

6 Days Highlights of Western Bhutan Tour

Trip overview

Embark on a soul-stirring 6-day journey through the heart of Western Bhutan. This curated tour takes you through the kingdom's most iconic valleys—Thimphu, Punakha, and Paro. From the vibrant traditions of the modern capital to the serene beauty of ancient fortresses and the breathtaking heights of the Tiger's Nest, you will experience the unique "Gross National Happiness" that defines this mystical Himalayan kingdom.

- **Durations:** 6 Days
- **Destinations:** Thimphu - Punakha - Phobjikha Valley - Paro
- **Tour inquiry:** <https://asiachinatour.com/6-days-highlights-of-western-bhutan-tour/>

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Paro & Transfer to Thimphu

Your journey to the "Land of the Thunder Dragon" begins with one of the world's most spectacular mountain flights into Paro. After clearing customs, you will be warmly welcomed by your private Bhutanese guide and driver.

Instead of staying in Paro, you will take a scenic 1.5-hour drive following the Pa Chhu and Wang Chhu rivers to **Thimphu**, the kingdom's vibrant capital. Unlike any other capital city, Thimphu has no traffic lights and maintains a charming blend of modern development and ancient tradition. After checking into your hotel, take your first steps into this high-altitude sanctuary with a gentle walk through the town center, soaking in the serene atmosphere and the sight of locals in traditional Gho and Kira.

Accommodation: Hotel in Thimphu

Meals: Lunch, Dinner

Professional Suggestions:

*If you are flying from Kathmandu, Delhi, or Bangkok, try to request a seat on the **left side of the plane** for the best views of the Himalayan peaks, including Mt. Everest and Mt. Kanchenjunga. Upon arrival, we recommend taking it easy and drinking plenty of water to help your body adjust to the altitude (Thimphu is at 2,334m). Also, keep in mind that Bhutan is a plastic-free and tobacco-*

free country; smoking in public areas is strictly prohibited and can result in heavy fines.

Day 2: From Capital Traditions to the Sacred Valley of Punakha

Your morning begins with a cultural immersion in Thimphu. Visit the **National Folk Heritage Museum** to witness the rustic charm of traditional Bhutanese life, followed by a stop at the **National Painting School**, where students master the thirteen traditional arts. A unique highlight follows at the **Bhutan Post Office Headquarters**, where you can have your own portrait printed onto legal, usable postage stamps—a truly personalized souvenir.

After lunch, embark on a scenic 3-hour drive to the ancient capital, **Punakha**. The journey takes you across the magnificent **Dochula Pass (3,100m)**. If the weather is clear, you will be rewarded with a breathtaking 360-degree panorama of the snow-capped Himalayan peaks. Here, you will find the **108 Druk Wangyal Chortens**, built to honor Bhutanese soldiers.

As you descend into the subtropical Punakha valley, you will visit **Chimi Lhakhang**, the famed "Temple of Fertility," known for its unique blessings. The day culminates at the majestic **Punakha Dzong**. Often called the most beautiful fortress in the kingdom, it sits gracefully at the confluence of the Pho Chhu (Male) and Mo Chhu (Female) rivers, serving as a masterpiece of Bhutanese craftsmanship.

Accommodation: Hotel in Punakha

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Professional Suggestions:

*When stopping at **Dochula Pass**, the temperature can drop significantly compared to the valleys, so keep your jacket or sweater within reach. At the **Post Office**, if you plan to make custom stamps, have a high-resolution photo ready on your phone, or let the staff take a fresh one for you. Also, Punakha is lower in altitude and noticeably warmer than Thimphu; we recommend wearing layers so you can adjust easily as you descend into the valley. Lastly, please remember to remove your shoes and hat before entering the inner sanctums of the temples and Dzongs.*

Day 3: Terraced Fields & the Sacred Valley of Cranes

After breakfast, your morning begins with a refreshing hike to the **Khamsum Yuelley Namgyel Chorten**. This stunning stupa was built to promote world peace and stands majestically on a ridge overlooking the Punakha Valley. The 2-3 hour trek takes you through lush, terraced rice fields and pine forests. Upon reaching the hilltop, you will be rewarded with perhaps the most breathtaking panoramic view of the river and the surrounding emerald valley.

After lunch, you will embark on a 3-hour scenic drive to the glacial **Phobjikha Valley**, one of the most beautiful high-altitude valleys in Bhutan. Upon arrival, you will visit the **Gangtey Monastery** (Gangtey Gonpa). Perched on a forested hill overlooking the vast valley, this 17th-century masterpiece is the largest Nyingma monastery in the kingdom and is renowned for its intricate woodcarvings and serene atmosphere. As evening falls, enjoy the profound silence of this remote sanctuary.

Accommodation: Hotel in Phobjikha Valley

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Professional Suggestions:

*The hike to Khamsum Yuelley Namgyel involves some uphill sections through farmland; we recommend wearing **comfortable hiking boots or shoes with good grip**, as the paths can be slippery if there was morning dew or rain. **Phobjikha Valley is significantly higher and colder** than Punakha, especially after sunset. Many hotels here use traditional wood-burning stoves (bukharis) for heating, so be sure to pack warm thermal layers. Also, if you visit between November and February, keep your eyes peeled for the rare **Black-necked Cranes** that migrate here from the Tibetan Plateau—it's a spectacular sight for nature lovers!*

Day 4: Gangtey Nature Trail & Return to Paro

Begin your morning with the **Gangtey Nature Trail**, arguably the most beautiful short hike in Bhutan. This 2.5-hour gentle trek leads you through ancient blue pine forests and sun-drenched meadows. You will pass traditional village houses and crystalline mountain streams, all while enjoying panoramic views of the vast Phobjikha Valley floor. It is a peaceful immersion into the raw, untouched nature that defines the kingdom.

