



Bhutan!!! Experiences!!!!

Once in a lifetime experiences

to be reserved in advance with us

Helicopter breakfast

As the sun rises across Paro Valley, join it in the sky on a helicopter ride over pristine forests and remote hamlets towards the Bhutan-Tibet border. Drink in panoramic views of the Himalayas then land at the base of Mount Jomolhari – Bhutan's second highest peak. Here a delicious continental breakfast will await you, set between Jomolhari's glacier-fed twin lakes with majestic peaks all round.

Hike through Gangtey Valley

Don your hiking boots for our easy Nature Trail Walk or the slightly longer Tongpushing Hike, or even combine both routes if you'd like to do a complete loop of the valley. Alternatively, drive 30 minutes towards Trongsa to conquer the stunning Longtey Hike. From the trail head, the path takes you through the rhododendron forest – a mass of colourful blooms from March to May each year. On reaching the top of the ridge, drink in breathtaking views of Gangtey Valley below.

See endangered, black-necked cranes

Rare black-necked cranes are revered in the Himalayan region, seen as avatars of ancestors and loved ones sent from the heavens. Every autumn, they migrate from Tibet to Bhutan, and the return of this beloved bird is celebrated with an exuberant festival of song and dance at Gangtey Goemba. Whether you're able to join the festival or simply have the chance to witness these birds at The Crane Centre, managed by Bhutan's Royal Society for Protection of Nature, this is a wildlife encounter not to be missed.

Buddhist purification ritual

In Bhutan, every place has its local protective deity or spirit, appeased and appreciated through daily smoking ceremonies.

Take part in this early morning spiritual cleansing ritual which involves the burning of specific herbs in Amankora Gangtey's hilltop fumigation stupa in the presence of a local monk. This Buddhist tradition is believed to cast away bad spirits, allowing you to begin the day free of negativity.

In Phobjikha Valley near the village of Gangtey, Amankora Gangtey is set on a forested knoll with scenic views of the valley floor and the 16th-century Gangtey Goemba monastery. Part of the Black Mountains National Park wildlife reserve, the valley is home each winter to a flock of 300 endangered black-neck cranes and provides an idyllic setting for nature-bound hikes, meaningful interactions with the local monastic body and a deep dive into age-old Buddhist rituals.

Bumthang more than lives up to its name meaning 'beautiful field' and is known not just for its cottage industries, but as a treasure trove of Bhutan's art and painting traditions. Home to 29 temples and monasteries, including the ancient Jambay Lhakhang, it is also where Wandichholing Palace is situated, with Amankora Bumthang resting right next door. From here, guests can embark on a multitude of cultural and spiritual experiences across Bumthang's four valleys, namely Choekhor, Tang, Ura and Chhume.

The gift of a name

Visit the monastic school of Sey Lhakhang, where a lama will perform a name-giving ceremony for you based on your birthday, year and exact time of birth. This ceremony will bless you with a Bhutanese name of your own, which the lama will then write down for you in Dzongkha in beautiful calligraphy.

108-butter lamp offering

Take part in a lighting ceremony, an experience involving the lighting of 108 butter lamps to represent the dispelling of the darkness of ignorance at Jambay or Kurjey Lhakhangs. The former is an ancient temple home to the early-winter festivals that draw thousands of Bhutanese for their annual blessings, while the latter was once the resting place of Guru Rinpoche and is considered one of the country's most auspicious monuments.

Shugdrak hike and lunch

Shugdrak is one of four holy cliffs in Bhutan. Follow the steps imprinted on the mountain side that lead up above the rooftop of the temple to a farmhouse surrounded by prayer flags where hermits reside. This is the perfect spot for a picnic lunch offering the chance to appreciate the mountain scenery and absorb the peace of this sacred setting, before hiking back to the lodge.

Journey through Tang Valley

Explore Tang Valley, a seldom-visited area of temples and monasteries that are truly off the beaten track. Enroute, stop off at the Burning Lake, where famous Buddhist saint, Pema Lingpa, dreamt he dived into the water carrying a burning butter lamp and returned with treasures and the lamp still burning. Visit the nunnery, as well as Ta Rimochen Lhakhang, built by Pema Lingpa in the 14th century, its temple dominated by an enormous rock at which Guru Rinpoche meditated.



Beer & Cheese Tasting at Red Panda Brewery

Taste the fermented fruits of Bumthang with Red Panda Brewery, started in 2006 by Fritz Maurer, originally Swiss but a Bhutanese citizen since 1976. His brewery was the first established beer brewery in the country, and he is still the sole producer of the specialty Weiss bier.

