

Mt. Kailash: THE CROWN

4 - 24 JUNE 2019



This tour is being themed The Crown. Mount Kailash is considered the crown chakra of the planet and for many believers, even the centre of the Universe. The highlight of our tour is the four-day kora (circumnavigation) of this auspicious mountain **and** in this itinerary are visits to two other of the holiest sites in Tibetan Buddhism – Lake Manasarovar and Thirthapury – in addition to other precious jewel-in-the-crown locations!

We have carefully crafted this itinerary to support the theme of this being the seventh chakra and the crown destination. Given this, we will be journeying not only to cleanse and transform all themes related to the crown chakra, but to holistically integrate *all upgrades* of the personal journeys that these times have asked of us.

This tour may be opening the door to the next levels of our lives.



“Where Mount Kailash is considered the father-mountain, the active principle of skillful means, Lake Manasarovar is the mother-lake, the principle of transcendent reality.”

J. Snelling – The Sacred Mountain



Holy Mount Kailash

The most sacred mountain in the Tibetan Buddhist world is considered by many to be the centre of the universe and to repeat, the crown of our planet.

Uncannily symmetrical, this remote and remarkable peak is located in the far west of Tibet, 1200 km from Lhasa. Mt. Kailash (6714m) is not only geographically one of the most important mountains in Asia, it is also the source of four major rivers, namely, the Indus, Sutlej, Karnali and Tsang Po which nourish Asia with water. In Sanskrit, Kailash means 'luminous crystal'. Hindus believe Mt. Kailash to be the abode of Lord Shiva and his wife Parvati. For Hindus, to make the arduous pilgrimage to Kailash and have the darshan (divine view) of Shiva's abode is to attain release from the clutches of ignorance and delusion.

Tibetan Buddhists call the mountain Kang Rinpoche, the 'Jewel of Snow', and regard it as the body mandala of Korlo Demchog and his consort, Dorje Phagmo (Chakrasambhava and Vajravarahi). A pilgrimage to this great sacred and magical landscape is the most precious of pilgrimages for both Tibetan and Indian people, a journey they hope to experience at least once in a lifetime.



“[It] is the ladder which simultaneously ascends to heaven and descends from heaven...and it thus has the same function as the 'heavenly cord' which links heaven and earth”.

G Tucci – The Religions of Tibet

Overview

From Chengdu (or Kathmandu), China we fly to Lhasa for our steady acclimatization to the culture, altitude, the journey ahead and one another – this will include walks to carefully selected sites that will support both our inner and outer journey. From Lhasa, we move into the core of this journey: an unhurried four-day circuit trek (kora) among Tibetan pilgrims around holy Mt. Kailash followed by a visit to Thirthapuri Hot Springs and monastery and the beautiful Lake Manasarovar. We enjoy silence and nature, spectacular panoramic views, as well as our group interactions.

Expedition or Inner Purification



All trips to Mt. Kailash have an expedition nature about them. This expedition, more than any tour – holds a deep sense of pilgrimage. Our pilgrimage, through vast open spaces, is likely to catalyze a variety of deep personal inner reflections and experiences. Long drives and simple accommodations require a lot of patience, tolerance and little expectation. In return, we will see some of the most untouched and beautiful landscapes, visit some of the most auspicious locations on the planet and are likely meet many genuinely kind and considerate people.

The reverence and silence held at many of the locations we will visit, will continuously give us the opportunity to return to our conscious awareness...and see where it wants to take us.

Special Tours: This tour has been organised in such a way that the effort of making all transport, accommodation, food and admin arrangements has been taken care of, giving you more personal time to prepare for, experience and enjoy your journey. We plan to see all the most important sights along the way, while you are taken care of by professionals: your tour leader, a Tibetan guide and drivers – and part of the tour with Sherpas and cook.

