

**31st Joint Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and
the Pacific and the UNWTO Commission for South Asia,
57th Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for South Asia (CSA),
53rd Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the
Pacific (CAP) and
UNWTO Regional Conference on Sustainable Development
through Tourism**

Thimphu, Bhutan, 03-05 June 2019

GENERAL INFORMATION NOTE

--as of 15 May 2019



Table of Contents

1. Conference	3
1.1 Conference Venue	3
1.2 Conference Website.....	3
1.3 Online Registration and deadline.....	3
2. Transportation	3
2.1 Transfer arrangements and airport meeting services.....	3
3. Accommodation	5
4. Entry Formalities.....	8
4.1 Visa requirements.....	9
4.2 Custom regulation	11
5. About Bhutan.....	11
5.1 Country Profile	11
5.2 Getting into Bhutan.....	11
5.2.1 Travel by Land.....	12
5.2.2 Travel by Air.....	12
5.3 History	13
6. Practical information.....	13
6.1 General information.....	13
6.2 Local currency and currency exchange	13
6.3 Electricity.....	13
6.4 Photography	14
6.5 Shopping.....	14
6.6 Communications	14
6.7 Clothes & Other Paraphernalia	14
6.8 Measures, Weight & Time.....	14
6.9 Health Inoculations.....	15
6.10 Precautions	15
6.11 Public Holidays	15
7. Technical Tour.....	15
7.1 Half Day Tour	15
7.2 Full day Tour.....	16
8. Contact Details.....	17

1. Conference

1.1 Conference Venue

The 31st Joint Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Commission for South Asia, the 57th Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for South Asia (CSA), the 53rd Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific (CAP) and the UNWTO Regional Conference on Sustainable Development through Tourism will be held at Taj Tashi Hotel, Thimphu, Bhutan from June 3-5, 2019.

The Kingdom of Bhutan, popularly known as the Last Shangri La on Earth, is secluded high in the Himalayas having a strong belief in their unique culture and tradition. Overlooking the mesmerising Wang Chu River, Thimphu, the kingdom's capital city boasts a pristine environment, spellbinding scenery and architecture, and warm, hospitable people. Nestled in the heart of this valley lies the magnificent Taj Tashi, the gateway to a magical land brimming with fascinating mythology. It is ideally situated for you to explore the kingdom's spectacular monasteries, scenic mountain passes and pristine wilderness. Taj Tashi enchantingly blends with unique Bhutanese architecture and modern design, and is adorned with classical hand-drawn Buddhist murals.

The 66 spacious rooms and suites of Taj Tashi Hotel overlook exquisite mountains and the township, and capture the essence of Bhutanese art and architecture. As one of the most distinguished landmarks in the national capital, the hotel puts at your disposal 2,736 square feet of convention with a spectrum of 3 separate, tastefully appointed halls for an intimate party for 20, to a seminar for 180 and holding a grand reception for about 200 guests.

1.2 Conference Website

Delegates can stay connected with up-to-date information on the meeting, through the official UNWTO website [here](#).

1.3 Online Registration and deadline

International delegates are required to register online through the registration link. International delegates can use the online registration platform to provide the necessary information for meeting registration, dietary requirements, airport transfer and technical tour **before 10 May 2019**.

2. Transportation

2.1 Transfer arrangements and airport meeting services

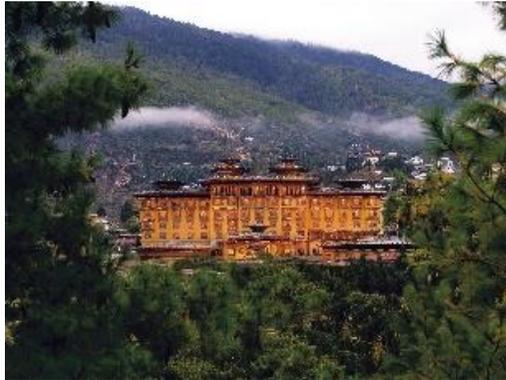
The Tourism Council of Bhutan warmly welcomes all registered delegates who have provided a copy of their flight itinerary at Paro International Airport. On arrival, complimentary transfer from the airport to all enlisted official hotels transfer will be provided to delegates. The distance from the Paro international airport to Thimphu is 57kms and it will take about 45 minutes to an hour to reach Thimphu.

