

Textile Tour

Duration: 16 nights/17 Days.

Season: December, January and February & June, July and August

Destinations: Thimphu, Paro, Punakha and Bumthang. In Bumthang you will have one day hike to Ura village. The tour also includes a day hike to remote Tashiyangtse to villages of Khoma and Radhi to see the weaving in action.

Day 1: Arrive Paro

The flight to Paro crosses the Himalayan Mountains, affording spectacular views of the awesome peaks, including the sacred Jumolhari and Jichu Drake peaks in Bhutan. If you arrive via Kathmandu, which offers the most breathtaking view of the range, it's possible to see Mount Everest and Mount Kanchenjunga as well. On arrival you will be greeted by the representative of Bhutan Travellers and transfer to the hotel. In the afternoon you can visit the Paro Dzong. It was built in 1646 and now houses government offices and religious institutions, as do all the Dzongs (forts) currently. You'll cross a traditional wooden bridge on the way to the Dzong. Afterward you will visit Kichu Lhakhang, the oldest temple in the country. From there you will be taken to the Drukgyal Dzong (Bhutan Victory Fort), which was built in 1646 to commemorate Bhutan's victory over Tibetan invaders during the 1600s. On a clear day you can see Mount Jumolhari, Bhutan's second-highest mountain at 7,314 meters, from the village below the Dzong. In the evening you can stroll through the Paro market and town. Overnight in Paro.

Day 2: Paro – Thimphu

After breakfast hike to Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) Monastery, which is Bhutan's most famous monastery. Guru Rimpoche is said to have flown on the back of a tigress from Singye Dzong in Lhuntse to meditate in a cave where Taktsang Monastery now stands. It is perched on the edge of a steep cliff, about 900 meters above Paro Valley. The hike to reach the viewpoint to the monastery makes for a nice half-day excursion. In the afternoon you will drive to Thimphu. In Thimphu visit the majestic Tashichodong. In the evening you can explore Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan, and absorb the lifestyle of the people. You can also visit some interesting handicraft shops. Overnight in Thimphu.

Day 3: Thimphu

After breakfast you will visit the King's Memorial Chorten (built in memory of the third King of Bhutan who reigned from 1952-1972), and Changangkha Monastery. From there you will visit the Nunnery, National Library (which houses ancient manuscripts), Folk

Heritage Museum, School of Arts and Crafts (also known as the painting school) where the preservation of traditional Bhutanese arts is taught. After lunch, you will visit the Textile museum, private weaving centre at Changzamtok. We will also visit to a private house to see the weaving in practice. Our expert Kesang has been a special weaver to the royal family and will be showing us how to weave Bhutanese style. Overnight in Thimphu.

Day 4: Thimphu – Wangdiphodrang

After breakfast you will drive to Wangdiphodrang visiting Simtokha Dzong en route and stop at Dochula (3,100 meters) for tea. On clear day you can get spectacular views of the Himalayas. Continue driving and check into Hotel. After lunch you will 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. On the way back from Punakha, you will stop at Metshina Village and take a 20-minute walk through the rice fields to Chhimi Lhakhang, which is a fertility temple, where you may receive a special fertility blessing if you wish. Overnight in Wangdiphodrang.

Day 5: Wangdiphodrang – Trongsa

You will begin the day by driving to Gangtey. You'll pass through dense forests of oak trees and rhododendrons and arrive at Gangtey village, where you'll visit Gangtey Goenpa, the only Nyingmapa monastery in western Bhutan. From Gangtey, you can see the picturesque Black Mountain range as well as Phobjikha Valley, the winter habitat of the black-necked cranes. From there you'll head to Trongsa, the ancestral home of the royal family. The route is along a spectacular winding road, crossing 3,300-meter-high Pele La, and at certain times of year it's possible to see yaks. You can browse through the Trongsa shops and town in the afternoon. Overnight in Trongsa.

Day 6: Trongsa – Bumthang

In the morning you'll visit Trongsa Dzong, the masterpiece of Bhutanese architecture, and you'll also see Ta Dzong, the watchtower built to defend this Dzong. After lunch, you'll proceed to Bumthang, the religious heartland of the nation, with lush valleys and hilly forests. Along the way you will stop at a yathra (textile weaving) factory at Chumey, where the yathra are designed with patterns unique to Bumthang, and you can even watch some of the weavers at their looms. The afternoon will be spent sightseeing in the area, including Jakar Dzong, Woodcarving factory in Jakar; Jambay Lhakhang, one of the oldest monasteries in Bhutan, dating from the introduction of Buddhism in Bhutan; and Kurjey Lhakhang, one of the most sacred places, because Guru Rimpoche left his body imprint on the cave when he was meditating. In the evening you can visit some handicrafts shop while strolling through Bumthang town. Overnight in Bumthang.

