

## **Department of Tourism Tawang ,A Complete Guidelines**

### ➤ **DIRECTORY**

1. Tourist Information Centre - 03794-222567

### ➤ **TOURISM**

#### 1. How to Reach.

Considering its geographic location, Guwahati, the capital of Assam State may be rightfully termed as the gateway to Tawang for the majority of the tourists planning to visit Tawang. It is approximately 543 Kms. from Tawang and is well connected by Air with direct daily flights from New Delhi and Kolkata and single stop flights coming from Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Jaipur etc. which are operated by all the Airlines of the country like Air India, Indigo, Jet Airlines, Spice jet, Go Air etc. with more additions in number of flights and operators expected due to launch of new private airlines in the country.

Besides Air connectivity, Guwahati is also very well connected with other major cities like Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata, Jammu, Bangalore, Secundrabad etc. through the vast network of the Indian Railways

After reaching Guwahati, one can reach Tawang through the following alternative modes.

1. By Helicopter: The Arunachal Pradesh Helicopter Service is operational from Guwahati Airport and presently the Helicopter services operate from Tawang to Guwahati and back on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. However due to the limited number of seats (on an average 10 – 12 only ) it is advisable that the tickets are pre-booked by calling the Counter at the Guwahati airport or the Aviation officer at Tawang and thereafter paying the ticket charges at the Counter as till now online booking of tickets has not been started by the State Government. The Helicopter journey to Tawang over Bhutan takes around 55 minutes and local transport at Tawang can be arranged by the concerned Hotel / Tour Operator.

By Road: The 543 Kms. long Guwahati-Tawang road journey is quite long and takes around 14-16 hours. The long duration of the journey makes it necessary to have a break in the form of night halt en-route. The suggested road travel plans are described below:

Passengers arriving at Guwahati on or before 12 P.M. and preferring to travel on the same day.

Option 1: Drive to Tezpur: Tourists may drive down to Tezpur which is around 198 Kms from Guwahati. The expected duration of the road journey to Tezpur from Guwahati Airport is around 3 and a half hours. Tezpur, being a major Army hub has a wide variety of good quality hotels and restaurants for the tourists.

Option 2: Drive to Bhalukpong: Tourists may alternatively drive further down to Bhalukpong which is located approximately 260 Kms. from Guwahati with a travelling time of around 4 ½ hours. Compared to Tezpur the stay and dining options at Bhalukpong are limited though the next day journey to Tawang is reduced by approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours. However, it is advisable to reach Bhalukpong in the evening before nightfall due to security advisory of the Government.

Tourists / visitors arriving Guwahati before 12 P.M. or starting their journey from Guwahati in the morning:

Option 1 : Drive to Bomdila: The tourists / visitors can opt to drive down to Bomdila ( 390Kms), which is approximately an 8 hours drive from Guwahati. It has a good number of Tourist accommodation of the Govt. alongwith Private Hotels. Midway one can have refreshment / Lunch at either Tezpur or Bhalukpong. The next day's journey to Tawang (188 Kms) takes approximately 5 ½ to 6 hours. The visitors may have a light break at either Baisakhi Brigade (2 and a half hours away) or Jaswant Garh ( 3 and a half hours away).

Option 2 : Drive to Dirang: The tourists / visitors can alternatively decide to take a night halt at Dirang (Approx. 430 Kms.) which is approximately a Nine hour drive from Guwahati. It has a few good hotels for stay. Midway the tourists can have refreshment / short break at either Tezpur or Bhalukpong. The next day journey to Tawang (Approx. 144 Kms) is around 4 to 5 hours long. The visitors may take a short break / refreshment at either the Baisakhi Brigade ( one and a half hours away) or Jang ( 3 and a half hours away).

With the gradual improvement in the road conditions enroute, it is expected that the abovementioned travel times would also gradually reduce.

## **2. CULTURE AND HERITAGE**

### **RELIGIOUS PRACTICES**

The Monpa are Buddhist by religion. The form of Buddhism followed by them is broadly of the Tibetan Mahayana School. Before the advent of Buddhism in the region their religion was referred to as Bon, which was an indigenous religion of Tibet as well. With the advent of Buddhism in the region, the people gradually gave up their old religion and started adopting Buddhism. As explained previously, the Monpa never completely gave up their old religion and absorbed a number of Bon deities into the Buddhist pantheon as protectors, which are worshiped according to the Buddhist rituals.

The Monpa people believe in the law of Karma, which means that any action or deed that we do with our body, speech or mind will have a corresponding result. It is one's karma, positive or negative, that determines one's birth. It is thus believed that that human life is obtained as result of a person's previous positive karma. Likewise the kind of birth, which a person will have in the next life, will be dependent on one's deeds and actions in the present life.

Irrespective of their financial position every Monpa house has a private chapel. Every morning, a member of the family offers water in bowls (*Yonchap*) at the altar; lights incense & butter lamps, and recites prayers. They make it a point to recite the sacred mantra of Avaloketesvara, '*Om mane Padme hung*' several times. In order to build up merit many engage themselves in turning prayers wheels and by circumambulating a *chorten* whenever they find time. Periodically they organize religious prayers at home or on a community level in which holy texts are recited by the official monks.

The Monpa also have ritual activities associated with particular stages of their life cycle. If a pregnant woman had a miscarriage earlier, they may arrange a recitation to safeguard her against such a mishap in the future. A few days after the birth of the child, an astrologer is approached to cast the horoscope of the child. The astrologer is also consulted to ascertain the auspicious day and time for the bridegroom's party to start for the bride's house and vice-versa. Pilgrimage to holy places is believed to help in building up merit and also in the cleansing of sins.

Sickness and death are attributed to a person's karma. They believe that many diseases are caused by supernatural beings that are easily offended and are very vindictive. They believe that these kinds of sickness cannot be cured by the modern healthcare system; appeasing and seeking the forgiveness of the supernatural being that had caused it could only cure it. It is also believed that many kinds of sicknesses are also caused by black magic. Once the cause is found by the divinary, monks are called to recite sacred texts in order to cleanse the person from the negative karma. If however, the intercessions and medicines fail and the patient dies, an extensive sequence of rituals is then performed.

The Monpa believe that the consciousness of a dead person remains in the intermediate state (*bardo*) for a maximum period of 49 days after death. On the day of the death an astrologer is invited to see as to how long the body should be kept in the house, in which manner the corpse should be disposed off and what rites and religious rituals/practices should be performed for the benefit of the dead. The Monpa people dispose off the dead body in one of the following four ways- Mountain cave burial, water burial, land burial and cremation.

### **LANGUAGE**

The linguists place the Monpa language under the Bodic group of the Tibeto-Burman language. Linguistically, Tawang district shows four marked divisions, viz., the Mago-Thingbu-Keth, the Pangchen-Keth, the Shyoepa-loh and the Tawang Mon-keth. The *Mago-Thingbu-Keth* is the dialect spoken by the inhabitants of Mago, Thingbu and Luguthang villages. Their dialect bears resemblance with that of the inhabitants of Lubrang, Dirme, Sumrang, Nyukmadung and Senge-Dzong villages of the West Kameng district. Their dialect displays many elements of the Tibetan language. *Pangchenpa-keth* is the dialect spoken by the people of Pangchen dhingduk (Zimithang). Their dialect is not easily understood by the other people of Tawang, though it has many Tawang Monpa words. The third division is the *Shyoepa-loh* which is spoken by the people of Shyoe village. It is similar to the Tibetan language. The last division is the *Tawang Mon-Keth*. It is the dialect spoken by the majority of the people of Tawang through variations in tone and phonetics is there from village to village. It is, in fact, the lingua franca of the district. Mon-keth is distinct from Tibetan although it has many Tibetan words. The people of Mago, Thingbu, Zimithang and Shyoe villages can also understand and speak it fluently.