A visit to the brewery includes a 30-minute tour of the premises to learn more about Red Panda's production process, the beer ingredients and the health benefits of this Bhutanese specialty. The tour concludes with a Red Panda beer and local cheese tasting in the brewery garden. For those who prefer non-alcoholic beverages, Bumthang produced apple juice is also available.

Discover Bhutan's colourful history and wealth of traditions while exploring the Kingdom's only city – a capital like no other – with Sunny's curated experiences. Visit Tashichho Dzong at dusk and hike to the Cheri Goemba, a picturesque temple and monastery where the Kingdom's first monastic body was established. Experience astrology readings and insightful lectures and learn more about Bhutan's diverse cultural heritage with visits to the Textile Museum, Weaving Centre and Paper Factory. Time your trip with the four-day Tshechu Festival held each spring, when costumed and masked dancers perform in the courtyards of Thimphu's Tashichho Dzong as they have done for centuries.

A young man in traditional Bhutanese attire, including a white shirt and a colorful striped shawl, is shown aiming a bow. The background is a soft-focus view of trees and a clear sky. The text is overlaid on the image in a clean, black, sans-serif font.

Uncover your past and future

Experience a personal astrology reading at the monastic astrology school housed within ancient Pangri Zampa Lhakang. This collection of 16th-century temples were built by Ngawang Choegyel, the great-grandfather of the Zhadrung, the lama who unified Bhutan. Previously used as the Zhadrung's residence when he arrived in Bhutan during 1616, the temples are now dedicated to interpreting the past and foretelling the future as guided by the heavens. A private reading can also be arranged back at Amankora Thimphu.

Master Bhutan's official national sport

Join the passionate spectators at one of the frequent archery tournaments on the festival calendar or take a personal class at Amankora Thimphu and learn to master the bow. Archery – or 'Da' – has been Bhutan's official national sport for five decades, but the importance of the bow and arrow has been celebrated in the country's myths for thousands of years.

Engage with spiritual leaders

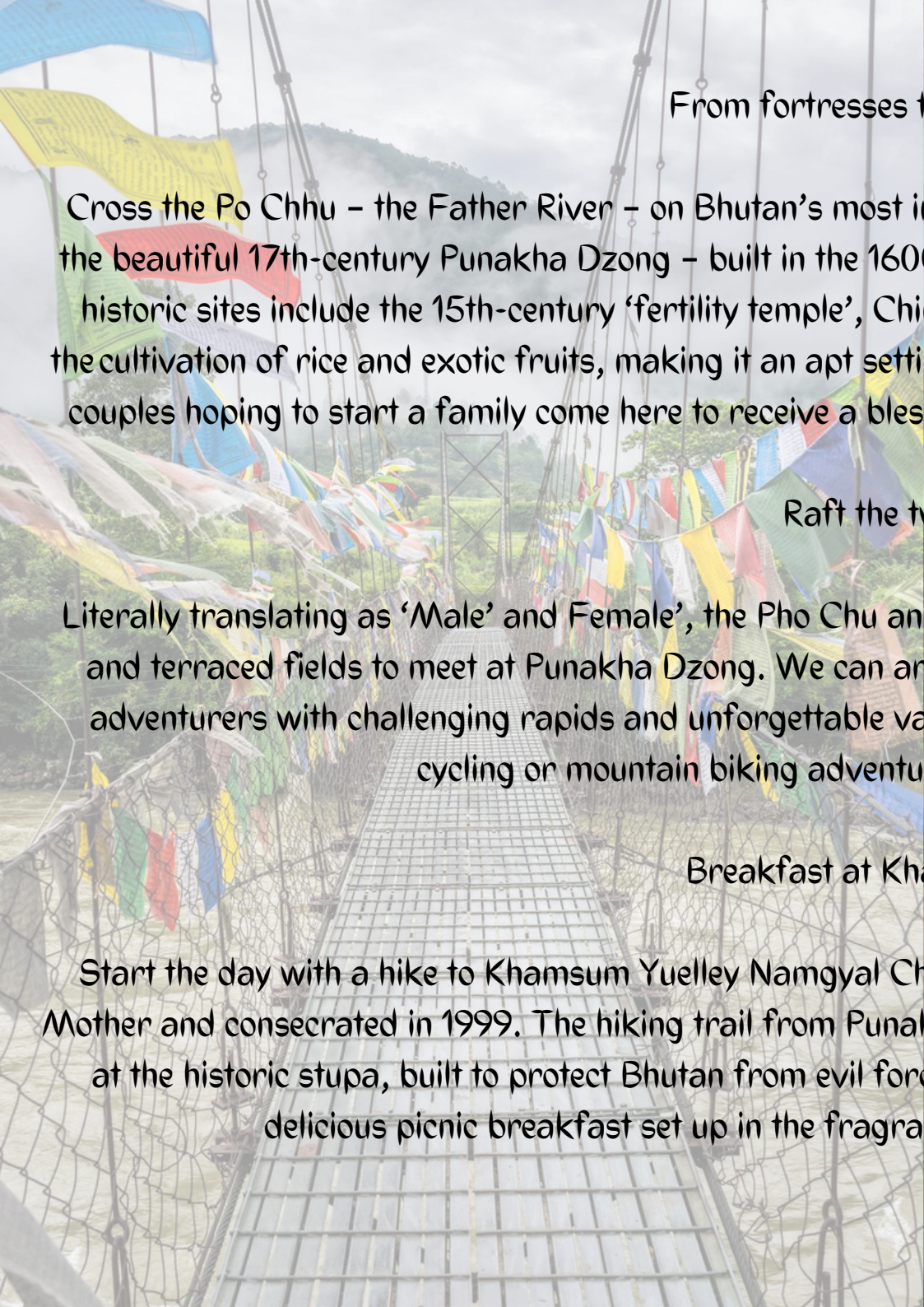
Learn about the rich history of Buddhism in the Himalayan region from Mynak Trulku – the 12th reincarnate lama of Mynak Rinpoche who is the spiritual leader of the Mynak province in the Eastern region of Tibet. Mynak Trulku's insightful lectures take place in Thimphu Lodge's library twice a week or can be offered privately on request.



