



## **BHUTAN BLACK CRANE FESTIVAL EX PARO 7<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2024**

### **Proposed Itinerary 15 days- 14 nights**

Day 1 Paro 1-night Afternoon sightseeing 7th November (Thursday)  
 Day 2 Haa 1 night (drive time 2.5 hours) 8th November (Friday)  
 Days 3/4 Thimphu 2 nights (3 hours) 9th 10th November (Sat Sunday) Markets Thimphu  
 Days 5/6 Phobjikha (Gantey) 2 night (4 hours) 11th 12th (Monday Tuesday) Festival  
 Days 7/8 Bumthang 2 nights (Jakar) (4.5 hours) 13th 14th (Wed Thursday)  
 Day 9 Tang (3 hours) 1 night 15th (Friday)  
 Day 10 Trongsa (4 hours) 1 night 16th (Saturday)  
 Day 11/12 Punakha 2 nights 17th 18th November (4 Hours) (Sunday Monday)  
 Days 13/14 Paro 2 nights (3.5 hours) 19th 20th November (Tuesday)  
 Day 15 Depart (Wednesday 21 November)

### **Day 01: Arrival Paro**

Catch the early flight to Paro, Bhutan. Our guide will welcome you and drive you to Paro town.

Check in the hotel and lunch After lunch Later visit the watch tower also known as Ta Dzong where the army used to inspect the valley against the Tibetan invasion. Now the watch tower is converted into the great museum of Bhutan. Evening walk around the old Paro town and peep into some local handicrafts stores Overnight Hotel (LD)

### **Day 2 Paro – Haa – Paro (2.5 Hrs)**

Visit the temples of Dzongdrakha on foot which studs the rock cliff. Continue driving to Haa over the Chelela Pass, your highest point of the trip at 3800m. When the weather permits one can view the most scared mountain in the country Mt. Jomolhari (7314m). Visit the quiet, timeless Haa valley with a picnic lunch. **Overnight Hotel (BLD)**

**Day 3 Haa – Thimpu** Today you will continue your drive to Thimpu. After lunch visit the Memorial Chorten (temple) built in memory of the late 3rd King. This place now teems with elderly devotees chanting prayers. Visit Changangkha Lhakhang, the oldest temple in the valley offering a beautiful view of the valley. Continue to Takin enclosure, where Bhutan's national animals are kept. Continue your drive to visit one of the world's largest sitting Buddha Statue, offering bird eye view of the Thimphu city. Visit the Tashichho Dzong, the fortress, which houses the throne of the king (open after 5pm and on weekends). Evening stroll at leisure vibrant Thimphu Street, which sells anything from red rice, sundried chilli peppers, handcrafts, souvenirs to modern utilities. Overnight: **Thimphu| Altitude: 2300m Overnight Haa (BLD)**



**Day 04: Thimphu Sightseeing** Morning visits the lively and colourful Farmers Market (Friday, Saturday, Sunday) where the locals from the surrounding villages come to sell their produce. Visit the traditional Hand Made Paper Mill. Visit the School of Arts and Crafts, where students learn 13 different arts and crafts used predominantly in Bhutan. Visit Folk Heritage Museum, which houses Traditional Bhutanese house with lifestyle.

Lunch in the city and visit the National Library, which has a collection of Bhutanese rich religious text and the contemporary Buddhism books. Drive further up to visit the Dechenphodrang Monastic School where young monks fill the place. Continue to Zilukha Nunnery. After lunch you have two options for some nice hikes. If you prefer a short and easy one could go for Wangditse temple hike. If you prefer a longer hike, choose Cheri Temple Hike. **Overnight: Thimphu (BLD)**

**Day 5: Thimpu to Gangtey** After breakfast drive towards Punakha valley crossing over **Dochula Pass (3200m.)**. If the weather permits one can enjoy a spectacular breath-taking view of the highest mountain peaks of Bhutan at a site that stretches almost 180 degrees. After lunch continue to **Phobjikha**. En route could stop for a short hike to the ancient **village of Rinchengang** overlooking the ruins of **Wangdi**

**Dzong.** This valley is protected being winter home for the endangered **Black Necked Cranes** migrating to Bhutan every end of Oct to end of Feb. This valley is an outdoor paradise. If you are too tired after the long drive, could relax in the hotel and enjoy the breathtaking view of the valley. **A Farmhouse** stay can be an option if interested. **Overnight: Phobjikha| Altitude: 2900m (BLD)**



#### **Day 06: Phobjika Crane Festival**

Morning takes a walk from your hotel and meet the school children, who cheerfully walk to the school. After late breakfast drive to the **Gangtey Goempa** temple, the largest monastery in the country belonging to a different sect of Buddhism to witness the most popular Black Necked crane festival where locals from around the valley come to witness the annual festival. It's a colourful festival dedicated to the Black Necked Cranes which is considered very sacred. Many other cultural and religious dances are also performed to commemorate the event.