The Tibetan language, locally known as Bhoti is also making a resurgence in the district. Initially, only the Lamas & Nuns knew the Bhoti script & language, as the religious training was imparted through it. It was however realized that without knowledge of Bhoti, the local people were unable to grasp the essence of their culture and history, as all the earlier documents and records were in Bhoti. Thus, the Government of Arunachal Pradesh has introduced it as the third language of instruction in the local schools, for classes I to VIII.

#### DRESS & ORNAMENTS

The Monpas have their own distinctive attire, which is well suited to the climatic conditions of Tawang. The traditional dress of the males consists of a short woolen trouser called *Kangnom* and a full length woolen trouser called *Dhorna*. The traditional male shirt is called *Toh-thung*. Over the shirt they wear a black woolen coat called *ali-phudhung* or *khanjar*. In cold days a thick woolen red cloak called *Chupa* is worn, it is tied at the waist with a sash called *khichin*. The Monpa's also wear a sleeveless coat called *Paktza*.

The women wear a sleeveless gown of light red color with white stripes known as the *Shingka* made up of coarse endi silk. A red or black coloured square woolen cloth is tied at the rear of the waist known as *Teng-ngakyima*. On top of the *shingka* an endi silk shirt, known as the *allentoh-thung* is worn, which is open from the front. Over it another shirt called *kyanchen* is worn. It is a lavishly embroidered full sleeve maroon colour shirt with opening in the front like the *aleentoh-thung*. They also wear a woolen coat called *baitoh-thung*. Many Monpa women also wear the Tibetan dress, which consists of a full sleeve blouse known as the *honju* and a loose gown known as the *Chupa*. In the Tibetan dress, the married women also tie a multi coloured apron in the front, known as *pangten*.

The traditional boots of the Monpa are known as *Tsem-lham*, which are common for both men and women. They are made up of woolen cloth which reaches till the knees. The soles of the shoes are made up of yak or cowhide; these are flat and are tied at the top with garters.

A unique aspect of the Monpa dress is the distinctive type of headgear worn by the people, based on the region of their stay. The most common headgear is called as *Ngama-shom*. It is made of yak's hair, which is in the shape of a skull. It has no brim, but has five tapering points of about three inches in length twisted out from the body. The people of Zimithang—both men and women wear a different type of cap known as the *seir-sha*. It is round in shape and red and yellow in color. The women of Mago-Thingbu wear a distinctive cap known as the *nga-sha*. Like other caps, it is made up of Yak's hair and has 18-23 tapering points twisted out from the material to form an unusual brim. Both Monpa men and women also wear Tibetan caps of various designs.

#### Ornaments

The Monpas possess various kinds of ornaments for their personal adornment. The stock of ornaments also serves as an index of their wealth. Their ornaments are similar to the ornaments of the Tibetans.

*Son-dhup*– It is a finger ring made of gold,silver or some other metal.Most of the rings are studded at the top with precious stones like turquoise, red coral or onyx.Both men and women wear finger rings.The Men also wear ivory rings called *thekor* on their right thumb.

*Nyon-dhup*– It is a bangle made up of gold,silver or other metal.Only women wear it.

*Kaykor*–It is a necklace or red corals interspersed with onyx,pearls and turquoise. Only women wear it. The women of Mago-Thingbu area wear a string of Amber beads known as *poshephre-nga*,which hangs down from the hair, on either side of the forehead but not from the neck.

*Gau*–It is a charm box of various shapes & sizes, normally made up of silver and studded with turquoise or other precious stones. Inside the *gau* a talisman is kept to protect the wearer from evil,illnesses etc.

*Along*–It is an earring made of gold or silver.Amongst the Monpas only women wear earrings.

*Khraseng*–It is a silver clip, which fastens the hair of women at the top of the head.

*Grokha*–It is as silver brooch mostly in the shape of a butterfly or a bird, which is worn only by Women

*Phre-nga*–Rosaries or Phre-nga are carried by both men and women.They may be made of wood,glass or bone.

Millet is the staple food of the Monpas. They also eat barley, rice, wheat, buckwheat and various pulses. Their Vegetable consumption is based on local availability, but by and large they consume potatoes,cabbages,spinach,radish,lettuce,gourd,pumpkin,layi patta(local spinach),maan,dried local mushrooms,chilies etc.

The Monpas are quite fond of spicy food.Therefore there is a lot of use of the chillies in their preparations. One of the very popular side dish, which every typical household prepares with food, is called *chamin*,it is a chutney which is made by grinding chilies with fermented cheese.Fermented cheese is a key ingredient in almost all of their traditional preparations and is found in almost all households.They also use fermented beans called *greh-churba* as a flavoring agent. The Monpas are non-vegetarians.They eat beef, pork, yak, mutton, chicken and fish.Beef and yak meat is cut into strips and dried during winter months to be consumed later.Some of the popular Monpa preparations are described below:

#### Zan

It is the staple food of the Monpas. It is prepared with millet or other flavored flour added to boiling water. It is consumed with vegetables, meat or *chamin* along with the addition of fermented cheese or soya beans as condiment.

#### Khura

It is a Monpa pancake made of buckwheat flour. It is taken along with tea or vegetable curry.

#### Gyapa-khazi

It is a Monpa version of the pulao. It is prepared by mixing rice, fermented cheese, small dried fish, chilly, ginger,butter etc.

#### Thukpa

It is also one of the most popular and common dish consumed by the people of Tawang. It is basically a noodle soup mixed with minced meat, chillies etc. Another kind of Thukpa is *Dheb-thukpa* in which they use rice. Thukpa made of maize, meat and beans is called *Ashum Thukpa*.

#### Puta

The Monpa version of noodles is *puta*. These are noodles made from buckwheat flour. The *Puta* is usually eaten with a stew made of vegetables, fermented cheese and chillies.

#### Bresi

It is basically sweet rice, usually served during ceremonial occasions. Cooked rice is transferred to a basin on which melted butter is poured. It is then seasoned with raisins and sugar.

## Momos

Momos are very popular with most Indians & the Monpas also prepare them on a regular basis. It is often served with soup and hot *chamin*.

## TsizinKyola

It's methodology of preparation is almost the same as of *Zan* except that only buckwheat flour is used in its preparation and the fact that the resultant paste is much thinner. It is best eaten with thin *chamin*.

## Khazi

It is cooked rice mixed with finely chopped *maan*— a local vegetable (a kind of spring onion leaves), *chamin* and salt.

## Beverages

Unlike most of the other tribes of Arunachal, the Monpas are quite fond of milk and products. 'Sueja' or butter tea is the chief beverage of the Monpa people.

The Monpa are also quite fond of alcoholic beverages, which are prepared by them at their houses. *Chang* is the common word used by the Monpa for alcohol. It is used for all social occasions like birth, death, housewarming or festivals. The key ingredients used for making *chang* are rice, maize, barley and millets. The Monpa brew the following kinds of *chang*:

*Baang-chang*: It is mostly prepared from rice. However, it can also be made by combining millets and barley.

*Shin-chang*: It is only prepared during Losar—the Monpa New Year festival. It is a sweet beer like concoction prepared by mixing together Millet, buckwheat and barley.

