





Culture

Bhutan has a profound cultural diversity. With more than 80 percent of the country being Buddhists, the ways of the Buddhist practice has had a huge impact on the Bhutanese culture. The influence of Buddhism is very visible in the everyday life of the Bhutanese people.

The country boasts of thousands of monasteries and the landscape is dotted with stupas, prayer wheels, prayer flags and many other insignias celebrating the Buddhist religion.

The preservation of culture has always been accorded the highest of priorities and it was outlined as one of the four main pillars of the country's unique development philosophy of Gross National Happiness.





Tshechu is a religious festival that begins on the 10th day of the Bhutanese calendar.

During the festival, monks and laymen perform mask dances over a stretch of three to five days in a temple or monastery. The mask dances are performed to commemorate the life of Guru Padmasambhava and other great Buddhist masters.

Tshechus customarily conclude with the unfurling of a Thongdrel (*large scroll painting*) of Lord Buddha, Guru Rinpoche, Zhabdrung and other enlightened beings. Tshechus are grand events where entire communities come together to witness religious mask

dances, folk dances, receive blessings and socialize. Besides the religious dances and songs, atsaras are a major attraction during the tshechu. Atsaras usually don hilarious looking masks with large protruding noses and often with a phallus dangling from the head. They signify enlightened wisdom and their acts are intended to cleanse the collective sin of the people gathered to witness the religious dances.

The festival is also an occasion for people to wear their best finery, socialize and make merry. More importantly, people attend tshechus to gain merit.





Dzongs

Dzongs or fortresses are castle-like structures that were built as defensive forts against external invasions. Built on strategic locations, dzongs are symbolic of Bhutan's rich history and are valued as national heritage.

Dzongs showcase the brilliance of Bhutan's unique architectural designs. Today, the dzongs serve as the office of local civil administration and also house the monastic community.



Adventure

Bhutan's mountainous geography and rugged topography provide exciting opportunities for adventure activities of all kinds. From hiking, trekking and kayaking to river rafting, mountain biking and fishing, the choice is abundant. Bhutan truly offers one-of-a-kind experience for travelers seeking adventure in an unspoiled and unexplored environment.

Mountain biking/Cycling

The rugged, mountainous terrain of Bhutan provides an ideal landscape for mountain biking. It offers both on-road and off-road trails with breathtaking scenery. The sport is gaining popularity among both visitors and Bhutanese alike.

There are a variety of biking routes available ranging from smooth journeys on paved roads to challenging off-road dirt trails that wind through rough terrain. The sport offers a certain intimacy with the environment that is seldom experienced in vehicles.

There are numerous opportunities for optional hikes with a bit of climbing thrown in - with one in particular that is more than seven hours. You peddle the pads over two miles (3,400 meters) above sea level. Your effort is rewarded with a breathtaking view and an unforgettable experience. Riders should have an adequate level of fitness and stamina and be experienced enough in the art of mountain biking. Tours are fully supported by a van following riders. The van allows riders to rest should they require it. Many of the biking trails lead through small villages and temples which can provide interesting and informative diversions should you wish to take a break.

Kayaking and Rafting

The glacier fed rivers of Bhutan originating in the eastern Himalayas and gushing down to the southern foothills provide an ideal challenge for water sports like kayaking and rafting. The pristine natural setting and the sheer variety of the rivers' courses provide a unique opportunity to explore Bhutan's beautiful wilderness.

Adventurous travelers will not be disappointed by the rugged, untamed waterways of Bhutan. The rivers are plentiful with strong currents varying between slow, gentle flows in some places and powerful, raging torrents that can be found throughout the country. Although adventure sports and tourism are relatively recent introductions to Bhutan, they are rapidly gaining popularity.

The river courses available in Bhutan offer something for all visitors, regardless of experience: There are easy routes for beginners and hair-raising runs for the veterans. Besides the rafts and the kayaks, Bhutanese agents also organize walking and trekking expeditions along the scenic riverbanks. The best time for rafting and kayaking is from March to April and November to December.

Trekking

Bhutan's rich natural environment makes it a trekker's paradise. It is a bountiful destination for nature lovers with virgin mountain lakes, imposing glaciers, rich Himalayan ecosystem which is home to many endangered birds and animals. Most trekking routes are in the northern parts of the country taking you teasingly close to the snowlines and letting you experience amazing natural landscape.

From a short two to three day trek to a grueling trek of more than 31 days called the Snowman trek - considered to be the toughest trek in the world - Bhutan offers all kinds of trekking experience. Most trekking routes also offer a wonderful opportunity for wildlife enthusiasts and photographers.







Entertainment

Each and every festival in Bhutan is the most sought after form of entertainment. The Royal Academy of Performing Arts (RAPA) in Thimphu works to preserve the unique folk dancing heritage in the country and its dancers are expert in all forms of this unique art.

The national sport of the country, archery, is also a celebrated sport and every game of archery attracts huge crowd of onlookers. Shooters shoot two arrows in one round and the target is located at a distance of 120 meters. Women dancers entertain the crowds and each team has its own dancers who cheer for their team and try to distract every archer of the opposing team. Every game of archery is an event where Bhutanese culture is at display in its glory. Similarly, there are other sports like Khuru (*dart*) traditionally played by men but also getting popular with women. After a busy day, taking a refreshing hot bath in a traditional hot stone bath is also very popular among tourists.

Urban towns also have a good number of cozy restaurants and bars where you can have your dinner and while away time at your own pace. Singing enthusiasts have karaoke joints to go to and for the more energetic - nightlife in cities like Thimphu can be fun at various discotheques where people dance to the tunes of the latest best selling music numbers.



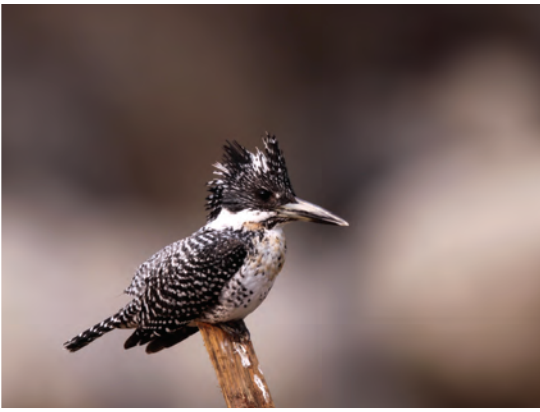


Theme based festivals

Besides the numerous religious events, Bhutan also hosts a variety of theme based festivals, celebrating the country's rich culture and arcane lifestyle.

Festivals like the Nomad Festival, Matsutake Festival, Jumolhari Mountain Festival, to name a few, offer a glimpse into the unsullied culture of ethnic communities and their unique traditions. These festivals are a big draw among locals and tourists alike.





