

DeRiemer Adventure Kayaking
Bhutan Class III+
October 25 – November 6, 2020
Sample Itinerary

Thank you for your interest in joining us in Bhutan. This year represents our eleventh year into this enchanted Himalayan, Buddhist Kingdom. Each visit feels like a gift. Our aim for you is twofold; that you paddle in the Himalaya and, that you are exposed to as much of the culture, people and surrounding countryside as is possible. We want you to experience the magic of Bhutan and the kindness of these people that we have come to know and appreciate.

We are very excited about this itinerary, not only because of the places we visit and the areas of the country in which we travel, but also that we'll experience the Jakar Tsechu, a religious festival held in the intimate Jakar Dzong overlooking the Chumkar valley, Bumthang located in the center of the country. Our adventurous journey is designed to take full advantage of each day, while still being open to the special moments that always present themselves in this unique land.

We know your vacation time is precious. Rest assured that your journey to the other side of the world, where you step back in time, is well worth the effort. We look forward to sharing with you this country that we find so special.

Tashi Delek,
Phil and Mary DeRiemer

Cost: Cost \$5680 includes domestic flight from Bumthang to Paro.
Does not include international flights to and from home country to Paro, Bhutan.





Day 1: Oct 25th, Sunday

Flying into the beautiful valley of Paro, you will glide over the tops of snow and pine covered ridges that are dotted with remote monasteries. Located in western Bhutan, this valley is a patchwork of rice fields and the harvest techniques used haven't changed for hundreds of years.

We'll meet you at the airport and, depending on your arrival time, go to lunch. The rest of the day we'll wander the town and shops, visit the national museum and/or Paro's majestic Dzong (fortress) and outfit our kayaks. We lodge in Paro (approx elevation 7800 ft.).

Day 2: Oct 26th, Monday

Today we'll board a flight to Chumkar, located in Bumthang province. The views of the Himalaya during this flight are spectacular as we fly over much of the route we will spend the next 2 weeks traveling by road on our return. The Jakar Tsechu will be taking place during our stay and we will arrange our day to take advantage of experiencing this interesting display of masked dances attended by much of the local community. The remaining time in the day will be spent exploring sites in the beautiful Chumkar valley. We stay 2 nights in Chumkar (approx elevation 8000 ft.).

Day 3: Oct 27th, Tuesday

Today is a continuation of the Jakar Dzong Tsechu. We'll structure the day to take advantage of what the festival has to offer. After leaving the festival we head up river for a picnic lunch alongside the Chumakr Chu followed by a river run through the valley. Afterwards you can return to the hotel to relax or join us as we explore more of what this beautiful valley has to offer. Lodge in Chumkar.

Day 4: Oct 28th, Wednesday

After a quick paddle on the Chumkar Chu, we drive to Trongsa, the one-time center of government under the first king, Ugyen Wangchuck. Highlights during our stay include a visit to the sprawling Trongsa Dzong or the Watch Tower museum. We spend the night in Trongsa (approx elevation 6800 ft.).

Day 5: Oct 29th, Thursday

This is a driving day that takes us to the beautiful Phobjikha Valley. Known as the valley of the black-necked cranes, it is the winter home of these majestic, migratory birds. We will drive over Pele La at 11,122 ft. On the way we'll have lunch then finish our day with a hike on the valley trail. We spend the night in Phobjikha (approx elevation 9500 ft.).

Day 6: Oct 30th, Friday

We spend some of the morning in the valley, including a visit to the Gangtey Gompa Monastery then move on toward the Punakha valley. Our lodging for the night will be along the banks of the Dang Chu river. Lodge one night here.

Day 7: Oct 31st, Saturday

Drive up the Mo Chu (mother river) valley and begin a short hike to the Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten, a hilltop temple with a commanding view overlooking the valley of rice terraces and pines. We'll then walk down to lunch and put on the Mo Chu for an afternoon paddle, there's a paddle raft for the non-kayakers and we all run this stretch together. A late afternoon visit to the Sangchen Dorji Lhuendrup nunnery perched high above the valley is the end to a full day. Lodge Punakha.

Day 8: Nov 1st, Sunday

Today we paddle the Po Chu (Father river). We start with a walk in the countryside that takes us over the longest footbridge span in Bhutan. On the other side we walk a country road through rice fields in mid-harvest, allowing us to interact with the locals working the fields. Our vehicle meets us along the way and we drive to the put-in. Again, there is a paddle raft for the non-kayakers. The run finishes up floating past the Punakha Dzong at the confluence with the Mo Chu. Upon taking out we have a picnic lunch with a view of the Dzong then tour this impressive 16th century structure. This will be our last night in Punakha.

Day 9: Nov 2nd, Monday

An early morning begins with a drive toward Thimphu, the capital. This leg of the journey takes us over the stunning pass at Dochu La at 10,302 feet. If we have clear skies, there will be views of the snowcapped Himalayan range separating Bhutan from Tibet. We'll lunch and sightsee in Thimphu. Lodging in Thimphu (approx 7600 ft.).

Day 10: Nov 3rd, Tuesday

There is an optional, pre-breakfast visit to the Buddha Dordenma statue, one of the largest sitting Buddhas in the world. This short drive allows us to experience sunrise over Thimphu with a commanding view of the valley and city. Following this, we'll stop at the Memorial Chorten, built in memory of the third King, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. After breakfast we can sightsee, wander and shop until lunch. We'll then gear up to go to the river downstream of town, the Wang Chu. Lodge Thimphu.

Day 11: Nov 4th, Wednesday

Our last day of paddling on the trip is the beautiful Paro Chu, chances are you saw some of the run on your flight into the country. The paddling and land tour groups reunite for lunch then have a chance to sightsee around town. We spend the next 2 nights in the town of Paro (approx 7800 ft.). Lodging Paro.

Day 12: Nov 5th, Tuesday

Our early start to the day sees us at the trailhead for the most famous monastery in the country, Takstang, known as “tigeress’ nest”, the most sacred monastery in the country. For all Bhutanese, this is the most religious pilgrimage one can make. A fully enlightened being, Guru Rimpoche, or Padmasambava, first came to Bhutan in 810, bringing Buddhism to the country. He meditated here in a cave that is now a temple within the Dzong, and surrounded by many temples. After the hike, our late lunch is followed by one last chance to wander Paro, interact with the locals and perhaps do last minute shopping of gifts for those at home. Lodging and farewell dinner in Paro.

Day 13: Nov 6th, Wednesday

Today we’ll take you to the airport for your early morning departure, a farewell to the Land of the Thunder Dragon!