

amankora

Experience Guide



Amarkora Bumthang



Exploring Bumthang's Eastern Echoes

Bumthang, situated at 8462 ft / 2580 m above sea level, is the most eastern point of your pilgrimage with Amankora through the Land of the Thunder Dragon and is considered by the locals as the spiritual hub of the country. The valley and many connecting ones are steeped in history and the expression of deep spiritual beliefs. Bumthang also houses many of the spiritual tests, which if you dare, show you how free of sin you are or aren't, or whether you will (or have) lived up to the expectations of your parents. From chain mails that have to be carried around the altar room three times, to tunnels and holes in stones, that when found with closed eyes, will indicate whether you are honest - Bumthang has it all and more.

The four valleys of Bumthang - Choekhor, Tang, Ura and Chhume offer numerous experiences whether you want to hike, bike, discover temples, watch wildlife, or learn more about Bhutanese lifestyle and culture. We have discovered several exciting things to do in the area and gathered the following information for you so that you can get a better idea of all the possibilities. We hope that we can tempt you to discover the valley with us and that this will help you get the most out of your time in Bumthang. We would be very happy to give more information or help tailor-make the experiences even further. We hope you will enjoy exploring the magical Bumthang Valley.

Because some activities, hikes and excursions require planning, we recommend that you discuss what you might be interested in doing with your guide or with one of our family members at least one day in advance.



Bhutanese Name Giving Ceremony at Sey Lhakhang

Our name-giving ceremony is unique. Our names are given by Lamas and Rinpoches from the temples. Bhutanese names have nothing to do with caste and we don't have a family name. The first names for both males and females will be the same. It is only from the second name that we can distinguish between the two genders. No matter what age you are, you can always get a new name. Coming to Bhutan is an enthralling experience and getting a Bhutanese name is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Should you wish to have a Bhutanese Name from Sey Lhakhang, we can arrange a small ceremony followed by name-giving by the Lama. You will have to provide your date of birth. After the Lama receives your date of birth, he will perform a Buddhist name calculation and present you with a name and explain its meaning. With the new name and blessings, you will light the butter lamps for well-being. This blessing will take place in the private altar room of the monastery. Monks will serve you some milk tea with Bhutanese snacks.

Astrology Reading by the Village Astrologer

Our gifted local astrologer tells the fortunes of the villagers and religious people in the valley. Some come from other valleys far and wide to learn their fortunes and uncover some connections with our past.

If you wish to have your fortune told, we will take you to his house in the nearby village, or we can invite him to meet you at the lodge.



Butter Lamp Lighting at Jambay Lhakhang

The Butter Lamp or Karme represents the dispelling of the darkness of ignorance. The lighting of butter lamps is an offering of light to the deities and is one of the most common means of increasing one's merit. It also helps to focus the mind and aid meditation.

The Jambay Lhakhang or Temple of Maitreya is said to be one of the 108 temples that were built by Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo in 659 CE on a single day, to pin down the demon. Only the inner core of Jampa Lhakhang was built by Gyap Songtsen Gembo where we can still see the statue of Buddha Maitreya. In the 8th Century, when Ugyen Guru Rimpoche visited Bumthang at the invitation of King Sindha Raja, it is said that Guru used Jambay Lhakhang as his residence where we can still see a small room above the entrance of the main temple.

Every year Jambay Lhakhang hosts a festival where they perform a Fire Blessing (Mewang) and Naked Dance which is popular all over Bhutan and is the biggest attraction for tourists in Bumthang. The Naked Dance was introduced in the valley by Tertön Dorji Lingpa when he was extending the Jampa Lhakhang from Trongsa Nabji Korphu.

The temple caretaker will assist you in lighting your 108 butter lamps. It is said that this will protect you from evil and help you reach enlightenment.

Take time to sit down and relax to the sound of a caretaker spinning the prayer wheel as he chants, or to admire the old female resident who has dedicated 39 years of her life to the Lhakhang.



Talk about Birds, Flora and Fauna with Bird Specialist Ap Sherab

If you are interested in learning more about birds and/or the flora and fauna of our Kingdom, we would love you to meet our local specialist Sherab. Sherab has researched the topic for more than 15 years and is an award-winning specialist on birds. In addition to giving you a lecture, Sherab can also take you on an early-morning bird-watching tour around the valley or a hike through the forest to forage the local flora and fauna.



Visit and Learn About Bhutan's Indigenous Honeybees and Apiculture or Beekeeping with Beekeepers

Spend a few hours visiting the Beekeeping Centre where they produce honey from beehives in areas surrounded by golden clovers, apples and wildflowers monitored by the Beekeepers' Association of Bhutan. The honey produced from the valley is very pure and a healthy gift of nature - truly one of Bumthang's culinary treasures.

The chairman of the cooperative Tul Bdr. Chhetri will explain to you the method of bee cultivation from beginning to end. This process involves several steps from farming, harvesting, bottling and labelling, to pressing the final product ready for the market. Beekeeping has been a seasonal job and an extra source of income for Bumthaps for years.

There are already more than 140 beekeepers in the district today with more than 10,000 hives and many more looking forward to taking up farming. During your visit, they will offer you Propolis Honey Wine, and honey ginger tea while you enjoy views in this beautiful and tranquil spot.