Birdwatching

Bhutan is increasingly being described as the birding capital of the world. Bhutan boasts of about 800-900 species of birds (*experts believe that there are many yet to be spotted*) which is almost equal to the 925 species found in the US and Canada combined. About 50 species of the known birds are winter migrants. These include ducks, waders, birds of prey, thrushes, finches and buntings. The country harbors more than 16 species of vulnerable birds.

Bhutan is home to many species of birds that are in danger of extinction, including the Imperial Heron, which is one of the fifty rarest birds in the world and the rare Black-Necked crane, which breeds in Tibet and then migrates over the Himalayas to Bhutan during the winter months. The cranes can be spotted in Phobjikha valley in western Bhutan, Bumthang in central Bhutan and in Bomdeling in eastern Bhutan. They migrate to these winter roosting sites in the months of September and October and fly back to Tibet between February and March.



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Visa

Other than Indian, Bangladeshi and Maldivian nationals, all visitors to Bhutan require a visa; all visas are issued from Thimphu; Tourist visas are only issued to tourists booked with a local licensed tour operator, directly or through a foreign travel agent. Applications for tourist visas are submitted by the tour operator. Visa clearance from Thimphu must be obtained before coming to Bhutan. Visa clearance takes at least 10 days to process. The one time visa fee is US\$ 40 per person.

ATM & Currency

Bhutan's currency is called 'Ngultrum' (Nu). It is at par with the Indian Rupee. One US dollar is approximately Nu. 66. There are also ATM facilities located in most places where you can withdraw your money. ATM and banks accept Visa International, JCB card and Master Card.

Accommodation

A wide variety of accommodation is available ranging from luxurious 5-star hotels to cozy village homestays in traditional Bhutanese homes and settings. Visitors can be assured of their warmth and comfort. Similarly, the ambience and hospitality offered by the hotels are incredible.

Shopping

Shopping has become a popular activity for tourist as Bhutan offers a variety of souvenir items. However, please remember that buying and selling of antiques is strictly forbidden in Bhutan.

Sim card and Internet

Bhutan is well connected and almost every town has good telecommunication services. Most of the hotels and cafe's have wifi connection. Sim cards are available at the airport and in most shops.

January





February



BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS MAJESTY JIGME KHESAR NAMGYEL WANGCHUCK

21 - 23 February | Venue: Changlimithang
Ground, Thimphu

His Majesty the 5th King of Bhutan was born on 21st February, 1980 and to mark this important day, people in every dzongkhag observes the day with various cultural programs.

Contact Person: Tourism Council of Bhutan: 02-323251

PELDEN LHAMOI DRUPCHEN

10 - 12 February | Venue: Trongsa Dzong, Trongsa

The Pelden Lhamoi Drupchen is a festival dedicated to the dominant female protective deity of Bhutan, Pelden Lhamo (Mahakali). The festival was first introduced in Thimphu Dzong in 1710 by Kuenga Gyeltshen, who is recognised as the reincarnation of Jampel Dorji, son of Zhabdrung Nawang Namgyel. According to legend, Pelden Lhamo appeared in Kuenga Gyeltshen's dream and showed him some tantric teachings through dances. In 1988, the festival was introduced in Trongsa Dzong by His Majesty the 4th King Jigme Singye Wangchuck and the 68th Je Khenpo His Holiness Tenzin Dendup. Different dances are performed during the festival, including a Nangcham (secret performance) that is performed exclusively in the shrine with dancers circumambulating the mandala. Other dances are showcased to the public.

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PUNAKHA DRUBCHEN

12 - 14 February | Venue: Punakha Dzong,
Punakha

A brief history on the construction of Punakha Dzong is showcased to the general public. The internal conflict and external invasion during the construction of the fortress by the Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel in 1637, and sacred mask dances and folk dances are performed by the Central Monastic Body, as well as the public of Punakha district. The drubchen is organised by the Culture Section under the Dzongkhag Administration of Punakha.

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TRASHIYANGTSE ANNUAL TSHECHU

13 - 15 September | Venue: Tokaphu Lhakhang,
Tongzhang, Trashiyangtse

Tokaphu Lhakhang Annual Tshechu in Tongzhang, Trashiyangtse is happening this September. Various mask dances and local cultural programs will be displayed to the public.

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PHURBA DUBCHEN

12 - 19 February | Venue: Doedel Pemacholing
Lhakang, Ramjar, Trashiyangtse

This festival is observed in Trashiyangtse, located in the far eastern part of Bhutan. “Drubchen” means “great accomplishment” in Tibetan and is one of the most elaborate forms of Vajrayana Buddhist practice. Apart from watching the mask dances and cultural programmes, sincere participation in a drubchen is said to generate merit and potential realisation equal to one year of retreat.

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Dzongda: 04-781100

LICHIBI TSHECHU

15 February | Venue: Li Chi Bi, Goshing,
Zhemgang

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

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PUNAKHA TSHECHU

15 - 17 February | Venue: Punakha Dzong,
Punakha

The Punakha Tshechu is one of the most popular tshechus in the country. It is held right after the popular Punakha Drubchen. The unfurling of the thongdrol (a large tapestry) of Guru Rinpoche on the last day is the main attraction of the festival. It is believed that a mere sight of the thongdrol liberates an onlooker and cleanses him of his sins.

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NAKTSHANG TSHECHU

15 - 18 February | Venue: Nyalamdung
Naktshang, Khoma, Lhuentse

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

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LHAMOIZINGKHA TSHECHU

16 - 18 February | Venue: Lhamoizingkha
Drungkhag Administration

The three-day Drungkhag Tshechu is conducted at the border area of Lhamoizingkha.

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NGANGLAM TSHECHU

17 - 19 February | Venue: Nganglam Lhakhang,
Zobel, Pemagatshel

Nganglam Tshechu 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.

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TANGSIBI MANI

18 - 22 February | Venue: 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 as well.

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Gup Office, Ura: 03-680001
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THARPALING THONGDROL

19 February | Venue: Tharpaling Lhakhang,
Chumey, Bumthang

Tharpaling Thongdrol is a one-day festival and is mainly a display of a giant thangka or thongdrol (applique silk work with Buddhist images) of Jowo Jampa and Kuenkhen Longchen Rabjam, and is preceded by prayers and. No chams (dances) are performed during the entire festival.

Contact person: District Culture Officer: 03-631539
Gup Office, Chumey: 03-641113
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CHENGA KORA

19 February | Venue: Chorten Kora, Trashiyangtse

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.

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BIRD FESTIVAL

19 - 21 February | Venue: Berti/Trong Gewog, Zhemgang

Different artwork and local foods of all eight gewogs within Zhemgang will be showcased. For nature lovers or bird photography enthusiasts, birding and photography tours are also organized, so that you can catch a glimpse of the vast varieties of bird species within Bhutan.

