

Heart of Bhutan Bike Tour

a 12 day Himalayan Bicycle Tour





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Day by Day Itinerary

Day 1 - Arrive Paro, explore the National Museum, explore Thimphu.

Your journey through the fabled kingdom starts with one of the world's most scenic flights, coming into the Paro Valley. After stepping off the plane into the cool mountain air, we will enjoy lunch and then a short drive to Thimphu (60km/2 hours). Time permitting we will visit the National Museum of Bhutan. You will have time to admire the museum's collection of rare Bhutanese artifacts and art, traditional weaving and other eclectic pieces. This afternoon we will prepare the bikes and enjoy a brief sightseeing pedal around the city. Wind down your first day in Bhutan with our welcome dinner and orientation.

Ride: 15 mi / 25 km, Land: flat

Eat: Lunch, Dinner

Sleep: Hotel Druk

Day 2 - Bike to the 108 Chortens atop Dochula Pass, discover the risqué house art in Wangdue.

After breakfast you will tackle the 14 mile climb to Dochula Pass. The views from the pass are magnificent, offering a panorama of the eastern Himalayas. Enjoy lunch at the pass before starting the 26 mile descent from the pass to Wangdue through the leafy temperate forests and semi-tropical zone with abundant orange trees, bananas and bamboos. Evening you will visit a local farmhouse located about 10 minutes from your hotel, offering you a closer look at the Kingdom's unique culture, which dictates simple hospitality extended to any and all guests, even to perfect strangers. Our hotel is in Punakha tonight.

Ride: 39 mi / 63 km, Land: alpine climb, Pass: Dochula (3100 m)

Eat: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Sleep: Meri Puensum



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Day 3 - Cycle into the Black Mountains, overnight in Phobjikha Valley, explore the Gangtey Monastery.

Today's ride starts out level, but a few miles up the road after we cross the Tikke-Zam (river), we begin the long ascent to the summit of the Black Mountains. Today's climb is our first really big climb, gaining over 4800 feet over 25 miles. Lunch will be served on route depending on the time. After lunch more climbing up to small pass marked by a stupa and finally some downhill to finish the day. We will be enjoying the beautiful Phobjikha Valley, this evening, exploring the monastery of Gangtey and the village. Perhaps we will spot some Black Neck Cranes, which migrate here to escape Tibet's harsh winters.

Ride: 44 mi / 71 km, Land: alpine climb

Eat: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Sleep: Hotel Dewachen

Day 4 - Tackle Pelela Pass, enjoy views of Mt. Jhomolhari, explore Trongsa Dzong and Chendebji Choten.

A short 1000 feet of ascent takes us back to the small pass we crossed yesterday afternoon. From the pass it's downhill to the main road from where you will continue your climb for 9 miles to Pelela Pass, the traditional boundary between the Western and Central Bhutan. Today's ride is a pleasant change from yesterday. On clear days you can enjoy the views of the Mt. Jhomolhari (7314m) rising in western Bhutan. It is a downhill almost all the way to Trongsa. Lunch will be served at Chendebji Chorten by the river side. After lunch the road contours around small ups and downs until you finally see the Trongsa Dzong. Evening you will visit the Trongsa Dzong and explore the Trongsa Town.

Ride: 50 mi / 82 km, Land: descent and climb, Pass: Pelela (3300 m)

Eat: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Sleep: Yangkhil Resort

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Day 5 - Bike over Yotongla Pass, learn about local handicrafts in Chumey Village, descend into Bumthang Valley, explore the Jakar Dzong (fortified temple).

Approximately 18 miles after leaving Trongsa, you will reach Yotongla Pass. Then you descend to Chumey village where you will stop for tea and a visit to local handicraft shops where they make Yahthra a handwoven woolen fabric, the specialty of Bumthang valley. After a short gradual climb to Kikila (about 2 miles), a great descent to Bumthang valley. We will reach town in time for lunch, then set out to visit Jakar Dzong (the fortress of the white bird) and Jakar town.

Ride: 43 mi / 69 km, Land: alpine climb, Pass: Yotongla (3400 m)

Eat: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Sleep: Kaila Guesthouse

Day 6 - Visit 7th century Jambay Lhakhang, Shuttle back to Punakha.

