

BHUTAN

Believe

Bhutan – The only surviving Buddhist Kingdom in the world, has cautiously reopened to tourists and international travellers from 23 September 2022. The lure of its inaccessibility and low-tourist-to-local travel policy makes this destination a firm favourite with discerning travellers.

A slew of new developments has been put into place in post pandemic Bhutan.

The country has big plans afoot. These include making travel planning accessibility a top priority, upskilling and introducing new standards across the tourism sector and focusing on enhancements in itineraries and experiences. New branding launched simultaneously with the reopening of the country will appeal to the eco conscious traveller. New immersive experiences intertwined with age-old festivals and traditional Bhutanese hospitality are some of the things that will excite the most die-hard explorer.

But it's not just the panoramic valley views and rice fields splashed with the vibrant colours of prayer flags that make this tiny nation a compelling visit. With more than 163 festivals throughout the year, Bhutan is a culturally immersive and exciting destination.

(Please note that the dates of the festivals are indicative, so it's best to check online or with your preferred travel partner before confirming your visit to a festival).

All-year round

Trans Bhutan Trail

A spiritual journey is now accessible for the first time in its 60-year history. The Trans Bhutan Trail criss-crosses the kingdom showcasing 400 sites steeped in history and culture across a 400-kilometre (250-mile) trail that originated as a route for pilgrims roughly 500 years ago. Time has virtually stood still along this route and thanks to the tireless efforts of the government along with a veritable army of almost a thousand workers, the trail has been resuscitated during the pandemic.

The Trans Bhutan Trail – called one of the world's greatest places by Time magazine and CNN Travel – is more than just an epic and ancient route: it's an immersive cultural experience. Starting – or ending – in Trashigang, it unfurls across central Bhutan and stretches to the western region of Haa. En route, you'll explore breath-taking historic and religious sites, be welcomed by local communities, and pass through an astonishing array of climates. The trek takes around 30 days to complete, but you can choose just to walk sections of the trail: the Divine Madman Trek, Tergola Trek and Pumola Hike are shorter trails that overlap the Trans Bhutan Trail. transbhutantrail.com, Available to be booked year-round for short or long treks.

2023

JANUARY

Traditional Day of offering

A celebration in memory of the unifier of the Kingdom of Bhutan in the 17th century, locals dressed in their finest gho and kira attires, celebrate with picnics, household feasts and offerings to temples.

January 14, 2023

FEBRUARY

Birth Anniversary of His Majesty the King

Celebrating the birth anniversary of His Majesty King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, this is a proud day for all Bhutanese. Marked by three fun-filled days of festivities, the valley is brimming with public programmes of dances, fairs, feasts, and songs.

February 21 - 23, 2023

Festival of Mahakali - Trongsa

This unique festival in Trongsa is held in Trongsa Dzong, where the dominant or main female protective deity of Bhutan known as the goddess Mahakali is celebrated in a colourful 3-day extravaganza of dances and songs at the stunning fortress grounds.

February 25 - 27, 2023

Phurba Dubchen -Doedel Pemacholing, Lhakhang, Ramjar, Trashi Yangtse

This festival is observed in Trashiyangtse, in East Bhutan. 'Drubchen' means great accomplishment in Tibetan and one of the most elaborate forms of Vajrayana Buddhist practise. Dances and cultural practises symbolize this event

February 26- March 7, 2023

Trashiyangtse Annual Tshechu - Trashi

Trashiyangtse Annual Tshechu is happening this February. Various mask dances and local cultural programs will be displayed to the public at Trashi.

February 27- March 01, 2023

Punakha Drubchen - Punakha

The Punakha Drubchen is held to showcase the history and mythical narratives of the construction of the Punakha Dzong to the public. Sacred masked dances and folk dances are performed by the central monastic body and citizens of the district.

February 26-28, 2023

Khengzor Tsechu - Khengzor Lhakhang in Khar, Pemagatshel

This is yet another important and sacred festival in Pemagatshel. It takes place in the Khengzor Lhakhang in Khar, Pemagatshel.

February 28-March 2, 2023

MARCH

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Lichibi Tsechu -Lichibi, Zhemgang

During this festival, mask dances are performed, and prayers recited during the day, while cultural dances and songs are performed towards the evening.

March 1, 2023

Punakha Tsechu - Punakha

The main festival of Punakha Valley includes performances and lively parades of locals in their most striking ghos and kiras but the highlight is the unfurling of the thongdrol, a large tapestry of Guru Rinpoche – Bhutan’s most revered religious icon.

March 1-3, 2023

Naktashang Tsechu – Nyalamdung Naktshang, Khoma, Lhutse

Naktshang is believed to be the seat of Guru Chowang. A five-day festival is celebrated in Naktshang, where local mask dancers perform.

March 1-5, 2023

Bhutan International Marathon and Half Marathon – Gasa to Punakha

Organised by the Bhutan Olympic Committee, a full and half marathon held in Punakha also coincides with the last day of the valley’s religious festival. The full marathon starts in Gasa, one of Bhutan’s highest districts then goes down towards the subtropical valley of Punakha, ending in its historic dzong.

March 4, 2023

Nganglam Tsechu -Nganglam Lhakhang, Zobel, Pemagatshel

Nganglam Tsechu is held in Nganglam Lhakhang in Zobel, Pemagatshel. Several sacred mask dances are displayed to the public. The local folk dances are also showcased to the public.

March 5-7, 2023

Tangsibi Mani - Tangsibi Lhakhang, Ura, Bumthang

Tangsibi Mani is a religious ritual celebrated in Ura Gewog under Bumthang Dzongkhag. The chams/ dances include all the terchams composed by the great saint Tertön Pema Lingpa and other dances also.

March 6-10, 2023

Chenga Kora – Chorten Kora, Trashy Yangtse

This festival is very popular in Bhutan. It is held at Chorten Kora in Trashiyangtse. It is also known as the Tse-Chenga Kora, and is a celebration on the 15th day of the first month of the Bhutanese calendar. This festival is so significant that the devotees from Tawang in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh join the local Bhutanese in this grand event.

March 7, 2023

Tharpaling Thongdrol (Unfurling of the Holy Scroll) Chumi - Bumthang

Like the unfurling of the giant scroll in Punakha’s tsechu, without the dances and festivities, during this event, a sacred applique silk scroll adorned with Buddhist imagery is presented annually to the public and its unfurling is meant to bring good karma in the scroll’s presence. This holy ceremony is marked by 10 days of prayers and Buddhist ceremonies by the monks of Tharpaling Lhakhang to the people of Chumi Valley.

March 7, 2023

Zhuri Duechoed -Zhuri Lhakhang, Chumey, Bumthang

Zhuri Duechoed is observed in Zhuri Lhakhang in Chumey, Bumthang. Bumthang is considered as country's most sacred place being blessed by numerous great saints in olden days.

March 17-18, 2023

Gayden Choedpa – Gayden Lhakhang, Ura, Bumthang

This festival takes place in the sacred Gayden Lhakhang in Ura, Bumthang. It is a small festival for the temple.