Marvel at the Buddha Dordenma

Stand in awe before the fulfilment of an ancient prophecy – one of the world's tallest Buddha statues erected in 2015 not far from Amankora Thimphu. Within this towering golden monument are over one hundred thousand smaller Buddha statues, also made of bronze and gilded in gold. Built to bestow blessings, peace and happiness on the whole world, the statue is surrounded by almost 950 acres of protected forest and overlooks the southern approach to the capital.

Punakha lies east of Dochu La Pass and just north of the resplendent Punakha Dzong in a warm, fertile valley at the junction of two rivers, the Mo Chhu and Pho Chhu. Moments from the winter residence of Bhutan's King, Punakha is surrounded by rice paddies and fruit plantations offering the perfect base for exploring the valley's natural and cultural attractions. From crossing the longest chain link bridge in the Kingdom to river rafting, hoisting prayer flags and exploring historic sites, this valley is one for expanding horizons in every way.



From fortresses to fertility temples

Cross the Po Chhu – the Father River – on Bhutan's most impressive, prayer-flag bedecked suspension bridge to visit the beautiful 17th-century Punakha Dzong – built in the 1600s to an architectural plan inspired by a dream. Other local historic sites include the 15th-century 'fertility temple', Chimi Lhakhang. The valley's subtropical environment allows the cultivation of rice and exotic fruits, making it an apt setting for this auspicious fertility monastery built in 1499. Many couples hoping to start a family come here to receive a blessing from the saint with the 'magic thunderbolt of wisdom'.



Raft the twin rivers

Literally translating as 'Male' and Female', the Pho Chu and Mo Chu rivers flow through rocky gorges, pristine plains and terraced fields to meet at Punakha Dzong. We can arrange white-water rafting excursions on both, rewarding adventurers with challenging rapids and unforgettable valleys views. By land, the rivers can also be enjoyed with a cycling or mountain biking adventure that follows the rivers' courses.

Breakfast at Khamsum Chorten

Start the day with a hike to Khamsum Yuelley Namgyal Chorten, a stunning monument built by the Bhutanese Queen Mother and consecrated in 1999. The hiking trail from Punakha weaves through rice fields and farmland before arriving at the historic stupa, built to protect Bhutan from evil forces and help bring peace to the world. On arrival, enjoy a delicious picnic breakfast set up in the fragrant gardens that surround Khamsum Chorten.

Hoist prayer flags with a local monk

Spend a meaningful morning in sacred spaces and the great outdoors, culminating in a special blessing and scenic picnic. A short and peaceful hike to Chorten Nyeabu, a 15th-century hilltop temple and monastery, will reveal an impressive statue of Jowo Jampa (the Future Buddha) and the storied 'upside-down tree'. Then head to the hilltop to hoist your own prayer flags, consecrated by the local monk who will accompany you. Prayer flags are hoisted for happiness, long life, prosperity, luck and merit, to clear ones' sins, and to offer karmic merit to all sentient beings.

When the wind blows, it is believed that it carries the prayers on the flags, blessing all beings. Choose a spot for your flags that resonates with you, then savour a delicious picnic lunch as your prayers take to the wind.