



ADVENTURE ASSOCIATES OF WA, INC.

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CUSTOM TOURS

ESCAPE TO BHUTAN: THE DRAGON KINGDOM FESTIVAL TOUR & CULTURAL TREK

Journey to one of the world's smallest and most extraordinary countries in the great Himalayas... the "Dragon Kingdom" of Bhutan. Nested between India, Tibet and Nepal, Bhutan is a proud nation of one of the earth's best-preserved ecologies and cultures. Opened up to tourism in during the mid 1980s, Bhutan hosts relatively few tourists each year. The landlocked country is inhabited by two million practicing Buddhists. They greet you with a genuine smile and penetrating personal warmth. The breathtaking countryside scenery is full of thick pine forests, raging wild rivers, mosaics of rich cultivated fields, crafted Bhutanese style farm houses, prayer flags, and fortress like Dzongs and monasteries. Our local guides take us into villages providing expert interpretation of their culture. Visitors stay in local guesthouses, go to remote villages and hidden valleys, and immerse themselves in rare and enchanting encounters. We'll take a look at Bhutanese art forms such as thangka painting, textile weaving, woodcarving, and papermaking. Often you will witness demonstrations of the art forms and creations crafted by Bhutanese artists. You will attend and participate in festivals, where the Bhutanese gather in celebration wearing their finest clothes and jewelry. Dance rituals are performed in colorful dress and masks. A three-day cultural trek through bamboo and pine forests allows you to witness the fresh air and beauty of the Himalayan foothills. Join us! This is truly an adventure of a lifetime!

Trip Dates: October (Festival dates change annually)

Best time to travel is spring and fall.

Land Costs: TBA (13 Nights in-country) Number of Travel Days Optional

SAMPLE ITINERARY:

Travel Days:

Los Angeles / Bangkok: Check in three hours to your scheduled departure. On your own.
Arrive Bangkok: On your own.

Day 1: Bangkok To Wangdue Via Paro

At Paro airport, you will be received by representative guide who

will be waiting at the exit of the airport with your name on a placard. Check into Naksel Boutique Hotel and Spa in Paro. Have a leisurely lunch at the hotel and in the afternoon visit a village home or two around Ngoba (below Naksel) and interact with the village folks.

Visit Paro Rinpung Dzong and Taa Dzong or the National Museum.

Evening stroll around Paro town. Dinner and overnight at Naksel.

Day 2: Wangdue Via Paro

Start drive to Punakha/Wangdue (5 hours). The drive from Paro to Punakha follows the Paro River until its confluence with the Thimphu River from which point you will take the road along the Thimphu River valley to Semtokha. The road diverts to Dochula Pass 3150 metres pass. In good weather the pass provides a 180-degree panorama of the distant Himalayan summits. At the pass witness the 108 Druk Wangyal Stupas built in 2005 for the peace and stability of the Kingdom.

Lunch at the Dochula Café.

Descend from the pass, observe dramatic changes in vegetation. At the lower elevations, cacti, banana plants, poinsettias, and other semi-tropical plants dominate the exotic landscape.

In Lobesa, take short hike to visit Chimed Lhakhang in the valley of Lobesa. Chhi-Med (means no dogs) Lhakhang in the picturesque Lobesa valley. The temple is dedicated to the famous saint, Drukpa Kunley, affectionately known as the Divine Madman. The phallic paintings on the exterior walls of Bhutanese houses are attributed to the Divine Madman for his skill in warding off evil deities using ribald sexuality and outrageous behavior.

Visit the impressive Punakha Dzong (fortress-monastery), situated at the confluence of the Pho and the Mo Rivers. This huge fortress was built in 1637 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, the unifier of Bhutan, and served as the national capital until 1966.

Drive 20 Km to Chuzom and check into Kyichu Resort
Dinner and overnight at Kyichu Resort

Day 3: Wangdue To Chumey

Early morning start for Chumey in Bumthang. First drive to Trongsa. Your route crosses Pele La 3420m, which is marked by a chorten and an array of prayer flags. If the weather is clear you should see some of the highest peaks in Bhutan from the pass, which marks the boundary between western and central Bhutan as well as the western border of Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park. Beyond Pele La is Longte Valley where people raise sheep and yaks. If possible, visit a yak herder's camp and meet the family.