Tour Leader:



Roger Pfister, Swiss, born in 1960 has been based in Boudhanath, Kathmandu in Nepal since 1995. During this time, he has owned and operated Snow Jewel, leading expeditions to remote locations in Nepal and Tibet. In addition, he has worked for over five years as a volunteer for the British operated not-for-profit ROKPA Nepal. Roger has practiced extensively in both the Tibetan and Theravada traditions, completing annual Vipassana retreats in Thailand at Wat Ram Poeng and in India at Bodgaya and Sarnath with Christopher Titmuss. During his time in Nepal, he spent two years in study at Ka-Nying Shedrup Ling, the official seat of very venerable Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche, as well as Pullahari Monastery under the guidance of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyatso Rinpoche. His inaugural trip to Mt. Kailash was during the spring of 1996 and since then he has made over 100 circuits of the mountain and 14 of Lake Manasarovar.

Group Size: Minimum 7, maximum 15 people.

Duration: 21 days (+ 3 days if one is coming from Kathmandu). This itinerary has been prepared with a view to starting our journey from Chengdu, China.

Price: 25'500 CNY /US\$ 3800 / €uro 3350, Plus flight (Chengdu to Lhasa) & Hotel / transfers 350 €uro.

500 Euros deposit to confirm your booking

Included: Pick up & Hotel in Chengdu (CTU), Transfer & Flights from CTU to Lhasa (return) and then drive in a private vehicle to Mt. Kailash, Lake Manasarovar and onwards to Kathmandu, with private transport and support truck (see itinerary); all permits and road tolls in Tibet; local guide, drivers and cook; two vegetarian meals daily (breakfast and dinner) and picnic lunch during the time from Saga and all the way to Kathmandu; all fees for sightseeing, Kailash circuit, grassland fee, yak and yak driver for your luggage; camping gear; hotel in Lhasa x5, Gyantse, Sakya & Shigatse; all other overnight stays in basic accommodation (pilgrim guesthouses) or tents.

Excluded: Visa fee for Tibet; visa for Nepal; food up to Saga and again in Kathmandu; horse and horse driver for personal ride; cost for visa split from the group visa in case of an emergency; alcohol and soft drinks when eating in restaurants; cost for public shower or bath in hot springs; personal expenses; insurances and tips.

Note: We will be pleased to organise airport transfer or hotel extension in Kathmandu if needed.



Itinerary – Short

Our journey is planned to start in Chengdu. For this, Chinese visas will have to be arranged in your home country. For this we will send a booking confirmation of the trip beforehand, which you will need for your Chinese visa application.

June 03: Arrival in Chengdu transfer to hotel; depending on flight etc. Group meeting and briefing for the tour will be in Lhasa with Roger. You will receive your Tibetan Travel permit and flight tickets for CTU-LXA.

Day 1: June 04	Chengdu Flight to Lhasa, 3* hotel
Day 2: June 05	Lhasa – Barkhor, rest & acclimatization
Day 3: June 06	Lhasa – Jokahng Linkhor, Jagpori by foot with guide
Day 4: June 07	Visit Potala, Lhukang by foot
Day 5: June 08	Visit Dorjee Drak and caves
Day 6: June 09	Visit second cave - Samye
Day 7: June 10	Samye – Jinpu Cave
Day 8: June 11	Samye – Gyantse
Day 9: June 12	Gyantse - Sakya
Day 10: June 13	Sakya – Saga meet with the Sherpa crew from Nepal for dinner
Day 11: June 14	Saga – Darchen
Day 12-14: June 15-17	Kora Trekking (June 17, Full Moon)
Day 15: June 18	Kora Trekking - Monsier
Day 16: June 19	Monsier – Thirtapury Kora – Khyunglung
Day 17: June 20	Monsier to Langbona Gompa – ½ Rest day of Manasarovar Lake.
Day 18: June 21	Langbona – Saga:
Day 19: June 22	Saga – Kyrong - Rasuwa (Nepal)
Day 20: June 23	Rasuwa – Kathmandu
Day 21: June 24	Free day Kathmandu on your own (return flights can be arranged on this day)
Day 22: June 25	End of service; Fly back home