March 19-21, 2023

Namgang Kora – Chorten Kora, Trashiyangtse

Namgang Kora is one of oldest religious festivals of eastern Bhutan, which is held annually at the Chorten Kora, Trashiyangtse. This festival involves circumambulation the famous Chorten Kora on the last day of the auspicious first month of the Bhutanese calendar. It is preceded by Chenga Kora. Local devotees and devotees from Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh state of India, come together annually during this festival.

March 21, 2023

ZhemGang Tsechu – Zhemgang Dzong

Different mask dances are performed for three days with the unfurling of a huge thongdrel (large tapestry) of Guru Rinpoche on the fourth day.

March 28-31, 2023

Gasa Tsechu – Gasa Dzong

A festival set in one of Bhutan's most stunning districts, the celebration is held in a community located at the country's highest elevation. The culture of the highlander communities and their unique dances and songs make this a true spectacle.

March 28 - 31, 2023

Tsirang Tsechu -Tsirang

The annual tshechu is the biggest festival in the southern town of Tsirang. The festival attracts people from all over the region. Several different kinds of mask dances are performed. Local and traditional dances and music add zest to the festive mood. The thongdrol (large tapestry) of Guru Rinpoche is unfurled on the last day of the tshechu.

March 29-31, 2023

Talo Tsechu, Talo Goempa, Punakha

A three-day festival of masked and atsara dances.

Unlike the Punakha, Thimphu and Paro tsechus that attracts large crowds and visitors, this small festival is truly authentic.

March 29 - 31, 2023

Gomkora Tsechu – Gomphu Kora, Trashiyangtse

Gomphu Kora lies in the heart of the agrarian belt of eastern Bhutan. It is 23 km from Trashigang Dzong, the headquarters of Bhutan's most populous district in the East. Gomphu means "Meditation Cave" and Kora means "Circumambulation".

The name is derived from a cave formed out of a rock-face next to a temple that has been built as a tribute to this sacred site. The biggest attraction of Gomphu Kora is the circumambulation. "Go around Gomphu Kora today, for tomorrow may be too late", advises a local song that entices devotees to visit Gomphu Kora. The place comes annually when people dressed in their finery arrive, to partake in the festivity, to worship and to reaffirm their connection with the past. The sanctity of the three-day religious festival even draws the Dakpa tribe from neighboring Arunachal Pradesh (India). They endure days of travel on foot through with entire families in tow.

March 31, 2023

Prewchoed – Buli/Tali/Nangkor, Zhemgang

No masked dances are performed and the public is offered only with potatoes during this event.

March 31, 2023

Dzongdra Tsechu - Dzongdrakha Lhakhang, Luni, Paro

It is believed that the Paro Tsechu Chhenmo started from Dzongdrakha and ends at Dzongdrakha.

March 31 – April 7, 2023

APRIL 2023

Paro Tsechu

If you ask any Bhutanese, no festival bears more importance than Paro Tsechu. The Rinpung Dzong comes alive with dances and songs, but the main highlight are the locals donning their most colourful and expensive kiras and ghos, hence it is popularly known as "Bhutan Fashion Week."

April 2-6, 2023

Rhododendron Festival - Dochula

The festival marks the blooming of the beautiful Rhododendron flower that covers the country with a riot of pink, red and white in the spring season. The beauty of this flower is celebrated through folktales and songs by the locals. Bhutan boasts 46 species of Rhododendron of which 29 of the species are found in the park where the festival is observed. The festival features a walk-through of the Rhododendron Garden, as well as an arts and crafts exhibition. Traditional games and cultural programs are also on the list of events. The park also has a lake, which adds a charm to the event. Yak rides are also available. The event is held every year at the Lamperi Botanical Garden, Dochula.

Revised dates: April 22 – 24, 2023

Zhabdrung Kuchoe - Punakha

Commemorating the death anniversary of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel, the Tibetan Buddhist lama and leader who first united Bhutan as a nation state in 1630, this day is marked by the unfurling of the Thongdrol of Zhabdrung in the Punakha Dzong. Everywhere else in Bhutan, temples hold ceremonies and locals light butter lamps.

April 22, 2023

Rawabi Tsechu - Rawabi Goenpa, Maenbi, Lhuentse.

A perfect gathering to celebrate in colourful costumes.

April 28-30, 2023

Tashicholing Lhakhang Tsechu - Tashicholing Lhakhang, Pemagatshel

Dances and masks dominate this festival.

April 28-30, 2023

Dungmed Tsechu -Dungmed Lhakhang, Pemagatshel

Different mask dances and cultural programs are displayed to the public.

April 28-30, 2023

Neyphu Mani - Neyphu Goenpa Shaba Gewog

April, 30, 2023

Dungkhar Tsechu - Dungkhar Lhakhang, Khar, Pemagatshel

The three-day festival showcases sacred dances such as the Black Hat Dance, the three Ging, and the drummers of Drametse. A small thongdrol ((large tapestry), representing the future Buddha Maitreya (Jampa), is unfurled for the public to receive blessings and it is the highlight of the festival. A distinction of Dungkhar Tsechu is that people are given the blessings of the lake. During this festival, the local deity of Khar village, Kha Thoepa, is propitiated and offerings are made to him. It is believed that the local deity would not protect the community if he is not given his due reverence and that natural calamities like heavy rainfall and storms would bring havoc to the community.

April 28 -May 1, 2023

Domkhar Tsechu, Chumey - Bumthang

A three-day festival celebrated since the 1700s in western Bumthang's Domkhar Village, the colourful and historical festivities derive their origins from Terton Pema Lingpa. On the last day of the feast, large scrolls are unfurled to bring blessings to the citizens of the village and the visiting reveller.

April 30 -May 2, 2023

MAY 2023

Birth Anniversary of the 3rd Druk Gyalpo, King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck

A holiday to honour the birthday, the memory and accomplishments of Bhutan's third king. His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck was largely responsible for opening Bhutan to the outside world and instrumental in its modernisation.

May 2, 2023

Ura Yakchoe, Ura Valley - Bumthang

Another small but unique festival hosted in a picturesque village, Ura Lhakhang in Bhutan's eastern valleys, this celebration is highlighted *by* invoking and escorting Yidam Chana Dorjee (a holy Buddhist deity) from Gaythen to Ura.

May 2-6, 2023

Dumati Tsechu – Dumati, Lichibi, Zhemgang

Masks and cultural dances are held in Central Bhutan.

May 14, 2023

Dolay Drupchen -Taktshang, Pelphu

This festival is held every year. Monks from Nephu Monastery participate in the festival as mask dance performers.

May 20-30, 2023

Prew Khowchung -Gangzur, Lhuentse

Khowchung in Gangzur, Lhuentse is the residence of the famous terton (treasure revealer) Pema Lingpa. The stone bathtub and a footprint of the horse that used to belong to him can still be found here. The festival held here at Khowchung is when the public can receive blessings from relics.

