



A JOURNEY TO BHUTAN



**Paro – Thimphu – Punakha – Gangtey – Trongsa – Jakhar – Bumthang –
Gangtey – Paro**

- **Day 1** Travel to Paro via Bangkok or Delhi
- **Day 2** Arrive at Paro. Afternoon sightseeing
- **Day 3** Morning hike to Tatskang. Afternoon birding at Paro
- **Day 4** Morning birding at Chele La. Afternoon drive to Thimphu
- **Day 5** Morning drive to Punakha. Afternoon birding at Punakha
- **Day 6** Morning and afternoon birding at Punakha
- **Day 7** Morning, drive to Trongsa. Afternoon birding at Trongsa and surrounding areas
- **Day 8** Morning drive to Jakhar. Afternoon hikes in Jakhar
- **Day 9** Morning sightseeing at Jakhar. Afternoon hikes to Chokhor valley
- **Day 10** Morning drive to Gangtey. Afternoon birding or walking at Phobjika valley
- **Day 11** At Phobjika Valley – day long hike in the near and surrounds
- **Day 12** Morning drive to Paro. Afternoon at leisure
- **Day 13** Fly back from Paro via Bangkok or Delhi arriving the next day

Bhutan is a fascinating land – it is a place where the forests still hide unknown animals and birds. The people of Bhutan are warm and smiling and the culture is ancient. The forests are home to bird species like the Satyr Tragopan, Ward's Trogon, Ibisbill, Black Necked Crane, Rufous Necked Hornbill, Sikkim Wedge-Billed Babbler, Beautiful Nuthatch, Oriental Honeyguide, Fire Tailed Myzornis and Bhutan Laughing Thrush. Mammals include the elusive Clouded Leopard, Marbled Cat and the Takin. The high mountains of Bhutan are home to a lot more birds than one manages to see in one trip – that is why Bhutan is best explored – slowly.

Day 1

Depart the UK to Delhi, Bangkok or Kathmandu arriving early next morning.

Day 2 Arrive Paro

Arrive at Paro. On exiting the baggage reclaim you will be met by a representative and transferred in an air conditioned vehicle to your hotel: The Dechen Hill Resort (20 minutes' drive from the airport).

Afternoon – enjoy a visit to the Paro Dzong, the Kyichu Lakhang temple and the areas surrounding it.

Overnight – Dechen Hill Resort, Paro – Lunch & dinner.



Ibisbill

Day 3 Paro

This morning you will be driven to the Tatsakang monastery and from the base you will trek up to the monastery. Half-way take a break - a small cafe is an ideal place here to regain your breath and admire the views. In case the hike is too demanding – return from here. After lunch, you will spend the afternoon exploring the lovely Paro Valley, where such species as Ibisbill and perhaps the scarce Black-tailed Crane can be found, apart from species as White Wagtail, White-capped Water Redstart, Blue Whistling-Thrush, Plumbeous Water Redstart, Oriental Turtle-Dove and Russet/Cinnamon Sparrow. If you wish you can also be driven to the Haa valley for a half day excursion and back.

Overnight - The Dechen Hill Resort - All meals included

Day 4 Paro - Thimphu

Early (Very Early) – you will start for Chele la. Here you will explore the area on foot and look for birds like Blood Pheasant, Himalayan Monal, along with other species like the Collared Grosbeak, Himalayan Griffon,

Kalij Pheasant, Spotted Laughingthrush, Rosy Pipit, Blue-fronted Redstart, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Himalayan White-browed Rosefinch. After breakfast and lunch in the field, you will gradually head towards the capital Thimphu and arrive there late afternoon. On reaching Thimphu – a casual stroll through the market place can be interesting.

Overnight – The Riverview Hotel - All meals included

Day 5 Thimphu – Punakha

Early this morning you will leave for Punakha – the drive is a spectacular drive through the high pass Dochula (which offers great views of the Bhutan Himalayas). The drive itself is a bird-rich one with species like Gold Billed Magpie, Dark Rumped Rosefinch, Daurian Redstart, Brown Dipper, Rufous Breasted Accentor, Himalayan Bulbul, Slaty backed and White crowned Forktail and several other species. You should also see Nepal Grey Langur, Assamese Macaque and with some luck a Barking Deer or a Wild Boar. Here as you cross the Punakha Dzong you will stop to look for the rare and endemic White Bellied Heron. A few of these birds use this area and you might be very lucky to see one scanning the shallow waters for fish or other rodents/amphibians.

Overnight - The Zangtho Pelri – All meals included



Inside a Dzong

Day 6 Punakha

Very early this morning, after a tea and some biscuits – you will start the two hour drive to Jigme Dorji national Park – this is moist broad-leafed forest with trees lined with moss and lichen and home to an incredibly rich avifauna. Bird highlights include – Red Headed Trogon, Wallcreeper, Greater Yellownape, Yellow bellied Fantail, Nepal Fulvetta, Ashy throated Warbler, Rufous capped Babbler, Greater Yellownape, Striated Laughing thrush, Streak-throated Barwing, Fire tailed Myzornis, Pale Chinned Flycatcher, Black-eared Shrike Babbler, White Browed Shrike Babbler, Lesser Yellownape, Crested Kingfisher.

