



Tour Details
[Short Overview of Places](#)

BHUTAN: A JOURNEY WITH KHANDRO DORJE PHAGMO

May 17–27, 2027

A Pureland Project Cultural Journey & Fundraiser

This intimate journey to Bhutan offers a rare opportunity to experience the country's Buddhist culture, extraordinary Himalayan landscapes, and living traditions while spending meaningful time with **Khandro Dorje Phagmo Rinpoche and the community of Ngajur Pema Chopheling Monastery**.

This is not simply a sightseeing tour. The journey is designed around **relationship, cultural exchange, spiritual practice, service, and learning**. Proceeds from the trip support The Pureland Project and the communities and projects we partner with, including the Dorje Phagmo Foundation.

Bhutan

Bhutan is a small Himalayan kingdom between India and Tibet, known for its dramatic mountains, Buddhist monasteries, forests, traditional architecture, and commitment to protecting its cultural and natural heritage.

Bhutan has maintained a remarkably strong relationship between everyday life, Buddhist practice, culture, and the natural environment. Dzongkha is the national language, although Bhutan is home to many languages, and English is widely used in education.

May is **spring in Bhutan**. Because the country rises from subtropical valleys to Himalayan peaks, temperatures can vary considerably as we travel. Come prepared for warm days, cool mountain mornings and evenings, sun, and occasional rain.

Khandro Dorje Phagmo Rinpoche

At the heart of this journey is time with **Khandro Dorje Phagmo Rinpoche (Farchen Zangmo)**, a Bhutanese Buddhist teacher whose life and work are deeply connected to caring for people who might otherwise have few places to turn.

After completing years of Buddhist study and retreat, Khandro returned to Bhutan and established a monastic community in Zhemgang. Today she spends much of her time at the monastery and periodically travels to Thimphu to meet followers and raise resources for its work.

Our journey is an opportunity not only to visit sacred places, but to **meet the people who sustain these traditions and understand how Buddhist teachings of compassion are put into practice through everyday community life.**

[Learn more about Khandro Dorje Phagmo](#)

Ngajur Pema Chopeling Monastery | Zhemgang

Our primary destination is **Ngajur Pema Chopeling Monastery**, located in Kikhar in Bhutan's Zhemgang District.

Khandro Dorje Phagmo began developing the monastery after visiting the area in 2003. Alongside restoring an old temple, she established a monastic institute. The monastery reports that today approximately **50 nuns and monks** are under her care.

What makes this community particularly meaningful to The Pureland Project is its commitment to welcoming people who might otherwise experience profound exclusion. The monastery provides refuge and community for young monastics as well as elderly people, people with physical disabilities or serious illnesses, orphans, and others without adequate family support.

Here, people are offered more than shelter. The community provides **education, spiritual guidance, daily care, meaningful roles, dignity, and a place to belong.**

The Pureland Project serves as a fiscal sponsor supporting the work of the Dorje Phagmo Foundation, and this journey gives participants an opportunity to understand firsthand the community their participation helps support.

[Dorje Phagmo Foundation](#)

A Journey With Purpose

Our time in Bhutan will balance cultural exploration with a slower and more personal experience of the country.

We will visit important Buddhist and cultural sites, travel through Bhutan's mountain landscapes and villages, experience Bhutanese food and daily life, and spend meaningful time with the monastic community.

Rather than approaching Bhutan simply as tourists, we ask participants to arrive as **guests, students, and supporters**—ready to listen, learn, participate respectfully, and form relationships.

Bhutan itself asks visitors to respect sacred places, living culture and the country's natural environment. The country's tourism model includes a Sustainable Development Fee intended to contribute to cultural preservation, environmental protection, infrastructure and other national priorities.

[Packing list & reading list](#)
[Medical form](#)
[Waiver](#)
[Registration form](#)

Bhutanese Food

Bhutanese food is warming, simple, and often **very spicy**. Rice—particularly red rice—is central to many meals, accompanied by vegetables, lentils, cheese, and sometimes meat. Chiles are treated less as a seasoning and more as a vegetable in their own right.