May 30, 2023

Prew -Jasabi, Kurtoe, Lhuentse

Prew is celebrated yearly to offer prayers to Guru Rinpoche to protect from any misfortune and to have bountiful production in the year. Some say Prew is to observe the birth anniversary of Guru Rinpoche.

May 30 -June 1, 2023

JUNE 2023

Bonchoed - Trong/Dangkhar, Zhemgang

People from the community offer offerings (Tshog) to the god and pray for wellbeing and happiness for another year. Religious dances and local folk songs are also performed during the event.

June 3, 2023

Zobel Tsechu – Zobel, Pemagatshel

This festival takes place in Nanong and forms [part of the rich cultural tapestry of Pemagatshel.

June 2-4, 2023

Lord Buddha's Parinirvana

A sacred holiday honouring Buddha's nirvana. Many Bhutanese embark on pilgrimages to holy sites whilst temples hold ceremonies to bless pilgrims. Some of Bhutan's holiest relics are also put on display.

June 4, 2023

Birth Anniversary of Her Majesty the Queen

Queen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck is a picture of elegance and style. Her Majesty's birthday is celebrated and honoured throughout Bhutan and the fabrics she wears on her kira and tego on her yearly portraits are prized and sought after by everyone in the kingdom.

June 4, 2023

Birth Anniversary of Guru Rinpoche

Apart from the tsechu in Kurjey Temple in Bumthang, the whole kingdom joins in the celebration to honour their most revered religious figure with temple ceremonies and offerings. Having been credited for the founding of the Tiger's Nest and many other important religious edifices in Bhutan, a pilgrimage to these Buddhist monuments is an important spiritual journey for many Bhutanese.

June 20, 2023

Der-Choed -Bjoka Trong, Zhemgang

Different types of mask dances are performed on this day to entertain and bless the locals.

June 25-28, 2023

Dechenling Tsechu – Dechenling Lhakhang, Pemagatshel

Dances with masks are the highlight here

June 26-28, 2023

Nimalung Tsechu - Bumthang

A three-day festivity of Cham and masked dances performed by monks of Nimalung Dratshang culminating with the unfurling of the sacred Guru Tshengye Thongdrol scroll on the last day.

June 26 - 28, 2023

Dungsingma Tsechu – Dungsingma, Yurung Pemagatshel

People of the village wear colourful clothes and gather to receive blessings.

June 28, 2023

Kurjey Tsechu - Bumthang

Celebrated in one of Bumthang Valley's most sacred temple, this one-day celebration pays tribute to Guru Rinpoche, credited for bringing Buddhism to Bhutan. Here, tantric dancing and ceremonies are performed all day, capped by the display of the large sacred scroll.

June 28, 2023

Khamdang Tendra Tsechu – Shaksing Goenpa, Khamdang, Trashy Yangtse

The annual tshechu is performed on the 10th day of the second month as per the Bhutanese calendar which is considered a female month for the year

June 27 -28, 2023

Tendra Tsechu- Geokar Lhakhang, Yalang, Trashiyangtse

The Geokar Teldha Tshechu is held in Geokar Lhakhang in Yalang, Trashiyangtse.

June 28, 2023

JULY 2023

Ha Festival - All Chiwogs in Jarey, Lhuentse

Ha festival is part of the Bon tradition, which has unique and special characteristics. All villages under Jarey Gewog take part in the Ha festival.

June 28- July 2, 2023

Haa Summer Festival

On the western border of Bhutan lies a peaceful haven amongst the rolling hills. Most of the inhabitants live a nomadic life raising Yaks and trading their products. The Haa Summer Festival is initiated in the celebration of traditional living-culture, nomadic lifestyles of the people there. Besides witnessing and participating in the traditional sports, and masked dance performances, one can relish the unique Bhutanese cuisine. Hontae, a buckwheat dumpling with turnip filling, is a must try delicacy indigenous to the place.

July 9-10, 2023

Nimalung Festival - Bumthang

Nestled in the beautiful valley of Bumthang - a three-day celebration of the gods is a visual pageantry of songs, dances and costumes. The highlight of the festival is the unfurling of a nine-meter high and twelve meters wide thongdrol scroll depicting Guru Rinpoche, who is also known as Padmasambhava.

July 10-11, 2023

First Sermon of Lord Buddha

As a deeply devout Buddhist nation, Bhutan celebrates the First Sermon of Lord Buddha as a national holiday. Thousands of Bhutanese visit the temples and religious sites, embarking on sacred pilgrimages and making offerings to mark the first time that Buddha codified the “Four Noble Truths” of Buddhism and the day he began teaching these doctrines. Temples are beautifully adorned to welcome the faithful and to celebrate the triumph of Buddhism through Buddha’s teachings.

July 21, 2023

Lhamoi Doey Phang -Ringpung Dzong, Paro

Lhamoi Doey-Phang is performed annually by the Ringpung Rabdey monks as rituals to their local deity and protector.

July 27, 2023

AUGUST 2023

Mushroom Festival - Thimphu

Genekha, a secluded village in Thimphu Valley known for its mushrooms, plays host to this unique festival. Mushroom foraging excursions are organised together with cultural performances and mushroom cooking classes.

August 15- 16, 2023

Semi Nomad Festival – Genko, Nomad

The annual Merak festival is a festive occasion when most of the residents are home and people from the neighborhoods all join in. It is the only time of the year when the herdsmen get the much-needed respite from their daily routine of cattle rearing in the high pasturelands.

August 15-16, 2023

A-Hoi Bonchoed -Bjoka Trong, Zhemgang

This is an ancient Bon tradition, which is observed to appease the god, to ensure good health and wealth in the coming year.

August 19, 2023

Dongdorla Duechoed - Bjoka Trong, Zhemgang

This is a popular festival observed in Bjoka gewog in Zhemgang.

August 23-26, 2023

Takila Chham – Takila Lhakhang, Lhuentse

Takila is one of the most sacred historical and religious places in Lhuentse. Many important festivals of nearby communities take place at Takila. This is where the country's largest statue of Guru Rimpoche is located. The popular festival of Kurtoe region called "Chha" also takes place here.

August 29-31, 2023

Kesibi Chaa – Kesibi Lhakhang, Maenbi, Lhuentse

The main event of the festival is the mask dance and offerings.

August 29-31, 2023

Takila Chaa Festival – Takila Lhakhang (old), Lhuentse

The Chha celebration is an ancient tradition and offering made to the local deities by the some of the communities in Lhuentse. The Chha festival is held at the Takila temple. Takila temple is the place where Gadpo and Ganmo statues meant for Chha festival is being kept. Takila Chha is celebrated for four days to make offerings to the local deities of Wokhor Zhelngo and Kharshong Zhelngo Each day has its own unique activities.

