



A CULTURAL SUMMIT

WITH BUMDRA MONASTERY CAMP

COMO UMA PARO: FOUR NIGHTS
COMO UMA PUNAKHA: TWO NIGHTS
BUMDRA MONASTERY CAMP: ONE NIGHT

This seven-night adventure brings the enigmatic Kingdom of Bhutan to life through its diverse culture and landscape. You will spend four nights at COMO Uma Paro, high above the Paro Valley, and two at our intimate lodge of COMO Uma Punakha. You'll also spend one night camping in the Himalayas beside mountaintop Bumdra Monastery.

Views from COMO Uma Punakha



Paddy fields in the Paro Valley



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Climb through prayer flags with a view of the snow-capped Himalayas on the way to Bumdra Monastery, where you'll spend the night at our private camp
- Engage with young monks at Chorten Ningpo, a Buddhist educational institution built on spirited ground that dates back to the 17th century
- Pay respects at Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the oldest temples in Bhutan
- Visit the Taktsang 'Tiger's Nest' Monastery, one of Bhutan's architectural highlights
- Walk across farmhouses to reach Chimmi Lhakhang, a 15th-century fertility temple
- Enjoy spectacular views of the Himalayas from the Dochu La mountain pass
- Visit the 300-year old Punakha Dzong: the winter residence of the Central Monastic Body and where many major Royal events take place
- Spend a day exploring the bustling capital Thimphu, including major attractions like the Buddha Dordenma, the National Memorial chorten and more





Taktsang 'Tiger's Nest' Monastery

CULTURAL NOTES

- If the air seems fresher in Bhutan, it's because it is. Bhutan is the first country in the world that has environmental protection built into its constitution. It's stipulated that at least 60 per cent of the nation must remain under forest cover at all times, making Bhutan the world's only carbon-negative nation, as it absorbs more carbon dioxide than it produces.
- Forgetting birthdays doesn't happen in Bhutan, as all citizens turn one year older on New Year's Day. It originally began as most people did not record their own birth date due to illiteracy, and was maintained as it became easier to share a communal celebration of the year rather than a month and day.
- Bhutan's borders were not open until 1974, when international media was allowed to cover the coronation of its former king. Previously, Bhutan had been in self-imposed isolation to protect their Buddhist culture and unspoiled landscape from globalisation. It also only lifted a ban on television and the internet in 1999.
- Contrary to inheritance law almost anywhere else, Bhutanese families pass property onto the eldest daughter rather than the son. After marriage, a man moves into the home of his new wife rather than the other way around.



Druk Choeding Temple



A typical culinary spread in Bhutan

- Ignoring global metrics of economic growth, Bhutan developed the concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH). It is often ranked as the happiest nation in South Asia and among the top ten happiest places in the world.
- Spice-lovers rejoice, and the spice-sensitive beware – chilli is not a condiment in Bhutan, but an essential vegetable. Their cuisine is heavily spiced by default, and it is said that they will not eat a dish until it is spicy enough.
- Bhutan's capital, Thimphu, does not have a single traffic light. People drive slowly and carefully through the precarious roads and it hasn't failed them yet. Local officials tried to install a light but roused such public outcry that it was quickly removed and a traffic officer assigned to the intersection instead.
- Only eight pilots have been trained to navigate landing in Paro Airport. Situated in a deep valley, flying to Paro involves avoiding high peaks and strong winds in specific meteorological conditions. The flight itself is an exclusive privilege.
- You will likely see a number of colourful phallus drawings on the walls of certain houses in Bhutan. These aren't graffiti, but rather a tradition that symbolises good luck and fertility. Phalluses are believed to ward off evil spirits and are often used in place of a scarecrow.



Views from Chele La Pass



DAY-BY-DAY SCHEDULE

This itinerary is customisable. Please speak to us about your needs and requirements and we will do our utmost to accommodate you.

