



Tourism Council of Bhutan

*Taking Tourism to the Top*



*Taking Tourism to Villages*

# VILLAGE HOME STAYS

- KINGDOM OF BHUTAN -

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (March 2021)





Taking tourism to the top

# VILLAGE HOME STAYS

KINGDOM OF BHUTAN

Taking tourism to villages



2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (March 2021)

*Quality Assurance Division*  
**Tourism Council of Bhutan**



# KINGDOM OF BHUTAN

TOURISM COUNCIL OF BHUTAN



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TOURISM  
TO  
THE  
TOP

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# Introduction



## Tourism in Bhutan

Tourism in Bhutan is guided by the sound policy of ‘High Value, Low Volume’. Bhutan took this unique approach since the opening of tourism in the country in 1974. In line with this policy, tourism is managed in a sustainable manner without leading to negative impacts on the environment and culture among others. Today, Bhutan is recognized as one of the sustainable, high end tourist destinations in the world.

## Village Home Stays (VHS)

In Bhutan, visitors have the option to stay in village home stays approved by the Tourism Council of Bhutan. As the name suggests, village homestays are promoted mainly in rural areas to offer basic accommodation facilities to visitors. It is an opportunity to generate supplementary income and improve the livelihoods in the rural communities where farming is the main source of income.

Basically, VHS involves staying with a host family and experiencing its customs, cuisine and way of life first-hand. Food in the VHS is mostly

organic. Vegetables come fresh from the garden. We ensure that VHS is clean, comfortable and safe with a maximum of five guest rooms consisting of 10 beds in all and a maximum of 2 beds in each guest room. This helps to ensure proper management of VHS without putting undue pressure on the host family.

Apart from accommodation services, VHS also organizes a myriad of activities such as village tours, hikes, hot stone bath, farm work, cultural programs and many more. You will experience all those things that you generally will not find in towns and cities. Therefore if you are looking for an opportunity to experience local culture and lifestyle, VHS is the perfect place for you.

As of now, there are 158 VHS across 13 Dzongkhags/districts in the country. The contact details of VHS and a brief description of what is there to see and do in each Gewog where VHS is located is provided in this booklet. This is the second edition of the booklet and it has been updated to include new VHS registered with TCB since the last edition and comments received from the Dzongkhags and tour operators.



# BUMTHANG DZONGKHAG



Bumthang Dzongkhag consists of four main valleys: Ura, Chumey, Tang and Choekhor. The valleys are broad and gentle, making it one of the popular destinations for tourists in the country. The Dzongkhag is known for historical and spiritual legacy. It is home to some of the oldest and most venerated temples such as Jambay Lhakhang and Kurjey Lhakhang. There are also numerous other temples and shrines worth visiting and many of them are linked to Guru Rinpoche.

The fertile valleys of Bumthang are covered in fields of buckwheat, rice and potatoes. Apple orchards and dairy farms are also common sights here.

There are 20 VHS certified by the Tourism Council of Bhutan across 3 Gewogs that include Chokhor, Tang and Ura.



## Chokhor Gewog

The Gewog has a total of 9 VHS registered with TCB.



👤 Ugyen Choden

📍 Nasephey

☎ 17292140



👤 Yeshey Dema

📍 Chokhor

☎ 17882059



👤 Sonam Gembo

📍 Chokhor

☎ 17292098



👤 Tshering Choden

📍 Chokhor

☎ 17494146



👤 Sherab Dema

📍 Chokhor

☎ 17723673



👤 Pema Tshoki

📍 Chakhar

☎ 17291600



👤 Tshomo

📍 Pangrey

☎ 17861095



👤 Ugyen Lhamo

📍 Dorjibe

☎ 17814925



👤 Tshomo

📍 Dorjibe

☎ 17649947



# Attractions



Some of the main attractions under Chokhor Gewog are:

## Jambay Lhakhang

Built by Tibetan King, Songtsen Goenpo in 659 AD, Jambay Lhakhang is only 10 minutes' drive from Chamkar town. The monument is said to be one of the 108 temples built across Himalayan region on a single day to subdue evil spirits. Jambay Lhakhang Drup is held on 15th to 19th Day of the 9th Lunar Month annually for five days and draws a large number of tourists.

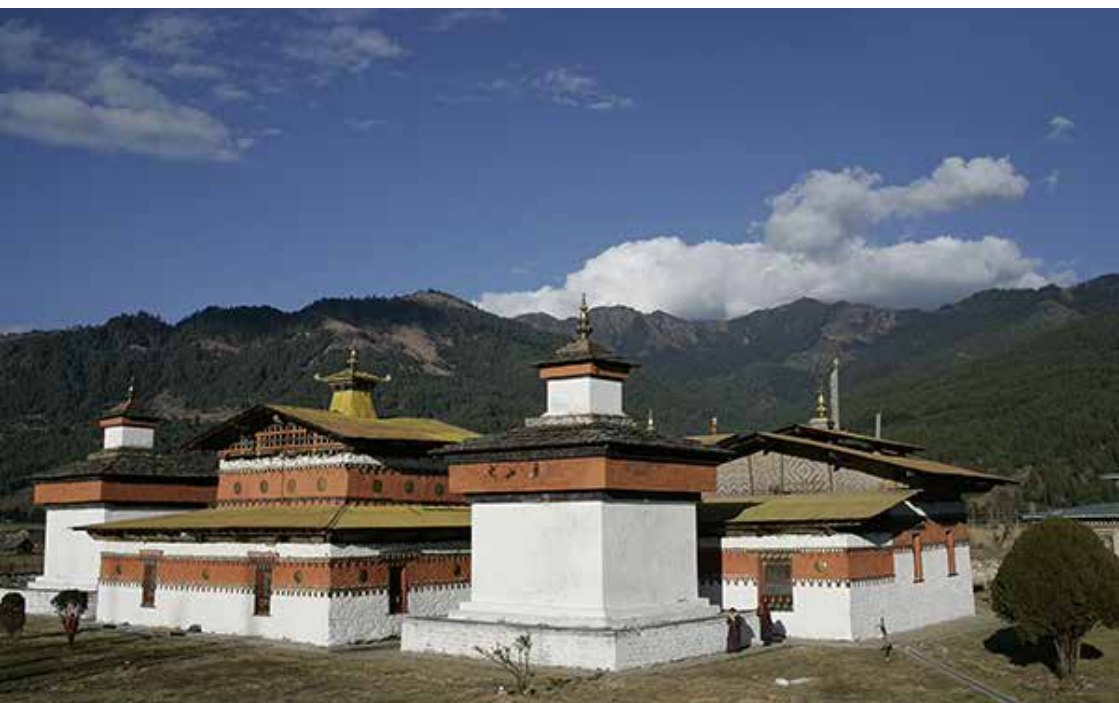


## Kurjey Lhakhang

Another sacred place to visit is Kurjey Lhakhang. It is where Guru Rinpoche is said to have mediated and left an imprint of his body on a rock face, which is why it is called Kurjey. The popular Kurjey tshechu is held for one day on 10th day of the 5th lunar month and includes dances and display of a Guru Thangkha. The monastery is 15 minutes' drive from Chamkar town.

## Tamzhing Lhakhang

Tamzhing Lhankhang is also worth a visit. The lhakhang was founded in 1501 by Terton Pema Lingpa. Phala Choepa festival takes place on 10th to 12th Day of the 8th Lunar Month. The highlight of this festival is the performance of unique ritual dance composed by Pema Lingpa.



## Pedtselling Goenpa

Situated about 3 to 4 hours walk uphill from Chamkhar town, Pedtselling Goenpa is another sacred place in this gewog. Visitors come from far and wide to view the impression of white snake, holy waterhole, conch and Holy Scriptures in this temple. The goenpa can also be reached by car in 36 minutes from the town.

## Tang Gewog

Tang has 4 VHS registered with TCB.



👤 Pema Thinley

📍 Gamling

☎ 17401447



👤 Tshewang Choden

📍 Tang

☎ 77757909



👤 Rinchen Lhamo

📍 Babzur

☎ 17932165





👤 Sangay Dawa

📍 Tandingang

☎️ 77351571/77323191

## 🌸 Attractions 📍 🤩 👍

The popular tourist attractions in the Gewog are:

### Tang Ogyen Chholing Museum

Tang Ogyen Chholing Museum is 34 kms from Chamkar town. Built by Tshoki Dorji, (Governor of Trongsa) who was the descendant of Terton Dorji Lingpa in the 16th century, it features historic items of Tshoki Dorji and his household items. There is also a lhakhang with the main statue of Guru Pema Jungney, Chenrizey and Terton Dorji Lingpa.



## Ta Rimochen Lhakhang

Ta Rimochen Lhakhang is also one of the most visited holy places in Bumthang. Set against a cliff, visitors come here to view the stripes of tiger and foot prints of Guru Rinpoche on a rock face. The temple also has a stone bowl that is believed to be the bath tub of Guru Rinpoche.



