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1. Geographical location

Paro is a town located in Bhutan. The city is one of the most important towns across the entire district. It is situated at an elevation of 7,200 ft which is around 2,200 m. The valley extends right from Paro Chhu to Tibetan border. Paro is surrounded by beautiful mountains such as the Himalayas Mountains and Mount Jumolhari which are an exquisite site when viewed from the valley.



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2. Neighbouring cities/countries

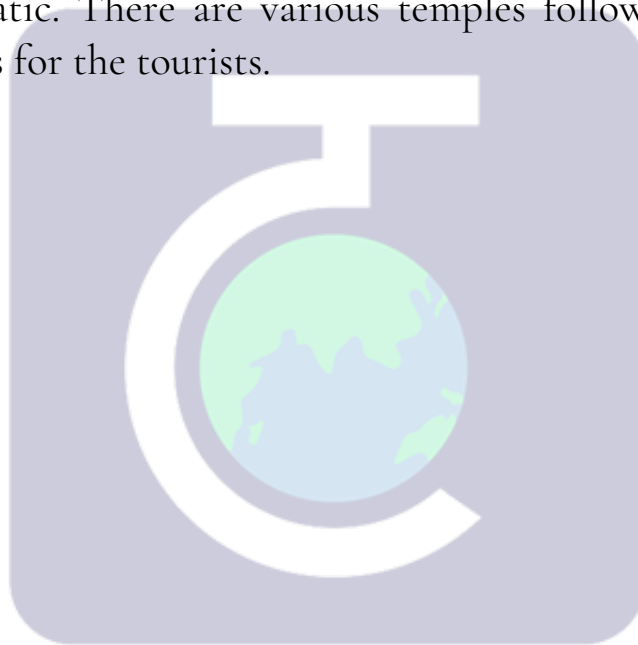
Paro Is Mostly Bordered By Other Districts In Bhutan And Tibet. Haa District Lies To Its West, Thimphu District Towards The South And Chukha District Lies In The South. Tibet Is At A Distance Of 297km From North Of Paro. Kathmandu, Capital Of Nepal Is 401 Km Away From Paro. Thimphu Is Around 50km From Paro.



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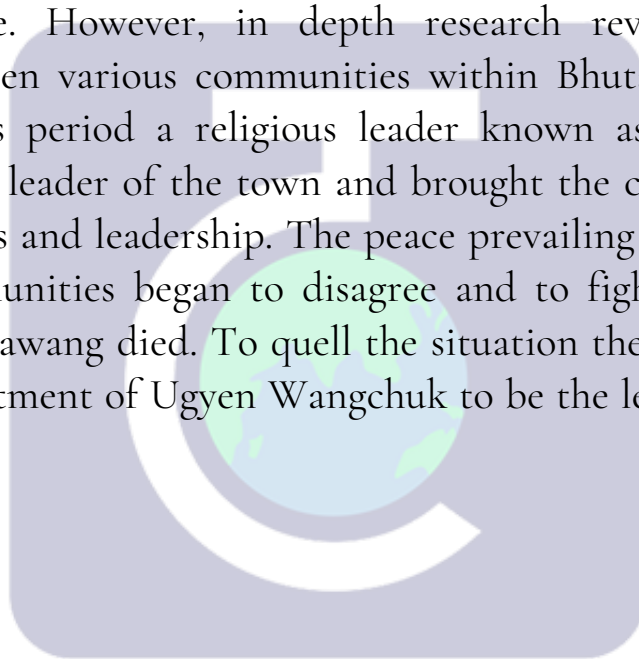
3. Significance

With a range of monasteries, there are other historical features such as the medieval bridge that connect with complex built Palace. The surrounding shops, institutions, buildings and restaurants have been built in an ornate style. You can find a number of traditional houses and elegant nature beautifying the essence of the city. The city is designed in a grid-style pattern making the flat valley at the bottom look systematic. There are various temples following Buddhism along with high-end resorts for the tourists.