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March





GOMKORA TSHECHU

14 - 16 March | Venue: Gompku Kora, Trashiyangtse

Gompku Kora lies in the heart of the agrarian belt of eastern Bhutan. It is 23km from Trashigang Dzong, the headquarters of Bhutan's most populous district in the eastern Bhutan. Gompku 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 Gompku Kora is the circumambulation. "Go around Gompku Kora today for tomorrow may be too late", advises a local song that entices devotees to visit Gompku Kora. The place comes alive once every year when people all over eastern Bhutan descend upon the narrow valley, dressed in their finery, 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 rugged environs with entire families in tow.

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ZHURI DUECHOED

1 - 2 March | Venue: 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.

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Gup Office, Chumey: 03-641113
Dzongda: 03-631100 / 631806



GAYDEN CHOEDPA

4 - 6 March | Venue: Gayden Lhakhang, Ura, Bumthang

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

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NAMGANG KORA

6 March | Venue: Chorten Kora, Trashiyangtse

Namgang Kora is one of the oldest religious festivals of eastern Bhutan, which is held annually at the Chorten Kora, Trashiyangtse. This festival involves circumambulating 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.

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GASA TSHECHU

13 - 16 March | Venue: Gasa Dzong, Gasa

The Gasa Tshechu is the biggest festival in the small district of Gasa in northwest Bhutan, which is home to highlander communities. Many mask dances are performed and the local folk dances are very unique and distinct, adding to the festive mood of the celebration.

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ZHEMGANG TSHECHU

13 - 16 March | Venue: Zhemgang Dzong, Zhemgang

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

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TSIRANG TSHECHU

14 - 16 March | Venue: Ragbey Dratshang, 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 colour to the festive mood. The thongdrol (large tapestry) of Guru Rimpoche is unfurled on the last day of the tshechu.

Contact person: Dzongda: 06-471100
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PREWCHOED

16 March | Venue: Buli, Zhemgang

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

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DZONGDRA TSHECHU

16 - 22 March | Venue: Dzongdrakha Lhakang, Luni, Paro

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

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PARO TSHECHU CHHENMO

17 - 21 March | Venue: Ringpung Deyangkha, Paro

Paro Tshechu is one of the biggest festivals in the country and is held over five days. On the first day, all mask dances are held inside the courtyard of the dzong. On the subsequent days, the festival will then be held at the courtyard outside the dzong. A thongdrol (large tapestry) will be unfurled on the last day of the festival.

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PANTANG TSHECHU

19 March | Venue: Dzongdrakha Lhakang, Luni, Paro

The mask dances are similar to Pe-ling Cham of the Gangtey Goenpa and are performed for three days.

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April



BHUTAN SPORTS FESTIVAL

6 April | Venue: Phobjikha, Gantey, Wangdue

Bhutan Sports Festival is an international trail running and mountain biking event, scheduled for the first Saturday of every April, with the inaugural year being 2019 (April 6th) at Phobjikha, Gangtey. The proposed two tiers of the ultra-race comprises of a full race with a distance of 50km and a half-race of 25km, run and bike event.

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DUNGKHAR TSHECHU

13 - 15 April | Venue: 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 Tshechu is that people are given the blessings of the lake. During this festival, the local deity of Khar village, Nalu 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.

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RAWABI TSHECHU

13 - 15 April | Venue: Rawabi Goenpa, Maenbi, Lhuentse

Rawabi Tshechu is celebrated with mask dance performances, with a display of Guru Tshengay on the last day.

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DOLAY DRUPCHEN

14 April | Venue: Neyphu Goenpa, Shaba, Paro

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

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URA YAKCHOED

16 - 20 April | Venue: Ura Lhakhang, Bumthang

Ura Lhakhang is situated in the middle of Ura village in Bumthang, and the temple is about the size of the National Library at Kawajangsa, Thimphu. It was built in the 1980s. Inside the temple is a huge statue of Guru Rinpoche and beautiful paintings. The main statue in the temple is that of Guru Nangsay Zilnoen. Highlight of the event is invoking and escorting of the deity Yidam Chhana Dorjee from Gaythen to Ura.

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DOMKHAR TSHECHU

14 - 16 April | Venue: Domkhar Lhakhang,
Chumey, Bumthang

Domkhar Lhakhang was built by Serkhong Truelku during the 18th century and it is said that the lhakhang is the residence for the Trulku. Domkhar Tshechu is a three-day festival, which includes chams and dances that are performed by the local people of Domkhar village. The chams include mainly the Peling Chams (composition of Terton Pema Lingpa). On the last day of the festival, the lhakhang displays large thongdrels (large tapestries) to bless the people of Domkhar village.

Contact person: Cultural Officer: 03-631539
Gup Office, Chumey: 03-641113
Dzongda: 03-631100 / 631806



RHODODENDRON FESTIVAL

19 - 21 April | Venue: Lamperi Botanical Garden,
Dochula, Thimphu

The festival celebrates the rhododendron flower, which blossoms abundantly in Bhutan. It features the rhododendron garden walk and exhibition, local culture and cuisines, arts and crafts, traditional games, cultural programmes, guided walks and activities. The festival displays different species that are in full bloom in their natural habitat.

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DUMATI TSHECHU

29 April | Venue: Dumati, Lichibi, Zhemgang

People gather to witness different types of mask dances and cultural items. It is also a time for people to come together to meet each other.

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May





June



PREW KHOWCHUNG

12 June | Venue: Gangzur, Lhuentse

Khowchung in Gangzur, Lhuentse is the residence of the famous tertön (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.

Contact person: Khenpo Jigme Wangchuk: +975-17659356

ZOBEL TSHECHU

15 - 17 June | Venue: Zobel Lhakhang, Zobel, Pemagatshel

Zobel gewog under Pemagatshel Dzongkhag is known for its many sacred religious monuments: it has about 13 temples and 50 chortens. The popular Zobel Tshechu is held in the Zobel Lhakhang in Zobel gewog under Pemagatshel Dzongkhag.

Contact person: Cultural Officer: 07-471288 / +975-1729116
Dzongda: 07-471100

PREW

12 - 14 June | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Phuntsho Tshewang: +975-77326957

BONCHOED

16 June | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Wangay, GUP Trong Gewog: 03-744023 /
+975-17856759
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562



July





THE HAA SUMMER FESTIVAL

2nd weekend of July | Venue: Dzongkhag Ground,
Upper market, Haa

The Haa Summer Festival is a lively and uplifting celebration of traditional living-culture, nomadic lifestyles, unique Bhutanese cuisine, traditional sports and religious performances. It provides unparalleled insight into the lives and traditions of Bhutan's nomadic herders. It showcases a lively traditional living culture, nomadic lifestyles, and demonstration of local cuisines, brewing of local ara, traditional sports, religious performances, dances, songs, artifacts and natural alpine flowers. Tourists can also experience the night at one of the many village home stays and enjoy the hospitality of the local people of Haa Valley.

