

7 Day Yoga Retreat & Cultural Tour

(SAMPLE ITINERARY)

Day 1

Your introduction to our enchanting kingdom begins with a flight over the Himalayas into Paro Valley; truly one of the world's most spectacular sights. You will view the world's highest, most majestic peaks and enjoy the view of the approaching valley with its primeval alpine forests, monasteries, temples and farmhouses nestled in splendid mountain isolation. After clearing customs and immigration your Bhutanese escort will drive you through the lush green valley of Paro to your hotel, The Zhiwa Ling. After freshening up, we will meet for lunch and spend a few hours in town exploring the shops and galleries. The first yoga session of the trip will be a welcomed treat after the long flights, enjoy a relaxing cup of tea as we reflect on our journey that brought us to The Last Shangri-La.

Enjoy dinner and the evening at leisure. We will gladly book spa treatments for those interested.

Day 2

After breakfast the day begins with a yoga/meditation session, followed by tea and reflection. Today's adventure begins with a visit to the Drukgyal Dzong, a fort built in 1647 by the great Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, father and unifier of medieval Bhutan, it once protected against Tibetan invasions. The Dzong was destroyed by accidental fire in the 1950s and is now left in ruins as an evocative reminder of the great victories it was built to commemorate. Explore the ramparts and on a clear day experience an unforgettable view of Mt. Jhomulhari (7314m). Next, enjoy a visit to Kyichu Lakhang, one of the 108 temples built in the 7th century by first Tibetan King, Songtsen Gampo. Weather permitting enjoy an outdoor yoga session with tea and reflection, followed by a late lunch. In the afternoon visit Ta Dzong, built in the 17th century as a watch tower for the Paro Dzong. Ta Dzong was converted into the National Museum in 1968, and it boasts antique thankas, textiles, weapons and armor, household objects and a rich assortment of natural and historic artifacts; it is considered to be one of the best natural history museums in Asia. Below the museum is the Rimping Dzong, a 350-year-old fort, centre of civil and religious authority in the valley, housing the governance for Paro as well as 200 monks. A short walk takes you to the base of the Dzong and across a traditional cantilevered, covered bridge. A short distance further is one of the innumerable archery grounds where we will hope to take in a match and enjoy the national sport of Bhutan, archery.

At the hotel, dinner at leisure followed by an evening yoga/meditation session with tea and reflection.

Day 3

This day begins with an early morning yoga/meditation session, followed by tea and reflection. After breakfast we travel to Thimphu, the capital city. Where we visit:

- The National Memorial Chorten built in honor of the late Majesty, King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk. The painting and images inside the monument provide a rare insight into Buddhist philosophy.
- Dupthop Lhakang, one of the few surviving nunneries in Bhutan.

- The National Library, stocked with Ancient Buddhist manuscripts.
- The Art and Craft School where traditional art is still kept alive through instruction in the art of painting Thankas, sacred Buddhist religious scrolls.
- The Folk Heritage Museum, which is dedicated to connecting people to the Bhutanese rural past through the exhibition of items and artifacts used in rural households.
- The handmade Paper Factory, where papers are made from the fiber of Daphne and Edgeworthia.
- Tashichho Dzong, seat of the national government and the central Monastic Body, including the summer residence of the Je Khenpo, chief Abbot of Bhutan. The Tashichho Dzong is open to visitors in the winter when the Je Khenpo and the Monk Body move to Punakha, the ancient winter capital of Bhutan.
- The Medicine Hospital and the Handicraft Emporium, which has all types of handicrafts for sale.

Lunch and dinner will be provided en route. Upon returning to the hotel in Paro, an optional yoga/meditation session will be provided for those interested, followed by tea and reflection.

Day 4

This day will be focused on yoga and meditation. After breakfast we will adjourn to The Tea House (or somewhere similar on the grounds) for a yoga/meditation session, followed by tea and reflection. Lunch will be followed by yoga practice and meditation.

Enjoy dinner and the evening at leisure. We will gladly book spa treatments for those interested.

Day 5

This day begins with an early morning yoga/meditation session, followed by tea and reflection. After breakfast we embark on a day excursion and hike to Chele La Pass and then continue on to the Kila Nunnery, the oldest of the remaining twelve nunneries in Bhutan. Lunch will be provided en route.

The early evening will include a yoga session followed by tea and reflection, with dinner and the remainder of the evening at leisure.

Day 6

After breakfast drive up north of the valley to Satsam Chorten for one hour hike to the viewpoint of the Takshang Monastery, Tiger's Nest. Weather permitting a spot along the water will make the perfect stop off for the morning yoga practice, focusing on breathing and stretching. The trail climbs through beautiful rhododendron and pine forest, many of the trees festooned with Spanish moss, and an occasional grove of fluttering prayer flags. Recess for a light refreshment at the tea house and then walk a short distance until you see clearly and seemingly within reach, the Takshang Monastery. Built in the 1600s, this incredible monastery clings to the edge of a sheer rock cliff that plunges 900m, into the valley below. Legend has it that Guru Padmasambhava, the tantric mystic who brought Buddhism to Bhutan, landed here on the back of a flying tigress. Lunch will be served at the tea house, followed by a

walk back to the road, and then a drive to the hotel. To soothe tired muscles after the hike, we offer our yogis a traditional hot stone bath with ara.

Dinner and the rest of your day at your leisure; we will gladly book spa treatments for anyone that requires.

Day 7

This day begins with an early morning yoga/meditation session, followed by tea and reflection. After breakfast, depart for the Paro Airport where your escort will bid you farewell.