



Refresh Your Spirits  
Reach New Heights

# Summer Cultural Festival Tour

Fri 8<sup>th</sup> July – Sat 16<sup>th</sup> July 2011  
(9 days/8 nights)



**Summer  
Cultural tour  
luxury Resort  
hotel option.**

## Highlights

- A unique opportunity to attend a local cultural festival designed to showcase to the outside world the traditional lifestyle, crafts, rituals and cuisine of the people of the Haa valley.
- A cultural sightseeing tour of Paro, Punakha & Thimphu.
- Visit Dzongs (monasteries), Lakhangs (temples), museums, villages & places of natural beauty.
- Short hike to Taktsang Monastery “the famous “Tiger’s Nest” (Horse ride available on request).
- Join flights from Bangkok, Delhi, Kolkata & Katmandu.

## About this tour

This tour is specially designed around the Haa Valley Summer festival. This event is being organized for the first time in collaboration with the people of Haa and a whole range of traditional activities is presented at one time. Your tour starts with a leisurely stop in **Paro**, giving you time to acclimatize and enjoy the many colourful cultural sites of Paro. Drive over the Chele-la Pass (3,800m) into the little explored valley of Haa. The festival is a two day event. Our suggested tour coincides with day one of the festival. This itinerary can be adjusted as per your specific preference. We offer the opportunity to stay overnight in Haa or return to Paro. If you choose to stay in Haa, you can either experience a night in a Bhutanese farm house or a simple guest house.

Continue your visit with two days sightseeing in the capital city, **Thimphu**, and two days in the lower altitudes of the **Punakha** valley.

Celebrate the end of your visit with an evening of classic Bhutanese dining. The final day’s trek to **Taktsang** is another highlight of the tour. **See the detailed description of the Summer Festival events below**

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## Summer Cultural festival Tour:

9 Days/8 Nights

### Flight Schedules:

#### From Bangkok

Date	sector	Flight no	Dep	Arr
Fri 8 <sup>th</sup> July	BKK -PBH	KB127	0840	1140
Sat 16 <sup>th</sup> July	PBH- BKK	KB130	1120	1545

#### From Delhi

Date	sector	Flight no	Dep	Arr
Fri 8 <sup>th</sup> July	DEL -PBH	KB205	1115	1450
Sat 16 <sup>th</sup> July	PBH- DEL	KB204	0825	1015

#### From Kathmandu

Date	sector	Flight no	Dep	Arr
Fri 8 <sup>th</sup> July	KTM -PBH	KB411	1010	1215
Sat 16 <sup>th</sup> July	PBH- KTM	KB400	0700	0805

#### From Kolkata

Date	sector	Flight no	Dep	Arr
Fri 8 <sup>th</sup> July	CCU-PBH	KB211	1430	1620
Sat 16 <sup>th</sup> July	PBH-CCU	KB210	1100	1420

### Outline Itinerary

Fri 8 <sup>th</sup> July	Arrive Paro & transfer to hotel. Visit Drugyel Dzong.
Sat 9 <sup>th</sup> July	Attend Haa cultural festival. O/N in Haa or Paro.
Sun 10 <sup>th</sup> July	Morning in Haa & O/N in Paro.
Mon 11 <sup>th</sup> July	Drive to Punakha (3½hrs.). Stop at Dochula pass (3000m) and take a stroll through rice fields and villages in the semi-tropical region around Chimi Lakhang (1,200m)
Tue 12 <sup>th</sup> July	Drive to Punakha Dzong & short walk along the valley.
Wed 13 <sup>th</sup> July	Drive to Thimphu. Check in hotel & visit the folks museum, the Institute of Traditional Arts & Crafts (Zorig Chusum), the Institute of Traditional Medicine, takin reserve, Sangaygang viewpoint.
Thu 14 <sup>th</sup> July	Day excursion to Tango and in afternoon visit Changgangkha temple. Evening circumambulates the Memorial Chorten with the locals who go to turn the prayer wheels. Dinner at Traditonal Bhutanese Restaurant.
Fri 15 <sup>th</sup> July	Morning hike to Taktsang temple. Drive to Kichu lakhang. Free time for exploring the town.
Sat 16 <sup>th</sup> July	Departure of flight from airport.....Tashi delek.....

