



POWER PLACES OF THE HIMALAYAS – 13 DAYS

Overview:

This classic combination program takes you through a journey of insightful revelations as you explore different yet similar patterns of culture, traditions, customs and beliefs. The Power Places of the Himalayas lets you experience the overpowering fortresses of Bhutan, the quintessence of mystic Nepal and the fascinating monuments of Tibet. All in one, visiting the most fascinating places of Asia. The serenity of this trip is sure to engulf you, a trip of a lifetime.

Trip Facts:

Destination: Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet

Theme: Culture

Activity: Tour

Difficulty: Easy

Max Altitude: 3,570 m / 11,710 ft

Best Season: February - May / September - November

Highlights:

- Discover the power places of the Himalayas; Nepal, Bhutan & Tibet that share common cultural and geographical landscapes and yet are diverse in many ways.
- Wander through UNESCO World Heritage Sites in each destination.
- Experience the local lifestyle and traditions of all three places.



Itinerary at glance:

Day	Program	Accommodation
1	Arrive in Paro and drive to Thimphu	Hotel
2	In Thimphu	Hotel
3	Day excursion to Punakha	Hotel
4	Drive to Paro	Hotel
5	In Paro, Taktsang Monastery Hike	Hotel
6	Fly to Kathmandu	Hotel
7	In Kathmandu	Hotel
8	In Kathmandu	Hotel
9	Fly to Lhasa, Tibet	Hotel
10	In Lhasa	Hotel
11	In Lhasa	Hotel
12	Fly back to Kathmandu	Hotel
13	Final Departure	

Detailed Itinerary:

Day 1: Arrive in Paro and drive to Thimphu

Distance: 53kms/ 32 miles

Drive Time: 1 hour approx.

Altitude: 2,350 m / 7,709 ft

On arrival at the Paro International Airport, our representative will receive and escort you to the hotel in Thimphu, the capital city of Bhutan. The drive takes you through the winding road with lots of beautiful hamlets.

Visit Tashichho Dzong on the way, in Thimphu. **Tashichho Dzong** is an impressive building also known as 'the fortress of the Dharma Raja'. It has traditionally been the seat of the Druk Desi, the head of Bhutan's civil government.



Note: Tashichho Dzong is open during weekdays after office hours (5pm onwards) and from 9am to 5pm on weekends.

Overnight at Hotel [-/-]

Day 2: In Thimphu

Today we will visit the following places in Thimphu.

After breakfast drive to **Mothithang Takin Preserve** and see Takin - the National Animal of Bhutan. The drive will take around approximately 2 hours (79 kms), spend some time in the sanctuary and later drive further up to the viewpoint and enjoy the view of Thimphu valley.

Drive back and visit the **Memorial Chorten**, also known as the Thimphu Chorten, a large Tibetan-style Buddhist Monastery with golden spires and bells. It is a popular landmark and one of the most visible religious structures in Thimphu.

Also visit the **Folk Heritage Museum** that is set inside a 19th century three-storied traditional building and was established in 2001.

Overnight at Hotel [B/-]

Day 3: Day excursion to Punakha

Distance: 76kms/ 47 miles

Drive Time: 3 hours approx. (each way)

Altitude: 1,300 m / 4,265 ft

After breakfast at the hotel drive to Punakha. En route visit Dochula Pass. Also visit Chimi Lhakhang and Punakha Dzong in Punakha. Later drive back to Thimphu.



On the way to Punakha from Thimphu, the **Dochula Pass** offers a 360-degree of beautiful panoramic view of the Himalayan mountain range, especially on clear winter days. Further, drive to Punakha.

Chimi Lhakhang flanked with hundreds of prayer flags sits on a round hillock near Punakha. Also visit the majestic **Punakha Dzong**, or 'the palace of great happiness or bliss', the second largest dzong in Bhutan.

Drive back to Thimphu after the sightseeing.

Overnight at Hotel [B/-/-]

Day 4: Drive to Paro

Distance: 53kms/ 32 miles

Drive Time: 1 hour approx.

Altitude: 2,250 m / 7,382 ft

Breakfast will be served at the hotel. After breakfast drive to Paro en route visit Simtokha Dzong. Later visit Paro Dzong in Paro.