Drive down through rhododendrons and ferns, to reach reach Chendebji village. This was a night halt for mule caravans travelling from Trongsa during the reign of the 2nd King of Bhutan. Just below Chendebji village is the Chendebji chorten, a large white structure beside a stream. This chorten is modeled after

Swayambhunath in Kathmandu and was built in the 19th century. The last village before you reach Trongsa is Tangsibji, which provides a full view of Trongsa Dzong and its distinctive yellow roof.

Depart Trongsa to Bumthang, the spiritual heartland of Bhutan. This journey will take you over one of the most scenically beautiful routes in Bhutan via the Yotong La pass (3425m). IN about 1 1/2 your will enter the Chumey Valley (the first of the four valleys that comprise the Bumthang Valley).

Check into Chumey Nature Resort.

Visit the Yathra factory to see the famous woollen hand woven cloth special to Bumthang and also visit Zugne and Nimalung villages.

Overnight: Chumey Nature Resort

Day 4: Chumey

Today spend a full day at the Prakhar Duchhoed Festival held in Prakhar village. This is a unique festival celebrated every year in honor of Lama Thukse Dawa, son of the Treasure Discoverer, Pema Lingpa who lived in Bumthang valley in the 15th century.

Overnight: Chumey Nature Resort

Day 5: Chumey To Jakar

Drive 1 hour after breakfast to Jambay Lhakhang to attend the festival there.

(Jambay Lhakhang Festival)

The Jambay Lhakhang festival will be held Id in the court yard of Jambay Lhakhang Temple located in the heart of Chokor Valley. This is one of the oldest temples in the country built around the 7th century by a Tibetan King, Songtsen Geombo. The festival dances symbolize the fight between good and evil and this is also a thank offering time for harvest to the local deities. There's much gaiety, feasting and drinking on this day. Guests are invited to join the celebration.

Overnight: Yu Gharling Resort or River Lodge

Day 6: Bumthang Cultural Trek

Jakar To Ngalhakang

Distance: 11 Km

Time: 4 – 5 hours

Ascent: 180 m

Descent: 0m

From hotel, drive up to Toktobi small community village through Zangtherpo and Kurjey village. After Kurjey road is rough for half hour and 5 Km till Toktobi, From Toktobi, the Trail descends down for 5 minutes to Dur river, crossing over Suspension bridge over Dhur river then trail ascends up hill for 20 Minutes to the base of Thangbi Valley. From Thangbi the trail is flat for 30 minutes through tractor farm road passing Thangbi temple and Several farm house.

After passing Thangbi Village, trail descends down to Chamkhar River crossing the bridge to the right. From the bridge at few place trail is muddy, through the pine forest and flat small trail for 2 hours till you reach few village site of Ngang Lhaxhang. From the village sites cross a stream and trek up hill through buckwheat fields until you reach camp site at the base of a hill in meadow near a stream.
Overnight: Farm House

Day 7: Ngalhaxhang To Tandingang

Distance: 12 Km
Time: 5 hours
Ascent: 665m
Descent: 545m

From the camp, the trail winds uphill through woods and bamboo Forests. The last one hour to the Phephela pass at 3465 m. will be quite a strenuous climb and the trail is rough through boulder strewn pathways.

Box lunch at the pass.

From the pass the trail is downhill through rhododendron forests till you reach open yak pastures. There is an old stupa here and from this point it is another 2 hours' walk to the Tandingang Village.
Overnight: Farm House

Day 8: Tandingang To Ugyencholing

Tandingang is a model eco tourism village where you can experience farming and other traditional practices. Spend the morning exploring the village and taking part in farming activities.

After lunch, drive 45 minutes on a farm road to Ugyencholing Dzong overlooking the Tang valley.

Visit the Nunnery in the vicinity. There are just a few nunneries in Bhutan and the "Anims" (nuns) are dedicated women who have chosen this life style to do penance or to simply devote the rest of their lives to prayer and meditation.

Day 9: Ugyencholing To Trongsa

After an early breakfast, leave Tang Valley for Trongsa through Jakar and over the Yotongla Pass.

