

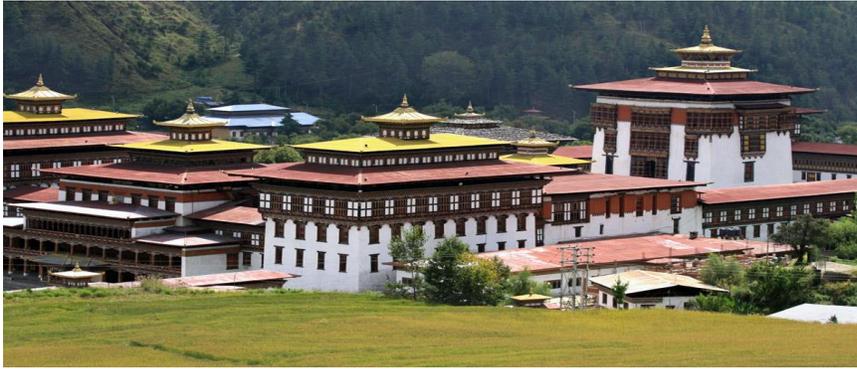


## THIMPHU

The Kingdom's capital city is home to approximately 100,000 inhabitants including the Royal family. This bustling little city is the main center of commerce, religion and government in the country.

Thimphu is the most modern city in Bhutan with an abundance of restaurants, internet cafes, nightclubs and shopping centers, however it still retains its' cultural identity and values amidst the signs of modernization. Thimphu is one of the few towns in Bhutan that have been equipped with ATM banking facilities and is a good place to stock up on some currency.

One of the most curious features of Thimphu is that it is the only capital city in the world that does not use traffic lights. Instead a few major intersections have policemen standing in elaborately decorated booths (small pavilions), directing traffic with exaggerated hand motions. The juxtaposition of ancient tradition and modernity make Thimphu the ideal location for visitors to break away from their tour itinerary and just immerse themselves in the lifestyle of contemporary Bhutanese.



### Places of interest in Thimphu

- I. **Tashichho Dzong:** The dzong is located close to Thimphu town, next to the banks of the Wangchhu River. It is an impressively large structure, surrounded by well-kept lawns and beautiful gardens.
  - II. **National Memorial Chorten:** Visitors will find elderly Bhutanese people circumambulating the Chorten throughout the day. Chorten literally means 'Seat of Faith' and Buddhists often call such monuments, the 'Mind of Buddha'. The chorten is an extraordinary example of Buddhist architecture and artwork with its gorgeous paintings and intricate sculptures.  
  
The chorten is a large white structure crowned with a golden spire. It is located close to the center of Thimphu city and is one of its most iconic monuments.
  - III. **Buddha Statue:** The Buddha Dordenma is located atop a hill in Kuenselphodrang Nature Park and overlooks the Southern entrance to Thimphu Valley. The statue fulfills an ancient prophecy dating back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D that was discovered by Terton Pema Lingpa.
  - IV. **FOLK HERITAGE MUSEUM :** Located in the capital city of Thimphu, this museum was established in 2001 and provides visitors and tourists with fascinating insights into the Bhutanese material culture and way of life. The Folk Heritage Museum is set inside a three storied, 19th century traditional house.
  - V. **THE CENTENARY FARMER'S MARKET :** Located below the main town, near the Wangchhu River, Thimphu's weekend market is by far the largest domestic market for the farmers in Bhutan.
-

**Vi. THE JUNGSHI PAPER FACTORY :** The Jungshi handmade paper factory uses traditional methods to produce the authentic Bhutanese paper known as Deh-sho. It is located approximately 1 km from Thimphu City. The factory uses the bark of two tree species, the Daphne tree and Dhekap tree in the manufacture of traditional paper. Visitors can observe the entire process of producing handmade paper using ancient traditional methods that have been practiced for generations. You can even try your hand at this ancient craft and make some paper of your very own as a souvenir. Deh-sho paper was originally used by monasteries for woodblock and manuscript books and also for writing prayer books.

**Vii. SIMTOKHA DZONG :**The name Simtokha literally means “Atop a Demon” and the legend associated with the dzong’s construction tells us that it was built in order to subdue an evil spirit that was harassing travelers in the region.

**Viii.Craft Bazaar :**Organised on Tuesday and Wednesday in Centenary Farmer’s market, under patronage of Department of cottage & small industry and in collaboration with the department of culture, tourism council and the department of agriculture marketing and cooperatives, this market offers genuine Bhutanese arts & crafts thus contributing in promotion, protection and preservation of traditional arts.

**viii.Tango Goemba :**This monastery was founded by Lama Gyalwa Lhanangpa in the 12th century and the present building was built in the 15th century by the "Divine Madman", Lama Drukpa Kuenley. The picturesque three-storey tower and several surrounding buildings were built in the 18th century by the eighth Desi, Druk Rabgyal and Shabdrung Jigme Chhogyal added the golden roof in the 19th century. Situated north of Thimphu, one way it takes about 30 minutes’ drive and one hour walk through shaded rhododendron forests to reach the monastery.

**xi.Cheri Goemba**

This monastery was built by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in 1620. A silver chorten inside the monastery holds the ashes of Shabdrung father. The Goemba is situated about half an hour walk from Dodena (alt. 2,600m).

The trail commences by crossing a traditional wooden bridge that spans the Thimphu Chhu, then climbs steeply to the monastery. Being the place where the Shabdrung spent many years in meditation, Cheri today has numerous hermitages and small temples located on its slopes, commanding spectacular views. The one way walk to the monastery is approx 4.5 km, taking about 2 hours.

From	To	Distance	Driving Time
Paro	Thimphu	65kms	1hr
Paro	Haa	65kms	1.5-2hrs
Thimphu	Haa	115kms	3-4hrs
Thimphu	Punakha	77kms	3hrs
Thimphu	Wangdue Phodrang	70kms	3hrs
Trongsa	Bumthang	68kms	2hrs
Bumthang	Mongar	198kms	7-8hrs
Mongar	Trashigang	91kms	3-4hrs
Trashigang	Trashiyangtse	55kms	2hrs