## Tang Membartsho or “The burning lake”

It is 30 minutes’ drive from Chamkar town, right at the entrance of Tang valley. It is not a lake in itself but a gorge in a beautiful setting. This is where Pema Lingpa, the treasure revealer is said to have discovered the hidden treasures in the 15th century.

## Tang Ogyen Choling to Ungar trek (Rodongla trek)

It is a 4 day trek, which starts from Tang in Bumthang and ends at Ungar in Lhuntse. The trek follows traditional route and passes through alpine and bamboo forests and mountains offering an amazing view of valleys and rich biodiversity.

## Mountain biking

It can be done from chamkhar town till Tang which would be 62km, roundtrip. Chamkhar town to Membartsho is 11km and from Membartsho to Mesithang is an uphill dirt road of 17km. From there to Kizom Suspension bridge is 3km and 30min uphill walk to Ogyen Choling.



## Ura Gewog

Ura Gewog has 7 VHS certified by TCB.



👤 Chimi Wangmo

📍 Ura

☎ 17337176



👤 Tshering Yuden

📍 Ura

☎ 17522361



👤 Karma Wangdi

📍 Ura

☎ 7755370



👤 Tashi Wangmo

📍 Ura

☎ 7639828/17814545



👤 Tshering Zangmo

📍 Ura

☎ 17928277



👤 Ugyen Lhaden

📍 Ura

☎ 17548001



 Yeshi Wangmo

 Ura

 17235076

## Attractions

The major attractions of the Gewog include:

### Shingkar Dechenling Lhakhang

Shingkar Dechenling Lhakhang was founded by Kuenkhen Longchen Rabjam (1308-1364). The main relics include the statues of Kuenkhen Longchen Rabjam, Buddha, Guru Rinpoche and paintings of Guru Rinpoche. Every year from 21st to 26th day of the 11th lunar month, a festival called Shingkar Rabney is held in the Lhakhang. It is 2 hours' drive from Chamkar town.





## Ura Lhakhang

Ura Lhakhang is 2 hours' drive from Chamkar town and is situated right in the middle of the village. The lhakhang houses a huge statue of Guru Rinpoche, beautiful paintings and Guru Nangsay Zilnoen. Ura Yakchhoed festival, which takes place from 6th to 11th day of the 9th month of Bhutanese calendar every year, is popular among tourists.

## Phrumshengla National Park

It is the second major temperate park in Bhutan and protects large tracts of old-growth fir forest. The park is home to 361 species of birds and of which 6 are globally threatened birds species such as Rufous necked hornbill, beautiful Nathatch, Pallas fishing Eagle, Chestnut breasted partridge and many more other rare birds species.



## Phrumshengla to Purgyela Trek

The best time for this trek is in autumn season. Purgyela, during these months is filled with different kinds of flowers and fragrance from these flowers. A celebration is held for one day on the 8th day of the 7th month of the Bhutanese calendar and includes offerings and dances by the women of Ura.



# GASA DZONGKHAG



Gasa is located in far north of the country and shares borders with the districts of Punakha, Thimphu and Wangdue Phodrang and autonomous region of Tibet to its north. It has the smallest population with just about 3000 inhabitants. This region is inhabited by the Layaps; nomadic herders with a unique culture. Their main source of revenue comes from the sale of yak products and Cordyceps (a fungus of extremely high value used in oriental medicine).

Gasa is known for the Snowman Trek - one of the most challenging treks in the Himalayas. The newly established festival called the Royal Highlander Festival is gaining in popularity and attracts many tourists every year.

There are four Gewogs in Gasa and 8 VHS certified by the Tourism Council of Bhutan in Khamaed and Khatoed Gewogs.


## Khamaed Gewog

There is only two registered VHS in Khamaed Gewog.




 Dorji Pem


 Damji

 17703672



 Pasang

 Damji

 17704952



# Attractions



Popular attractions in the Gewog are:


## Tshechu Dra

It is about two hours walk from the road point at Yemina village. It is believed to be a spot where Guru Rinpoche flew from Goen Tshephu and meditated. The best time to visit this sacred site is during the winter months.

## Khatoed Gewog

The Gewog has 7 registered VHS.



 Namgay Budha


 Dochong

 17664856



 Chado Tshering

 Mani

 16288002/17422868



👤 Sangay Tashi

📍 Chole

☎ 17408286



👤 Passang Lhamo

📍 Phulakha

☎ 17313848



👤 Tashi


📍 Umchogang

☎ 1753774



 Kinga Wangmo

 Dochong

 17408428



 Karma Yuden

 Datapangchu

 17408142



# Attractions



The key attractions of the Gewog include:

## Gasa Dzong

Gasa is known as Tashi Thongmon Dzong, named after the local deity of Gasa. In 17th century, the dzong served as a defending barrack. It has the most unique architecture with circular shape and three watch towers that are placed at strategic points. It now serves as the administrative center for Gasa Dzongkhag. The dzongkhag's annual festival, Gasa Tshechu is held in the Dzong,







### Gasa to Laya trek

The trek offers amazing views of the snow covered mountains. It starts from place called khoina. The route runs from Tibetan border and one can see the most pristine and untouched landscape in Bhutan. The trek covers the magnificent views of Jomolhari, Jichu Drake and Tsherimgang and we can enjoy the unique culture and tradition of the Layaps. It takes 1 day to reach laya from main road ( Khoina).



### Gasa Tshachu

It is one of the popular hot springs in the country. There are several bath houses and the water temperature varies in each pool with different medicinal values. Bathing facilities

have also been provided to ensure that the hot springs remain clean and hygienic. There is also a guesthouse for visitors. The hot spring is connected by road from the highway.

# HAA DZONGKHAG



Haa is a small Dzongkhag covering an area of roughly 1706 sq. km. It shares borders with Samtse, Chhukha, Paro and the autonomous region of Tibet to its northwest. The Dzongkhag is noted for its pristine alpine forests and tranquil wooded hills, making it an ideal location for hiking and mountain biking. Haa is also home to many sacred sites such as Lhaxhang Karpo, Lhaxhang Nagpo, Chundu Lhaxhang, Tagchu Goenpa, etc.

Haa Summer Festival is one of the popular events in the Dzongkhag and draws many tourists. It is held annually in July to showcase the culture and lifestyle of nomadic herders of Haa valley.

Toorsa Nature Reserve is located in Haa Dzongkha and occupies a substantial proportion of Bjee and Sangbay Gewogs. It is connected to

the Jigme Dorji National Park via a biological corridor, cutting across the northeastern half of Haa District.

There are total of 20 Village Home Stays in Haa Dzongkhag that are registered with Tourism Council of Bhutan.


## Bji Gewog

The Gewog has a total of 5 VHS registered with TCB.



 Gaki


 Yangthang

 17685474



 Jam Tshering

 Talum

 17617782



👤 Lhaki

📍 Talum

☎ 77639036/77317938



👤 Pema Dema

📍 Talum

☎ 77485971/77252642



👤 Namgay Wangmo

📍 Chumpa

☎ 17475230/08371077



# Attractions



Some of the popular tourist attractions in the Gewog are:

## Yangthang Goenpa

Founded by Lam Thinley Gyatsho, the disciple of Lam Choying Gyathso, Goenpa is located 5 km away from Haa town, on the hilltop of Chubugang. The main relics of the Goenpa include the statues of Avalokiteshvara, Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, Nirmanakaya and Lam Thinley Gyatsho. The Goenpa holds one million Mani recitation for twenty one days on the first month of the Bhutanese calendar.



## Sagala Trek

The trek takes 3 days to walk via Talung village in Haa and exits at Chelela Pass or Drukgyal Dzong in Paro valley. There are several sacred sites filled with beautiful meadows, blue pine forests, coniferous and fir forests along the trail. On clear days, the trek offers gorgeous views of Mt. Jhomolhari, Drakigang, Jichudrake, Tshering Gang, Drukgyel Dzong and Taktshang monastery. Sagala is also home to birds such as Himalayan Monal, Blood Pheasants and Musk Deers along the trail.





## Uesu Gewog

There are a total of 8 VHS in Uesu Gewog.



👤 Chimmi

📍 Dumcho

☎ 77240938/17416009



👤 Phub Dem

📍 Dumcho

☎ 77250421



👤 Damcho Pem

📍 Dumcho

☎ 17628873/17648468





👤 Sherab Wangchuk

📍 Tsilungkha

☎ 17479744/17794817



👤 Kinley Wangchuk

📍 Dumcho

☎ 17461993/17654981



👤 Tshewang Choden

📍 Dumcho

☎ 17907196



👤 Ugyen

📍 Dumcho

☎ 77265817/77211852



👤 Zangmo

📍 Tshaphel

☎ 77216034/17757495



# Attractions



The popular tourist attractions in the Gewog are:

## Lhakang Karpo

This sacred site is one of the 108 monasteries built in a single day by Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo in 7th century. A white pigeon from Tibet is said to have landed on the spot where the Lhakang stands today which is why the Lhakang is called Lhakang Karpo (white temple). The architecture of the Lhakang depicts true Bhutanese art and culture. It is 5 minutes' walk from the highway leading to Haa town. Haa Thechu is held at Lhakang Karpo once a year.