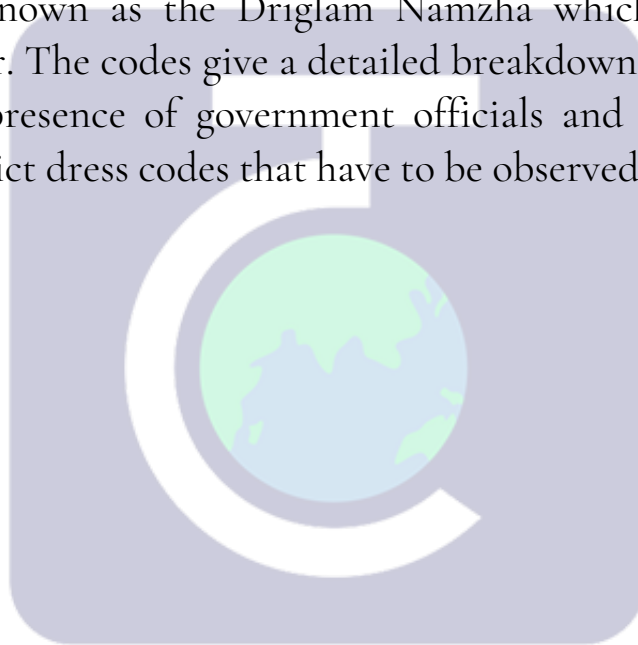
4. History

The history of the town of Paro Bhutan has been documented to begin from the beginning of the 8th Century. This is when the popular leader known as Guru Rimpoche visited this area in Bhutan with the main aim of spreading the Buddhist faith. His teachings have been well preserved in the 'hidden treasures' otherwise known as the termas. There haven't been many preserved records of the Bhutan way of life. However, in depth research reveals the strife and disagreements between various communities within Bhutan up until the 16th century. During this period a religious leader known as Ngawang Namgyal became the religious leader of the town and brought the communities together through his teachings and leadership. The peace prevailing within the town was short lived as communities began to disagree and to fight based on political associations after Ngawang died. To quell the situation the monks unanimously voted for the appointment of Ugyen Wangchuk to be the leader and his dynasty lasts until today.



5. Cultural identity

Paro's isolation due to surrounding geographical features have enabled to preserve its authentic cultural identity. There have been strict measures implemented over the years in a bid to preserve the cultural independence it values. Majority of the Bhutanese living in Paro believe in the Padmasambhava the founder of the Buddhism religion. Regulations have been put in place to preserve the culture and behavioural codes known as the Driglam Namzha which mean the rules of disciplined behaviour. The codes give a detailed breakdown on how to dress, talk and behave in the presence of government officials and the clergy. Men and women both have strict dress codes that have to be observed in a bid to Bhutanize all the people.



Index**6. Natural resources**

The rich cultural city has profound levels of natural resources. Calcium carbonate, gypsum, timber and hydropower are a few of the main natural resources found here. Many of the other resources such as petroleum is said to have commercial significance to the town. Some of the leading resources include fodder, water, forest products from non-timber, wood and water. The Paro Chhu River which emanates from the southern area of the Mount Jomolhari flows through the valley of Paro.



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7. Key site seeing places (paid and free)

7.1. Paid

7.1.1. National Museum of Bhutan

Located on the outskirts of the city, the National Museum of Bhutan is famous for the collection of traditional and old preserved items. The specific fungi, the varieties of the birds and the animal life portrayed here makes this place worth a visit. You can find a number of paintings, photographs and relics depicting the culture of Bhutan in detail.

