

Zhemgang Festival Tour – 12 days

Bhutan traverse and Buddhist festival at Zhemgang (S-Bhutan)

Tour JTT- BH04: Guwahati - Gelephu - Zhemgang - Bumthang – Phobjika – Punakha - Thimphu - Paro - Takstang

Fixed dates: March 24 – April 04, 2018

On this compact and extremely rewarding tour you enter Bhutan in the Southeast from India. You'll visit the unknown and Buddhist festival at Zhemgang and then gradually climb up to the high valleys of Central Bhutan with their cultural highlights, like Bumthang and Punakha. Then you continue westwards to Thimphu and Paro, where the famous Tigersnest Monastery (Taktsang) will serve as a literal climax to the tour.

Itinerary

Day 01: (Delhi) - Guwahati – Gelephu

On arrival at Gelephu, our guide will meet you and transfer you to the Hotel.

Day 02: Gelephu – Zhemgang

Drive to Zhemgang, the Black Mountain Range. It's a beautiful drive of about 4-5 hours through the dense tropical forest rich in different species of trees, wild animals and flowers. Overnight at Zhemgang.

Day 03: Zhemgang – Halt

Attend to witness the Zhemgang Tshechu. (Tshechu means tenth day of the month in Dzongkha, the national language of Bhutan. So every tenth day of the month is considered as very auspicious day in Bhutan and most of the festivals are performed on



this date to honour Guru Rinpoche).

Day 04: Zhemgang – Jakar

Drive to Bumthang via Trongsa & Yotong La Pass (3400m). Bumthang is the general name given to a complex of four valleys – Chumey, Cheorkor, Tang and Ura – with altitude varying from 2600m to 4000m.

Day 05: Jakar – Halt

Here we will visit some of the most precious of the many temples and gompas (monasteries) that abound in this area. Jampa Lhakhang built in 7th century is one of the oldest monasteries of the kingdom. The Kurje Lhakhang was built in the 17th century to mark the place



where Guru Padmasambhava had meditated in the 8th century, leaving his body imprint on the rock. Furthermore we will visit the serenely situated Tamshing monastr and Lhodrakharcho Goemba, as well as climb up to the 17th century Jakar Dzong. Overnight at hotel in Bumthang (2750m).

Day 06: Jakar – Phobjikha

Visit the Ta Dzong, built as a watchtower to guard Trongsa Dzong and then visit to striking Trongsa Dzong, ancestral abode of Bhutan’s royal family. Drive to Phobjikha, on the way stop at Chendebje Chorten which is replicate of the Nepalese stupa called Shyambunath and Pele La, a 3300m high pass. Overnight at lodge in Phobjikha (2900m).

Day 07: Phobjikha – Punakha

We visit the Black Necked Crane Information Center. This rare and elegant bird breeds in high marshlands of the Tibetan Plateau but comes here to winter in large flocks. We hike the Gangtey Nature Trail and visit the scenic Gangtey Goemba, the biggest Nyingmapa Monastery in western Bhutan. On the way we visit Wangdi Dzong , built in 17th Century and presently its under renovation funded by Government of India. Then continue drive to Punakha. Overnight at hotel in Punakha (1300m).

Day 08: Punakha – Thimphu

After breakfast we visit Punakha Dzong, the winter residence for the Chief Abbot, the head of the monastic body and the old capital of the Bhutan. We hike to the Chimmi Lhakhang, the fertility temple. Couples without children, who suffered miscarriage, or an early death of the children come here to get the blessing. After lunch we drive to Thimphu, the modern capital of Bhutan. Overnight at Thimphu (2300m).



Day 09: Thimphu – Halt

Local sightseeing in Thimphu. Visit as time permits: National Memorial Chorten (built as a memorial to Bhutan's third king and as a monument to world peace); Changangkha Lhakhang, built in 13th century, Takin Zoo, the national animal of Bhutan: the National Institute of Traditional Medicine (Museum only) where herbal medicines are made up and dispensed and traditional medicine practitioners are trained; the Institute for Zorig Chusum, where students learn the 13 traditional arts and crafts of Bhutan; the National Library, with an extensive collection of Buddhist literature including many ancient Buddhist texts in block-printed format; Folk Heritage Museum, showing the ancestral Bhutanese way of living; Tashichho Dzong, ('the fortress of the glorious religion'), which houses the His Majesty's throne room and office for the cabinet secretariat, and the central monk body. Overnight at Thimphu (2300m).

Day 10: Thimphu – Paro

We visit the Hand Made Paper Factory, Buddha Point, and the view point of Thimphu Valley. Also the national Weaving Center, Simtokha Dzong, the first and oldest Dzong in Bhutan, and in the afternoon the National Museum. Overnight in the hotel (2250m).



Day11: Paro – Halt

Drive up till the road end and then hike to the Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) Clinging 900m above the Paro Valley where once upon a time the great saint called Guru Rinpoche meditated for three months. Today it's the sacred site for the Bhutanese people and everyone makes a pilgrimage once in their life.

In the afternoon we drive up the valley to Drukgyel Dzong, built in 1646 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal to

commemorate his victory over Tibetan invaders. We may also have time to visit the 7th century Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the oldest monasteries of the kingdom. Overnight at hotel in Paro. (2250m).



Day 12: Paro – Guwahati.

Drive to the airport for flight to onward destination.

Price

Basic price for land arrangement USD 2870 per day for 3 people traveling together in high season (March, April, May, September, October & November). USD 2270,- in other months (low season). This is all-inclusive.

Additional cost:

- For visa, Tourism Development Fund and bank charges: together USD 60 p.p. for two people traveling together)
- USD 40 surcharge per day for individual travellers, USD 30 for parties of two.

Cost for days spent in Assam (India) before entering Bhutan, and flights to and from Guwahati (Assam) or Paro (Bhutan) not included. Please ask for quotation.