## Lhakang Nagpo

It is located within short distance from Lhakang Karpo. The temple was also built by Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo in 7th century on the spot where the blacked pigeon released from Tibet landed. That's why the temple is named Lhakang Nagpo (black temple).

## Nub Tshonapata Trek

This trek takes 6 days to walk and starts in Kajena village. It can also be started from Dranadingkha. The trail passes over several mountain ranges with stunning views of Mt. Kanchenjunga, Mt. Gangkar Punsum, Jichu Drake and Mt. Chundu Gang. Trekkers can also spot blue sheep, marmots and many species of birds along the trail. The best time for this trek is April to May and September to mid-November.


## Katsho Gewog

There are three VHS under Katsho gewog.



 Kezang Dawa


 Katsho

 17610449



 Rinzin Bidha


 Hatam

 17675493/17411724



 Kinley Wangmo

 Katsho

 17810332



# Attractions



The major tourist attractions in the Gewog comprise of:



## Katsho Goenpa

It is about hour walk from the highway. Dedicated to Guru Rinpoche, this sacred temple was founded by Lam Choying Gyatsho, the disciple of Drakpa Gyatsho.

## Junidra Nye

About 4 hours walk from Woncho Lhakhang, this holy place is believed to have been blessed by Guru Rinpoche. Many people visit this sacred site annually.

## Mountain biking

You can start from Haa, and after riding for 26 km, you will arrive at Chelela pass (3400 m) surrounded by evergreen forest of blue pine, fir and oak. On a clear day, you will have a spectacular view of Himalayan ranges along this route. From Chelela, you continue your ride downhill for 35 km till you reach the junction of Paro road in Bondey.




## Samar Gewog

In Samar Gewog there are 4 VHS registered with TCB




 Deki Yangzom


 Samar

 77233219



 Dechen Wangdi


 Dorikha

 17425495



 Jamyang Tenzin

 Samar

 17778943/77778943





 Yeshi Dema

 Samar

 17804277/17991622



## Attractions



The major tourist attractions in the Gewog consist of:

### Samar Lhakhang

Centrally located, Samar Lhakhang is one of the important monuments in the gewog and is worth paying a visit.

### Chuzokha Goenpa

It is 2 hours walk from highway in the Chuzokha village. It is not only important for the people of Haa but also for Paro Dzongkhag.

### Poppy Tours (Seasonal)

Sele La and Tego La, two mountain passes, above Dorikha village are uniquely endowed with the rare red and white poppies, which makes for a great hiking spot for poppy tours.

## Cattle migration

Although gradually disappearing, the tradition of cattle migration in the region can still be experienced in Samar Geowg. Caravans of cattle migrations become common sight during specific seasons around Tegola Pass.



## Lapsaten gang (4,200m elevation)

A gradual two-hour hike from Tegola Pass to the scenic top affords a spectacular 360 degree view of the high mountains, including Mt. Kanchenjunga in Sikkim.

# LHUMENTSE DZONGKHAG

Lhuentse is located in the northeastern part of the country. It is the ancestral home of our Kings and hosts numerous sacred sites, making it a favourite destination for tourists.

Most of Lhuentse district is part of the environmentally protected areas of Bhutan. The district contains parts of the Wangchuck Centennial Park in the north, Phrumshengla National Park in the south and the Boomdeling Wildlife Sanctuary in the east.

Lhuentse Dzong currently houses the Dzongkhag Administration office and Lhuentse Rabdey. There are 19 village home stays certified by Tourism Council of Bhutan in four Gewogs that include Khoma, Maenbi, Minje and Gangzur. Lhuentse is 77km from Monggar and takes 3 hours to reach here by car.


## Gangzur Gewog

There are 2 VHS registered with TCB under Gangzur Gewog.




 Rinchen Yangtso


 Gangzur

 17813058



 Sonam Zangmo

 Gangzur

 17380638

## Attractions

Some of the major tourist attractions in this Gewog include:

### Lhuentse Dzong

It was constructed in 1654 by Trongsa Penlop, Chogyal Minjur Tempa upon the site of an older Temple built by Ngagi Wangchuk in 1552. Today the dzong is the administrative and the religious Centre of the district. The Dzongkhag holds its annual festival, Lhuentse Tshechu for 5 days. It Showcases various masked dances and traditional cultural dances.



## Jangchuling Goenpa

This is a monastery that is definitely worth paying a visit. It was founded by Pekar Gyamtso in the 18th century and used to be under the patronage of the 16th Karmapa Rangjung Rigpe Dorji. The daughter of the 1st King, Ashi Wangmo lived here at the monastery as a nun. The monastery is easily accessible by road and 23 kilometres away from Lhuentse Dzong.



## Pottery at Gangzur

Situated around 2 km from the Dzong, this village is famous for pottery. It is one of the main sources of income for the people of Gangzur. The pottery farm provides guests with opportunity to observe the potters making earthen pots and can even request a brief pottery class.

## Khowchug Lhakang

The lhakang was built by Pema Lingpa, heart son Kuenga Wangpo in 1505. The stone bathtub and foot print of a horse of Terton Pema Lingpa, can still be found there.


## Khoma Gewog

There are total of 11 VHS in Khoma Gewog.




 Yangkula


 Khoma

 17788454




 Aum Tshering


 Khoma

 17531557



 Norbu Lhaden

 Khoma


 17700848/17932885







 Chimi Yuden


 Khoma

 17576688





 Pema Dechen


 Khoma

 17638394/17714728



 Chozom


 Khoma

 17565010/17268885



 Bumpa Dema


 Khoma

 77714102/17303515



 Norbu


 Khoma

 17310774/77600877



 Namgay Zam


 Khoma

 17788383





 Tashi Pelmo


 Khoma

 77388121



 Tsheringmo

 Khoma

 17576688/17708618



## Attractions



Major attractions in the Gewog comprise of:

### Khoma village

Khoma village is known for its signature woven textile called Kishuthara. The women of in this village are specialized in weaving intricate designs and patterns. This dress is worn by women during annual tsechus and social gathering. Khoma is about 11 kilometres away from Lhuentse Dzong.

### Singye Dzong

Singye Dzong is the one of the sacred places visited by Guru Rinpoche in the history of Bhutan. There are eight dzongs all embedded on rocks. The dzongs are believed to be the eight manifestation of Guru Rinpoche. Beside the dzongs, the pilgrims can also visit Lake Tshokar, Tshonag and Terdha Latsho to offer prayers and receives blessing. It is three days journey the road head in Lhuntse. The best time to visit Singye Dzong is the last week of September to the second week of October.




## Minjey Gewog

There are a total of 3 VHS under Minjey gewog registered with TCB.



 Kinzang Tobgay


 Minjey / wangzhing

 17626618




 Deki Peldon


 Minjey / wangzhing

 17814374



 Jigme Tshewang

 Minjey

 17712127



# Attractions



Some of the key tourist attractions in the Gewog include:

## Tshechus and festivals


Some of the popular tshechus in the Gewog are Wangzhing Rabney (23rd to 25th day of 7th month of Bhutanese calendar), Zham tshechu (21st to 22nd day of 9th month) and Sengling Gonpa Tshechu at Kupinyelsa (10th day of 12th month).


## Maenbi Gewog

There are only 3 VHS, which are registered with TCB.




 Sangay Wangmo


 Tangmachu

 17541811/17820313



 Tshering Dolma

 Tangmachu


 17701038





 Tashi Chozom

 Tangmachu

 17788394

## Attractions

Some of the places of interest in the Gewog are:

### Takila Guru Statue

Located on a hill top overlooking Takila village, it is the world largest Guru's statue measuring 157 feet. The construction of this majestic statue began in 27th September, 2003 and was successfully consecrated in 2008 for the continued prosperity in the world in general and Bhutan in particular. It has now become a major attraction for tourists and locals. The site is 15 kilometres from Tangmachu Bridge.



### Other pilgrimage sites

In addition to Takila Guru Statue, there are also other pilgrimage sites or nyes in the Gewog. These include Yamdrang Nye in Tangmachu, Tungkhay Nye in Maenjabe, and Barkha Lhakhang Nye in Dromashong, which are worth visiting.

# MONGGAR DZONGKHAG

Located about 450 kilometres from Thimphu, Monggar district covers an area of 1,940 sq. km with a population of about 41852. The landscape is spectacular with stark cliffs and deep gorges set amidst dense conifer forests. The Dzongkhag is known for its weavers and textiles and produces some of the best fabrics in the country.

Monggar is the fastest-developing dzongkhag in eastern Bhutan. It is known for lemon grass plan that is used to produce an essential oil. Kuri Chhu hydropower project is also located in the Dzongkhag. Part of the Phrumshengla National Park and Boomdeling Wildlife Sanctuary lies in this Dzongkhag. There are also numerous sacred sites in the Dzongkhag, which attracts many tourists every year.

As of now, Monggar Dzongkhag has only two village home stays certified by the Tourism Council of Bhutan

## Saling Gewog

There are 2 VHS, which are registered with TCB in Saling gewog.



