



ADVENTURE ASSOCIATES
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ESCAPE TO BHUTAN: THE DRAGON KINGDOM FESTIVAL TOUR & CULTURAL TREK

Journey to one of the world's smallest and most extraordinary countries in the great Himalayas... the "Dragon Kingdom" of Bhutan. Nested between India, Tibet and Nepal, Bhutan is a proud nation of one of the earth's best-preserved ecologies and cultures. Opened up to tourism in during the mid 1980s, Bhutan hosts relatively few tourists each year. The landlocked country is inhabited by two million practicing Buddhists. They greet you with a genuine smile and penetrating personal warmth. The breathtaking countryside scenery is full of thick pine forests, raging wild rivers, mosaics of rich cultivated fields, crafted Bhutanese style farm houses, prayer flags, and fortress like Dzongs and monasteries. Our local guides take us into villages providing expert interpretation of their culture. Visitors stay in local guesthouses, go to remote villages and hidden valleys, and immerse themselves in rare and enchanting encounters. We'll take a look at Bhutanese art forms such as thangka painting, textile weaving, woodcarving, and papermaking. Often you will witness demonstrations of the art forms and creations crafted by Bhutanese artists. You will attend and participate in festivals, where the Bhutanese gather in celebration wearing their finest clothes and jewelry. Dance rituals are performed in colorful dress and masks. A three-day cultural trek through bamboo and pine forests allows you to witness the fresh air and beauty of the Himalayan foothills. Join us! This is truly an adventure of a lifetime!

Trip Dates: November 5 – 22, 2011

Land Costs: \$3995 (14 day in-country)

DAY 1 (Sat, Nov 5)

Los Angeles / Bangkok: Check in three hours to your scheduled departure. On your own.

DAY 2 (Sun, Nov 6)

Arrive Bangkok: On your own.

DAY 3 (Mon, Nov 7) *Druk flight leaves Bangkok at 6:50am*

Bangkok to Para (via flight Druk Air arranged by Adventure Associates)

Note: Druk Air flights are available from Delhi, Calcutta and Kathmandu as well.

Our representative will receive you at Paro Airport and transfer you to the hotel. After lunch explore the Paro valley. Tour the Paro Rinpong Dzong. This is the seat of the district administration and home for the monastic school. The craftsmanship of the central tower (Utse) of the Dzong, is one of the most beautiful in the country. Stop for tea followed by a visit to the Kyichu Lhakhang, the oldest temple in Bhutan thought to have been built in 659 A.D. by King Songtsen Gampo. The temple holds down the left foot of an ogress whose spread eagled body is so large that it covers Bhutan and most of eastern Tibet. Tour the Dungtse Lhakhang, a temple built in the form of a chörten. It contains one of the most beautiful collections of paintings in the country. Evening: Free to explore Paro town and perhaps watch an informal archery contest. Dinner and overnight Nak-Sel Boutique Hotel. (LD)

DAY 4 (Tues, Nov 8) Thimphu (65 km / 1.5 hrs)

A full day begins with an early breakfast. Enjoy a morning walk from the hotel through a lovely pine forest to Tingchoe Goempa, the community temple of Ngoba Village. Greet the people as you walk around the cluster of village homes. Your vehicle will meet you at Olathang Hotel. Visit the National Museum once the watch tower for the Rinpong Dzong, overlooking the Paro Valley, which provides an excellent introduction to Bhutan's history. A one hour drive to Thimphu, the capitol city and check into your hotel. Sightseeing will begin at the Memorial Chorten built in memory of the Third King of Bhutan who reigned from 1952-1972. Witness Thimphu residents walking around the Chorten in prayer. The day will also include visiting the weaving cottage industries; the Textile Museum full of rare and beautiful textiles; the traditional paper making unit; Sangeygang viewpoint for a panoramic view of Thimphu and the Takin Zoo. Overnight Thimphu Hotel Kisa. (BLD)

DAY 5 (Wed, Nov 9) Thimphu to Punakha (70 km/ 2.5 hrs)