Contact person: Planning Officer: +975-7656443 / 08-375179

DECHENLING TSHECHU

10 - 12 July | Venue: Dechenling Lhakhang,
Dechenling, Pemagatshel

This festival is held in the lhakhang of Dechenling gewog under Pemagatshel Dzongkhag. Mask dances, along with different varieties of cultural items, make up the main highlights and entertainment of the festival. There is another Dechenling Tshechu taking place in December, so if you miss this one, it's still possible to attend it later in the year.

Contact person: Cultural Officer: 07-471288 / +975-1729116
Dzongda: 07-471100 / 471154

DER-CHOED

9 - 11 July | Venue: Bjoka Trong, Zhemgang

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

Contact person: Gup, Tshering Wangchuk: +975-17962066
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562

TENDRA TSHECHU

11 July | Venue: Geokar Lhaxhang, Yalang,
Trashiyangtse

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

Contact person: Culture Officer: 04-781238 / +975-17806008
Dzongda: 04-781100

NIMALUNG TSHECHU

10 - 12 July | Venue: Nimalung Dratshang,
Bumthang

Nimalung Tshechu is a three-day festival. It starts with the usual chams and dances performed in other dzongkhags but on the final day, people are blessed with the display of Guru Tshengye thongdrel (large tapestry) in the morning. On the final day of the festival, the Guru Tshengye cham and Drametse Nga cham are performed by the monks of Nimalung Dratshang.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 03-631539
Gup Office, Chumey: 03-641113



KHAMDANG TENDRA TSHECHU

11 July | Venue: Shaksinggoenpa, Khamdang,
Trashiyangtse

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.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 04-781238 / +975-17806008
Dzongda: 04-781100



KURJEY TSHECHU

11 July | Venue: Kurjey Lhakhang, Choekhor, Bumthang

Kurje Tshechu is celebrated in the popular Kurje Lakhang in Bumthang. People of Jakar and Kurje villages attend the tshechu to pay obeisance to Guru Rinpoche who brought Buddhism to Bhutan. It is a one-day festival and the chams/dances include the Guru Tshengye and Shinjay cham performed by the monks of Kurje Lhakhang. The festival closes with the unfurling of a giant Buddha/Guru thangka painting known as thongdrol. The festival is fully supported and funded by the government of Bhutan.

Contact person: District Culture Officer: 03-631539
Gup Office, Chokhor: 03-63149

HA FESTIVAL

11 - 15 July | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Gup, Kinzang Minjur: +975-17681420

KHANGMA TSHECHU

11 - 13 July | Venue: Khangma Lhakhang, Yurung, Pemagatshel

Khangma Tshechu takes place in Khangma Lhakhang in Yurung, Pemagatshel. Various mask dances and traditional cultural programmes are performed during the festival.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 07-471288 / +975-1729116
Dzongda: 07-471100 / 471154

DUNGSINGMA TSHECHU

11 July | Venue: Dungsingma, Yurung, Pemagatshel

Dungsingma Tshechu is a festival held in Dungsingma village in Yurung, Pemagatshel. People gather during the festival to witness mask dances and receive blessings.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 07-471288 / +975-1729116
Dzongda: 07-471100 / 471154

August





HUNGLA CHOKHOR

28 - 30 August | Venue: Tokaphu Lhakhang,
Tongzhang, Trashiyangtse

Hungla Chokhor festival takes place in Tokaphu Lhakhang in Tongzhang, Trashiyangtse.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 04-781238 / +975-17806008
Dzongda: 04-781100

LHAMOI DOEY-PHANG

29 August | Venue: Ringpung Dzong, Paro

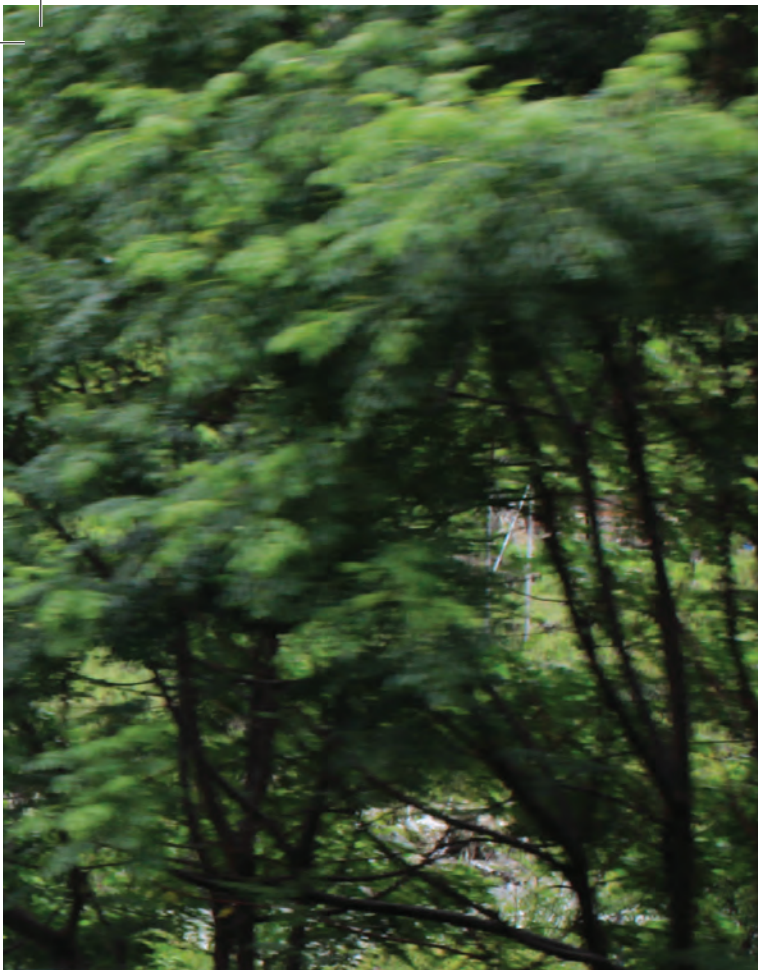
Lhamoi Doey-Phang is performed annually by the Ringpung Rabdey monks as rituals to their local deity and protector.

Contact person: Lam Neyten: +975-17116399



September





TOUR OF THE DRAGON (Mountain Bike Race)

7 September | Venue: Bumthang to Thimphu

Tour of the Dragon is not a road bike race or a classic mountain bike race, nor is it a gravel grinder, because it doesn't fit into any of the categories defined by the UCI. Since the distance of the race is 200+ km, we would categorise it as an ultra-marathon mountain bike race on roads that happen to be extremely challenging. Tour of the Dragon starts in Bumthang and travels 268km over four mountain passes before finishing in Thimphu. It's one of the toughest one-day mountain bike races in the world.

Contact person: Bhutan Olympic Committee: 02-338064
+975-17374116



MATSUTAKE MUSHROOM FESTIVAL

3 - 4 September | Venue: Genekha, Thimphu

During the festival, the native mushroom and other local products, mushroom hunting, and cultural programmes by the school and local community will be showcased. The objective of the festival is to create awareness on the sustainable harvesting of the local mushroom and enjoy the organic natural flavors of nature.