Day 7: Bumthang

Day excursion to Ura Valley. The road to Ura Valley is off the main road, and this enjoyable excursion will provide a nice view of the Jakar Dzong. You'll make a stop in Ura village for lunch and will have a chance to visit the main temple and explore the village. Ura Village has a medieval look to it because of the cobblestone streets, and the typical clothing of the women includes a sheepskin shawl. On the way back to town, you will be taken to Mebar Tsho (Burning Lake), where some of Guru Rimpoche's treasures were found in the 15th century by the famous treasure discoverer Pema Lingpa. It's a good place to meditate. You will also have a chance to tour Tamshing Lhakhang; a treasure house of interesting religious Buddhist paintings, and you will make a stop at the Swiss cheese factory. In the evening you can visit local shops. Overnight in Bumthang.

Day 8: Bumthang – Lhuntse

You will begin your journey to eastern Bhutan, which is different from western and central Bhutan in terms of development and lifestyle. The steepness of the region lends itself to some spectacular views, with rushing waterfalls and sheer drops. The drive on this day is an exhilarating 10 hours, particularly the Thrumshing La (pass), which peaks at 3,750 meters. You can wander around Lhuntse town in the evening and sit down to a relaxing dinner. Overnight in Lhuntse.

Day 9: Lhuntse Hike to Khoma village

After breakfast hike to Khoma village, which is very famous for textiles in Bhutan. You can see women folks weaving different types of textiles. If you want you can also buy the textiles at the reasonable prices. Then hike to Ngangladhung village to see the textiles and here also you will see the women weaving a tapestry of textiles with their nimble hands.

Day 10: Lhuntse – Rangjung

After breakfast drive to Rangjung. Check into Rangjung guesthouse. After lunch visit Radhi village. Radhi is famous for raw silk, which is known as "bura". You can also witness women weaving raw silk. Overnight at the guesthouse in Rangjung.

Day 11: Rangjung – Khaling

After breakfast drive to Khaling. Visit National Institute for the Disabled (NID), which caters educational needs to the disabled people in the country. Have lunch at the farmhouse. After lunch visit the Weaving Center which is operated by the National Women's Association of Bhutan. And you can see the girls weaving different types of textiles out of back strap loom. If possible we can also visit to the house a private weaver to see the techniques of Bhutanese dye. Then drive to Trashigang visiting Sherubtse College (Kingdom's only college) and Zangdo Pelri Lhakhang. Check into hotel in Trashigang. Overnight at the hotel in Trashigang.

Day 12: Trashigang Excursion to Tashiyangtse

Today you will visit Tashiyangtse, which is a small, pretty, quiet town. The people are known for making wooden bowls and containers, which are said to be the best in Bhutan. Visit the Arts School and the Chorten Kora. Along the way to Tashiyangtse you will stop at the Gom Kora temple, behind which is a large black rock. It is said that Guru Rimpoche meditated in a cave in the rock and that you can see the impression of his thumb, his hat, and his body on the rock. You will also visit the abandoned iron chain-link bridge behind the village of Duksum. It is said that this is the last remaining bridge of those built by a Tibetan bridge builder by the name of Thangthong Gyalpo in the 15th century. Later in the day you can relax in Trashigang and enjoy a nice dinner. Overnight in Trashigang.

Day 13: Trashigang – Mongar

In the morning you will visit Trashigang Dzong, which was built by Pekar Chopel in 1659, and the Dzong commands a remarkable view over the surrounding countryside. Then drive to Mongar, which is 3 hours journey and 91 kilometers. Check into hotel and overnight in Mongar.

Day 14: Mongar – Bumthang

Drive the spectacular 8-hour route back to Bumthang, with stops for lunch and tea in nearby villages. Overnight in Bumthang.

Day 15: Bumthang – Wangdiphodrang

You'll begin the day at the Bumthang market, and then drive to Wangdiphodrang, where you can stroll through the town and visit the shops. The nearby villages are known for their slate and stone carvings and bamboo work. Overnight in Wangdiphodrang.

Day 16: Wangdiphodrang – Paro

After breakfast drive to Paro with a lunch stop in Thimphu. If it's the weekend, you can stroll through the market to see the variety of food of the country, including basket upon basket of fiery chilies, fresh cheese, and mangoes. In addition, many stalls contain Bhutanese handicrafts and household items. It's fun to wander the aisles, taking in the bustling atmosphere of the market. After that you will drive to Paro. Check into the hotel. In the evening you can visit a traditional farmhouse and, if you wish, enjoy a hot-stone bath and a typical Bhutanese dinner. Overnight in Paro.

Day 17: Depart Paro

Drive to Paro Airport for departure. Our representative will bid you farewell.