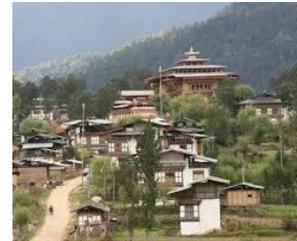


12 Days Bhutan – India Culture Tour

Bhutan is the Buddhist kingdom on the Himalayas' eastern edge, is a land of monasteries, fortresses, mountains beautiful valleys and dramatic countryside. **Tourism in Bhutan** began in 1974, when the Government of Bhutan made the effort to raise the revenue and to promote the unique culture & traditions to the outside world. Following places are very interesting and historical for all kinds of tourists.



Thimphu Capital, Punakha Festival, Dochula Pass, Gangtey Monastery, Haa Valley, Paro
Likewise there are many other interested places in Bhutan for Tourists.

IMPORTANT PLEASE:

Bhutan Flight: Bhutan has one single airport, at **Paro** and only one airline, **Druk Air**. The schedule is seasonal, but there are regularly scheduled flights from New Delhi, via Kathmandu, and at least one daily flight from Bangkok, through Dhaka or Kolkata.

Bhutan Festivals: There are two festivals, one in **October in Thimphu** and the other in **April in Paro**, during these times, additional flights are scheduled to handle the influx of passengers. During the monsoon season, flights are often delayed by cloud cover.

Be aware that the single runway at Paro Airport is located in a steep-sided valley with restricted VFR (visual flight rules) approaches. The airport has one passenger terminal, one cargo terminal and two aircraft hangars. There are also four check-in desks and one gate.

Day 01: (Arrive Paro Airport)

On arrival at Paro airport, by **Druk Airways** flight to Bhutan is one of the most spectacular in entire Himalayas. Make the immigration and custom formalities and our representative will welcomed you and transfer to the hotel.

Evening, take a leisurely walk around the town and Main Street and return for overnight at the hotel in Paro.



Day 02: (Full day at Paro)

Morning take an excursion to **Taktsang Monastery** (Tiger-Nest). It is believed that Guru Rinpoche, the father of the Bhutanese strain of Mahayana Buddhism, arrived here on the back of a tigress and meditated at this monastery. The first monastery was built in 1694 but a tragic fire destroyed most of the original building in 1998 and now has been restored in its original grandeur.



After lunch, visit Ta Dzong the **National Museum**. Today it has in its possession over 3,000 works of Bhutanese art, covering more than 1,500 years of Bhutan's cultural heritage. It shows various creative traditions and discipline, represents remarkable combine of the past with the present. It is a major attraction for local and foreign visitors.



Then walk down the trail to visit **Rinpung Dzong** situated at commanding height, overlooking Paro valley. This Dzong is symbolic as the religious and secular centre of all affairs of the valley.



Then evening visit a traditional farm house to get an idea on lifestyle of local people.

Overnight stay at the hotel in Paro

Day 03: (Paro – Punakha, 125 km, 4 hours)

Enjoy the breakfast then drive to ruins of **Drukgyel Dzong**. This ancient ruin is considered as the most beautiful and famous archaeological sites in Bhutan, is situated on a ridge in the upper Paro valley. Since its construction in 1649, had been served as an important base for defense in the region until 1951 when it was destroyed by fire. Even after the destruction, the ruins of the Dzong continued to be protected as an important monument linking people.



Then visit **Kyichu Lhakhang**, one of the Bhutan's oldest and most beautiful & sacred temples of the Kingdom, reflecting the introduction of Buddhism in Bhutan. The temple is popularly believed to have been built in 659 by King Songtsen Gampo of Tibet. Additional buildings and a golden roof were constructed in 1839 by the pen lops of Paro. The third king's wife, Ashi Kesang Wangchuck, Sponsored the construction of the Guru Lhakhang in 1968.



After this visit drive to **Punakha** across Dochula pass (3,080m) which heralds the most enchanting views of Bhutan. Until 1955, Punakha served as the capital of Bhutan. It has been destroyed by four fires and an earthquake in 1897 and has frequently been devastated by flood water coming from the great northern glaciers. The Dzong has now been fully restored to its original splendor.



Evening visit local market & overnight at the hotel in Punakha

Day 04: (Punakha –Thimphu,(90 km, 3 hours)

After breakfast, drive to Wangduephodrang, the last town in the west before arriving at the central region of Bhutan. It is typical small Bhutanese town, in the 17th century Wangdue, played a critical role in unifying the western, central and southern Bhutanese districts.



