

Bhutan Explorer: A Journey through the Thunder Dragon Kingdom

06 Days / 05 Nights

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Embark on a profound six-day journey into the heart of the Last Shangri-La. This carefully curated adventure, presented by Karmaia Adventures, is designed to immerse you in the vibrant culture, sacred spirituality, and breathtaking landscapes of Bhutan. From the bustling capital of Thimphu to the serene, fertile valleys of Punakha and the iconic cliffs of Paro, you will discover a kingdom where happiness is measured and tradition is cherished. We will guide you through ancient fortresses, across high mountain passes adorned with prayer flags, and on a pilgrimage to the legendary Tiger's Nest, ensuring an experience that is as enriching as it is unforgettable.

TRIP OVERVIEW

Duration: 06 Days / 05 Nights

Locations: Thimphu, Punakha & Paro

Difficulty: Moderate (with challenging Tiger's Nest hike)

Max Elevation: Dochula Pass (3,100 m / 10,171 ft)

Best Season: Spring (March–May) and Autumn (September–November)

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Seek Blessings at the breathtaking Tiger's Nest Monastery (Paro Taktsang), Bhutan's most iconic spiritual site.
- Witness Bhutanese Artistry at the School of Arts and Crafts and the traditional Handmade Paper Mill in Thimphu.

- Cross the Dochula Pass (3,100m), walking among 108 stupas with panoramic Himalayan views.
- Explore Magnificent Dzongs, including the majestic Punakha Dzong and the imposing Tashichho Dzong in Thimphu.
- Connect with Local Life at the vibrant Thimphu Farmers Market and in the charming old streets of Paro Town.
- Visit Sacred Temples like the fertility-associated Chimi Lhakhang and the ancient Kyichu Lhakhang.

OUTLINE ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive in Paro and transfer to Thimphu; visit Memorial Chorten, Buddha Dordenma, and Tashichho Dzong.

Day 2: Thimphu sightseeing, including Farmers Market, Paper Mill, School of Arts, National Library, and the Nunnery.

Day 3: Drive from Thimphu to Punakha via Dochula Pass; explore the 108 Stupas, Chimi Lhakhang, and Punakha Dzong.

Day 4: Travel from Punakha to Paro; enjoy a scenic drive and visit the National Museum, Paro Dzong, and experience traditional archery.

Day 5: Paro sightseeing with a hike to Tiger's Nest Monastery, visit Kyichu Lhakhang, followed by a farewell dinner.

Day 6: Departure; transfer to Paro Airport.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- **Physical Challenge:** Moderate overall. The *Tiger's Nest hike* is the main challenge: a steep 2-3 hour climb. Good fitness is required. Other days involve light walking.
- **Accommodation:** Comfortable 3-star hotels with Bhutanese character, private bathrooms, and reliable amenities.
- **Food:** Full-board meals. Flavorful Bhutanese cuisine (like Ema Datshi) is featured, with Indian/continental options available.

- **Weather:** Variable. Layering is key. Spring/Autumn are ideal: clear skies, mild days (10-20°C). Summer brings rain; winter has sunny days but cold nights. Prepare for sudden changes on hikes.

Detailed Itinerary

Day 01: Arrival in the Himalayas – Welcome to Thimphu

Your journey begins with a spectacular flight into Paro, offering views of the world's highest peaks. Upon arrival, your Karmaia Adventures guide will welcome you and escort you on a scenic 1.5-hour drive to the capital, Thimphu. After settling in, we begin our cultural immersion with a visit to the Memorial Chorten, a revered stupa where locals congregate for prayer. We then proceed to the Changangkha Lhakhang, an ancient temple perched like a fortress overlooking the valley. Later, witness the grandeur of the giant Buddha Dordenma statue. As evening approaches, we visit the magnificent Tashichho Dzong, the seat of Bhutan's government, beautifully illuminated in the late light. The day concludes with a stroll through the vibrant streets of Thimphu.

Overnight: Thimphu | Altitude: 2,300m

Day 02: The Heart of Culture – Thimphu Immersion

Today is dedicated to exploring the soul of the capital. We start at the lively Weekend Farmers Market, a colorful exchange of local produce and goods. Dive into Bhutan's living heritage with visits to the Traditional Handmade Paper Mill and the School of Arts and Crafts, where the 13 traditional arts are preserved. We'll step back in time at the Folk Heritage Museum and explore the sacred texts at the National Library.

The day offers a profound spiritual connection as we visit the Dechenphodrang Monastic School to observe young monks at studies, followed by a visit to the Zilukha Nunnery to interact with the nuns. Enjoy a final evening at leisure in the capital.

Overnight: Thimphu

Day 03: Over the High Pass – From Thimphu to Punakha

After breakfast, we journey eastwards, ascending to the Dochula Pass (3,100m). On a clear day, you are rewarded with a breathtaking 180-degree panorama of the Himalayan peaks. We pause here to walk among the cluster of 108 Druk Wangyel Stupas. Descending into a warmer, subtropical zone, we stop for a gentle hike through rice fields and a traditional village to the famous Chimi Lhakhang, the Temple of Fertility, founded by the "Divine Madman." After lunch, we explore the magnificent Punakha Dzong, an architectural masterpiece situated at the confluence of two rivers. Optionally, test your stamina with a hike to the serene Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten for stunning valley views.

Overnight: Punakha

Day 04: Valleys and Fortresses – Return to Paro

We retrace our route back to the Paro valley today. Upon arrival, our exploration begins at the National Museum of Bhutan, housed in an ancient watchtower and offering a deep dive into the nation's history and culture. A short walk leads us to the impressive Rinpung Dzong (Paro Dzong), followed by a crossing of its traditional wooden bridge. The afternoon is for immersing yourself in the charm of Old Paro Town, where you can browse local handicraft shops and perhaps witness a thrilling match of traditional archery, Bhutan's national sport.

Overnight: Paro | Altitude: 2,200m

Day 05: The Crown Jewel – Hike to Tiger's Nest

Today is dedicated to one of Bhutan's most sacred and iconic sites: the Tiger's Nest Monastery (Paro Taktsang). We begin early with a drive to the trailhead. The 2-3 hour hike uphill is a rewarding pilgrimage through pine forests, with stunning views of the monastery clinging to a sheer cliff face. The spiritual energy of this site, where Guru Rinpoche is said to have meditated, is a profound experience. After exploring the monastery, we descend.

If energy and time permit, we will visit the Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the oldest temples in Bhutan. In the evening, we gather for a special farewell dinner to celebrate the journey's end.

Overnight: Paro

Day 06: Farewell and Departure

Enjoy a final breakfast in the serene Bhutanese morning. Your Karmaia Adventures guide will accompany you to Paro International Airport, assisting with your departure formalities and bidding you a heartfelt farewell as you board your flight, carrying with you the timeless memories of the Dragon Kingdom.