A daily conference shuttle will also be provided to delegates staying at the identified official hotels outside Taj Tashi (note: Shuttle Schedule will be confirmed closer to the meeting date)

A dedicated information desk will be available at Paro international Airport, to assist delegates with necessary logistical support.

To avoid inconvenience or delays, delegates are requested to register online [here](#), indicating their arrival, departure and accommodation details latest by 10 May 2019.

3. Accommodation

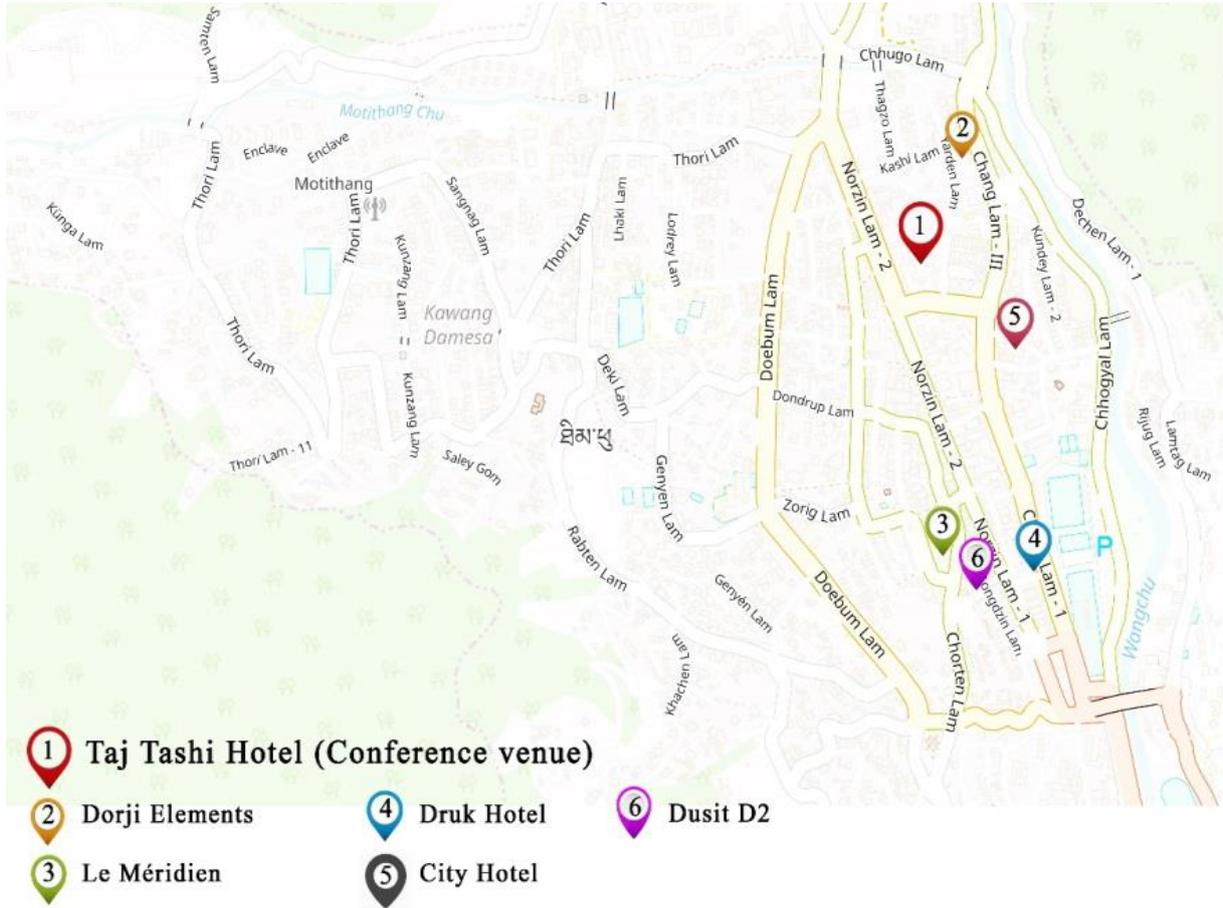
No	Hotel Name	Photo	Category	Room Type	Rate	
					Single	Double
1	Taj Tashi Varun Sharma (Mr.) Director of Sales Mobile: +975 77100093 Email: v.sharma@tajhotels.com www.tajhotels.com		5 star	Deluxe Rom	USD 252	USD 276
				Deluxe Suite	USD 648	USD 648
2	Le Meridian Thimphu Jigme Tenzin (Mr.) Catering Sales, Associate TEL: +975 2 337788 / +975 2 337799 Mobile: +975 77638166 Email: 04056.lmtcateringsales@lemeridien.com www.lemeridienthimphu.com		5 star	Classic Rooms	USD 204	