Foods you are likely to encounter include:

Ema datshi — Bhutan's famous chile-and-cheese dish

Kewa datshi — potatoes cooked with cheese

Shamu datshi — mushrooms and cheese

Red rice — a Bhutanese staple

Momos — steamed dumplings with vegetable or meat fillings

Thukpa — Tibetan-influenced noodle soup

Jaju — a light Bhutanese soup

Khurle — buckwheat pancakes, particularly associated with central Bhutan

The Pureland Project: Bhutan 2027

Khandro Dorje Phagmo & Ngajur Pema Chopeling Monastery

Monday, May 17 | Arrive in Bhutan — Paro

Everyone arrives in Bhutan on May 17 in PARO

This small-group cultural, spiritual, and service journey is centered around Khandro Dorje Phagmo and Ngajur Pema Chopeling Monastery in Kikhar, Bhutan.

Unlike a traditional sightseeing tour, we will spend the majority of our journey traveling to, staying with, and learning from the monastery community. Along the way, we will also experience some of Bhutan's important Buddhist, cultural, and natural sites.

Our schedule at the monastery will remain intentionally flexible. We are guests of a living monastic community, and teachings, ceremonies, service, meals, and opportunities to spend time together will take precedence over a rigid itinerary.

Arrival at Paro International Airport and welcome by our Bhutanese guide and driver.

Transfer to hotel, settle in, and acclimatize.

Afternoon:

- Walk through Paro
- Rinpung Dzong
- Explore Paro shops and town
- Trip orientation and opening circle
- Introduction to Bhutanese culture and etiquette

Welcome dinner.

Overnight: Paro

Tuesday, May 18 | Tiger's Nest → Thimphu

Early breakfast and departure for **Paro Taktsang — Tiger's Nest Monastery**.

Hike through pine forest to the spectacular monastery built into the cliffs above the Paro Valley.

- Approximately 2–3 hours uphill
- Optional horses for part of the ascent
- Visit monastery and sacred sites
- Lunch at Taktsang viewpoint/cafeteria
- Hike down

Late afternoon drive approximately 1.5 hours to **Thimphu**.

Dinner and evening reflection.

Overnight: Thimphu

Wednesday, May 19 | Thimphu → Punakha → Trongsa

Breakfast.

Visit **Buddha Dordenma**, overlooking the Thimphu Valley.

Drive across **Dochula Pass** and stop at the 108 chortens.

Continue to **Punakha Dzong**, one of Bhutan's most beautiful and historically important fortress-monasteries.

Lunch in Punakha.

Continue through the mountains toward Trongsa.

Evening arrival, dinner, and rest.

Overnight: Trongsa

Thursday, May 20 | Trongsa → Zhemgang → Kikhar

Breakfast.

Morning visit to **Trongsa Dzong** and its temples.

Continue toward Zhemgang District and into central Bhutan.

Lunch along the way.

Drive to **Kikhar and Ngajur Pema Chopheling Monastery**.

Arrival at the Monastery

Meet Khandro Dorje Phagmo, the monks and nuns, and members of the monastery community as available.

Settle into our accommodations and learn about monastery life and customs.

Shared dinner.

Evening prayer, practice, or quiet reflection.

Overnight: Ngajur Pema Chopheling Monastery

Friday, May 21 | Monastery Life

Optional early morning practice.

Breakfast.

Our first full day will be devoted to getting to know the monastery community and settling into its daily rhythm.

Possible activities include:

- Morning prayers
- Time with Khandro
- Introduction to the monastery and its history
- Meeting monks and nuns
- Meditation and Buddhist teachings
- Helping prepare meals
- Gardening
- Service projects
- Walking in the surrounding community
- Chöd practice
- Sharing meals and tea

Evening reflection.

Overnight: Monastery

Saturday, May 22 | Service & Community

Optional morning meditation and practice.

Breakfast.

A full day of **service, learning, and community exchange**.

Rather than arriving with a predetermined service project, we will ask our hosts what is genuinely useful while we are there.

Depending on current needs, this could include work in the garden, kitchen, monastery grounds, maintenance, educational activities, or simply participating in daily life.

Shared lunch.

