

**SPIRITUAL ODYSSEY IN BHUTAN**  
**JAMBAY LHAKHANG FESTIVAL**  
**October 29-November 8, 2017**

Your odyssey includes the opportunity to witness the Jambay Lhakhang Festival, where masked, costumed dancers enact the themes of dealing with good and evil. The sacred dance originated in the 8th century and includes a fire ceremony and a masked Naked Dance. There is a story to almost everything in Bhutan, a country that honors the tradition of storytelling. The dance ultimately blesses the infertile women so that they may bear children.

This is one of many stories that you will hear about while in Bhutan. We will be visiting many Buddhist monasteries tucked away in the Himalaya, each with its own history and stories as well as many ancient beautiful paintings and sculptures. This will be a stimulating and peaceful journey. Meditation and gentle yoga will be offered each morning.

**Day 1** Paro - Arrival at the airport and pick up by our guide from Happiness Kingdom. While travel to Paro, You will view many famous Himalayan peaks, including Johmolhari and Mount Jichu Drake. You will also visit the National Museum of Bhutan, Paro Rimping Dzong, and Kyichu temple built in 659 AD.

**Day 2** Paro - Excursion to Taktsang Monastery, a renowned temple in the Himalayan Buddhist world and a popular site of pilgrimage. This is a gentle but long 5 hour round trip hike on an ancient footpath flanked by water falls and prayer wheels. Taktsang is perched 3000 ft up on a cliff overlooking the valley

**Day 3** Paro to Punakha, a beautiful 3 hour drive through mountains and meadows, where upon reaching the top of Dochula pass (3,100m) you can see the entire eastern Himalayan range. Punakha is in a sub-tropical valley and was once the capital of Bhutan. It has many of the country's ancient Buddhist relics. You will visit a rural farming household, have tea, interact with local people. Later you will walk through rice paddy fields to the Temple of Fertility, Chimi Lhakhang, built in the 15th century.

**Day 4** Punakha to Phobjikha, we travel to a bowl shaped valley on the slopes of Black Mountain. This valley is home to the rare black necked cranes that migrate from remote parts of Tibet, China and Siberia during the winter to this valley.

**Day 5** Phobjikha to Bumthang, On our drive we will pass over Pelela pass, the boundary between Western and Eastern Bhutan. We will stop on the way at a weaving center.

**Day 6** Bumthang, We will see many well known sacred and historical sites today and in the evening witness the first day of the Jambay Lhakhang Festival

**Day 7** Bumthang, We will continue to observe the festival with different dances. The dances are divided into 3 categories; those for instruction, those for driving away evil spirits, and those that celebrate the Buddhist faith. Local people will be dressed in their finest traditional clothes. Later in the day, we will visit the famous Menbartsho or Burning Lake, another beautiful Buddhist site of great significance.

**Day 8** Bumthang to Trongsa, We will visit the Trongsa Dzong, seat of the administration, built in 1648 and also the Tower of Trongsa, a museum that explores Bhutan's history

**Day 9** Trongsa to Thimphu, a long drive through spectacular scenery

**Day 10** Thimphu, We will visit many places of cultural and historical importance in the capital of Bhutan. The Memorial Chorten (Stupa) one of Bhutan's most beautiful stupas, the Buddha Point where a gigantic Buddha statue stands, Changankha Lhakhang is a 13th century monastery, the Takin Zoo, a Handcrafts center, The Tashichho Dzong which houses the main Bhutanese police body, including the office of the King

**Day 11** Thimphu to Paro, Departure to your next destination