Itinerary - Detailed

- Day 1:** Early morning transfer to airport, flight to Lhasa with beautiful Mountain views. In Lhasa, our Tibetan guide will pick us up from Gongar airport and take us to the Yak Hotel, located in the middle of the Tibetan old part of the city, just 5 minutes' walk from Potala and Jokhang.
- Days 2-4:** Lhasa – Sightseeing: by foot we will explore Lhasa and visit the heart of Tibet - the Jokhang Temple and the Potala Palace of the Dalai Lamas. We will also visit other less famous, but no less important places and temples.
- Day 5:** From Lhasa we drive 2-3 h. towards Samye and visit caves in the Samye region, on the way passing Dorjee Drak monastery. Overnight in a simple pilgrim's guesthouse.
- Day 6:** Walk and visit about 4-6 h. Roger's favorite cave complex where Guru Rinpoche meditated 3 years. Afterwards we visit the lake/monastery where Ysehe Tsogyal was born and drive to Samye. Overnight in hotel.
- Day 7:** Samye to Jinpu – Jinpu Caves
Samye/Chimphu Kora walk: Samye was the first Monastery built by King Trisong Deutsen with the help of Guru Rinpoche. It is built in a Mandala style representing Indian Cosmology. Above Samye Monastery are the Chimphu caves which represent Guru Rinpoche's enlightened speech aspect. While staying in Samye, Guru Rinpoche gave the first Vajrayana teachings to his consort and closest students (all together 25 disciples). Overnight in hotel.
- Day 8:** Samye to Gyantse
We drive via Kambala Pass (4794m) along Yamdrok Tso (Scorpion Lake, 4488m) and Karola pass (5045m) with a beautiful glacier. Later, we will reach Gyantse's monastery with the famous Kumbum. Hotel; double room with shower (280km, 7-8h).
- Day 9:** Gyantse to Sakya
Morning 9 am we will visit the Gyanste Kumbum and the monastery which holds the very precious 14th century clay statues with Yoga mudras (postures). After lunch we drive through Shigatse to Sakya where we stay in a hotel; double room with shower. (241km, 5-6h).
- Day 10:** Sakya to Saga. In the morning we will visit the Sakya monastery, afterwards travelling on to Saga. We drive through a magnificent hill landscape. (8h drive 460 Km). Overnight in simple pilgrim's guesthouse (public bath). **Here we meet the Sherpas and the support truck with the camping equipment coming from Nepal and have vegetarian food cooked by the lovely Sherpas all the way until we are in Kathmandu.**
- Day 11:** Saga – Darchen (4'560m). 9-10h drive (540km). We cross several high passes and enter the high desert of Western Tibet – through beautiful landscape from Paryang to Darchen. After crossing the Mayumla pass (5216m), we drive along the shores of Gung Gyu Lake, before getting our first glimpse of holy Mount Kailash. We stay in a guesthouse (public bath) at the foot of Mount Kailash.
- Day 12:** Beginning of the Kailash kora. This is a medium trek (20km, 6-8h), slightly uphill. From the south, we reach Tarpoche, the so-called centre of the universe. Then, we pass Chuku monastery (those who have lots of energy can go for a short visit) and

the west face of Kailash. Our camp is right below Dirapuk monastery at 4900m with awesome views of Mt. Kailash's north face.

