



The Amankora Journey : Estimated Travelling Time (including short stops)

	Paro	Thimphu	Punakha	Gangtey	Bumthang
Paro	—	2 hours	4.5 hours	6 hours	10 hours
Thimphu	2 hours	—	2.5 hours	4 hours	8 hours
Punakha	4.5 hours	2.5 hours	—	2.5 hours	6.5 hours
Gangtey	6 hours	4 hours	2.5 hours	—	5 hours
Bumthang	10 hours	8 hours	6.5 hours	5 hours	—

THE AMANKORA JOURNEY: Bhutan is one of the world's last frontiers. The sole surviving Himalayan Buddhist Kingdom, it is located between the Tibetan Plateau and India, making it one of the most remote and unaltered environments on earth. Descending from the 7,500-metre high Himalaya in the north to the low-lying plains of the south,

Bhutan's rivers have forged deep valleys separated by high mountain passes.

Amankora now offers a number of guided treks and excursions by car, on foot or on horseback throughout the principal central and western valleys of Bhutan: Paro, Thimphu, Punakha, Phobjikha and Bumthang. Amanresorts is the only international hotel group

in Bhutan to offer its own accommodation and services throughout these valleys.

For guests staying seven nights or longer, a tailor-made itinerary will include all meals, house beverages, laundry, long road permits, private transport with driver and guide, and a 60-minute massage at Amankora's spa to be enjoyed at one of the lodges.

amankora

THE LODGES & VALLEYS

Amankora derives its name from 'aman', the Sanskrit word for 'peace' and 'kora' meaning circular pilgrimage in Dzongkha, the Bhutanese language. This remote retreat is a series of lodges in Bhutan's central and western valleys.



AMANKORA PARO: Located 30 minutes from the airport, Amankora Paro is the beginning of a path through pristine landscapes, ancient dzongs and secluded villages, a cycle of discovery beneath the peaceful presence of the Himalayan mountains.

Amankora Paro is a 24-suite pine forest retreat which pairs the rustic with the contemporary. Nearby are ruins of the 17th century Drukyl Dzong. The resort features natural rammed-earth walls, gently sloping roofs and wood-panelled interiors. Suites provide travellers with a king-size bed, traditional *bukhari* (wood-burning stove) and a large terrazzo-clad bath. Lodge facilities include a living room, dining room, library and outdoor terrace, all warmed by fireplaces. A welcome return from challenging treks is the Spa which overlooks the surrounding blue pine forest and herb garden. The Spa houses a glass-walled sauna, treatment rooms with hot stone baths, and a yoga and meditation room.

Historically Paro is believed to be one of the first valleys to have welcomed Buddhism in the Eastern Himalayas. Two 7th century temples bear splendid witness to that arrival – Kyichu Lhakhang and Taktsang Goemba. The National Museum displays an intriguing collection of artifacts that illustrate the rich culture and heritage of the Kingdom. A short stroll away is the dominating Paro Dzong.

Bumthang

AMANKORA BUMTHANG: Adjacent to the first and second King of Bhutan's Palace – Wangdichholing – Amankora Bumthang lies within the town of Jakar in the Choekhor Valley. It is home to no less than 29 temples and monasteries, a museum and a treasure-trove of Bhutan's art and painting traditions.

The 16-suite lodge is surrounded by an apple orchard and pear trees. A *dzong*-inspired hallway at the lodge's entrance opens onto a library and a cosy living room appointed with lounge chairs, daybeds and a traditional *bukhari*. Floor-to-ceiling windows offer views of a landscaped courtyard adjoining the shared Palace grounds. Adjacent is the dining room with its soaring 18ft ceiling. The Spa offers three treatment rooms, a steam room and changing area. Each suite features wood-panelled interiors, a traditional *bukhari*, king-size bed, terrazzo-clad bath, shower, twin vanities and daybed.

The Choekhor Valley is blanketed with fields of buckwheat and millet. Apple orchards climb up slopes to mix with deep pine forest. Across the valley lie many of the Kingdom's most auspicious and highly-revered houses of worship and ancient monasteries, many decorated with vibrant ancient wall paintings and richly adorned altars, all with colourful, mystical histories. Amankora Bumthang's neighbouring Wangdichholing Palace built in 1857 as the Kingdom's first palace is now the residence of a small group of monks that also share an adjacent Goemba.

