

Bhutan Folk Festival - 13-15 December 2008

The Bhutan Folk Festival has been organised to commemorate the 100 years of Monarchy and to celebrate the coronation of the new King.

The festival is a 3 day event (13th, 14th & 15th December 2008) in Punakha. It will showcase both the contemporary and age old Bhutanese traditions which are practiced in today's day to day life.

The highlight of the event would be for the Bhutanese and the visitors alike to interact with the people of six gewogs (sub districts) under the Punakha Dzongkhag (district).

December 13th & 14th:

The Bhutan Folk Festival will commence with the traditional inaugural ceremony followed by conferring of Tashi Khadar (white scarf of goodwill and purity) to tourists by the High Priest with Tashi Moenlam (prayers for good luck). The event will showcase Bhutanese culture, the social mores and folklores, and the ethical way of life and organise competitions on traditional Bhutanese games such as archery (traditional sport), Khuru (traditional dart), Dego (stone flinging), and other rural games.

One interesting feature of the event is that , the guests can participate in the games and experience rural lifestyles. Traditional cuisine and traditions that accompany Bhutanese sporting competitions will also be showcased. Coinciding with lunch a traditional food festival will be organized and prizes for the best food will be awarded.

December 15th:

The final day will be a religious proceeding where the monks, participants, guests and the locals, led by the High Priest, will carry Kanjur (religious Buddhist scripts) starting from Punakha Dzong to Nobgang across several villages and back. On the way the villages will receive blessings and offer Chhemar (flour & butter) and Soelja Dresi (butter tea & butter rice), tea and snacks.

The hauling of these sacred scripts is a routine tradition and is believed to be performed every year for the protection of evil spirits and to atone yourself from bad deeds committed in the past and the present.

In the evening, Tsang-Mo (a kind of traditional banter) will be staged. The Bhutanese folk songs and dances are becoming more progressively graceful with the modern music and rhythm at the forefront. The folk festival will conclude with traditional songs, dances and a performance of the Tashi-Lebey (closing dance) in which all the participants and guest will have to join.

This event, besides paying homage to the local arts and artisans and engraving in the deepest recesses of the visitors senses Bhutan's living culture and tradition, would be a possible prospective for the revelation of what has been celebrated as a truly unique existence to the global anthology of similar lifestyles of other parts of the world.

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