Address : Paro, Bhutan

Location : 27.4289489, 89.42559789999999

Contact : +975 8 271 511

Website : <http://www.nationalmuseum.gov.bt/>

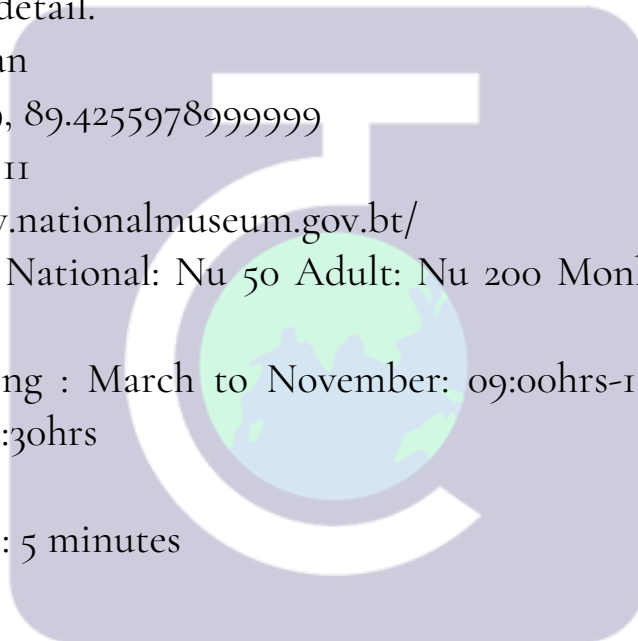
Entry Fee : SAARC National: Nu 50 Adult: Nu 200 Monks, Nuns & Children under 10 years: FREE

Open & Close Timing : March to November: 09:00hrs-16:30hrs December to February: 09:00hrs-15:30hrs

Time Required : 2

Expected Wait Time : 5 minutes

Buy Ticket : No



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7.2. Free

7.2.1. Paro Taktsang

One of the most iconic and remarkable landmarks of the city, Paro Taktsang is also known as 'The Tiger's Nest'. Renowned as the holiest places in the entire city, the spot is above the Paro Valley at a height of no less than 900 meters. Established in the year 1692, it remains as the meditation site of Guru Rimpoche.

Address : Paro Valley, Taktsang Trail, Paro, Bhutan

Location : 27.4918934, 89.36349569999999

Website : <http://www.parotaktsang.org/>

Open & Close Timing : Daily 08:00hrs-13:00hrs; 14:00hrs-18:00hrs

Time Required : 1.5

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.2. Rinpung Dzong

Rinpung Dzong is where you can experience the magnificence of the largest monastery in Bhutan. The gigantic place will leave you spellbound with the mythical view of people walking in monk robes and white scarfs. Enjoy the local annual festival of dance or tshechu that takes place in the main courtyard of the monastery. The breathtaking sight of entire Paro Valley can be seen from the top of Dzong.

Address : Paro, Bhutan

Location : 27.4264955, 89.42313899999999

Contact : +975 17 33 83 00

Open & Close Timing : March to October: 08:00hrs-18:00hrs November to February: 08:00hrs-16:30hrs

Time Required : 1

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.3. Kyichu Lhakhang

Embrace the spirituality present in the atmosphere of Kyichu Lhakhang. Get an insight of the cultural and artistic significance of this place, what resonates with the sacredness present in the breeze. The holiness of this monastery will introduce you to a deep sense of inner peace. The courtyard is empty, but is

adorned with 2 orange trees that are believed to bear fruit all over the year.

Address : Lango, Paro 12001, Bhutan

Zipcode : 12001

Location : 27.4411252, 89.37580830000002

Open & Close Timing : Daily: 09:00hrs-12:00hrs; 13:00hrs-17:00hrs

Time Required : 1

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.4. Jangtsa Dumtseg Lhakhang

Notice the rare view of Chorten in Jangtsa Dumtseg Lhakhang. As you go inside the holy relics, the wall paintings and frescoes will grab your attention. The temple is very dark inside, so you will have to carry a torch with you. You can reach different levels of Lhakhang on wooden ladders, where each level will take you to the different deities.

Address : Paro, Bhutan

Location : 27.4351853, 89.4135076

Time Required : 1

Expected Wait Time : 5 minutes

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.5. Tachog Lhakhang

Come to this place if you want to infuse your trip with some adventure that involves a swinging bridge. The soothing breeze is all you need to rejuvenate yourself while you are embraced by the mountains and a crystal clear stream of flowing water. You can listen to the flutter of small flags as the wind flows. The visitors are not allowed to walk on the complete bridge due to safety concerns.

