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AMANKORA



As majestic as it is notoriously mysterious, Bhutan is only slowly opening up to foreign visitors, and remains enticingly devoid of the trappings of tourism. Spread across the country, Amankora's five lodges – Paro, Thimphu, Gangtey, Punakha and Bumthang – offer unprecedented access to the world's last surviving Buddhist kingdom. Combining the Sanskrit word for peace with the Bhutanese for circular journey, Amankora allows guests to create a tailor-made tour of their own, visiting all or a selection of the lodges, with a driver and guide provided for the duration of their stay.

Location

- Near the airport, Paro is the largest lodge, and usually the start and/or end point of an Amankora journey
- Thimphu lodge lies within reach of the capital's shops and sights
- Gangtey lodge overlooks a valley in the Black Mountains National Park
- Punakha lodge lies in a valley with a uniquely sub-tropical climate
- Bumthang lodge is further east, in the country's most historic and sacred region

Getting There

- Paro lodge is 20 minutes' drive from Paro International Airport
- Bumthang lodge is 15 minutes' drive from Bathpalathang Domestic Airport
- International flights to Paro International from Bangkok, Delhi, Kolkatta, Singapore and Kathmandu



Accommodation

Across the five lodges, Amankora's 76 suites fuse contemporary design with rustic materials to create a sleek yet convivial atmosphere. Open-plan bedrooms and living rooms have kingsize beds, window seats and traditional bukhari wood burners. Ensuite bathrooms, clad in terrazzo, centre on a large freestanding bathtub.

Paro	24 Suites	52 m ²	560 ft ²
Thimphu	16 Suites	52 m ²	560 ft ²
Gangtey	8 Suites	52 m ²	560 ft ²
Punakha	12 Suites	52-144 m ²	560-1550 ft ²
Bumthang	16 Suites	52 m ²	560 ft ²

Paro Lodge

- Hidden in thick pine forest, Paro suites feature walls clad in wood and black steel panelling

Thimphu Lodge

- Located in the capital's Motithang area, and built in the style of a traditional dzong fortress
- Open-plan wood-panelled suites

Punakha Lodge

- Reached by a suspension bridge over the Mo Chhu River
- Incorporates a traditional Bhutanese farmhouse built by a former chief abbot
- Suites are identical to those at Paro, with views of an orange orchard and rice terraces
- Heated outdoor Infinity Pool with views over rice terraces
- Additional two storey block containing four Suites. Each Mo Chhu Suite can be combined with a Suite to create a 2-bedroom unit.

Gangtey Lodge

- Set on a forested knoll within a wildlife reserve, with views of a 16th-century monastery
- Suites are identical to those at Thimphu

Bumthang Lodge

- Bumthang lodge resides next to a former royal palace in the Choekhor Valley
- The area is home to 29 temples and monasteries, and is a treasure-trove of traditional art
- Suites are similar to those at Paro



Dining

An array of Bhutanese, Western and Indian dishes are served across all five Amankora lodges, using local ingredients such as yak meat and fresh honey from the Bumthang Valley. Private dining can be arranged, indoors or outdoors, for intimate dinners or group celebrations

Paro Lodge

- The dining room features an external terrace overlooking a small stream
- Views extend to snow-covered Jhomolhari and the ruins of the ancient dzong

Thimphu Lodge

- Soaring ceilings and wood panelled walls complement an outdoor dining deck
- Views of the nearby stream and surrounding forest
- Traditional Bhutanese cuisine available

Gangtey Lodge

- Large family-style dining tables and floor-to-ceiling windows with outdoor dining options on the terrace and viewing deck
- Sweeping views of the valley and a 16th-century monastery

Punakha Lodge

- Occupying an old farmhouse, the dining room extends to an outdoor deck
- Views of the valley and rice fields extends to an outdoor deck with an adjacent tea room

Bumthang Lodge

- Shaded by fruit trees, the courtyard provides an alfresco dining venue
- The interior dining area features a cosy fireplace
- Views of the courtyard and the old palace

Other Facilities

Libraries

- A library in each lodge features a range of books on Buddhism, local folklore, textiles, wildlife, Bhutanese history and the Himalayas
- Venue for private dining and in-house activities
- Desktop PCs available for guest use

Boutiques

- A selection of traditional handicrafts and art are available to buy from Thimphu and Paro lodges



Relaxation and Fitness

Incorporating Himalayan plants and herbs, different spa therapies are available across Amankora's five lodges, offering a uniquely Bhutanese healing experience.