## **Summer Festival in the Mythic Valley of the Guardian Spirit, Haa Valley**

### **Festival Highlights**

- Explore the richness of the natural biodiversity of the valley by undertaking some of the wonderful trekking routes; A favourite haunt of the nature lovers with lake, alpine flowers and mountains
- Experience the nomadic yak herders lifestyle
- Partake in the traditional lifestyle of the Haaps (the people of Haa valley) and feel the experience of ancient Bhutan
- Savour the delicacies of the Haaps and taste the home brewed Ara (local alcoholic drink)
- Participate in the traditional games of khuru, archery and soksum and try hitting the bull's eye
- Compete in the Haa's alpine flower photo competition to take home attractive prizes
- Drown in the spirit of folk songs and mask dances
- Pick a souvenir made of yak's hair or other local traditional handicraft product

### **Haa Valley and its People**

We are delighted to bring the best truly off the beaten track experiences of Haa, the Mythic Valley of the Guardian Spirit. The valley shares its border with the Autonomous Region of Tibet, China in the north where for centuries, the Haaps enjoyed good trading links.

Located at an elevation between 1000-5600 meters, the valley is an ancestral home of the Royal grandmother of Bhutan. The Haaps are set aside from the rest of the Bhutanese population by their unique customs and traditions. The valley is also a cultural hub with numerous temples and sacred places dating back to 7<sup>th</sup> century. The Haaps are a farming lot cultivating high altitude crops such as wheat, potatoes, barley and millet. Their primary livelihood revolves round animal husbandry and for most part of their sustenance depends on the yaks.

### **Festivals and Places of Interest**

The valley is also unparalleled in Bhutan in terms of the diversity of the folk culture, legends and shamanistic rituals. The shamanistic traditions is vividly practiced in almost all the communities, most notable of which is the annual ceremony to honour Ap Chundu, the guardian deity of the valley. One may visit the temples of Ap Chundu and listen to the caretakers narrating mesmerising stories of the deity.

Haa has numerous places of interest such as the 7<sup>th</sup> century old Lhakhang Karpo (White) and lhakhang Nagpo (Black) at the foothills of a venerated three brotherly mountains known as Meri Puensum. The grand annual Haa Tshechu is also performed here at Lhakhang Karpo on the 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> Bhutanese month. The Haa Wangchuklo Dzong built in 1915 after the Dumchog Dzong was razed to the ground by fire is worth visiting. The other place of interest which involves some walking includes the hike to the 8<sup>th</sup> century Juneydrag, Katsho Gompa, Drana Trashidingkhag, Yangto Gompa, Jamtoe Gompa, Shelkardrag, Takchu Gompa and Haa Gompa. The five storied fortress of Dobji Dzong which is considered to be the first model dzong built in 1531 is another place that one may visit which is 11 kilometres away from Chuzom towards Haa.

It's a worth a stop at Chelela Pass (the highest road point in Bhutan), which will give an opportunity to witness spectacular scenery of snow capped peaks, fluttering prayer flags, alpine flowers and possible encounter with yaks.

## **The Haa Summer Festival / The Alpine Festival**

### **Yak Products**

The valley is a paradise for nature lovers and travelling there is a very rewarding experience. Witnessing the Summer Festival is unique in many ways that will bring you closer to nature and Bhutanese traditional values. It showcases some of the rarest experiences from the lives of Haaps and the valley they inhabit. As nomads whose lives revolves round yaks, one can come across a variety of yak products on display including yak herders tent, harden cheese (Chugo), coveted bundle of white yak tail that brings in luck. One can also witness the process of the whole traditional method of churning the milk, yak wool processing and other nomadic activities.