*Aarak* it is made by the distillation of maize, millet, rice or barley. It is quite strong and is usually served hot in a small cup.

## RECREATIONAL DANCES

Recreational dances are called *Broh* and are performed on jovial occasions for merriment. Recreational dances do not form part of any festival or ritual and anybody can take part in it. No dancing costume is required. The dancers stand in a line or form a circle, holding each other's hand on either side. As they sing, they swing their hands back and forth, take one step forward or sideways, halt and again take one step back to the original position.

## PANTOMIMES/DANCE DRAMA

Pantomimes are the media through which a mythical story is narrated or a moral lesson is taught. These are generally performed during Losar and other occasions but can also be performed at any other time of the year. Each pantomime / dance drama has a fascinating story which is described briefly:

### 1. Achi Lhamo Dance

The development of this dance-drama is attributed to Thangtong Gyalpo who was a highly respected Lama, Teacher and self-made bridge Engineer of the fourteenth century. It is one of the prominent folk dances of the Monpa and Sherdukpen Tribes of Western Arunachal Pradesh. The Tibetan version of Ramayana is depicted through this dance-drama. This is a masked dance, which was evolved approximately 600 years before. It has its own style of dance and mime act. Achi Lhamu involves five characters each having a mythological origin. They are 'Gyeli', 'Nyapa', 'Nyaro' and two other female characters 'Lhamo' and 'Lhum'. 'Lhamo' was the fairy from heaven who later became the Queen of Gyeli. The dance also depicts the marriage ceremony of Lhamo with King Chhoegay Norzang.

The dance drama is performed for 4 to 5 days through a unique style of song, dialogue, dance and pantomime. The musical instruments played to the accompaniment of the dance are the drums and cymbals.

### 2. Snow Lion Dance

This dance is performed during the Losar and festive occasions. Legend has it that a saint named Tenteling was performing meditation on Mount Gangri-Karpo. The saint's meditation was witnessed by the two snow-lions living on that mountain. Impressed by the saint's religiosity, the lions offered their milk for the sustenance of the saint and consequently became his good friends. This dance is performed to commemorate the saint and the good deeds of the snow lions.

### 3. Yak Dance

One of the most popular pantomimes of the Monpa tribe is the yak pantomime. In this dance, a dummy yak is made by covering the body-frame made of bamboo with black cloth and setting a wooden head on it. An image of a country-guardian (*sungma*) sits on its back. The body frame is carried about by two men concealed within it who dance according to the beats of the drum and cymbals. Four masked men representing *Theopa Gali*, who was said to have discovered the yak, and his family members, dance round the yak narrating in the form of song the romantic story of the origin of yak-it's discovery and how it's integration brought permanent source of wealth and happiness to the entire community.

### 4. Kieng Cham

During Choekhor festival, *kieng Cham* forms a part of the procession, where some barely dressed young men of the village wearing monkey like masks and a wooden phallus attached to their dress perform dance with erotic movements, the dancers are called *kiengpas*. The dance has great significance as the Monpa believe that the evil spirits who are said to cause harm to the crops get so engrossed watching this dance they forget to cause harm to the crops and the village community.

## RELIGIOUS/MONASTIC DANCES

The religious dances (*cham*) form an important part of the religious rituals of the Monpa people. During the Torgya Festival, the dances are performed with great sanctity and spiritual quest, by selected Monks of the Tawang Monastery as a part of the Torgya rituals which go on for three days. Before going into details about the actual *cham*, a mention of the outfits of the dancers needs to be made. The most important object of the dancer's attire is the mask (*bak*). The masks are carved out of wood and are painted in different colours. They are often double the size of a human face. The costumes used in the *cham* are mostly made of brocade and silk. The outfit of a dancer representing a deity of higher rank usually consists of a gown (*phodka*) with long, broad sleeves and a poncho-like tippet (*stod le*). Some dancers wear a circular breastplate called *melong* bearing in its center, the 'seed' syllable (*sa bon*) of the deity, which the dancer personifies. The weapons and other objects which the dancers carry in their hands are the characteristic attributes which Buddhist iconography assigns to a particular God or Goddess. The common objects carried by the dancers in their hands are the skull cup (*bandha*), damaru, vajra (*dorjee*), dagger (*phurpa*), sword (*raldri*), club in the shape of a mummified corpse (*thodthrom*), bell (*drill bu*) or a flag.

Another important component of the *chamis* the orchestra. The orchestra players are attired in the usual monks' dress. The musical instruments used by the orchestra are the same instruments used in normal religious ceremonies, such as long trumpets (*dungchen*), clarinet (*gyaling*), conch shells (*dungkar*), damaru, drums (*dha*) and cymbals (*silnyen and bubcha*). Their beats indicate the rhythm of the dance.

A total of 22 different kinds of Cham are performed during the festival some of which are described as under:

#### 1. Pha cham

In the early mornings of the three days of festival, a dancer in fully ordained monk's dress performs the Phacham by wearing a boar's mask (Pha=boar; cham=dance). This dance is performed in order to prepare the ground for performance of cham by pacifying the malice of the gods and spirits so that perfect conditions could be created for performance.

#### 2. Shanag cham

Shanag cham is performed by twelve dancers wearing *phodka*, a kind of richly embroidered kaftan reaching to the ankles and *pang kheb*, a colorful richly embroidered apron. The dancers wear a black, broad-brimmed hat from which the dance derived its name *Shanag* (black hat). The dancers personify Tantric priests. After executing the *cham* for some time, four dancers representing *Dharmaraja Kalarupa* and his consort, *Chamundi* accompanied by their attendants appear on the scene dancing solemnly. They are greeted by the Abbot of the Tawang Monastery by offering scarves from the balcony above. After the dance is over, the

Abbot; senior lamas, all the above dancers and the procession of people proceed towards the southern gate of the monastery to participate in the Torgya rites.

### 3. Gon-Nyin cham

This *cham* is performed by eleven dancers each holding a ritual bell in one hand and *damaru* in the other. They represent *dakinis* who are the protectors of the Buddha Dharma. *Gon-Nyin cham* is generally performed when an important religious venture is to be undertaken like the construction of a monastery or when a holy statue is to be installed and consecrated. It is performed to distract the attention of the demons who create obstacles to the advancement of the Buddhist doctrine. It is believed that the demons get so engrossed in watching this dance that they forget to create obstacles in the work.

### 4. Lham Tsoktor

Wearing fearful masks and dressed magnificently, a group of twelve dancers representing the retinue of *Palden Lhamo* (Sri Devi) perform this *cham* signifying the clearance of ground for her appearance. A masked dancer representing *Palden Lhamo* comes out from the main temple dancing solemnly. Her attendants escort her. Before entering the dance arena, the Abbot of Tawang Monastery offers scarves to *Palden Lhamo* and her attendants from the balcony above. Reaching the dancing square, she is ushered to the throne arranged for her. *Seir-Kyem* (libation) is then offered to her by some senior monks. This dance is performed to invoke the blessing of *Palden Lhamo*, the principal guardian deity of Tawang Monastery.

### 5. Zam Cham

Wearing fierce looking masks, this dance is performed by two dancers holding small flags in their right hands and skull cup in the left hands. It symbolizes the taking possession and safeguarding the ground which is to be used for performance of sacred dances.

### 6. Dung Cham

*Dung-cham* is performed for the prosperity of all sentient beings. This *cham* is performed by wearing mask of different animal figures. The dancers represent the retinue of Chamsing, a protective deity.