 Changala

 Thridangbi

 17750349



 Thinley Wangdi

 Thridangbi

 17644057/17600764

## Attractions

The following are some of the major tourist attractions in Saling Gewog:

### Zhongar Dzong

The ruins of this historic Dzong can be found in Thridangbi village and is a popular tourist attraction. The Dzong was constructed in the 17th century by the master architect, Zow Balip. Located on a hilltop, it offers a breathtaking view of Themnangbi village. The ruins hold great significance, and make sure to visit the site to get a sense of the medieval Bhutanese administration. The Dzong is only half an hour drive from Monggar town.



### Bird watching at Yongkola

Yongkola is one of the best birding places in eastern Bhutan. Located along Monggar-Bumthang highway, it is home to rich subtropical forest and rare species of birds such as brown bullfinch, scarlet finch, grey-winged blackbird, brown-throated treecreeper, Grey-sided Laughing thrush, etc.

# PARO DZONGKHAG

Paro Dzongkhag is situated in the north-western part of the country at an altitude of 2,250m above sea level. The country's first and only international airport is located in this Dzongkhag, which is why Paro is the entry port for visitors flying into Bhutan.

The Dzongkhag is blessed with numerous temples and monasteries, some dating as far back as the 14th century. Since it is home to many historical and religious sites, it attracts a large number of tourists. Some of the most iconic landmarks include Taktsang Monastery, Ta Dzong, Drugyel Dzong, Kyichu Lhakhang, etc.

What is more, Paro is also one of the best towns to explore on foot. The main street is lined with traditional buildings with handicraft shops and cafes. Paro is located about 57 kilometers from Thimphu.

There are total of 23 Village Home Stays registered with Tourism Council of Bhutan in Paro Dzongkhag.



## Dopshari Gewog

Dopshari has 4 VHS registered with TCB.



 Deki


 Kempa

 17610851




 Tshering

 Dopshari

 17687642/77381413



 Ugyen

 Dhopshari

 17664193/77665376



👤 Chenco Lham

📍 Dhopshari

☎ 17707601

## 🌸 Attractions 📍 🤩 👍

Some of the major places to visit in Dop Shari Gewog are:

### Dungtsi Lhakhang

Built by Drubchen Thangthong Gyalpo in the 8th century, the monastery is easily recognizable because of its unique shape, which is in the form of a chorten or stupa. It is believed that the temple was built to subdue a demon and bless the community. The temple is a place of worship for the local community and has beautiful Buddhist iconographies and paintings. It is located within a short distance from Paro town.





## Singyedra Lhakhang

Guru Rinpochoe is said to have meditated here and transformed himself into Khandro Singye Drongma (Lion-faced) to subdue the two evil spirits (known to be snakes). Hence the Lhakhang is known as Singyedra, 'singye- lion'. It is 40 minutes' walk from the nearest road and is located on a cliff. It is also believed that Singyedra is the entrance of Taktshang, Ragay and Chumphu Nye.

## Damji, Shari

One of the places to visit is Damji in Shari. It is believed that the youngest of 5 Tsherims, riding on a deer, is located in one of the Bhutanese houses in the area. It is also believed that one should visit all the 5 Tsherims in sequence (Dzongdrakha- Gangtey- Drangja Goenpa- Tenche goenpa- Damji) in one day.

## Lamgong Gewog

Lamgong gewog has a total of 7 VHS registered with TCB.



 Kinley Choki

 Kichu

 17704665/17620695



👤 Dorji Dema

📍 Gangju

☎ 17791416



👤 Singye Namgyel

📍 Jakarthang

☎ 17614157/77614157



👤 Dema

📍 Lamgong

☎ 17606674/17603482



👤 Pema Wangchuk

📍 Kichu

☎ 77368059/17982509



👤 Aum Choden

📍 Shomo

☎ 17604517/77475101



👤 Rinzin Om

📍 Lamgong

☎ 17628150



# Attractions



Some of the popular attractions in Lamgong Gewog are:

## Tenche Goenpa

Tenche Goenpa is the second youngest or fourth among the 5 Tsherims and is said to be riding on Female Tiger. It is 3 km from Lamgong town. It is said that, one should visit all the 5 Tsherims in sequence (Dzongdrakha- Gangtey- Drangja Goenpa- Tenche goenpa- Damji) in one day.

## Kyichu Lhakhang

Kyichu Lhakhang is one of the 108 temples to be established by Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo in one day during the 7th century. It is believed that the monastery was built to subdue the giant ogre who was preventing the spread of Buddhism. The main relics include the statues of Jow (Buddha Shacha muni) and Chenrezig. The temple is 4 km from Paro town.



## Sangnagchoekhor Lhakhang

Located high up on the hill, the monastery is the seat of the Speech Incarnation of Zhabdrung Rinpoche. It is also where the Buddhist Institute (Shedra) is established and has an enrolment of over hundred monks. The Lhakhang is 12kilometres from Paro town.

## Sangnagchoekhor –Bumdra trek

This is an easy and short trek, which takes about 2 days to complete. The trail starts from Sangchoekhor and ends at Taktshang via Bumdrak. Along the trail, you will enjoy beautiful views of Paro valley and mountain ranges. The best time for this trek is from March to May and from October to November.


## Lungnyi Gewog

This Gewog has total of 6 VHS registered with TCB.



 Choden


 Nemjo

 17673008




 Kinley Lhamo


 Lungnyi

 17718741/17609123



 Tashi Lhamo


 Nemjo

 17666293



 Wangdi


 Gatana

 17580425



 Tshering Om

 Lungnyi


 77210636





 Gyeltshen

 Lungnyi

 17841344



## Attractions



Here are some of the major tourist attractions in this Gewog:

### Dzongdrakha Goenpa



Just 5 kilometers away from Paro town along Paro-Chelela highway, Dzongdrakha Goenpa is also considered to be a sacred place. Situated high up on cliff, overlooking Bondey village, the Goenpa was established by Druptob Gyembi Dorji during 14th century. It is also a place where the lineage of Dzongdra Chhoeje started. This Geonpa also houses the eldest of the 5 Tsherims.

## Ugen Lhakhang

This Lhakhang is one of the sacred places where, Guru Rinpoche is said to have meditated and blessed the community. Located in Pambesa village, the temple was built by Terton Sherub Mebar (1267-1326). This Lhakhang has a collection of “Ters” - religious treasures and other religious artifacts.



## Kyila Goenpa

Another sacred place worth visiting is Kyila Goenpa. It is a monastic school for nuns and situated along Paro-Chelela highway. Visitors have to walk about 30 minutes from the road to reach the Goenpa.

## Shaba Gewog

Shaba gewog has only one VHS that is registered with TCB.



👤 Sonam Yangdon

📍 Bara

☎ 1771017



# Attractions



Some of the best places to visit in Shaba Gewog are:

## Drakarpo Monastery

One of the holiest sites in Bhutan, it is perched on the cliff above Shaba valley. Established by Guru Rinpoche during 8th century, the temple is home to 21 Dolma Tara, 1000 Buddhas and the foot prints of Khandro Yeshe Tshogyal. The temple is also the abode of Rigsum Goenpo. To visit, tourists have to seek special permit.



## Dochorten

Another sacred place to visit is Dochorten on the way to Neyphu Goenpa. It is believed that the place was first discovered by Kechog Bawai followed by many eminent lamas like His Eminence Chapje Kinga Peljor. The attraction was named Dochorten after eight stone chortens were seen on the right side of the main site.

## Neyphu (or Hephu) lhakhang

This Lhakhang is also among the many sacred places in the Gewog. It houses a few relics of past teachers and a shoe of Guru Rinpoche. The 9 days festival is held annually here called Neyphu Mani in the 3rd month of Bhutanese calendar.


## Tsento Gewog

There are 2 VHS in Tsento Gewog that are registered with TCB.



 Chench Dorji

 Ramthangka

 17824314/17422466



 Sangay

 Nechu

 17969145/17693017



## Attractions



The following are the major attractions in Tsento Gewog:

### Drakey Pangtsho Trek

This is a 3-4 days trek tour, passing one 4400m high pass and two Tsho (lakes) with 3 goenpa. The trekking starts at Drukyel Dzong (2500m) and ends at the village Chutang (2500m). Through this trek one can enjoy the great views of lakes, majestic mountains, flora and fauna



## Taktshang

It is one of the most visited attractions in Bhutan. Guru Rinpoche is believed to have flown to the site on the back of the tigress which is said to be a manifestation of his consort, Yeshi Tshogyal to subdue the local demon called Singye Samdrup. Hence, it got the name Taktshang 'Tak- tiger, Tshang- nest'. It is a 2-3 hour walk from the base camp and tourist needs to pay an entry fee to visit the site.

## Bumdra lhakhang

It is located above Taktshang and takes 2 hours to reach on foot. This holy site is very popular among the tourists and locals. There are footprints of dakini on the rock face and visitors touch them for blessings. You can also enjoy the serenity of the site which is perfect for meditation.



