



Eastern Bhutan

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Best Places to Stay

- » Wangchuck Hotel (p133)
- » Druk Deothjung Resort (p138)
- » Rangjung Woesel Chholing Monastery (p139)
- » Bomdeling Wildlife Sanctuary Guesthouse (p143)

Best Buddhist Architecture

- » Lhuentse Dzong (p134)
- » Gom Kora (p141)
- » Trashigang Dzong (p138)
- » Old Trashi Yangtse Dzong (p141)

Why Go?

The east of Bhutan sees far fewer tourists than the western regions – reason enough to go! Intrepid visitors will be rewarded with exquisite dzongs and temples, beautiful handicrafts, and lush, bird-filled monsoon forests. Even though this is the most densely populated region, the rugged east remains the kingdom's hinterland. Roads reach the major towns, but most of the population live in remote settlements; secreted high above the road or in isolated valleys, some are home to minority ethnic groups comprising less than 1000 people.

Eastern Bhutan is separated from the rest of the country by a chain of extremely rugged and steep hills that runs from the Tibetan border almost all the way down to the Indian border. The road from Bumthang crosses these hills over Thrumshing La (3750m), Bhutan's highest road pass. Other than trails, this one spectacular drive is the region's only road link to the rest of the country. New airports being built at Gelephu and Yongfula will provide easier access to eastern Bhutan and facilitate increased tourism in region.

When to Go

The lower altitudes mean that spring and summer here are hot, humid and sweaty, with insects aplenty. This is also the best time for bird-watching in the lush broadleaf forests. Monsoon rains, however, regularly cause havoc on the fragile roads carved into the steep mountains, so expect delays after heavy downpours.

Snowfalls in winter can also result in temporary road blockages on the high passes.



Eastern Bhutan Highlights

- 1** Wander the bustling narrow streets of **Trashigang** (p137), one of Bhutan's most attractive and lively towns
- 2** Fasten your seatbelt for a trip on the dramatic cliff-hugging road over the 3750m **Thrumshing La** (p130)
- 3** Take the picturesque drive up to **Lhuentse Dzong** (p134)
- 4** Watch some of Bhutan's finest cloth being woven at the remote weaving village of **Khoma** (p135)
- 5** Check your sin levels at the serene pilgrimage spot of **Gom Kora** (p141)
- 6** Walk around the serene Chorten Kora, and witness traditional crafts in far-flung **Trashiyangtse** (p142)
- 7** Explore the remote **Bomdeling Wildlife Sanctuary** (p143), one of the best places to see the black-necked crane