### 7. Gelong Cham

For peace and prosperity in the world, twelve dancers dressed in ceremonial monks' robes perform this *cham*. Apart from the above sacred dances, many shabbily dressed clowns play their part as interludes, besides entertaining the public with mimes, they also teach moral lessons.

## **3. ACCOMMODATIONS:**

### WHERE TO STAY & EAT

Tawang has a good range of accommodations in the form of private hotels, Govt. guest houses and Lodges, Home Stays etc. Most of the private hotels and Guest Houses are located in and around the Tawang Township. For the guest desirous of staying either in Lumla or Jang, the appropriate option would be to stay in the Govt. Circuit House or Lodge for which the respective ADC Offices may be contacted for prior booking/ reservation. For accommodation in the Govt. Circuit House or Tourist Lodge the District Tourism Officer may be contacted.

## **HOTELS OF TAWANG**

### HIGH END HOTELS

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Name of Hotels</b>	<b>Full Address</b>	<b>Contact Nos.</b>	<b>Website and E-mail</b>
1.	Hotel Tayatha	Craft Center Colony, Tawang	9899058868/8258 013724	<a href="http://www.hoteltayatha.com">www.hoteltayatha.com</a> /

1.	Hotel Dekyi Pelbar	Old Market,Tawang	03794-223867	
2	Hotel Tashi Ga-tsel	Near Parade Ground Tawang	03794-224652/9436010602	<a href="http://www.hoteltashigatsel.com">www.hoteltashigatsel.com</a> /
3.	Hotel Zax Star	Near Tawang Emporium Craft Center Colony Tawang	03794-224652 / 09862220859/09402262482	<a href="http://www.hotelzaxstar.in">www.hotelzaxstar.in</a> / <a href="mailto:reservationszaxstar@gmail.com">reservationszaxstar@gmail.com</a>
4.	Hotel Gakyi Khang Zhang	Near DC Office,Air Colony Tawang	03794-224647/48/49	<a href="http://www.gkztawang.com">www.gkztawang.com</a>
5.	Hotel Mon Paradise	Nehru Market,Tawang	03794-222443	
6.	Hotel Yangzom	Urgelling Village, Tawang	08527924987	
7	Hotel Monyul Residency	New Market, Tawagn	7642829536	

### **MID RANGE HOTELS**

Sl.No.	Name of Hotels	Full Address	Contact Nos.	Website and E-mail
1.	Hotel Tawang Regency	Old Market Tawang	9402492375	<a href="https://hoteltawangregency-dawa.com/">https://hoteltawangregency-dawa.com/</a>
2.	Hotel Tawang Holiday	Officer Colony Opposite SBI Bank, Tawang	03794-222030	<a href="http://www.tawanglodge.com">www.tawanglodge.com</a> / <a href="mailto:tawanglodge@yahoo.in">tawanglodge@yahoo.in</a>
3	Hotel Tawang Inn	Nehru Market,Tawang	03794-2221729402066004	
4.	Hotel Mon Kyemojong	Old Market Tawang, Near Tourist Lodge,Tawang	03794-224311/9436222293	<a href="mailto:hotel.monkyimojon@gmail.com">hotel.monkyimojon@gmail.com</a>
5.	Hotel Ugyenling	Near Gas Agency, Tawang.	9402860038/9402293650	<a href="mailto:Ugyenlinghoteltawang@gmail.com">Ugyenlinghoteltawang@gmail.com</a>

6.	<a href="#">Hotel Monyul Lodge</a>	Old Bazar , Near Taxi Stand, Tawang	03794- 222196/94362252 64	
6	Hotel NEFA	Nehru Market, Tawang	03794- 222419/84139329 99	
7	Hotel White House	Nehru Market,Tawang		
8	Hotel Tawang Regency	Old Market Tawang	03794-224743	<a href="http://Letseetour&amp;travels.com">Letseetour&amp;travels.com</a> .
9	<a href="#">Hotel Dawa</a>	Old Market, Tawang	03794223310	
10	Hotel Mount View	Nehru Market, Tawang	03794- 224304/94024923 75	
11	<a href="#">Hotel Buddha</a>	Old Market Tawang	9436872954/0379 4-222954	
12	Hotel Tawang View	Nehru Market, Tawang	03794-222433	
13	Hotel Taktsang	Temilo, Tawang	07085900801	
14	<a href="#">Hotel Siddhartha</a>	Nehru Market, Tawang	03794- 222515/94366359 98	
15	Hotel Samdrupling	Old Market, Tawang	03794-224213	
16	Hotel Dolma Chhinkar	Old Market, Tawang	03794- 223271/94360510 11/ 94362523191	<a href="http://Infordolmahotels.com">Infordolmahotels.com</a> / <a href="http://www.dolmahotels.com">www.dolmahotels.com</a>
17	Hotel Happy Valley	AIR Colony	03794-223832	
18	Hotel Mon-Valley	Nehru market Tawang,	03794-222119	

19	Red Coral	Old market, Tawang		
20	Bumla Inn	Near Parade Ground, Tawang	08729902020	
21	Hotel Dekhang	Near Gas Agency, Tawang	09774660107	
22	Hotel Mandala	New Market, Tawang	8794554003	
23	Hotel Pemaling	Nehru Market, Tawang	8257080996	
24	Hotel Ajanta	Nehru Market, Tawang	8794752521	
25	Hotel Yul Pemakhar	Mandrelling Village, Tawang	9402238934	
26	Hotel Zambhala	Near Govt. Higher Secondary, Tawang	7085938482	

**BUDGET HOTELS**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Name of Hotels</b>	<b>Full Address</b>	<b>Contact Nos.</b>	<b>Website and E-mail</b>
1	Hotel Shambala	Nehru Market Tawang	03794-222348	
2	Hotel Gorichen	Old Market, Tawang	03794-224151	
3	Hotel Tawang	Old Market, Near D.C. Resident, Tawang	03794-224640	
4	Hotel Pungteng	Nehru Martket, Tawang	03794-223173	
5	Hotel Dungphoo	Old Market, Tawang	03794-223765	

6	Hotel Maa	Old Market, Tawang	03794-222295	
7	Hotel Dolma	Old Market Tawang	03794-223271/94362523191	<a href="http://Infordolmahotels.com">Infordolmahotels.com</a> / <a href="http://www.dolmahotels.com">www.dolmahotels.com</a>
8	Hotel Massang	Old Market Tawang	03794-222162	
9	Hotel Snow Hill	Old Market, Tawang	03794-224548	
10	North Hill	Near Gas Agency, Tawang	03794-222162	
11	Hotel Sunrise	Nehru Market	9402475782	

**LIST OF GUEST HOUSE**

Sl.No.	Name of Guest House	Full Address	Contact Nos.	Website and E-mail
01.	Dolma Khangsar Guest House	Gompa AIR Road Tawang	03794-223271 /94362523191	<a href="http://Infordolmahotels.com">Infordolmahotels.com</a> / <a href="http://www.dolmahotels.com">www.dolmahotels.com</a>
02.	Lebrang Guest House	Lebrang Village	9402605029	<a href="mailto:Yeshipemp@gmail.com">Yeshipemp@gmail.com</a>
03.	Tenzin Paying Guest House	Damgyen Village	9436630456	
04.	Thunderbolt Guest House	Near Parade Ground, Tawang	03794-224242/9402622264	

