The Bhutan Folk Festival is organised to commemorate the 100 years of monarchy and to celebrate the coronation of His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck the 5th king of Bhutan. The event offers visitors a chance to experience and discover the living tradition and cultural heritage of the last Himalayan Buddhist kingdom.

The event will showcase different artifacts, games, dances, food, folk and religious performances. It is a festival that will give the visitor an understanding into the Bhutanese way of life.

**Venue description**

- **Elevation:** 1350 meters or 4430 ft.
- **Average temperature in December:**
  - Max. 15.0 degrees C.
  - Min. 7.90 degrees C.
- **Driving distance from Thimphu:** 75 Kms

Punakha is the winter residence of the Je Khenpo, the Chief Abbot of Bhutan. It was once the capital of Bhutan. The valley has a sub-tropical kind of climate and winters are very pleasant.

The landmark of the place is its dzong or fortress-like structure called Punthang Dewachen Phodrang. The Pho-chu or the male river flows to its right and the Mo-chu or the female river flows to its left offering a picturesque scene to all who visit the valley. The dzong was the second of its kind built by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in 1637, who unified Bhutan under one authority, the first being Semtokhadzong built in 1629. The Machen Lhakhang, a temple inside the fortress enshrines the mummified body of the Shabdrung who died in retreat here in 1651. It was also in this dzong where the first king of Bhutan Sir Ugyen Wangchuck was enthroned as the first hereditary king of Bhutan on 17th December, 1907. The day is still celebrated as the National Day of Bhutan.
Day 1: Inaugural ceremony, Conferring of white scarf of goodwill and purity, traditional games, Traditional cuisine, Competition on Rice and Butter Measurement with traditional measuring scales, staging of traditional drama.

Day 2: Archery tournament, demonstration on making traditional bow and arrow & accessories, Victory celebration by the winners of the Archery Tournament, Lunch will be served in a traditional manner by the family members of the two archery teams. The guests present will be divided into groups and served lunch by the families. As per tradition & culture, Soela (prizes) will be awarded to the family members of both the teams who serve lunch, Competition on traditional grinding and sieving of rice & maize (corn) with traditional implements amongst the gewogs (guests can also participate in the competition), Awarding of prizes to the winners. The programme will come to an end with traditional songs and dances (the guests can also sing their local songs), BREAK (Traditional attire show), Traditional & Modern songs and dances will be performed for the guests.

Day 3: Arrival of the Lam (high priest), guests & participants, The Lam & monks will perform Jabthreue & Kago with Mechham (Fire Dance) for protection from evil spirits, Kagyur Lingkor: as per existing tradition, Guests & participants will carry Kagyur (religious Buddhist scripts) starting from Punakha-Tabab Chhorten- Pepchu Village via Yongu Village. On the way, the villagers will receive blessings & and offer flour and butter & Soelja Dresi (traditional tea and butter rice), Lunch will be served by the local community in Nobgang. During the lunch break, some traditional games competition such as Parey Sherey, Pung-dho, Chhap-chha, Ke-shi, Langthabni will take place. Prizes will be awarded to the winners, Kanjur Lingkor procession returns to Punakha, Conclusion ceremony of Kanjur Lingkor. Tashi Khadhars will be presented to the tourists & participants with prayers for good luck, good health and prosperity (Tashi Moenlam), Tsang-Mo (traditional singing involving repartee usually between the sexes) will be staged. The folk festival will conclude with traditional songs, dances & the performance of the Tashi-Lebey (Concluding dance) in which all the participants and guests can participate.

For more information on Festivals and to visit Bhutan contact:

www.abto.org.bt  www.tourism.gov.bt  dot@tourism.gov.bt