Our day is pretty relaxed today. The morning is free to explore more of Jakar town or sleep in after several days of alpine pedaling. We will say good bye to Jakar with the visit to 7th century Jambay Lhakhang built by the Dharma King Songtsen Goenpo. It is said he built 108 temples in one day to pin down an ogress. One is Kyichu Lhakhang in Paro, Potala Palace in Tibet and others are said to be along the Himalayas. Around lunch time we will load up in our support vans and start the drive back towards Thimpu (unfortunately Bhutan has only one airport and no loop road, so we have to retrace our cycling by van). We will break up the drive with a stop in Punakha.

Transfer: no cycling

Eat: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Sleep: Meri Puensum

Day 7 - A leisurely ride to visit Punakha Dzong.

We break out the bikes for a daytrip around Punakha town and the Wangdue Valley. This relatively flat ride will be a sharp contrast to our previous cycling. And offers opportunities to visit some of the famed temples and enjoy the quiet rural countryside. Today you will visit the Punakha Dzong built in 1637 by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel, a Buddhist saint who unified Bhutan in the 17th century. Punakha served as the capital of Bhutan until 1955 and it still is the winter residence of the Je-Khenpo (Chief Abbot) and the central monk body. We will again spend the night in Punakha.

Ride: 28 mi / 45 km, Land: valley, with small hills

Eat: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Sleep: Meri Puensum



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Day 8 - Hike to Chimi Lhakhang then transfer to Thimphu.

Another half day drive returns you to Thimphu, from where we started our first leg. After breakfast we will hike to Chimi Lhakhang dedicated to Lama Drukpa Kuenlay who is also known as "Devine Madman" in the west. This temple is also a worship place for woman for fertility. It is an easy hike through the rice paddies and the village of Yulakha. Resume your drive to Thimphu. In the afternoon, you have free time or for those wanting to pedal some more, we will organize a half day local ride to explore some more of the sights nearby town. We will relax tonight Thimphu.

Ride: 22 mi / 35 km, Land: small hills

Eat: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Sleep: Hotel Druk

Day 9 - Bike to Haa Valley, an area rarely visited by tourists.

Back on the bikes today for a delightful ride downstream along the Thimphu Chu (river). When we reach the confluence with the Paro River, we will switch to a small road on the other side of the Thimphu River and start the ride into Haa Valley. This hidden valley was only recently opened to tourism and offers pristine landscapes and quiet village during a dramatic ride along the Wang Chu River. The road into Haa climbs slowly through quaint villages and thick conifer forests before opening into a valley dotted with fields of millet, barley, potatoes and wheat, where the farmhouses are adorned with intricately painted cornices and frames.

Ride: 66 mi / 107 km, Land: small hills, then long gradual climb

Eat: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Sleep: Soednam Zingka Heritage Lodge

Day 10 - Bike Bhutan's highest road, crossing Chelela Pass, enjoy 35 kilometer downhill run to Paro.

One last climb today, as we cross over to the Paro Valley. On clear days you can enjoy the stunning view of Mt. Jhomolhari (7314m) and Taktshang Goenpa (Tiger's Nest). Its a 26 km ascent to Chelela Pass through pine forests and alpine scenery, rewarded by a 35 km descent to Paro town. Lunch at the hotel. Upon checking into our hotel, we'll set out to explore town a bit before dinner. 41 mi / 67 km, Pass: Chelela (3988 m).

Ride: 41 mi / 67 km, Land: alpine climb, Pass: Chelela (3988 m)

Eat: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Sleep: Zhiwaling Heritage Hotel



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Day 11 - Hike to Taktshang Goemba (Tigers Nest Monastery), visit your guide's family's farm.

This morning we will swap travel modes and enjoy a hike to visit the renowned Tigers Nest Monastery (Taktshang Goemba). We will have permits to actually visit the temple and will enjoy most of day here in the mountains, hiking and sightseeing. Upon our return to Paro, you will have a chance to finish your last minute shopping needs. We'll gather for a final Bhutanese dinner, swapping tales of the ride and country.

Walk: 2 hours

Eat: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Sleep: Zhiwaling Heritage Hotel

Day 12 - Say farewell to Bhutan as you fly back to Bangkok. Legshembe joen

We will shuttle everyone back to the airport for your flight to Bangkok.