Address : Paro-Thimphu Highway, Paro 12001, Bhutan

Zipcode : 12001

Location : 27.3310932, 89.5043536

Open & Close Timing : Daily: Open 24 hours

Time Required : 1

Expected Wait Time : 5 minutes

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.6. Drukgyel Dzong

Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Drukgyel Dzong is one of the most famous archaeological sites which was established in 1649. There are ruins of the Dzong after it was shattered by fire. During the period of power struggles, this was signified as a fortress and hosted the finest level of the armory.

Address : Paro 11001, Bhutan

Zipcode : 11001

Location : 27.5031823, 89.3232884

Time Required : 1

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.7. Chele La Pass

If you want to explore the best of the pine forests and snow-clad mountains, then Chelela pass is the right place for you to be. You can experience the thrilling ride among the hills before you reach the highest point. The exceptional beauty of peaks and passes covered with snow is sure to leave you mesmerized. The smooth roads take you through riveting sceneries.

Address : Paro, Bhutan

Location : 27.3698236, 89.34661389999999

Open & Close Timing : Daily: Open 24 hours

Time Required : 2

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.8. Paro Valley

Known as one of the best places for trekking, the Paro Valley is the thrilling gateway for many tourists across the world. With Rhododendron forests and unperturbed alpine lakes, you can climb the Takstang Monastery which is at a height of 900 meters. You can have a quick walk through Chelela for a beautiful view of the town.

Address : Paro, Bhutan

Location : 27.428684, 89.4163654

Open & Close Timing : Daily: Open 24 hours

Time Required : 4

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.9. Chencho Handicrafts

This place is known to have the best collection of local handicrafts and is particularly famous for weavings and embroidery. You can also get a glimpse of weavers working on the site and see how they intricately craft every item.

Address : Paro, Bhutan

Location : 27.4297639, 89.4122385

Time Required : o

Buy Ticket : No



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8. Adventure sports, Local sports, stadiums

There are a number of cycle enthusiasts in the city of Paro. As the city is surrounded with mountains and rivers, you will find many water sports and adventure sports played.



9. Events calendar

Month

Events

New Year (1st)

The city enjoys New Year with amazing enthusiasm. The entire city is lit with various lights, events are hosted with people inviting their friends and relatives for lunch and dinner.

Paro Tshechu (7th to 11th)

One of the most popular festivals across the city, Paro Tshechu is an interesting event where trained laymen and monks dance unfurling the living culture of the city.

10. Transportation hubs

The Paro International Airport is the nearest airport to the town. It is at a distance of around 3 km from the city centre. There are airport shuttle services that can take you to the city centre. You can even hire a taxi that charges around 80 BNT. There are no trains and buses/coaches available from the airport to the centre. Birpara is the main bus station here. There is no direct service of trains in Paro.



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11. Transportation cost

Most of the entire city is covered by foot. You can hire a taxi for long routes. However, not many of the taxis are metered. It takes a minimum of 80 BNT for a ride via taxi.



Index**12. Baggage allowance**

As there is no major public transport available, you can hire a taxi for your travel. The taxis do not charge extra for the luggage unless there are multiple bags and have overloaded it.



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13. Must try food and local savouries

You should try the varieties in the Bhutanese cuisine. A few of the unique items include Ema Datshi and Jasha Maroo.



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14. Restaurant & Nightlife

There are a number of restaurants spread across the entire city. However, the main hub of restaurants is found at the main bazaar.



Index**15. Average meal cost**

A single person can dine at any of the Paro restaurants at a cost of 320 BTN to around 1500 BTN. A meal at McDonald's can be purchased with 127 BTN. Domestic beer of 0.5 litres is available between 80 BTN to 150 BTN.



16. Tourist benefits

The taxation applied on the goods are based on the price of the items. Apart from the organizations of the civil society and the Royal families, every individual is subjected to the tax that has been imposed on the goods. The VAT rate is almost as high as 50%.



