

amankora

Experience Guide



Amankora Punakha



Exploring Punakha's Sunny Sides

Punakha sits on an elevation of 4,100 ft/1,250 m in a fertile, warm, and beautiful valley at the junction of the Mo Chhu (Female River) and Pho Chhu (Male River). The sub-tropical environment allows the cultivation of rice and numerous fruits such as oranges, mangoes, and bananas. The valley and the surrounding mountainsides offer a large variety of attractive places to hike and bike. You can also explore monasteries and Bhutanese farming traditions as they have been carried out for centuries. Below we have listed some activities, outings, hikes, and bike trails that you might like to venture on whilst staying with us here in Punakha.

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

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 a day or two in advance.



Long Life Blessing at Dho Gaja Lam Temple

The blessing for long life is called *Tshewang* and is a ritual blessing to extend the astrologer's purported prophecies. This elaborate one-hour ritual by six to eight monks involves ample prayers, mantras and a final Dorji (thunderbolt) or a sacred scripture blessing on the head. It takes place at the Dho Gaja Lam Temple, 15-minute drive from the lodge founded by Drubthop Naggi Rinchen (1384-1468), an important master in the Kalachakra lineage. Originally from Bengal, He was one of the last great Indian Scholars to visit Bhutan. It is said that he liberated his mother who was born as a frog under a Hugh rock by splitting the boulder with lightning through his power. The rock is visible even today and is considered sacred and wish-fulfilling.



Morning Yoga

For a morning of grounding and balance, join our experienced yoga buddy for an energising complimentary yoga session in our spa yoga and movement 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 inform our team the evening before for the following morning yoga to confirm your participation.

Guests seeking more specialised 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.



Grounding Face Ritual

Developed to promote emotional healing and inner peace and in return bring the body and mind to a state of harmony, Amankora Punakha's Grounding Face Ritual incorporates quartz to facilitate healing, frankincense to aid rejuvenation and hyaluronic acid to boost cell hydration.

Lymphatic and muscular massage techniques stimulate circulation and raise vibrational energy, while acupuncture using heated Himalayan salt poultices leaves the skin radiant. The treatment ends with a Peruvian black mud together with an amethyst crystal mask and Tibetan head massage.



Rafting or Kayaking

Spend a morning on the water and discover a whole new angle of Bhutan. If you are new to rafting and looking for an enjoyable and easy scenic float down the river and along with the view of Changyul Valley where you can see the old monument Galem House, we recommend the Mo Chu (Female River) that flows below the lodge. On the other hand, the Pho Chu (Male River), is for the more adventurous who wish to tackle some of the kingdom's white water while enjoying the pristine forests and farmland on either side of the river. Rafting offers a more leisurely adventure with a private raft for your group of up to 8 people or if you wish to go solo, kayaking offers as much of a challenge as it does thrill.



Learn How to Make Sacred Torma Cakes

Torma is a sacred cake made mainly with butter and barley flour used to adorn altars during traditional Buddhist celebrations and ceremonies. Created primarily by monks as offerings during holy rituals and festivals, the colourful cake is dyed with colourful pigments, shaped by hand, blessed and finally offered in accordance to its specific creation - whether to represent a deity, consumed partially as part of a ritual in a feast, as a healing, medicinal symbol or even as a vessel to obstruct spirits.

In Amankora Punakha, torma-making classes are held during auspicious dates and festivals by a monk, where guests are invited to partake in this unique heritage practiced all over the Buddhist realms of the Himalayas. Special private torma-making classes can be requested in advance.



Culinary Journeys

With Punakha's subtropical produce and year-round crops on highlight, 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.



Private BBQ Lunch or Dinner by the Riverside

A truly unique experience! Just below the lodge at the edge of the Mo Chhu (Female River) is our favourite spot for a peaceful private BBQ lunch or dinner. Our Chef will freshly prepare a tailor-made four-course menu which will be served by your private server. During lunch, you sit in the shade of pine trees and enjoy the views and sounds of the river, the surrounding rice fields and the Himalayan mountain peaks in the background while smelling the charcoal and exotic aromas of the food sizzling on the grill. If you are looking for a more romantic experience, we recommend the BBQ dinner with a white tablecloth, candlelight, lanterns and a bonfire where you watch dusk falling until a million stars rise.

Bhutanese Cooking Class

Master the art of Bhutanese cooking by signing up for a private cooking class with our chef. With many years of culinary experience, he is happy to share his knowledge and newfound passion for Bhutanese cuisine. The location of the cooking class is the former farmhouse kitchen - where else could you better learn how to prepare Ema Datse and Momos? You can choose from a list of the most popular Bhutanese dishes that you are interested in learning. After your hands-on cooking class in the afternoon, you can enjoy the exotic aromas of your newly acquired culinary skills during dinner. Best of all, take a taste of Bhutan home to impress your family and friends with!



Breakfast at Khamsum Chorten

After a good night's sleep, get an early start to witness how night slowly turns into day as you venture on your morning walk towards the extraordinary Khamsum Chorten. From the lodge, the walking trail takes you through farmyards and rice paddies and offers a wonderful opportunity to experience the local farming traditions. While you enjoy the superb views of the valley from the chorten rooftop, your guide will have found the perfect picnic spot in the gardens surrounding the chorten and laid out your continental breakfast for you to enjoy in the morning sun.

Khamsum Yuelley Namgyel Chorten is 100 ft / 30 m tall and can be seen in the distance when driving or walking up from the footbridge towards the lodge.

The three-leveled chorten took eight and a half years to build and was consecrated in 1999. Dedicated to the Fifth King, it was built to remove negative forces and to provide peace, stability, and harmony in an ever-changing world. It is therefore filled with every form of colourful protector imaginable.

From the Khamsum suspension bridge to the Chorten: 30-45 minutes. From the Chorten to the lodge: 45 minutes-1 hour. We recommend starting your hike as early as you feel comfortable.

Difficulty level - Moderate

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