En route to Wangdue, enjoy a short break for tea & coffee at Dochula Pass at 3150 m to view the Eastern Himalayan mountain ranges and walk around the 108 stupas built on the pass. Tour the Punakha Dzong, "Palace of Great Happiness". This is the winter residence of Bhutan's spiritual leader, the Head Abbot, and the Central Monastic Body. The Dzong was built in 1637 A.D. and lies between two rivers known as "Phochu" (Male River) and "Mochu" (Female River). We'll also stop to take a short hike to Chhi-Med Lhakhang in the picturesque Lobesa valley, to visit the temple of one of Bhutan's foremost saints, Lama Drukpa Kunley, also known as the "Divine Madman". Overnight: Damchen Resort (BLD)

DAY 6 (Thurs, Nov 10) Punakha To Phobjekha

A beautiful two hour drive brings us to Phobjekha valley This glacial valley is on the northern boundary of Black Mountain (*Pele La*) National Park. According to legend, the Gangtey Goenpa was founded by the grandson (the mind incarnation) of Pema Lingpa Gyalse Pema Thinley in 1613. The Phobjekha valley is one of the roosting grounds of the Black-necked cranes (*grus nigri collis*). Each year in winter, the birds migrate from Tibet and Siberia. Visit the Information Center (run by the Royal Society for the Preservation of Nature) to learn about this rare and endangered bird. Meander through the valley with stops at village homes and people of Phobjekha to learn the simple lifestyles of these farming people. Enjoy a traditional lunch in family farm house and tea with Khenpo, the head of Khewa Lhakhang Monastery built in 14th century.

Overnight: Gakiling Resort (BLD)

Day 7 (Fri, Nov 11) Phobjekha To Trongsa (87 Km/4 hours drive)

Morning attend the Black-necked Crane Festival held in the courtyard of Gangtey Goempa. Dressed in traditional costume dancers celebrate the return of the crane.

After lunch drive to Trongsa. Enroute cross Pele La 3420m where weather permitting you will see some of the highest peaks in Bhutan forming the western border of Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park. Pass through Longte Valley where farmers raise sheep and yaks and arrive at Chendebji village, once a night halt for mule caravans travelling from Trongsa A brief stop Chendebji chorten, a large white structure modeled after

Swayambhunath in Kathmandu, Nepal. Visit the Yartha Textile weaving center in Chumy Valley en route. Arrive Trongsa to visit the Trongsa Dzong. This Dzong, built in 1648, is the ancestral home of the Wangchuck Dynasty, Bhutan's royal family. Presently, the Dzong houses the district administrative offices and the monastic center of Trongsa. This is also the investiture site for future kings ascending the Golden Throne of Bhutan. It is constructed in split-levels on a narrow spur and is considered an architectural wonder! Hike up the imposing Watch Tower, since 2008 a Royal Museum. The museum displays both traditional and modern relics used by the Wangchuck dynasty. Of special significance is the Raven Crown worn by the first King in 1907.

Overnight: Hotel Yangkhil (BLD)

Day 8 (Sat Nov 12) Trongsa To Bumthang (3 – 4 hour drive)

The drive between Trongsa and Bumthang is the most scenic leg of your journey. Driving over Yotongla Pass (3425m) you may get your first glimpse of the Black Mountains. The road winds into the clouds, crosses rivers and streams, passes by water-driven prayer wheels and colorful rock carvings. An hour outside of Bumthang spot the golden-roofed Jakar Dzong, known as the Castle of the White Bird. At Chumey, attend the Prakhar Festival. A unique village festival honoring the Lama Thukse Dawa, son of the Treasure Discoverer, Pema Lingpa who lived in Bumthang Valley in the 15th century.