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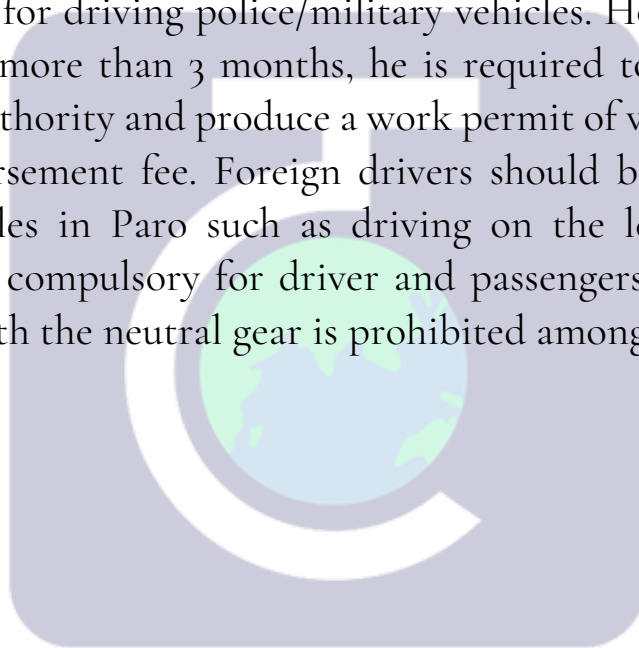
17. Essential local apps

While your travel to Paro, it is necessary to have the best apps on your phone. Cheaper Calls lets you call at any international number with cheaper rates. It is similar to rate cutter. Ride Finder is essential to find the nearest taxis and the routes it may be taking.



18. Driving

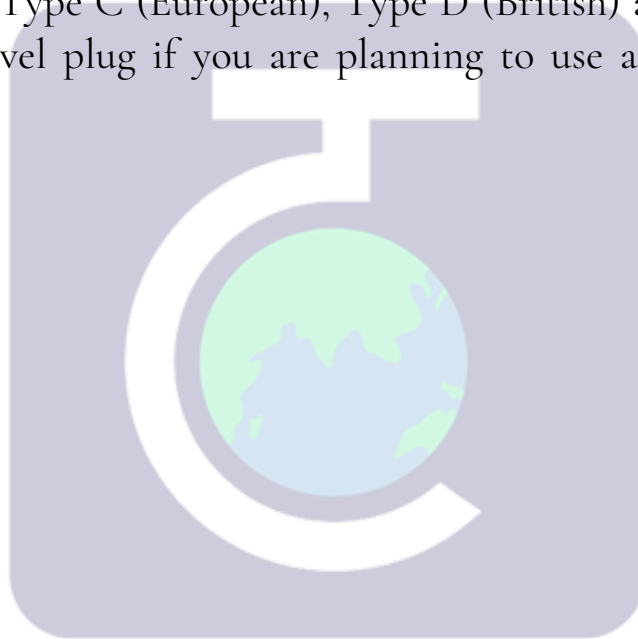
Although Bhutan is not part the Conventions of Road Traffic (1949 and 1968 respectively), it provides certain exemptions to foreigners from obtaining a local driving license. The exemptions only apply to a foreigner whose visit doesn't exceed 3 months and has a valid International driving permit, has a diplomatic passport and a valid foreign license or is a member of the armed forces and has a valid license granted for driving police/military vehicles. However, if a foreigner exceeds his visit for more than 3 months, he is required to endorse his foreign license in the local authority and produce a work permit of visa along with paying the prescribed endorsement fee. Foreign drivers should be aware of basic but important traffic rules in Paro such as driving on the left side of the road, wearing seat-belts is compulsory for driver and passengers, the alcohol limit is 0.08% and driving with the neutral gear is prohibited among others.