August 31, 2023

SEPTEMBER 2023

Tour of the Dragon Cycling Race – Bumthang to Thimphu

The Tour of the Dragon is claimed as the world's toughest one-day bike race. It stretches over 225 km and passes four of the highest mountains of the country. Starting off in Bumthang, travelling over four mountain passes (Kiki La 2870m, Yotong La 3434m, Pele La 3430m, Dochu La 3150m) and closing in Thimphu town square, it is an extremely challenging and exhilarating bike race. To accomplish the Tour of the Dragon, one really needs the strength of a dragon!

September 2, 2023

Chukor – Shaksing goenpa, Khamdang, Trashi Yangtse

Chukor festival is most popular in eastern dzongkhags. Trashiyangtse, which is in the far-eastern part of Bhutan, is particularly famous for this festival. Visitors will have a nice time attending this festival and interacting with the local people of Trashiyangtse.

September 4-14, 2023

Chha – Chhusa and Zimpong, Kurtoe, Lhuentse

Chha is celebrated to welcome Byul Lha and to protect any misfortune from happening in the year.

September 17-19, 2023

Shingkar Rabney -Shingkar Lhakhang, Ura, Bumthang

The Shingkar Rabney is held at the historic temple, Shingkar Dechenling Lhakhang, in Ura valley in Bumthang. Several mask dances are performed during the festival. The highlight of the festival is the role of an old man, locally called Chath Dorji, who wears a brown wrinkled mask and blesses women with a wooden phallus.

September 20-24, 2023

Thimphu Drubchen

An important consecration day and ceremonies leading to the capital's biggest festival.

September 21, 2023

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Dromche – Rinpung Dzong, Paro

Sacred mask dances are performed during the dromche. During this one-day event, all regional offices, private sectors, and government institutions are closed for the public to witness the dromche.

September 22, 2023

Wangdue Tsechu-Tencholing Army Ground, Wangduephodrang

Widely known for the Raksha Mangcham or the Dance of the Ox, this three-day festival in the kingdom's "Valley of the Wind" is a special display of culture in Central Bhutan.

September 22 -24, 2023

Kothakpa Tsechu -Shumar/Kothakpa, Pemagatshel

Kothakpa Tsechu takes place in Shumar, Kothakpa, in Pemagatshel. This is where the country's largest gypsum mine is located.

September 22 -24, 2023

Blessed Rainy Day (Thue Bup)

A holiday marking the finale of the rains in the Himalayas, water from sacred lakes and rivers collected on this day is used to cleanse and remove bad karma.

September 22 -24, 2023

Geling Goenpa Tsechu -Geyling Goenpa, Chhukha

It was said that during the olden days, the tsechu was performed to subdue the demons obstructing the construction of the Goempa. All the chams/dances are the usual ones performed in other dzongkhags and the festival is celebrated annually.

September 23 -24, 2023

Lamai Kuchoed – Dorji Gompa, Tang, Bumthang

September 23-25, 2023

Shakshing goenpa - Shaksinggoenpa, Khamdang, Trashiyangtse

Shakshing goenpa is in Khamdang, Trashiyangtse. You will also go through this monastery if you happen to trek to the popular Omba Ney, which is dubbed as the Taktshang of the East.

September 23-25, 2023

Jangchubling Wang – Gangzur, Lhuentse

This occasion marks the discovery of a treasure or terton, Tsepamey (Buddha Amitayus) and has been held every year since. During this event, one can see relics, such as the nabza (dress), leather boots and cap from the 16th Karmapa, a cup and rosary of the former Situ Rinpoche, among others. One can also see the lama Ngawang Samten's holy water.

September 24, 2023

Terchen Drupchen -Kichu lhakhang, Paro

The annual Terchen Drupchen is performed under the patronage of Her Majesty the Queen Mother Ashi Kezang Choden Wangchuck.

September 23 – October 4, 2023

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Thimphu Tsechu

The capital's biggest festival is marked by grand dances, songs and ceremonies in the setting of Tashichho Dzong, the royal and national seat of administration in Bhutan. Members of Bhutan's highest royal and monastic orders as well as government officials and international dignitaries attend the festival.

September 24-26, 2023

Tamsing Phala Choedpa - Bumthang

People from all over Bhutan gather in Bumthang for this three-day festivity to witness the dances of terton (treasure discoverer) Perma Lingpa performed by the monks and people of Tamsing and the monastery. One of the highlights include the Phagchham or the Pig Dance and the Pholay Molay Cham.

September 24-26, 2023

Ney, Jang and Gangzur Chha – Gangzur

September 24 -26, 2023

Gangtey Tsechu

Held in the courtyard of the valley's iconic monastery of Gangtey Goempa, this tsechu showcases sacred masked dances, cultural performances and tantric ceremonies. The costumes and masks are a must see for any photographer and reveller.

September 27- 29, 2023

Dungsingma Tshechu -Dungsingma, Yurung Pemagatshel

Dungsingma Tshechu is observed in Dungsingma village in Yurung gewog under Pemagatshel Dzongkhag. Different mask dances and traditional folk dances are showcased to the public.

September 27-29, 2023

Nangkor Tshechu- Shumar, Pemagatshel

This festival takes place in Shumar, Pemagatshel. The people from nearby communities gather to witness mask dances and enjoy the festival.

September 27-29, 2023

Thangbi Mewang-Thangbi Lhakhang, Choekor, Bumthang

The four-day festival is a display of the rich tradition and celebrates the cultural heritage of the ancient Thangbi Lhakhang. The main highlight of the festival is the Mewang ceremony. Mewang ceremony (Fire Blessing) is performed in an open ground. The Gomchens performs purification rituals, while all the people and guests jump over the flames to get themselves purified from their sins and evil deeds. It is believed that if one is able to jump over the flame three times, he or she is protected from ill luck and misfortunes are removed for that entire year. Then, mask dances and folk dances are performed as scheduled in the enclosed courtyard of the temple.

September 29-30, 2023

Kadam Tshechu- Kadam Lhakhang, Khar, Pemagatshel

Kadam Tshechu takes place in Kadam Lhakhang in Khar gewog of Pemagatshel.

September 28-30, 2023

Khomshar Kharphu -Khomshar, Zhemgang

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People gather to offer cash and kind or wine to their bon priest to receive blessings. It is believed that the Bonpo presides over the event.

September 29, 2023

Phuentsholing Tshechu -Pelden Tashichoelling Shedra, Phuentsholing

The three-day tshechu is performed at Pelden Tashichoelling Shedra, Phuentsholing. Badza Guru Dungdup recitation is one of the major events apart from the mask dance performances

September 29, 2023

Dankala Mani (mantra) Tshechu -Dankala lhakhang, Shaba, Paro

Dankala Mani Tshechu is performed every year with Shingjay yabyum cham and followed by the display of some culture items.

September 29, 2023

Thangbi Mani - Bumthang

One of the most popular festivals in Bumthang, Thangbi Mani is celebrated in the 15th century Thangbi Monastery. The festival's biggest crowd drawers are the fire dances and the purification rituals using fire. Although organised only by a small community, the festival is well loved for its unique custom where guests are encouraged to jump over the fire three times to usher in good karma and luck. Festival guests are also offered buckwheat noodles and beverages by the villagers.

