

Aman Kora Journey

9 Days 8 Nights at Amankora Thimphu, Paro, Punakha, Gangtey, Bumthang

Day 1 - Arrive Paro, transfer to Aman Thimphu (1 hr drive)

In clear weather, Druk Air's flight to Bhutan provides a wonderful view of the Himalayan scenery. Whether flying along the Himalayan range from Katmandu or over the foothills from Kolkata, it is a breathtaking journey, culminating in an exciting descent past forested hills into the kingdom. After completion of airport formalities, you will be met by your guide at the airport and transferred to your hotel. The drive from Paro to Thimphu is about 1 hr. Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight at Aman Thimphu.

Day 2 – Thimphu Sightseeing

Thimphu, perhaps the most unusual capital city in the world, is the seat of government. This bustling town is home to Bhutan's royal family, the civil service, and foreign missions with representation in Bhutan. It is also the headquarters for a number of internationally funded development projects.

Your tour of Thimphu includes the following sights:

- ❖ Institute for Zorig Chusum - where students learn the 13 traditional arts and crafts of Bhutan
- ❖ The Folk Heritage Museum - a restored mid 19th century house which gives one insight into the average household & lifestyle in the region during that era
- ❖ The Textile Museum - showcasing some of the ancient fabrics of Bhutan & the history of Bhutanese textiles
- ❖ National Memorial Chorten - a monument built in the heart of Thimphu as a memorial to the Third King and is also dedicated to world peace
- ❖ Special Highlights:
 - Visit to a private weaving center where you will be able to actually see the traditional weaving process and interact with the weavers
 - Attend a Cultural Performance showcasing traditional, regional and modern Bhutanese dances and songs.

Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight at Aman Thimphu.

Day 3 – Thimphu - Punakha (2 hr drive)

After breakfast drive to Punakha, the old capital and the rice bowl of Bhutan. The drive from Thimphu to Punakha takes about 2 hours over the Dochu La pass situated at 10,000 feet. If the weather permits, you can see the Bhutanese Himalayas.

Your tour of Punakha includes the following sights:

- ❖ Punakha Dzong/fortress - strategically located on an isle between the Pho Chhu (male) and Mo Chu (female) rivers originally built in the 17th century. The fortress is also famous for its architectural details and finesse, now serves as the administrative center of Punakha and the winter residence for the Monk body.
- ❖ Chimmi Lhakhang - you will walk through a village and paddy fields to Chimmi Lhakhang the temple of Drukpa Kuenley, the Divine Madman of Bhutan
- ❖ Special Highlights: Visit a traditional farmhouse in Lobesa village on your way to the Chimmi Lhakhang. You will get a better insight into the lives of the Bhutanese villagers

Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight at Aman Punakha.

Day 4 – Punakha – Bumthang (7 hr drive)

After breakfast depart for Bumthang via Trongsa. The drive takes you across Pele-la pass (3,300m/10,830ft) which is traditionally considered the boundary between western and central Bhutan. Further down the road, stop to visit Chendebji Chorten erected in the 18th century by a Tibetan lama to cover the remains of an evil spirit that was subdued at this spot, built in the Nepalese style, with painted eyes at the four cardinal points.

The landscape around Trongsa is spectacular and its impressive dzong, stretched along a ridge above a ravine, first comes into view about an hour before the winding road suddenly leads you into the town.

After lunch proceed to Bumthang, one of the most spectacular valleys in Bhutan and also the holy heartland of Buddhism. The 68 km. journey from Trongsa takes about 3 hours. The road winds steeply up to Yutong-la pass (3,400m/11,155ft), then runs down through dense coniferous forest to enter a wide, open, cultivated valley, known as Chumey valley. From here it is about an hour to Bumthang, a most pleasant run in the soft, late afternoon light. Overnight at Aman Bumthang.

Day 5 – Bumthang Sightseeing

Bumthang is the general name given to a group of four valleys – Chumey, Choekhor, Tang and Ura, with altitudes varying from 2,600 to 4,000m/8,530 to 13,125ft.

Your tour of Bumthang includes the following sights:

- ❖ Kurje Lhakhang - one of the most sacred places in the kingdom as Bhutan's "patron saint", Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava) meditated here.
 - ❖ Jambey Lhakhang - from Kurje monastery, a tarmac road heads south along the right bank of the river to Jambey Lhakhang. This temple, erected by the Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo in the 7th century, is one of the two oldest in Bhutan (the other being Kyichu Lhakhang in Paro).
 - ❖ Special Highlights:
A special prayer by the care taker/monk (kyoener) can be done for you at one of the temples in Bumthang
- Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight at Aman Bumthang.

Day 6 – Bumthang – Gangtey (6 hr drive)

After breakfast depart for Gangtey via Trongsa stopping enroute for tea and lunch break.

- ❖ Special Highlights:
Stop at Pele la pass to hang prayer flags (lung dhar) to ward off negative energy and evil spirits
- Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight at Aman Gangtey.

Day 7 – Gangtey – Paro (4 hr drive)

Phobjikha valley is surely one of the loveliest high altitude valleys in Bhutan. Phobjikha is one of Bhutan's few glacial valleys, and chosen winter home of black-necked cranes, migrating from the Tibetan plateau.

After breakfast walk around and explore Phobjikha valley. Depart for Paro via Punakha where you will stop for lunch. After lunch proceed to Paro. Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight at Aman Paro.

Day 8 – Paro Sightseeing

Your tour of Paro includes the following sights:

- ❖ The National Museum aka as Ta Dzong is housed in an ancient watchtower. The museum contains a wonderful gallery of Thangkhas (scrolls) to ancient armory to natural history
- ❖ Visit the ruins of Drugyel Dzong, a fortress used to repel Tibetan invasions in the 17th century
- ❖ Visit Kyichu Lhakhang one of the oldest and most scared shrines of Bhutan which dates back to the 7th century

Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight at Aman Paro.

Day 9 – Exit Bhutan for Onward Destination

Please note that some of the sights/itinerary may change due to season, weather, national holidays, and special events. We maintain the rights to alter the itinerary since tours are made in advance and unforeseen circumstances that mandate change may arise. Itinerary changes are made to improve your overall travel experience in Bhutan.