Enroute in Jakar, take some time to visit the following temples:

Membar Tso (Burning Lake) which is actually a wide place in the Tang Chhu. Pema Lingpa found several of Guru Rimpoche's terma here. A wooden bridge crosses the river and is a good vantage point to look down into the lake.

Jambay Lhaxhang, a 7th Century temples built by King Tsongtsen Geombo of Tibet. It is one of the two oldest temples in Bhutan, the other being the Kychu Lhaxhang in Paro. In the inner santum of the temple, there is the 3 stone slab steps

representing the Three Buddhas of the Past, the Present and the Future. Beyond the steps is the statue of the Future Buddha (Jo Jamba).

Kurjey Lhakhang is named after the body print of Guru Rinpoche, which is preserved in a cave inside the oldest of the three buildings that make up the temple complex. The first temple is the oldest and was built in 1652 by Mingyur Tenpa, when he was Penlop of Trongsa. The second temple was built by Ugyen Wangchuk, the first king of Bhutan in 1900 when he was still Penlop of Trongsa.

The third building in the complex is an elaborate three-storey lhakhang built by Ashi Kesang Wangchuk, in 1984 under the guidance of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche.

Tamshing Goemba (also known as Tamsing lhendup Tsholing, literally 'temple of the good message') was established in 1501 by Pema Lingpa and is the most important Nyingmapa Goemba in the kingdom. Pema Lingpa built the structure himself, with the help of Khandroms (female celestial beings) who made many of his statues.

Continue to Trongsa. On reaching Trongsa, visit the Trongsa Dzong, built in 1645, is a vast, white fortress that appears to grow directly up from the narrow green ridge on which it is constructed. It is one of the most powerful Dzongs and even today the crown prince of Bhutan must first become its Trongsa Penlop (governor) before he can become Bhutan's King.

Visit the Ta Dzong which is the Watch Tower of the Trongsa Dzong. The Watch Tower was converted into a Royal Museum on 10th of December 2008. The museum has on display about 224 items used over the years by the Wangchuck dynasty. You will see the Raven Crown worn by the first King in 1907 and many other objects of interest.

Overnight in Yangkhil hotel or View Point Resort

Day 10: Trongsa To Thimphu

Early morning leave for Thimphu (7 hours) recrossing the Pele La Pass, Wangdue district and the Dochula Pass. En route you can visit Rukubji village which is mid-way between Wangdue and Trongsa. The village is not far from the main road and they have rough roads connecting but one can take a leisurely stroll to see the village.

Check into Hotel Kisa at Thimphu. Afternoon -

Visit the Textile Museum

Visit the Folk Heritage Museum

Overnight: Hotel Kisa

Day 11: Thimphu Sightseeing

Morning: After an early breakfast, visit the week end market which will be one of the highlights of your trip.

Excursion to Tango and Cheri Monasteries.

Drive for about 45 minutes from Thimphu to embark on a vigorous hike up the mountain to Tango Goemba Monastery. Tango is one of Bhutanese' most important Buddhist colleges. Its name, meaning 'horse's head', is derived from the horse-head shaped rock at the top. It is a beautiful dzong built in the 1680 A.D. century by the 4 th Druk Desi, GyaltshenTenzin Rabgye. Today Tango is home to the a young reincarnate of Gyaltse Tenzin Rabgye. Meet with monks for discussions have access to many wonderful scenes of a monk's daily life.

Optional: After descending from Tango Monastery, enjoy a boxed lunch on the banks of the Thimchuu (Thimhu River) next to the picturesque Cheri Zam (Cheri Bridge.) This covered wooden footbridge is one of only a handful of traditional suspension bridges left in the Himalayas. After lunch visit the Cheri Monastery and view the meditation Centre.

This monastery was built by Shabdrung Nawang Namgyel and the cave where he meditated is still in existence there.

Return to Thimphu.

Afternoon do more sightseeing:

Visit Kuenselphug to see the gigantic statue of Lord Buddha

Visit Sangaygang for an aerial view of Thimphu. Just below Sangaygang you will be able to see the Takin (Burdocasx Taxicolour, the National animal) Zoo.