Afternoon service and cultural exchange.

Dinner and evening practice.

Overnight: Monastery

Sunday, May 23 | Indigenous Bridges Exchange

Morning practice and breakfast.

Today will include a special focus on **Indigenous Bridges**, The Pureland Project's program creating opportunities for Indigenous people from different cultures to meet and learn directly from one another.

Our scholarship participant will have an opportunity to share their own culture and community while learning from people at the monastery.

Conversations may explore:

- Traditional knowledge
- Land and spirituality
- Cultural continuity
- Foodways
- Language
- Community care
- Traditional livelihoods
- Intergenerational knowledge
- The challenges of sustaining culture in a rapidly changing world

The purpose is exchange rather than presentation: **people sitting together, sharing experiences, asking questions, and discovering connections across cultures.**

Dinner and evening reflection.

Overnight: Monastery

Monday, May 24 | Practice, Learning & Daily Life

Another full day immersed in monastery life.

Possible activities:

- Teachings with Khandro
- Morning prayers
- Meditation
- Chöd practice
- Cooking together
- Gardening and service
- Walking in the surrounding landscape
- Time with monks and nuns
- Learning about the monastery's approach to community care
- Music, storytelling, and cultural exchange

The schedule will remain intentionally open.

Overnight: Monastery

Tuesday, May 25 | Final Full Day at the Monastery

Our final full day is reserved for the relationships that have developed during our stay.

Rather than filling the day with scheduled activities, we will leave room for teachings, conversations, service, practice, and time together.

We will end our stay with a **gratitude gathering with the monastery community**, followed by a shared meal.

Closing monastery reflection.

Overnight: Monastery

Wednesday, May 26 | Kikhar → Thimphu / Paro

Early breakfast.

Say goodbye to our monastery family and begin our journey west.

This will be a long driving day through central Bhutan, with stops for meals, tea, stretching, and photographs.

The drive also gives us time to reflect together on our experience.

Depending upon timing and Khandro's schedule, we may stop in Thimphu for time with Khandro and the Dorje Phagmo Foundation.

Continue to **Paro**.

Final dinner and closing circle.

Overnight: Paro

Thursday, May 27 | Depart Bhutan

Early breakfast.

Transfer to **Paro International Airport**.

All participants depart Bhutan on May 27.

International travel home or onward independent travel.

Additional possibilities depending upon flight schedules and Khandro's availability:

- Tashichho Dzong
- Memorial Chorten
- Bhutanese arts and handicrafts
- Traditional medicine
- Local markets

- National cultural sites
- Final shopping and independent exploration

Closing Circle

We will gather for our final reflection on what we have learned, the relationships we have formed, and how we carry those relationships home.

Closing lunch or dinner together.

Transfer to Paro for departure or an additional overnight depending upon international flight schedules.

The Heart of the Journey

Unlike a traditional Bhutan sightseeing itinerary, **approximately four days and three nights of this journey are devoted to Ngajur Pema Chopeling Monastery and its community**, with additional time with Khandro in Thimphu whenever her schedule allows.

The monastery is not simply another destination on the itinerary. **It is the reason for the journey.**

Our visits to Tiger's Nest, Thimphu, Punakha and Trongsa help us understand the broader landscape, history, Buddhist traditions, and culture surrounding the community we have come to support.

The schedule at the monastery will therefore remain flexible. If Khandro offers a teaching, a ceremony takes place, someone needs help in the garden, the nuns invite us into the kitchen, or the community simply wants to sit together over tea, **that becomes our itinerary.**

May 17–27, 2027

10 nights / 11 days

Small group | Cultural immersion | Service | Buddhist practice | Indigenous exchange | Fundraiser for The Pureland Project and Dorje Phagmo Foundation

One logistical point I would verify before publishing this as final: **May 17–27 is very tight if May 17 and 18 are both consumed by U.S.–Bhutan travel.** If you want *four full days* at the monastery plus Tiger's Nest, Thimphu, Punakha and Trongsa without the trip feeling rushed, May 17 should ideally be the international departure date and May 27 the Bhutan departure date, with the exact international routing built around that.