Contact person: District Agriculture Officer: 02-324205
+975-77457980

A-HOI BONCHOED

2 September | Venue: Bjoka Trong, Zhemgang

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

Contact person: Gup, Tshering Wangchuk: +975-17962066
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562

DONGDORLA DUECHOED

5 - 8 September | Venue: Bjoka Trong, Zhemgang

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

Contact person: Gup, Tshering Wangchuk: +975-17962066
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562

KESIBI CHAA

16 - 18 September | Venue: Kesibi Lhakhang,
Maenbi, Lhuentse

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

Contact person: Gup: +975-17130900





TAKILA CHHAM

11 - 13 September | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Gup: +975-17130900

CHUKOR

27 - 29 September | Venue: Shaksinggoenpa,
Khamdang, Trashiyangtse

Chukor festival is most popular in eastern dzongkhags. Trashiyangtse, which is located 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.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 04-781238 / +975-17806008
Dzongda: 04-781100



October

CHHA FESTIVAL

30 Sept – 02 October | Venue: Kurtoe, Lhuentse

Chha is celebrated every year by the people of Phagidoong, Tagmochhu, Kamdhar, Kusumpel, Khaashaling and Takila for four days. Chha is an offering made to the local deities and originated from the bonism religion. During the festival, people from the six villages gather to make offerings to local deities such as Wokhor Zhelngo, Kharshong Zhelngo, Chhami, Gyem and Lham.

Contact person: Sr. Planning Officer: +975-17630288
Dzongda: 04-545101 / Dzongrab: 04-545102

CHHA

30 Sept – 02 October | Venue: Kurtoe, Lhuentse

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

Contact person: Chhusa Village, Tshering: +975-77396125
Zimpong Village, Sangay: +975-17596059



THIMPHU DROMCHOE

4 October | Venue: Tashichho Dzong, Thimphu

Thimphu Dromchoe precedes the popular three-day Thimphu Tshechu. The Dromchoe showcases the sacred dances dedicated to the protecting deity of Bhutan, Palden Lhamo.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 02-336278 / +975-17738027
Royal Academy of Performing Arts: 02-322569

BUM TASHI FESTIVAL

5 October | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Culture Officer: +975-16288115
Dzongda: +975-17610376 / 16288100

DROMCHE

5 October | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Drungchen: +975-17610552

WANGDUE TSHECHU

6 - 8 October | Venue: Tencholing Army Ground,
Wangduephodrang

The festival is held in Wangduephodrang and is observed for three days in the autumn season. The tshechu is well known for the Raksha Mangcham or the Dance of the Ox. Many different kinds of mask dances are performed during the festival. It concludes with the unfurling of the Guru Tshengye Thongdrel (large tapestry).

Contact person: Culture Officer: 02-481226 / +975-17658174
Dzongda: 02-481273 / +975-17117009

KOTHAKPA TSHECHU

6 - 8 October | Venue: Shumar/Kothakpa,
Pemagatshel

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

Contact person: Culture Officer: 07-471288 / +975-1729116
Dzongda: 07-471100 / 471154

GOENPUNG TSHECHU

6 - 8 October | Venue: Shumar/Goenpun,
Pemagatshel

This festival is observed in Shumar, Goenpung under Pemagatshel Dzongkhag.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 07-471288 / +975-1729116
Dzongda: 07-471100 / 471154



TERCHEN DRUPCHEN

6 - 18 October | Venue: Kichu lhakhang, Paro

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

Contact person: Kichu Lam: +975-17611756



JANGCHUBLING WANG

8 October | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Lama Penjor Gyeltshen: +975-17706747

GELING GOENPA TSHECHU

7 - 8 October | Venue: Geyling Goenpa, Chhukha

It was said that during the olden days, the tshechu 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.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 08-478817 / +975-17120570
Dzongda: 08-478251 / +975-17984024

SHAKSING GOENPA TSHECHU

7 - 9 October | Venue: Shaksinggoenpa, Khamdang, Trashiyangtse

Shakshing goenpa is located 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.

Contact person: Cultural Officer: 04-781238 / +975-17806008
Dzongda: 04-781100

DORJITSE KUCHOED

7 - 10 October | Venue: Dorji Gompa, Tang, Bumthang

Dorjitse Kuchoed takes place in Dorji Goenpa in Tang, Bumthang.

Contact person: Culture Officer: +975-17160926
Gup Office, Tang: 03-680500
Dzongda: 03-631100/132 / +975-17619991

THIMPHU TSHECHU

8 - 10 October | Venue: Tashichho Dzong, Thimphu

One of the biggest festivals in the country is the Thimphu Tshechu. This festival is held in the capital city for three days. The Tshechu is witnessed by thousands of people, both local and tourists. The actual Tshechu is preceded by days and nights of prayer and rituals to invoke the gods. Mask dances like the Guru Tshengye (Eight Manifestations of Guru Rinpoche), Shaw Shachi (Dance of the Stags) and many more are performed.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 02-336278 / +975-17738027
Royal Academy of Performing Arts: 02-322569

TAMSHING PHALA CHOEDPA

8 - 10 October | Venue: Tamshing Lhakhang, Choekhor, Bumthang

The festival of Tamzhing Lhakhang is held for three days. People from different parts of Bumthang and also from other parts of Bhutan gather to witness the dances of terton (treasure revealer) Pema Lingpa (Peling Sung Cham), which are performed by the monks of Tamzhing Monastery. The chams (dances) include the Phagchham (pig dance), which is performed on the first night and was composed by the great saint Mewang. The festival is concluded by Pholay Molay cham.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 03-631539
Gup Office, Chokhor: 03-631496



HAA TSHECHU

10 October | Venue: Lhakhang karmo, Haa

The Haa Tshechu was introduced in 1990 and performed at the Lhakhang Karmo. The annual Haa Tshechu, which is held to honour Guru Rinpoche, is the biggest festival in the district and attracts people from all over western Bhutan. The three-day Haa Tshechu concludes with the unfurling of the Guru thongdrel (large tapestry) on the last day.

Contact person: Tandin Dorji, Offtg Cultural Officer:
08-375164 / +975-17794105





DUNGSINGMA TSHECHU

11 - 13 October | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 07-471288 / +975-1729116
Dzongda: 07- 471100 / 471154



DANKALA MANI (MANTRA) TSHECHU

13 October | Venue: Dankala lhakhang, Shaba, Paro

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

Contact person: Dankala Lam: +975-17791398

KHOMSHAR KHARPHU

13 October | Venue: Khomshar, Zhemgang

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.

Contact person: Gup, Kunzang Jurmey: +975-17704755
Tourism Focal- 17895562

NANGKOR TSHECHU

11 - 13 October | Venue: Shumar, Pemagatshel

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

Contact person: Culture Officer: 07-471288 / +975-1729116
Dzongda: 07-471100 / 471154

THANGBI MEWA

11 - 14 October | Venue: 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. That is why people from all walks of life attempt to jump across the flame three times to be blessed for the whole year. Then, mask dances and folk dances are performed as scheduled in the enclosed courtyard of the temple.

