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The kingdom's capital is home to some 100,000 residents, including the royal family. This bustling small town is the main center of commerce, religion and government in the country. The juxtaposition of ancient traditions and modernity makes Thimphu an ideal place for visitors to break away from their tour itinerary to immerse themselves in the modern lifestyle of Bhutan.

Thimphu is the most modern city in Bhutan with an abundance of restaurants, internet cafes, nightclubs and shopping malls. Nevertheless, it still retains its cultural identity and values among the signs of modernization. Thimphu is one of the few cities in Bhutan that have been equipped with ATMs banking services and is a good place to stock up on some currency. There are several attractions in Thimphu, such as the National Post Office, the Clock Tower Square, the Motitan Takin Nature Reserve, the Monasteries of Tango and Chari, The Buddha Dordenma, the Chorten National Memorial, the Centennial Farmers Market, Semtoha Dzong, to name a few. They form the most important tourist attractions in the capital. Bhutan's culture is fully reflected in Thimphu in relation to religion, customs, national dress code, monastic practice of monasteries, music, dance, literature and media. Tshechu is an important festival where mask dancing, popularly known as Chams, is performed in the courtyards of Tashichho Dzong in Thimphu. It is a four-day festival held every year in the autumn (September/October) on dates corresponding to the Bhutanese calendar. One of the most curious features of Thimphu is that it is the only capital in the world that does not use traffic lights. Instead, at several major intersections, police officers stand in carefully decorated booths (small pavilions), directing movement with exaggerated hand movements. Bhutan, Thunder Dragon Land. Is there another country on the planet with a cooler catchphrase? Bhutan sounds exotic, mystical, almost otherworldly. Well, it feels that way too. Bhutan is so tiny that it is a tiny country straddling the Himalayas. If you want to see Bhutan before it gets to be upgraded, go now. It is a feast for the eyes and the opening eye of the cultural experience. Explore the zongs, admire the Himalayas, eat chili and cheese, learn about Buddhism and learn one of the most unique journeys of your life. The official language is Dzongha. Nepalese is spoken throughout southern Bhutan. Many people will speak and understand English and Hindi. 220V 50 Hz. Adapters D, F, G. Bhutanese Ngultrum (BTN). \$1 USD is approximately 76 BTN. All visitors to Bhutan (except India, Bangladesh and maldives) must have a visa. All visitors must also book a trip through a local tour operator. This tour operator will receive a visa after The cost of the trip will be paid in full. Also called called A daily package, it is a daily fee, per person to visit Bhutan. This fare covers your stay at a 3-star hotel (4 and 5 star accommodations require extra fees), all meals, a licensed Bhutanese guide, all domestic transportation, and camping equipment if you are going hiking. This fee also includes a tax and royalty fee of \$65. The fee is \$200 per person per day for January, February, June, July, August and December. The fee is \$250 per person per day during March, April, May, September, October and November. Children under the age of five are free. Children between the ages of 5 and 12 receive a 50% discount. Your payment must be connected to Bhutan National Bank before your visa is issued. This fee is mandatory. There is no negotiation about reducing the price of tourist fare. Bhutan is an expensive place. For travelers on a budget, this destination is hard to swallow. Is Bhutan worth it? There was a question we asked ourselves (and the travel forums) several times before booking our trip. I'm so glad we did. Bhutan is one of the most unique places to visit on the planet. So yes, Bhutan is worth it. Read our posts to find out more. September-November is the best months to visit Bhutan, with clear skies, pleasant temperatures and the most festivals. Spring, from March to May, is also good, with a comfortable temperature, but a slight chance of rain. The summer months, from June to August, can be hot and this period receives the most rainfall. The winter months, from December to February, have clear skies but cold temperatures and has the least tourists. Tiger's Nest (Paro Takstang). A glance at this Buddhist monastery sat precariously on the mountainside hundreds of meters from the ground. It's worth an uphill hike to get here and this is your chance to see one of Bhutan's most popular icons. Paro. Most people spend at least a little time in this city as it is home to Paro International Airport. It is also your home base for hiking up to the tiger's nest. Thimphu. Thimphu is the capital of Bhutan. There's a lot to work with. Visit Cherie Monastery, look at the Takin Nature Reserve, spin the prayer wheels at the Chorten Memorial, or look at Buddha Dordenma, the largest sitting Buddha in the world. The Dochula Pass. The Dochula Pass is a high mountain pass (3,150 meters, 10,330 feet) on the road between Thimpu and Punah. Take a look at the snow-covered Himalayas and walk among the 108 chorts that serve as a memorial to Bhutanese soldiers who died during the 2003 uprising. Punakha. This city was once the capital of Bhutan. Visitors come here to see the amazing Punakha Dzong sitting on the banks of the Pho Chu and Mo Cho