3	<p>DusitD2 Yarkay Thimphu Tshering Yangchen (Ms) Sales Coordinator</p> <p>TEL: +975 2339988 Mobile: +975 77808172 Email: d2tbsmco@dusit.com www.dusit.com</p>		4 star	Delight	USD 180	
4	<p>Zhiwa Ling ASCENT Sonam Peldon (Ms) General Manager</p> <p>TEL : +975 2 336486 Mobile: +975 17119030 Email: ascentgm@zhiwalingascent.com www.zhiwalingascent.com</p>		4 star	Deluxe	USD 120	USD 120
5	<p>Hotel Druk- Thimphu Chencho (Ms) Reservation Department</p> <p>TEL: 00975-2-322966 / 322977 Mobile: 00975 77198819</p> <p>Email: druk.thimphu@drukhotels.com www.drukhotels.com</p>		4 Star	Deluxe	USD 91	USD 109

6	<p>DORJI Elements Dorji Khandu (Mr) Reservation Manager</p> <p>TEL: +975-2-333075 Mobile: +975-17686154</p> <p>Email: hoteldorjielements@gmail.com www.hoteldorjielements.com</p>		3 star	Standard	USD 57 approx.	USD 57
7	<p>City Hotel Ngawang Choden (Ms) Reservation</p> <p>Tel: +975 2 338813/14 Mobile No: +975 77481700</p> <p>Email: reservation@cityhotelthimphu.com www.cityhotelthimphu.com</p>		3 star	Deluxe	USD 84	USD 107

Notes:

- ❖ Please note the room rate includes the breakfast and taxes, and the guests can pay by US dollar.
- ❖ The participants are requested to directly contact the hotel of their choice for the reservation and to mention “UNWTO Meeting” when contacting the hotel.
- ❖ It is highly recommended to make EARLY reservation to secure the rooms in your preferred hotels



4. Entry Formalities



4.1 Visa requirements

With the exception of visitors from India, Bangladesh and Maldives, all other visitors travelling to Bhutan need a visa. Indian, Bangladeshi and Maldivian nationals can obtain a permit at the port of entry on producing a valid passport with a minimum of 6 months validity.

All other visitors must obtain a visa clearance prior to their travel to Bhutan. Visas will be processed by the Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB) in collaboration with the Department of immigration for all the participants. Therefore, participants are required to submit a duly completed **application form** along with the documents indicated below for processing their visas.