## Lhading Goenpa

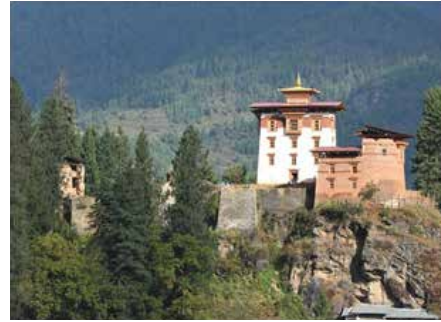
This is a private lhakhang located about 25 km from Drugyel Dzong. It is believed that Drubthop Pawo had a dream of gods and goddesses flying above a lake and built the temple. Thus it was named Lhading, which means flying/ hovering gods and goddesses. The main relics include the statues of Jow, Buddha and Chenrigzig, which were brought from Tibet. Locals consider the temple as one of the sacred places in the Gewog.





## Drukgyel Dzong

Located about 30 minutes' drive from Paro town, it is one of the oldest fortresses in Bhutan and a must-visit site for tourists. The dzong was built on a hill top in 1649 by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal to commemorate the victory of Bhutan over Tibetan invasion. Once at the top, visitors can enjoy a spectacular view of Jomolhari Mountain and the valley below it.



## Wangchang Gewog

This Gewog has three VHS registered with TCB.



Choedey

Wangchang

17603950/17118505



Chencho Dema

Geptay


17675757





 Dorji Wangchuk

 Geptey

 17622667/17415944



## Attractions



The Gewog has a number of major tourist attractions. These include:

### Tashicholing Lhakhang

It is located in Jangtona village and is a privately owned lhakhang. It is home to one of the reincarnations of Dorji Phamo (Diamond sow goddess) and presently run as a nunnery under Dorji Phamo.

### Gangtey Lhakhang (Riding on Dragon)

It is the second in line of the 5 Tsherims in Paro and is said to be riding on the dragon. The lhakhang is located on the top of a cliff overlooking Paro town. It is believed that all the 5 Tserims should be visited in one day according to their sequences.

### Dranja Goenpa lhakhang (Riding on Lion)

The lhakhang is the third among the 5 Tsherims and the Tsherim is believed to be riding on the lion. The site is 4km away from main town, on a cliff top overlooking the valley.

# PUNAKHA DZONGKHAG



Punakha Dzongkhag is located about 2 hours' drive from Thimphu. It used to be the former capital of Bhutan until it was moved to Thimphu in 1955. A major attraction in the Dzongkhag is Punakha Dzong built in 1637–38 by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. Located at the confluence of Pho Chhu and Mo Chhu, the main relics of the Dzong include Rangjung Khasarpani and the sacred remains of Zhabdrung and Tertoen Pema Lingpa. Punakha Dromchoe is held in first month of the lunar year and draws a large number of tourists.

Punakha is known not only for the sacred sites and festivals but also for outdoor activities such as white river rafting. Pho Chhu and Mo Chhu rivers flow through the valley making it a perfect place for white river rafting. As of now, Punakha Dzongkhag has 17 VHS certified by Tourism Council of Bhutan in the following Gewogs.

## Guma Gewog

This Gewog has 3 registered VHS with TCB.



👤 Lala

📍 Pepchu

☎ 17660506



👤 Chechey

📍 Pepchu

☎ 17545898



👤 Chhimi Wangmo

📍 Jawana

☎ 77606530



# Attractions



Some of the places to visit and explore in Guma Gewog are:

## Changyul Galem's House

Believed to be 700-year-old, Changyul Galem's house lies within a short distance from Punakha Dzong towards Gasa. Changyul Bumo and her lover, Singye are considered to be equivalent to Romeo and Juliet in Shakespeare's play. The house, which stands in ruins now, is a testimony of extraordinary love and commitment between the two lovers.



## Sangchhen Dorji Lhuendrup Nunnery

This is a large temple complex located in Omolatsekha with a remarkable view of Punakha valley and Wangdue valley. The main relics include a 14-foot bronze statue of Avalokiteshvara (Chenrezig with thousand hands and thousand eyes). Apart from this, the temple also houses the statues of Guru Padmasambhava, Buddha, Zhabdrung NgawangNamgyal, the 21 Taras and Buddha of longevity. The temple is located 4 kilometers away from Khuruthang town.

## Other attractions

The other attractions include visit to the breathtaking Punakha Dzong and petite Khuruthang town. Rafting and kayaking are other activities you can try here. The best time for river rafting is November to December and from March to April.

## Kabjisa Gewog

This Gewog has only one registered VHS



👤 Chophel

📍 Kashikha

☎ 17600846/17605900

## 🌸 Attractions 📍 🤩 👍

Here are some of the interesting things to do and see in Kabji Gewog:

### Kabji Hoka Tsho

This beautiful lake is located at an altitude of about 2000m. As there is no road, it takes 2 and half hours for regular hikers and little more for others to reach the lake from Punakha. The path is clear and easily accessible during winter, which is also the best season to visit the lake.



## Chorten Ningpo

One of the places to visit in this Gewog is Chorten Ningpo. Built by Gyalsay Tenzin Rabgye in the 17th century, the chorten lies on a hilltop with a beautiful view of the valley and served as the winter residence for Gyalse Tenzin Rabgye in the past.

## Sinchula Trek

This trek can be done in 4-5 hours walk with approximately 16 kilometres from the village of Kabisa to Sinchula pass at an altitude of 3200m above sea level. On a clear day, trekkers can enjoy the stunning view of Phajoding monastery and Talo Monastery from Sinchula pass.

## Talo Gewog

There are 2 VHS registered with TCB in this Gewog.



 Leki Wangmo

 Lapsakha

 17615212



 Thuji

 Lapsakha

 17907352/77414775





# Attractions



Some of the top attractions in the Gewog are:

## Talo Monastery

Talo is a beautiful village situated on a hill above Punakha valley at an altitude of 9186 feet above sea level. Surrounded by rich forest of conifer trees, the village has become one of the must visit places in Punakha. The main attractions are Talo monastery, annual tshechu and trekking in the area. The village is located within 5 kilometers from Punakha.



## Nobgang Hike

This is an easy hike, which passes through Nobgang village, the home of Queen Mothers and continues downhill to Punakha. Along the way, you can enjoy the view of the village with its farmland and Punakha valley.

## Dzomi Gewog

There are two registered VHS in this Gewog.



 Namgay Zam

 Yusakha

 17703871/17843335



👤 Sangay Choden

📍 Mendhagang

☎️ 17625800/17651925



## Attractions



The major attractions in this Gewog are:

### Suspension bridge

Located within few minutes from Punakha Dzong, it is one of the longest suspension bridges in Bhutan measuring approximately 520-foot-long. The bridge provides a beautiful view of the valley and rolling hills covered in lush vegetation. There are restaurant/shops at other side of the bridge.



### Hot stone bathtub of Choeje Lama Drukpa Kuenley

This site is popular among locals. It is located in a place called Thanggu as one descends down to the village of Drimthang. The site is famous for the hot stone bath tub of Lama Drukpa Kuenley. Locals come here to take bath and receive blessings. There are also caves and other sites of religious importance in the area.

## Other attractions

There are several other activities you can try here. These include river rafting, kayaking, village tours and visit to the majestic Punakha Dzong.



## Chhubu Gewog

The Gewog has only one VHS registered with TCB.



👤 Karma Yangchen

📍 Gubjithang

☎ 17609998



## Attractions



Here are some of the major places to explore in Chhubu Gewog:

### Khamsum Yulley Namgyel Chorten



This chorten or stupa attracts a large number of visitors due to its unique design and architecture. It was built in 2004 by the Queen Mother Ashi Tshering Yangdon Wangchuck for the peace and well-being of all sentient beings. Visitors can reach here after a short drive from Punakha Dzong followed by one-hour hike that starts from the suspension bridge.

## Barp Gewog

In this Gewog, there are 3 VHS registered with TCB.



 Dago Zam

 Chimi Lhakhang

 17851311



 Kinley

 Yuwakha

 17851311



 Thangka

 Menchuzakha

 17605551



# Attractions



Here are some of the major places to explore in Barp Gewog:



## Chimi Lhakhang

Chimi Lhakhang, widely also known as the fertility temple, is the main attraction in this Gewog. It was founded in 1499 by Lam Ngawang Chogyel on the site where “Divine mad man”- Lam DrukpaKuenley (1455-1529) built a chorten. The temple draws a large number of tourists and locals, especially women to increase their chances of conception. It is located on a hillock with a panoramic view Sopsokha village and the paddy fields. From here, Punakha is only 10 kilometers away.

## Shengana-Bjemi Gewog

This Gewog has only one VHS registered with TCB.



 Tashi Wangmo

 Shengana

 17801644/17600818



## Attractions



Some of the major places to visit in this Gewog are:

### Dado Goenpa

This temple is about 2 hour drive from Punakha and is located at the head of Shengana village. Festival is held once in three years and is very popular among tourists and locals.

### Nepa Lhaxhang

The other attraction in this Gewog is Nepa Lhaxhang. It is located within one hour walk from Shengana School. Apart from the tour of Lhaxhang, you should also attend the festival, which is held every three years.