river rivers. Chimi Lhahang. It is a Buddhist monastery located near Punahi. Lama Drukpa Kunli, Madman, is one of the saints known for their sexual exploits. Currently, his temple is visited by childless couples who are looking to increase their fertility. Be blessed with a wooden phallus to ward off evil spirits... a travel experience that you won't soon forget. Watch the festival. Bhutan is a country that loves the festival. This is one of the most colorful events in the world. Snowman Track. This is one of the most difficult high-rise hikes in the world. Spend 25 days hiking in the Himalayas of Bhutan, crossing nine passes with heights of more than 4500 meters. Bhutan is a tiny country that is located among the richest mountains in the world. It is a land of dramatic mountain scenery, Buddhism, prayer wheels, zongs, ancient traditions, chili and cheese, rice terraces and some of the most beautiful woodworking you have ever seen. With one week in Bhutan, you can explore the cultural heart of this country, making memories that will last a lifetime. Before you get on the route, it is important that you know about the national fare. In order to visit Bhutan, visitors are charged a minimum daily package. This fee, \$250 per day during the peak season months, is a non-negotiable fee that you have to pay in order to visit Bhutan. It sounds like a hefty fee, and in some ways it is, but this fee covers all your meals, 3 star accommodation, your activities, transport to Bhutan, and a licensed guide and driver throughout the trip. This fee does not include flights and other modes of transport to or from Bhutan, nor anything additional, such as snacks, alcoholic beverages and certain activities. You can travel in small groups and make your own itinerary (or just follow it). You are not forced on giant tour buses for sightseeing with twenty-five other people. Details of the fare: \$200 per person per day in January, February, June, July, August and December \$250 per person on the day of March, April, May, September, October and November There is a \$40 surcharge per night for singles There is a \$30 surcharge per night for groups of 2 people you can pay extra money for 4 and 5 star accommodation Children under 5 years only to pay once \$40 visa fee Children from 5 to 12 years get 5% For more information on the daily fare, visit Bhutan's tourism website. For our family of four with two children under the age of 12, we paid a daily fee of \$750. Yes, it's expensive, but was it worth it? Thimphu, is Bhutan worth Bhutan? Absolutely! Bhutan is an extraordinary place and worth a visit. We look back on our one week in Bhutan with love and we dream of coming back again someday. The daily rate makes Bhutan one of the most expensive countries to visit, but what you get in return high-quality experience on the ground, which is very unique from almost any other country in the world. A A our travels around the world, we wondered if Bhutan would live up to our expectations and if it would cost a high cost of daily fare. During our trip around the world, we lived with a budget of \$250 a day, so Bhutan was a huge splurge. And it was worth every penny. If you're wondering if Bhutan is worth it, check out our post Journey Through Bhutan in Photos for some inspiration, or continue to read this post. Before you even set foot in Bhutan you can see that the dramatic place is off the plane. From the window, take in the form of Bhutan as you enter the Himalayas. This is one of the most scenic flights we have taken. We flew to Bhutan from Kathmandu and the views of the Himalayas were spectacular. Most people will fly to Bhutan from Bangkok, Delhi, Kolkata, Kathmandu or Singapore. Only Druk Air and Bhutan Airlines fly in and out of Bhutan. Paro Airport is one of the most difficult places in the world to land a plane. The runway is located in a narrow valley between high mountain peaks and lining the aircraft with the runway can be difficult. Only a handful of pilots have the right to land here. At the airport, you will meet your guide during the week and begin your tour of Bhutan. Thimphu, Bhutan From the airport it is a 45-minute drive to Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan. It was in Thimphu that we stopped for lunch, getting our first taste of Bhutanese cuisine. We ate traditional food: red rice, noodles, beef with carrots, various vegetables and green chili with cheese. Chili peppers make it into lots of dishes here, so get ready for spicy food! The day will be hung in Thimphu. For the capital it is a relatively small place. Thimphu is a beautiful, colorful city in an idyllic landscape, with bright blue sky, green mountains and rice fields. Our guide, Kinga, took us to a local school where young people studied various works of art, such as painting, weaving, embroidery and woodworking. At the Bhutan post office, you can customize stamps made with your photo on them. If you like to send postcards to friends and family when you travel, now you can turn your face on print! Who knew butane could be so high-tech? Visit the Tahing Nature Reserve, the zoo where Tahing, Bhutan's national animal, is on display. Your day will end with dinner and downtime. Where we stayed: Hotel Pedling. This hotel has large rooms with comfortable beds, a flat screen TV and a private bathroom. For three-star accommodation, this place is fantastic! After breakfast, it's a short car ride to the mountains to Cherie Monastery. And for many people this is probably your first