



## **AMALOKA ADVENTURE**

### **(6 Nights 7 Days Bhutan)**

Our itinerary is generally longer and has more activities listed on each day. We have initially done so to cater to our travellers who are fast walkers/climbers or generally can complete each of them quickly. If you would like to linger or have a slower pace, please do so. You should discuss your itinerary with your guide and prioritize the attractions which you prefer the most. The wider options is also meant to provide you with potential options if you a change of mind during your trip. If you have enough of fortresses and dzongs, you may want to go for a trek. If you are feeling unwell, you may want to go for slower pace such as visiting the museum.

We suggest that you use your itinerary as a guide rather than a fixed schedule. Unexpected stuffs always happen in Bhutan. One of our travellers actually met the King of Bhutan while descending from Taktsang Monastery and stop to have a chat with him. Another one went to a Museum that is unexpectedly closed as the guard was home for a nap. As Bhutan has just opened up to the world, do not expect their service to be in the same standard as visiting a Museum in London. However, they are one of the friendliest and jolly people you would ever meet.

## AMALOKA ADVENTURE ADVENTAGE

First 2 days in Bhutan Should there be any deficiency during your trip, do drop a note to the guide immediately, preferably during the first 2 days. It would be easier for us to change your guide, driver or vehicle when you are still in Thimphu or Paro should the need arise. We understand that Bhutan is often once in a lifetime trip, so we will try our best to remedy any deficiency on the spot.

**Private Guided Tour** This is an exclusive stay and you won't be combined with other groups during your stay. You don't have to be in a hurry throughout your private stay in Bhutan. Additionally, feel free to change your activities if you find something of interest while in Bhutan. You can, for example, drop by a village you pass by if you so wish. Consult your guide and he will be able to assist you. **Your Hotels, Travel Management & Tips** Your hotels will usually be confirmed within 2 weeks of your down payment.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

Can we choose our preferred hotels? Yes, you can. We will check the availability of your preferred hotels for you if you have specific preference. Otherwise, we will choose the best hotel based on the experience of our travellers. Certain hotels may charge additional fee on top of the standard normal rate. Can we further customize the itinerary? Yes, that's possible. We will be able to adjust the itinerary according to your preference. We have also created a list of experiential activities which you can do while in Bhutan.

### Day 1: PARO – THIMPHU

Elevation 2,320m | Drive time 1 hour



Welcome to Bhutan, the Land of the Thunder Dragon. Touching down at Paro International Airport, you will be greeted by your guide upon exiting the arrival hall. Today, we will take it easy to acclimatise to the altitude. Drive to Thimphu, check in to the hotel and let's have your first taste of Bhutanese cuisine.

### National Memorial Chorten [1 hr]

Meet the elderly generation in circumambulation at the National Memorial Chorten. Chorten means 'Seat of Faith' and Buddhists often call such monuments, the 'Mind of Buddha'. Treat yourself with the fantastic depiction of Buddhist teachings in the form of paintings and sculptures at this temple. As the name denotes this National Memorial Chorten was consecrated on July 28, 1974, in memory of the Third King.

### Buddha Point [1 hr]

Located at Kuenselphodrang Nature Park, the 169 feet bronze statue of Buddha Dordenma, Vajra Throne Buddha makes it one of the largest statues of Buddha in the world. The Buddha Dordenma symbolizes indestructibility, and it is said to emanate an aura of peace and happiness to the entire world. The Buddha statue will be completed soon, currently waiting for the completed paintings but visitors can drive up to the Buddha point and view the tallest statue of Lord Buddha. The view of Thimphu valley from the Buddha point is spectacular and beautiful, especially at night.

