

Upcoming Events in 2016

Yongphula Tshechu: 13-16 April.

Venue: Yongphula Goenpa, Trashigang.

The Yongphula Tshechu in Trashigang will be a three day festival. The festival portrays Bhutanese culture. There will be sacred mask dances and traditional folk songs and dances.

Domkhar Drub: 16-18 April.

Venue: Domkhar, Chumey, Bumthang.

The Domkhar Tshechu in Bumthang marks the birth anniversary of Guru Rinpoche, the Indian Saint who visited Bhutan in the 8th Century. This festival will be celebrated with people adorning fine clothes and jewelries and flocking to the venue to witness sacred dances and traditional storytelling, songs and dances.

Rhododendron Festival: 18-20 April

Venue: Lamperi Botanical Garden, Dochula, Thimphu.

The festival celebrates the rhododendron flower. There are 46 rhododendron species recorded in the country, 29 of which are found in Lamperi Botanical Park. The festival features the rhododendron garden walk and exhibition, local culture and cuisines, arts and crafts, traditional games, cultural program, guided walks and activities.

Ura Yakchoe: 18-23 April.

Venue: Ura Dozhi Lhakhang, Ura, Bumthang.

This annual festival held in Ura in Bumthang is known for its famous dance called the "Ura Yakchoe." A sacred relic is displayed for people to receive blessings from.

Peling Tshechu at Kuenselphodrang: 2-4 May

Venue: Kuenselphodrang, Thimphu.

Over 200 dancers will be performing the sacred dances from all the Pema Lingpa traditions in the country.

Tarayana May Fair: 6-8 May**Venue: Centenary Park, Thimphu.**

The annual Tarayana May fair will be held from 6th to 8th May 2016 at the Centenary Park. During the fair, one of the activities is jumble sale and for that you could donate goods be it clothes, shoes, bags, toys, books, crockery etc . Cash contribution can also be accepted. The fund raised (from kind and cash) will be utilized solely for supporting disadvantaged people of the rural communities.

Pedselling Kuchod: 26-27 May.**Venue: Padselling Goenpa, Choekhor, Bumthang.**

This festival features several sacred mask dances. On the first day, a large tapestry of Buddha Shakyamuni, Avalokiteshvara and Padmasambhava is displayed. On the second day, the highlight is a special blessing of the phurba (spiritual dagger) belonging to the founder of the temple. The dagger is preserved inside a box and is one of the main relics of the temple.

Royal Bhutan Flower Exhibition: 4 - 7 June.**Venue: Ugyen Pelri Palace grounds, Paro.**

The Royal Bhutan Flower Exhibition was launched in 2015. The Horticulture division of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Royal Bhutan Police and the Royal Bhutan Army and local nurseries will exhibit their best plants and flowers.

Nimalung Trela: 13 – 15 June**Venue: Nimalung Dratshang, Chhumi, Bumthang.**

The Nimalung Trela festival is popular for the display of a nine-meter high and twelve meters wide Guru Rinpoche Thongdrol.

Trela Tshechu: 12 – 15 June.**Venue: Yakgang Monastery, Monggar.**

This festival commemorates the birth anniversary of Guru Rinpoche. Lama Sangdag, the 6th son of Terton Pema Lingpa, founded the Yakgang Lhakhang.

Yonphu/Kholong Tshechu: 14 – 16 June.

Venue: Yonphu Lhakhang, Kanglung, Trashigang.

This festival is around 400 years old. Amongst the sacred mask dances performed in the festival, the highlights are those initiated by Tertön Pema Lingpa and his descendants.

Kurjey Lhakhang Tshechu: 15 June.

Venue: Kurjey Lhakhang, Choekor, Bumthang.

The Kurjey Tshechu coincides with the birth anniversary of Guru Rinpoche. The Kurjey Lhakhang is dedicated to Guru Rinpoche who was supposed to have meditated there in the 8th Century. Hence, the festival celebrates with mask dances, folk songs and dances to its glory.