Visa-processing Guidelines for Participants

- Visas will not be processed at Bhutan's embassies. Tourism Council of Bhutan will handle the processing of all visa applications in coordination with Bhutan's Immigration Office.
- There will be no visa-on-arrival issuance at the airport in Bhutan.
- The documents required for the visa application are as follows:
 1. A photocopy of the passport the participant will be travelling with. This passport should have a validity of at least 6 months from the date of departure from the applicant's home country and the date of arrival in Bhutan.
 2. A visa application form (completely filled in and signed by each participant)
 3. A nomination letter/document from participants' respective organizations.
 - ✚ The above-mentioned documents are to be sent by email to **all the 4 visa application coordinators** cited below who will in turn forward them to the immigration office and follow up on the processing of the visa.
- All participants are required to pay 40 US dollars visa fee. The waiver/exemption of visa fees will be based on the type of passport participants hold. Visa fees will not be applicable to gratis visas. Eligible applicants include those holding Diplomatic, Official and UN passports. Visa fee waiver will be applicable to only bearers of these passports.
- Bhutan's immigration office does not approve any extensions beyond the actual conference period and the additional two days as per MICE regulations.
- Once the application form has been received with the accompanying documents, the visa clearance will be processed within 10 working days and a copy of the visa will be sent to the participants. However, we recommend that participants send their visa application documents well ahead of time. At the

point of entry, participants will be required to show their visa clearance letters and the visa will then be stamped in their passports.

- Please kindly note that TCB will advance the payment of the visa fee of 40 USD to the Immigration Office. The reimbursement of the fee will be collected from participants in the hotels where they will be staying.
 - ✚ Reimbursement will be made by participants when they check in;
 - ✚ A special counter for this purpose will be provided in the check-in area where a designated official will receive the payment;
 - ✚ A receipt will be issued after payment has been made.
- Participants who wish to extend their stay beyond the actual conference period and the additional two days, and to process visas for their accompanying spouses/partners should contact Tourism Council of Bhutan directly through the officials listed below – the Coordinators of visas for all participants.
- The documents required for the **visa application of spouses/partners** are as follows:
 1. A photocopy of the passport the participant will be travelling with. This passport should have a validity of at least 6 months from the date of departure from the applicant's home country and the date of arrival in Bhutan.
 2. A visa application form (completely filled in and signed by each participant)
 3. A nomination letter/document from participants' respective organizations.
 - ✚ The above-mentioned documents are to be sent by email to **all the 4 visa application coordinators** cited below who will in turn forward them to the immigration office and follow up on the processing of the visa.

Visa Application Coordinators

Mr. Tshering Wangchuk

Assistant Tourism Officer
Services Division
Tourism Council of Bhutan
Contact: +975 2 323251 Ext 217
Email: twangchuk@tourism.gov.bt

Ms. Dechen Wangmo

Visa Assistant
Service Division
Tourism Council of Bhutan
Contact: +975 2 323251 Ext 211
Email: dechen@tourism.gov.bt

Mr. Thinley Gyeltshen

Tourism Officer
Services Division
Tourism Council of Bhutan
Contact: +975 2 323251 Ext 210
tgeltshen@tourism.gov.bt

Mr. Dorji Rinzin

Sr. ICT Officer
Services Division
Tourism Council of Bhutan
Contact: +975 2 323251 Ext 210
dorjirinzin@tcb.gov.bt

4.2 Custom regulation

Bhutan has a duty to protect its citizens from drugs and tobacco products. Please cooperate with custom officials if asked about the baggage at the entry ports. Please do not carry any items prohibited by the custom Act and tobacco goods in excess of the set limit. For more information regarding the custom and tobacco regulation please see the websites of [National Assembly of Bhutan](#) or [Ministry of Finance of Royal Government of Bhutan](#).

5. About Bhutan

5.1 Country Profile



The Kingdom of Bhutan is a small landlocked country located in the southern foothills of the Himalayan mountain range, sandwiched between the People's Republic of China in the north and the Republic of India in the south. Bhutan is divided into three altitude zones,

namely, the greater Himalayas of the north, the hills and valleys of the inner Himalayas, and the foothills and plains of the Sub-Himalayan Foothills.

Bhutan's pristine environment, with high rugged mountains and deep valleys, offers ecosystems that are both rich and diverse. Recognizing the importance of the environment, conservation of its rich biodiversity is one of the government's development paradigms.

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan mandates the country to maintain at least 60% of its forest cover for all times. Today, a little over 70% of the total land area of Bhutan is under forest cover and 51.40% (16,396.4 sq.km) of the land area falls under protected areas comprising of 10 national parks and sanctuaries (State of the Environment report 2016, National Environment Commission).

