Bhutanese Textile

The art of weaving is an integral part of Bhutanese society. Today, every Bhutanese home is equipped with a loom for weaving. Since time immemorial, Bhutanese women have adopted weaving as a respectable profession for eking out their livelihood. Young girls begin learning the art of weaving from their mothers at an early age and attain proficiency before they reach the age of twenty. Considering the societal and religious values associated with weaving in Bhutan, Bhutanese textiles have received wide accolade and recognition for its unique quality across the world. To help you see and appreciate the beauty of Bhutanese textiles, Bhutan Journeys, offers this very unique tour centered exclusively on the intricacies of weaving in small villages. In the course of your visit, you will have the opportunity to interact and meet various segments of people involved in weaving and eventually learn the advancement of this industry in Bhutan. In order to help you see the manifestation of these textiles, we will take you to at least one festival where men and womenfolk attend in their best outfits embedded with intricate Bhutanese patterns.

Duration: 15 days

Price: $3375

Group Size: Minimum Pax - 2

Grade: Moderate

Destination: Bhutan

Activity: Trekking in Nepal

Itinerary:

Day 1: KTM - Paro - Thimphu

Depart Kathmandu by Druk Air to Paro. If you are lucky, you will have glorious view of the snowcapped Himalayas. The remarkable and steep descent into the Paro valley is an awe-inspiring beginning to an adventure of a lifetime. After visa formalities and collection of baggage, you will meet the Bhutanese representative, who will receive you and take you for lunch at one of the local restaurants in Paro. After lunch, we will take a 2-hour leisurely drive towards the Capital of Bhutan, Thimphu. Upon reaching Thimphu, you will be taken to one of the best hotels of Thimphu. The hotel will be centrally located and you can, on foot, go around the commercial establishments for shopping. After settling down, we shall have the Welcome Dinner. Overnight at Hotel.

Day 2: Thimphu Sightseeing

After breakfast, there will be a short lecture on Bhutanese Textiles in the 21st Century. Soon after the lecture, you will be taken to the following places of interests. ? The Textile Museum: This museum displays the finest art of weaving from various regions of Bhutan. You will also be able to see the different fabrics and the intricacies of weaving. There will be a brief audiovisual program on textiles of Bhutan. ? Bhutan Post (Post Office): As the sole postal organization of Bhutan, Bhutan Post offers you the finest collections of stamps and post cards. You can purchase the finest stamps and cards as a souvenir. ? The Folk and Heritage Museum: This museum lets you experience the Bhutanese way of living. ? The Arts and Craft Institute: This is a vocational training institute where the art of painting, woodcraft and sculpturing are taught to students with the objective of preserving the rich and pristine heritage. ? Industrial State: Afternoon visit the Industrial State, where you can see the weavers weaving different fabrics. • RNR Center in Serbithang.(Thimphu) • Bhutanese paper Factory. ? The Memorial Chorten: Built in the honor of the late King of

Bhutan, this Chorten is centrally located for young and old people to pray. After seeing this place of worship, you will visit the Handicraft Emporium, and other local handicraft shops to experience the beauty of Bhutanese textiles. Evening at leisure. Overnight at hotel.

Day 3: Thimphu - Wangdue

Day 3 will begin with a lecture on the Arts and Crafts of Bhutan particularly on and will be followed by an excursion to the indigenous hospital. This hospital manufactures traditional medicines from herbals collected from varying altitudes within the country. We will also visit the Bhutanese paper factory before leaving for Wang due. Wangdue is about 3 hours drive from the capital. The route passes through the horticulture center in Yusipang before reaching the 10,000ft Dochula pass. On a clear day you will be able to see a spectacular view of the Eastern Himalayas from this pass. Many colorful prayer flags also dot the pass. Your lunch will be served at the Dochula cafeteria. After lunch, we shall descend through the forest of rhododendrons and magnolia. After several stops on the way, you will pass the village of Lumitsawa; Thinleygang and reach the fertile valley of Lobesa. Another 20 minutes' drive will take you to your hotel. Evening at leisure. If time permits, you can take a half an hour hike from your hotel to a typical Bhutanese farm village in "Rinchengang".