According to a legend, **Simtokha Dzong** was constructed to subdue an evil spirit that was harassing the people in the region and guard the place. Hence, Simtokha translates as 'Atop a Demon'.

Once you are in Paro, visit the Paro Dzong.

Paro Dzong, also known as Ringpung Dzong means 'Fortress on a heap of jewels.' This impressive dzong is the finest example of Bhutanese architecture and is one of the most popular and well known dzongs in Bhutan.

Transfer to the hotel after the sightseeing. Rest of the day will be at leisure.

Overnight at Hotel [B/-/-]



Day 5: In Paro, Taktsang Monastery Hike

Hike Duration: 4.5 hours approx. (round trip)

Perched on the side of a vertical cliff at 3000 m altitude north of Paro, **Taktsang Monastery** creates an impressive sight, and is the unofficial symbol of Bhutan. Keeping the spirituality aside, the journey up to Taktsang Monastery is a Hiker's delight. An hour hike up to a small wooden teahouse called Cafeteria provides close view of the monastery. A further and a rather challenging hike leads you to the glorious Taktsang Monastery. Pony ride for kids can be arranged while hiking uphill till the Cafeteria. Please note that because of the steep trails, ponies are not available for downhill.

Later visit Kyichu Lhakhang.

Located close to the Paro Airport, the **Kyichu Lhakhang** is an important Himalayan Buddhist Temple. Built in the 7th century, this is one of Bhutan's oldest religious sites. Transfer back to the hotel after the sightseeing.

Overnight at Hotel [B/-/-]

Day 6: Fly to Kathmandu

Flight Duration (International Flight): 1 hour approx.

Altitude: 1,400 m / 4,600 ft

Transfer to airport and fly to Kathmandu. Our representative will receive and escort you to the hotel. Rest of the day will be at leisure.

Overnight at Hotel [B/-/-]

Day 7: In Kathmandu

Mountain Flight (Optional)



This early morning, you have an option of taking the exhilarating helicopter ride to Everest or the scenic mountain flight.

After breakfast start your day with a visit to **Kathmandu**, the largest city of Nepal and the political as well as the cultural capital of the country.

Visit **Swayambhunath Stupa**, a UNESCO WORLD Heritage Site. This ancient stupa is the most sacred Buddhist shrine of Nepal. Later drive to Patan and visit its architectural interior.

Patan also known as Lalitpur is the city of artisans and a paradise of fine arts. It is home to Kathmandu Valley's finest craftsmen who have preserved such ancient techniques and lost wax process used to produce exquisite sculptures.

Drive back to Kathmandu and transfer to your hotel.

Overnight at Hotel [B/-/-]

Day 8: In Kathmandu

Today you will visit different sites in Kathmandu and around.

Visit **Boudhanath Stupa**, one of the most imposing landmarks of Kathmandu which is a center of Tibetan Buddhism. The stupa is built on a massive three level mandala style platform and is 36 meters (118 feet) in height.

Next visit **Pashupatinath Temple**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Set on the banks of the holy River Bagmati, it is dedicated to the Hindu God of destruction, Lord Shiva, and is one of the holiest Hindu shrines in Nepal. It is also a renowned Hindu cremation site. Later transfer to the medieval city of Bhaktapur.

Bhaktapur or Bhadgaon translates as the 'City of Devotees'. You can also experience pottery in Bhaktapur.



A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the extraordinary Bhaktapur Durbar Square has monuments that reflect the glory days of the Malla Dynasty when art and architecture thrived in the three cities of the Kathmandu valley.

Transfer to your hotel after the sightseeing.

Overnight at Hotel [B/-/-]

Day 9: Fly to Lhasa, Tibet

Flight Duration (International Flight): 1 hour approx.

Altitude: 3,595 m / 11,794 ft

Upon arrival at the airport, you will be met by our representative and transferred to the hotel. Rest of day will be at leisure to acclimatize to the high altitude.

Lhasa, which means 'the land of the gods' is the heart and soul of Tibet. It is a city of wonders, the capital of the Tibet autonomous region of China.

Overnight at Hotel [B/-/-]

Day 10: In Lhasa

After breakfast visit **Drepung** which is about 8km to the west of central Lhasa. Drepung is one of the "great three" Gelukpa university monasteries of Tibet.