Overnight: Chumey Nature Resort (BLD)

Day 9 (Sun Nov 13) Bumthang

Bumthang lies at an altitude 2600m (8,530ft) and has an individuality that charms its visitors and separates it from other regions. Comprised of four smaller valleys, the spiritual region of Bumthang is shrouded in religious legend. Here, tales of Guru Padmasambhava and his re-incarnation known as Tertons still linger in most nooks and corners. Bumthang is also known for its woolen material (yathra), which can be seen hanging outside of houses for sale. Attend the Jambay Lhakhang Festival held in the temple court yard. The temple built around the 7th century by a Tibetan King, Songtsen Geombo, is one of the oldest in all of Bhutan. The festival dances symbolize the fight between good and evil and is an offering of thanks for the harvest to the local deities. In the evening stroll Jakar township.

Overnight: River Lodge (BLD)

Day 10 (Mon, Nov 14) Jambay Lhakhang Festival

After breakfast attend the last day events of the Jambay Lhakhang Festival.

In the afternoon enjoy a walking tour of two historic temples:

Thangbi Lhakhang (Temple) built by Shamar Rimpoche in the 14th Century. At present about 20 Gomchens (lay monks) are training at the monastery. One peculiar feature here is the presence of a holy 'Iron Chain' made by Saint Pema Lingpa who lived from 1450 – 1521 A.D. Pilgrims pass under the Iron Chain to cleanse their sins.

Tamshing Lhakhang (Temple) built in the 14th century by Pema Lingpa, the "Hidden Treasure Discoverer". The monastery houses some of the oldest paintings in Bhutan believed to be painted by Pema Lingpa. These wall murals have not been re-touched since its first construction. An iron chain made by Pema Lingpa is still in the temple and people carry the chain and circumambulate to expiate their sins.

In the evening you may again choose to stroll through Jakar town.

Overnight: River Lodge (BLD)

Day 11 (Tues, Nov 15) Trek Bumthang to Nang Lhakhang (Walking time: 4 to 5 hours)

Our trek starts by following the Chamkhar River up a stream filled with rainbow trout. The hike is very pleasant and weaves up through pine forest and over suspension bridges. The day is such that one can thoroughly enjoy the beautiful countryside. En route, pass through Thangbi Lhakhang before entering "Swan Land" (Ngang Yul) and visiting "Swan Temple" (Nganglhakhang). Swans first inhabited this part of the valley. (BLD)

Overnight: Camp at 2800m/9186ft

(Options available other than trekking. Please Inquire. Must pre-arrange.)

DAY 12 (Wed, Nov 16) Ngalhakhang to Tahung (Walking time: app. 7 hours)

The day starts with a gradual climb to Phephela Pass to the highest point of the trek. (3,353m/11,000ft). The trail then winds through one of the most beautifully forested areas of the region, laced in mini bamboo pastures, forests of rhododendrons and mixed conifer. This is a full day of travel, around seven hours of hiking, which allows for many stops along the way to enjoy the natural landscape.

Overnight Camp in Tang valley (BLD).

DAY 13 (Thur, Nov 17) Tahung to via Ugyencholing (Walking Time: 1-2 hours)

Trek to Ugyencholing, which provides a spectacular view of Tang Valley. The Ugyencholing Palace now houses the Family Museum, a place that will transport you to another world and time. You will view permanent exhibits recreated to capture the ambience of the lifestyle of the Trongsa Penlop (Governor) Tshokey Dorji and his household. After lunch, relax with a stroll through Ugyencholing village. Overnight: Guesthouse in village (Guest house is very simple and comfortable. There are several rooms bedrooms with a main gathering area with a stove. Showers are available.) (BLD)

DAY 14 (Fri, Nov 18) Ugyencholing to Trongsa (3 hours/68 Km)

Trek downhill for 45 minutes to meet your transportation and drive to Trongsa. A short stop Tang to visit the Pema Choling nunnery. Retracing our route, we may have an opportunity to visit a Yak herder's camp. Arriving in Trongsa for lunch. Before settling in for the night visit the Kuenga Rabten Palace the Karma Drubdeyling Nunnery.

Overnight: Hotel Yangkhil (BLD)

DAY 15 (Sat, Nov 19) Trongsa To Paro Via Thimphu (8-9hours)

Today is a long cross country drive via Wangdue and Punakha districts Returning to for lunch and last minute shopping in Thimphu.