### Centenary Farmers' Market [1.5 hrs] –

Most of the Thimphu population congregate on the banks of Wangchhu River where the weekend market is held. Villagers from the Valley and other nearby places come to sell their wide range of agriculture products in the market. The market is by far the largest domestic market in Bhutan. A visit to the market provides great photo opportunities, as well as the chance to mingle with local people and perhaps buy souvenirs. [Operating hour: Every Fridays to Sundays 07:00 AM - 07:00 PM]

## Tashichhodzong (Thimphu Dzong) [1 hr] –

The “fortress of the glorious religion” was initially constructed in 1641 and restored by the Third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck in the 1960s. Tashichhodzong houses some ministries, His Majesty’s secretariat, and the central monk body.

Opening hour: Weekday 05:00 PM - 06:00 PM Weekend 09:00 AM - 06:00 PM Winter 04:00 PM - 06:00 PM

Walk Around Thimphu Town [1 hr] - Shop and walk around Thimphu town

## Day 2: Thumphu Elevation 2,320m |



Thimphu is the centre of government, religion and commerce. The capital has an interesting combination of tradition and modernity, and includes some of the most advanced and remotest parts of the kingdom. It is home to the Kings and the Royal family members, civil servants, expatriates, politicians, business persons and monks. Enjoy this cultural mix based on livelihood. Of culture we will take you through temples, dzongs, chortens, museums, handicraft stores, nunneries, parks and many more. Allow yourself to meet both traditional and contemporary artist.

## Simply Bhutan [1 hr] –

A living museum and a photo studio with a mission to engage and empower youth entrepreneurs through preservation, promotion and showcasing of Bhutanese tradition and cultural diversity. [Opening hour Summer 09.00 AM - 17.00 PM, Winter 10.00 AM - 16.00 PM]

### Paper Making Factory [1 hr] –

The paper factory uses traditional methods to produce the authentic Bhutanese paper known as Deh-sho. Located 1 km from Thimphu City. The factory uses the bark of two tree species, the Daphne tree and Dhekap tree in the manufacture of traditional paper. Visitors can observe the entire process of producing handmade paper.

### Changangkha Monastery [1 hrs] –

Built in the 12th century, Changangkha Lhakhang is the oldest temple in Thimphu. It is hovering over a ridge above Thimphu, near Motithang. Lama Phajo Drukgom Zhigpo, who came to Bhutan from Ralung in Tibet, chose this site to build this Lhakhang. The Lhakhang houses Chenrizig: an 11-headed, thousand-armed manifestation of Avolokitesawara as the central statue.

### Simtokha Dzong [0 hrs] –

Five miles from Thimphu, on a lofty ridge, stroll through the very first dzong, built in 1627 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. The Institute for Language and Cultural Studies is located here now. Enthral yourself with the most noteworthy artistic feature in form of over 300 finely worked slate carvings behind the prayer wheels in the courtyard.

### Post Office [0 hrs] –

Visit the post office in Thimphu to get customized stamps or to mail cards to your friends and relatives

### VAST Bhutan [2 hrs] –

Voluntary Artists' Studio, Thimphu, popularly known as VAST was set up in 1998 by a group of professional artists as a non-profitable and non-governmental organization (NGO). This informal organization was set up with the sole aim of providing an opportunity to the Bhutanese youth to participate and develop their potential talents as well as share social responsibilities through artistic explorations and other socially useful and productive

work. Its primary objective is to provide potential vocational skills and alternative positive use of free time and facilitate participation in the national and international art realm.  
Hotels in Thimphu

### Day 3: THIMPHU – PUNAKHA (Elevation 1,300m) Drive time 3 hours



We will set off early from Thimphu after breakfast. Then proceed to Punakha, the ancient capital of Bhutan, about 2 1/2 hours drive from Thimphu across Dochu-la pass. Once you cross the pass, you wind down into a warm fertile valley and meander along a gently flowing aquamarine river that leads you to the Punakha Dzong, the second dzong to be built in Bhutan.

Dochula Pass [2 hrs] - At 3,050 meter,

This beautiful pass located on the way to Punakha from Thimphu offers a stunning 360-degree panoramic view of Himalayas mountain range with its 108 chortens that was built by Her Majesty The Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck. The pass is also a popular spiritual destination for both locals and tourists.