After a final local lunch in the valley, you will begin the 5-hour scenic drive back to **Paro**. As you descend from the high mountains, the landscape shifts once again from alpine forests to the fertile, willow-fringed banks of the Paro River. Upon arrival, check into your hotel and enjoy a relaxing evening to rest your legs in preparation for the legendary hike tomorrow.

Accommodation: Hotel in Paro

Meals: Breakfast in hotel, Lunch, Dinner

Professional Suggestions:

*The Gangtey Nature Hike is relatively flat and easy, making it perfect for photography—keep your camera ready for the vast open landscapes of the valley. For the **5-hour drive to Paro**, we recommend having some ginger candy or motion sickness bands if you are sensitive to winding mountain roads. Also, since you will be in Paro this evening, it's a great time to browse the local shops for **Bhutanese incense or hand-woven textiles**. However, try not to over-exert yourself tonight; you'll want to save your energy for the iconic "Tiger's Nest" hike coming up on Day 5!*

Day 5: The Iconic Tiger's Nest Hike

Today features the absolute highlight of any journey to Bhutan—the hike to **Paro Taktsang**, legendary known as the **Tiger's Nest**. Perched precariously on a sheer cliff 900 meters above the Paro Valley floor, this is the kingdom's most sacred cultural icon. Your trek begins with a steady 1.5-hour climb to the primary viewpoint, offering a stunning perspective of the monastery "clinging" to the rock. After a brief rest, you will continue for another 1.5 hours, traversing ancient stairs and a waterfall bridge to reach the entrance of the sanctuary itself.

After descending, your journey into Bhutan's history continues with a visit to the **ruins of Drukgyel Dzong**. Built to commemorate a victory over Tibetan invaders, the ruins now stand as a hauntingly beautiful monument. On clear days, the snow-capped peak of **Mount Jomolhari** (7,314m) provides a magnificent backdrop, offering one of the most iconic photo opportunities in the Himalayas.

Accommodation: Hotel in Paro

Meals: Breakfast in hotel, Lunch, Dinner

Professional Suggestions:

*The Tiger's Nest hike is moderately challenging due to the altitude; we recommend starting as early as possible to avoid the midday sun and the crowds. **Walking sticks** are highly recommended and can usually be rented at the base of the trail. Please note that **cameras, phones, and bags are strictly forbidden** inside the monastery itself; you will need to leave them in lockers at the entrance. To soothe your muscles after the long hike, we highly recommend trying a traditional **Bhutanese Hot Stone Bath** at your hotel or a local farmhouse this evening—it's the perfect end to your Bhutanese adventure!*

Day 6: Paro Departure - Farewell to the Kingdom of Happiness

Enjoy your final breakfast in the serene Paro Valley, soaking in the crisp Himalayan air one last time. At the scheduled time, your private guide and driver will meet you at your hotel for a comfortable transfer to **Paro International Airport (PBH)**. As you drive through the valley, you'll have a chance to say a final "Tashi Delek" to the beautiful landscapes and warm-hearted people who have made your journey so special. Your guide will assist you with the check-in formalities as you prepare to fly toward your next destination, carrying with you the peace and memories of the Last Shangri-La.

Accommodation: /

Meals: Breakfast in hotel

Professional Suggestions:

*Paro Airport is one of the most unique airports in the world, and the take-off is just as thrilling as the landing! For the best final views of the mountains, try to request a seat on the **right side of the plane** when checking in for your flight out of Bhutan. We recommend arriving at the airport at least 2 hours before departure. Also, ensure that any **antique-looking souvenirs** you've purchased have the official "Non-Antique Certificate" if required, as Bhutan has very strict laws regarding the export of cultural heritage items.*

Booking Policy

Cancellation Policy

Cancellation by Customer

- Cancellation received before 60 days: FREE of charge
- Cancellation received from 30 days to 59 days prior arrival date: 20% of total rate
- Cancellation received from 15 days to 29 days prior arrival date: 40% of total rate
- Cancellation received from 7 days to 14 days prior arrival date: 70% of total rate
- Cancellation received less than 7 days prior arrival date or No show: 100% of total rate

Children Policy

The rate for children applicable for one child sharing a twin or double cabin with two adults.

- For infant (<04 years old): Free of Charge
 - 04 - 11 years old without bed: 50% adult rate
 - 04 - 11 years old with extra bed: 75% adult rate
 - Above 11 years old with extra bed: 100% adult rate
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Tel:

Beijing: +86 904-6699-222

Chengdu: +86 904-6699-234

Lhasa: +86 904-6699-253

Cambodia: +84 904-6699-555

Address:

Address 1: Floor 4, Global Center, Chengdu, Sichuan, China

Address 2: Chaoyang Road No.21, Guilin, Guangxi, China

Email:

info@asiachinatour.com

Website:

www.asiachinatour.com