DAY 1 ARRIVAL, CHECK-IN AND LOCAL SIGHTSEEING

Upon arrival you will be greeted by staff from COMO Uma Paro before embarking on the 10-minute transfer to the property.

After checking in and spending some time settling into your new surroundings, we will take you on the first foray into the Himalayan

kingdom, with sightseeing in Paro town and a temple visit.

The afternoon trip allows you to acclimatise to the rarefied air at this altitude, as well as the chance to get to know your guide.

Overnight: COMO Uma Paro

**DAY 2
PARO TO PUNAKHA VALLEY VIA
THIMPHU AND DOCHU LA**

Morning

During the journey from COMO Uma Paro to COMO Uma Punakha, you can stop off in the nation's largest city, Thimphu, with an immersive tour taking in some of the major attractions, including the Buddha Dordenma statue, the **National Memorial Chorten**, a view of **Trashi Chhoe Dzong** and the **Folk Heritage Museum** (exact tour itinerary varies). The capital city sprawls across the wooded western hillside of the Wang Chhu River, surrounded by verdant rice paddies and towering peaks.

After leaving Thimphu, the drive to Punakha is even more spectacular, winding snake-like up the 3,000m-high mountain pass of **Dochu La**, offering views to 108 chortens (Buddhist shrines), forests of cluttering prayer flags and, on a clear day, sweeping views of the Himalayan range.

Duration of drive: 3 to 4 hours (126km)
Overnight: COMO Uma Punakha

**DAY 3
CHIMMI LHAKHANG, PUNAKHA DZONG
AND KHAMSUM YULLEY NAMGYAL
CHORTEN**

Morning

The morning starts with a short walk across farmhouses and rice paddies to reach **Chimmi Lhakhang**, a 15th-century fertility temple dedicated to Drukpa Kuenley, a Tibetan Buddhist saint, perhaps better known as the 'Divine Madman'. This site has long been a pilgrimage for couples hoping to start a family, adorned with colourful fertility symbols and bold statues.

Heading further down the valley, the 300-year-old **Punakha Dzong** comes into view. Built in the 17th century by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (who founded the Kingdom of Bhutan), the fortress once housed the country's government. It is now the winter home of Je Khenpo, the head abbot of Bhutan, along with a retinue of 1,000 red-robed monks.

Afternoon

After lunch, we will take you on a walk through homesteads and farmland to **Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten**, a hilltop shrine built by the royal family. This is a full day of exploration through the lush **Punakha Valley** which, at 1,200m, is low enough for bananas and oranges to grow beside the footpaths.

Duration: 6 to 7 hours
Difficulty: Easy to moderate
Overnight: COMO Uma Punakha

Top: Punakha Dzong
Bottom: Red-robed Buddhist monks, a familiar sight throughout your trip in Bhutan





**DAY 4
PUNAKHA VALLEY TO PARO, CHUZOM
AND TAMCHOG LHAKHANG**

Morning

Retrace your steps back over the Dochu La pass for a second chance to view the Himalayan mountain range. Returning to the **Chuzom** (the confluence of the rivers Wang Chhu and Paro Chhu), you can glimpse the three nearby shrines, built to ward off evil spirits – each with a different style of architecture: Nepali, Tibetan and Bhutanese.

Time-permitting, there will be a visit to **Tamchog Lhakhang**, a temple built by Thangtong Gyalpo, a pioneering engineer who introduced the construction of suspension bridges into Bhutan and Tibet (several of which are still in use today).

Afternoon

The final part of the drive to COMO Uma Paro is through apple orchards and rice paddies back to our mountain home, where you can spend the rest of the day in this calming setting. One popular option is to try your hand at archery, Bhutan's national sport.