September 24-30, 2023

OCTOBER 2023

Black Mountain Festival - Trongsa

Trongsa district will celebrate and share its culture, traditions, nature and the stories of its community through the Black Mountain Festival from 1st -2nd October in this annual event. The festival aims to divulge the rich history, culture and tradition of the locality, savoring local cuisine, getting to learn about the rich flora and fauna, shopping local produces and specialties. The festival is an integrated approach for the communities to live in harmony with wonders of nature like the endangered tigers, panthers, golden langur and snow leopard that thrives in the region.

The festival will also witness the exhilarating 100 kilometre International Open Black Mountain Bike Challenge, connecting hills and valleys of historical significance. Keep your gears ready, conquer your fear and hear the Black Mountain echoes.

October 1 – 2, 2023

Bum Tashi Festival – Gasa Dzong, Gasa

The Bum Tashi Festival of Gasa has been named after the region's protecting deity Tashi Thongoen. It basically involves making offerings and prayers to this protecting deity.

October 2, 2023

Ugyen Choling Kangsoel, Tang Valley - Bumthang

One of the oldest royal palaces in Bhutan now converted into a private museum, this intimate gathering celebrates the holy consecration of the temple and the founding of the palace.

October 13-15, 2023

Jomolhari Mountain Festival

Jomolhari is one of the Himalayan Mountains towering above 7000 metres. It forms the main route for many trekkers and mountain escapades. The Jomolhari Mountain Festival is hosted by the local communities living along these routes, and it honours the sustainable coexistence between the highlanders and nature around them. The community pays tribute to their unique culture and exotic natural lives in their habitat, one of which is the snow leopard. The festival includes a snow leopard-themed song, traditional games of archery and darts, dances, yak riding, highland food and shopping for native crafts pieces. The festival is usually observed in mid-October. Taking a helicopter ride for a breakfast camp at the base of majestic Jomolhari Mountain is a growing favourite among adventure seekers.

October 14 – 15, 2023

Bho-Yak – Janka-kha at upper valley of Haa

Bho-Yak is also popularly celebrated as 'Ap Chundu's' birthday. The festival begins at Lhakhang Karpo, the residence of the local deity. As early as 2.30am, the monastic body recites prayers to appease Ap Chundu until 5.30am. After that, Ap Chundu's ride, a well-decorated horse, is brought to the lhakhang from the new dzong area and a cleansing ceremony is performed. Led in a traditional 'Chipdrel' procession with sounds of drums, bells and singing of melodious traditional songs of praises and well-wishes for all sentient beings, Ap Chundu is then ushered to Janka-kha, the place where the actual event for the day is held. As the Chipdrel proceeds, it is compulsory that

they stop at the old Haa dzong for the marchang ceremony. Stopping at around six different places on the way for traditional 'Marchang Ceremony' (wine-offering ceremony), the procession takes around four hours and covers around 10km, making it the longest Chipdrel processions in the country. The procession is then greeted by a cheerful crowd dressed in their best colourful attire at Jankakha.

October 21, 2023

Lanyiri Tsechu -Lanyiri Lhakhang, Dungmin, Pemagatshel

The Lanyiri Tsechu takes place in Lanyiri Lhakhang in Dungmin, Pemagatshel. People gather to witness mask dances and cultural programs.

October 22-24, 2023

Serzhong Tsechu - Do-Ngag Kuenzangcholing Lhakhang

Serzhong Tsechu is an annual event where mask dances are performed by the monks. It is a one-day tsechu that coincides with the Descending Day of Lord Buddha. The Guru Tsengye thongdrol (large tapestry) is also displayed to the public for blessings. About 10 relics from the lhakhang are also displayed

October 22-24, 2023

Laya Aulay – Laya, Gasa

The Laya Aulay, also spelled as Laya Aulay, is held

in Laya gewog of Gasa. Visitors can join this festival and experience the lifestyle of the country's highland community.

October 22-28, 2023

Tshebar Tsechu -Tshebar Lhakhang, Khar, Pemagatshel

Tshebar Tsechu is held in the Tshebar Lhakhang in Khar under Pemagatshel Dzongkhag. Different mask dances and cultural programmes are performed during the festival.

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October 23-25, 2023

Chukha Tsechu - Chhukha Ngedrubtse Dzong, Chhukha

The tshechu is performed annually as an offering to Guru Rinpoche. Different mask dances are performed during the festival, as well as traditional folk songs and dances. The highlight of the festival is the unfurling of the thongdrol (large tapestry) of Guru Rinpoche.

October 23-24, 2023

Goenkar Tsechu - Goenkar, Khoma, Lhuentse

This three-day festival is celebrated annually. Lama Choni Rangdol is the founder of this place. Local lay monks perform the dances.

October 23-25, 2023

Jakar Tsechu - Bumthang

As Bumthang's main administrative valley, Jakar is an important centre in the east and its 3-day festival held on the historic Jakar Dzong is a colourful jamboree of dances, songs and traditional performances from the monastic body of the district and the villages nearby.

October 22-24, 2023

Dechenphug Tsechu - Thimphu

A private royal temple closed to foreigners, Dechenphug opens its doors wide open to all annually on this bright and colourful festival.

October 24, 2023

Dashain (Southern Bhutanese holiday)

A holiday originating from India, Nepal and Southern Bhutan but now celebrated in many key areas of the country, this holiday features lavish family dinners, fairs and games.

October 24, 2023

Jambay Lhakhang Drup - Bumthang

As Bhutan's oldest temple, Jambay Lhakhang is an important historic site for the kingdom and its festival is celebrated with elaborate masked dances, drumbeats, clown and folk dances. The highlight of the festival however is the "Mewang," a vibrant fire ceremony held in the evening.

October 24, 2023

Dungmed Tsechu - Dungmed Lhakhang, Dungmin, Pemagatshel

Dungmed Tsechu takes place in Dungmed Lhakhang in Dungmin, Pemagatshel. Local people gather at the Lhakhang to enjoy the festival.

October 26-28, 2023

Pemagatshel Tsechu - Pemagatshel Dzong, Pemagatshel

People from all over the district come to the district Dzong where the festival is held, and all public offices remain closed for three days when the festival is in process. Different kinds of mask dances are performed together with many traditional and classical dances.

October 26-28, 2023

Changangkha Lhakhang Tsechu

This unique festival takes place in Changangkha Lhakhang, the oldest temple in Thimphu. Built in 12th century, it is located on a ridge above central Thimphu, with a picturesque view west all the way along the vast Thimphu valley. It is a popular temple attracting a regular procession of pilgrims, and new parents seeking auspicious names for their newborns or blessings for their young children.

More intimate than the popular Thimphu Tsechu, this festival is an annual ritual which begins with an appraisal to the local deity "Domsap" followed by masked dances and traditional forms of Bhutanese dance and entertainment. It is believed that everyone must attend a Tshechu and witness the mask dances at least once to receive blessings and cleanse away sins. Every mask dance performed during a Tshechu has a special meaning or a story behind it and are performed by Changangkha lamas.