Evening could go for **Phobjikha Nature trail**, through traditional villages and through the swamp of roosting place for **Black Neck Crane**. It can start after the festival from the hilltop overlooking the valley towards the valley. 2900 m **Overnight Hotel (BLD)**



**Day 7: Phobjika – Jakar** Today leave Gangtey for the drive to Bumthang stopping en-route to visit Trongsa Dzong which dates from 1543 AD, afterwards continue onto Bumthang. Comprising of four major valleys, Bumthang is the collective name of the region. Believed to have taken its name from bumpa, a valley shaped vessel and thang, or field, the valleys of Bumthang are some of the holiest, and most spectacular, of Bhutan. Distinct from Thimphu and western Bhutan, little over ten years ago it took three days to travel to the capital. **Overnight Hotel (B/L/D)**

#### **Day 08: Jakar Sightseeing**

Bumthang province consists of four different valleys known as Chumi, Jakar, Tang and Ura. This province is the most historical and one of the holiest places in Bhutan

with so many temples and holy sites spread all around the province. Jakar is a beautiful valley and if you want to take a break and avoid driving, today's activity can be entirely done on foot. Visit Jampay Lakhang, one of the first two Buddhist temples built in the country. Visit Kurjey Lakhang temple, one of the holiest sites in Bhutan, this is also the site where the royals are cremated. Cross the suspension bridge follows the dirt road and through the village of Parar and visit Tamshing Lakhang temple. End your day with a walk passing by the Swiss farm. If time permits visit the Jakar Dzong offering beautiful view of the valley. Evening stroll in Jakar town and try some local pancake and noodles. **Overnight Hotel (BLD)**

#### **Day 09: Bumthang to Tang Sightseeing**

Morning after breakfast drive to the remote isolated village of Tang, due to its remoteness, very few tourists get to visit this village. The landscape is beautiful crossing through many small villages. Just before reaching Tang village, if you want to avoid driving, you have an option to take a shortcut by crossing the bridge and walk for about half an hour to the O'Chholing palace, the ancestral home to the royal family of Tang region which is converted into a museum. Visit the unique museum of O'Chholing, which has very fine and unique collection of Bhutanese Arts and Artifacts. It covers and explains about all the history and details of Tang village activities during the olden days. Hot lunch in the museum guest house. Enjoy the calmness and the beautiful view of the Tang valley. Walk around the tiny village, meeting the locals, the shy children and interacting with them. Later to drive back to Jakar. **Overnight: Tang (BLD)**



#### **Day 10: Tang to Trongza Depart Tang for your 4-hour drive to Trongza**

Arrive Trongza and walk through the single lane town visit the majestic Trongsa Dzong (Fortress), the home of the royals. Historically Trongsa Dzong is the most important Dzong and the largest as well. Also, must visit the Ta Dzong, an ancient watchtower, which houses a unique museum **Overnight (BLD)**

#### **Day 11: Trongza to Punarkha (4hours drive)**

Early morning after breakfast start your drive for Punarkha.. En route could stop for a short hike to the ancient village of Rinchen gang overlooking the ruins of Wangdi Dzong. It's amazing how they have managed to be together and preserve the old houses. Cross over Pelela Pass at 3,300m which forms the part of Black Mountain range that divides the country into east and west. Enroute could take a short break and go for short hike to the remote village of Rukubji or Chendibji. The drive is long, but the landscape is picturesque and worth. Upon arrival relax in the hotel.

**Overnight: Punarkha| Altitude: 1350m (BLD)**



### Day 12: Punakha Sightseeing

Morning drive to visit **Punakha Dzong (fortress)**, which houses the most elaborated temple in the country. On interest, one can hike half a day above the Dzong with a short climb offering a great view of the valley with houses spread all around and majestic turquoise **Punakha River** and its sandy river beaches. The hike ends after crossing farm field and a newly constructed footbridge. Your car will be waiting across the bridge.

After lunch could relax in the balcony of the hotel to enjoy the view and the nature. Or could go for an hour hike (uphill) to the temple of **Khamsum Yuley Lakang** overlooking the paddy field and the river valley. **Overnight: Punakha (BLD)**

### Day 13: Punarkha – Paro

Morning after breakfast drive to the old capital, Thimpu crossing over **Dochula Pass (3200m.)**. If the weather permits one can enjoy a spectacular breath-taking view of the highest mountain peaks of Bhutan at a site that stretches almost 180 degrees. Walk around the newly built **108 temples** and continue driving through the vegetation that changes drastically. En route just before arriving Thimpu for lunch then retracing your steps to Paro **Overnight hote (BLD)**



### Day 14:| Paro Sightseeing

Today is what you have come to Bhutan to experience, hiking to the Tigers Nest Monastery. It is a short drive to the start of your 3 hrs uphill hike to Tiger's Nest, the most revered temple in the country that literally hangs on a granite cliff overlooking the Paro valley. Most of the day will go on the hike. On the way back, if you have the energy and time visit the Kichu Lakang, one of the oldest temples in Bhutan which marks the beginning of Buddhism in the country. Hot stone bath available at an additional cost. Farewell dinner with your guide.

## **Overnight: Paro (BLD)**

**Day 15: Depart to Bangkok. After Breakfast** Your Tour Guide will drive you to the Airport for your departing flight

### **Some useful Bhutanese phrases**

Hello: Ku-zu-zam-po-la (meaning good health) Thank You: Ka din chey la See you: Lok jey gay Goodbye: Lus la “or” Laso la

**COST AUD 8850 TWIN SHARE based on standard 3-star hotels.** (Please note that the rate of exchange will fluctuate until final payment has been received.

### **Included:**

1. Accommodation on twin sharing basis in 3-star standard hotels
2. Three meals a day
3. English speaking guide
4. Visa arrangement
5. Government royalty and taxes
6. Transportation and sightseeing as per the itinerary
7. Museum visiting fees
8. Bottled drinking water 1 bottle daily throughout the trip
9. Bangkok/Paro/Bangkok flight
10. Airport Transfers

**Not Included:** Gratuities, one Bath, Hard and Soft Drinks

