# Black Necked Crane Tshechu (Festival) - 8 Days

Experience the **Black Necked Crane Tshechu**, an exuberant celebration in Bhutan marking the annual arrival of black-necked cranes, with a rich tapestry of **Bhutanese cultural traditions**. This notable occasion holds both **spiritual and cultural significance**, presenting a colorful array of **traditional dances, masked performances**, and **rituals**. The festival serves as a **gathering of communities** to promote **awareness for conservation** and impart **environmental education**, adorned with crane-themed artistry and adorned with blessings for the well-being of these majestic birds. With **folk melodies, vibrant costumes**, and the delectable tastes of **local dishes**, the **Black Necked Crane Tshechu** emerges as an alluring **attraction for tourists**, embodying Bhutan's dedication to **sustaining its natural treasures** and showcasing its diverse cultural heritage.

Amen Bhutan Tours and Treks is widely recognized as the top choice for immersing yourself in the **Black Necked Crane Tshechu**. Leveraging our unparalleled proficiency in orchestrating cultural excursions throughout Bhutan, we ensure an unforgettable expedition steeped in the essence of **Bhutanese customs**. Our meticulous team meticulously orchestrates every aspect, from flawless logistics to exclusive access to festival highlights, making us the perfect partner for discerning adventurers seeking authenticity and excellence. Join us and experience firsthand why Amen Bhutan Tours and Treks is celebrated as the ultimate authority for embracing the enchantment of the -**Black Necked Crane Tshechu**.

# Itinerary

### Day 01: Arrival in Paro then transfer to Thimphu City - 1:30 hours (55km) drive

**Arrival in Paro:** Upon arrival at Paro International Airport, attendees are greeted by the breathtaking views of the Himalayan mountains, setting the stage for their Bhutanese adventure.

**Transfer to Thimphu City:** Attendees embark on a scenic drive from Paro to Thimphu, the capital city of Bhutan, which takes approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes to cover a distance of 55 kilometers.

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**Enroute Sightseeing:** During the drive, travelers have the opportunity to admire the picturesque landscapes of Bhutan, characterized by lush green valleys, cascading rivers, and traditional Bhutanese villages.

**Thimphu City:** Upon reaching Thimphu, attendees are greeted by the bustling cityscape, where modernity harmoniously blends with Bhutanese traditions and culture.

**Check-in at Accommodation:** Attendees are escorted to their respective accommodations in Thimphu, where they can relax and unwind after their journey.

**Evening Exploration:** Depending on the time of arrival, attendees may have the evening free to explore Thimphu city, visit local markets, or indulge in Bhutanese cuisine at traditional restaurants.

**Orientation:** Attendees receive a brief orientation about Thimphu city, including information about local attractions, dining options, and cultural experiences available during their stay.

**Rest and Relaxation:** After a day of travel and exploration, attendees can retire to their accommodations in Thimphu, ready to embark on the next leg of their journey in the Land of the Thunder Dragon.

## Day 02: Sightseeing tour in Thimphu

**Memorial Chorten:** Begin the day with a visit to the Memorial Chorten, a revered Buddhist stupa built in memory of the third king of Bhutan. Attendees can join locals in circumambulating the chorten, spinning prayer wheels, and offering prayers.

**Buddha Dordenma Statue:** Explore the magnificent Buddha Dordenma Statue, a towering figure overlooking Thimphu valley. Attendees can marvel at the statue's grandeur and enjoy panoramic views of the city and surrounding mountains.

**Tashichho Dzong:** Visit Tashichho Dzong, an impressive fortress and administrative center of Bhutan. Attendees can admire the intricate architecture, ornate paintings, and serene courtyards while learning about the dzong's historical and cultural significance.

**National Institute for Zorig Chusum:** Discover Bhutan's traditional arts and crafts at the National Institute for Zorig Chusum. Attendees can observe students honing their skills in painting, sculpture, woodcarving, and other traditional crafts.

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**Folk Heritage Museum:** Immerse yourself in Bhutanese culture and heritage at the Folk Heritage Museum. Attendees can explore traditional Bhutanese architecture, artifacts, and exhibits showcasing the country's rich cultural heritage.

**Changangkha Lhakhang:** Visit Changangkha Lhakhang, an ancient temple perched on a hilltop overlooking Thimphu. Attendees can receive blessings from resident monks and enjoy panoramic views of the city.

**Craft Bazaar:** Explore the vibrant Craft Bazaar, where local artisans sell a variety of handmade crafts and souvenirs. Attendees can shop for traditional Bhutanese textiles, handicrafts, and other unique items.

**Leisurely Stroll:** Conclude the day with a stroll through Thimphu's streets, soaking in the sights and sounds of the bustling city. Attendees can visit local cafes, shops, and landmarks at their own pace, immersing themselves in the vibrant culture of Bhutan's capital.

