



Experience. The Difference.

Bhutan Beckons

Festival Traditions of the Dragon Kingdom

16-day Escorted Tour
6 - 21 October 2027





Join Lyndon and Colette Hadden, your tour escorts, who have travelled to over 60 countries and counting! Lyndon has worked in travel all his life and owned a travel agency in Christchurch. After finishing up with full time travel agency work, Lyndon and Colette bought a beachside cafe in Sumner with their son Ben, which they recently sold. Lyndon and Colette have enjoyed reconnecting with Discover Travel and offering their extensive travel experience on escorted tours.

DISCOVER BHUTAN

Travel through the Kingdom of Bhutan to experience genuine connection with one of the world's most remarkable countries. Begin in charming Thimphu with its centuries-old traditions, then travel through the tranquil valleys of Punakha, Phobjikha and Bumthang to Paro. The journey culminates in a memorable ascent to the iconic Tiger's Nest Monastery in its dramatic cliffside setting. Join us to discover a fiercely traditional culture, deeply rooted in Buddhist philosophy, evident in its sacred monasteries and its endearingly friendly people.

YOUR TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Witness the colourful Tshechu Festival in Thimphu, with its sacred mask dances and vibrant rituals
- Enjoy spectacular Himalayan views from Dochula Pass
- Walk through rice terraces and the village of Yoakha to visit Chimi Lhakhang, Bhutan's famous Temple of Fertility
- Visit Punakha Dzong (fortress), built in the 17th century and arguably the most beautiful in Bhutan
- Journey through Bhutan's spectacular mountain scenery to Bumthang, visiting the historic Trongsa Dzong and a traditional weaving village in Zhugney
- Explore the whitewashed village of Ura set in the remote Ura Valley, a serene scene of fluttering prayer and fragrant pine trees
- Visit Taktsang Lhakhang (Tiger's Nest Monastery), Bhutan's most dramatic landmark. Well-worth the trek if energy allows!





YOUR TOUR ITINERARY

OCTOBER 2027

Wed 6 Christchurch > Singapore
Depart Christchurch to Singapore and overnight at our airport hotel.

Thu 7 Singapore > Paro > Thimphu
Depart for Paro, and on arrival enjoy a scenic drive through the valley to Thimphu, passing by rice fields, orchards and farmhouses. Check into the hotel and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure. (D)

Fri 8 Thimphu
Today's sightseeing in the Thimphu Valley includes a visit to the Memorial Chorten, an impressive stupa built in memory of Bhutan's third king. Overlooking the valley is Buddha Point with its impressively tall statue of Buddha Dordenma. Next visit Zilukha Nunnery (Drubthob Lhakhang), established in the 1970s, then stop at a viewpoint to see Tashichho Dzong, the largest fort in Bhutan. After lunch continue to the Institute of Traditional Medicine which collects plants and herbs from remote Himalayan regions. A small museum here holds a collection of more than 300 herbs, minerals and animal parts used by traditional doctors to prepare medicines. Next visit the National Textile Museum which showcases a stunning array of weaving and embroidery. Finish the day with a visit to the craft market which sells authentic Bhutanese crafts before returning to your hotel, with time to relax before dinner. (B,L,D)

Sat 9 Thimphu
Enjoy a second day exploring the Thimphu Valley area, driving to Dodina from where you'll take a short hike (up to an hour) through forests of oak, rhododendron and firs to reach Chari Monastery. Built in 1620 by a Tibetan Buddhist, this monastery is now used as a retreat centre; the view

from the top is stunning. Return to town for lunch and a visit to the Postal Museum and Philatelic Bureau. Here you can give them your photo, and they will instantly print stamps of your own image which you can use to send postcards back home (own expense). (B,L,D)

