

**NOMAD PHOTO
EXPEDITION**

Bhutan

Land of the Thunder Dragon

FESTIVALS & SACRED VALLEYS — AN 10-DAY PHOTOGRAPHIC
JOURNEY

BHUTAN PHOTO TOUR

9-18 OCTOBER 2026



Introduction

Bhutan remains one of the last countries in the world where Buddhist culture is not a memory preserved for tourists, but a living, daily practice. Monasteries function as they have for centuries, farmhouses still hold the rhythms of the 16th and 17th century, and prayer flags mark the land as much as any road sign.

This ten-day journey is built around two extraordinary photographic anchors: the Paro Tsechu Festival, with its masked dances and silk costumes, and the Tiger's Nest Monastery, perched 900 meters above the Paro valley.

We move slowly through Thimphu, Gangtey, Punakha, and Paro — crossing high mountain passes, sharing meals with monks and farming families, and photographing dzongs, temples, and festival grounds with the access and time that only a small group allows.

Every day is designed around light and access: private cultural performances, monastery breakfasts, and unhurried time inside some of the most overwhelming dzongs in the country.



What Makes Our Difference

We travel in a small, dedicated group led directly by Harry Fisch and/or Roberto Pazzi, both working photographers, not generalist tour guides. Every stop on this itinerary is chosen and timed for photography first.

Where a standard tour passes through a dzong for twenty minutes, we stay for the light. Where a standard tour watches a festival from the crowd, we have arranged private cultural performances and intimate access to monastery life.

This is relationship access, not festival-circuit tourism: breakfast with monks at Chorten Ningpo, a private traditional dinner and mask-dance performance in a Babesa heritage home, and unhurried time with farming families in the Phobjikha valley.

The result is a body of work built on trust and proximity — portraits and scenes that go beyond what a passing visitor is ever shown.



What Are We Going to Experience

Two of Bhutan's most important festival days, photographed from within the crowd at Paro Dzong: the sacred mask dances of the Paro Tshechu and the pre-dawn unfurling of the giant silk Thongdroel.

The hike to Taktshang Monastery, the Tiger's Nest, Bhutan's most iconic site, built into a cliff face 900 meters above the valley floor.

High mountain passes strung with prayer flags, farmhouses and villages still lived-in as they were centuries ago, and quiet mornings inside monasteries most travelers never enter.

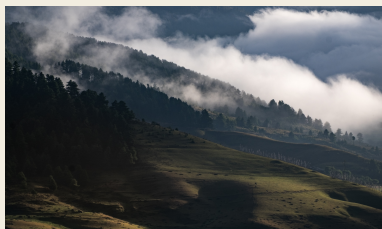
A private evening of traditional Bhutanese dinner and masked cultural performance, and an afternoon of village life, archery, and yak-butter tea with local families.



Itinerary

DAY 1 — OCTOBER 9

Arrive Delhi



Arrival in Delhi. Upon landing, our representative greets the group and transfers us to the hotel for check-in. Rooms are available from 14:00 hrs.

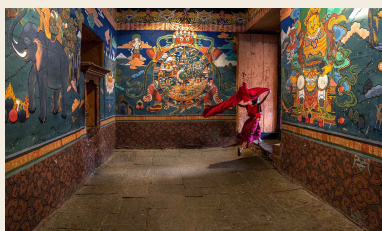
The rest of the day is at leisure to rest and prepare for the flight to Bhutan the following morning.

 **Photographic Opportunities:** First impressions of India's contrasts between modernity and tradition, glimpses of Delhi's energy and architecture, evening city lights and street scenes around the hotel.

 **Meals:** None / Accommodation: Pride Plaza Aerocity (or similar)

DAY 2 — OCTOBER 10

Delhi – Paro



Early transfer to the airport for our flight to Paro. As the aircraft crosses the Himalayas, we see the peaks of Everest, Kanchenjunga, and Bhutan's sacred mountains.

Upon arrival, we meet our Bhutanese guide and begin the drive toward Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan. En route, we stop at Tachog Lhakhang, a temple founded by Thangtong Gyalpo, the builder of Bhutan's iron suspension bridges. We cross his centuries-old bridge adorned with prayer flags and continue to Chuzom, where the Paro and Thimphu rivers meet beneath three stupas in distinct Bhutanese, Tibetan, and Nepali styles.

After check-in and lunch in Thimphu, we visit Buddha Point (Kuensel Phodrang), where the immense golden Buddha dominates the valley. Later, we stop at the Memorial Chorten, where devotees spin prayer wheels and walk clockwise around the stupa in constant meditation.

In the evening, we attend a private traditional Bhutanese dinner at a heritage home in Babesa, wearing national dress. During dinner, a private cultural performance introduces us to Bhutan's traditional masked dances and folk music — an intimate, colorful, and unforgettable introduction to the country's living culture.

 **Photographic Opportunities:** Himalayan vistas from the flight, the suspension bridge and temple at Tachog Lhakhang, rivers and stupas at Chuzom, prayer rituals at the Memorial Chorten, and the vibrant scenes of the private traditional dinner and cultural performance.