The details about Bhutan is shared on our official website www.bhutan.travel

5.2 Getting into Bhutan

The Kingdom of Bhutan remained largely cut off from the rest of the world up until the early 1960's. However, carefully planned economic development has made the country much more accessible and there are now a network of roads entering and traversing the country, as well as one international and multiple domestic airports.

Today the main roads entering the country are through Phuentsholing in the south, linking Bhutan with the Indian plains of West Bengal through the border towns of

Gelephu, in the central region and Samdrup Jongkhar in the east, that link Bhutan with the Indian state of Assam.

5.2.1 Travel by Land

Phuentsholing, Gelephu and Samdrup Jongkhar are the only land border areas open to tourists.

5.2.2 Travel by Air

There are flights to destinations that include Bangkok, Delhi, Kolkata, Bagdogra, Bodh Gaya, Dhaka, Kathmandu, Guwahati and Singapore.

Paro is situated at a height of 2,225 m (7300 ft) above sea level and is surrounded by mountains as high as 4,876 m (16,000 ft). At present, two carriers operate to Bhutan, Drukair and Bhutan Airlines. There are also domestic airports in Yonphula in eastern Bhutan, Bumthang in central Bhutan, and Gelephu in south-central Bhutan.

Flying into Bhutan's Paro International Airport is typically an exciting experience as the descent into Paro valley brings you closer to the mountain tops than most other flights in the world. The flight between Paro and Kathmandu is one of the most exciting ones as the aircraft passes over four of the five highest mountains in the world. In fine weather you can enjoy the spectacular view of Mt. Everest, Lhotse, Makalu and Kangchenjunga at their best.

The table below is the flight information although we highly recommend delegates to confirm with the airlines.

Sector	1 st June 19		2 nd Jun 19		Sector	5 th Jun 19		6 th Jun 19	
	Drukair	Bhutan airline	Drukair	Bhutan airline		Drukair	Bhutan airline	Drukair	Bhutan airline
Bangkok-Paro	(0500-0820)	(0430-0755)	(0500-0820)	(0600-0800)	Paro-Bangkok	(0800-1210) (1610-2020)	(1530-1930) (1800-2135)	(0800-1210)	(1800-2320)
Kathmandu-Paro	(1430-1550)		(1320-1440)		Paro-Kathmandu	(0740-0840)		1140-1240	
Dhaka-Paro					Paro – Dhaka	(1030-1200)			
Singapore-Paro			(0630-1030)		Paro Singapore	(0730-1535)			
Kolkata-Paro	(1110-1250)	(1540-1720)	(1630-1810)	(1540-1720)	Paro-Kolkata		(0840-0920) (1420-1500)	(1220-1320)	(0840-0920) (1800-1840)
Guwahati-Paro			(0910-1030)		Paro-Guwahati	(0730-0755)			
Delhi-Paro	(1155-1550)	(1110-1350)	(1050-1340) (1005-1255)	(1110-1350)	Paro- Delhi	(0740-1055)	(0830-1010)	(0715-0905) (1355-1545)	(0830-1010)
Mumbai-Paro		(1350-1730)		(1350-1730)	Paro-Mumbai		(0840-1250)		(0840-1250)
Bagdogra-Paro	(0710-0820)				Paro-Bagdogra				

5.3 History

The country came to be known as Druk Yul or The Land of the Drukpas sometime in the 17th century. The name refers to the Drukpa sect of Buddhism that has been the dominant religion in the region since that period.

The country was first unified in 17th century by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel. He consolidated his power, defeated three Tibetan invasions and established a comprehensive system of law and governance. His system of rule eroded after his death and the country fell into infighting and civil war between the various local rulers. This continued until the Trongsa Penlop Ugyen Wangchuck was able to gain control and with the support of the people to establish himself as Bhutan's first hereditary King in 1907. His Majesty Ugyen Wangchuck became the first Druk Gyalpo (Dragon King) and set up the Wangchuck Dynasty that still rules today.

