Unravel the wonders for yourself of this last Shangri-La, a land of snow-capped mountains, emerald green landscape, sturdy fortresses and gentle people. In Bhutan, tradition is real: The visitors can both see it and feel it. In a world where a thick cloak of globalization has all but smothered distinctive heritages, this self-reliant kingdom proudly stands alone. This trip will help you to experience and understand the authentic Bhutanese way of life. Drive from one valley town to another visiting temples, monasteries, dzongs, isolated villages, and the people. This trip is a wonderful immersion into Bhutanese culture where daily life is itself a form of art. An ultimate vacation in this mythical Himalayan Kingdom!

Includes:
- 3 or 4 star hotel + all meals
- Explore Thimphu’s textile markets, national library, Buddha point and Trashichhoedzong fortress
- Paro Valley exploration including Simtokha Dzong and Ta Dzong watchtower
- Rural village & farmhouse excursion
- Private guide & driver
- Temple visits & Tigers Nest hike
- Taxes + entrance fees + Bhutan visa

Excludes:
- International airfare
- Required travel insurance
- Beverages (alcoholic / non – alcoholic)
- Guide tips
What you’ll experience:

Tourism in Bhutan is unique as it is referred as the “Switzerland of Asia.” From quaint farming villages to magical forests to mountains where Yetis supposedly live, Bhutan is a place which has escaped the civilized touch of the rest of the world. It is The Land of Gross National Happiness whose philosophy is being practiced worldwide.

With its beautiful and largely unspoiled Himalayan setting, its rich flora and fauna, dense forests, and delightful people, the "Land of the Thunder Dragon" or 'Druk Yul' has become an increasingly popular destination for international tourists. Bhutan often revered as, is still regarded as one of the last "Shangri-La's" in the Himalayan region because of its remoteness, its spectacular mountain terrain, varied flora and fauna and its unique ancient Buddhist monasteries besides timeless images of its history.

The tiny kingdom of Bhutan shares with Nepal the world's greatest concentration of mountains and living heritage of Buddhism. Flights to Paro can truly be described as a flight into fantasy. During the flight, a firsthand close up view of Mt. Everest, Mt. Kanchenjunga and other famous peaks of the Himalaya range become a reality.

DAY 01 : ARRIVE PARO BY DRUK AIR & TRANSFER TO THIMPHU
(55km, approx. 1.1/2 hour drive)
The flight to Paro is one of the most spectacular in the entire Himalayas and offers one of the greatest arrivals anywhere during the decent to Paro Airport.

Stepping out of the aircraft, the first impressions of Bhutan are the cool fresh air and deep blue skies. You will be received by our representative. The short transfer to Thimphu, the capital town of Bhutan, leads through the Paro valley to the confluence of Paro and Thimphu rivers at Chuzom (confluence).

After checking into your hotel, enjoy an evening walk around Thimphu Main Street and market.
DAY 02: THIMPHU

Thimphu (alt. 2,320m), the capital town of Bhutan and the center of government, religion and commerce, is a unique city with an unusual mixture of modern development alongside ancient traditions. With a population of about 90,000 it is perhaps still the world’s only capital city without a traffic light.

After breakfast enjoy a guided tour of the city’s main highlights including:

**Textile Museum**: Experience the living national art of weaving. Exhibitions introduce the major weaving techniques, styles of local dress and textiles made by women and men.

**National Library**: The history of Bhutan lies imprinted in archaic texts, which are preserved at the National Library. Besides thousands of manuscripts and ancient texts, the library also has modern academic books and printing blocks for prayer flags.

**Simply Bhutan Museum**: This newly commissioned museum depicts ancient Bhutanese architecture, which is slowly being lost to modernization. The uniqueness of the structure is in its composition of the materials used. The structure is built reusing old timber, window and door frames and other items from traditional and old demolished houses. One highlight is the portrayal of the age-old life styles of the Bhutanese people.

**Memorial Chorten**: The stupa built in the memory of Bhutan’s third King, His Late Majesty, King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk, who is popularly regarded as Father of modern Bhutan. The paintings and statues inside the monument provide a deep insight into Buddhist philosophy.

**Buddha Point (Kuensel Phodrang)**. Located just a short drive from Thimphu city center, visitors can get a good overview of the Thimphu valley from the Buddha point (Kuensel Phodrang). You can pay your obeisance and offer prayers to the Buddha, the largest statue in the country and then walk around and take a glimpse of the valley.

Conclude the tour of the day with a visit of Trashichhoedzong, “fortress of the glorious religion.” This is the center of government and religion, site of monarch’s throne room and seat of Je Khenpo or Chief Abbot. Built in 1641 by the political and religious unifier of Bhutan, Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, it was reconstructed in 1960s in traditional Bhutanese manner, without nails or architectural plans.
DAY 03 : THIMPHU – PARO  (55 km, drive 1 ½ hrs approx.)

After breakfast drive to Paro, en route visiting Simtokha Dzong. This dzong, built in 1627 is the oldest in Bhutan. It now houses the Institute for Language and Culture Studies.

Paro (2,280m) - The beautiful valley of Paro encapsulates within itself a rich culture, scenic beauty and hundreds of myths and legends. It is home to many of Bhutan’s oldest temples and monasteries, National Museum and the country's only airport. Mount. Chomolhari (7,314m) reigns in white glory at the northern end of the valley and its glacial water plunge through deep gorges to form Pa Chhu (Paro river). Paro is also one of the most fertile valleys in the Kingdom producing a bulk of the locally famous red rice from its terraced fields.