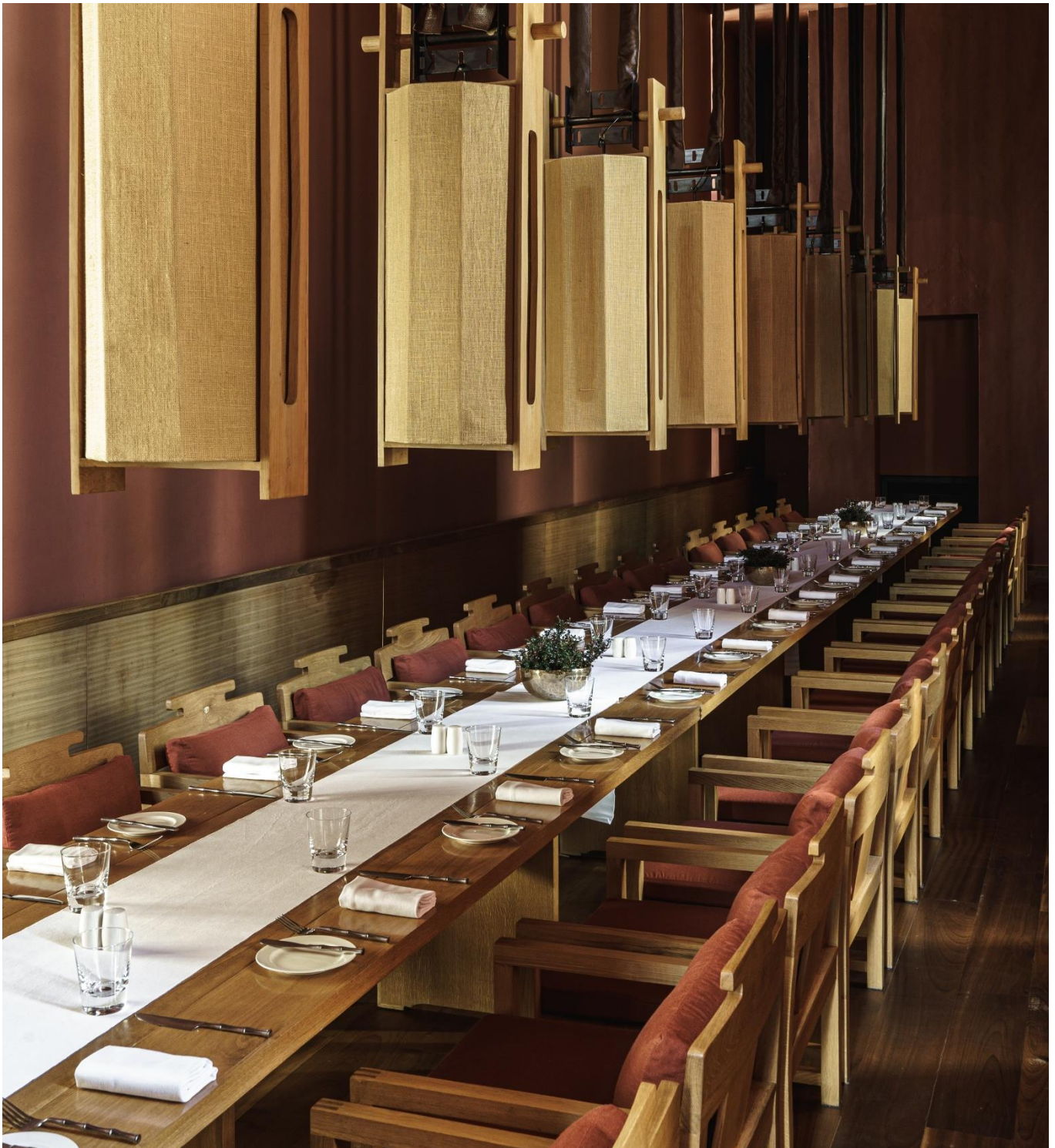


Relax with a Bumthang Zen Massage

A balance between dynamic stretches and pressure point stimulation, followed by soothing oil massage techniques to enhance blood circulation, release toxins and increase joint flexibility.

Benefits

- Reduces chronic pain and muscle tension and improves range of motion
- Eases restlessness and promotes relaxation
- Revives fatigued muscles



Culinary Journeys

With Bumthang's reputation as the "food basket of Bhutan", the culinary journeys in all five lodges offer a gastronomic glimpse into the culture and landscapes that helped shape these flavours.

Vegan, vegetarian and other culinary options are available in all the private dining experiences for those with dietary restrictions and food preferences. These options can be arranged upon request and can be designed into the private dining setting and experience.



Enjoy a Private BBQ by the Fire Pit

Our fire-pit area is the perfect setting for a truly romantic dining experience, and while on holiday, every day is an occasion to celebrate. On a clear, starry night, we will set up a table by the fire and arrange a barbecue feast. Our chef will be very happy to create the menu with you. The chef will cook for you, the musician will play, and you will have your own server who will make sure it will be an evening to remember.



Beer and Cheese Tasting at Red Panda Brewery

The Red Panda Brewery was started in 2006 by Fritz Maurer, originally Swiss but a Bhutanese citizen since 1976. His brewery was the first established beer brewery in the country, and he is still the sole producer of the specialty *Weissbier*. A visit to the brewery includes a 30-minute tour of the premises to learn more about the production process of Red Panda, the beer ingredients, the history of the beer and the health benefits of this Bhutanese specialty. The tour concludes with Red Panda beer and local cheese tasting in the brewery garden. For those who prefer non-alcoholic beverages, Bumthang-produced apple juice from the brewery across the road is also available.

15-minute drive to the Red Panda Brewery. Please notify us one day in advance if you wish to go for the tour and tasting.



Making Khabzey Biscuits in a Farmhouse

Bhutanese biscuits are called *Khabzey* and come in many different colours and patterns. Sometimes they are shaped like flowers, hearts, knots, or the Bhutanese eight lucky signs. Making beautiful and tasty *khabzey* is an art and our local farmhouse grandmother is an expert with many years of experience. If you would like to learn how to master this art in authentic surroundings, we will gladly arrange for a lesson in a local farmhouse while you enjoy tea and other snacks.

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