In 2008 Bhutan enacted its Constitution and converted to a democracy in order to better safeguard the rights of its citizens. Later in November of the same year, the current reigning 5th Druk Gyalpo Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck was crowned.

The progression from Hereditary Monarchy to that of a Parliamentary Democracy has been a carefully managed process that culminated in 2008 when Bhutan held its first elections country wide. Today, Lyonchen Dr Lotey Tshering of the DNT (Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa) heads the third democratically elected government as the Prime Minister since October 2018.

6. Practical information

6.1 General information

Total land area: 38,394 km²

Capital: Thimphu

Population: 735,553 (2017).

Religion: Bhutan is a Buddhist country and people often refer to it as the last stronghold of Vajrayana Buddhism.

Head of state: His Majesty the 5th Druk Gyalpo Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck

Head of Government: Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Lotey Tshering

Chairperson of Tourism Council of Bhutan: Hon'ble Minister Dr. Tandi Dorji, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

6.2 Local currency and currency exchange

Bhutan's currency is the Ngultrum (Nu.) It is at par with the Indian rupee which is widely accepted in the country. In addition, POS (Point of Sale) services are available nationwide, meaning visitors can pay by credit card at most hotels and handicrafts stores. Only some local shop and hotels accepts USD dollars.

6.3 Electricity

All major towns are well connected with electricity that runs on 220/240 volts with round hole two-pin and three-pin power outlets.

It is recommended that you bring flat-to-round pin converters for your electronics if necessary; however, most hotels offer multi plug sockets. Bhutan is a carbon neutral destination. Our energy is clean and green generated by hydro power.

6.4 Photography

Bhutan offers immense opportunities for photography especially during outdoor sightseeing trips.

However you should check with your guide before taking pictures or filming inside Dzongs, temples, monasteries and religious institutions as in some area photograph/filming is not permitted.

You are free to capture images of the landscape, the panoramic views of the mountain ranges, rural life, flora and fauna, distinctive Bhutanese architecture and the exterior of Dzongs and Chortens.

6.5 Shopping

Some popular handcraft items available for purchase are hand-woven textiles of raw silk or silk, carved masks of various animals, woven baskets of cane and bamboo, wooden bowls known as Dapas, handmade paper products or finely crafted gods of silver. Other items you may be interested in are the exquisite Buddhist thangka paintings or Bhutan's wide array of colourful and creative postage stamps. You can come across these items in the many handcraft shops in and around Thimphu and in other major towns. Please remember that buying and selling of antiques is strictly forbidden in Bhutan.

6.6 Communications

The country has a good network of telecommunication facilities. Most hotels and cafe's offer Wi-Fi internet access. Bhutan has a comprehensive mobile (cell) phone network, and global roaming also accessible.

6.7 Clothes & Other Paraphernalia

With great altitudinal variations, the weather is quite mixed in Bhutan. So be prepared to face the unforeseen weather conditions.

We expect visitors to dress modestly and respectfully especially if you are planning a visit to the monasteries, Dzongs and other religious institutions. Long pants and long sleeved tops should be worn when visiting such places. As a mark of respect, be kind enough to remove your hats, caps etc. as you enter religious and administrative premises, institutions and in any other place that you come across with the national flag being raised.

6.8 Measures, Weight & Time

Bhutan ascribes to the metric system and most weights are measured in grams (g) and kilograms (kg). The standard time is 6 hours ahead of GMT.

6.9 Health Inoculations

Before embarking on a trip to Bhutan, please seek advice from your doctor with regard to vaccinations and appropriate medication you should have prior to your travels.

6.10 Precautions

Bhutan is one of the safest countries in the world; however you should still exercise caution when visiting. Please ensure that your belongings especially your passports, cameras, wallets and purses are properly secured. Please refrain from leaving such items within sight or in locked vehicles while sightseeing.

Avoid drinking tap water which has not been boiled or ice cubes in drinks at all times as most water sources in Bhutan are untreated. One can easily acquire affordable treated and bottled water.