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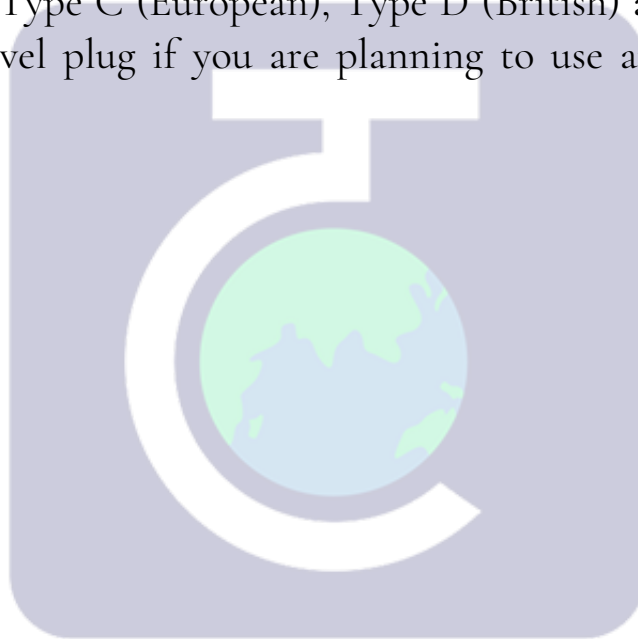
19. Travel essentials

The standard voltage in Paro is 220 volts to 240 volts with a frequency of around 50 Hz. There are many countries in the entire of Asia that uses the same standard voltage. A few of the electrical appliances may not function properly with this voltage. Hence, you shall need a step-down transformer or a converter to convert the higher voltage to a lower one to about 110 volts to 120 volts. There are three power outlets here - Type C (European), Type D (British) and Type G (British). You shall need a travel plug if you are planning to use an instrument from a different socket type.



20. Essential clothes

The standard voltage in Paro is 220 volts to 240 volts with a frequency of around 50 Hz. There are many countries in the entire of Asia that uses the same standard voltage. A few of the electrical appliances may not function properly with this voltage. Hence, you shall need a step-down transformer or a converter to convert the higher voltage to a lower one to about 110 volts to 120 volts. There are three power outlets here - Type C (European), Type D (British) and Type G (British). You shall need a travel plug if you are planning to use an instrument from a different socket type.



21. Local currency

Bhutanese ngultrum is the local currency of Paro, Bhutan. It is denoted as BTN or Nu. $1 \text{ USD} = 64.42 \text{ BTN}$



22. Change vendor's commission, ATM charges

The ATM facilities in Paro is limited. There are not many ATM kiosks you could find here. You are ought to use only MasterCard. The ATMs here do not accept international cards. Larger hotels and handicraft stores accept travel card of American Express and Visa. At ATMs, you would be charged with a surplus 4% on each withdrawal or swipe. Also, you can alternatively exchange your currency from a change vendor. They charge you an extra of around 0.5% to 1.5% on each transaction.



23. Staying connected

Airtel is one of the service providers that provides its service in the entire of Paro. It would be easier if you buy a Tashi or a B-Mobile SIM card. You can purchase a SIM card for around 100 BNT with a copy of passport ID. It charges as BNT 2 for local calling. The WiFi connectivity is a little slower as it is a mountainous area. You can recharge your phone with a data pack or ask for free WiFi service at your hotel stay.



24. Time Zone

Paro, Bhutan follows Bhutan Time Zone with UTC + 06:00 hours.



Index**25. Languages**

Dzongkha is the main language spoken here. However, you will find many people speaking English.



26. Political Scenario

The culture and the tradition has evolved much of the political system. In the year 2008, the constitution of the country was launched. The Executive, the Judiciary and the Legislature are the main dialects of the political government in Paro. The legislative body is formed with the opposition party along with the ruling political party and National Council.