Overnight: Nak-Sel Boutique Hotel in Paro (BLD)

DAY 16 (Sun Nov 20) Paro (Taktsang Hike)

Granted special permission, hike to the Taktsang monastery. (Horses can be arranged with an extra payment.) The hike takes about 4 hours round trip, past villages and through pine forests. The monastery, who's name means "Tiger's Nest," clings to a huge granite cliff 800 meters from the Paro Valley and was devastated by a fire in 1998. The Royal Government took immediate steps to restore the monastery to its original structure. It is believed that the great saint Padma Sambhava, known as the second Buddha in Bhutan, came here in the 8th century on a flying tigress and meditated in a cave for 3 months, thereby subduing the demons that were trying to stop the spread of Buddhism. The saint then converted the Paro Valley into a Buddhist region. Enjoy a picnic lunch at Taktsang Cafeteria. On the return, time permitting visit the Drugyel Dzong, a historic fortress built in 1646 to commemorate the defeat of Tibetan invaders. Drugyel holds great historical significance, for it was from this site that the Bhutanese repelled numerous Tibetan invasions in the 17th and 18th centuries. Drugyel means, "Victorious Bhutanese Fort." Relax in the afternoon.

Dinner and overnight: Nak-Sel Boutique Hotel (BLD)

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DAY 17 (Mon Nov 21) Paro to Bangkok

Last breakfast together prior to departure and end of AA Services. Overnight Bangkok Hotel on your own or continue on with extension.

Ask Adventure Associates for extension options. (B)

DAY 18 (Tues, Nov 22) Bangkok: / USA - Los Angeles

Transfer for your flight on your own or have us make other arrangements in Asia. (Transportation and meals on your own).

NOTE: While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of the trip route and activities, rather than an inflexible schedule. The itinerary, hotels and flights are subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. Any additional costs incurred due to circumstance beyond Adventure Associates of Washington's (AAW) control are the responsibility of the individual passengers. AAW does not accept any responsibility for refunds of unused arrangements due to any change in itinerary in any way by clients after the commencement of the journey or strike action prior to departure and while overseas. Prices are subject to change.

Land Costs	Deposit	RT Flight: BKK - PBH	Single Supplement	Trip Dates	Group Size	Difficulty	Activities
\$3995	\$500 (\$200 non-refundable)	\$840 (non-refundable)	\$420	Nov 5 - 22	3-12	No Experience Needed	Temples, Trek, Cultural Exchange, Lodges

Land Package: \$3995 (12 members)

Single Supplement (Optional): **\$420**

International Druk Air (including Gov't Tariff): **\$840** (BKK/PBH and return PBH/BKK)

Druk Air arranged by AA.

Approx. International Air: **\$1100** (LAX/BKK/LAX) Arranged on your own

Visa: \$20

Airport codes:

LAX – Los Angeles; BKK – Bangkok; DEL – New Delhi; CCU – Kolkota/Calcutta;

KTM – Kathmandu; DAC – Dakha; GAY – Gaya (ndia seasonal); IBX - Bagdogra -PBH – Paro (Bhutan)

A FEW IMPORTANT DETAILS ABOUT YOUR TRIP...Read carefully

Included in your Trip Fee: Standard accommodations (twin share); full meals board (BLD) = Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner; transfers, ground transportation; sightseeing with a national English-speaking guide and entrance fees; Bhutan visa authorization; Tourism Development Fund Tax; Royalty and taxes to the Bhutanese government; Tented camp, camping gear, porters and ponies, guide, and full board on trek.

Not Included in your Trip Fee: Visa fee (\$20), airport departure tax (approx. US\$20 - *inquire to see if tax is paid with ticket purchase), international airfare and any accommodations en route (i.e. Bangkok), Druk Air, meals not mentioned, camera/video fees at monuments, tips, travel/medical/evacuation insurance and items of a personal nature. Optional: single supplement fee.

