



Eastern Bhutan

Includes ➔

Mongar Dzongkhag	148
Mongar	150
Lhuentse	153
Trashigang	157
Trashigang Yangtse Dzongkhag	161
Trashigang Yangtse	162
Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag	164
Samdrup Jongkhar	166

Best Buddhist Architecture

- ➔ Lhuentse Dzong (p153)
- ➔ Gom Kora (p161)
- ➔ Dechen Phodrang (p164)
- ➔ Trashigang Dzong (p158)
- ➔ Trashigang Yangtse Dzong (p162)

Off the Beaten Track

- ➔ Hiking around Mongar (p152)
- ➔ Dungkhar (p154)
- ➔ Bomdeling Wildlife Sanctuary (p164)
- ➔ Birdwatching around Yong Khola (p149)

Why Go?

The wild and rugged east of Bhutan sees far fewer tourists than the western regions, which is reason enough to go. Intrepid travellers venturing east will be rewarded with group-free dzongs and temples, beautiful silks and embroidery, and lush, bird-filled forests. Food and accommodation options can be modest and simple, attesting to the region's remoteness. However, despite this remoteness, the east is surprisingly densely populated. 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 fewer than 1000 people.

The east is opening up to tourism but it remains a frontier for adventure travel in Bhutan. The new airport at Yongphula is not yet a reliable gateway, but there are new hotels and trekking routes being developed, and the east-west highway has been widened. If you want to get off the beaten track, this is your place.

When to Go

The lower altitudes mean that late spring and summer here are hot, humid and sweaty, with insects aplenty. This is the best time for birdwatching in the lush broadleaf forests. Monsoon rains between May and August regularly cause havoc on the fragile roads carved into the steep mountains, so expect delays after heavy downpours. Late February to mid-March is a good time to visit for comfortable temperatures, low-season crowds, interesting festivals and spring blooms.

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



Eastern Bhutan Highlights

- 1 Trashigang (p157)**
Wander the narrow streets of one of Bhutan's most attractive and lively towns.
- 2 Thrumshing La (p148)**
Take a trip on the dramatic cliff-hugging road over the 3750m pass.
- 3 Taki La (p153)**
Detour to the 45m statue of Guru

Rinpoche on the way to Lhuentse.

- 4 Khoma (p154)**
Watch some of Bhutan's finest cloth being woven at this remote weaving village.
- 5 Gom Kora (p161)**
Check your sin levels at this serene pilgrimage destination.

- 6 Trashi Yangtse (p162)**
Walk around the serene Chorten Kora, and witnessing traditional crafts.
- 7 Bomdeling Wildlife Sanctuary (p164)**
Explore this remote sanctuary, one of the best places to see the black-necked crane.