Contact person: District Culture Officer: 03-631539
Gup Office, Chokhor: 03-631496



KADAM TSHECHU

12 - 14 October | Venue: Kadam Lhakhang,
Khar, Pemagatshel

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

Contact person: Culture Officer: 07-471288 / +975-1729116
Dzongda: 07- 471100 / 471154

PHUENTSHOLING TSHECHU

13 October | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 08-478817 / +975-17120570
Dzongda: 08-478251 / +975-17984024

JOMOLHARI MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL

14 - 15 October | Venue: Jangkothang,
Upper Paro

Jomolhari Mountain Festival is an exquisitely themed two-day event celebrated at the base of Mt. Jomolhari by communities located along one of the most scenic trekking routes in Bhutan. The festival celebrates the culture of the communities living together with the natural wonders that surround them: one in particular is the elusive, yet elegant, snow leopard! This endangered cat thrives in the region; several camera trap photos and definite signs have established the region as one of the best snow leopard habitats in Bhutan.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 08-272238 / +975-1770 7815
Dzongda: 08-271770



LAYA AULAY

15 – 16 October | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Cultural Officer: +975-16288115
Dzongda: +975-17610376 / 16288100

ROYAL HIGHLANDER FESTIVAL

23 – 24 October | Venue: Laya, Gasa

The Royal Highlander Festival will be organised in Laya this October. Driven by the underlying goal of making the highlands a vibrant and thriving economy, the festival aims to promote the sustainable livelihood of highlanders, showcase highlander's innovation, and exhibit the highlands as a pride of Bhutan. The festival brings together highlanders from other parts of Bhutan to exchange values, knowledge, skills, and best practices related to highlands and yak farming. The festival is a landmark activity of Gasa dzongkhag's "Good to Great Gasa", a vision inspired by His Majesty's passion to make our country great.

Contact person: Cultural Officer: +975-16288115
Dzongda: +975-17610376 / 16288100



November





BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS MAJESTY JIGME SINGYE WANGCHUCK

11 November | Venue: Changlimithang Ground, Thimphu

His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck the 4th King of Bhutan was born on 11th November, 1955. To mark this occasion every Dzongkhag in Bhutan will observe the day with various cultural programmes and events participated in by people from all walks of life.

BHO-YAK

3 November | Venue: Janka-kha, Upper valley, 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.

Contact person: Tandin Dorji, Offtg Cultural Officer:
08-375164 / +975-17794105

SHINGKCHAR RABNEY

2 - 6 November | Venue: Shingkharchhakhang, Ura, Bumthang

The Shingkharchhak Rabney is held at the historic temple, Shingkharchhak 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.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 03-631539
Gup Office, Ura: 03-680001
Dzongda: 03-631100 / 631806

JAKAR TSHECHU

3 - 7 November | Venue: Jakar Dzong, Bumthang

The Jakar Dzong or “the Dzong of the White Bird” is perched on the hillock overlooking Chamkhar town and places surrounding it. The interesting thing about the Dzong is that there is a water tower four stairs down behind the Dzong, leading to a water reservoir used for drawing water during battle times in olden days. The three-day festival displays several sacred mask dances. The festival also hosts different types of folk songs and dances. People visit the festival dressed in their finest clothes and the festival is also popular among tourists.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 03-631539
Dzongda: 03-631100 / 132 / +975-17619991

UGYENCHOLING KANGSEL

4 - 6 November | Venue: Ugyencholing Dzong, Tang, Bumthang

Ugyencholing Kangsel is held in Ugyencholing Dzong in Tang gewog under Bumthang Dzongkhag. The popular Ugyencholing Dzong has played a vital role as a religious centre in the history of Bhutan. Today, it houses one of the most interesting museums of the country. It is a must-visit site for tourists.

Contact person: Culture Officer: +975-17658174
Gup Office, Tang: 03-680500
Dzongdag: 03- 631100 / 132 / +975-17619991



CHHUKHA TSHECHU

4 - 6 November | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 08-478817 / +975-17120570
Dzongda: 08-478251 / +975-17984024



LANYIRI TSHECHU

4 - 6 November | Venue: Lanyiri Lhakhang, Dungmin, Pemagatshel

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

Contact person: Culture Officer: 07-471288 / +975-1729116
Dzongda: 07-471100 / 471154

TSHEBAR TSHECHU

5 - 7 November | Venue: Tshebar Lhakhang, Khar, Pemagatshel

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

Contact person: Culture Officer: 07-471288 / +975-1729116
Dzongda: 07-471100 / 471154

GOENKAR TSHECHU

6 - 8 November | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Sr. Planning Officer: +975-17630288
Dzongda: 04-545101 / Dzongrab: 04-545102

PEMAGATSHEL TSHECHU

10 - 12 November | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 07-471288 / +975-1729116
Dzongda: 07-471100 / 471154

DUNGMEG TSHECHU

10 - 12 November | Venue: Dungmed Lhakhang,
Dungmin, Pemagatshel

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

Contact person: Culture Officer: 07-471288 / +975-1729116
Dzongda: 07-471100 / 471154



BLACK-NECKED CRANE FESTIVAL

11 November | Venue: Gangtey Goenpa, Phobjikha,
Wangdue Phodrang

The annual Black-Necked Crane festival is celebrated at the courtyard of Gangtey Goenpa in Phobjikha valley. The festival is an occasion for the locals to rejoice and celebrate the arrival of this vulnerable and majestic bird that has become an inseparable part in their daily lives during the winter months. The annual black-necked crane festival is organised to generate awareness and understanding on the importance of conserving the birds. The festival includes cultural programmes, such as folk songs and dances (some with black-necked crane themes), mask dances performed by the local people, crane dances and environmental conservation-themed dramas and songs by school children.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 02-481226 / +975-17658174
Dzongda: 02-481273 / +975-17117009
Gangtey Shedra: 02-442253

TSHEPAMI THRONGDREL

12 November | Venue: Ringpung Deyangkha, Paro

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

Contact person: Culture Officer: +975-17707815

BARDO KHARPHU

12 November | Venue: Bardo, Zhemgang

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.

Contact person: Gup, Kunzang Jurmey: +975-17704755
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562



JAMBAY LHAKANG DRUP

12 - 15 November | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 03-631539
Gup Office, Chokhor: 03-631496



PRAKAR DUECHOED

13 - 15 November | Venue: Prakar Lhakhang,
Bumthang

Prakhar Tshechu is performed in Prakhar Lhakhang every year. It is a three-day festival and the chams (dances) performed during the tshechu are the usual chams performed in other dzongkhags. On the third night of the tshechu, the people are given the opportunity to get blessings from Thuktshe Dawa.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 03-631539
Gup Office, Chumey: 03-641113
Dzongda: 03-631100 / 631806

PANBANG TSHECHU

17 – 19 November | Venue: Sonamthang Dratshang,
Zhemgang

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

Contact person: Lam Neten: +975-17150860 / 77666755
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562

SERZHONG TSHECHU

19 November | Venue: Do-Ngag Kuenzangcholing
Lhakhang, Serzhong, Sarpang

Serzhong Tshechu is an annual event where mask dances are performed by the monks. It is a one-day tshechu 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.