Day 4: Wangdue - Trongsa

In the morning we shall visit Wangdue town and other places of interest like Wangdue Dzong. Thereafter we shall drive through the tropical vegetation to Nobding and Pele la pass (11,000ft). Throughout your trip you will come across the beautiful sceneries of rural Bhutan, with scattered settlements far from the road. Lunch will be served at a local restaurant in Nobding or a picnic lunch en route whichever is deemed appropriate. After lunch we shall descend through the open meadows and valley of yak herders and several other villages via Chendebji Chorten. We shall stop for a tea break at a convenient spot and drive for another 2 hours drive to your hotel in Trongsa. Overnight: Hotel.

Day 5: Trongsa - Bumthang

After your early breakfast you shall visit the monumental architecture, "The Trongsa Dzong". The Dzong has played a vital role in shaping the political history of Bhutan. We shall view the Ta Dzong, an ancient watchtower. We shall drive towards Bumthang valley over the Yotung la pass (11,800ft). Early lunch at Trongsa or packed lunch will be served en route whichever is deemed appropriate. En route we shall visit the "Yathra" weaving centre at Zugney and spent our afternoon interacting with the local weavers. Yathra is the name for the colorful, hand-woven woolen cloth (often with geometric designs) that is produced in this region. Drive for another 30 minutes to Jakar. After checking at the hotel and evening at leisure. Dinner and Overnight: Hotel If time permit, we shall visit the places of spiritual and cultural interest in Bumthang.

Day 6: Bumthang Halt

In Bumthang Valley, we shall visit the following places of interests. Jambay Lhakhang: Built by the Tibetan King Songsten Gompo in the 7th Century. Tamshing Monastery: We drive to visit this monastery built by Terton Pema Lingpa (Treasure discovers). Kurjey Lhakhang: Legend has it that the body imprint of Guru Rimpoche was left behind while meditating in a cave in this temple. Lunch will be served at the hotel. Afternoon you will have a free stroll in Jakar Main Street. Overnight in Bumthang.

Highlights: • RNR Centre in Bumthang • Live stock/Sheep breeding in Bumthang. • Visit Textile weaving in private House. • Private Nunnery in Tang Valley

Day 7: Bumthang - Tang Ugyencholing Excursion

Today's early morning we take an excursion drive to Tang valley following the feeder road the Community School of upper Tang valley. You will pass through many villages scattered and people at work. From the school we hike about an hour to Ugyen Choling. Ugyen Choling monastery is located on the hill over looking valley. It's about an hour walk from the school. Brief historical account of Ugyen Choling begins with e visit of the great Tibetan master of Buddhism, Longchen Rabjam (1308 -63). He is the most celebrated writer and philosopher of Nyingmapa School of Tibetan Buddhism and is regarded as the synthesizer of the doctrine and methods of Dzongchen "school of great perfection". Ugyen Chloing was never so much a seat of political power but played a vital role as a religious center. It is the only structure of its size and history that still exist and used by a family with direct historical links to it. With its size and magnitude of the complex has initiated to house as a historical museum to ensure its continuity with the following commitments:

Highlights - Preserving and maintaining Ugyen Choling as a religious and cultural legacy. - Continuing the traditional religious observance and rituals - Providing a place for religious studies, research and solitude - Reviving and enhancing traditional skills and providing an outlet for local handicrafts. After visiting the museum, we shall walk down to valley and drive to Jakar. Evening at leisure and Overnight Hotel.

Day 8: Bumthang - Commence Owl Trek.

