

# BHUTAN

"Land of the  
Thunder Dragon".

Escorted small  
group tour  
departing Sydney  
17 October 2010.



## Festivals of the Last Shangri-La

15 Days/14 Nights

Tour cost \$6970 pp ex Sydney\*

\*Tour cost based on 8 clients travelling with Natural Focus Safaris tour leader from Sydney, Australia.  
Tour will have to be re-costed for a group size fewer than 8 clients. Prices from other cities available on request.

**N**estled in the eastern Himalayas between China and India, Bhutan is a mountainous Buddhist kingdom where time seems to have stood still. Religion permeates every aspect of life and fluttering prayer flags, saffron-robed monks and lonely hilltop monasteries exist in harmony with virgin forests and alpine meadows. Due to tight regulations on visitors and having only opened its doors to tourism in 1974, few people have experienced its timeless temples, breathtaking scenery or gentle natured people.

"Festivals of the Last Shangri-La" includes the chance to see many of Bhutan's most important towns and temples as you journey to the beautiful region of Bumthang, Bhutan's spiritual heartland. Beginning in the lovely Paro Valley with its spectacularly-located Taktsang Monastery, this tour explores Thimphu, the historical winter capital Punakha and the home of the Black-Necked Cranes, the beautiful, Phobjikha Valley. Continuing eastwards to the town of Jakar in the Bumthang Valley, you will witness the amazingly colourful dances and religious pageantry of one of Bhutan's most important festivals at 7th century Jambay Lhakhang Monastery, and the Prakar Tsechu amidst a village atmosphere. This will be a special experience, as you stroll amongst the colorful masked dancers and the equally colorful audience dressed in their finest ghos and kiras. This trip offers a real insight into the cultural highlights of this magical kingdom.

For further details contact Jean Maxwell on 0417 248 773.

Download our Bhutan e-brochure from [www.nfs.travel/bhutan](http://www.nfs.travel/bhutan)

  
**NATURAL FOCUS**  
SAFARIS



Performers wearing the traditional Mahakala mask © Bhutan DOT

## FESTIVALS OF THE LAST SHANGRI-LA

**15 days/14 nights**  
**Hotels/Guesthouses**  
**Departs Sun 17 Oct**  
**Ex Sydney**

**Tour cost per person ex Sydney**\*†  
 Twin Share \$6970

\*Tour cost based on 8 clients travelling with Natural Focus Safaris tour leader from Sydney, Australia. Tour will have to be re-costed for a group size fewer than 8 clients. Prices from other cities available on request.

†Single supplement applies. We can try to arrange shared accommodation on request.

†Clients can arrive and depart Bhutan from/to different destinations, but must do so on the same days.

**Price per person includes:** Airfares Australia - Bangkok return and overnight accommodation in Bangkok, Airfare Bangkok/Paro return including taxes, Bhutan visa fee, accommodation, all meals, excursions, transfers by air-conditioned private vehicle, services of a local English speaking guide, 1 bottle of water per person per day for all surface travel.

**E**njoy two intimate Tsechu experiences set the Bumthang Valley, Bhutan's spiritual heartland. Villagers gather to witness unique masked dances and celebrations. Also visit sacred sites in Paro, Thimphu, Punakha and Gangtey.

### Day 1 Bangkok

Depart Australia on Thai Airways to Bangkok. Overnight at Novotel Suvarnabhumi Airport.

### Days 2/3 Thimphu

Early flight to Paro. Visit the Ta Dzong Museum and the 17th century Rimping Dzong before driving onto Bhutan's capital, Thimphu (2 hrs). On day 2 explore the highlights of Thimphu including the National Library featuring ancient Buddhist scriptures, Memorial Chorten, Tashichhodzong and the Zilukha nunnery. LD/BLD

### Days 4/5 Punakha

Drive to Punakha (5 hrs) via the spectacular Dochula Pass (3,050m). On arrival, visit the impressive 17th century Punakha Dzong. On day 4 visit Chimi Lhakhang – temple of the 'Divine Madman' followed by a hike through farmland to Khamsum Yuelley Namgyal Chorten. BLD

### Days 6-9 Bumthang

Depart for Bumthang (3 hrs), the spiritual heartland of Bhutan. Visit Tamshing Monastery featuring some of Bhutan's oldest wall paintings and Kurje Lhakhang, home to a rock featuring the imprint of Guru Rinpoche's body. Stay awake until midnight to catch the opening proceedings of the Jambay Lhakhang Drup Festival, including an unusual naked dance performed to sanctify the region. On day 6 witness the colourful masked dances and cultural festivities at 7th century Jambay Lhakhang. On day 7 drive a to the Chumey Valley to participate in the Prakar Festival. On day 8 enjoy a day walk to Ugyenchoing Palace - the first palace built in Bhutan now housing an eco-museum. BLD



© David Kneale

Spectacular views from Dochu La Pass

### Day 10 Gangtey/Phobjikha

Morning drive to the valley of Phobjikha, home of the historic 17th century Gangtey Goempa and Phobjikha Sanctuary, winter residence of the black-necked cranes (Nov-Mar). BLD

### Day 11 Thimphu

Drive to Thimphu with lunch en-route. BLD

### Days 12/13 Paro

Drive to Paro with lunch en-route. On day 12 walk (1.5 hrs) up to Takstang Monastery. BLD

### Day 14 Inflight to Australia

Early morning transfer to airport for flight to Bangkok. Connect with your flight to Australia.

### Day 15 Tour ends Australia

Arrive in Sydney where your tour ends.



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"Dance of the Four Stags"



© Taj Tashi

Taksang Monastery