Contact person: Khenpo Yeshe Jamtsho: +975-17897489





SUMTHRANG KANGSEL

22 - 26 November | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 03-631539
Gup Office, Ura: 03-680001
Dzongda: 03-631100 / 63180

KHOMSHAR KATAG

25 November | Venue: 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.

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Tourism Focal: +975-17895562

December





YESHEY GOENPOI DRUPCHEN/ FESTIVAL OF MAHAKALA

1 - 3 December | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Lopen Sonam Yeshey, Trongsa Draktshang:
+975-17601887
Dzongda: 03-521314

DRUK WANGYEL TSHECHU

13 December | Venue: Dochula, Thimphu

The Druk Wangyel Tshechu is a unique festival performed by the Royal Bhutan Army rather than monks or lay people. It is a tribute to the wise leadership of His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the Fourth King of Bhutan. It also celebrates the continuous efforts of the Royal Bhutan Army in protecting the sovereignty and the stability of the country. This one-of-a-kind tshechu is performed at the festival round near Dochula Pass, against the backdrop of the magnificent Jigme Singye Wangchuck mountain range.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 02-336278 / +975-17738027
Royal Academy of Performing Arts: 02-322569
Gewog Administrative Officer: +975-17609734



TRASHIGANG TSHECHU

3 - 5 December | Venue: Trashigang Dzong,
Trashigang

The annual Trashigang Tshechu is one of the biggest festivals in eastern Bhutan. People from all over eastern Bhutan come to the festival. The nomadic community of Merak and Sakteng, called the Brokpas, stand out from the crowd with their unique dress and appearance. Different sacred mask dances are performed during the festival, as well as other traditional folk songs and dances. The highlight of the festival is the unfurling of the thongdrel (large tapestry) of Guru Tshengyed (eight manifestations of Guru Rinpoche). Another thongdrol of Neten Chudrug (Sixteen Arhats) is also unfurled for the public.

Contact Person: Cultural Officer: +975-17489004
Dzongda: +975-17646518
Planning Officer: +975-17801734 / 17629459

MONGGAR TSHECHU

3 - 6 December | Venue: Monggar Dzong, Monggar

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.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 04-641608 / +975-17814533
Dzongdag: 04-641100



DECHENLING TSHECHU

4 - 6 December | Venue: Dechenling Lhakhang,
Dechenling, Pemagatshel

This is the second Dechenling Tshechu 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.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 07-471288 / +975-1729116
Dzongda: 07-471100 / 471154

MENCHU PEMAPHUENDEY

4 - 6 December | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 07-471288 / +975-1729116
Dzongda: 07-471100 / 471154



THRICHU GOENPA TSHECHU

4 - 6 December | Venue: Thrichugoenpa,
Tongzhang, Trashiyangtse

Thrichugoenpa Tshechu is a festival that takes place in the sacred Thrichu goenpa in Tongzhang, Trashiyangtse. Tongzhang is located on the Trashigang-Trashiyangtse highway, just before reaching the popular Gomphu Kora temple.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 04-781238 / +975-17806008
Dzongda: 04-781100

PEMA YOESELCHOLING GOENPA TSHECHU

5 - 7 December | Venue: Kencholing,
Shompangkhang, Sarpang

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

Contact person: Tsampa Leki Wangchuk: +975-17725810



TANG NAMKHAR RABNEY

5 - 6 December | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Culture Officer: +975-17658174
Gup Office, Tang: 03-680500
Dzongda: 03-631100 / 132



GEOKAR LHAKHANG TSHECHU

6 - 12 December | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 04-781238 / +975-17806008
Dzongda: 04-781100

GAMUNG TSHECHU

10 - 12 December | Venue: Shumar/Gamung,
Pemagatshel

Gamung Tshechu takes place in Shumar in Gamung, Pemagatshel. People gather to celebrate the festival and get blessings.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 07-471288 / +975-1729116
Dzongda: 07-471100 / 471154

GOSHING TSHECHU

10 - 12 December | Venue: Goshing Trong,
Zhemgang

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

Contact person: Pema Samdup, Goshing: +975-17514415
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562

BULI TSHECHU

10 - 12 December | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Gup, Dorji Wangchuk: +975-17120742
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562

SHINGKCHAR TSHECHU

10 - 12 December | Venue: Shingkhari, Zhemgang

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

Contact person: Shingkhari Gup: +975-17120636 / 17866591
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562





WAMLING TSHECHU

10 - 12 December | Venue: Wamling, Zhemgang

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

Contact person: Shingkar Gup: +975-17120636/17866591
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562

THRISA TSHECHU

10 - 12 December | Venue: Thrisa, Zhemgang

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

Contact person: Shingkar Gup: +975-17120636/17866591
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562

PHUMITHANG TSHECHU

10 - 12 December | Venue: Phumithang Dratshang,
Zhemgang

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

Contact person: Tourism Focal: +975-17895562

GONGPHU TSHECHU

10 - 12 December | Venue: Gongphu, Zhemgang

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

Contact person: Wangay, Trong Gup: 03-744023 / 17856759
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562

BJOKA TSHECHU

11 - 14 December | Venue: Bjoka Trong, Zhemgang

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

Contact person: Gup, Tshering Wangchuk: +975-17962066
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562

CHOJAM RABNEY

11 - 15 December | Venue: Chojam Lhakhang,
Tang, Bumthang

The name 'Chojam' was originally derived when Yidam Khorlo Dampo (presently one of the most important relics of the Lhakhang) was brought down to the village. The local people noticed that the statue's expression looked sad and got its name as Chojam Lhakhang. 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 Tshogpa also seeks funds from any visitors in Tang for the Lhakhang. The chams/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.

Contact person: Culture Officer: +975-17658174
Gup Office, Tang: 03-680500
Dzongdag: 03-631100/132

LADRONG RABNEY

11 - 15 December | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Tashi Sither, Caretaker: +975-17781935

NANGLA TSHECHU

12 December | Venue: Nangla, Trong, Zhemgang

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

Contact person: Gup, Rinchen Wangdi: 03-742032 / +975-17686938
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562

MAMUNG TSHECHU

12 December | Venue: Mamung Trong, Zhemgang

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

Contact person: Tashi, GUP Phangkhar Gewog: +975-17573034
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562

KHARPHU BONCHOED

12 December | Venue: Shingkhar/Thrisa/
Wamling/Radi/Nimshong, Zhemgang

This festival brings together people from different places like Shingkhar, 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.