Masutake Mushroom Festival: 15 – 16 August

Venue: Genekha, Thimphu.

Masutake, the native mushroom and other local products will be showcased in this festival. Mushroom hunting tactics will be displayed along with cultural programs by the school and local community. The objective of the festival is to create awareness on the sustainable harvesting of the local mushroom and enjoy the organic natural flavors of our nature.

Chha Festival: 15 – 19 August

Venue: Tagmochu, Lhuentse

This festival is celebrated by the people of 6 villages, Phagidoong, Tagmochu, Kamdhar, Kusumpel, Khaashaling and Takila for four days. They gather to make offerings to the local deities.

Dobji Tshechu: 18 August.

Venue: Dobji Dzong, Paro.

The Dobji Tshechu is held every year at Dobji dzong, Paro on the 15th day of the 7th month of the Bhutanese calendar.

Masutake Mushroom Festival: 23 – 24 August.

Venue: Ura, Bumthang.

Masutake mushrooms are native to the forests of Ura Valley in Bumthang. During the festival, visitors can learn to identify and harvest the wild Masutake mushrooms of Bhutan.

Mountain Echoes 2016: 25 – 28 August.

Venue: Banquet Hall, Thimphu.

This literary festival brings together an eclectic group of writers from India and Bhutan, where they share stories and experiences from the Himalayan region.

Tour of the Dragon (Bicycle Race): 3 September.

Venue: Bumthang to Thimphu.

The Tour of the Dragon bicycle race, covering 268 km from central to western Bhutan is considered one of the most challenging one-day events in the world. The race covers elevations ranging from 1,200 – 3,340 meters and four high mountain passes.

Khaling Tshechu: 9 – 11 September.

Venue: Khaling Goenpa, Trashigang.

The Khaling Tshechu is the biggest festival in Khaling gewog, it is held annually at the courtyard of the Khaling Goenpa.

Jomolhari Mountain Festival: 25 – 26 October

Venue: Dangojang.

The Jomolhari Mountain Festival is celebrated at the base of Mt. Jomolhari by communities located along one of the most scenic trekking routes in Bhutan. This region is home to the magnificent but endangered Snow Leopard. This festival celebrates the culture of the communities living together with the natural wonders that surround them.

Thimphu Drubchen: 7 October.**Venue: Tashichho Dzong**

The Thimphu Drubchen is a festival dedicated to the protecting deity of Bhutan, Palden Lhamo.

Wangduephodrang Tshechu: 8 -11 October.**Venue: Tencholing, Wangdue.**

Wangduephodrang Tshechu is a festival well known for the Raksha Mangcham or the dance of the Ox along with other mask dances. It concludes with the unfurling of the Guru Tshengye Thongdrol.

Gangtey Tshechu: 9 – 11 October**Venue: Gangtey Goenpa, Phobjikha, Wangduephodrang.**

The Gangtey Tshechu is held in Gangtey Goenpa in Phobjikha valley which is the winter roosting ground of the migratory and rare black-necked cranes. The festival includes a special blessing ritual for the people, Nguedup Langwa (receiving of the spiritual wisdom/power).

Haa Tshechu: 9 – 11 October**Venue: Lhakhang Karpo.**

The annual Haa Tshechu is one of the biggest festivals in the western Bhutan. The highlight of the festival is the unfurling of the thongdrol (large, illustrious tapestry) of Guru Rinpoche for the people to take blessing.

Ache Lhamo Kuencham: 10 – 11 October**Venue: Samdrup Jongkhar.**

Ache Lhamo is a dance-drama performed originally by herdsmen of Bhutan once a year in keeping with the local customs. The Ache Lhamo Kuencham festival is now celebrated with the same dance-drama by the people of Samdrup Jongkhar every year.

Thimphu Tshechu: 10 – 13 October**Venue: Tashichho Dzong, Thimphu.**

The Thimphu Tshechu is one of the biggest festivals in the country. It is held in the capital city therefore it is witnessed by thousands of people, both local and tourists. It is celebrated with many days of prayers and rituals followed by elaborate mask dances.