October 27, 2023

Tshepami Throngdrel -Ringpung Deyangkha, Paro

The Tshepamey- Throngdrel (Life Long Throngdrel) is unfurled every year to the public.

October 28, 2023

Jambay Lhakang Drup - Jambay Lhakhang, Choekhor, Bumthang

The 7th century Tibetan king Songsten Gampo is said to have built 108 temples in one day and Jambay Lhakhang in Bumthang is believed to be one of them. The Jambay Lhakhang Drup is one of the most interesting events held there. During this festival, the chams (dances) include Terchham (Naked Dance), which was formerly initiated by Tertön Dorje Lingpa, Mewang, Macham, Ging Tsholing, Dramtse Ngacham, Zhana Cham etc,. The dances are performed by the local villagers of Norgang, Changwa and Nangsiphel. The festival is a five-day programme.

October 28-31, 2023

Prakhar Duchhoed - Bumthang

A temple in the scenic Chumi Valley in Bumthang believed to be built with the help of langurs or white monkeys, this festival highlights this unique tale through dances and songs.

October 29-31, 2023

Royal Highland Festival, Laya, Gasa

The Royal Highlander festival takes place in one of the highest settlements in Bhutan, namely Laya in Gasa that precariously stands at an altitude of 4,000m. The festival celebrates the simplicity and authenticity of the life of highlanders through its nature, history and age-old traditions. The Layap community is already facing the threat of rapid urbanisation and their culture is at risk of slowly disappearing. Festivals like this help to restore the age-old tradition and culture and faith in the community as the world comes forward to appreciate and embrace their culture. During the festival, visitors can witness the age-old practice of traditional offerings that existed as early as the 16th century. Various competitions on highland animals including yaks, horses and mastiffs are held during the event. The highland farm technology, agriculture technology and medicinal practices are as fascinating as the highlanders. Gasa is also famous for its healing hot springs, located at the bottom of the ridge below the Tashi Tongmoendzong of Gasa. The festival will be preceded by the one day Laya Run from Ponjothang, Gasa to Laya, which is around 25 kilometres in length.

October 2023

NOVEMBER

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Coronation Anniversary of His Majesty the King

A commemoration of the current king's coronation on November 2008, the year that also marked the 100 years of monarchy in Bhutan.

November 1, 2023

Lhabab Duchen

One of the four main holy Buddhist festivals honouring the four key events in the life of Buddha, marked by ceremonies, offerings and prayer. Referred to as Buddha's ascension, this holiday is a perfect time to visit temples and sacred sites where local Bhutanese visit for a pilgrimage.

November 4, 2023

Panbang Tsechu – Sonamthang Dratshang, Zhemgang

Different mask dances are performed with the unfurling of a huge Thongdrol (large tapestry) of Guru Rinpoche.

November 2-4, 2023

Pema Yoesel Choling Goenpa Tsechu – Kencholing, Shompangkhang, Sarpang

The one-day tsechu is held at the lhakhang. The mask dances are performed by the monks of the lhakhang and women perform the folk dances.

November 4, 2023

Sumthrang Kinsel – Sumthrang Lhakhang, Ura, Bumthang

This annual festival is held at the 13th century monastery of Sumthrang Lhakhang in Ura valley in Bumthang. This festival was initiated by the founder of the monastery, Nyoton Trulzhig Choje, a great yogi and one of the sons of Nyo Gyelwa Lhanangpa, the founder of Sumthrang monastic establishment. The Sumthrang Taacham (horse dance) is one of main mask dances performed during the festival.

November 9-13, 2023

Bird Festival – Tingtibi, Zhemgang

November 13-15, 2023

Black Necked Crane Festival, Gangtey

One of Bhutan's most celebrated festivals, this one-day occasion celebrates the arrival of the endangered black necked cranes as they arrive from Tibet for the winter to roost across Phobjika Valley. For years, the cranes arrive through the valley by flying and encircling the Gangtey Monastery, earning them the nickname "heavenly birds." A display of sacred and folk dances, the highlight of the festival is the Crane Dance performed by children of the local school. The festival aims to serve as a vehicle to promote nature conservation in Bhutan.

November 11, 2023

Birth Anniversary of the 4th Druk Gyalpo

A celebration in honour of the beloved 4th King, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck's birthday. This day, the nation pays tribute to the milestones of his majesty who has ruled the country since 1972 until his abdication in 2006 in favour of his son, the current king. As the founder of Bhutan's concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH), his Majesty's birth anniversary also coincides with the GNH Day in Thimphu where a day-long international cultural festival is held at the Centenary Park in the heart of the capital.

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November 11, 2023

Komshar Katag – Khomshar, Zhemgang

People gather to offer cash and kind to the Bonpo to receive blessings in return. People dances and sing to celebrate the day.

November 12, 2023

Chuzangang Tsechu – Chuzangang Lhakhang, Serzhong, Sarpang

Festival of colour and masks in Sarpang region

November 15, 2023

YESHEY GOENPOI DRUPCHEN/ FESTIVAL OF MAHAKALA -Trongsa Dzong, Trongsa

This festival is dedicated to the dominant male protective deity of Bhutan, Yeshey Goenpo (Mahakala). It was first introduced by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in the 17th century in Punakha Dzong to commemorate the victory over Tibetan invasions. In 1988, Yeshey Goenpi Drupchen was introduced in Trongsa Dzong by His Majesty the 4th King and the 68th Je Khenpo His Holiness Tenzin Dendup.

November 18-20, 2023

Mongar Tsechu – Mongar Dzong, Mongar

People from all over the region as far as Trashigang and Lhuentse come to attend the festival. A lot of unique dances indigenous to the region are also performed.

November 19-22, 2023

Dechenling Tsechu - Dechenling Lhakhang, Dechenling, Pemagatshel

This is the second Dechenling Tsechu taking place in Dechenling Lhakhang in Pemagatshel. Mask dances, along with different varieties of cultural items, make up the main highlights and entertainment of the festival. If you have missed the similar festival in July, you can still attend it this time round.

November 20-22, 2023

Menchu Pemaphuendey -Norbugang, Pemagatshel

This festival is held in Norbugang gewog, Pemagatshel. Norbugang gewog is a part of Nganglam Dungkhag and it has its own festival to celebrate.

November 20-22, 2023

Tang Namkhar Rabney – Tang Namkhar Lhakhang, Tang, Bumthang

The Tang Namkhar Lhakhang Rabney is a three-day annual festival commemorating the founding of the Namkha Lhakhang by Lama Namkha Samdrup. It is also performed for the peace and prosperity of the community.

November 21-22, 2023

Geokar Lhakhang Tsechu – Geokar Lhakhang, Yalang, Trashiyangtse

This festival takes place in Geokar Lhakhang in Yalang, Trashiyangtse. Local people gather at the temple to attend the festival and receive blessings.

