

## Religion... in Bhutan.

The Buddhist faith plays a fundamental role in the cultural, ethical and sociological development of Bhutan and its people. It permeates all strands of secular life, bringing with it a reverence for the land and its well being. Annual festivals are held in each district, which are important spiritual occasions. Festivals are becoming a major attraction to tourists visiting Bhutan, mostly held in the spring and autumn periods.

Bhutan is perhaps the only country in the world to retain the Tantric form of Mahayana Buddhism as its official religion. To ensure the perpetuation of Buddhism in the Kingdom, one son from each family normally attends monastic school, although this has become less popular over the last 5 years. The Dzongs are both centers of administrative and government activities for an entire valley and they are also predominantly the homes and temples of the monastic community.

The larger festivals, known as Tshechus and Dromchoes, are a major attraction in Bhutan and it is over these periods that air seats and hotel accommodation become very difficult to obtain unless you book well over 9 months in advance. Please refer to the main menu for Festival dates. These are generally held in Feb/Mar, June and September.

Note: Some travellers prefer to avoid the major festivals as this is when Bhutan is hosting the most overseas tourists at any one time and place.

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