**LIST OF HOME STAYS**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Name of Home Stay</b>	<b>Full Address</b>	<b>Contact Nos.</b>	<b>Website and E-mail</b>
01	Mandrel Khang Homestay	Gompa AIR Road, Shyo basti	+918257882689/ +919402613136	<a href="http://www.mandrelkhanghomestay.com/">http://www.mandrelkhanghomestay.com/</a>
02	Tawang Home Stay	Lebrang, Tawang	03794- 290205/9402477 544	<a href="mailto:dto.tawang@gmail.com">dto.tawang@gmail.com</a>
03	Tara Home Stay	Old Market, Tawang	03794-222483	<a href="http://www.tribaldiscovery.com">www.tribaldiscovery.com</a>
04	Lemberdung Home Stay	Lemberdung	9436051009	
05	Homestay for comfort	Down Town Road	03794-224788	
06	Dolkar Homestay	Lebrang	9862076099	
07	Tashi Home Stay	Lebrang	9774608088	
08	TL Home Stay	Shyo Village	7085327463	
09	Sangey Home Stay	Shyo Village	03794-222712	
10	Namgey Home Stay	Shyo Village	8258846210	
11	Sonam Tsomu Home Stay	Mandrelling Village	9436091899	
12	Jambey Villa	Urgyelling Village	8414987117	
13	Nawang Chotta Home Stay	Lumpo Village,Zemithang	9436875068	
14	Panden Home Stay	Muchut Village,Zemithang	9402661290	

15	Chumey Yangzom Home Stay	Kyalateng Village,Zemithang	9402859651	
16	Tashi Phuntso Home Stay	Muchut Village,Zemithang	9402661290	
17	Bliss Homestay	Mandrelling Village, Tawang	9436221434	
18	Kitpi Homestay	Kitpi Village, Tawang	8258965594	

**LIST OF GOVERNMENT ACCOMMODATION**

Sl.No.	Name of Govt. Accommodation	Full Address	Contact Nos.	Website and E-mail
01.	Circuit House, Tawang	Circuit house, Tawang	03794-224580	
02.	Tourist Lodge, Tawang	Tourist Lodge	03794-222359	www.tawangtourism.in tawangtourism16@gmail.com
03.	Forest Rest House, Tawang	Near Circuit House, Tawang	Mobile:9436220844 (RFO Hqs.)	
04.	Circuit House, Jang	Jang, Hqs.	03794-255588(ADC Office)	
05.	Circuit House, Lumla	LumlaHqs.	03794-264213(ADC Office)	
06.	Forest Rest House, Jang	Jang Hqs.	Mobile:9436220844 (RFO Hqs.)	
07.	Inspection Bungalow, Zemithang	Zemithang	03794-280326(CO ZMG.)	
08.	Tourist Lodge, Zemithang	Zemithang	03794-280326(CO ZMG.)	

## **PLACES TO EAT IN TAWANG**

Tawang Township has number of good restaurants in the market. Further, some Home Stays have also started preparing traditional food for the tourists on demand / prior booking. The popular places to eat in town are listed below;

- Dharma Coffee House, Near PHED Office, Tawang Ph. 08416053711  
A café cum mini library in Tawang where good coffee, cake, pizza are served along with some good collection of books.
- Tawang Food Court, Nehru Market, Tawang Ph. 08414834002  
The restaurant cum cafeteria serves good quality of Local, Chinese, Indian and Continental.
- Gakhyi Top-Tsang -Hotel Gyakhi Khang Zang, near DC Office Tawang Ph. 03794-224647  
The restaurant serves a good array of Indian and Chinese dishes. The hotel also has a bar & Lounge for its guest.
- [Orange Bar & Restaurant – Old Market, Tawang Ph. 9485240762](#)  
The bar-cum- restaurant is quite popular amongst the locals and the tourist for its good spread of food and drinks.
- Snow Hill Restaurant – Old Market, Tawang Ph. 9402001267  
The restaurant serves good quality of Local and Chinese food.
- Mon- Valley Restaurant – Nehru Market, Tawang Ph. 8131968915  
The restaurant serves good quality of Local and Chinese food.
- Greenwood Restaurant – Old Market, Tawang  
The restaurant serves quality Local, Chinese and Indian dishes.
- Woodland Restaurant – Nehru Market, Tawang.  
The restaurant serves good quality of Local and Chinese food.

## **4. HANDICRAFTS**

### **THANGKA PAINTING**

Like the other Buddhist tribes and communities of the Trans-Himalayan region, the Monpa owe a great deal of this artistic heritage to the Tibetans. Like Tibetan paintings, most of the Monpa paintings have a religious theme. It is a belief amongst these communities that the painting images of deities and religious themes is a pious act and earns the artist/painter, merit.

A Thangka, also known as Tangka, or Tanka (Tibetan) is a painting on cloth. The literal translation of the Tibetan word *Thangka* means 'recorded message'. Amongst all the Arts and Crafts in Tawang, painting occupies a very special position. Not only is it essential for designing, decorating and finishing homes and personal objects, but it is also a highly developed and important mode of religious expression. It is a medium through which the Buddhist philosophy can be explained.

The Thangka is not a flat creation like an oil painting or an acrylic painting but consists of a painted picture panel which is thereafter mounted on a silk border/cover. Generally, Thangkas last a very long time and retain much of their luster, but because of their delicate nature, they have to be carefully kept in dry places so that the Moisture does not harm the painting. It is sometimes also called as scroll-painting due to the completed painting being kept and rolled as scrolls. There are many types of Thangkas in terms of their content and design. As highlighted earlier, their subject matter include Buddhas, bodhisattvas, goddesses, wrathful creatures, humans, inanimate objects (stupas), monastic accessories, religious objects, animals, plants, flowers etc.

Thangka painting is a precise art of exact measurements and proportions. To sketch the figures in a *thangka* the painter needs an exact knowledge of the measurements and proportions of each deity as established by Buddhist iconography and artistic practice. A grid containing these proportions is essential to establish the continuity and correct transmission of the figures.

The ideal bodily form of the enlightened beings has to be perfectly oriented in relation to the central axis and each body part has to be perfectly proportioned. Even the slightest mistake affects the accuracy and hence the religious value of the *thangka*. It requires deep understanding of the symbolism involved to capture the spirit of it. One can easily purchase a good quality Thangka in the local market.

### LOCAL HANDPAPER

The art of handmade paper is quite ancient and is one of the most developed crafts of the Monpas of Tawang District, being an integral part of their local customs and culture. As the handmade paper-making industry existed many years back, its importance in the local economy is quite evident from the fact that Monpas used to sell and export it to the neighboring countries like Tibet, Bhutan and areas in the neighboring district of West Kameng, Arunachal Pradesh. During those days, the local artisans used to travel to Tsona and Lhasa in Tibet, Sakteng-Merak and Tashi Gang in Bhutan, Dirang, Bomdilla, Domkho-Morshing and Kalaktang in West Kameng District, to sell the handmade paper locally known as *Mon-Shug*. In fact, all the Buddhist religious texts, which came from Tibet, were written on this paper, as no handmade paper making industry existed in Tibet during that period.

The locally manufactured handmade paper (*Mon-Shug*) is made from a local tree called '*Shug-Sheng*' (Daphnie Paperacia), it is widely used in religious ceremonies throughout Buddhist belts and also for printing religious texts called "*Pe-Cha*", flags called "*Phann*", and as scrolls inside the prayer wheels (*Mani*) etc. The cost of *Mon-Shug* ranges from Rs. 50 to 60 per bundle depending upon the quality. A bundle of *Mon-Shug* consists of 10 sheets of paper and is locally known as "*Chideb*".