visit to a Bhutanese Buddhist monastery. From the parking lot to the monastery run from 45 minutes to 1 hour. Spin the prayer wheels, visit the temple and listen to your guide's lesson about and the monastery. After lunch in Thimphu you have the opportunity to visit a paper factory. Learn how the paper is handmade and painted with different pigments. Chorten Eta stupa National Memorial is one of the most recognizable religious sites in Bhutan. Many Boutanese visit this Chorten every day to spin the prayer wheels and bypass Chorten. This increases their good karma, which gives them a better chance of a favorable next life. This place with a funny name is the highlight of the day. Dzong is a fortress similar to the castles that were built in Europe. Nowadays, the dzongs are used as a place of government and as a monastery. Walking through the courtyard of this dzong is incredible. It is a beautiful place, with a mix of visitors, tour guides and Buddhist monks. Inside the temple, 1000 Buddhas are painted on the walls. Archery is Bhutan's national sport. If you are lucky with your time, you can watch the young men during training. Using hunting bows, they walk on the target in 145 meters (it is very far). End the day with dinner at Thimphu. Bhutan Route Day 3 Paro in Punah Buddha Dordenma Statue This is the largest Buddha statue in the world. It is made of copper, gilded with gold and filled with 125,000 smaller golden Buddha statues. Why build such a large or richly rich statue? The Buddha statue of Dordenm was built to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the fourth king of Bhutan. This statue is located on a hill overlooking Thimphu. Look at Thimphu, because now it's time to go to Punahu. However, since you will drive up and over the mountain pass on an incredibly windy road, this journey can take a long time. It took us more than 3 hours to go this distance. We did it in 2014, when this road was undergoing a huge renovation project. Travel time is now faster (more than 2 to 2.5 hours) on better quality roads. Note: If you suffer from motion sickness, make sure you are taking anti-nausea medications before leaving Thimphu. This road is very windy, and by the time we got to Punahi, Kara was green. Dochu-la -3 is a high-altitude pass on the road between Thimphu and Punah. At an altitude of 3150 meters, you have a great view of the Himalayas. In addition, the pass features 108 stupas built as a memorial for Bhutanese soldiers who were killed by Indian rebels in 2003. After lunch in Punagh, it's only a short drive from Punagh Dzong. Which site to see!! This is the most impressive zong we have seen in Bhutan. Cross the wooden bridge to the fortress and spend some time wandering around the yard, admiring the colorful tree, and get another lesson on Bhutan's history and culture from your guide. Next can be a little shocking for some people but it's this one of the scenic aspects of Bhutan. Chimi Lhahang is the temple of the Divine Madman. Divine Madman was a Buddhist monk who loved alcohol and women. Chimi Lhahang now has a high fertility and childless couples come here to be blessed to increase their fertility chances. When you go from city to temple, you will see buildings decorated with giant phalluses and shops selling phallic souvenirs. This can lead to some interesting conversations, especially if you are here with the kids. Inside the temple, you have the opportunity to be blessed with a bow and arrow and a foot-long wooden phallus. This is done on luck and keep the evil spirits away. End the day with dinner in the city or at the hotel. Where we stayed: We stayed at the Lobesa Hotel in Punagh. We had two giant rooms and each had a great view of the Punagh Valley. One very cool thing to do while in Punakha is to go white water rafting on the Mo Chhu River. The timing of your visit to Bhutan has a lot to do with whether it is possible or not. In October, when we did, the river conditions are quite seeded. But in the spring months, rafting along the Mo Cho River becomes a much bigger adventure. The Temple of Khamsum Yulley Namgyal from Punaghi, your guide drive you about 45 minutes up the river. Before rafting, we made a quick visit to the Hamsum Yuli Namgyal temple. This is a short, picturesque walk through the rice fields to this temple. From here, the view of the valley, and the river you're about to go rafting on, is amazing. From the Hamsum-Yally Namgyal temple, we put on life jackets and climbed on our raft. For about an hour we drifted down the Mo Chung River, occasionally hitting large rapids. Because the flow of water was low, it was more of a serene ride down the river than a hair-enhancing adventure, but even then it was a wonderful experience. The Punagh Valley is magnificent and it is a unique way to see it. Sliding past Punagh Dzong is an unforgettable experience. After lunch in Punagh, it's a long trip to Paro. Take these doses of drama if you need them and try to enjoy the scenic drive. The trip from Punahi to Paro takes 3 to 4 hours. Where we stayed: In Paro we stayed at the Khangku resort. In 2014 this place looked brand new and it was our favorite hotel in Bhutan. Again, we had huge rooms with a flat screen TV and a private bathroom. Most of this hotel had a balcony overlooking the Paro Valley and the runway of Paro Airport. Bhutan Route Day 5 Of the Paro National Museum National Museum is The Prime Museum of Bhutan. Inside this round, stone building thankgas (Buddhist paintings), historical artifacts, and