Visit the Courtyard of the Trashichhodzong the Central Secretariat of the government. Evening dinner in a local restaurant with a government official or business person.

Overnight at Hotel Kisa

Day 12: Thimphu to Paro

After breakfast, drive to Paro with a side trip to Chilela pass which separates Paro from Haa valley. This is one of the highest motorable passes in Bhutan and offers magnificent views of Mt. Jumolhari, Jichu Drake and other peaks. Go on the 1-1/2 hour hike and hoist a prayer flag high up in the pass. There are many prayer flags fluttering in the wind.

Picnic lunch at the pass and then drive back down to Paro. Check into Naksel Hotel And spend the rest of the day either enjoying the spa facilities or just relaxing. Dinner and overnight at Naksel.

Day 13: Taktsang Monastery Hike

In the morning, drive to Satsam Chorten 10 Km

from town and take a hike toTaktsang Monastery. The hike will take about 5 to 6 hrs round trip. Taktsang Goemba (Tiger's Nest Monastery) which is perched on a steep rock face at 2927 mt. or 9,678 ft. This is one of the most

important pilgrimage place in Bhutan. Legend says that the great saint Padma Sambhava, known as the second Buddha in Bhutan, came here in the 8th century on a flying tigress who was actually his favorite consort, Yeshe Tsogyel. The great Saint came to Bhutan to subdue demons that were trying to stop the spread of Bhudhism. The cave where the Guru meditated in 8th century can be still seen under the main temple.

Lunch at the Taktsang Cafeteria overlooking the resplendent Paro valley.

On descent from Taktsang Monastery, drive up the valley to visit the Drugyel Dzong, a ruined fortress. The dzong, although in ruins, holds great historical significance. It was from this fortress that the Bhutanese repelled many Tibetan invasions. On a clear day this spot offers a magnificent vista of Mount Jumolhari, "Mountain of Goddess" (Alt. 7329 m).

Visit Dingtse Lhakhang, on the other side of the river, is of an interesting architecture bus built in form of chörten. It contains one of most beautiful the collection of paintings of all the country, characteristic of the school Drukpa Kagyu.

Return to hotel for rest and relaxation and a session at the Spa.
Overnight: Naksel Boutique Hotel and Spa

Day 14: Paro To Bangkok

Departure for Bangkok by Druk Air KB 11:30 departing Paro at 11:30 a m and arriving in Bangkok at 4:30 pm (via Bagdogra, India)

NOTE: While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of the trip route and activities, rather than an inflexible schedule. The itinerary, hotels and flights are subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. Any additional costs incurred due to circumstance beyond Adventure Associates of Washington’s (AAW) control are the responsibility of the individual passengers. AAW does not accept any responsibility for refunds of unused arrangements due to any change in itinerary in any way by clients after the commencement of the journey or strike action prior to departure and while overseas. Prices are subject to change.

Land Costs☐	Deposit	RT Flight: BKK - PBH	Single Supplement☐	Trip Dates☐	Group Size☐	Difficulty☐	Activities☐
TBA☐	30%	TBA (non-refundable)	NA☐	October☐	3-12	No Experience Needed☐	Temples, Trek, Cultural Exchange, Lodges☐

Land Package: TBA (Approximate)

Druk Air arranged by AA.

Approx. International Air: **\$900** (LAX/BKK/LAX) Arranged on your own

Visa Fee: \$40

Airport codes:

LAX – Los Angeles; BKK – Bangkok; DEL – New Delhi; CCU – Kolkata/Calcutta;
KTM – Kathmandu; DAC – Dakha; GAY – Gaya (India seasonal); IBX - Bagdogra -PBH –
Paro (Bhutan)

A FEW IMPORTANT DETAILS ABOUT YOUR TRIP...Read carefully

Included in your Trip Fee: Standard accommodations (twin share); full meals board (BLD) = Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner; transfers, ground transportation; sightseeing with a national English-speaking guide and entrance fees; Bhutan visa authorization; Tourism Development Fund Tax; Royalty and taxes to the Bhutanese government; Tented camp, camping gear, porters and ponies, guide, and full board on trek.