#### *Different qualities of handmade paper:*

The handmade paper is basically classified into four categories based on their quality and size:

1. Gochema: – This, as the name suggests has the finest quality of paper.
2. Tsarsho: – This quality of paper is the thinnest and longest among its type.
3. KangyurParsho: – This quality of paper is finely polished on both its sides.
4. Kyosho: – This paper is of the lowest quality and is basically used in household works.

With proper refinement, the local handmade paper can also be used for making visiting cards, greeting cards, letter pads etc. as the paper is of high quality, can withstand rough climate for longer duration of time and is devoid of easy tampering. It is an Eco Friendly solution to the problem of energy and pollution. Apart from this, it is an ideal paper for painting with watercolor, landscapes and portraits. It also serves as an additional income for the farmers. One can purchase Hand paper from the Local market. For those interested in seeing the actual process of making local paper, they may visit Mukto village ( approx. 2 hours drive from the town) after consultation with the district tourism officer or Circle officer Mukto.

### MASK MAKING

The practice of mask making amongst the Monpas can be traced to the influence of the Tibetan culture on the Local culture. Influenced by the totem worship of primitive Bonism, Tibetans started to express themselves by wearing animal masks. Masks can be classified into religious type and folk type in terms of their functions:

Religious masks are generally used in religious dance festivals, but they vary in different monasteries. This type usually includes three dimensional or semi-three-dimensional hard-shaped masks made from roughcasts. They are regarded as a form of sculpture. As Buddhist believers think that religious masks symbolize Gods and Spirits, they especially emphasize solemnity and constancy in the making of masks. This strict standard has resulted in the artistic form of religious masks becoming fixed. Religious masks are only used in performances held once a year but at other times they are hung and enshrined in monasteries, with the

masks of a protective deity in the central position. Some masks in some particular monasteries have even become their treasures.

Folk art masks have diversified forms and are used in folk singing and dancing performances, operas as well as storytelling and ballad singing activities. These sort of masks emphasize the entertainment function and their production is therefore free from any design restrictions.

*Masks can be classified into three types, in terms of subject:*

Demon masks: mainly in form of a nine-headed demon, mountain god, sea god, dragon god and demons

Animal masks: mainly in the form of yaks, horses, rabbits, snakes, monkeys, lions, tigers, wolves, dogs, leopards, elephants, hawks, deer and foxes.

Human figure masks: mainly in form of witches, spell chanters, hermits, female demons, herdsmen, long-lived old men, etc.

During performances, masks are mainly used to express the characters' happiness, anger, grief and joy and also demonstrate the true, the good, the beautiful and the ugly. The color of a particular Mask is quite significant and is its own meaning:

- *Yellow masks represent profound knowledge and far-sightedness.*
- *Red masks represent bravery, intelligence, and the ability to use strategy to conquer or advise others.*
- *Green masks represent merit, virtue, achievements intelligence and kindness.*
- *Black and white masks represent saying yes and meaning no, or being changeable and unreliable. Black masks also represent ferociousness and cruelty while White Masks represent peace and auspiciousness.*
- *Purple masks represent jealousy and hatred.*
- *Blue masks represent fearlessness and heroism*

One can visit the Craft Centre in Tawang to see the process of Mask Making and can also buy them there or in the local market.

## WEAVING

Weaving is an important activity of the Monpa society. Weaving in their society is almost exclusively done by women.

Girls are trained in the art of weaving from a very early age and the art form is handed down from generation to generation. The basic raw materials used by them in weaving are wool and cotton yarn. Their woven products are mainly woolens, which meet their essential requirement of clothing. They also weave blankets, haversacks, tents etc., from yak hair. Of all the articles woven by the Monpa women, the craft of weaving wooden carpets deserves a special mention. By combining different shades of woolen yarn, they weave carpets with exquisite designs of dragon, snow-lion, birds or flowers on them. Equally sophisticated and artistic, are their textile bags, which are made by combining five colors -red, yellow, white, black and green.

The Monpas use three types of looms-loin loom, high wrap loom or treadle loom and low wrap loom. The loin loom is used for weaving bags, blankets, raincoats, tents, haversacks etc. It is also employed for weaving light woolen cloths. Low wrap looms are employed for weaving most of their woolens while carpets are woven on high wrap looms.

## WOOD CRAFT

As the region is endowed with lush green forests, various kind of wood is extracted by the people to make various objects of daily use as well as for other specialized purposes. The Monpa are very adept in woodwork. Their low table called 'Cho-tze' is known for its artistic carved woodwork. It is open on the side fencing the person seated on it. The other sides are paneled with carved figures of dragon, bird or flower pattern painted in vivid colors. The Monpas also produce various utensils of daily use from wood. One can easily buy these traditional items in the craft emporium or the local market.

## HAT MAKING

The most common headgear of the Monpas is the hat made of yak's felt. The Hat design differs from region to region in the district. It is called *ngama-shom* or *tzithpa-shom* in tsoksum area, *nga-sha* in Mago-Thingbu and *dhueja* in Zemithang area. A required quantity of yak's felt is placed in a basin to which is added hot water containing crepe apple juice. The yak's felt is then kneaded for about an hour. It is then moulded with hands giving it a desired shape of hat. The tapering point is twisted out from the material of the body. The Monpa hats can be purchased from the local market or the craft center.

## INCENSE MAKING

The Monpas are also experts in the art of making incense. The basic raw materials used by the Monpas in making incense are the leaves and the stems of juniper tree, while other ingredients used are several different herbs locally known as *balu* (*Rhododendron anthopogen*), *solu* (*Rhododendron setosum*), *adung-karpo*, *shole-karpo* etc. For adhesive, the bark of trees, locally known by the name of *yang-yang-ma* and *dhongze* is used. It is generally used during religious ceremony and for purification of surroundings. One can witness the process of incense making in Sh. Topgey's unit located near the Craft-Centre.

## ILP FORMALITIES

**Outlined Below are the Steps to Obtain Inner Line Permit / Protected Area Permit**

### **For Domestic Tourists :**

The State of Arunachal Pradesh falls under restricted area and official permission in the form of Inner Line Permit (ILP) is required to enter the State for visitors, other than the natives of Arunachal Pradesh. The grant of an ILP is a routine affair and thus it should not deter any tourist from visiting the state. The inner line permits may be obtained in the following manner:

- **Online Application:** The Government of Arunachal Pradesh has formulated an Inner Line Permit Management System through which the visitors can apply for ILP online by visiting [www.arunachalilp.com](http://www.arunachalilp.com). The website is quite informative and provides complete details about the process, fees and documents that are required for obtaining an ILP.
- **Apply at Government Offices:** The inner line permits were initially issued by the Secretary (Political), Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, respective Deputy Commissioners and Additional Deputy Commissioners of the districts. However for the convenience of the visitors, a number of other officers posted in various major cities have also been designated as Liaison Officers for the grant of ILP.

The details of those officers are as under:

Sl No.	Name of the City	ILP ISSUANCE AUTHORITY WITH ADDRESS
1	New Delhi	Resident Commissioner, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, Kautilya Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi. Phone: 011-23013915 / 23014136.
2	Kolkata	Deputy Resident Commissioner, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, CE-109, Sector-1, Salt Lake City, Kolkata. Phone: 033-23213627/ 23593097.
3	Guwahati	Deputy Resident Commissioner, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, G S Road, Rukminigaon opposite Manasa Mandir, Dispur, Guwahati – 781021. Phone: 0361 – 2229506/ 2229565.