Duration of drive: 3 to 4 hours (126km)
Difficulty: Easy
Overnight: COMO Uma Paro

**DAY 5
WALK TO ZURIG DZONG, RINPUNG
DZONG, TA DZONG, PARO TOWN, KYICHU
LHAKHANG AND DRUKGYEL DZONG**

Morning

Wind through pine forests high above COMO Uma Paro to the pretty grounds of the fortress-like monastery of **Zurig Dzong**. Traverse across to **Ta Dzong**, home to Bhutan's **National Museum**, with magnificent views over Paro, then on down to **Rinpung Dzong** (Fortress on a Heap of Jewels).

The trail then leads across the Paro Chhu river via the traditional covered bridge **Nyamai Zam**, past the main archery ground, **Ugyen Pelri Palace**, and into Paro town.

Afternoon

Driving a few kilometres north of Paro, we pay our respects at **Kyichu Lhakhang**, one of the oldest temples

in Bhutan with its magical orange tree that bears fruit all year round.

Time permitting, we drive further up the valley to **Drukgyel Dzong**, built in 1648 by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal to control the northern route to Tibet.

If you choose to, your guide will also arrange to bring you to a nearby monastery for a butter lamp ceremony – as a spiritual blessing and welcome to the kingdom – any time on this day. During this symbolic Buddhist ceremony, you will witness monks lighting lamps filled with ghee, in place of the originally used yak butter. The ceremony is meant to dispel ignorance, celebrate the fluidity of life and acknowledge the interdependency of nature.

Duration: 5 to 7 hours (subject to time spent in National Museum and Paro)
Difficulty: Easy to moderate
Overnight: COMO Uma Paro



Our wild camp above the Paro Valley



DAY 6
HIKE FROM SANG CHOEKHOR
BUDDHIST COLLEGE (2,800M) TO
YAK PASTURE BELOW BUMDRA
MONASTERY (3,800M)

Morning

Today's adventure begins with an early morning drive to **Sang Choekhor** to meet our ponies.

While they are loaded up, we should have time to pay our respects at the **Buddhist College**, with outstanding views of the valley below. Striding out on foot from here, we make the one to two-hour ascent of the ridge, which is steep at times but in cool shade. This brings us to a clearing with fluttering prayer flags and sweeping views down to the Paro and Do Chhu valleys far below.

Above us, the **Chhoe Tse Lhakhang** monastery nestles in the mountainside – a further two-hour walk away, where we will stop for a hearty lunch.

Afternoon

The trail undulates for a while before a steep pull as we draw close to our destination. From here, you can soak up the dramatic views south over Paro and north to the snow-capped **Himalayas**. After a final climb through ruins and fluttering prayer flags, we plunge back into the ancient forest, coming out on a high wide meadow dotted with sacred chorten and white flags.

Our wild camp for the night is tucked under **Bumdra Monastery** (Cliff of a Hundred Thousand Prayers) with incredible views of the Himalayan range.

If time permits, we can visit the monastery and also climb the peak to the sky burial site (about 4,000m) for even better views, returning in time for a warming dinner.

Duration: 4 to 6 hours to camp, 2 to 3 hours optional return trek to peak

Difficulty: Moderate to hard (guided with picnic lunch)

Overnight: Bumdra Wilderness Camp (3,800m)

DAY 7
HIKE FROM YAK PASTURE BELOW
BUMDRA MONASTERY (3,800M) VIA
ZANGTOKPELRI MONASTERIES TO
TAKTSANG MONASTERY (2,900M),
COMO UMA PARO CHECK-IN

Morning

After a filling breakfast, we can either head back into the valley or linger a while to soak up the view and perhaps hang some prayer flags of our own. Eventually we drop back into the ancient pine and rhododendron forest on the zig-zag trail. During our descent, we catch glimpses of temples below.

The path snakes across the mountainside between the temples, before reaching the gardens of **Zangktopelri**, from where we can see straight down onto the ornate rooftops of **Taktsang monastery**,

perched against the cliff-face far below.

An hour later and we are at the gates of Taktsang, looking across the gorge; a steep descent to a waterfall then up some steps to pass into **Tiger's Nest** itself.