## Toedpisa Gewog

There are four VHS under this Gewog.



 Kinley Choden

 Mendralgang

 77469174



 Thinley Wangmo


 Phenteykha

 17659143



 Sonam Wangmo

 Menchuna

 17678533



 Choden

 Mendhagang

 17445504



## Attractions



The following are some of the major attractions in this Gewog:

### Thinleygang Lhakhang

Built in the 15th century, this temple was blessed by Lam Ngawang Chogyal and later by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. It houses an arrow of Lam Chogyel Drukpa Kuneley which was said to be shot from Tibet and landed here. The central monastic body spends a night in the temple before continuing to Punakha, its winter residence and returns to Thimphu on the on the first day of the fourth Bhutanese month.



### Heritage Trail: The Divine Madman Trail

The Divine Madman Trail This heritage trail is a 21km light-moderate trek. The trail starts from Thinleygang temple on the foothills of Dochula and takes four to five hours to walk. It is believed that the trail was once used by Lam Drukpa Kuenley (1455-1529), more popularly known as the 'Divine Madman' to subdue demons in the area. There are many scared sites along the way, all linked to Lam Drukpa Kuenley. Due to its growing popularity, this ancient trail has been well maintained under My Gakidh Village, an eco-tourism project initiated by the Youth Development Fund.

# THIMPHU DZONGKHAG



Thimphu is the capital and largest city of Bhutan with over 100,000 residents. The city is the main center of commerce, religion and government in the country. Thimphu has still retained its' cultural identity and values despite growing modernization and development.

There are several attractions in Thimphu such as the National Post Office, the Clock Tower Square, Motithang Takin Preserve, Tango and Chari Monasteries, Buddha Dordenma, National Memorial Chorten, Centenary Farmer's Market, Tashichhoe Dzong, Semtokha Dzong, Druk Wangyal Chortens, etc.

Thimphu Tshechu is one of the biggest festivals in the country. It is an important festival where mask dances, popularly known as Chams, are performed in the courtyards of the Tashichho Dzong in Thimphu. It is a four-day festival held every year in September/October on dates corresponding to the Bhutanese calendar.

Currently Thimphu Dzongkhag has 4 VHS in two Gewogs with certification from the Tourism Council of Bhutan.


## Kawang Gewog

There is only one registered VHS in this Gewog.



 Sonam Dorji

 Kabesa

 77446797/77370713



## Attractions



Some of the major tourist attractions in the Gewog are:

### Phajoding monastery

Founded in the 13th Century by Phajo Drugom Zhigpo (1184-1251), the monastery is about 3 hour hike from Motithang. The temple consists of 10 Lhakhangs (temples) and a series of meditation houses.



## Dechenphu Lhakhang

Dechenphu Lhakhang is one of the most sacred and visited monasteries in Bhutan. Built by Damtrul Loden Gyalpo and Jamyang Kuenga Sengye between 1345 and 1347, it is the abode of Geynyen Jagpa Melen, the protective deity of Bhutan. Dechenphu tshechu is observed every year and is dedicated to Geynen Jagpa Melen.



## Cheri Monastery

The temple was built in 1623 under the command of Zhabdrung. It is believed that Zhabdrung spent three years in retreat in Cheri and lived there for many years throughout his life. The central monastic body was started from Cheri. The monastery is about a half hour drive from Thimphu after 2 hours walk from the nearest road head.



## Tango Monastery

It was founded by Phajo Drugom Zhigpo in the 13th century and upgraded to its present form by Tenzin Rabgye, the 4th Temporal Ruler in 1688. One of the major attractions of the monastery is Yarney, which is an annual festival mainly for monks to take special vows. The monastery is about a half hour drive from Thimphu followed by over 2 hours walk from the nearest road head.






## Mewang Gewog

Mewang Gewog has 3 VHS certified by the Tourism Council of Bhutan.



 Daw Zam


 Selekha

 17610933



 Dechen Wangmo


 Sisina

 17902417



 Kezang Wangmo

 Namselling

 17622355





# Attractions



The major tourist attractions under the Gewog comprise of:

## Chewang Lhakang

It was founded by Lam Drukpa Kuenley during 16th century. The monastery is located about 1 km from the village of Danglu Wanglu. The main highlights of the temple are the statues of Duesum (three) Sangay (Buddha) and Kanjur Tanjur texts.

## Dom Tshang Nye

It's one of the famous nyes of Guru Rinpoche. In this nye, Guru Rinpoche has left the imprint of his body, which can be seen even to this day. This sacred site lies at Bjemina via Gidakom about 20 minutes' walk from the main road.

## Tsalu Nye

Another attraction under this Gewog is Tsalu Ney. It is a small 14th century temple and Guru Rinpoche is said to have meditated here. This nye is one of the most sacred sites in west of Thimphu from where it takes about 2 hours by car to reach here.

# TRASHIGANG DZONGKHAG

Trashigang is one of the largest Dzongkhags in the Kingdom with an altitude ranging from 600 m to over 4000 m. The Dzongkhag shares its border with Monggar Dzongkhag in the west, Samdrup Jongkhar and Pemagatshel Dzongkhag in the South, Trashi Yangtse Dzongkhag in the north and Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh in the east.

Bhutan's largest river, Dangme Chhu, flows through this district. The Dzongkhag is home to the Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary, which is one of the protected areas of Bhutan. It was created in part to protect the migo, a type of yeti, in whose existence most Bhutanese believe.

Trashigang is also known for the semi-nomadic people of Merak and Sakteng with its unique tradition and culture, making the Dzongkhag a popular destination for tourists. There are also numerous sacred sites, which are worth visiting in this Dzongkhag.

The distance from Thimphu to Trashigang is 551 kilometres and takes 2 days by car to reach via Bumthang and Monggar. Yonphula domestic airport is also located in this Dzongkhag.

As of now, Trashigang has 3 VHS registered with TCB in three Gewogs.

## Samkhar Gewog

This Gewog has only one VHS.



👤 Deki Pelden

📍 Rangshikhar

☎ 17116766



# Attractions



The key attractions in Samkhar Gewog are:

## Trashigang Dzong

Also known as 'The Fortress of the Auspicious Hill', it was built on a hilltop overlooking Dangmechu in 1659 to defend the district against Tibetan invasions. The Dzong was repaired and expanded later on with the addition of Goenkhang in 1680s. A shrine and large statue of Guru Rinpoche was also added in 1936. Trashigang tsechu is conducted annually from 7th to 11th day of the 10th month of the Bhutanese calendar.



## Rangshikhar Lhakhang

Rangshikhar Goempa is 11 kilometres from Trashigang Pam. Inside the complex, there is a large statue of Buddha in meditation posture surrounded by different statues of Buddha depicting the stories of his life. It is one of the sacred places to visit in the Gewog and attracts many tourists every year.

## Kangpara Gewog

There is only one VHS in this Gewog.



Wangpo Tshering



Kangpara



17235373



# Attractions



The key attractions in Kangpara Gewog are:

## Kangpara Lamai Geonpa

Founded by Lopen Melam Rabzang in 1930, the goenpa is surrounded by a mountain pass called Chenla, which is also pilgrimage site, and a steep cliff called Tshephu. The Goenpa is managed by H.E. Gyeltshen Trulku with 40 disciples led by a lama and other teachers.




## Merak Gewog

The Gewog has only one VHS.



 Ngaden

 Merak

 17429755/16490412



# Attractions

The key tourist attractions in this Gewog are:



## **Merak valley**

Merak is one of the most isolated valleys in Bhutan. The inhabitants of Merak have unique culture and lifestyle similar to those of Sakteng. Like the people from Laya, Lingshi and Lunana, they are semi nomadic people and depend primarily on yaks for their livelihoods.

## **Merak-Sakteng trek**

Merak is also a perfect place for trekking. The trek from Merak to Sakteng is 22 kilometres long and can be done in 8 hours. As the trail goes through several passes and ridges, trekkers are rewarded with the amazing views of the mountain ranges of Bhutan, Arunachal and Tibet. The best time for this trek is March to May and September to November.

# TRASHIYANGTSE DZONGKHAG



Trashiyangtse Dzongkhag was established after bifurcating from Trashigang Dzongkhag in 1992. Covering an area of 1,437 sq. km, the Dzongkhag is blessed with numerous religious sites making it a popular tourist destination. One must visit GomphuKora, Chorten Kora, Rigsum Goenpa monastery, Omba Nye and many more as these are considered to be the most sacred sites in the valley.

The Dzongkhag is also home to one of the important protected areas in the country. Boomdeling Wildlife Sanctuary, located in this Dzongkhag, is a roosting area for the endangered species of black necked cranes in winter months. It is also a great place for winter birding. What's more, the Dzongkhag has craftsmen specialized in 'dapa' making skills. Definitely this Dzongkhag is one of the best places to visit in eastern Bhutan.

Trashiyangtse is 54 kilometres away from Trashigang and takes about 2 hours to reach by car. As of now, the Dzongkhag has 7 VHS in 4 Gewogs.



