

EXTENSION TO BHUTAN

September 19 - September 23, 2012



Sept. 19 – 23rd

Bhutan also known as the Dragon Kingdom is a rich mosaic of different cultures, traditions, life styles, ethnic groups, languages and belief systems. It is astounding that a country with a population of just over half a million speaks as many as nineteen different dialects and a few major languages. Diverse as it may seem, yet the Bhutanese socio-culture fabric is well interlaced and harmonized mainly due to the common thread of simple Buddhist values that the people share. Our cultural tours are the easiest way to get a taste of Bhutan. Each town has a Dzong (fortress) dating back from the 1600s, and many old temples and monasteries. In our trip, we will visit Thimphu valley (the capital of Bhutan), Paro and Punakha.

Itinerary:

September 19, Wednesday Fly to Paro and drive Thimpu. Overnight at Peaceful Resort or similar [B/L/D]:

You will be met by our representative at the airport. From Paro you will drive to Thimphu. The drive to Thimphu (capital of Bhutan) through the winding road along the Paro and Thimphu River takes about 1hr. The drive would take you through the picturesque villages of Paro and Wang settlement with traditional houses and well-terraced fields that go in harmony with nature. On the way visit the Simtokha Dzong, (5 kms before reaching Thimphu) built in 1629 by Shabdrung Nawang Namgyal presently used as the Institute of Language and Cultural Studies. Simtokha Dzong is also the oldest Dzong in Bhutan (Dzong means fortress) On reaching Thimphu, check in the hotel and visit the Memorial

Chorten, built in memory of the Late King in 1974. Proceed for lunch to the hotel.

After lunch, visit the National Library where ancient manuscripts are preserved. A little further is the Institute of Zorig Chosum (arts and craft). Drive to the Nunnery and visit the temple and also get a good view of the Thimphu Dzong. Drive to the radio tower to get a sunset view of Thimphu and also to see the Takins (national animal). Evening free to stroll in the city and shopping.

September 20, Thursday Thimphu – Punakha (77 Kms, 3 hours).

Overnight at Damchen Resort or similar [B/L/D]

After breakfast drive to Mothithang and visit the Takin (National Animal) sanctuary. Drive further up to the viewpoint and enjoy the view of Thimphu valley. Visit the Zilukha Nunnery and drive to Punakha via Dochula Pass (3150 mts). On a clear day, you can see the breathtaking views of the whole range of Eastern Himalayan Mountain ranges. On reaching Punakha check in the hotel.

September 21, Friday Paro (138 Kms, 5 hours). Overnight at Olathang

Hotel or similar [B/L/D]

After breakfast drive to old Punakha town and visit the recently renovated Punakha Dzong with beautiful woodworks and paintings. Drive to Wangdi and visit the Wangdi Dzong and Wangdi village town. After lunch in Wangdi drive to Dochula pass for the evening tea and to Paro for the night.

September 22, Saturday In Paro, Taktsang Hike. Overnight at Olathang Hotel or similar [B/L/D]

Start the day early with the hike to the famous Taktsang Monastery which is 300m above the valley floor. The hike takes about 4-5hrs back and forth to the road head. Have lunch at the Taktsang cafeteria or the Yak Herders camp restaurant. From Paro you will drive to Thimphu. The drive to Thimphu (capital of Bhutan) through the winding road along the Paro and Thimphu river takes about 1hr. After reaching Thimphu visit the Glorious Stupa, memorial of the 3rd King of Bhutan. Check into your hotel and later be free to explore the city on your own or just relax in your hotel.

September 23, Sunday Fly to Kathmandu, Sightseeing [B/-/-]

Transfer to the airport for your flight home