Chhimi Lhakhang [2 hrs] –

The Divine Madman, Drukpa Kinley is a famous teacher with whom the phallic symbol is associated. Tales told by your guide would have excited you to visit Chhimi Lhakhang. The Divine Madman sits there though a statue this time. Do not miss the master's deeds painted on the walls. Japanese and several American couples visited this temple and were blessed miraculously with children. Ask yourself, do I need this Fertility Tour or not?

## Punakha Dzong [2 hrs] –

Placed strategically at the junction of the Pho Chu and Mo Chu rivers, the Dzong was built in 1637 by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal to serve as the religious and administrative seat of the region. It was here that the dual system of government was introduced in the 17th century and in 1907, enthroned the first King Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck. Damaged over the centuries by four catastrophic fires and an earthquake, the Dzong has been fully restored in the recent years by the 4th King Jigme Singye Wangchuck. At the Dzong enriches your trip with the opportunity to see the highest standards in woodwork. Do not miss the massive Kuenray, the Coronation Hall of all Bhutanese kings, the Dzongchung at the entrance to the Dzong and the cantilever bridge over the Mochu that has been recently renovated.

## Pho Chhu Suspension Bridge [1 hrs] –

The 160 metres Pho Chhu Suspension Bridge is known for the longest suspension bridge in Bhutan, which gives you spectacular views of Punakha Dzong and the Pho Chhu Valley.

## Day 4: PUNAKHA

Elevation 1,300m |



## Khamsum Yuley Temple [3 hrs ]

Drive time 1 hours] - [Duration 2 hour]

1 hour to ascend and 1 hour to descend] There is no temple in Bhutan built elaborately as this. This fascinating temple was built by the Queen Mother of the 5th King to bring universal peace in this world. The best of the spiritual art works are painted on the inner walls. There are also paintings of Buddhist teachers and tutelary deities of the country. This is a great temple to study the symbolic meanings from frescoes and sculptures.

## Sangchhen Dorji Lhuendrup Lhakhang [0 hrs]

- A temple and nunnery perched on a ridge and overlooking Toebesa, Punakha and Wangduephodrang valleys. The temple is consecrated by His Holiness and was attended by His Majesty the King, the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, members of the royal family along with hundreds of people from Punakha. The temple is dedicated to the bodhisattva of compassion

## Day 5: PUNAKHA –PARO

Elevation 2,280m |



## Paro Kyichu Lhakhang [1 hrs] –

Also known as Kyerchu Temple or Lho Kyerchu, is the oldest temple in Bhutan. Just like Jambhay Lhakhang in Bumthang, it is one of the 108 temples built by the Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo to subdue and pin down an ogress that was obstructing the spread of Buddhism. According to legend, all 108 temples were built in a single night. Go back in time and history and visit the 7th century Kyichhu temple. As the name suggests, the temple is a reservoir of peace, where you will feel at peace here. Next to the temple is the house that is turned into a museum dedicated to the late Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. One can come across photographs and other artifacts belonging to Rinpoche.

## Paro Dzong (aka Ringpung Dzong) [2 hrs]

Explore the Ringpung Dzong, which the locals call the ‘fortress of a heap of jewels’. Built in 1646 by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, the dzong stands on a hill above Paro Township. It is linked by the traditional cantilever bridge (called the Nemi Zam) over the Pa Chu where one may pose a photograph. Experience a walk up a stone paved path running alongside



the imposing outer walls. Once inside the Dzong, you will be welcomed by the monks, architecture and the ancient frescoes.

### National Museum (Ta Dzong) [1 hrs] –

On a ridge immediately above Rinpung Dzong is Ta Dzong, originally built as a watchtower. In 1968, Ta Dzong was inaugurated as the first National Museum, and now holds a fascinating collection of art, relics, religious thangka paintings, Bhutan's exquisite postage stamps, coins and handicrafts, together with a small natural history collection. Start or end your trip with a visit to this marvellous museum.