## Day 03: Drive from Thimphu to Punakha and sightseeing - 2 to 3 hours (74km) drive.

**Departure from Thimphu:** Begin the journey from Thimphu in the morning, embarking on a scenic drive towards Punakha, the ancient capital of Bhutan.

**Dochula Pass:** En route to Punakha, stop at Dochula Pass, located at an altitude of 3,100 meters (10,200 feet). Attendees can enjoy panoramic views of the Himalayan mountain range, adorned with 108 stupas and prayer flags fluttering in the breeze.

**Druk Wangyal Lhakhang:** Visit Druk Wangyal Lhakhang, a temple built in honor of the fourth king of Bhutan. Attendees can explore the temple grounds, adorned with intricate murals depicting scenes from Bhutanese history and mythology.

**Chimi Lhakhang:** Continue the journey to Punakha and make a stop at Chimi Lhakhang, also known as the "Temple of the Divine Madman." Attendees can embark on a short hike through lush rice paddies to reach the temple, dedicated to Drukpa Kunley, known for his unconventional teaching methods.

**Punakha Dzong:** Arrive in Punakha and visit Punakha Dzong, one of Bhutan's most iconic landmarks. Attendees can explore the majestic fortress-monastery, situated at the confluence of the Pho Chhu and Mo Chhu rivers, and admire its stunning architecture and serene surroundings.

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**Sangchhen Dorji Lhuendrup Lhakhang Nunnery:** Optionally, attendees can visit Sangchhen Dorji Lhuendrup Lhakhang Nunnery, perched on a ridge overlooking Punakha valley. Attendees can marvel at the panoramic views and interact with the resident nuns.

**Leisurely Exploration:** After sightseeing, attendees can enjoy a leisurely stroll around Punakha town, visit local markets, or relax by the riverside, soaking in the tranquil ambiance of this historic valley.

**Check-in at Accommodation:** Conclude the day by checking into accommodations in Punakha, where attendees can unwind and enjoy a comfortable stay amidst the natural beauty of the Punakha valley.

## Day 04: Drive from Punakha to Gangtey/Phobjikha - 2 to 3 hours (85km) drive

**Departure from Punakha:** Begin the day by departing from Punakha in the morning, embarking on a picturesque journey towards Gangtey/Phobjikha valley.

**Scenic Route:** Enjoy the scenic drive through the Bhutanese countryside, passing through verdant valleys, terraced fields, and quaint villages along the way.

**Wangdue Phodrang:** En route, make a stop at Wangdue Phodrang, a historic town known for its dzong (fortress). Attendees can explore the town and admire the impressive architecture of Wangdue Phodrang Dzong, which overlooks the convergence of the Punakha and Dang Chhu rivers.

**Gangtey/Phobjikha Valley:** Arrive at Gangtey/Phobjikha valley, a stunning glacial valley renowned for its natural beauty and rich biodiversity. Attendees can marvel at the expansive marshlands, lush forests, and panoramic views of the surrounding mountains.

**Gangtey Monastery:** Visit Gangtey Monastery, also known as Gangtey Gonpa or Gangtey Sangngak Choling Monastery. Attendees can explore this 17th-century monastery, which holds significant cultural and religious importance in Bhutan.

**Black-necked Crane Information Center:** Optionally, attendees can visit the Black-necked Crane Information Center in Phobjikha valley. Learn about the conservation efforts aimed at protecting the endangered black-necked cranes that migrate to the area during the winter months.

**Nature Walks:** Take advantage of the serene surroundings by embarking on nature walks or hikes in the Gangtey/Phobjikha valley. Attendees can enjoy the tranquility of the natural environment while spotting native flora and fauna.

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**Local Experiences:** Engage with the local community and experience traditional Bhutanese culture firsthand. Attendees may have the opportunity to participate in cultural activities, interact with villagers, and learn about local customs and traditions.

**Accommodation:** Conclude the day by checking into accommodations in Gangtey/Phobjikha valley. Whether staying in a cozy guesthouse, eco-lodge, or farmhouse, attendees can unwind and enjoy the hospitality of their hosts amidst the serene surroundings of the valley.

**Evening Relaxation:** After a day of exploration, attendees can relax and unwind, soaking in the peaceful ambiance of Gangtey/Phobjikha valley. Whether enjoying a warm cup of butter tea or stargazing under the clear night sky, the valley offers a tranquil retreat away from the hustle and bustle of city life.

## Day 05: Attend the Black-necked Crane Festival in Gangtey Goempa:

**Arrival at Gangtey Goempa:** Begin the day by arriving at Gangtey Goempa, a monastery nestled in the scenic Gangtey/Phobjikha valley. Attendees are greeted by the picturesque surroundings and the festive atmosphere of the Black-necked Crane Festival.