Paro Lodge

- Paro's two-storey spa is surrounded by glistening conifers in the forest
- Try a herb-infused hot stone bath, followed by a traditional massage
- Facilities include a glass-walled yoga studio, a sauna, steam room, changing areas
- The five treatment rooms each have a shower and an outdoor hot stone bath

Thimphu Lodge

- Thimphu's signature treatment is a Grounding, Purifying, Nourishing Massage Ritual
- Himalayan oxygen treatments and facials also a highlight in the Thimphu and Paro spas
- Facilities include three treatment rooms, a steam room and changing areas

Punakha Lodge

- At Punakha, try a Grounding, Purifying, Nourishing Face Ritual made with locally sourced products such as homemade yoghurt, Bumthang honey and orange
- The two-storey spa includes a yoga/meditation room with views of rice paddies, two treatment rooms, a steam room, changing areas and an outdoor heated Infinity Pool

Gangtey Lodge

- Experience a candlelit traditional hot stone bath; a sliding bamboo door reveals a panorama of the valley
- Spa facilities include two massage rooms and changing areas

Bumthang Lodge

- Zen massage is the signature treatment at Bumthang
- Three intimate treatment rooms, a steam room and changing areas

Activities & Excursions

Hiking and cycling are arguably the best ways to explore the incredible landscape, and every lodge offers an exhaustive list of options and routes. In addition, guests will be given a 'top ten' list of activities and experiences to try in each locality. Below is a selection of those available.

Paro

- Embark on the exhilarating four-hour hike to the Tiger's Nest, the iconic 7th-century monastery that clings to the mountainside, 900 metres up
- Take a guided cultural tour of Paro, taking in the major museums, institutions and sights
- Enjoy a private lecture on Bhutan and Gross National Happiness
- Dining experiences include a barbeque lunch at the Tiger's Nest base or a traditional tented dinner at the lodge courtyard, warmed by fire cauldrons

Thimphu

- Guided tour taking in the major museums and cultural institutions, as well as exploring shops, boutiques, markets, and the city's best bars and restaurants
- Take an archery lesson and discover more about Bhutan's national sport
- Pay a late-afternoon visit to the 12th-century temple overlooking Thimphu, before watching the sunset from the Radio Tower
- Enjoy a private lecture on Bhutan and Buddhism with the Mynak Rinpoche, the twelfth spiritual

leader of the Mynak province in Eastern Tibet

Gangtey

- Relax in a traditional outdoor hot-stone bath with magnificent views of the countryside
- Donate a meal to the monks, join them for evening or morning prayers, or experience a spiritual cleansing ritual
- Enjoy a Bhutanese meal in a candlelit potato hut, warmed by a bukhari stove and accompanied by folk music and song

Punakha

- Visit the beautiful 17th-century Punakha Dzong, and the 15th-century 'fertility temple' Chime Lhakhang
- Enjoy a four-course barbeque at a peaceful spot on the Mo Chhu river, surrounded by pines and rice fields, and watch the stars rise over Himalayan peaks
- Visit the morning market with the chef and take part in a Bhutanese cooking class at the lodge

Bumthang

- Lunch on local produce at a nearby farmhouse, tour the Red Panda brewery, the country's sole producer of weiss beer, and explore the Wangdichhoeling palace, next to the lodge
- Cultural and spiritual experiences include visits to monasteries and nunneries, butter lamp lighting, astrology readings and evening prayers with the monks
- Enjoy a private barbeque by the firepit with a personalised menu

Amankora

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