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner / Accommodation: Access Suites / Hotel Osel (or similar)

DAY 3 — OCTOBER 11

Thimphu



After breakfast, we visit the Choki Traditional Art School, a nonprofit institution dedicated to preserving Bhutan's traditional arts while providing education and lodging to children from disadvantaged families. Our visit begins with a butter-lamp lighting ceremony before the statue of Guru Rinpoche, followed by a short documentary on the school's mission. Over mint tea, we learn about the Zorig Chusum — Bhutan's thirteen classical arts — and witness students creating works in painting, sculpture, and textile weaving.

We join a hands-on painting session guided by senior students and visit a 340-year-old building within the school, consecrated by Druk Desi Tenzin Rabgye and blessed by the Divine Madman. The experience includes live demonstrations of wood-turning, bamboo craft, tailoring, and embroidery.

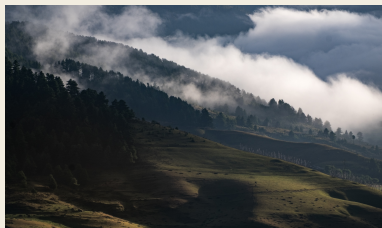
After lunch, we proceed to Pangri Zampa Monastery, built in 1529, where astrologer monks read celestial charts and offer predictions. The afternoon continues at Kaja Throm, Thimphu's revitalized market district, alive with artisans, food stalls, and street scenes. Later, we visit Trashichhoedzong, the majestic "Fortress of the Glorious Religion," which houses the King's throne room and the seat of the Chief Abbot.

In the evening, we explore the Local Craft Bazaar and then take a short driving tour of Thimphu's illuminated monuments.

 **Photographic Opportunities:** The butter-lamp lighting ceremony at Choki Art School, artisans working on traditional crafts, portraits of monks during astrology readings at Pangri Zampa, bustling activity at Kaja Throm, sunset and night images of Trashichhoedzong, and the illuminated streets and markets of Thimphu.

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner / **Accommodation:** Access Suites / Hotel Osel (or similar)

DAY 4 — OCTOBER 12

Thimphu —
Gangtey

After breakfast, we begin the journey toward Gangtey, crossing Dochu La Pass at 3,088 meters. We stop to admire the 108 chortens, prayer flags, and sweeping Himalayan views. A prayer flag hoisting ceremony takes place at the pass, surrounded by magnificent mountain scenery. If the sky is clear, we see peaks such as Masagang, Terigang, and Gangkar Puensum, the highest in Bhutan.

We continue to Gangtey, stopping for lunch at Punakha or Wangdue. On arrival, we check in at the hotel and explore the Phobjikha Valley, winter home of the black-necked cranes.

In the afternoon, we visit Gangtey village, share yak butter tea with local families, and learn about their life in this remote valley. Later, we attend a prayer ceremony at Gangtey Monastery, a profound and peaceful experience that connects us to the valley's spiritual essence.

📷 **Photographic Opportunities:** The prayer flag hoisting ceremony at Dochu La, panoramic mountain views, pastoral life in Gangtey village, intimate moments during tea with locals, and the private prayer ceremony at Gangtey Monastery.

🍴 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner / Accommodation: Namgayling Cottage / Phobjikha Hotel (or similar)

DAY 5 — OCTOBER 13

Gangtey



At dawn, we attend a morning prayer ceremony at Gangtey Monastery before breakfast. Later, we visit Gangtey Goenpa, the only Nyingmapa monastery west of the Black Mountains, and walk the Gangtey Nature Trail, a two-hour path through meadows, villages, and pine forests.

We continue exploring the Phobjikha Valley, visiting the Black-Necked Crane Information Centre, which offers insight into the valley's ecology and the lives of its migratory birds. After lunch, we drive toward Punakha, stopping briefly at the restored Wangduephodrang Dzong.

 **Photographic Opportunities:** The morning prayer ceremony at Gangtey Monastery, landscapes along the Gangtey Nature Trail, cranes and wetland views at the Information Centre, and the scenic dzong at Wangduephodrang.

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner / Accommodation: Zen Punakha / Meri Puensum Resort (or similar)

DAY 6 — OCTOBER 14

Punakha



Morning drive to Chorten Ningpo Monastery for breakfast with monks, surrounded by fruit trees and prayer wheels. Afterward, we photograph the stunning Punakha Dzong, strategically located at the confluence of the Pho Chu and Mo Chu rivers.

We then walk through rice fields to Chimi Lhakhang, the Temple of Fertility, dedicated to Lama Drukpa Kuenley, the Divine Madman.

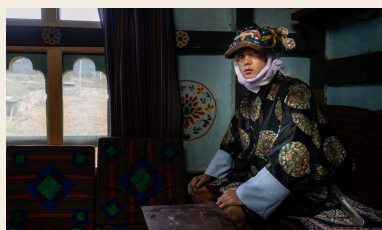
The afternoon brings a hike to Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten, a hilltop structure built for peace and harmony in the world. We return to the hotel in the evening.