Travel: Shuttle to airport

Meals: Breakfast

Private Dates For Your Gang:

This tour is available upon request for groups from 2 to 12 people. It can be set up with our Classic Boutique hotels or more luxurious Premiere level lodges. Let us know your group size, dates you want to travel and any extra bits you might want to include in your Bhutan visit. A tip from our local experts, this tour is best enjoyed in spring (March to May) and fall (September to November).



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Why Pedalers?

Experience the Heart and Soul of Each Country with Our Local Expert Team

Our passionate and diverse team of local experts will guide you through their homeland, sharing intimate knowledge and hidden wonders. They are not just guides but also skilled bike mechanics, ensuring a comfortable and enjoyable ride. Unlike other tour companies, Pedalers' local crew brings an insider's perspective to the table. You'll be pampered by a friendly team, equipped with the skills to fix anything. A sweep rider and sag wagon provide support, and your baggage travels comfortably with you. Pedalers treats you like family, making your journey unforgettable.

Indulge in Mouthwatering Local Delights on a Culinary Adventure

Unlock the essence of culture through food as we take you on a culinary extravaganza. Bond with fellow riders over scrumptious dishes at local restaurants specializing in regional cuisine. Family-style dining lets you sample outstanding dishes, carefully chosen by our expert guides. Lunch is satisfying but not overwhelming, and breakfast offers comforting Western delights. Pedalers knows the importance of good food for cyclists, creating a mouthwatering experience that combines riding and dining.

Immerse Yourself in Authentic Accommodations, Where Culture Meets Comfort

Discover the charm of our handpicked accommodations. Pedalers takes a unique approach to accommodations, ensuring an authentic and immersive experience. Choose between Classic and Première Classe tours, each offering carefully selected lodging options. Classic tours feature mid-priced boutique inns that blend comfort with local character, while Première Classe tours add a touch of luxury to your adventure with upscale lodges and inns. Regardless of your choice, Pedalers' accommodations reflect the local culture, providing a delightful and comfortable stay that complements your journey.

Lodging:

Boutique Hotels, Inns & Resorts



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What's Included:

- 11 nights Accommodation in the area's better hotels (double occupancy)
- All meals from Dinner on Day 1 until Breakfast on Day 12
- Water, sodas and beer included at dinner
- Service of bilingual Team Pedalers Guide(s)
- Full Van Support
- Sightseeing and cultural activities
- Visa fees and airport taxes
- Airport pick up & drop off

Meeting & Flights:

Arrive at Paro Airport on Day 1

Departure Paro Airport in the morning on Day 12

Druk Air is the only carrier serving Bhutan, with flights from Bangkok, Delhi, Kathmandu and Calcutta. Airfare is approximately \$915, with occasional fare discounts offered during the low season (summer & winter). Pedalers Pub & Grille arranges these flights on your behalf as part of our service and will bill the cost with the balance due on the tour.

Flights from Bangkok and Delhi depart early in the morning, requiring most guests to arrive a day early in order to meet the flight. The return flights from Paro, arrive back at either Bangkok or Delhi in mid to late afternoon. Kathmandu and Calcutta are stops on the flights from Delhi and Bangkok respectively, so subsequently have later departures and earlier returns.

For assistance with flights contact our friends at Exito Travel: help.pedalers.travel/flights.htm



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Route Conditions:

The entire ride is on paved roads, narrow but with little or no traffic. Pavement is a bit coarse and suitable for touring, sport road and also performance road bikes with wider tires (25 or wider). Terrain is quite mountainous and hilly, most days involve a moderate to long alpine style climb.

Passport, Visa and Travel Documents:

Passports and visas are required for all visitors to Bhutan. The cost of the visa and processing service is included in our tour package, as all visas must be obtained through your tour operator. Access to the visa application will be sent to registered guests well in advance of the tour departure. Please note Pedalers does not provide visa processing services for any country you may visit or transit through enroute to Bhutan.

Payment Dates & Cancellations:

This tour has a 60 Day Prior to Departure deadline for balance due and cancellations. All bookings must be paid in full on or before 60 days prior to departure (not the 45 day deadline listed in our general booking conditions). In addition the cancellation deadline for receiving a partial refund or transferring to another date is also 60 days prior to departure. Festival departure dates require an advance payment of 20% at least 120 days prior to departure to cover advance purchase of airfare (this is in addition to the standard deposit paid at the time of booking).