Thimphu

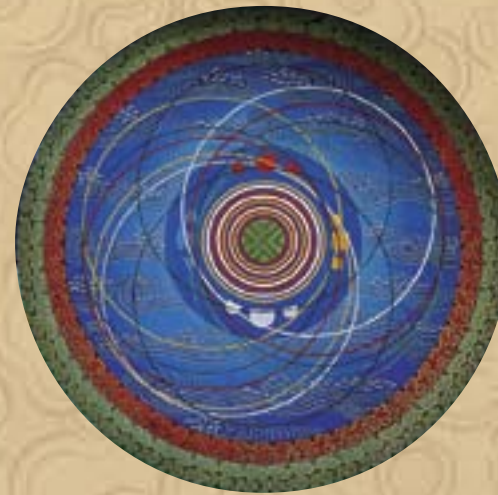
AMANKORA THIMPHU: Set in a blue pine forest in the upper reaches of the Motithang region of Thimphu Valley, the 16-suite Amankora Thimphu is close to the capital's sights and shopping while maintaining a quiet sense of peace.

The *dzong*-like architecture incorporates high white-washed stone buildings, to feature combined living and dining room with dramatic soaring ceiling and wood-panelled walls. An outdoor dining deck provides views of the nearby stream and forest. The Spa offers three treatment rooms, changing rooms and steam rooms. Suites are identical to those of Amankora Gangtey. Features include wood-panelled walls, a king-size bed, reading chair, window banquette, and a *bukhari*. The spacious bathroom provides a terrazzo-clad bath with a view of the pine forest through a small vertical window.

As the capital of Bhutan, Thimphu is home to many attractions and activities including the National Textile Museum, Folk Heritage Museum and the bustling Changlingmethang Market. It also houses the seat of government and the office of His Majesty, King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck. Thimphu's main street provides an ideal place to shop for Himalayan jewellery and Bhutanese handicrafts and textiles.



Paro



Punakha

AMANKORA PUNAKHA: Situated east of the Dochu La Pass and just north of the impressive Punakha Dzong, Amankora Punakha is reached by crossing a suspension bridge over the Mo Chhu (Mother River). More than 85 percent of the district is forested with a mixture of conifer and broadleaf trees.

The lodge includes a traditional Bhutanese farmhouse built as a residence by a previous Je Kempo (spiritual and religious leader). This grand structure, with its preserved vegetable dye wall paintings, houses the dining room and intimate relaxation areas as well as a traditional altar room for meditation. The courtyard is suitable for outdoor dining and relaxation in Punakha's temperate climate. Other facilities include a tea pavilion that was once the kitchen of the summer palace, and beyond is the yoga/meditation room with open views of the surrounding rice terraces and orchards. Spa treatment rooms and a steam room offer quiet areas for rest and relaxation. Eight suites are air-conditioned in the summer and set in an orange orchard with views across paddy fields.

One of the many highlights of Punakha is visiting the Punakha Dzong which straddles the confluence of the Mother (Mo) and Father (Pho) rivers.



Gangtey

AMANKORA GANGTEY: In the little-visited Phobjikha Valley near the unspoiled village of Gangtey, the eight-suite Amankora Gangtey is nestled on a forested hill with scenic views of the valley floor and the 16th century Gangtey Goemba (monastery). The valley is part of the Black Mountains National Park, one of Bhutan's most important wildlife sanctuaries. Each winter it is home to a flock of 300 rare and endangered black-necked cranes which arrive from Tibet. The surrounding Black Mountains are mainly inhabited by shepherds and nomadic yak-herders.

Lodge accommodations and guest facilities are housed in one structure. The combined living and dining room features views through floor-to-ceiling windows. The lodge's ground level provides two massage treatment rooms and changing areas. Suite interiors are identical to those of Amankora Thimphu.

Guests often begin with a walk through the Gangtey village before visiting the ancient altars and ramparts of the massive Goemba. Numerous nature walks and treks are offered throughout the valley's varied terrain. In winter, the reclusive black-necked cranes can be seen from the nearby Crane Centre or a viewing hide set near their main nesting and feeding grounds.



RESERVATIONS

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