High light - Visit Dhur Community School. The trek starts from Manchugang and reach Dhur village at an elevation of 2900 meters. The inhabitants of the village are the Kheps and Brokpas (nomads). This village has two different dialects, the usual Bumthang Kha and the Brokke (nomadic dialects). Near the river is a traditional water-driven flour mill which used to be a source of livelihood for the people of Dhur village. Resuming the trek is the uphill climb through the blue pine forest towards the campsite at Schonath (3450m) in hemlock and juniper forest. The hauling of owls through the night is quite common, hence the name The Owl Trek.

Day 9: Schonath - Kitiphu

Day two is trekking through fresh forest of hemlock, fir, spruce and many species of rhododendron which are in full bloom during the months of April and May. The trekking also takes you through the forest of bamboo which is the main undergrowth in this forest. After few hours of walking you will arrive at the Drangela Pass (3600m). Climbing up the Kitiphu ridge brings you to an altitude of about 3870m which is the night campsite. From this point you can have a fresh view of snow capped mountains and valleys underneath. This is also when you can view the mount Gangkarpunsum (7541m), the highest unclimbed peak in the world.

Day 10: Kitiphu - Bumthang

On day three you descend towards the monasteries of Zambhalha, Chuedak and Tharpaling. Chuedak monastery has 100 Avoloketeshvaras in the form of Chukchizhey (eleven heads) where you may pray for yourself and all living beings. You might even stop for many holy water around this place to quench your thirst, wash your sins and purify your body and soul. Towards the afternoon the trek will take you along the ridge of Kikila and following the traditional trek route between Trongsa and Bumthang (the Royal Heritage Trail) through scenic hills and forests. Finally you will have the best view of Jakar Dzong and come to end of the trek at Bumthang

Day 11: Bumthang - Phobjikha

After breakfast we depart via Trongsa to Phobjikha. En-route picnic lunch will be served at Chendebji Chorten. Drive over Pelela pass and after driving 10 minutes from the pass, we meet a road diversion that heads to the Phobjikha valley. We follow the road to

Phobjikha valley about an hour drive to the guesthouse. Phobjikha is an open wide valley, where Gantey Gompa is ideally located on a hilll over looking the valley. It is aslo the winter habitat for the Black necked cranes migrating from Tibet. You will have the opportunity to see these graceful birds and visit the small carpet factory owned by the hotel owner. Evening at leisure and over night at Hotel.

Day 12: Phobjikha - Punakha

After breakfast, we drive back to Gantey Gompa to see the renovation and people at work. We continue our journey to Punakha for lunch at your hotel. Afternoon we will visit Punakha Dzong, one of the impressive and important Dzong located between the two rivers and a stroll through the town. Late evening, there will be a demonstration on the Bhutanese national dress (Gho for Men and Kira for Women) and an open discussion forum with your Bhutanese trip leader. Evening at leisure. Overnight at hotel.

Day 13: Punakha Thimphu - Paro

We will start early today towards Paro and lunch at one of local restaurant in Paro town. Afternoon we will visit National Museum and Paro Rinpung Dzong. The Paro Dzong may be familiar to people who watched Bertolucci’s film ‘The Little Buddha’. Evening stroll through Paro town. Overnight: Hotel

Day 14: Paro Halt

Today full day sightseeing at Paro. Early morning drive till the road head to Ramthangkha, from where we start our hike to the Taktsang monastery (Tiger’s Nest). Visitors are permitted to hike up to the viewpoint from where they can see the monastery hanging on a cliff. Legend has it that Guru Rimpoche flew from Easter Bhutan on a tigress, bringing Buddhist teachings and meditated here in this cliff. This is one of the most venerated and sacred of all Buddhist sights around the world. Lunch at Taktsang cafeteria. Walk downhill to the road head and drive on to Drugyel Dzong (now in ruins) and enroute visit the Kyichu Lhakhang, built in the 7th century by Songtsen Gampo, which denotes the spread and emergence of Buddhism in the country. The riding horse will be arranged on requirement for the hike to Taktsang.

Day 15: Paro Kathmandu

Depart for Paro airport for your onward flight to Kathmandu.