 **Photographic Opportunities:** Breakfast and ceremony with monks at Chorten Ningpo, the majestic architecture of Punakha Dzong, local life on the path to Chimi Lhakhang, and views from Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten.

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner / Accommodation: Zen Punakha / Meri Puensum Resort (or similar)

DAY 7 — OCTOBER 15

Punakha – Paro



After breakfast, we drive to Paro, arriving for lunch at a local farmhouse, followed by a friendly archery game, Bhutan's national sport.

The afternoon includes visits to Ta Dzong, the former watchtower now serving as the National Museum, and Rinpung Dzong, the "Fortress of the Heap of Jewels." We then explore Paro town before returning to the hotel.

📷 **Photographic Opportunities:** Rural scenes on the road to Paro, the archery match at the farmhouse, exhibits at the National Museum, frescoes at Rinpung Dzong, and street life in Paro.

🍴 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner / Accommodation: Himalayan Keys Forest Resort / Tenzinling Resort (or similar)

DAY 8 — OCTOBER 16

Paro – Paro
Tshechu
Festival and
Tiger's Nest

Following breakfast, we attend the Paro Tshechu Festival, one of Bhutan's grandest religious celebrations, featuring monks and laymen performing sacred mask dances at Paro Dzong.

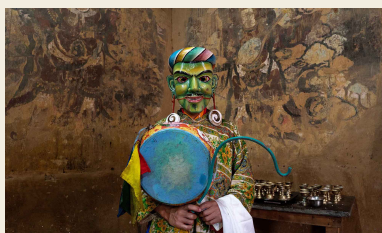
In the afternoon, we hike to Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest), Bhutan's most iconic site, built on a cliff 900 meters above the valley. The round trip takes about five hours with plenty of time for photography.

📷 **Photographic Opportunities:** Colorful mask dances and costumes at the festival, portraits of monks and devotees, and breathtaking views of Tiger's Nest Monastery and its dramatic setting.

🍴 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner / Accommodation: Himalayan Keys Forest Resort / Tenzinling Resort (or similar)

DAY 9 — OCTOBER 17

Paro – Paro Tshechu and Thongdroel Ceremony



Before dawn, we witness the Thongdroel Ceremony, when a giant silk Thangkha is unfurled at daybreak, believed to bestow liberation by sight.

After breakfast, we continue photographing the final day of Paro Tshechu before visiting Drukgyel Dzong, the historic fortress once guarding the valley, and Kyichu Lhakhang, one of Bhutan's oldest temples.

📷 **Photographic Opportunities:** The sacred Thongdroel Ceremony at dawn, final festival dances and blessings, mountain views from Drukgyel Dzong, and pilgrims at Kyichu Lhakhang.

🍽️ **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner / **Accommodation:** Himalayan Keys Forest Resort / Tenzinling Resort (or similar)

DAY 10 — OCTOBER 18

Paro – Delhi



After breakfast, transfer to Paro Airport for the flight to Delhi. Upon arrival, connect with international flights for onward travel.

📷 **Photographic Opportunities:** Last views of Paro Valley from the air, the Himalayas seen at sunrise, and quiet reflections marking the end of the journey.

🍽️ **Meals:** Breakfast

What Are We Going to Experience

The Sacred Paro Tshechu

The sacred Paro Tshechu Festival, with its masked dances, silk costumes, and centuries-old rituals of blessing and devotion.

A Private Evening in Thimphu

Private photo sessions and cultural performance with traditional dinner in Thimphu, featuring masked dancers and musicians in national dress.

Breakfast Among Monks

Morning breakfast in a monastery with the monks.

Villages Preserved in Time

Farm houses and villages, preserved in time, a slice of life from the 16th and 17th century still living and used today as they always have been.

Taktshang, the Tiger's Nest

The incredible Taktshang Monastery, the Tiger's Nest.

Daily Life, Unposed

Local people engaged in daily activities, and authenticity.

Prayer Wheels and Flags

Prayer wheels and flags pepper the land, evidence of how interwoven the culture and religion are in this area.

Inside the Dzongs

Our photo sessions in some of the most overwhelming of Dzongs in Bhutan.

Views from the High Passes

The impressive views at high passes.

Sacred Prayers at the Festivals

Sacred prayers at the temple festivals.

Prayer Flags at Dochula

Prayer flag hoisting at Dochula pass, enjoying the magnificent mountain views.

Farmhouse Lunch and Archery

Lunch at a typical village farmhouse, followed by a game of archery, and an evening cultural program at the hotel amidst a bonfire.

Hotels Used

Pride Plaza Aerocity (or similar)	DELHI	1 night
Access Suites / Hotel Osel (or similar)	THIMPHU	2 nights
Namgayling Cottage / Phobjikha Hotel (or similar)	GANGTEY (PHOBJIKHA VALLEY)	1 night
Zen Punakha / Meri Puensum Resort (or similar)	PUNAKHA	2 nights
Himalayan Keys Forest Resort / Tenzinling Resort (or similar)	PARO	3 nights

Final hotels will be shared 30 days before departure.