27. Economic Scenario

Despite the fact that Paro is a very small town, there have been a number of recent developments with rapid growth in the economy. The basic healthcare industries and the cottage industries are the main industries serving the place. With abundant forest resources, the city has been brought a vast development in its rich biodiversity. Reaping the advantages of a tourist place, Paro has gained major economic growth from its tourism industry. The main industries in Paro are tourism, agriculture, livestock and mining. Paro Airport is the only international airport in Bhutan and is home to the national airline, Druk Air whose headquarters are located within Paro. The airport receives over 100,000 tourists annually hence tourism is a major employer and source of revenue for the town. Agriculture is a livelihood for over 89% of the population in Paro. The farms are small parcels of land cut into terraces on hillsides. Mining contributes 10% to the Gross National Product (GNP) while forestry contributes 15%. There are general stores and souvenir shops scattered all over the town selling high quality items such as artifacts, ornaments, clothes and farm produce.

Index**28. Religious belief**

Bhutan is one of the main places and known to be the only place that has retained the Mahayana Buddhism in the Vajrayana form as its religion. You can find a number of stupas across the entire town. Hinduism is also followed widely here.



Index**29. Visa requirements**

It is mandatory for the tourists to carry a valid visa except passport holders from Maldives, Bangladesh and India. As the city allows only a specific number of people at one time to enter the city, it is necessary to have all the arrangements made months before. If you hold a service, official or diplomatic passport of Thailand or Switzerland, you can visit Paro without any visa and tour for 90 days. There should be a temple permit if you wish to visit the temples outside of Paro.



Index**30. Essential vaccination**

You should get yourself vaccinated with routine vaccinations available for polio, measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), varicella (chickenpox), diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis, and flu. You should also get vaccinated for hepatitis - A, hepatitis – B, typhoid, malaria, rabies and yellow fever.



Index**31. Theft and Safety**

Paro is considered as one of the safest tourist destination in Nepal. You will rarely find any cases of theft. The reports of petty crimes such as pickpocketing and bag snatching are reported hence it is advisable for tourists to be vigilant. You should be careful about your belongings especially when staying in hotels. Apart from this there are no issues reported. You can enjoy your tour with peace of mind.



Index**32. Embassy/Consulate**

There are no embassies and consulates in the city. However, to find more information about the neighboring places you can visit <https://embassy.goabroad.com/embassies-in/nepal>.



33. Accessibility

Paro offers complete facility for inaccessible people to enjoy their tour. There are special tourist programs designed for disabled people. These provide wheelchair access tour for people who cannot walk or hardly walk. There are hotels which provide barrier free access. They also have trained guides who help you to explore the site.



34. Emergencies

Dial 100 for any police emergency. You can connect to 102 for an ambulance services and 101 for fire services. You can call 1234 which is special hotline number introduced by Nepal government for all types of emergencies. Paro General Hospital is the medical care center located in the heart of city accepting travel insurance.



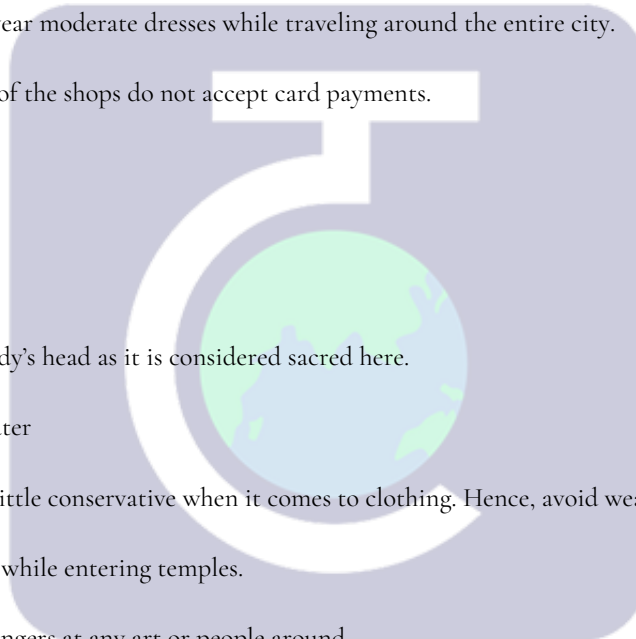
35. Do's and Don'ts

Do's –

- Ensure that the driver uses a meter while riding through taxis.
- Electricity is undependable here. Hence, carry a torch or a flash-light each time
- It is necessary you wear moderate dresses while traveling around the entire city.
- Carry cash as many of the shops do not accept card payments.