Ta Dzong (closed on Government Holiday) : once a watchtower, built to defend Rinpung Dzong during inter-valley wars of the 17th century, Ta Dzong was inaugurated as Bhutan's National Museum in 1968. It holds fascinating collection of art, relics, religious thangkha paintings and Bhutan’s exquisite postage stamps. The museum circular shape augments its varied collection displayed over several floors.

Afterwards, walk down a hillside trail to visit Rinpung Dzong, which has a long and fascinating history. Built in 1646 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, the first spiritual and temporal ruler of Bhutan, the Dzong houses the monastic body of Paro, the office of the Dzongda (district administrative head) and Thrimpon (judge) of Paro district. The approach to the Dzong is through a traditional covered bridge called Nemi Zam. A walk through the bridge, over a stone inlaid path, offers a good view of the architectural wonder of the Dzong as well as life around it. It is also the venue of Paro Tschechu, held once a year in the spring.

Later in the afternoon take a short drive to Lango village (approx 20 mins drive) to experience rural Bhutanese life offering a good glimpse into the lifestyle of a farmer. Bhutanese farm houses are very colorful, decorative and traditionally built without the use of single nail. All houses follow the same architectural pattern.
DAY 04: PARO – TIGER’S NEST HIKE  (approx. 5 hours round trip walk)
After breakfast take a short drive to Satsam Chorten, stop en route at the 7th century Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the 108 temples built in the Himalayas by Tibetan King, Songtsen Gampo. The building of this temple marks the introduction of Buddhism in Bhutan.

On arrival at trail-head point, embark on a walking excursion to Taktshang Monastery: It is one of the most famous of Bhutan’s monasteries, perched on the side of a cliff 900m above the Paro valley floor. It is said that Guru Rinpoche arrived here on the back of a tigress and meditated at this monastery and hence it is called ‘Tiger’s Nest.’ This site has been recognised as a most sacred place and visited by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in 1646 and now visited by all Bhutanese at least once in their lifetime. On 19 April, 1998, a fire severely damaged the main structure of building but now this Bhutanese jewel has been restored to its original splendour.

We’ll enjoy lunch at the famous Taktsang cafeteria overlooking the Tiger’s nest hanging on to the cliffside. On the way back to town stop at Drukgyel Dzong, a ruined fortress where Bhutanese warriors fought Tibetan invaders centuries ago. The snowy dome of sacred Chomolhari, "mountain of goddess" can be seen in all her glory from the approach road to the Dzong.

DAY 05 : DEPART PARO
After an early breakfast at the hotel, drive to the airport for the flight to your onward destination. Our representative will help you with exit formalities and then bid you farewell.

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IMPORTANT NOTES:

CLOSING DAYS OF SOME OF MONUMENTS MENTIONED IN ITINERARY:

- Ta Dzong – Paro (national museum) : closed on Government Holidays
- National Library – Thimphu : closed on Sat, Sun & Government Holidays
- Folk Heritage Museum - Thimphu : closed on Government Holidays and on Sat open from 10.30 a.m to 1.00 p.m and on Sun open from 11.30 a.m to 3.00 p.m
- Textile Museum – Thimphu : Closed on Government Holidays and on Sun and on Sat open from 9.00 a.m to 4 p.m
- Institute of Zorig Chusum (Arts & Crafts School) - Thimphu : Closed on Sun & Government Holidays and on Sat open from 10 a.m to 12 o’clock.

ESTIMATED AIRFARES (as of date & subject to change):

Notes : This airfare is best booked by an operator, though you can choose to book on your own. Please let us know if you’d like us to handle. Tickets are issued in local currency at the place of Issuance (Delhi) at prevailing rate of exchange – and therefore airfare is subject to change, due to currency fluctuation.

Delhi – Paro – Delhi : US$ 540 + US$ 91 per person in Economy Class
Delhi – Paro – Delhi : US$ 630 + US$ 137 per person in Business Class
Kathmandu – Paro – Kathmandu: E-mail for rates

Bhutan visa procedure for all nationals (except Indian/Bangladeshi/Maldivian):

- We require color scan or picture of passport for visa at least 30 days prior to travel date (sooner the better & minimum 7 working days needed to process and obtain Bhutan visa).
- Remaining validity in passport after Bhutan tour must be min 6 month excluding travelling month.
- Multiple entry Indian visa is required if you enter Bhutan from India and re-enter India after Bhutan tour.
- Passengers visiting India on the E-tourist visa & entering Bhutan by air (by remaining in transit at Delhi / Kolkata airport) and re-entering India after Bhutan tour by surface (Phuentsholing, Samdrup Jonkhar & Gelephu) are required to travel with original Indian visa stamped in passport by Indian embassy/consulate at their home country as there is no facilities at these border towns to check & verify Indian E-Visa.
- Dual passport holders are required to use the same passport whose details are submitted on to Bhutan for Visa authorization, prior to arrival in Bhutan.
- It is mandatory for a tourist (except Indian/Bangladeshi/Maldivian) to buy full service tour package from a licensed Bhutanese tour operator like in this case.
- Your Bhutan visa fee is US $40, which is included in tour cost.

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