## Boomdeling Gewog

There are three registered VHS in Boomdeling Gewog.



Tharpala

Tarkashing

17302303



Thukten Tshering

Boomdeling

17968117



Karma Choden

Lamdra

17781323



# Attractions



Some of the interesting places to see and explore in this Gewog are:



## Black-necked cranes

With its wide and gentle valleys, this Gewog is the winter home for the rare and endangered black-necked cranes. There is a visitor center at Dungzam that provides information about the cranes and the valley. The area is also popular for winter visiting birds including ibisbills, bar-headed geese and ducks. This site is only 8 kilometers away from Trashiyangtse town and takes 30 minutes to reach by car.

## Ludlow's Bhutan Glory (Bhutanitisludlowi)

This Gewog is also popular for butterfly tour. Ludlow's Bhutan Glory (Bhutanitisludlowi), the national butterfly of Bhutan, is found in Tobrang, a remote part of the Bumdelling Wildlife Sanctuary. Listed as vulnerable under the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), very little is known about the butterfly species until now. It flies mainly in the month of August, which is also the best time to visit this place for butterfly tour.



## Rigsum Goenpa

Rigsum Goenpa is one of the oldest temples in the country. It is located on a ridge with good a view of the Boomdeling valley and Trashi Yangtse Dzong. The main relics include the statue of Jowo Shacha Muni, 100 volumes of Kanjur and the enlightening stupas of Lord Buddha. It is believed that temple will give the same merit as visiting Lhasa Jowo in Tibet. The monastery can be reached after one hour walk from the nearest road point.

## Dechenphodrang Ney

Dechenphodrang Nye is one of the sacred sites in the Gewog and is popular among tourists and locals. There is a temple nearby where one can view a narrow waterhole in the rock believed to be as deep as the huge Tsenden (cypress) tree in close proximity. The Nye is about 4-5 hrs walk from Rigsum Gonpa and half an hour from or to the end of the farm road in Woogmanang valley. There is a campsite along the trail across Woogmanang river.

## Ramjar Gewog

This Gewog has only one VHS registered with TCB.



 Jigme Tenzin

 Ramjar

 17714103/17576018



# Attractions



Some of the places of interest in this Gewog are:

## Dodril Goenpa

Dodril Goenpa is one of the sacred sites in Ramjar Gewog. This monastery is 2 hours walk from the nearest road head and is a meditation center which can accommodate up to 30 people. It is a perfect place to attain mental peace and learn more about Buddhism.

## Mongling Tsho

This lake is located around 2 hours walk from Ramjar Village. Locals consider this lake as a sacred site and come here to make offerings on auspicious days.

## Ramjer to Thongja trek

This is an easy trek and can be done in one day via the Mongling Tsho. The main attraction of this trek is that it offers an incredible view of the lake and the surrounding valleys clothed in rich vegetation.

## Toedtsho Gewog

This Gewog has only one VHS registered with TCB.



 Jamyang

 Omba

 17714103/17576018



# Attractions



The major tourist attractions in Toedtsho Gewog are:

## Gongza Nye

Regarded as one of the holiest sites in Trashiyangtse, this lies along the Gongri (Drangme) Chu. Guru Rimpoche is said to have visited this place to subjugate a devil in the area. There is also a small lhakhang in the area. The main relics include shoe of Guru Rimpoche and devil's egg and many other relics. The Nye is about 3 hours walk from the Doksum town, 3 hours downhill from Jangphu village and 1 hour walk from the gewog centre.

## Omba Nye

Popularly known as the Taktshang of eastern Bhutan, this Nye has letter OM on the rock face. It is one of the three unique holy places blessed by Guru Rimpoche, the others being Aja and Hungrel where letter AH and Hum can be seen. Omba is about an hour and half walk from the nearest road point. It can also be reached from the gewog center after a three hour climb. There are temples, caves, holy water and sacred sites nearby which are worth a visit.



## Nangkhar Lhakhang

Nangkhar Lhakhang is one of the important temples in Toedtsho Gewog. It takes almost 1 to 2 hours to reach from Tsenkharla on foot. The annual festival is held annually on every 10th traditional month of Bhutanese calendar for three days.

## Yangtse Gewog

There are 2 registered VHS in this Gewog.



👤 Chorten Dendup

📍 Rinchengang

☎ 17701156



👤 Dechen Dorji

📍 Bimkhar

☎ 17302098

## 🌸 Attractions 📍 🤩 👍

Some of the main attractions in Yangtse Gewog are:

### Festivals and Tshechus

There are numerous sacred sites and festivals in this Gewog. Some of the popular festivals which will be of interest to visitors are Bimkhar Dongacholing tshechu on 10th day of 10th month of Bhutanese calendar, Banye Goenpa tshechu on 7th-30th day of 10th month of Bhutanese calendar and Gangkhar tshechu on 27th-30th day of 6th month of Bhutanese calendar.





## Chorten Kora

One of the religious sites in this Gewog is Chorten Kora constructed in the style of famous Boudhanathstupa in Nepal by Lama Ngawang Loday in 1740. It is believed that the chorten has remains of 8 year Dakini girl from Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh who was sealed alive on her own free will in the chorten as an offering. The people of Tawang come here for circumambulation every year. The chorten is only three minutes' walk from Trashiyangtse town.



## National Institute of Zorig Chusum

Established in 1997, this institute provides vocational training in 13 traditional arts and crafts. Students study thangka painting, embroidery, sculpture, metalwork and woodturning. You can visit the institute and watch the students at work. The showroom has a decent variety of paintings, carvings, sculptures, bowls and masks for sale.

# TRONGSA DZONGKHAG

Located in central Bhutan, the Dzongkhag is bordered by Bumthang Dzongkhag to the northeast, Wangdiphodrang Dzongkhag to the west and Zhemgang Dzongkhag to the south. Historically, Trongsa is one of the most important Dzongkhags in the country. Even today, the King of Bhutan first becomes the Trongsa Penlop (governor) before being named the Crown Prince and eventually the King.

Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park is located in the Dzongkhag and is home to many globally endangered rare flora and fauna. The Monpas who are considered to be the first inhabitants of Bhutan reside on the lower parts of the Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park. The Mangdechhu Hydroelectric project is also located in Trongsa Dzongkhag. Some of the major attractions in the Dzongkhag are Chendebji chorten, Trongsa Dzong, Taa Dzong, Thruiepang palace, Kuenga Raten palalce, etc. Trongsa Tsechu, which is held in in Decemeber/January also attracts a large number of tourists.

The Dzongkhag consists of 5 Gewogs and as of now, there is only 1 village homestay certified by Tourism Council of Bhutan in Nubi Gewog.


## Nubi Gewog

This Gewog has only one VHS registered with TCB



 Dorji Tsho

 Dorji Tse

 77619923



# Attractions



Popular attractions in Nubi Gewog are:

## Trongsa Dzong

Trongsa is considered to be the largest and most impressive dzong in the country. A small temple was first built by Nagi Wangchuk great grandfather of Zhabdrung Nawang Namgayal on the spot where the Dzong stands today. Later in 1644, the first governor of Trongsa, Chogyal Minjur Tempa built the Dzong. At present the Dzong hosst Dratshang Rabdey with 26 lhakhangs and the Dzongkhag Administration.



## Royal Heritage Museum/Ta Dzong

Ta Dzong is a must visit place in Trongsa. Built in 1652 by the first governor of Trongsa Chogyal Minjur Tempa, it served as a watch tower overlooking Trongsa Dzong. The place is now converted into a state-of-the Art Museum.

## Trongsa Tshechu

Trongsa tshechu is one of the oldest tshechus in Bhutan. It is believed that tshechus in other parts of Bhutan originated from Trongsa Dzongkhag. The Tshechu is held during December or January and draws a large number of tourists. On the last day, a Thongdrol is displayed.



## View point to Trongsa Dzong hike

For the hiking enthusiast, there is an option to hike from the view point to Trongsa Dzong. It is a two hour hike, following the traditional path, which will take you down to Mangde chuu across the Baa Zam and up the slope before reaching the dzong.

# WANGDUE PHODRANG DZONGKHAG

Wangdue Phodrang is one of the largest Dzongkhag in the country. It covers an area of 4,308 sq. km with elevations ranging from 800-5800 m above sea level. Most of the Dzongkhag is part of the protected areas. These include Wangchuck Centennial Park in the north, Jigme Dorji National Park in the northwest and Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park in the southeast.

One of the major attractions in the district is the beautiful Phobjikha valley. With wide and gentle valleys, this place is a winter roosting area for the rare and endangered Black-necked cranes. The Black-necked crane festival is observed annually to spread awareness on the cranes and support the efforts to preserve the habitat of these beautiful birds. It has become one of the popular events in the country and includes performance by the local community and school children.

With its diverse climate and rich natural resources, Wangdue Phodrang Dzongkhag is also home to rare and exotic animals like Red Pandas, Tigers and Leopards. It is also known for a large number of rare birds such as the Black Necked Crane, White-Bellied Heron and the Spotted Eagle.