After lunch, drive to **Thimphu**, small charming city sandwiched in the heart of Himalayas. This is not only well-established in its wealth of museums or places of historic interest but visitors must wander along the main street and into shops, all of which are decorated in traditional style.



Afternoon free at leisure your own, overnight stay at the hotel in Thimphu.

Day 05: (Full day at Thimphu)

After breakfast, visit **Trashichho Dzong**, situated on the banks of Wang Chhu River. It is home of the National Assembly and the summer residence of monastic community. The Dzong is the impressive result of a redesign of the original medieval structure sanctioned by the Third King, HM Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, when he moved Bhutan's permanent capital to Thimphu.



Bhutan's National Library is located close and has the best collection of religious and historic literature in the Himalayas. The Textile and **Folk Heritage Museum** opened in year 2001 is fascinating testimony of the Bhutanese material culture and living traditions.

Overnight at the hotel in Thimphu.



Day 06: (Thimphu – Phuentsholing; 179 km, 6 hours)

Morning, after breakfast drive to **Phuentsholing** is a border town in southern Bhutan, and is the administrative seat of Chukha District & the point of entry for travelers arriving by bus from Kolkata and Siliguri and the town functions primarily as a place.



En route visit **Simtokha Dzong**, the oldest fortress of the Kingdom built in 1627, which now houses the School for Buddhist studies. Thimphu – Phuentsholing road was built in 1962 by Dantak, the Indian Border road organization. The drive on this route is very pleasant with numerous scenic spots Enroute.



Just before, arriving Phuentsholing, visit **Kharbandi Goemba**, the monastery built in 1967 by the late Royal Grandmother Ashi Phuentso Choedron, who had a winter residence here and is situated at an altitude of 1300 feet.

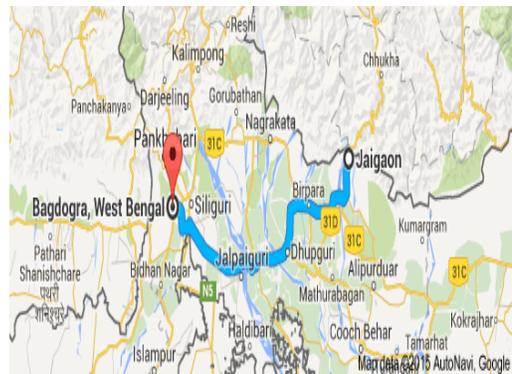
Dinner & overnight at the hotel in **Phuentsholing**



Day 07: (Phuentsholing – Jaigaon – Bagdogra –Delhi Flight)

After breakfast depart Phuentsholing for onward program to India.

Upon reaching Phuentsholing Jaigaon, one can simply walk through the border gate to Jaigaon. The gates are open only till about 10 pm in the night. After clearance



continue drive upto **Bagdogra Airport**. (150 km; 3-4 hrs drive).

Upon arrival at Bagdogra Airport fly to Delhi

Arrive & transfer to Hotel for overnight stay at Delhi.

Five flights per day, 2h 15m duration Bagdogra, India (IXB) to New Delhi, India (DEL)

12:00 pm → 2:15 pm Jet Airways 712 S M T W T F S IXB-DEL

12:15 pm → 2:25 pm IndiGo 472 S M T W T F S IXB-DEL

1:05 pm → 3:15 pm SpiceJet 286 S M T W T F S IXB-DEL

1:45 pm → 4:10 pm Air India 880 S M T W T F S IXB-DEL

2:15 pm → 4:30 pm Go Air 154 S M T W T F S IXB-DEL

Day 08: (Full day visit Delhi)

Morning after breakfast proceeds for full day visit to Delhi's important tourist points i.e. Jamia Masjid, Raj Ghat, Qutub Minar, India Gate and Chandni Chowk.

Jamia Masjid: one of the largest mosques in the world and in India, it was built by Shah Jahan. It was completed in the year 1656 and made it the biggest and best known mosque all over India. The name of Jama Masjid was put on the Friday noon prayer which used to given at this mosque. The capacity of this mosque is about 25000 people which are more than any other mosque in India. The history of Jama Masjid included the blood shielding work of about 5000 labours for making this mosque. The **cost of this mosque** at the time period of Shah Jahan was estimated to be about 1 million rupees. The mosque is a real example of great architecture that existed during the Mughal period. It has the blend of both **Hindu and Mughal style of architecture**.