Contact person: Shingkhar Gup: +975-17120636/17866591
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562

TASHIBI TSHECHU

12 December | Venue: Tashibi, Zhemgang

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

Contact person: Tashi, GUP Phangkhar Gewog: +975-17573034
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562

BONCHOED

12 December | Venue: Buli/Tali/Kikhar/Nangkhor,
Zhemgang

People perform rituals and make offerings to their local deity on this day. This is mainly done to bring peace and good harvest in the coming year.

Contact person: Gup, Dorji Wangchuk: +975-17120742
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562



KHOMSHAR TSHECHU

12 December | Venue: Khomshar, Zhemgang

During the tshechu, different forms of mask dances and cultural items are performed with unfurling of thongdrel (large tapestry) to the public on last day.

Contact person: Gup, Kunzang Jurmey: +975-17704755
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562

LANGDURBI BONCHOED

12 December | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Gup, Kunzang Jurmey: +975-17704755
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562

BONCHOED

12 December | Venue: Trong/Dangkhar, 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.

Contact person: Wangay, Trong Gup: 03-744023 / 17856759
Tourism Focal: +975-17895562

DEKIDLING TSHECHU

21 December | Venue: Lungtok Tharchen Goenpa, Dekidling, Sarpang

The one-day Dekidling annual tshechu is held at the lhakhang. The mask dances are performed by the dzongkhag mask dancers, while the folk dances are performed by a group of women.

Contact person: Dekidling Gup: +975-77408448





JAMBAY LHAKANG SINGYE CHAM

12 December | Venue: Jambay Lhakhang,
Choekhor, Bumthang

The Singye Cham (lion dance) is held at the Jambay Lhakhang in Bumthang. The Jambay Lhakhang Singye Cham is performed once a year.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 03-631539
Gup Office, Chokhor: 03-631496



NGA LHAKHANG ZHI

12 - 14 December | Venue: Nga Lhakhang,
Choekhor, Bumthang

The festival is held at the Nga Lhakhang 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 as a whole. It is also a symbolic prayer for good harvest and for the wellbeing of everyone.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 03-631539
Gup Office, Chokhor: 03-631496

PANGKHAR CHOEDPA

21 - 26 December | Venue: Pangkhar Lhakhang,
Ura, Bumthang

The festival is held at Pangkhar monastery in Ura, Bumthang. Legend says that when the monastery was under construction, langurs helped at night while humans used to work during the day. Hence the name Prakar, which literally translates to white monkey. This festival celebrates the origin of this temple.

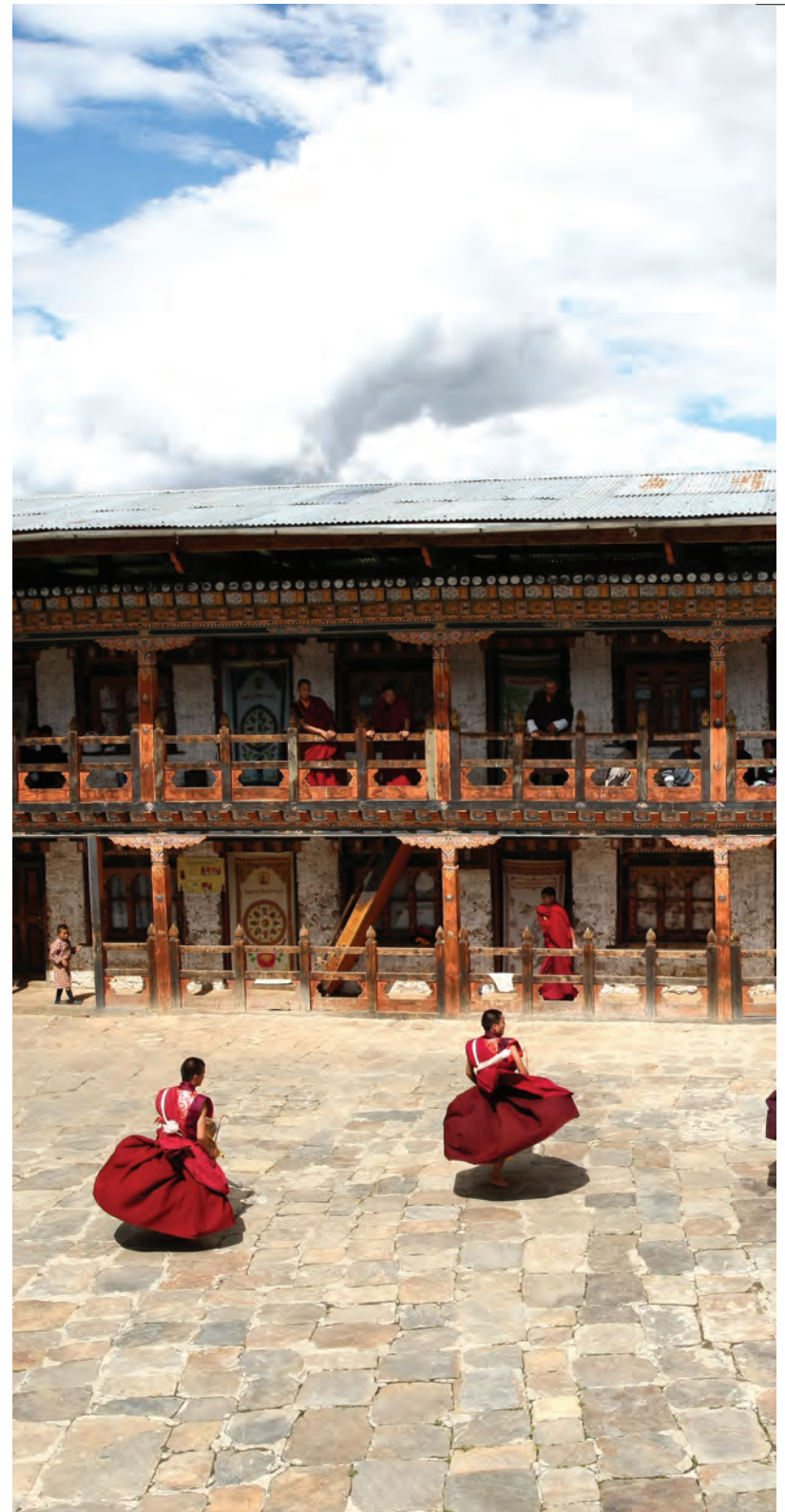
Contact person: Culture Officer: 03-631539
Gup Office, Ura: 03-680001
Dzongda: 03-631100 / 631806

DOEDEL PEMACHOLING TSHECHU

28 Nov - 13 December | Venue: 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.

Contact person: Culture Officer: 04-781238 / +975-17806008
Dzongda: 04-781100





JANGCHUBLING TSHECHU

24 - 25 December | Venue: 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.

Contact Person: Lama Penjor Gyeltshen: +975-17706747

LOMBA

25 - 26 December | Venue: 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.

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