There are total of 30 Village Home Stays registered with Tourism Council of Bhutan in Wangdue Phodrang.







## Gangtey Gewog

This Gewog has 17 VHS certified by TCB.



 Phub Lham


 Aekor

 17512152




 Pemba


 Aekor

 17734049/17983106



 Dorji Om

 Simchubara

 17964102





👤 Karma

📍 Khewang

☎ 17747773/77493818



👤 Phub Gyeltshen

📍 Betta

☎ 17879831



👤 Karma Wangmo

📍 Tokha

☎ 17512512



👤 Lhakpa

📍 Moel

☎ 77851240/17996756



👤 Sonam Yuden

📍 Moel

☎ 17625853



👤 Shekar

📍 Moel

☎ 17995256



👤 Pem

📍 Moel

☎ 17736941




👤 Pasang Zam


📍 Moel

☎ 17443219



 Wangchuk Dema


 Moel

 17296838



 Phub Lham


 Moel

 17970521




 Yangka


 Moel

 17846897




 Sigay


 Ramgokha

 17841894/77264142





 Karma Wangmo


 Moel

 17683831



 Wangchuk Dema

 Gongtsawa

 77292427/17861601

## Attractions

Some of the major places to visit in Gangtey Gewog are:

### Gangtey Goenpa

Gangtey Goenpa is an important monastery of Nyingmaga school of Buddhism, the main seat of the Pema Lingpa tradition. Situated on the hilltop, it offers an incredible view of Phobjikha valley. Inside the complex, there are 5 temples surrounding the central tower. Gangtey tshechu is held every year in the 8th month of Bhutanese calendar for 3 days.



## Kumbu Lhaxhang

Kumbu Lhaxhang is located 1 hour walk to northeast of Gangtey Goenpa after 3kms on the rough road. It was founded by a lama called Tsende Dewa, a proponent of the Bon religious tradition.



## Khewang Lhaxhang

Located towards south of Gangtey Goenpa, you have to walk for one hour to reach the temple. It was founded by Lama Palden Gyeltshen and the main relic includes the statue of Buddha.



## Mountain biking

Apart from monasteries, Gangtey is also a perfect place for mountain biking. Many tourists and locals can be seen biking in and around Gangtey and Phobjikha valleys exploring and enjoying its natural beauty and breathtaking scenery.

## Trekking

Among the treks, Gangtey Nature Trail is one of the popular treks and can be completed in short time. It starts from the stone wall to the north of the Goenpa and ends in Khewa Lhaxhang. The other trek, which is a longer version, commences from Gangtey Goenpa and passes through villages before terminating in Kungathang Lhaxhang.




## Phobjikha Gewog

This Gewog has 13 VHS registered with TCB.




 Dechen Om


 Tangchey

 17870644




 Daw Lham


 Tangchey

 17845863



 Yangka Dem

 Tangchey

 17915760





👤 Tshewang Lham

📍 Tangchey

☎ 17915405



👤 Sati

📍 Tangchey

☎ 17866889



👤 Zangmo

📍 Tangchey

☎ 17512474




👤 Tshering Lham


📍 Tangchey

☎ 17846108




 Sangay Bidha


 Tangchey

 17481007




 Pem Choden


 Gangtey

 17769401



 Dopphu Wangmo

 Gangtey

 17749283



👤 Pasang

📍 Talam

☎ 17749133



👤 Tshering Lham

📍 Gonphu

☎ 77438742/17768055



👤 Gyalmo

📍 Nymphey

☎ 17970585



## Attractions



Some of the major tourist attractions of Phobjikha are:

### Black Necked Crane Information Center

The black-necked crane information Centre is a must visit place in Phobjikha. Equipped with a high power telescope, it is the best place to catch the view of the cranes. The center also provides information on the nature and culture of the area. There is a small gift shop, which sells handicrafts produced by the local people.



### Trekking

Phobjikha is also a great place for trekking. There a number of trekking options here. Some of the popular treks include Phobjikha – Kamechhu trek (5 days), Phobjikha-Chuzom trek (3 nights) and Phobjikha-Wangdue trek (65 kilometers).

# ZHEMGANG DZONGKHAG

Zhemgang Dzongkhag is located in the south-central region of the country. The Dzongkhag is a part of the wildlife corridor constituting the famous Royal Manas National Park, the Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park, and Phrumshingla National Park. Zhemgang is one of the three Dzongkhags with highest forest cover of 94.17 percent (LCMP 2016).


The Dzongkhag is noted for being one of the last regions where ancient Bon (Animist) religious practices are still carried out but animal sacrifices are replaced by Tormas (sacrificial images made of flour). The people of Zhemgang are famous for their rich culture, particularly their folk songs and dances. They are also well-known for their skill at crafting various goods out of bamboo such as Bangchungs (matted bamboo bowls), Palangs (alcohol containers), Balaks (hats), mats and boxes.

Zhemgang is home to 495 species of birds including the endangered White Bellied Heron (*Ardea insignis*) making it one of the ideal destinations for birding tour. Zhemgang is also popular for having a large number of Royal Bengal tigers and Golden Langurs in the country. With its diverse and rich natural heritage, the Dzongkhag has the potential to become a major destination for the nature based-tourism.


## Nangkor Gewog

Nangkor Gewog has 2 VHS approved by the Tourism Council of Bhutan.



 Tshewang Buthri


 Buli

 17544554



 Tshering Yuden

 Buli

 77444780



## Attractions



Some of the major places to visit in Nangkor Gewog are:

### Buli Lhaxhang

Buli Lhaxhang is located in the middle of the Buli village. It is believed that the temple was constructed by Terton Dorji Lingpa in 14th century. The main relics include the statues of Guru Padamasambhava, Zhabdrung Rinpoche, Dorje Sempa (Buddha Vajrasattva) and Avalokiteshvara. The other major sacred sites in Nangkor Gewog are Dungkar Nye and Kikhar Khandro Nye.





## Buli Tsho

Located towards the southwestern part of the village, the lake is believed to be the seat of the protecting deity Tshomen Kuntu Zangmo (Buli Moenmo). The deity is represented in half human body with many hooded snake canopies over her head and lower body coiled like a snake. The people of Buli worship and make offerings at the lake to accumulate merit, cure illness and ward off ill luck. Lately, the portrait Moenmo has been included in the wall paintings (dhebri) of famous Buli Lhakhang and a separate portrait (kathrab) of the Moenmo has also been consecrated. The best time to visit the Tsho is from December to August. The lake remains closed to visitors from 1st day of 8th month to 15th day of the 10th month of Bhutanese calendar.



## Buli Khar Lhakhang

This Lhakhang is located in the place where Tertoen Pema Lingpa had pitched his tent when traveling from Bumthang. The main relic of the temple is the Guru Dragmar. It is also said that Pema Lingpa resided there and the circular stone wall where he did blacksmithing can still be seen today. His works include the metal pan used for preparing buckwheat pancake (khulay), which has his thump print.

The other major sacred sites in Nangkor Gewog include Dungkar Nye, Kikhar Khandro Nye, Tali Shedra, and Duekhor Chorten.


## Trong Gewog

As of now, Trong Gewog has only one VHS certified by TCB.



 Lhakpa Dorji

 Buli

 17649262



## Attractions



Among others, the main tourist attractions in Trong Gewog are:



## Zhemgang Dzong

Zhemgang Dzong is the administrative centre of Zhemgang district. It was founded by Lama Zhang Dorje Drakpa who came to Bhutan from Tibet in the 12th century. Lama Zhang is considered the greatest Buddhist saint to have settled at present day Zhemgang. The Dzong sits beautifully on a ridge facing the village of Trong and the town of Zhemgang.

## Zhemgang Tshechu

Zhemgang Tshechu is one of the biggest annual festivals held in the Dzongkhag. Locals along with the tourists gather at Zhemgang Dzong to watch the Tsehchu and make offerings to Guru Rinpoche and the other deities. The main attraction of this religious festival is mask dance which is performed here by the Buddhist monks as well as dance and songs by the other local villagers.



## Trong and Dangkhar heritage villages

Some of the worth visiting heritage villages in Zhemgang are Trong heritage village, and Dangkhar heritage village. Trong village is located above Zhemgang Dzong and popular among tourist due to clustered settlements with traditional two-storied stone structures with wooden door and windows. The village is preserved and promoted as a heritage village to retain its traditional beauty.

Dangkhar heritage village with traditional stone houses also offer a unique and thrilling experience to visitors. The village is located below the highway before reaching the Zhemgang Dzong.

### **Dangkhar Menchu (medicinal water)**

Located in a secluded area, Dangkhar Menchu is managed by Dangkhar Community Forest Committee. It is believed that the menchu has existed since four hundred years ago and is said to cure various ailments.

### **Bermo Botanical Garden**

The garden is under the care of Zhemgang Forest Division and is located 2 KMs from Tingtibi. The garden has an Orchiderium, tree nursery and short hiking trails. The garden is an ideal spot for picnicking with canopy and resting sites. One can enjoy the best serene environment during the spring season (March-May).



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