Sun 10 Thimphu
Today is your chance to experience the colourful Tshechu Festival. This 3-day Buddhist festival is held at the Tashichho Dzong, featuring traditional masked dances, spiritual rituals, and vibrant cultural celebrations. Today, being the first day of the festival, will feature the Shaw Dcham (Stag Dance) and Peling Ging Sum (Dance of the Three Kinds of Ging). (B,L,D)

Mon 11 Thimphu > Punakha
This morning journey by car just over 70 kilometres to Punakha. The road climbs for about an hour until you reach Dochula Pass at an altitude of 3,150 metres. Weather permitting, enjoy spectacular views over the Himalayas. After lunch, take a short walk through rice terraces and the village of Yoakha to visit Chimi Lhakhang, known as the Temple of Fertility. Built in 1499, this is a popular pilgrimage site for couples unable to bear children. Locals also visit the lhakhang to get a name for their child. On the return walk you may have the chance to visit local farmhouses and interact with the villagers. Continue to your hotel in Punakha for check in, with the remainder of the afternoon and evening at leisure. (B,L,D)

Tue 12 Punakha
Today's tour of the Punakha Valley begins with a visit to Punakha Dzong, often referred to as the Palace of Happiness and arguably the most beautiful dzong in the country. Next set out on a 45-minute walk to a beautiful four-storey pagoda-style stupa by crossing the famous Punakha Suspension Bridge, adorned with colourful Buddhist prayer flags. Visit Sangchhen Dorji Lhuendrup Nunnery and Temple which houses a learning and meditation centre for nuns, providing both religious and life skill training in embroidery, tailoring, statue making and painting. (B,L,D)

Wed 13 Punakha > Phobjikha Valley
This morning depart for Phobjikha (Gangtey) Valley, one of Bhutan's most pristine glacial valleys, known for its open meadows and pastoral charm. The journey climbs steadily through changing ecological zones, from subtropical river valleys to cool alpine forests. On arrival, check into your hotel. This afternoon enjoy a hike around the valley through forests and traditional hamlets. If time

permits, visit the Black Necked Crane Information Centre to learn about the valley's famed winter migrants, and the Gangtey Monastery, dramatically positioned on a ridge overlooking the valley. (B,L,D)

Thu 14 Phobjikha Valley > Bumthang
Continue today to Bumthang, the spiritual heart of Bhutan. The journey (approx. 6-7 hours) traverses dramatic mountain landscapes, dense forests and remote settlements. Stop in Trongsa for lunch and a visit to the Trongsa Dzong, perched above a deep gorge and historically linked to Bhutan's royal lineage. Continue the ascent toward Bumthang, passing Zhugney Village where traditional pedal-loom weaving can be observed. Check in to your hotel on arrival and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure. (B,L,D)

Fri 15 Bumthang
Today explore some of Bumthang's most religious and historical landmarks. Visit the sacred temples of Kurje Lhakhang; Tamshing Lhakhang, which features Buddhist paintings dating back to the 16th century; and Koncho Sum Lhakhang. Next visit a Swiss Farm where cheese is produced, and a factory brewing Bhutanese beer. End with a visit to Jakar Dzong, known as the Castle of the White Bird. (B,L,D)

Sat 16 Bumthang > Ura Valley > Bumthang
Today's excursion leads to the remote Ura Valley, home to one of Bhutan's highest inhabited settlements. The drive passes through alpine forests and open landscapes, with possible distant views of Mt Gangkar Puensum – the world's highest unclimbed peak. Explore Ura Village, noted for its whitewashed houses and pastoral setting, then return to Bumthang. (B,L,D)

Sun 17 Bumthang > Paro
Early this morning, transfer to the airport for your flight to Paro. On arrival, transfer to your hotel for check in. The remainder of the day is at leisure. (B,L,D)



Your Tour Itinerary (continued)



Mon 18 Paro

Explore Paro today. First visit Ta Dzong, an ancient tower which served as the watch tower to Paro Rinpong Dzong, until 1968 when it was converted into the National Museum. Today the museum offers displays of spectacular thankas (religious scroll paintings), ancient artifacts and an impressive collection of ancient weapons.