November 22-27, 2023

Doedel Pemacholing Tsechu- Doedel Pemacholing Lhakhang, Ramjar, Trashiyangtse

The festival is very popular in Ramjar gewog in Trashiyangtse. It takes place in Doedel Pemacholing Lhakhang in Ramjar gewog.

November 24-28, 2023

Goshing Tsechu - Goshing Trong, Zhemgang

At this festival, different forms of mask dances and cultural items are showcased to the public.

November 25-26, 2023

Phumithang Tshechu – Phumithang Dratshang, Zhemgang

During the tshechu, various mask dances along with cultural items are held.

November 25-27, 2023

Gamung Tsechu – Shumar/ Gamung, Pemagatshel

Gamung Tshechu takes place in Shumar in Gamung, Pemagatshel.

People gather to celebrate the festival and get blessings.

November 25-27, 2023

Gongphu Tsechu – Gongphu, Zhemgang

During the tshechu, different mask dances along with a variety of cultural items are performed.

November 25-27, 2023

Buli Tsechu - Buli, Zhemgang

Different types of mask dances are performed with the unfurling of a huge thongdrol (large tapestry) of Guru Rinpoche on the last day of the event.

November 25-27, 2023

Khangma Tsechu

November 26-28, 2023

Bjoka Tsechu

Different forms of mask dances and traditional songs are performed to entertain the public.

November 26-29, 2023

Ladrong Rabney -Ladrong Lhakhang, Jarey, Lhuentse

Ladrong Rabney is an annual festival held at Ladrong Lhakhang. Ladrong Lhakhang was built by tertön (treasure revealer) Drimed Lingpa. The main relic is the Jowo Jampa, the main statue of the lhakhang. Upon completion of the lhakhang, the consecration ceremony (Rabney) was held on the 18th day of the 10th month of the Bhutanese Calendar. Five days later, the tshechu was initiated by the late Aja Rinpoche. This festival is conducted to honour the lhakhang.

November 26-30, 2023

Jambay Lhakhang Singye Cham - Bumthang

Another significant festival marked by a unique dance, this celebration in Bumthang's oldest temple is primarily focused on its "Singye Cham" or Lion Dance – a dance conducted to appease sentient beings and believed to wash away bad karma of those who witness the event.

November 27, 2023

Chojam Rabney – Chojam Lhakang, Tang, Bumthang

The name 'Chojam' was originally derived when Yidam Khorlo Dampo (presently one of the most important relics of the Lhakang) was brought down to the village. The local people noticed that the statue's expression looked sad and got its name as Chojam Lhakang. Chojam Rabney is celebrated for five days and is financially supported by the villagers of Tang, which includes four chiwogs (Chitsum, Nimlung, Gawjud and Sakarmed). The dances includes the Yakcham, Lhamgyem (performed in two types), Tempa Phuensum (which is said to have originated from Tibet) and many other cham/dance varieties performed in other dzongkhags, all of which are performed by the monks, the local villagers and students.

November 27, 2023

Bonchoed -Buli/Tali/Kikhar/Nangkor, Zhemgang

People from the community make offerings (tshog) to the god and pray for well-being and happiness for another year. Religious dances and local folk songs are performed.

November 27, 2023

Kharpu Bonchoed – Shingkar, Zhemgang

This festival brings together people from different places like Shingkar, Wamling, Thrisa, Nimshong and Radi to do rituals and make offerings to their local deity. This is mainly done to bring peace and good harvest in the year.

November 27, 2023

Mamung Tsechu -Mamung Trong, Zhemgang

The community of Mamung Trong marks the occasion by performing annual ritual with the dances of Pawo and Pamo.

November 27, 2023

Tashibi Tsechu - Tashibi, Zhemgang

No mask dances are performed but people gather annually and offer the SOL-KHA in the lhakang. The tshechu is presided by the Meshey Lam and local Gomchens.

November 27, 2023

Nangla Tsechu – Nangla, Trong, Zhemgang

During the tshechu, different forms of mask dances and cultural items are showcased to the public.

November 27, 2023

Nalakar Tsechu - Bumthang

Celebrated in the far-flung, Nalakar Village's Ngaa Lhakang in the charming Choekhor Valley, this three-day festival is a celebration of dance and song. Its remote location means it is not a tourist magnet, thus rewarding intrepid travellers the opportunity to revel in a festival that is more rooted in authentic Bhutanese customs and celebrations that are intrinsically influenced by the kingdom's rural eastern cultures.

November 27-29, 2023

Langdurbi Bonchoed – Langdurbi, Zhemgang People perform rituals and make offerings to their local deity. This is mainly done to bring peace and good harvest in the year.

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November 27-29, 2023

Nga Lhaxhang Zhi – Nga Lhaxhang, Choekhor, Bumthang

The festival is held at the Nga Lhaxhang in Nalaxhar village in Bumthang. The three-day festival is one of the popular festivals in the Choekhor valley and attracts people from all over Bumthang, dressed in their finest clothes. This festival is celebrated to bring happiness and prosperity to the village and the country. It is also a symbolic prayer for good harvest and for the wellbeing of everyone.

November 27-29, 2023

Bardo Kharphu – Bardo, Zhemgang

At the tshechu, many mask dances along with cultural items are performed.

November 27-30, 2023

Thrisa Tsechu – Thrisa, Zhemgang

During the tshechu, different forms of mask dances along with cultural events are held.

November 27-30, 2023

Shingkar Tsechu – Shingkar, Zhemgang

The Shingkar Rabney is held at the historic temple, Shingkar Dechenling Lhaxhang, in Ura valley in Bumthang. Several mask dances are performed during the festival. The highlight of the festival is the role of an old man, locally called Chath Dorji, who wears a brown wrinkled mask and blesses women with a wooden phallus.

November 27-December 1, 2023

Wamling Tsechu- Wamling, Zhemgang

For the tshechu, myriad forms of mask dances along with cultural items are performed.

November 27-December 1, 2023

DECEMBER 2023

Pangkhar Choedpa - Bumthang

Known as the Festival of the White Monkey, celebrated in Bumthang's Ura Valley – in a temple supposedly built by white langurs at night and humans by day. The key Highlights are the monkey dances, this three-day festivities pays homage to the legendary origins of the temple.

December 2-5, 2023

Monpa Festival – Jangbi, Trongsa

December 10, 2023

Jangchubling Tsechu – Gangzur, Lhuentse

This festival takes place at the Jangchubling monastery in Gangzur, Lhuentse. The Jangchubling Monastery is an important religious seat and place worth visiting. It was founded in the 18th century by Pekar Gyatso and until recently was under the patronage of the 16th Karmapa Rangjung Rigpe Dorji. The daughter of first King, Ashi Wangmo, lived here at the monastery as a nun. The monastery is easily accessible by a feeder road.