Tamzhing Phala Choepa – 13 October**Venue: Tamzhing Lhakhang, Bumthang.**

The Tamzhing Phala Choepa is a festival dedicated to Tertön Pema Lingpa. It is held in Tamzhing monastery which follows Peling tradition established by Tertön Pema Lingpa. The monastery is headed by his direct reincarnation, the Venerable Lhalung Sungtrul Rinpoche.

Thangbi Mani: 14 – 17 October**Venue: Tangbi Lhakhang, Bumthang**

The Thangbi Mani Festival is one of the most popular festivals in Bumthang. The highlight of the festival is the fire blessing (Mewang) ceremony where the monks perform purification rituals while people jump over the flames to purify themselves.

Dechenphu Tshechu: 22 October**Venue: Dechenphu Lhakhang, Thimphu.**

The Dechenphu Tshechu is dedicated to Gay Ngyen Jakpa Melen, a powerful deity of Bhutan. Many traditional and classical dances are performed during the festival.

Birth Anniversary of His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck: 11 November**Venue: Changlimithang Ground, Thimphu**

His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck the 4th King of Bhutan was born on 11th November 1955. To mark this occasion every Dzongkhag in Bhutan will observe the day with various cultural programs and events participated in by people from all walks of life.

Monggar Tshechu: 6 -9 November

Venue: Monggar Dzong, Monggar

People from all over the region as far as Trashigang and Lhuentse come to attend the festival. A lot of unique dances indigenous to the region are also performed.

Shingkhar Rabney: 6 – 9 November

Venue: Shingkhar Lhakhang, Ura, Bumthang

The highlight of the Shingkhar Rabney festival is the performance where an old man, locally called Chath Dorji, who wears a brown wrinkled mask and blesses women with a wooden phallus.

Pemagatshel Tshechu: 12 – 14 November

Venue: Pemagatshel Dzong, Pemagatshel

People from all over the district come to the district Dzong where the festival is held and all public offices remain closed for three days when the festival is in process. Different kinds of mask dances are performed together with many traditional and classical dances.

Jakar Tshechu: 7 – 10 November

Venue: Jakar Dzong, Choekhor, Bumthang.

The three-day festival showcases several sacred mask dances. The festival also hosts different types of folk songs and dances. People visit the festival dressed in their finest clothes and the festival is also popular among tourists.

Chhukha Tshechu: 7 – 9 November

Venue: Chhukha Dzong, Chhukha

Different mask dances are performed during the festival apart from the traditional folk songs and dances. The highlight of the festival is the unfurling of the thongdrol (large tapestry) of Guru Rinpoche.

Black-Necked Crane Festival: 11 November

Venue: Gangtey Goenpa, Phobjikha, Wangduephodrang

The annual Black-Necked Crane festival is celebrated at the courtyard of Gangtey Goenpa in Phobjikha valley. The festival is an occasion for the locals to rejoice and celebrate the arrival of this endangered and majestic bird which becomes an inseparable part in their daily lives during the winter months. The annual black-necked crane festival is organized to generate awareness and understanding on the importance of conserving the endangered Black-Necked cranes.

Jambay Lhakhang Drub: 14 – 17 November

Venue: Jampa Lhakhang, Choekor, Bumthang

The festival is held at the Jambay Lhakhang, Ura in Bumthang, which was built in the 7th century and is one of the oldest temples in the country. Masked dances and bonfires commemorate the establishment of this 7th century Lhakhang. The highlight of the festival is the fire ritual that is held by midnight where crowds gather to witness the ritual. A naked dance is also performed where the dances only have their masks on.

Sumthrang Kanssoel: 25 -29 November

Venue: Sumthrang Lhakhang, Ura, Bumthang

This annual festival is held at the 13th century monastery of Sumthrang Lhakhang in Ura valley in Bumthang. This festival was initiated by the founder of the monastery, Nyoton Trulzhig Choje, a great yogi and one of the sons of Nyo Gyelwa Lhanangpa. The Sumthrang Taacham (horse dance) is one of main mask dances performed during the festival.