- Day 13:** Rest day at Mt. Kailash's north face for acclimatisation. Those who would like to can visit the Dirapuk monastery (famous yogi Gyalwa Gotsangpa meditated there in a cave for long time), make an excursion to the north face (2h), stroll into a side valley (1-2h) or simply enjoy Mt Kailash's power in the camp right below Dirapuk monastery at 4900m.
- Day 14:** This day is the core of the kora and it has been lined up to coincide with June's full moon. This is a difficult trek (15km, 8-10h), where we need the energy reserves built up from the day before. For the first 2-5h, we slowly ascend towards the Tara-Pass/Drölma-La (5630m). After a break we steeply descend to the valley (1-2h). From here it is another 2-3h slightly downhill to the camp, just 3km before Zutulpuk monastery (4790m).
- Day 15:** This day is fairly easy (11km, 3-4h). We pass Zutulpuk monastery and hike slightly downhill back to Darchen where we have lunch in a simple restaurant. Then drive 90 km to Monsier village, simple guesthouse (no bath).
- Day 16:** Day excursion to Kyunglung, with the famous Garuda Valley which is considered the entrance to the Shangrila (hidden paradise). According to several scientists and explorers, this is the site of the former pre-Buddhist Bön-kingdom Shang Shung, cradle of the Tibetan culture. We can explore the ruins of the ancient city and enjoy the spectacular atmosphere. On the way back we visit Thirthapury - holy hot springs we walk the small kora around the idyllic monastery complex.
- Day 17:** Drive to Langbona Gompa and camp near the lake. Rest day on the shores of Lake Manasarovar. Here you can relax, enjoy the stunning panorama, stroll along the lake shore, collecting shells/stones, take a ritual bath, or perhaps even have a swim. Overnight camp.
- Day 18:** Drive from Langbona back to Saga. We will stay at the same places as on the way in.
- Day 19:** Saga to Kyirong/ Rasuwa 5h 160km. We drive over a high mountain pass (Zhongma) and descend the high desert and enter the green and lush vegetation. Along the way we visit the enlightenment cave of Milarepa. In Lower Kyirong/Rasuwa we leave the Tibetan crew and cross the border and walk one kilometre to our hotel in Nepal. Overnight in small Hotel.
- Day 20:** From Rasuwa we drive 7-8h/ 160km to Kathmandu overnight Hotel in Boudha just 4 minutes from the great Stupa of Boudhanath.
- Day 21:** Free day on can stroll around the stupa or go to Thamel for shopping if you like we can arrange sightseeing tour for you and also additional days in Nepal just let us know and we will show you the possibilities. Hotel in Boudhanath.
- Day 22:** **Free day** end of service! You can fly home at your convenience or extend your stay if you like.



General Information

Please Note

- We will not be responsible for extra cost incurred by landslides, road blockages and other weather-related or political problems.
- You are responsible for your own health. The itinerary has been designed to allow sufficient time for acclimatisation.
- Accommodation will occasionally be in shared rooms (small dormitories). During the Kailash kora we stay in tents for two people each. We assume your preparedness to share rooms/tents with others, regardless of gender.
- We reserve the right to increase the tour price should the Euro in relation to the Chinese Yuan (RMB) depreciate significantly.

Visa and Passport Information

Chinese visa

Entry from Main Land China, best from Chengdu; One will have to make the visa back home and we will send a booking confirmation for the duration of the trip, with which you can apply for a Chinese tourist visa. After receiving the Chinese visa you will need to send a scan to Roger at Snow Jewel, so they can make you a Tibet Travel Permit in Lhasa which will be handed over to you up on arrival in China.

Visa Nepal

Entry from Nepal, Nepalese visa is best applied upon arrival in Kathmandu. You will need a passport photo. At arrival you get a 30 day or 90 day multiple-entry visa valid from the date of entry. The visa costs US\$ 40 or US\$ 100, respectively.

Tibet Group Visa Nepal

Entering Tibet from Nepal: One can only travel by so called “Group visa” any other valid Chinese visa will be deleted by the Chinese embassy! We will obtain this for you in Kathmandu. For this, we need one passport photo and a completed visa application form. Please download, print and fill out: <http://snowjewel.com/visalinks.html>. The visa costs US\$ 114 in cash, payable upon arrival when handing over the passport. (US citizens must pay US\$ 198.)

Passport Validity

Minimum 6 months from date of entry.

Recommended Reading:

1. The sacred life of Tibet: By Keith Downman
2. Power places of Tibet: By Keith Downman
3. The way of the white clouds: By Lama Govinda
4. The Sacred mountain: By John Snelling
5. Walking to the holy mountain: By Wendy Rowe
6. Kailash Manasarovar: By Swami Pranavananda
7. Tibet Hand Book: By Gurme Dorje



May all beings be happy!