Continue to the 7th century Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the most sacred and oldest Buddhist temples in Bhutan. End with a walk down to Rinpung Dzong, the Fortress of the Heap of Jewels, an elegant administrative and monastic complex overlooking the Paro River. (B,L,D)

Tue 19 Tiger's Nest

A short drive through the Paro Valley takes you to the starting point for your hike to Taktsang Lhakhang (Tiger's Nest Monastery). Bhutan's most iconic landmark and religious site, the monastery clings dramatically to a sheer cliff face 800 metres above the valley. It was first built in 1692 at a cave where Guru Rimpoche, also known as the Second Buddha of Bhutan, meditated in the 7th century AD, and has been considered a sacred

site ever since.

The trek up to Tiger's Nest takes around 2–3 hours through beautiful, shady pine forests. As you climb the well-maintained but very steep trail, the monastery seems to appear and disappear in and out of the trees and the mists. There is a café located halfway, where you can take a break for refreshments. Finally, you'll arrive at the entrance to the Tiger's Nest, a rocky outcrop overlooking a vast chasm, with the monastery on the other side. Beneath the promontory of rock, and across the chasm from the monastery, the cliff drops a couple of thousand feet to the gorge below. Navigate the final steps that have been carved into the exposed cliff face to reach the monastery. On arrival, explore the several levels within and marvel at the three temples and incredible views. When ready, commence the descent to the valley below (taking around half the time, but equally dramatic) where your vehicle will be waiting to take you back to your hotel for some well-earned relaxation. (B,L,D)

Wed 20 Paro > Singapore

Early this morning transfer to Paro Airport for your flight home, transiting in Singapore. (B)

Thu 21 Christchurch

Arrive late morning.



Discover Travel

New Zealand owned and operated; Discover Travel is a premier boutique travel agency within the House of Travel Group. Specialising in travel to far-flung places, we have travelled extensively worldwide, returning regularly to ensure our knowledge is current. We aim to experience those places through your eyes and passionately share our knowledge of the destination with you. Our goal is to genuinely connect you with the location and its culture. Consequently, we like to think that our clients come home with the stories that everyone else misses.

Tour price from

Twin share price NZD\$22,995

Single price NZD\$25,295

Price includes:

- Economy class return airfares from Christchurch
- 1 night 5-star hotel in Singapore, 13 nights 4-star hotels
- Transfers and transport as per itinerary
- Meals: 13 breakfasts, 12 lunches, 13 dinners
- Sightseeing and excursions with local guide as per itinerary
- Admissions to all excursions
- Gratuities/tipping for all group activities
- Tour escort

Not included:

Travel insurance (mandatory), any meals/ beverages not specified, additional visa required if not travelling on an NZ passport, portage and items of a personal nature.

Please note:

Exploring this region often involves traversing uneven roads and staying in the best available accommodation. A positive attitude and a flexible mindset will enhance your experience, allowing you to fully appreciate the unique charm of this captivating destination.

To secure your place:

To confirm your booking, a non-refundable deposit of \$6,000 per person and completed booking form is required. Final payment will be due no later than 24 July 2027.

For more details and to book:

Phone: 03 364 3400 or 0800 747 737

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Mail: PO Box 2477, Christchurch

CONDITIONS: Price – the price of \$22,995 per person is based on twin share. Single supplement – for travellers wanting their own room, the tour price is \$25,295. The price quoted is for payment by direct bank transfer. Bank Transfer: 06 0801 0495605 02 – Discover Travel Worldwide Ltd, using 'Bhutan' as a reference. VISA or Mastercard payments will incur a 1.5% convenience fee and American Express a 3% fee. As cancellation fees apply, travel insurance is mandatory. Prices are based on a minimum group size of 10/ maximum of 16 (excluding tour escort). Should the group size be less than 10, excluding tour escort, a surcharge will apply.

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