December 10-11, 2023

Lomba – Individual house, Haa and Paro

Lomba is an important occasion for the people of Haa and Paro. In the olden days, they considered this day as New Year's Day. It is also a time when all crops have been harvested and people get some free time before they begin their work again. During Lomba, families get together in their villages and treat themselves to a good meal. Haaps and Parops make their special dish called hoentey (buckwheat dumplings) and distribute them to friends and relatives. Men also play archery matches and other traditional games. People sing a rhyme "Lolay Lolay", thanking god for the good year they had and to make wishes for the New Year. During this festival, people greet each other "Lolay", meaning "good new year". They also perform a small ceremony at home to drive away evil and bring in good health, happiness, and prosperity for the New Year.

December 11, 2023

Druk Wangyel Tsechu, Dochula - Thimphu

Drumroll, please! The Royal Bhutan Army comes out with all its finery to pay tribute to His Majesty, The King and celebrate the nation's sovereignty. The colourful costumes and pageantry are performed against the splendour of the Jigme Wangchuck range. This is a unique festival as the festival is fully performed by the Royal Bhutan Army rather than the monastery. The soldiers have been given three months of training in folk and mask dance. The festival is held at the Dochula Pass, less than one hour from Thimphu.

December 13, 2023

Bhutan National Day

The National Day of Bhutan is a celebration marking the coronation of Ugyen Wangchuk in 1907, marking the birth of the modern Kingdom of Bhutan. Here, elaborate parades and performances are showcased to the public with the much awaited King's Speech as the high point of the grand ceremony.

December 17, 2023

Lhuentse Dzong – Ganczur, Lhuentse

December 19-23, 2023

Dungkar Tsechu – Kurtoe, Lhuentse

Dances and music are symbolic of this festival.

December 20-22, 2023

Trongsa Tsechu

As the ancestral home of Bhutan's royal family, the valley of Trongsa holds a special place in the hearts of all Bhutanese, and its primary festival celebrates this royal connection with pomp.

December 20-22, 2023

Namker Dho Festival – Paro and Haa

A community festival celebrated coinciding with the local new year for the two districts of Paro and Haa in west Bhutan. Namker which literally means 'white sky' was a vision seen by Lama Phaju Drugom Zhigpo at the location where the temple stands today. This celebration is marked by unique dances and rituals that is not seen by many, making this festival authentic and intimate.

December 23, 2023

Samdrup Jongkar Annual Tsechu – Samdrup Jongkhar Rabdey

Fun filled events, dances and celebrations mark the onset of this annual celebration in this town on the border of Assam.

December 24-26, 2023

Kilung Chopta – Gangzur, Lhuentse

December 25-26, 2023

OTHER UNIQUE EVENTS

Bhutan Echoes (Drukyul Literature Festival)

A country is best discovered through its literature! Come and join the Drukyul Literature Festival (Bhutan Echoes 2023) as the tale of Bhutan unfolds through stories, dialogues, arts, and music. Bhutan Echoes is an annual event that usually happens in the month of August, and it brings world renowned literature laureates, artists, and musicians together with local renowned names.

<https://www.drukyul.org/> *Dates in 2023: TBC (but likely around August)*

Dragon's Fury Race

The Dragon's Fury is the shorter version of the Tour of the Dragon, and it stretches approximately about 70km. The uphill ride from Punkaha to Dochula is quite a testament to one's physical prowess and strength. The race will take you on a roller-coaster ride of physical challenge and spiritual aesthetics as you pass through serene Dochula pass amidst the fluttering prayer flags and cheerful locals in the company of chirping birds and smiling greenery of rich vegetation.

Dates in 2023: TBC (it usually takes place in October)

Flower Festival

The 7th Annual Flower Exhibition is set to bloom this year in Mongar and Gyalpozhing. Get a chance to see some of the varied and endemic flora and fauna as Bhutan is home to more than 60% of the common plant species found in the Eastern Himalayas. Approximately 46 species of Rhododendrons and over 300 types of medicinal plants, including Junipers, Magnolias, Orchids, Blue Poppies (the national flower), Edelweiss, Gentian, various medicinal herbs, Daphne, Giant Rhubarb, Pine and Oak trees should be on display in all their flowering glory!

Dates in 2023: TBC

OTHER PROJECTS OF INTEREST

Vast Bhutan

Voluntary Artist Studio, Thimphu, popularly known as VAST was set up in 1998 by a group of professional artists as a non-profit organization with the primary aim to provide opportunity to the Bhutanese youth to participate and develop their potential artistic talents especially in contemporary art, develop sense of social responsibilities through community services and also to explore art as a vocation. Undoubtedly, VAST stands by its slogan 'Nurturing a creative society'

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VAST is more than a place of talents for youths, it also provides them personal problems to use art as a therapy and help them develop life skills. The Vast Gallery in Thimphu is a tapestry of Bhutanese art and culture, a talent museum and creative expression of young and old Bhutanese alike.

You will be greeted with beautiful arts and colourful pictures at the Paro international airport, which is the biggest project by VAST artist and is one of the highest expressions of Bhutanese creative art.

<https://www.vastbhutan.org.bt/>

Available to visit year-round

Desuup-Skilling Programme

Desuup, literally meaning 'Guardian of the Peace' is born out of His Majesty the King's vision in 2011 to encourage citizen's roles in building a nation and instilling a sense of volunteerism. The Desuups were the fore-runners and indeed guardians for Bhutan during the COVID-19 adversity.

As the pandemic worsened globally and became a reality in our own country in early 2020, the challenges mounted through the year. In an extraordinary expression of the solidarity with the nation, thousands of youth stepped forward to join De-suup programme and serve in various capacities across the nation to bolster national security, ensure public health and improve the well-being of our people

In view of appreciation for the selfless service of youths, His Majesty the King provided opportunities for the youth to enhance their skills and capabilities so that they can participate even more meaningfully in the process of nation building through De-suup Skilling Programme.

It is designed to be a reassuring promise for our youths to build better and more meaningful lives by enabling them to discover their passion and honing life skills.

Today, there are several start-ups initiated through De-suup Skilling Programme like Garuda Bar, the De-suung Cafe and food stalls at the footpath market Kaja- Throm in Thimphu that guests should definitely check during their visit to Bhutan. The army of people in orange uniforms that are seen in Bhutan are our respected De-suups.

<https://dss.desuung.org.bt/de-suung-skilling-programme-dsp>

Mountain Hazlenuts

The Mountain Hazelnut project is the Kingdom's first 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in a public-private-community partnership. The project is widely spread to 19 districts out of 20 districts in the country. Mountain Hazelnut is an important project for Bhutan not only in terms of income generation, but also in the fight against climate change and the country's pursuit of sustainable practices. The hazelnut orchards stabilize mountain slopes, reduce erosion, improve watershed retention, and mitigate climate change by improving soil fertility and carbon sequestration. The project also teaches and trains the farmers in sustainable farming methods and practices.

10 million hazelnut trees have been planted so far that is projected to sequester 8 million metric tons of atmospheric carbon over their lifetime, helping to counter climate change. Bhutan has the world's largest hazelnut nurseries in Lingmethang, Ngatshang, and Bumthang, and a hazelnut processing factory in Eastern Bhutan.

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<https://www.mountainhazelnuts.com/>

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