Don'ts –

- Do not touch anybody's head as it is considered sacred here.
- Do not drink tap water
- The Nepalese are a little conservative when it comes to clothing. Hence, avoid wearing sleeveless or revealing clothes.
- Do not use sun caps while entering temples.
- Do not point your fingers at any art or people around
- Do not smoke in public as there are designated smoking zones around.



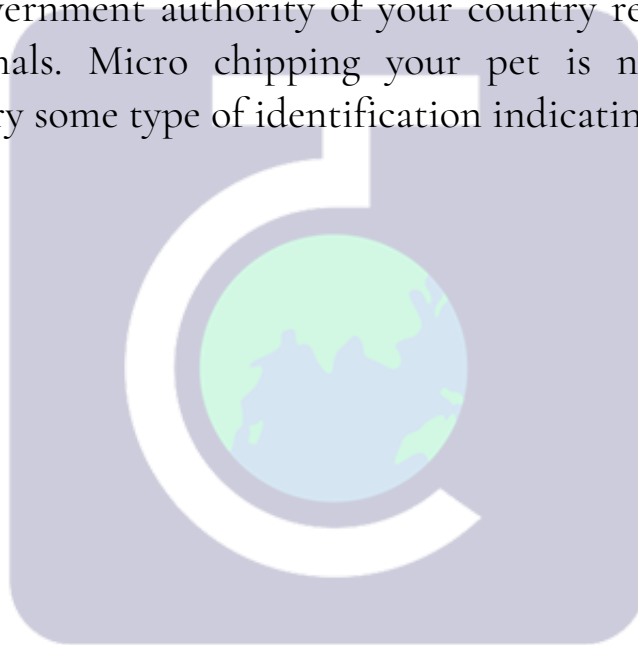
Index**36.Tipping basics**

There are no hard and fast rules for tipping in Paro. There is no fixed amount that you should give. You can also tip some amount or just see the quality of services and give something as a token of appreciation for their services. Tipping is not customary and it is a personal choice.



Index**37.Pet info**

The government authority of Nepal allows you to carry up to 2 dogs or cats. If your pet is not a dog or cat then you should get verification that your pet is not protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). If it falls under this category then you will have to apply for additional permits. You should have the Nepal Veterinary Certificate endorsed by the Government authority of your country responsible for import and export of animals. Micro chipping your pet is not mandatory. It is recommended to carry some type of identification indicating your pet ownership.



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Conclusion – Why to select this destination

Located within Paro Valley, Paro is a famous picturesque town endowed with magnificent beauty and unmatched attractions. Paro is a must visit destination in Bhutan where visitors explore its rich history and natural ambience. The town is home to over 150 temples and monasteries with some of them having stood the test of time since the 14th century. Among them is the iconic Taktsang Monastery commonly known as the Tiger's nest which is an awe-inspiring temple situated on sheer cliff standing 1000 meters above the valley's floor. Paro boasts of its proximity to Paro Airport which coupled by the endless religious and historical sites, make it a tourism haven with large and top-notch resorts. Tourists are treated to various dining options from cheap and mid-range restaurants to high-end hotels serving the very best Bhutan and foreign cuisines. Paro is also home to the National Museum located near Paro Ta Dzong. The museum showcases hundreds of Bhutanese artwork and artifacts such as handcrafted implements, traditional weaponry, armor and costumes. Other sites worth visiting include the Drugyel dzong locally termed as the Fortress of the Victorious Bhutanese, Kyichu Lhakhang (oldest shrine in Bhutan), Ugyen Pelri Palace, Jangsarbu Lhakhang among others. Interesting activities in Paro include participating in the Paro Tshechu festival (held around February to March annually), trekking to the Taktsang monastery or watching a dart game in the evening at the river bank next to the Bhutan Telecom office. Alternatively, tourists prefer shopping at the Sunday market which offers quality Bhutanese clothing and artwork.

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