

DeRiemer Adventure Kayaking  
Land Tour  
October 25 – Nov 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 that you are exposed to as much of the religion, 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 and a big 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 25<sup>th</sup>, 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 many of 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 visit the national museum and/or Paro's majestic Dzong (fortress), and wander the town. We lodge in Paro (approx elevation 7800 ft.).

### **Day 2: Oct 26<sup>th</sup>, Monday**

Today we'll board a flight to Chumkar, located in Bumthang province. This province is perhaps the most significant in the religious history of Bhutan. The torten finder, Jingme Lingpa's temple, as well as many significant sites are located here. (1729-98). 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. Upon arrival in Chumkar, we'll go to our lodging, drop our bags, and depending on the time, have lunch. Our arrival in Chumkar is scheduled to coincide with the Jakar Tsechu (festival) and we'll plan the rest of day to take in what we can of the festival followed by walking the countryside and visit one or two temples along the way. We stay 2 nights in Chumkar (approx elevation 8000 ft.).

### **Day 3: Oct 27<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday**

Today we will see the Jakar Dzong Tsechu. We'll structure the day to watch the religiously symbolic Masked Dances and other ceremonies. After leaving the festival we'll head up river for a picnic lunch alongside the Chumkar Chu (river). There is much to see and do in the Chumkar valley and we'll spend the rest of the day seeking out some of these interesting sites.

### **Day 4: Oct 28<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday**

Today we drive to Trongsa. Highlights during our stay include a visit to the Dzong or the Watch Tower museum. We spend the night in Trongsa (approx elevation 6800 ft.).

**Day 5: Oct 29<sup>th</sup>, Thursday**

Today 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 lodge the night in Phobjikha (approx elevation 9500 ft.).

**Day 6: Oct 30<sup>th</sup>, Friday**

We'll spend some of the morning in the Phobjikha valley, including a visit to the small 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 31, Saturday**

Drive the Mo(mother) Chu Valley further up-valley and begin a short hike to Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten, a hilltop Temple overlooking the Mo Chu and it's valley. We'll then walk down to lunch. There is an afternoon option to paddle raft our way down to the most significant Dzong in Bhutan, Punakha, winter home of the head religious leader and many monks. A late afternoon visit to the Sangchen Dorji Lhuendrup nunnery perched high above the valley is the end to a full day. Lodge Punakha (approx 4500 ft.).

**Day 8: Nov 1, Sunday**

Today there is a paddle rafting option on the Po Chu (Father river). We start with a walk in the countryside that takes us over the longest footbridge span in Bhutan. We cross the lower Po Chu onto a country road through rice fields in mid-harvest, allowing us to interact with the locals working the fields. If you are game, you can try your hand at hand cutting rice with a sythe. Our vehicle meets us along the way and we drive to the put-in of the Po Chu (father river). 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 16<sup>th</sup> century structure. This will be our last night in Punakha.

**Day 9: Nov 2, 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 lunch and sightsee in Thimphu, spending the next two nights here (approx 7600 ft.).

**Day 10: Nov 3, 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. The land group has many site seeing/ walking options like a visit to the Takin Preserve (national animal of Bhutan, found only in the Himalaya) and the textile museum. Lodging Thimphu

**Day 11: Nov 4, Wednesday**

We travel up the Paro Valley stopping at sites of interest, including the Temple of Dilgo Khyentse Rimpoche. “Brilliant Moon” was one of the most significant Buddhist teachers of this century. He was a [Vajrayana](#) master, scholar, poet, teacher, and head of the [Nyingma](#) school of [Tibetan Buddhism](#) until his death in 1991 at age 81. Rimpoche was born in Tibet. He was one of the Dalai Lamas teachers. Lodging Paro (approx 7800 ft.).

**Day 12: Nov 5, Thursday**

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 6, Friday**

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