Not Included in your Trip Fee: Visa fee (\$40), airport departure tax (included in tickets purchase), international airfare and any accommodations en route (i.e. Bangkok), Druk Air, meals not mentioned, camera/video fees at monuments, tips, travel/medical/evacuation insurance and items of a personal nature. Optional: single supplement fee.

How Strenuous is the trek: It is not a strenuous hike. We are out for two nights and the three days. The long day is in the middle, but we travel at a very comfortable pace and the pass is around 11,000 feet. The last day is shorter. We'll enjoy a wonderful museum that afternoon and enjoy lodging in the adjoining guest the monastery and museum. This overlooks the most fertile valley in Bhutan.

Bhutan Lodging, Infrastructure and Roads: Bhutan is a developing country. Resources at times, cannot match tourism pressures and demands. Your host country is very accommodating and will do everything to assist in a wonderful experience. However, there may be unexpected adjustments to the travel itineraries. Accommodations in some locations may be simpler than in others. Individual rooms may be warmed by fire or there are main heated gathering areas. Bedding is very warm. Electricity is generally available along with warm showers. Roads may be under construction and cause short delays. Roads are two-lane and follow the landscape. We are visitors and our intrigue has opened the doors to amazing kingdom. Travel with an open mind. Expectations need to be flexible.

Single Supplement: Single accommodations are not guaranteed, but will be provided at an additional cost of approximately US\$420. For passengers who are traveling alone and wish to share a room with another tour member, we will do our best to provide a roommate. However, if this is not possible, you will be required to pay the single room supplement prior to your departure from the USA.

Do I need a Visa for travel to Bhutan: Yes, if you have not received a visa application from us, call the office to request one via email. Complete the visa application and email or fax to Adventure Associates along with the visa fee of US\$40. A clear color copy of your passport personal information page(s) is required. This fee is collected in advance for processing. You will receive a clearance letter close to your departure date, once your visa has been processed.

Travel & Trip Insurance: We strongly recommend that travel insurance be purchased immediately following your registration. The time and expense that you have put into planning and paying for your trip warrant protection through the purchase of travel insurance. Our primary interest in the Access America travel Insurance package is that it covers "emergency medical transportation" - this is important when traveling and preparing for the unexpected. Emergency services are very costly. This coverage is very inexpensive in comparison. The insurance also protects you and your money from late cancellations, accidents or illness in remote areas, loss of

baggage, airline flight changes and other unexpected delays. The particular program we recommend (Access America) will cover "preexisting" conditions, if you purchase full coverage within fourteen (14) days following your registration or flight purchase. Information available upon request.

Transportation/Flight Arrangements: Upon your registration, Adventure Associates will work closely with you on your individual flight plans. Certain programmed activities are dependant on flight schedule - you should verify your flight itinerary with Adventure Associates **before** purchase. Druk Air flight arrangements will be done by Adventure Associates. Once purchased, Druk Air flights are non-refundable

How to Register: If you have not downloaded an application form from our website, please contact our office for a complete registration packet. Complete the application form and return it to our office along with the appropriate deposit. Upon receipt of your application, we will send you a confirmation and final details about your pre-trip preparation. For immediate confirmation, you may charge your deposit to Visa, Master Card or American Express by phone or fax.

Payment Schedule:

We accept checks, Visa, and MC, payments for tour costs; checks/cash for flights and visa fees.

Once purchased, Druk Air flights are non-refundable.

30% deposit due at time of registration (\$200 non-refundable)

\$1200 due six months prior to departure

Final payment due two months prior to departure

Cancellation & Refund Policy

If you must cancel prior to departure, the following fee will be assessed based upon our receipt of your written cancellation request:

Days Prior to Departure (trip destination)

90 or more \$200

60 to 89 \$500

45 to 59 50% fee

1 to 44 100% fee

Itineraries are subject to change.

No partial refunds are possible for any unused portion of your trip.

Penalties on airline tickets are subject to the individual air carrier's rules and regulations. Departure is defined as the date of the first flight, or the trip departure date as indicated on our Trip Schedule, whichever comes first.

Once a trip has been confirmed medical circumstances will not be considered as exceptions to our cancellation policy. However, if you have purchased a comprehensive Travel Insurance plan that covers cancellation, you may be able to retrieve some of the funds.

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