**Festival Opening:** Attendees gather at the monastery grounds to witness the opening ceremony of the Black-necked Crane Festival. Traditional Bhutanese rituals and prayers are conducted to invoke blessings for the festival and the well-being of the black-necked cranes.

**Cultural Performances:** Enjoy a variety of cultural performances showcasing Bhutanese traditions, including masked dances, folk songs, and traditional music. Local dancers adorned in vibrant costumes entertain attendees with their graceful movements and rhythmic performances.

**Masked Dances:** Witness mesmerizing masked dances performed by monks and local artists, depicting religious stories, legends, and moral tales. Each dance carries symbolic significance and is accompanied by traditional music and chanting.

**Crane-themed Artwork:** Explore exhibitions featuring crane-themed artwork, including paintings, sculptures, and handicrafts created by local artisans. Attendees can admire the intricate craftsmanship and learn about the significance of the black-necked cranes in Bhutanese culture.

**Conservation Awareness:** Attend educational sessions and presentations focused on black-necked crane conservation efforts. Learn about the challenges facing these majestic birds and the importance of preserving their natural habitat.

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**Environmental Education:** Engage in environmental education activities aimed at raising awareness about conservation and sustainable practices. Attendees can participate in workshops, discussions, and interactive displays highlighting the importance of environmental stewardship.

**Community Gathering:** Immerse yourself in the vibrant atmosphere of the festival as attendees from across Bhutan gather to celebrate the black-necked cranes' arrival. Enjoy the camaraderie of fellow festival-goers and the sense of community spirit that permeates the event.

**Local Cuisine:** Sample delicious Bhutanese cuisine offered at food stalls and vendors throughout the festival grounds. Indulge in traditional dishes such as ema datshi (chili cheese), momos (dumplings), and red rice, experiencing the flavors of Bhutanese culinary heritage.

**Closing Ceremony:** Conclude the day with the closing ceremony of the Black-necked Crane Festival, offering prayers of gratitude and blessings for the successful celebration. Attendees bid farewell to Gangtey Goempa, carrying with them cherished memories of the festival's cultural richness and natural beauty.

## Day 06: Drive from Gangtey to Paro - 6 to 7 hours (205km) drive

**Early Departure:** Begin the day with an early departure from Gangtey, ensuring ample time for the scenic drive to Paro.

**Gangtey Valley:** Bid farewell to the picturesque Gangtey/Phobjikha valley, known for its stunning landscapes and rich biodiversity.

**En Route Exploration:** Enjoy the journey through Bhutan's countryside, passing through verdant valleys, charming villages, and panoramic mountain vistas.

**Wangdue Phodrang:** En route, make a stop at Wangdue Phodrang, a historic town known for its dzong and traditional architecture. Attendees can explore the town and stretch their legs before continuing the journey.

**Dochula Pass:** Traverse Dochula Pass, offering breathtaking views of the Himalayan mountain range and the iconic 108 stupas. Attendees can take a moment to admire the scenery and capture photos of the majestic peaks.

**Thimphu:** Pass through Thimphu, Bhutan's capital city, where attendees can catch glimpses of the bustling cityscape and modern infrastructure. Depending on time constraints, a brief stop may be possible to explore Thimphu further.

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**Paro Valley:** Arrive in Paro Valley, known for its historic sites, cultural attractions, and natural beauty. Attendees can anticipate the sight of terraced fields, traditional Bhutanese architecture, and the meandering Paro River.

**Paro Town:** Drive through Paro town, the gateway to many of Bhutan's most iconic landmarks, including the famous Tiger’s Nest Monastery. Attendees may choose to stop and explore Paro town, visit local markets, or enjoy a meal at one of the town's eateries.

**Check-in at Accommodation:** Upon arrival in Paro, attendees can check into their accommodations and unwind after the long journey. Whether staying in a hotel, guesthouse, or traditional Bhutanese farmhouse, attendees can relax and prepare for upcoming adventures in Paro.

**Evening Relaxation:** Conclude the day with some leisure time to rest and rejuvenate. Attendees can take a leisurely stroll around their accommodation, enjoy scenic views of the surrounding mountains, or simply unwind and reflect on the day's travels.

## Day 07: sightseeing Hike to Tiger’s Nest Monastery (3,120m/10,236ft) - 3 to 4 hours (6.4km) hike

**Early Departure:** Start the day early to make the most of the hike to Tiger’s Nest Monastery. Depart from your accommodation in Paro and head towards the trailhead.

**Trailhead:** Arrive at the trailhead, located near Paro town, where the hike to Tiger’s Nest Monastery begins. Attendees can prepare for the trek and ensure they have all necessary supplies, including water, snacks, and appropriate clothing.