4	Shillong	Deputy Resident Commissioner, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Shillong. Phone: 0364 – 2224247 / 2224476.
5	Tezpur	Deputy Resident Commissioner, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, Parvati Nagar, Tezpur (Assam). Phone: 03712 –260141 / 260173.
6	Mohanbari	Deputy Resident Commissioner, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, Mohanbari, Dibrugarh, Assam. Phone: 0373-2382738 / 2382560.
7	Lilabari	Deputy Resident Commissioner, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, Lilabari, North Lakhimpur, Assam. Phone: 03752-234170.
8	Jorhat	Deputy Resident Commissioner, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, Jorhat, Assam. Phone: 0376-2932676 / 2311806.

Temporary Inner Line Permits are also issued from the office of the Extra Assistant Commissioners (EACs) at those entry gates where EAC Offices exist. However, it is recommended that the visitors obtain ILP in advance, so as to prevent any inconvenience and delay at the check gates.

### **For Foreign Tourists :**

As the entire State of Arunachal Pradesh is covered by the Protected Area Regime, Foreign visitors are required to obtain Protected Area Permit (PAP), before entry into the state. These may be obtained from all the Indian Missions Abroad; Offices of the Foreigners Regional Registration Officers (FRROs) at Delhi, Mumbai & Kolkata; Chief Immigration Officer, MHA, Chennai and Commissioner (Home), Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh at Itanagar. However, for the convenience of the Foreign travellers, the following additional authorities have also been delegated powers to grant the Protected Area Permit form which the Foreign traveller can obtain the PAP after arrival into the country. The details of these authorities are:

Sl No.	Name of Cities	Name and address of the Authority
1	New Delhi	Resident Commissioner, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, Kautilya Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi. Phone: 011-23013915 / 23014136.
2	Kolkata	Deputy Resident Commissioner, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, CE-109, Sector-1, Salt Lake City, Kolkata. Phone: 033-23213627/ 23593097.
3	Guwahati	Deputy Resident Commissioner, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, G S Road, Rukminigaon opposite Manasa Mandir, Dispur, Guwahati – 781021. Phone: 0361 – 2229506/ 2229565.

The above authorities have also been delegated powers to issue PAP to single Foreign tourist to visit Tawang, West Kameng and Lower Subansari District. The authorities at Sl. No. 2 and 3 above can also issue PAP to Foreign Tourists without sponsorship of a registered Tourist Operator.

## **TRAVEL TIPS**

The best season to visit Tawang will, to a great extent, depend on what you are really interested in. If you want to be assured of a clear view of the scenery as well as clear skies, then the best months to visit would be October and November. After November it tends to get cold. If you are interested in seeing snow, then the best months are January to March. To beat the scorching heat of the summer of the plains the best time would be from the month of April to August. Though the rainy season starts from April, it is amply compensated by the rhododendrons and other flowers in bloom. Also, the snow at higher altitudes persists till May. If monastic dances hold your interest, then you are to visit Tawang during the month of Torgya festival. This festival is held for three days from twenty-eighth of the eleventh month of the Buddhist calendar i.e., around January. It is suggested that the exact date may be confirmed.

You require lightweight woolen in summer and heavy ones during winter. Never have a tight schedule and always keep a few days extra on the itinerary. Roadblocks due to landslide during monsoon and heavy snowfall during winter should always be kept in mind. If you decide to travel by hired light vehicle, then it would be a good idea to travel in a group of eight or ten as this will give you ample freedom in asking the driver to stop at various places on the way to enjoy the beauty of nature.

Tourists and visitors availing helicopter service from Guwahati to Tawang are advised to check the status of helicopter service one day in advance. Helicopter services are available subject to weather condition on 5 days a week except for Wednesday and Sunday. Also, ensure that local transportation is arranged, if traveling by helicopter.

## **DOS AND DON'TS FOR RESPONSIBLE TOURISM IN TAWANG**

### Dos

- Help us to keep Tawang clean.
- Be responsible and throw wastes in dustbins.
- Ensure that you book hotel accommodation in advance before arriving in Tawang, especially in peak tourist season of September, October, November, April, and May.
- Get adequate sunscreen, essential medicines when traveling to Tawang.
- Carry woolens, feather jackets, monkey cap, muffler, a pair of comfortable footwear, sunglasses, cold creams and a sunblock with you.
- Ensure that your health is good during trekking and hiking in the mountains
- If you have medical condition/history, be cautious while going to Bumla due to its high altitude as breathlessness and blood pressure issues may occur.
- Always seek permission before taking photographs of any local/indigenous people of the area.

### Don'ts

- Do not enter frozen lakes.
- Do not run on snow-covered areas.
- Avoid going close to the waterfall as there are chances to slip and hurt yourself.
- Do not litter monasteries, public places, villages, lakes etc.
- Do not wear shoes while going inside the main prayer hall of the monasteries/gompas and be respectful while visiting sacred sites.
- Do not smoke in public places.
- Do not drink in sacred sites.
- Do not leave Tawang without warm clothes.
- Do not scribble on trees, buildings, rocks etc.
- Do not take photographs of army installations/prohibited areas without seeking approval of the army officers on site.
- Do not to go to Bumla Pass without obtaining a permit that is issued by the DC's office and countersigned by the Army.
- Foreign tourists are advised not to enter prohibited/restricted areas. If there is any doubt, clarify from the Deputy Commissioner's office/ office of Superintendent of Police.

## **ADVISORY FOR ALTITUDE SICKNESS**

Many tourists suffer from high altitude sickness after reaching Tawang. Therefore, it is advisable that all tourist /visitors should acclimatize themselves with one night halt in between either at Bomdila whose altitude is 8500 ft or at Dirang whose altitude is 4910 ft. in West Kameng District.

The tourists/visitors having heart problems and other related ailments need to take extra precaution like prior medical consultations, availability of medicines and other life-saving drugs, warm woolen clothing etc. Before taking preventive medicine for High Altitude Sickness, prior consultation with their doctors may be done.

*(This advisory is issued to all the intending Tourists/visitors to Tawang in view of some instances of problems due to high altitude sickness requiring emergency evacuation.)*

## **FAIRS & FESTIVALS**

The Monpa celebrate a number of festivals throughout the year. Majority of their festivals have a religious background & each festival has a history and significance of its own. The major festivals of the Monpa are described below :

### 1. Losar

Losar which means New Year, is the most important festival of the Monpa tribe, it falls either in the last part of February or the early part of March. It is marked with lots of gaiety and festivity which lasts the greater part of the lunar month which is the 1<sup>st</sup> Month of the lunar calendar. The Preparations for Losar start from the middle part of the twelfth month. It basically consists of managing sufficient meat, butter, cheese, flour, edible oil, *chang*, fruits, sweets, etc. New clothes are bought to be worn during the festival. A whole day is spent on making a special variety of fried loaves called 'Bongp-nelap' and fried biscuits called 'Khab-se' of various shape and forms. On the twenty ninth day of the twelfth lunar month, houses are swept and white washed. A special gruel called 'guthug' (the 29<sup>th</sup> day gruel) is prepared for dinner.