Retracing our steps we begin the final descent to reach our vehicle and drive back to COMO Uma Paro – not forgetting to stop on the other side of the valley and look back at all that we have achieved.

Duration: 5 to 7 hours, depending on time taken in monasteries

Difficulty: Moderate (guided with lunch)

Overnight: COMO Uma Paro

DAY 8
DEPART BHUTAN

Your 10-minute transfer to Paro International Airport will be arranged according to your flight schedule.



Top left: Nyamai Zam Footbridge
 This: The National Museum of Bhutan

YOUR ACCOMMODATION

With COMO Uma Bhutan, the Himalayan Kingdom's splendour is revealed to you daily through drives, walks and enchanting heritage sites. Each night, you will return safely to the sleek comfort of our two COMO lodges.

COMO Uma Paro – Bukhari Restaurant



COMO Uma Paro – One Bedroom Villa



COMO UMA PARO

COMO Uma Paro is nestled above the emerald Paro Valley, on a hill overlooking the rice paddies and ancient monasteries. Sequester yourself in our private rooms that combine traditional Bhutanese colour and craftsmanship with modern amenities. The location immerses you in the country's rich cultural tapestry, making it easy to explore the rest of the valley, including the precarious Tiger's Nest Monastery perched 3,100m above the valley floor. As always, you can expect pin-sharp service and world-class cuisine, with food inspired by the country's local flavours.





COMO UMA PUNAKHA

Five hours from Paro by car, over a mountain pass dotted with prayer flags, COMO Uma Punakha stands high above a serpentine bend in the Mo Chhu River – just west of the lesser-visited Punakha Valley. Amidst the alpine serenity, you can hike, white-water raft and explore temples like the Punakha Dzong, home to a retinue of 1,000 red-robed monks. After full days of excursions through Bhutan's heartlands, you'll stay in one of just 10 rooms at the lodge – each with sweeping views of the lush wilderness and an iconic, locally-inspired design.

Top: COMO Uma Punakha - Hot Stone Bath
Bottom: Views of COMO Uma Punakha



COMO Uma Punakha – COMO Villa



KEY DETAILS

INCLUSIONS

- Accommodation for four nights at COMO Uma Paro and two nights at COMO Uma Punakha on a full board basis, including picnic lunches during excursion days (excluding beverages) and one fully serviced overnight camp
- Six-and-a-half days of privately guided excursions, taking in the highlights of the Paro, Thimphu and Punakha valleys.
- The private services of an experienced English-speaking Bhutanese guide
- One 60-minute COMO Shambhala body treatment
- Complimentary use of the library, swimming pool, steam room and gym at COMO Uma Paro
- Complimentary wireless internet throughout COMO Uma Paro and COMO Uma Punakha
- Private airport transfers and transport around Bhutan
- All Bhutanese government visa and royalty fees, service charge and sales tax
- All museum and visitor centre entry fees and road permits
- Complimentary one-hour daily yoga class whilst at COMO Uma Paro (except Sundays)



Bhutanese locals in traditional dress

The verdant Paro Valley



MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

To make the most of this expedition, we recommend booking from March to May or from mid-September to November. It requires a minimum of two people. COMO Uma Bhutan requires guests to check out during the overnight camping (we will store luggage during this time).

TREKKING INFORMATION

For a trek at this level, you may wish to optimise your fitness to get the most out of the experience. A detailed pre- departure information sheet designed to help you prepare for your adventure will be sent out with your booking confirmation.

- Packing essentials: Warm jacket, good leather or waterproof fabric boots or shoes with good soles, waterproof jacket, sunglasses, warm hat, sunhat, sunscreen, torch, backpack (small day sack, 20-30 litres), duffle bag (30-40 litres to be carried by ponies).
- Packing recommendations: Trekking pole, binoculars, gloves, tracksuit or thermal underwear, lip balm and moisturizer, sufficient supply of any medication required, and extra batteries or portable chargers.
- Camera film is rare in Bhutan so you may wish to bring your own.
- What we provide: Camping picnic lunch, dinner and breakfast, mineral water, the services of an experienced English-speaking Uma guide, cooks and ponies for carrying luggage. Tentage including one bathroom tent, one toilet tent with toilet paper, one kitchen tent, one dining tent and one sleeping tent for two people with sleeping bags, fleece blanket, hand towels, hot water bags and torches for each guest, camping beds and armchairs.