**Scenic Route:** Begin the hike along the well-maintained trail, surrounded by lush forests and stunning mountain scenery. The trail offers panoramic views of the Paro valley and the surrounding Himalayan peaks.

**Ascending Trails:** Ascend gradually along the trail, passing through rhododendron forests and rocky terrain. The trail is relatively steep in some sections but well-marked and manageable for hikers of all levels.

**Taktsang Cafeteria:** Midway through the hike, reach the Taktsang Cafeteria, a resting point offering refreshments and a chance to refuel. Attendees can take a break, enjoy a snack, and soak in the views of Tiger’s Nest Monastery perched on the cliffside.

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**Final Ascent:** Continue the ascent towards Tiger’s Nest Monastery, following the trail as it winds its way up the mountainside. Attendees can take their time, enjoying the natural beauty and serenity of the surroundings.

**Viewpoints:** Along the way, stop at various viewpoints that offer stunning vistas of Tiger’s Nest Monastery and the Paro valley below. These vantage points provide excellent photo opportunities and a chance to catch your breath before continuing the hike.

**Tiger’s Nest Monastery:** Arrive at the legendary Tiger’s Nest Monastery, perched precariously on a cliff at an altitude of 3,120 meters (10,236 feet). Attendees can explore the monastery complex, including temples, prayer halls, and meditation caves, while learning about its history and significance.

**Guided Tour:** Join a guided tour of Tiger’s Nest Monastery, led by knowledgeable guides who share insights into the monastery's architecture, religious significance, and the legend of Guru Rinpoche. Attendees can gain a deeper understanding of Bhutanese culture and spirituality.

**Descent:** After exploring Tiger’s Nest Monastery, begin the descent back to the trailhead, retracing the same route taken earlier. Attendees can take their time on the descent, enjoying the scenery and reflecting on their memorable experience at this iconic Bhutanese landmark.

## Day 08: Transfer to the Paro International airport – Departure

**Check-out from Accommodation:** Begin the day by checking out from your accommodation in Paro. Ensure that all personal belongings are packed and accounted for before departure.

**Travel Arrangements:** Coordinate with your tour operator or transportation provider to arrange for transportation to Paro International Airport. Confirm the pick-up time and location for a smooth departure.

**Transfer to Airport:** Board the vehicle arranged for your transfer to Paro International Airport. The journey typically takes a short duration, depending on the distance from your accommodation to the airport.

**Arrival at Airport:** Upon arrival at Paro International Airport, gather your luggage and proceed to the terminal building. Allow sufficient time for check-in procedures, security checks, and other pre-departure formalities.

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**Check-in:** Approach the airline counter and present your travel documents, including your passport and flight itinerary. Complete the check-in process, receive your boarding pass, and drop off any checked baggage as required.

**Security Screening:** Proceed to the security checkpoint for screening of carry-on items and personal belongings. Follow instructions from airport staff and adhere to security protocols to ensure a hassle-free experience.

**Immigration Clearance:** Queue up for immigration clearance, where your passport and travel documents will be verified. Ensure that you have any required visas or entry permits for your destination country.

**Departure Lounge:** After completing immigration formalities, proceed to the departure lounge. Take this time to relax, enjoy airport amenities, and browse duty-free shops if available.

**Boarding:** Keep an eye on the flight information display screens for updates on your flight's boarding gate and time. Once boarding is announced, proceed to the designated gate and queue up for boarding.

**Departure:** Board the aircraft and find your assigned seat. Store your carry-on items in the overhead compartments or under the seat in front of you. Follow instructions from the cabin crew and prepare for takeoff.

**Flight:** Relax and enjoy the flight to your destination. Listen to safety instructions provided by the cabin crew and make yourself comfortable for the duration of the journey.

**Arrival:** Upon arrival at your destination airport, follow disembarkation procedures and collect any belongings from the overhead compartments. Proceed to immigration and customs clearance as required for entry into the destination country.

# Cost Details

## What's Included

- ✓ Bhutan Royalties, tourists fees, Visa fees and taxes.
- ✓ Accommodations in listed or similar hotels (pleasant hotels 3 star) during the tour.

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- ✓ All meals, including evening tea/coffee etc through-out the trip.
- ✓ All land transfers, sightseeing with entrance fees
- ✓ Bottled water in the vehicle and other camp services.

## What's Not Included

- ⊗ Luxury hotel upgrades available at additional cost.
- ⊗ Travel insurance
- ⊗ Expenses of personal nature
- ⊗ Drinks like beer, whisky, coke, fanta and Mineral water
- ⊗ Telephone and internet
- ⊗ Tips for guide and driver.

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