

How do I get there?

Your travel arrangements can be made through your tour operators. Gasa is approximately a 5 hour drive from the capital city of Thimphu and 3 hours from Punakha Dzongkhag (district). Once past Punakha the road is unpaved but passes through beautiful canopies of broadleaved forests, the home of the elusive Bengal Tiger and the winter habitat of the takin. The journey is an experience in itself as you'll be awed by the lush vegetation and sparkling waterfalls set against a backdrop of towering Himalayan peaks.

Travel Tips

Make sure that you bring warm clothes, gloves, hats, comfortable trekking boots, a flashlight and a first aid kit. It is also recommended that you bring a pair of binoculars in order to better appreciate the stark natural beauty of the landscape.

Accommodation and Logistics

There are two options available for your accommodations during the festival. You can either enjoy a homestay in a local farm house, gaining an upclose look at the lives of the locals or you can choose to camp at designated campsites. Your tour operators will provide you with all the camping gear necessary. For a truly authentic experience they can even provide you with the yak hair tents traditionally used by the local nomads. When dining you can either sample the local delicacies or stick to your favored dishes arranged by your travel guides.

Route Map



Jigme Dorji National Park
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TAKIN FESTIVAL

Jigme Dorji National Park



Showcasing Bhutan's natural and cultural heritage

Takin Festival

The Takin Festival is your once in a lifetime opportunity to get an up close look at Bhutan's national animal, the Takin (*Budorcas taxicolor*) in their native summer grazing grounds. Despite being a rare and endangered species around the world, there are still thriving populations of this majestic animal in Bhutan. You won't want to miss this chance to admire their unique physique and natural agility.



The Takin Legend

According to Bhutanese folklore, this incredible animal was created by Bhutan's favourite Buddhist master, Lam Drukpa Kuenley affectionately known as 'The Divine Madman'. The takin was given life when he attached a goat's skull to the skeleton of a cow. Some sources even claim that the Takin's golden pelt was inspiration for the Golden Fleece in the Greek myth of Jason and the Argonauts.

Location/Regional Background

The festival is set in Jigme Dorji National Park, the second largest national preserve in the country. The park encompasses areas that are rich in temperate biodiversity and medicinal plants. It supports thriving populations of rare and endangered animals such as Takins, clouded leopards, red pandas, blue sheep, Himalayan musk deer, Asiatic golden cats, spotted linsang and many more.

This picturesque park offers spectacular views of awe-inspiring natural beauty where you find a treasured heritage that has nurtured environmental conservation for generations. Conveniently the park is the closest natural preserve to the capital city of Thimphu and the international airport at Paro.

Top 5 Things to See and Do

1. Trekking

Embarking on short treks will allow you to seize the opportunity to view these unbelievable animals in their natural habitat. You will be able to observe the takin's natural social and mating behavior as you hike through the regions where their salt licks are located.

2. Handicrafts

Watch nomadic herders practice their ancestral arts and skillfully weave sheared yak hair into beautiful tents, blankets and rugs as they have done for generations. You'll have the opportunity to learn to weave cane into the iconic traditional conical hats indigenous to the region.

3. Medicinal Hotspring Baths

The perfect way to revitalize after a fulfilling day of trekking, playing the local sports and sampling the hearty local recipes is to treat yourself to a rejuvenating hot spring bath. Your aches and pains will just melt away as you relax in the naturally occurring mineral water and you will emerge with renewed vigor and vitality.



4. Food

Indulge yourself in the rich and delicious local cuisine specializing in meals of yak meat and dairy. The popular snack chugo, made from dried yak cheese is also

a must-try for visitors. Its unique flavor and chewy texture will have you absolutely addicted!!

5. Take in the local culture

Immerse yourself in the ancient culture of the locals. Learn from the intricate relationship that has been developed between their culture and their natural environment. Appreciate the harmony in which the nomads live alongside fierce predators like tigers, clouded leopards and leopard cats. Try your hand at the local sports.