How Strenuous is the trek: It is not a strenuous hike. We are out for two nights and the three days. The long day is in the middle, but we travel at a very comfortable pace and the pass is around 11,000 feet. The last day is shorter. We'll enjoy a wonderful museum that afternoon and enjoy lodging in the adjoining guest the monastery and museum. This overlooks the most fertile valley in Bhutan.

Bhutan Lodging, Infrastructure and Roads: Bhutan is a developing country. Resources at times, cannot match tourism pressures and demands. Your host country is very accommodating and will do everything to assist in a wonderful experience. However, there may be unexpected adjustments to the travel itineraries. Accommodations in some locations may be simpler than in others. Individual rooms may be warmed by fire or there are main heated gathering areas. Bedding is very warm. Electricity is generally available along with warm showers. Roads may be under construction and cause short delays. Roads are two-lane and follow the landscape. We are visitors and our intrigue has opened the doors to amazing kingdom. Travel with an open mind. Expectations need to be flexible.

Single Supplement: Single accommodations are not guaranteed, but will be provided at an additional cost of approximately US\$420. For passengers who are traveling alone and wish to share a room with another tour member, we will do our best to provide a roommate. However, if this is not possible, you will be required to pay the single room supplement prior to your departure from the USA.

Do I need a Visa for travel to Bhutan: Yes, if you have not received a visa application from us, call the office to request one via email. Complete the visa application and email or fax to Adventure Associates along with the visa fee of US\$20. A clear color copy of your passport personal information page(s) is required. This fee is collected in advance for processing. You will receive a clearance letter close to your departure date, once your visa has been processed.

Travel & Trip Insurance: We strongly recommend that travel insurance be purchased immediately following your registration. The time and expense that you have put into planning and paying for your trip warrant protection through the purchase of travel insurance. Our primary interest in the Access America travel Insurance package is that it covers "emergency medical transportation" - this is important when traveling and preparing for the unexpected. Emergency services are very costly. This coverage is very inexpensive in comparison. The insurance also protects you and your money from late cancellations, accidents or illness in remote areas, loss of baggage, airline flight changes and other unexpected delays. The particular program we recommend (Access America) will cover "preexisting" conditions, if you purchase full coverage within fourteen (14) days following your registration or flight purchase. Information available upon request.

Transportation/Flight Arrangements: Upon your registration, Adventure Associates will work closely with you on your individual flight plans. Certain programmed activities are dependant on flight schedule - you should verify your flight itinerary with Adventure Associates **before** purchase. Druk Air flight arrangements will be done by Adventure Associates. Once purchased, Druk Air flights are non-refundable

How to Register: If you have not downloaded an application form from our website, please contact our office for a complete registration packet. Complete the application form and return it to our office along with the appropriate deposit. Upon receipt of your application, we will send you a confirmation and final details about your pre-trip preparation. For immediate confirmation, you

may charge your deposit to Visa, Master Card or American Express by phone or fax.

Payment Schedule:

We accept checks, Visa, MC, AmEx payments for tour costs; checks/cash for flights and visa fees.

Once purchased, Druk Air flights are non-refundable.

\$500 deposit due at time of registration (\$200 non-refundable)

\$1200 due six months prior to departure

Final payment due two months prior to departure

Cancellation & Refund Policy

If you must cancel prior to departure, the following fee will be assessed based upon our receipt of your written cancellation request:

Days Prior to Departure (trip destination)

90 or more \$200

60 to 89 \$500

45 to 59 50% fee

1 to 44 100% fee

Itineraries are subject to change.

No partial refunds are possible for any unused portion of your trip.

Penalties on airline tickets are subject to the individual air carrier's rules and regulations. Departure is defined as the date of the first flight, or the trip departure date as indicated on our Trip Schedule, whichever comes first.

Once a trip has been confirmed medical circumstances will not be considered as exceptions to our cancellation policy. However, if you have purchased a comprehensive Travel Insurance plan that covers cancellation, you may be able to retrieve some of the funds.

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