Visit one of the orphanages in Lhasa. This is a unique opportunity to interact with the less fortunate children.

Later visit **Sera Monastery**: 5km North of Lhasa, the Sera Monastery's setting is one of the prettiest in Lhasa, hugging the ridge that forms the Northern wall of the Kyi Chu



Valley. Founded in 1419, Sera Monastery is one of the "great three" Gelukpa university monasteries in Tibet.

Overnight at Hotel [B/-/-]

Day 11: In Lhasa

After breakfast at the hotel, set out to explore Lhasa.

Potala Palace, the chief residence of the Dalai Lama since the 7th century, has been the focus of travelers for centuries. The Potala Palace is one of Tibet's most impressive and enduring monuments that were protected by the Chinese Army of Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution.

Norbulingka: Built 100 years after the Potala palace, Norbulingka means 'Treasure Park' in Tibetan and is situated in the western suburb of Lhasa City, on the bank of the Kyichu River, about one kilometer southwest of the Potala Palace. It is the biggest man-made garden in Tibet.

Jokhang meaning 'House of the Lord' in Tibetan is located at the center of old Lhasa and is the oldest and the most revered religious structure in Tibet. It was built by craftsmen from Tibet, China and Nepal and thus features an intriguing mix of architectural styles.

Barkhor Street is the oldest street in Lhasa and runs through the center of the old city. It is a circular street where Tibetan culture, economy, religion and arts assemble. The word Barkhor refers to the middle of the three concentric holy circuits around the Jokhang.

Transfer to the hotel after the sightseeing.

Overnight at Hotel [B/-/-]



Day 12: Fly back to Kathmandu

Flight Duration (International Flight): 1 hour approx.

Transfer to the airport for your flight to Kathmandu. Upon your arrival, you will be met by our representative and transferred to the hotel. Rest of the day will be free for leisure.

Overnight at Hotel [B/-/-]

Day 13: Final Departure

Today you will be transferred to the airport for your onward journey. [B]

Trip Ends

Note: All information in this itinerary is accurate to the best of our knowledge but please note that changes to our trips can and do occur. This may be due to our effort to improve our program or logistical reasons such as changes in flight schedules, traffic conditions, weather conditions, or government policies. Dharma Adventures will make every effort to keep you informed of any changes but cannot be held liable for any alterations made to the published itinerary.

[B= Breakfast, L= Lunch, D= Dinner]



Trip Includes:

Nepal Portion

- Arrival/departure transfers.
- Meet assistance at the airport.
- 4 nights' hotel accommodation in Kathmandu in a twin sharing room on bed and breakfast basis.
- All the sightseeing tours and transfers as per the above program with local English-speaking guide by private vehicle.
- Orphanage visit in Kathmandu.
- Pottery in Bhaktapur.
- All the entrance and monuments fees as indicated in the program.

Bhutan Portion

- Arrival/departure transfers.
- Meet assistance at the airport.
- 3 nights' hotel accommodation in Thimphu in a twin sharing room on full board basis.
- 2 nights' hotel accommodation in Paro in a twin sharing room on full board basis.
- All the sightseeing tour and transfers as per the itinerary with English speaking guide.
- Bhutan Visa Fee.
- One way pony ride till Cafeteria, Taktsang Monastery [For kids].
- Tourism development fund & Entrance fee in Bhutan.



Tibet Portion

- All necessary arrival/departure transfers.
- Meet assistance at the airport.
- 3 nights' hotel accommodation in Lhasa in a twin sharing room on bed and breakfast basis.
- Sightseeing tour and all surface transfers in Tibet will be provided as per the itinerary with English speaking Tibetan guide by private vehicle.
- Tibet Travel Permit.
- All entrance and monuments fees as indicated in the program.

Trip Extras:

- Nepal Visa Fee.
- Chinese Visa Fee.
- All International airfares and airport tax [Will be quoted separately].
- Meals those are not included on the above cost inclusion.
- Refreshments, bottled drinks.
- Tipping.
- Insurance and rescue of any form.
- Cost arising out of flight cancellation/road blockades/landslides/riots and events beyond our control.
- Expenses of personal nature and any other expenses not mentioned in the above program.
- Photography charges in the monasteries and monuments.
- Other services & items that are not mentioned in the above program.