Mammals include Orange-bellied Squirrel, Assamese Macaque and Barking Deer etc. After enjoying a packed lunch birding would resume and you will be looking for species like the Ward's Trogon, Rusty Flanked Treecreeper, Rufous Chinned laughing Thrush, Lesser Yellownape, Crested Kingfisher, Yellow Breasted Greenfinch, Blue Beared Bee-eater and more.

You will be back in town in time for a quick visit to the magnificent Punakha Dzong and also look for the White Bellied Heron. Punakha was the old capital of Bhutan and the magnificent dzong is situated on an

island in the middle of the river. It is also the winter residence of the Central monastic body. In the afternoon, visit impressive Punakha Dzong, home to the remains of Bhutan's first ruler, Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyel, and the winter residence of the monastic order's leader and his entourage of monks. Built strategically at the junction of Pho Chhu and Mo Chhu rivers in 1637 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal to serve as the religious and administrative centre of the region, Punakha Dzong has played an important role in Bhutan's history.

Overnight - The Zangtho Pelri – All meals included

Day 7 Punakha to Trongsa

After an early breakfast, you will be driven to Trongsa – on the way you will be birding and stopping to see some of the beautiful birds like the Dark-rumped, and Crimson-browed Rosefinch; Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Stripe-throated and Rufous-vented Yuhina, Buff-barred Warbler; Coal Tit, White-browed and Rufous-breasted bush-robins, Gray-winged Blackbird and the Wallcreeper. As you reach central Bhutan's Black Mountain region, much of our journey will be through mixed broad-leaved evergreen forest and you will continue on to Trongsa to overnight.

Overnight – Yankhill Resort - All meals included

Day 8 Trongsa to Jakhar

This morning you will be exploring the Trongsa area. Visit the Dzong from outside, then enjoy a bit of birding and see the Ta Dzong and the Chedebji Chorten and drive to Jakhar (3 hours drive). On arrival at Jakhar check in at the Swiss Lodge. This afternoon enjoy a short hike in the near and surrounds of your hotel.

Overnight – The Swiss Hotel – All meals included.



Spotted Laughing Thrush

Day 9 Jakhar

After breakfast, explore the Jakhar Dzong and then head out to explore the nearby Chokhor Valley. This extremely scenic valley has a number of birds and some cultural places worth exploring. One of the key mammals to see is the magnificent Golden Langur. If interested – you can visit the vegetable dye project as well.

Overnight – The Swiss Hotel – All meals included.



Textiles of Bhutan and a Golden Langur

Day 10 Jakhar to Gangtey

From Jakhar drive back to Gangtey (5 hours drive) through a beautifully forested road. On arrival check in at the strategically located Dewachen Resort. Afternoon – take a walk to the area where the Black Necked Cranes winter. You can of course just relax at this beautiful hotel and enjoy the views over a cup of the local brew.

Overnight – The Dewachen Resort - All meals included

Day 11 Phobjika Valley

Enjoy the peace and quiet at the Phobjika valley. Take a walk to see the cranes, see the Gangtey temple and go for walks to the Pele La – if you have an interest in birding.

Overnight – Tshen Hotel - All meals included

Day 12 Gangtey to Paro

This morning after breakfast, you will be driven to Paro via Wandue Phoedrang (6 hours drive). On the way visit the Dzong, enjoy some marketing and stop at a couple of places to enjoy the national sport – archery. On arriving at Paro – check in at the Dechen Hill Resort. The afternoon is at leisure.

Overnight – Dechen Hill Resort - All meals included



Day 13 Paro – you will be driven to the international airport to connect to your flight back home.

PRICE INCLUSIONS:

- Accommodation for 11 nights on Twin share basis and meals as specified in the itinerary
- Transportation by Toyota Innova's - mineral water will be provided in the car for sightseeing and long drives – In Bhutan a Toyota Heiss or a similar vehicle will be used
- Porterage fee at the hotel/airports only

- Local English speaking guide and entrance fees (single entry) to Jigme Dorji National Park and other sanctuaries and parks.
- All entrance fees at the national parks and walking safari fees
Bhutan entrance fees
Air fare from New Delhi to Bhutan and back in economy class

PRICE EXCLUSIONS:

- International, visa fees, airport tax or any kind of insurance cover
- Drinks and other meals than those mentioned in the itinerary
- Tips or gratuities • Any car arrangements on free days
- Still and video camera fee at monuments and game parks
- Items of personal nature like drinks, laundry, telephone calls, tips, camera fees, etc



Archery is the national sport

TRACKS SAFARIS – WE GET YOU CLOSER TO BHUTAN