Prakhar Duchhoed: 15 – 17 November

Venue: Prakhar Lhakhang, Bumthang

The annual festival is held at the Prakhar Lhakhang in Chummi gewog in Bumthang. Several kinds of mask dances are performed during the festival. The festival is celebrated to honor Lama Thukse Dawa, one of the sons of the 15th century Buddhist master, Terton Pema Lingpa, who was one of the greatest Buddhist masters to be ever born in Bhutan.

National Day: 17 December

Venue: Changlimithang Ground, Thimphu

The coronation of the 1st King of Bhutan was held on 17th December 1907 and since then the day is observed every year as the National Day of Bhutan in every Dzongkhag.

Druk Wangyel Tshechu: 13 December

Venue: Dochula, Thimphu

The Druk Wangyel Tshechu is a unique festival performed by the Royal Bhutan Army rather than monks or lay people. It is a tribute to the wise leadership of His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the Fourth King of Bhutan. It also celebrates the continuous efforts of the Royal Bhutan Army in protecting the sovereignty and the stability of the country. This one of a kind Tshechu is performed against the back drop of the magnificent Jigme Singye Wangchuck mountain range.

Gelephu Tshechu: 6-8 December

Venue: Rabdeyling, Gelephu.

The Gelephu Tshechu is held annually in the south of Bhutan. There will be religious dances and songs along atsaras, who wear funny masks and attires to humor and entertain onlookers.

Samtse Tshechu: 7-9 December

Venue: Samtse

The Samtse Tshechu is the biggest festival in Samtse when the small town bursts to life. It attracts all the people from the southern region of Bhutan.

Dremetse Tshechu: 6-9 December

Venue: Dremetse Lhakhang, Monggar.

The Dremetse Tshechu is one of the most important festivals in eastern Bhutan. It was here that the popular Dremetse Ngacham (Dance of the Drums from Dremetse) was born. The mask dance was selected as one of the 80 global masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2005 by UNNESCO. It is a highly revered dance and performed in tshechus all over the country. The dance is a dramatization of the dance performed in Zangtopelri, the Copper Colored Palace of Guru Rinpoche.

Tang Namkha Rabney: 8-9 December

Venue: Namkha Lhakhang, Tang, Bumthang.

The Tang Namkha Lhakhang Rabney is a three-day annual festival commemorating the founding of the Namkha Lhakhang by Lama Namkha Samdrup. It is also performed for the peace and prosperity of the community.

Trashigang Tshechu: 6-10 December

Venue: Trashigang Dzong, Trashigang.

The Trashigang Tshechu is one of the biggest festivals in the eastern Bhutan. The nomadic community of Merak and Sakteng, called the Brokpas participate in the festival with their unique dress and appearance. Different sacred mask dances are performed during the festival. The highlight of the festival is the unfurling of the thongdrol (large tapestry) of Guru Tshengyed (eight manifestation of Guru Rinpoche). Another thongdrol of Neten Chudrug (Sixteen Arhats) is also unfurled for the public.

Nalakhar Tshechu: 13-15 December

Venue: Nga Lhakhang, Choekhor, Bumthang.

The Nalakhar Tshechu is celebrated to bring happiness and prosperity to the village and the country as a whole. It is also a symbolic prayer for good harvest and for the wellbeing of everyone.

Chojam Rabney Festival: 12-16 December

Venue: Chojamrab Lhakhang, Tang, Bumthang.

It is the most important festivals of Tang valley, Bumthang, which is presided by Chojam Lam, a reincarnate lama. Mask dances are also a highlight of the festival, blessings are also performed.

Pangkhar Choepa: 24-29 December

Venue: Pangkhar Lhakhang, Ura, Bumthang.

The Pangkhar Choepa festival celebrates the origin of the temple, Pangkhar monastery in Ura, Bumthang. Legend has it that when the monastery was under construction, langurs helped at night while humans used to work during the day. Hence the name— prakar—which literally translates to white monkey.