6.11 Public Holidays

Public holidays are observed throughout the nation. However, each Dzongkhag has its own list of regional holidays that are observed especially during the annual Tshechus (Religious festival).

7. Technical Tour

7.1 Half Day Tour

Visit to National Memorial Chorten, Takin Preserve and Buddha Dordenma

National Memorial Chorten



The National Memorial Chorten was built in memory of Third Druk Gyalpo and is dedicated to World Peace. The Chorten is a large white structure crowned with a golden spire.

It is located close to the center of Thimphu city and is one of its most iconic monuments. Visitors will find elderly Bhutanese people

circumambulating the Chorten

throughout the day. Chorten literally means 'Seat of Faith' and Buddhists often call such monuments, the 'Mind of Buddha'. The Chorten is an extraordinary example of Buddhist architecture and artwork with its gorgeous paintings and intricate sculptures.



Takin Preserve

Motithang Takin Preserve is a wildlife reserve area for takin (*Budorcas taxicolor*), the national animal of Bhutan. The reason for declaring takin as the national animal of Bhutan is attributed to a legend of the animal's creation in Bhutan in the 15th

century by Lama Drukpa Kunley, popularly known as the *Divine Mad Man*. It's worthwhile taking the time to see these oddball mammals. The best time to see them is early morning, when they gather near the fence to feed.

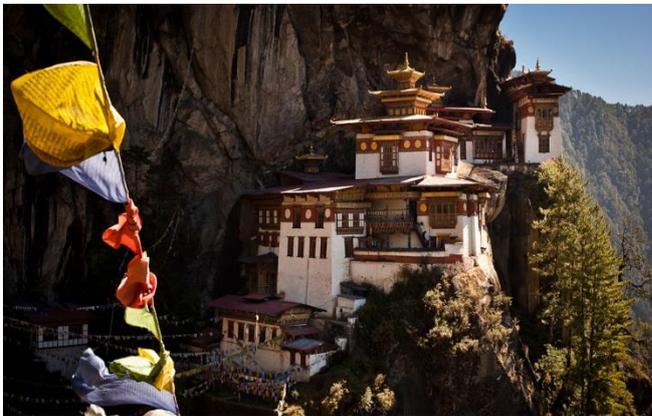
Buddha Dordenma

The Buddha Dordenma is located at the top of a hill at Kuenselphodrang Nature Park and overlooks the Southern entrance to Thimphu Valley. The magnificent statue which measure about 154 ft is the tallest sitting Buddha statue in the world.



7.2 Full day Tour

Visit to Taktsang Monastery



The participants will travel to Ramthangka, Paro (basecamp Taktsang) from Thimphu (62 Km, 1 hr 30 mins drive) in the morning to visit Taktsang Monastery.

Taktsang Lhakhang is Bhutan's most iconic landmark and religious site. The name Taktsang translates to "The Tiger's Nest". This temple is one of the most holy sites in the

kingdom and clings impossibly to a sheer cliff face 900 meters above the Paro Valley.

It was first built in 1692 at a cave where Guru Rimpoche meditated in the 7th century A.D. Legend states that Guru Rimpoche flew to the site atop the back of a tigress and meditated in the cave for 3 years, 3 months, 3 days and 3 hours in order to subdue evil demons residing within it. The cave has been considered a sacred site ever since and many famous saints have travelled to meditate in it.

Taktsang Lhakhang is located approximately 10 km north of Paro town at an altitude of 3.120 m. In order to arrive at the temple visitors must trek from the Basecamp for around 2-3 hours through beautiful, shady pine forests.

8. Contact Details

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

- General Information

Ms. Eunji Tae

Officer, Regional Department for Asia and the Pacific

Ms. Christine BREW

Technical Coordinator, Regional Department for Asia & the Pacific

EMAIL: rdap@unwto.org

Tel: +34 91 567 8100

Tourism Council of Bhutan

-General Information

Mr. Sangay Tenzin

Sr. Legal Officer

Secretariat Services

Tourism Council of Bhutan

EMAIL: stenzin@tcb.gov.bt

Tel: +975-2-323251/247