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## Expedition Details

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Within the folds of Bhutan's mountains lie sacred temples, dazzling rice fields, and villages unchanged by time. On this magical journey, experience the wonders of the last Mahayana Buddhist kingdom of the Himalaya. Hike to ancient *dzongs*, meet local families, wander through serene monasteries, discover unique artistic traditions, and witness one of Bhutan's spectacular local festivals.

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FROM BANGKOK, fly to the Paro valley (7,500 feet) in Bhutan.

Transfer to our hotel and enjoy time to relax, or visit the seventh-century Kyichu Lhakhang. Tonight, gather for a welcome dinner.

*Zhiwa Ling Hotel (B,L,D)*

#### Day 4 — Punakha

This morning, witness a Buddhist blessing ceremony for the safe passage of our group throughout the kingdom. Then journey to Punakha, Bhutan's ancient capital.

*Meri Puensum Hotel (B,L,D)*

#### Day 5 — Punakha

After an invigorating hike to Khamsum Yuelley Namgyel Chorten, a spectacularly situated temple, be rewarded for your efforts with incredible views of the valley below. Then visit the Punakha Dzong, an impressive fortress guarding the southern end of the valley at the confluence of the Pho (male) and Mo (female) Rivers.

## *Meri Puensum Hotel (B,L,D)*

### Day 6 — Phobjika

Travel to the alpine valley of Phobjika (10,000 feet), considered one of the most beautiful valleys in Bhutan. It is also the largest wintering site of endangered black-necked cranes, which arrive in November and stay through March.

*Dewachen Lodge (B,L,D)*

### Day 7 — Phobjika

Against a backdrop of forest-clad mountains, Gangtey Goemba, one of the oldest private monasteries in Bhutan, rises dramatically from a cluster of hilltop cottages. After examining the workmanship of Bhutan's finest artisans at this recently restored temple complex, take part in a butter-lamp-lighting ceremony. Then set off on a half-day hike, stopping to meet a family at a farmhouse and visit a local school.

*Dewachen Lodge (B,L,D)*

### Day 8 — Thimphu

Travel to Thimphu (7,900 feet), the present capital of Bhutan and home to the royal family. En route, stop at the Dochu La pass (10,000 feet) to admire thousands of prayer flags fluttering in the wind and (weather permitting) 200 miles of Himalayan summits. Visit the National Textile Museum in Thimphu, where Bhutan's finest weavings and brocades—considered spiritual expressions that are admired for their sophistication and diversity—are on display. Tonight, get a behind-the-scenes perspective on contemporary Bhutan during a lively banquet with members of the government, local dignitaries, and respected professionals.

*Taj Tashi Hotel (B,L,D)*

### Day 9 — Paro

This morning, set off on a hike to the most famous pilgrimage site in Bhutan: Taktsang Lhakhang, or the Tiger's Nest Temple (9,300 feet). Visible from afar, this stunning monastery clings to a vertical granite cliff 2,000 feet above the valley floor. Spend the

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afternoon exploring Paro or relaxing at our comfortable, Bhutanese-style hotel.

*Zhiwa Ling Hotel (B,L,D)*

## Day 10 — Paro/Paro Teschu Festival

Perched majestically above the town of Paro, the Paro Dzong is one of the oldest dzongs in Bhutan and still serves as the administrative and religious center of the valley. Visit the dzong and enjoy a full day of celebrations at the Paro Tsechu festival. Bhutan's festivals are joyous expressions of its Buddhist culture. People travel from distant valleys and towns to socialize, celebrate their thriving Buddhist heritage, and enjoy one of the most important events on the Bhutanese calendar. This evening, celebrate your Bhutanese adventure at a festive farewell dinner.

*Zhiwa Ling Hotel (B,L,D)*

## Days 11 & 12 — Paro/Bangkok, Thailand/U.S.

Fly to Bangkok and check into our hotel. The following morning, transfer to the airport for your return flight, arriving home the same day.

*Novotel Suvarnabhumi Hotel (B,L; B)*

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### Optional Extension

- [Angkor Wat, Cambodia](#) - Post-Trip Extension, 4 Days

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### Related Trips



Bhutan Photo Expedition



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