## Day 6: PARO

Elevation 2,280m |



### Are you ready?

We will be making the hike up to one of the key highlights in Bhutan today! Tiger's Nest aka Taktsang Monastery [6 hrs] - Often called the Tiger's Nest, perched on the cliffs, has awestruck many a visitor. "Trip to Bhutan is never complete without climbing to Taktsang", says one tourist. Indeed, it's true as the journey there fills you with spiritual bliss. For those not choosing the spiritual side, it is the dramatic, artistically built monument that becomes a hiker's delight. Take a trip to this dramatically set Buddhist relic hanging from a cliff. Experience the uphill climb as you ascend more than two thousand feet from the valley floor. A prominent Himalayan Buddhist sacred site and temple complex located on the cliff side of Paro Valley. According to legends, it is believed that Guru Rinpoche flew to this location from Tibet on the back of a Tigress (his consort Yeshey Tshogyal) and meditated in one of the caves. Guru Rinpoche performed meditation and emerged in eight manifestations, and the place became holy, thus gaining the name Tiger's Nest.

Paro Town [2 hrs] - Explore the main street of Paro town and check out if there's anything you will like to pick up as a souvenir

## **Day 7: Departure**



Amaloka adventure wishes you a safe journey back to your onward destination...

### **Druk Air Tickets**

Druk Air is the only airline that flies in and out of Bhutan. Druk Air fares are subject to change. Also note that Druk Air tickets are refundable, if cancellation is made prior to 45 days of your initial travel date. You may also reschedule up to one month from date of departure. On receipt of payment for the full fare, guests will be sent a copy of their E-ticket via email. Should your flight be delayed and you have to miss your connecting flights, Druk Air would arrange for your lodging in Bangkok. They would also arrange for you to take the next flight in the same airline. We advise that all travellers take the full-fledged airline for connecting flights since Druk Air would be able to reschedule your flight. Druk Air may not be able to reschedule your flight for budget airline.

## Guide & Driver

Your guide will be waiting for you outside the arrival hall. Both your guide and driver will be with you throughout the trip until you step into the departure hall. We will send their number together with your Visa. Do feel free to inform your guide of any adjustments/changes that will allow yourself a comfortable trip and he will try his best. Should you be interested to check out the local bar scene, you can also request that they accompany you to the pubs.

Your travel package to Bhutan will include

- 1) Visas for Bhutan
- 2) A qualified & licensed English-speaking guide
- 3) An experienced driver
- 4) Suitable transport for your group with experienced driver
- 5) All meals inclusive at selected restaurants
- 6) Accommodation at 3 star rated hotels
- 7) Taxes, surcharges, government contribution
- 8) Mineral water for the duration of the stay (foc, to get from guide)

\*Hotels are subject to availability at point of reservation

The package excludes:

- 1) Flight to Bangkok/Kathmandu/India/Singapore to catch a flight to Druk Air Flights.
- 2) Hotel Stay outside Bhutan e.g. to catch a flight to Bhutan
- 3) Travel Insurance
- 4) Lunch & Dinner outside selected restaurants e.g. 5-star resorts
- 5) Tips for guide and driver
- 6) Alcoholic drinks
- 7) Expenditure of personal nature e.g. shopping and hot stone bath

## Travel to Bhutan

Amaloka adventure handles the whole booking process on behalf of our guests, including Druk Air flights and visa applications (included in the package) but it is advisable to book well in advance to secure accommodation and seats on Bhutan's national airline Royal Bhutan Airlines- Drukair.

Please read this document in conjunction with your confirmation letter and pre-departure information

## **FACTS AND FIGURES**

Population	735,553
Time Zone	GMT +6
Currency	Ngultrum (Nu)
Country Dial Code	+975
Languages	Dzongkha, English
Airport	Paro Airport (PBH) 45 min to capital, Thimphu
Airline	Drukair (KB) From Bangkok, Delhi, Kolkata, Kathmandu and Singapore
Visa	Yes, except Indian, Bangladeshi and Maldivian Nationalities
Visitors	254,704 in 2017