Then visit India's tallest minaret **Qutub Minar**, made of red sandstone and marble and decorated with verses from the Quran. Qutub Minar is a World Heritage Site and has survived the ravages of time impressively. Qutub Minar is the favorite destination of tourists. It is a great masterpiece of Mughal architecture. The base of the Qutub Minar measures 14.32 meters and the top of the structure measures 2.75 meters. The bird eye's view of Delhi city from the top is amazing. The tower is so high that around 379 steps are needed to be climbed to reach the top. The verses from the holy Qur'an are carved on sandstone walls of Qutub Minar.



Next we will pass through **India Gate** – constructed in the memory of Indian soldiers who died in World War- I. Along the way, your guide will point out architectural and cultural features of these important monuments.

After some refreshment proceed to see the Chandni Chowk, in the evening return to hotel for overnight stay.



Then we will continue to visit **Lotus Temple**, is a Bahai's House of Worship completed in 1986. It serves as the Mother Temple of the Indian subcontinent and has become a prominent attraction in the city.



This day we will end by visiting of **Humayun's Tomb** of the Mughal Emperor Humayun in Delhi. The tomb was specially made by Humayun's first wife in 1569-70, a Persian architect chosen by Bega Begum. Inside the walled enclosure the most notable features are the garden squares (chaharbagh) with pathways water channels, centrally located well proportional mausoleum topped by double dome. There are several graves of Mughal rulers located inside the walled enclosure and from here in 1857 A.D; Lieutenant Hudson had captured the last Mughal emperor **Bahadur Shah II**.



Later evening return to hotel for dinner & overnight stay.

Day 09: (Delhi – Agra)

Today, after early breakfast, drive to Agra (180 Kms & 3 Hrs). Arrive & transfer to hotel.

After refreshment proceeds to visit **Taj Mahal**, is a white marble mausoleum located on the southern bank of Yamuna River in the Indian city of Agra. It was built in 1632 by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan to house the tomb of his favorite wife of three, Mumtaz Mahal. The famed mausoleum complex, built over more than 20 years, is one of the most outstanding examples of Mughal architecture.



It is built of shimmering white marble that seems to change color depending on the sunlight or moonlight hitting its surface. It remains one of the world's most celebrated structures and a stunning symbol of India's rich history.

Then we will continue our visit to **Agra Fort**, near the gardens of the Taj Mahal stands the important 16th-century Mughal monument known as the Red Fort of Agra. This powerful fortress of red sandstone encompasses, within its 2.5-km-long enclosure walls, the imperial city of the Mughal rulers. It comprises; Jahangir Palace, Khas Mahal, and Diwan-e-Khas and two very beautiful mosques.



In the evening visit the local market of Agra and then back to hotel for overnight stay.

Day 10: (Agra – Jaipur, 248 Kms & 5 Hrs)

Enjoy breakfast at your hotel, followed by an approximate five- hour drive to Jaipur. En route, visit the **Red Sandstone Complex** of Fatehpur Sikri, built in 1569 by Emperor Akbar and abandoned 15 years later due to water shortage. Visit inside the walls as your guide enlightens you about Hindu and Muslim Architectural style of the expressive construction, including Jama Masjid, Tomb of Salim Chishti and other historical buildings.



Amber Fort is located in Rajasthan state. It is one of the principal tourist attractions in the Jaipur area, located high on a hill. Fort was built by Raja Man Singh. It was built during (December 21, 1550 – July 6, 1614) in 16th century, Man Singh, one of the first war chiefs or the trusted general of the Emperor Akbar.



Enjoy and admire breathtaking views of **Maota Lake**. It provides a serene setting from which to look up at Amber Fort on the hillside. The fort and palace are reflected on the water's surface from the fortress. After lunch, enjoy your city tour of Jaipur, whose origins can be traced back to the 18th century, such as the magnificent palaces, temples, lush gardens and pink plastered stone that gives Jaipur the popular name "Pink City."



Later transfer to hotel for dinner & overnight stay at Hotel.

Day 11: (Jaipur – Tokyo)

Transfer to airport and fly back

Day 12: (Arrive back at home)