For more details please refer to our pre-departure information sheet for trekking.



Thimphu Festival Performers



The sweeping Punakha Valley

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We strongly recommend that you take out travel insurance against medical and personal accident risks (including repatriation costs, air ambulance and helicopter rescue services), as well as cancellation insurance. You should be aware that some policies may not cover travel to Bhutan and may not cover activities such as trekking, mountain biking and rafting. Please ensure that your policy provides a sufficient level of protection and covers you for the activities involved in this package. You must carry proof of insurance (e.g. your insurance certificate) with you in Bhutan.

PLEASE NOTE

This itinerary is intended as a guide only. Routes and weather conditions may mean variations to the programme, which may affect the availability of views and panoramas described. Please be aware that all times stated are approximate, and may vary with individual and group fitness and interest levels.

COMO Uma Bhutan provides complimentary drinking water for all guided itineraries. If you have any special dietary requirements, please advise us in advance. Where stated, trips include lunch picnics prepared by our chefs. Please place your picnic order the day before departure through your guide or at the Activity Desk.

Throughout your stay, you have the option to participate in a range of extra outdoor activities at an additional fee.

COMO Uma Punakha



COMO Uma Paro

TRAVEL TO BHUTAN

COMO Uma Bhutan handles the whole booking process on your behalf, including flights via Druk Air or Bhutan Airlines. However, the price of flights is not included in the package and it is advisable to book well in advance to secure seats. We also handle visa application processing (included in the package). It normally takes two to three weeks to process the visa.

Please read this document in conjunction with your confirmation letter and pre-departure information.

For more information on COMO Uma Bhutan, including the full range of itineraries and services we offer – from tailor-made adventures, overnight treks and biking itineraries to provisions for groups and the hosting of special events – please refer to the website: ecomohotels.com/uma/bhutan.

Guests can choose to combine their break in Bhutan with a stay in Thailand at COMO Metropolitan Bangkok. For special rates when combining a stay in the city with one of our COMO Uma Bhutan itineraries, please email us at res.uma.bhutan@comohotels.com or call +975 8 279 999.

Please contact COMO Uma Bhutan for current pricing.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Deposits

- The hotel reserves the right to release a reservation if the required deposit amount is not received within the mentioned cut off period as stipulated in the pro forma invoice.

Cancel date	Deposit	Deposit amount
Season 1 Season 2 Season 3	Initial deposit	Deposit of 30 per cent required at the time of booking
Season 1	Balance deposit	Deposit of 70 per cent required 30 days prior to arrival date
Season 2 and 3	Balance deposit	Deposit of 70 per cent required 45 days prior to arrival date



Welcoming Guest with Traditional White Scarf



Cancellations for COVID

- All cancellations of confirmed bookings must be received in writing by the hotel or by its representative.
- Late arrivals, no shows and early departures will be charged in full.
- Separate reservation, deposit and cancellation conditions will apply for group bookings of five rooms or more.
- Separate cancellation policies apply for flights.

Cancel date	Prior arrival date	Cancellation Penalty Charge
Season 1 Season 2 Season 3	30 days to 22 days	Bookings can be postponed for one year at the same rate
Season 1	21 days to 15 days	Charge of 50 per cent of the invoice amount
Season 1	14 days	Charge of the full invoice amount
Season 2 and 3	21 days	Charge of the full invoice amount

For non-Covid related cancellations, please contact us for our full policy.



COMO
UMA BHUTAN

For further information, please contact COMO Uma Bhutan:

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