### **Display of Arts and Crafts**

Known for their skills in the traditional 13 arts and crafts, one may stumble upon brightly coloured products on display beautifully crafted out of gold, silver, bronze, clay, slate and wood. These intricate carving, painting and designs of various motifs are worth the Bhutanese craftsmanship. You may also choose various containers made of bamboos and cane.

### **Haaps Cuisine and Beverages**

Like the rest of the Bhutanese people, the Haaps love to eat and try their hands at various dishes. They have their own specialty and are known for Haapi Hoentoe; dumplings prepared out of buckwheat filled with dried turnip greens, turnip, garlic, onion, chopped ginger, chilly powder, salt, butter and oil seeds to enhance the flavour. It is a ceremonial food that is prepared only during Lombas, a New Year celebration that is unique to the Haaps. Beside, you may also savour the hot burning taste of ema datshi or shamu datshi a completely vegetarian dish made of cheese mixed with chilly or mushroom. Tonpa and Ara are some of the beverages that the Haaps prepare. Yak meat is a staple diet for the Haaps and they are known for the dried meat that sliced and relish with the drinks.

### **Dances**

The Haaps have developed a fondness for music and dance over the centuries. The most prominent is the Haapi Ausa, a song that is often sung in dedication to the yaks. Often while grazing their yaks, the herders would sing these songs. It is also sung when family members depart for long journeys.

### **Sports and Games**

Haaps love displaying their skills in sports and games and the most popular is the archery. While it was traditionally played using bamboo bows and arrows, today the game is replaced by bows and arrows imported from US. Often competitions are held amongst the villages of different gewogs displaying their skills while the women folk are there to support their teams. You may either watch the game or take part in it.

Similarly you can partake in the traditional game of Khuru, a dart game shot at a target set at about 20 yards away. It is played in teams of two like Sokum, another Bhutanese traditional game. Sokum is throwing a long spear sharpened at both ends and hitting at the target.

### **Nublang Show**

A Breed that's known only amongst the Haaps is the Nublang- a native breed that has a legendary tale linked to the famous lake Nubtshonapatta, located on the western mountain ranges. The legend has it that the breed was given as a generosity to a cow herder for hosting the deity of the lake. Since then the breed is popular not just in Haa but in many parts of the country.

### **Important Note**

All our tours are offered dependent on flight and hotel availability. Since these are quite limited we recommend you book early to avoid disappointment. We request your understanding in the event of the need to alter dates and itineraries which we would only do in order to ensure the best holiday experience for you.

**For prices & detailed itinerary please contact us at [info@bhutanvisit.com](mailto:info@bhutanvisit.com)  
Please quote: Haa Summer Festival**

**Haa Summer Festival:** *show casing the rich alpine flowers, folklore and culture*

**Day 1: 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2011**

**Proposed programme**

Sl.No	Time	Programme
1	8:00 AM	Arrival of the guest and tourists at lhakhang Karpo
2	8:15 AM	Offering of Tashi khadar to the tourists by the respected family members at the reception
3	8:30 AM	Arrival of the chief guest escorted with chipdrel ceremony ( the longest procession ceremony) till DYT hall
4	9:30 AM	The inauguration of the festival with the Marchang ceremony
5	9:45 AM	Welcome address by DYT Chairman
6	10:00 AM	Opening of the festival including the nomads and alpine flower photo exhibition by the Hon'ble chief guest together with the selected youngest tourist in the group <sup>1</sup>
7	10:15 AM	Traditional folk welcome dance, Local Chundu Gongshay and Zhungdra <sup>2</sup>
8	11:00 AM	Starting of the local sports and games: <sup>3</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Khuru</li> <li>• Soksum competition</li> </ul>
9	12:00PM	Prize distribution for Khuru and Soksum
10	12:30PM	Demonstration and experiencing the Haaps cuisine speciality ( Hontey, khuley and Tshe Thub) <b>9<sup>th</sup> July: 12:30 pm &amp; 3:30 pm</b> <b>10<sup>th</sup> July: 11:45 am</b>
11	1:00 PM	Coinciding with lunch, families bring lunch in the traditional containers to exhibit which will be shared by the guests. In addition to the above dishes " <b>wild flowers</b> " and " <b>mushroom</b> " cuisines will be prepared
12	2:00 PM	Show casing traditional, cultural skills ( Choeshum, thanka painting, bamboo products, yak's products, pala-tongpa, household items and khami ngashig etc) if possible all 13 arts and crafts <sup>4</sup>
13	3:00PM	Yak Cham and other cultural programs
14	4:00 PM	Display of local Shaman costumes and ornaments along with a preview on how its conducted ( Showing documents of the shaman festivals on TV in a tent displaying the attires)
15	5:00PM	BREAK <sup>5</sup>
16	7:00 PM	Traditional rituals in preparation for the next day's archery tournament ( performing rituals and hiring astrologers to suppress the opponents)