On the thirtieth day of the twelfth lunar month, decoration of the house is done. Colored paper-flowers are hung from the ceilings; walls are adorned with drawings in flour or lime, depicting auspicious signs. Drawing of sun and moon, it is believed, would gather good fortune while drawing swastikas will keep away ghosts and other evil spirits. Biscuits, loaves, fresh and dry fruits, liquor, sweets, etc., are arranged finely on tables in the chapel, the kitchen as well as in the other rooms. These all form a good omen (tem-dre) for the upcoming year.

Early in the morning of the First day of the Losar, one or two members of the family first go to draw water from the nearby stream or water tap. The water drawn on that early morning is believed to be especially purifying and sanctifying as it has been cleansed by the starry light of the night before. Thereafter, donning themselves in their best dress and jewelry, all the family members go to the family chapel where they light lamps and recite prayers for a prosperous and calamity free year. On the first day of Losar people do not go to others' houses. During this day, the family members spend the day enjoying drinks, good food and playing games. Many people living in Tawang Township, however go to the Tawang Monastery for blessings.

From the Second day onwards, the people visit each other's houses for greeting each other a Happy New Year. The Guests are entertained with Sumptuous Meals. Between the meals, the elders amuse themselves with games of Dice, Mahjong and Cards while kids play 'thibi' and many other games. Youngsters organize archery competition. Prayer flags are raised both vertically and horizontally on the third day. While raising flags, a ritual of appeasement is offered in honor of their deities and the local protective deity. This is performed by

holding flour in their hands and shouting “*Lha so lo, ki ki so so lhagyal to*” (May the Gods be victorious) and then throwing the flour towards the sky. Yak and Achi Lhamu dances are performed in villages during the festival. The festival goes on for 15 days.

## 2. Gorsam Kora

A large 3-day festival known as the Gorsam Kora festival is observed every year at the Gorsam Stupa at Zemithang, during the last day of the first month of the lunar calendar. It is attended by thousands of people of the district and the nearby areas of Bhutan.

## 3. Saga Dawa

The Fourth month as per the lunar calendar is regarded as the holiest period for the Buddhists. It normally falls in the month of May. This month marks the birth of Lord Buddha, his attainment of supreme enlightenment and his passing into the state of nirvana. In this month prayers, circumambulations, prostrations are offered by the people to increase ones fortune and to gather more merit. A rite known as ‘*Nyung-ne*’ (alternate fast) is organized in the village Gompa to cleanse one’s sins and to earn merit.

## 4. Dukpa Tse-She

On the fourth day of the sixth month i.e Dukpa Tse-She, the Lord Buddha delivered his first preaching on the Four Noble Truths at Deer Park in Sarnath. The day is spent by the locals visiting religious shrines and offering prayers.

## 5. Lhabab Duechen

The twenty second day of the ninth month of lunar calendar is celebrated as the day of Lord Buddha’s descent from Tushita, the realm of God. Lord Buddha is said to have travelled at the age of forty-one to Tushita, where his mother had taken rebirth as one of the Gods. In order to repay his mother’s kindness, he spent one rainy season retreat at Tushita, giving teachings to his mother and other Gods. The day is devoted to religious activities such as visiting temples, lighting lamps and chanting prayers.

## 6. Gaden Ngam Choe

The twenty fifth day of the tenth lunar month is the anniversary of the passing away of Je Tsong Khapa, the founder of the Gelukpa order of Tibetan Buddhism. As a mark of devotion and to mourn his death, lamps are lighted in the evening on rooftops, varandahs of Gompas and private houses.

## 7. Choe-Kor

After the crops are sown and when there is little Agricultural activity, *Choe-kor* is organized in the villages by the whole village community. *Choe-Kor* means circumambulation round the village with holy images and scriptures. It is an important religious procession organized by the village community with an aim to provide supernatural protection to the crops, for good harvest and to drive away evil spirits, which could cause harm to the village community.

## 8. Torgya

Torgya is a monastic festival held every year for three days starting from the twenty-eighth day of the eleventh lunar month, which generally falls in the middle to the last part of January. In order to drive away evil forces and to ward off any natural calamities so that the people may have a happy and prosperous life, a proposition rite of “*Yamataka chakkhar zurgupa*” is conducted and with this connotation the festival is called Torgya. During the three days of Torgya, thousands of people converge at the Tawang Monastery in their colorful best, making the festival a carnival of colors. The core event of the festival is the performance of *Cham*, a highly choreographed, sacred dance for three days which is performed by a select group of Monks dressed in magnificent robes and wearing masks representing various divinities and earthly characters in the courtyard of the Monastery to the accompaniment of beating drums and cymbals.

Prayers are offered in the main temple of the monastery for three days i.e. from twenty-sixth to twenty-eighth of the eleventh month. On the evening of the twenty-eighth, i.e. on the first day of the Torgya festival, the *torma* (sacrificial cake) is taken out in a procession to the southern gate of the Monastery where

the *torgya*(casting of sacrificial cake) is performed. The performance of *torgya* symbolizes the destruction of all evil forces, so that the people may have a peaceful life, free from disease, hunger and all sorts of calamities in the coming year.

On the second day of the festival, monks perform *cham* of various kinds at the courtyard of the monastery. On the final day of the festival, a vase initiation is bestowed by the Abbot of the monastery to the people.

Every third year, the festival is celebrated on a very grand scale and is known as *Dung-Gyur*. During *Dung-gyur* the monks conduct the *Mani Dung Drub ritual*.

#### 9. Tseb-Chu

On the tenth day of the fifth month of lunar calendar called '*Tseb-chu*' the birth anniversary of Guru Padmasambhava is observed at Khinmey Gonpa. On this day, an initiation (*wang*) is bestowed to the devotees by Thegtse Rinpoche. On two days prior to it, the monks of the Khinmey Gonpa perform various sacred dances, known as *cham*. The dances bring blessings upon the onlookers; protect them from misfortune and evil influences.

### ➤ **FLAGSHIP SCHEMES**

#### **RESTRUCTURED CHIEF MINISTER'S PARYATAN VIKAS YOJNA.**

Instead of subsidizing tourist vehicles to the beneficiaries, the Tourism Department proposed to finance Value addition to Homestay operators which includes renovation of 2(two) adequately sized well furnished rooms with attached toilet with shower, geyser and western toilet.

#### **CURRENT STATUS OF CHIEF MINISTER'S PARYATAN VIKAS YOJNA AT TAWANG DISTRICT**

Under the restructured and revised scheme of "Chief Minister's Paryatan Vikas Yojna 2014-15", 11(eleven) registered Homestay operators of Tawang District has been selected as the beneficiaries for availing the financial subsidy for renovation/maintenance of 2(two) rooms as per the guidelines.

Under 2<sup>nd</sup> phase, 6(Six) Nos. of registered Homestay Operators of Tawang District were selected as beneficiaries for availing the scheme for the year 2015-16.

### ➤ **SERVICES**

1. Tourist Information Centre, Govt. Tourist Lodge and Presidential Suite, Tawang are functioning under the Department of Tourism, Tawang.
2. Traditional dress photo shoot facilities is available at Govt. Tourist Lodge, Tawang.
3. Digital billboard has been installed at Main Market, Tawang so that the tourists can have detail information about the places of tourist interest, art & culture, tradition, festivals etc of the District.

Address- District Tourism Office, Tawang  
Near Old Market, Tawang  
PO/PS/Dist: Tawang. 790104

Contact No. 03794- 222567/ 222359

Email id: dto.tawang@gmail.com

Website: [www.tawangtourism.in](http://www.tawangtourism.in)