

BHUTAN ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive in Delhi

Arrive at Delhi Airport, meet our representative and transfer to your Hotel.

Day 2: Fly to Paro in Bhutan

We have an early morning start for the transfer back to Delhi International Airport to check in for the Druk Air flight to Paro. This flight is one of the most spectacular of all mountain flights and as we descend into the Paro Valley there are splendid views of alpine forests, small monasteries, temples and flat-roofed farmhouses. The Paro Valley is enchanting. A single road lined with willows, clear mountain streams, families working in the rice paddies and one of Bhutan's most impressive Dzongs (fortresses) creates a memorable first impression. Before we go to our hotel we take a light lunch in the town. In the afternoon we have a sightseeing trip to Taktsang Monastery. This is one of the Buddhist world's most venerated pilgrimage sites and is known as the 'Tiger's Lair'. It is said that the Guru Rinpoche came to Taktsang on the back of a tigress and, whilst meditating in a cave, converted the Paro Valley to Buddhism. A number of temples have now been constructed on the site, and these occupy precarious positions, clinging to a black cliff high above the Paro Valley. The visit involves a two-hour climb on a steep footpath, but the views are well worth the effort. After spending some time at the monastery, we descend back to the road and drive to our hotel. We have some time before and after dinner to put our bikes together ahead of the start of our journey.

Day 3: Paro – Thimphu

The ride is gradual along the river side of Pa Chhu (Paro River) with the view of typical Bhutanese infrastructures and prayer flags along the hill sides, this vista will be your constant companion until Thimphu.

Paro to the check point is about 25km and from there you still have another 31 km to Thimphu city. It's a busy check point which controls all the vehicles moving out to Southern Bhutan. The place is beautifully marked with three different stupas from Nepal, Tibet and Bhutanese style.

There is still a climb of 5% gradient with the same view along the river of Thimphu. The road is quiet with little traffic. In between you will have few stops for photographs. After the long ride you will enter Thimphu city through a huge gateway. We will spend the night in our hotel in Thimphu, Total Distance 56kms.

Day 4: Thimphu – Punakha (70kms)

After an early breakfast we will be pedaling over the pass of Dochula (3,015mtrs) and cycling through the busy traffic of Thimphu for about 4kms until we reach Semtokha. From there we begin to climb with the view of Semtokha fortress ahead and the road is fringed with gorgeous blue pine trees. The climb that follows is a brilliant 17 kilometres of amazing cycling to Dochula Pass. You will be rewarded with spectacular views of the mountains, hundreds of prayer flags and the 108 stupas of Druk Wangyal Lhakhang Monastery. You have well and truly arrived at the Dochula pass (3015mtrs). Lunch will be

served. For every ascent there is a descent and after lunch we have an exhilarating descent of 36kms to Lobesa and on to Punakha where we will spend the night in our hotel.

Day 5: Punakha to Trongsa (137 kms)

Today will be a tough day in the saddle and we have an awesome climb of over 3300 metres over the Pelela Pass.

The first stage of our journey is 12km to Wangdue and then a further 10km to Chhu Zomsa. This is where the climb commences. As you exert yourself cycling uphill you will see the vegetation changing, from broad leaf to conifers and then to alpine shrubs. The temperature drops as we climb higher and higher. Eventually we will go over the summit of the Pelela Pass and from there we descend all the way to Chendupji. The temperature warms up and from the sparse shrubs at the top of the pass we are now back amongst thick lush vegetation interspersed with waterfalls. We will continue cycling through Bjee Zam and onto Trongsa where we will spend the night in our hotel.

Day 6: Trongsa to Bumthang (66km)

After yesterday's epic ride over the Pelela Pass we have some more fun in store with another big climb of 30km to reach Yotongla pass. As ever in Bhutan, which lies on the southern slopes of the eastern Himalayas the views get better as you ascend higher. Once we reach the summit of Yotongla we will stop for a picnic lunch and then we have another superb descent of some 36km cycling through blue pine forest, and fields of wheat to eventually reach Bumthang where we will spend the night in our hotel.

Day 7: Rest Day.

Day 8: Bumthang Via Ura to Thrumshingla Park (90km)

After a relaxing day in Bumthang we start with early breakfast and then we have another exhilarating cycle ride of 66 km up to Ura. The first 14km of the ride is a gradual ascent and the road really climbs upwards until we finally reach the Ura Pass at 3000m above sea-level. From the summit we have a brilliant 20km descent and then around 40km of rolling terrain to reach the foot of the Thrumshingla pass. We will spend the night in a nearby hotel.

Day 9: Thrumshingla Pass to Mongar (88km)

Today promises to be full of fantastic views of the Himalayas. As our accommodation is at the foot of the Thrumshingla Pass we are well placed to commence our ride of 30km uphill all the way to the summit, which lies at 3500m above sea-level. As we ascend the weather will be cool, however once at the summit we have a now familiar descent, this time 30km of stunning downhill to reach Mongar where we will be spending the night.

Day 10: Mongar to Trashigang (71km)

We begin with a climb up to the summit of the Korila Pass and from there we descend for 21km into the heat of the Yadi Valley. From the village of Yadi we have a steady, undulating cycle ride into Trashigang which overlooks the Drangme Chhu River. We will be spending the evening at our hotel in Trashigang.

Day 11: Trashigang to Khaling (90km)

We will depart from our hotel in Trashigang and stretch our legs with a ride to Kanglung and then ascend to the Yongphula Pass, we have a great descent from the summit and then some undulating terrain all the way to our hotel in Khaling.

Day 12: Khaling to Samdrup Dzongkhar (89km)

Today's cycling will have a bitter-sweet feel as it is the last day on our bikes, the terrain is almost flat as we make our way through the forest and valleys to our final destination at Samdrup Dzongkhar where we will be spending the night in our hotel.

Day 13: Drive to Guwahati Airport, fly to Delhi

This morning we have a 3 hour drive to Guwahati, the capital of Assam, where we complete the formalities for our flight to Delhi. Upon arrival in Delhi you will be transferred to your hotel.

Day 14: Depart Delhi

Early morning transfer from your hotel to Delhi Airport in time for your departure home.