**Note:**

1. Local Tship (astrologer) will be in a tent providing his fortune telling services to everyone including tourists throughout the festival.
2. Personalised alpine flower stamps with photo by Bhutan post for everyone.

<sup>1</sup> The idea behind the youngest tourists is that the experiences gained by him/her will be the highlight of the trip which will be shared with many other people both in Bhutan and in his/her home country

<sup>2</sup> The cultural program, flower and nomad exhibition will continue for the entire 2 days festival

<sup>3</sup> The tourists and guest could also experience the Khuru and Soksum game saperately designed for them

<sup>4</sup> Show casing of the 13 arts and crafts will continue throughout the program (both days)

<sup>5</sup> Return to farm houses / hotel for leisure evening to experience village life and for dinner

**Day 2: 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2011**  
**Proposed programme**

Sl.No	Time	Programme
1	9:00 AM	Arrival of the participants and tourists for the archery match
2	9:15 AM	Food and Beverages Stall - Experiencing Haaps breakfast speciality: Akha (dough made out of wheat flour), Yaksha kam (dried yak meat) and Ezay( chilly paste)
3	9:30 AM	Drachen korni ( A traditional procession to make a round in an auspicious direction to avoid bad lucks and supersede the opponents )
4	10:00 AM	Start of archery tournament with marching ceremony
5	10:30 AM	Traditional archery experience for the guests ( in a separate ground possible oneway)
6	11:00 AM	Chundu Soelkha Haap's Ausa- Uesu Yakcham and mask dance
7	11:30 AM	Nublang exhibition
8	11:45 AM	Demonstration and experiencing the Haaps cuisine speciality ( Hontey, khuley and Tshe Thub) - Buck wheat flour processing -Tongpa, Tse thu ( local porridge), Phuelu, Chugo mago
9	12:00 PM	Choenda ( final hit) and victory lap celebration with distribution of prizes
10	1:00 PM	Lunch for the guests will be served in tradition manner by the family members displaying the varieties of cuisines
11	2:00 PM	Haap's Nomadic life experience in the yak tent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration of yak milking, butter and cheese processing etc</li> <li>• Competition with rice and butter measurement with traditional measuring scale for the guests.</li> </ul>
12	2:45 pm	Alpine flower exhibition and competition <sup>6</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competition on the identification, significance and naming the scientific terms of the flowers found in Haa Dzongkhag (open to all).</li> <li>• Best photograph competition on the alpine flowers of Haa Dzongkhag ( open to all)</li> </ul>
13	3:30PM	Awarding of prizes to the winners
14	4:00 PM	Vote of thanks by Dasho Dzongdag
15	4:20 PM	BREAK
16	5:30 PM	Demonstration and preparation of Ara
17	6:00 PM	Ara tshogchang ceremony, ara served in a formal traditional way along the bon fire.
18	6:30 PM	Tshang mo if any, followed by songs and cultural dances performed by the villagers
19	7:00 PM	Traditional dinner served around bonfire
20	8:00 PM	The Haa summer festival concludes with Tashi Labey joined by all the guests

<sup>6</sup> Alpine flower exhibition encompasses – photographs, paintings, botanical illustrations, its significance on local culture and activities and botanical excursions (day hikes and trekking) etc.