festival masks. Our favorite part of the museum visit was the view of the Paro Valley. In Paro Dzong, visit the temple, admire the architecture and rotate on the prayer wheels. In some ways, for these dzongs and temples gets a little repetitive, but they are all unique in some ways. Also, you never know what you will see or who you will meet. This photo we took of Tyler and Cara with young Buddhist monks is one of my favorites of all time. Kichu Lhahang is one of the oldest temples in Bhutan since the 7th century. Drukgyel Dzong After Lunch, and just when you thought there was once be another zong to visit in Bhutan, you will be traveling to Drukgyel Dzong. These are the ruins of an ancient zong that burned down in 1951. This is a cool place to explore and during the trip you get a view up to tiger's Nest monastery. Shopping in Paro Spend the rest of the day shopping in Paro and finish with dinner in the city. The grand finale of your tour of Bhutan is the ascent to the Monastery of the Tiger's Nest (Takstang Monastery). This monastery is one of the icons of Bhutan, and a visit to Bhutan would not be complete without seeing it with your own eyes. Tiger's Nest Monastery is a small collection of buildings, precariously located on a rock, 900 meters from the ground. The only way to get to the Tiger's Nest is to go camping. A visit here usually lasts from 6 to 8 hours, with time to hike to the monastery, tour the monastery, and have lunch. This is an extraordinary experience and a favorite pastime of many people during a visit to Bhutan. End the day with dinner at Paro. Today you will begin your journey home. Or, for those with more time, continue the journey. The best time to travel to Bhutan is the best time to travel to Bhutan during the spring months of March, April and May and the autumn months of September, October and November. At this time the weather is usually clear with warm days and cool nights. The summer months from June to August are the rainy season months. During this time, it is not uncommon to have daily rainshowers, sometimes a few a day, but they do not usually affect travel. You can't get a clear blue sky as you see in these photos. In the winter months of December, January and February, Bhutan can be very cold and snow can close roads in central and eastern Bhutan. We did the same Bhutan route during the third week of October. You can only visit Bhutan on a tour. And since there are over 1,000 licensed guides in Bhutan, how do you know which one to choose from? We used Bridge to Bhutan, the company listed in Lonely Planet's Bhutan guide. The bridge to Bhutan is run by two brothers, Lotay and Fin. They arranged our visas to Bhutan, planned our transport to and from Bhutan, and helped us set up this route. From start to finish, we had a lot of experience with the bridge in Bhutan. Our guide, Kinga, and our driver, Gonaf, felt like friends by the end of the week. Kinga taught us with great enthusiasm about Bhutan and its rich exceeded our expectations, and everything went smoothly. If you are looking for an authoritative, knowledgeable tour operator in Bhutan, we strongly recommend the Bridge to Bhutan. Rice fields Punah in October In order to enter the temples, men must wear a shirt with a collar and long pants. women should wear a long-sleeved shirt and long trousers or a long skirt. Both men and women should wear shoes with socks. Clothes that are not acceptable include shorts, hats and flip-flops. Be prepared to take off these shoes Every time you enter the temple, you have to take off your shoes. Some days you'll do it four to five times. I recommend wearing a pair of shoes that is easy to slip on and off. Bring ear Plugs in general, Bhutan is a quiet, peaceful place. That is... in the daytime. At night, numerous stray dogs howl and bark for hours, sometimes right outside the hotel window. If you have a hard time sleeping through the noise of barking dogs, make sure you pack earplugs. How's the food? We loved Bhutan. But we don't like the food. The Bhutanese cuisine is pretty bland with some chili thrown to add a little heat. You will eat a lot of rice and chicken without much flavor. It's like cumin and turmeric and coriander that adds so many flavors to Indian cuisine never made it to Bhutan. One thing I loved was chili and cheese. Chili peppers are growing in abundance in Bhutan. It is not uncommon to see loads of bright red pepper drying on sun houses along the roadsides. Chili peppers are eaten with cheese on a regular basis. It's very spicy and takes some getting used to, but it's definitely something to try while you're in Bhutan. Here are some recommended guidebooks for Bhutan. We used the Lonely Planet guidebook to select places to visit and experiences to have. I also strongly recommend you read Beyond the Sky and Earth of Jamie Sepp before you go. This book was written by a college student who moved to Bhutan to teach English. It's a story about what it's like to live in Bhutan, and it gives a very accurate picture of the country. Do you have any questions about this Bhutan route? Comment below! Traveling to Asia? You can also like: Note: This post contains affiliate links. When you make a purchase using one of these affiliate links, we get a small commission at no extra cost to you. All rights are reserved © Earth Trekkers. Reprinting of this article and/or any content (text, photo, link, etc.) is completely or partially strictly prohibited. Prohibited.

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