Paro valley built in 1649 to commemorate the victory over Tibetan invasion. It was gutted by fire in 1951, & now it is in ruined fort, but it is kept as a monument for the visitors from outside as historically this *dzong* is very important. On a clear day, the view of Mt. *Jomolhari* can be seen.

Rinpung Dzong - Meaning: fortress of the heap of jewels. It was built during the time of Zhabdrung in 1646. It houses both administrative and monastic bodies. It is also a venue of the Paro festival (*Tsechu*), held once in a year during spring time.

Taa Dzong - Meaning: watchtower. It served as a watchtower during the war to guard the *dzong* from the external invasion. Even if the *dzong* is capture by the enemy, there is always hope for the Bhutanese to regain it, if the watchtower is in their hand. It is converted into a national museum in 1968. It houses a fine collection of art, relics, religious *thangkas*, paintings, animals, armory and Bhutan's exquisite postage stamps.

Taktsang Monastry - *Taktshang* is the most famous of Bhutan's monasteries, perched on the side of a cliff 900m above the floor of Paro valley where the only sounds are the murmurs of the wind and the chanting of monks. The name means 'Tiger's nest", it was named because Guru Rinpoche is said to have flown to the site of the monastery on the back of a tigress. He then mediated in a cave here for three months. Later many Buddhist masters have mediated here. It is one of the very important pilgrimage sites even for the Bhutanese people.

•Kyichu Lhakhang - It is one of the two most sacred and the oldest temples in Bhutan, built in 7th century by Tibetan king SongtsenGampo (the 33rd Tibetan king, who is also the manifestation of avoloketeshivara, commonly known to Bhutanese as Chenrize). The legend tells that a giant demon was terrorizing the whole of Himalayan region, preventing the spread of Buddhism, so to subdue it the king built 108 temples in one day all over the Himalayan region out of which 2 are in Bhutan (Kichu Lhakhang in Paro & Jambay Lhakhang in Bumthang). Kyichu Lhakhang was built on her left foot. The temple of Jokhangin Lhasa was built over the very heart of the demoness.

DAY 06

Drop to Paro International airport. Depart Bhutan. Tashi Delek!

Depart from the hotel & drive to Paro International Airport. Drop to Paro international airport. Warm wishes from Kingdom of Himalayas with happy ending see off. Depart from Paro International Airport. Tashi Delek!

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- Transfer all in private basis in Wagon R (4 seater)

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- Anything not included in the Inclusions

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