

amankora

Experience Guide



Amankora Gangtey



Exploring Gangtey's Idyllic Charm

Gangtey and Phobjikha Valley are some of the most stunning areas in the country; the wide flat valley without any trees after the hard climb through dense forest is extremely rare in Bhutan. In contrast to some parts of Bhutan where modern development is already very apparent, Gangtey is a place with natural beauty, untouched scenery, local traditions and culture, and unconstrained peacefulness. Unlike the rest of Bhutan where you walk from one stunning viewpoint to the next, in Phobjikha Valley you will have constant breathtaking views wherever you venture. To ensure that you get the most out of your time in Gangtey, we have gathered a variety of activities, experiences and horseback rides that will allow you to experience the natural splendour of the valley and its surroundings.

The paths throughout the valley have largely been created by the locals and the animals wandering from pasture to pasture. For your safety and convenience, we would suggest you keep to the recognisable footpaths and roads and always wear sturdy footwear or trekking boots. The paths can be quite muddy and wet during the rainy season.

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.



Offering a Meal to the Monks at Gangtey Goempa

Ranging in age from 7 to 40, 270 monks reside in the Gangtey *Goemba/Shedra* (Monastic Schools). While many come for different reasons; religious and spiritual fulfilment, four, six- or nine-year courses in Nyingmapa Buddhism, most come because their families are too poor to keep them at home. The *Shedra* is also the home of nine young reincarnates. The *Goemba/Shedra* does not receive any financial support from the government, and therefore solely relies on different sponsors to operate. The meals for the monks are parties financed by the generous Gangtey Trulku Rinpoche, private sponsors, and the villagers with whom the *Goemba/Shedra* has a “barter system” - in return for food donations, the monks will give daily prayers to the villagers for peace and protection.

The three daily meals mainly consist of rice. Breakfast includes rice with *ezay* (chilli dip) and *suja* (butter tea). Lunch and dinner consist of rice and one curry.

Donating a meal to the monks is a generous and very rewarding gesture that you can personally get involved in. Our Chef will gladly accompany you to the local shops in Gangtey where you can take part in purchasing rice and vegetables. You are also welcome to overlook the meal preparations in the kitchen before taking part in the meal service itself. Sometimes sponsors prefer to give a monetary donation and not take part in the meal service, which is also an option.



Spiritual Cleansing (Buddhist Fumigation)

It is a common belief that every place has its local protective deity or spirit. To please the spirit and keep the spirit happy, the Bhutanese fumigate every morning and during special *pujas* (religious ceremonies). It is also a ritual for self-cleansing of all bad spirits surrounding us, and to be blessed with good luck.

Spiritual cleansing involves the burning of selected herbs in a fumigation stupa. Here at the lodge, our *stupa* is located at the top of the hill in front of the main entrance of the lodge. Should you wish to perform your own cleansing ceremony, this should take place early in the morning in the presence of a monk who will assist you in the ritual.



Morning Yoga

We all want to be healthy, look good and live a good life, both physically and spiritually. Join our experienced yoga buddy. For an energizing complimentary morning yoga session in our spa relaxation room between 7 AM to 8 AM that is suitable for all ability levels. There is no need to bring any equipment - just come as you are. You will enjoy a soothing program of breathing exercises followed by a series of poses. Our Yoga Buddy will be assisting you as needed. Please dial extension “o” the evening before for a following morning yoga to confirm your participation.

Guests seeking more specialized instruction can arrange for a private yoga session at your convenience. Our Yoga Buddy will happily craft a program geared toward your ability level and/or yoga style of interest.



Traditional Hot Stone Bath

The Amankora Hot Stone Bath is situated in a candle-lit stone hut on a hill, a ten-minute walk from the Gangtey lodge. You have the unique opportunity to soak in a wooden tub out in the open and enjoy this traditional Bhutanese healing experience. The sliding bamboo doors allow full privacy yet offer open views of the magnificent Phobjikha Valley.

Your body will benefit from the minerals in the heated stones and the healing effects of the local Khempa herb. Sit back and unwind in the bath for as long as you wish while sipping on a cup of hot apple cider and watching the sunset.



Culinary Journeys

With Gangtey's homegrown potatoes, chillies and organic seasonal crops on focus, 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.



Candle-lit Potato Shed Dinner

Situated a ten-minute walk from our lodge is a stone-built potato shed which is built to house the local farmers' autumn potato harvest. Amid all the spuds, we have mounted a *bukhari*, the traditional wood-burning oven to make the shed comfortably warm. With Bhutanese wooden furniture and flickering candles, the perfect setting for a romantic dinner is created. Start your evening with some *ara*, the local wine, by the bonfire outside, before retiring to your seats amidst the potatoes. Enjoy your Bhutanese meal in the rural surroundings whilst a musician enriches the atmosphere with Bhutanese instruments and folk songs.

A 10-minute walk from the lodge on a dirt road. The road is often very muddy during rain. We recommend good shoes and warm clothes. Please give us at least one day's notice.

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