



# Better Bhutan

## Four Days & Three Nights in Paro and Thimphu

### Day One: Arrive in Paro

Start your journey with a breathtaking flight over the great peaks of the high Himalayas right into the Dragon Kingdom's airport among the clouds at Paro (2,134m). On arrival at Paro Airport drive through the picturesque Paro valley with its quaint clusters of hamlets amid terraced paddy fields. Drive through the spectacular mountain views and peaceful countryside to Thimphu (2,286m), Bhutan's capital. Thimphu is a small, charming capital city sandwiched in the heart of the Himalayas. It is nothing like what a capital city is imagined to be. All houses and buildings are painted and constructed in traditional Bhutanese style.

After lunch, start sightseeing by visiting the Memorial Chorten, built in 1974 in the loving memory of Late His Majesty, King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, which exhibits a multi-storied Stupa and numerous paintings providing a rare insight into Buddhist philosophy.

Visit the Tashichoedzong (Fortress of the Glorious Religion), built in 1641 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal and reconstructed in 1961 when the Late King, His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, regarded as the Father of Modern Bhutan, shifted the capital from Punakha to Thimphu. Today, it is the seat of the central government where both the temporal and spiritual heads of the country preside.

Donner overnight in Thimphu

### Day Two: Paro

After breakfast you drive back to Paro, where you begin your sightseeing with visit to the Ta Dzong, the National Museum housed in an ancient watchtower, which has a fine collection of ancient Thangkha paintings, textiles, weapons and other artifacts; visit one of the most celebrated Dzongs in Bhutan, the Rinpung Dzong, or the Fortress of the Heap of Jewels.

Along the way you also visit Kyichu Lhakhang and Satsam Chorten. Kyichu Lhakhang is said to have been built by King Songtsen Gampo of Tibet in 659. It is believed that it holds down the left foot of an ogress, so large that it covers Bhutan and most of eastern Tibet.

Dinner overnight hotel

### **Day Three: Paro & Taksang Monastery**

Day hike to Taktsang Monastery. Taktsang meaning "Tiger's Nest", is built around a cave in which Guru Rimpoche (also known as Guru Padmasambhava) meditated. The monastery clings seemingly impossible to a cliff of rock at 914m above the valley floor. Enjoy horse ride one way to Tiger Nest but still some distance is to be covered by foot. For the local people it is a place of pilgrimage, but for a tourist, a hike up to the viewpoint opposite the monastery is exhausting, thrilling and mystical. The legend has it that Guru Rimpoche is said to have flown to the site of the monastery on the back of a tigress from Tibet and meditated in the cave there for three months. Although the main building of the temple was destroyed by fire in April 1998, the hike up to the viewpoint is worthwhile and fulfilling. It was reconstructed in the year 2000 and consecrated in March 25, 2005.

Drive to the end of the valley to look at the old ruined fortress of Drukgyel Dzong or the Fort of Drukpa Victory (14km from Paro), the historical site from the ramparts of which the Bhutanese repelled Tibetan invaders, time and time again. On a clear day, you will be overawed by the sight of the 7,315m white-domed peak of the sacred Mount Jhomolhari (Mountain of the Goddess JHOMO) that looms overhead.

You have time late in the day for a look around Paro town, which has many interesting shops

### **Day Four: Departure**

After an early breakfast, drive to Paro International Airport in time for your departure flight.