

Extensive Saga Dawa Festival Trip with Natalia Visit Samye, Mt. Kailash & Lake Manasarovar and Lhasa

Holy Mount Kailash

The most sacred mountain in the Tibetan Buddhist world is also considered by many to be the centre of the universe. 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. 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.

Saga Dawa festival / visit of Samye and Lhasa with Natalia

Samye is the first monastery in Tibet build around 750 and that is where Guru Rinpoche / Padmasambava gave the first teachings here and established the Buddhist belief system.... We will circumambulate Mt. Kailash as well as sacred Lake Manasarovar and participate on the Saga Dawa the main Buddhist Festival at Mt. Kailash. All this during the period of the Saga Dawa month, in this time one circumambulation of the mountain is popularly considered to have the merit of a 100 thousand times on top of that to be purifying one life time. At time for the full moon of Saga Dawa (Buddha's day of enlightenment and paranirvana) more pilgrims than usual visit Kailash.

Lake Manasarovar is the female principal and represents the wisdom aspect; meanwhile Mt. Kailash represents the male and Diamond (Vajra) aspect. In Hindu tradition Lake Manasarovar is regarded to be the spirit of Brahma where all life is being born.

Expedition or Inner Purification All trips to Mt. Kailash have expedition character. Long drives require a lot of patience, tolerance and little expectations. In return we will see some of the most untouched and beautiful landscapes and we are likely to meet genuinely nice people.

Seen as a pilgrimage, the vast open spaces encourage deep personal inner experiences. Therefore certain undigested events may (and probably will) suddenly pop up in the mind. Consequently, this journey is generally quite the opposite of a usual holiday or trek, where one seeks to forget about home and past. The journey tends to retrieve memories and you may find yourself taking a conscious look at events in your life and realise how much one is connected with everything.

«Mt. Kailash feels like a place where heaven and earth are merging in one place...»

Somewhere over the rainbow
Skies are blue
And the dreams that you dare to dream
Really do come true

~Arlen-Harburg

Guide: Natalia Sander, born 1974 in Russia, Translator & Tour guide, Journalist. Since 2006 she is living in Asia. This will be my 4th time / trip Mt. Kailash. I will be glad to accompany you on this great journey.



Group Size: Minimum 7, maximum 16 people.

Duration: May 25th – June 13th 2017.

Price: RMB 11'900 app. US\$1830 / €uro 1660 (at a rate of 6.5CNY to the US\$/ €uro 7.3CNY) **Plus flight:** KTM-LXA/ LXA- KTM = 490-600 Euro depending on booking class available

Included: airport transfer KTM- LXA & back; drive in Tibet to Mt. Kailash, Lake Manasarovar and back to Lhasa (see itinerary); all permits and road tolls in Tibet; local guide, drivers; Western guide

Excluded: visa fee for Tibet 114\$; visa for Nepal; All cost for food and overnight, all entrance fees, horse and horse driver for personal ride; cost in case of an emergency; airport transfer and hotel in Kathmandu; personal expenses; insurances; tip.

- **Of course we cannot determine or foresee your spending behaviour, however with a moderate way of spending you will need about 150-200 CNY / day this will cover food and simple accommodation & entrance fees (Kailash 300Y). If you need a porter the cost is extra 210CNY/ Day.**

Remark: Nepal Accommodation / activity Add-ons: If want us to book a room in a Monastic G.H. cost is: Single 20\$ double 28\$. Airport transfer 10\$ per PAX. For Nepal programs we can send you a variety of offers from City tour, trekking to Safari, just let us know.

Dates:

May 21th: Arrival in Kathmandu; hand over of passport Chinese visa form, 10- 17.00

May 22: Tibet visa; at 14.00 p.m. briefing for the tour

May 23: Free day

May 24: Visa is finished by 16.00

June 13th: Earliest departure, evening 22.00 be aware if the flight is delayed then you might have a problem

Alternative entry from Chengdu main land China on May 25/ Departure 13th June is possible and cheaper and needs less time only 22 days! Please get in touch with Roger he will explain all details to that way of joining the group and Natalia in Tibet at the airport!

Itinerary – Short Itinerary

Day 1:	Flight, Kathmandu – Lhasa – Samye / Guesthouse (G.H.)
Day 2:	Samye / acclimatisation visit Samye Monastery and pick nick on Hehuri/ G.H.
Day 3:	Samye / acclimatisation excursion by car and walk to Chimpu caves / G.H.
Day 4:	Samye – Sakya / H.
Day 5:	Sakya – Saga / visit Monastery / G.H.
Day 6:	Saga – Darchen on Mt. Kailash /G.H.
Day 7-9:	4 days Mt. Kailash Kora / trekking / G.H.
Day 10.	End kora drive to Thirthapury & to Manasarovar Chiu Gompa/ G.H.
Day 11.	Chiu gompa rest day visit Chiu Monastery & Hot springs /G.H.
Day 12-15:	4 days Manasarovar lake Kora / trekking / G.H.
Day 16:	Festival on Mt. Kailash/ drive to Tarpochen & to Saga / G.H.
Day 17:	Saga – Shigatse / H.
Day 18:	Shigatse – Lhasa / H./walk on Barkhor in Lhasa
Day 19:	Lhasa sightseeing Potala & Jokahng
Day 20:	Flight Lhasa – Kathmandu

Itinerary - Detailed

- Day 1:** Early morning transfer to airport, flight to Lhasa with beautiful Everest view. In Lhasa the Tibetan guide will pick you up from Gongar airport and bring you to Samye approximately 3-4h drive / 143 Km. You will stay in a G.H.
- Day 2:** This day is primarily an acclimatisation day; we consciously don't have a big program so people don't have pressure when feeling ill. You can visit the Samye monastery walk the kora around and have a pick nick on Hebu-Ri and enjoy the beautiful view on the mandala of Samye monastery. If you don't feel well, simply relax! G.H.
- Day 3:** Samye /Chimphu Kora walk: Samye was the first Monastery built by King Trisong Detsen with the help of Guru Rinpoche. It is built in a Mandala style representing the Indian Cosmology. Above Samye Monastery are the Chimphu caves which represent Guru Rinpoche enlightened speech aspect. While staying in Samye, Guru Rinpoche was giving the first Vajrayana teaching to his consort and closest students (all together 25 disciples). G.H.
- Day 4:** 10h drive approximately 520 Km from Samye to Sakya overnight Sakya Hotel.
- Day 5:** Morning 9 Am we will visit the Sakya monastery the first monastery of this tradition, and the seat of the Sakya School was built by Khonchog Gyalpo (1034–1102) in 1073. Afterwards you travel on to Saga about 7-8 h drive 346 KM. We stay the night in a simple pilgrim guesthouse.
- Day 6:** 8-9h drive 540km from Saga to Darchen. We cross over a pass of 4800m and will enter the high desert of western Tibet. We pass Paryang with a nice Himalayan view in the grasslands. Then (270km) through beautiful landscape from Paryang to Darchen (4560m) at the base of Mt. Kailash. After crossing the Mayumla pass (5216m), we drive along the shores of Gung Gyu lake, before getting the first glimpse of the holy Mt. Kailash.. We stay the night in a simple pilgrim guesthouse.

- Day 7-8:** Begin of the Kailash kora. First, the trek brings us to Tarpochen, the so-called navel of the universe, and continuing along we pass Chuku monastery (those who have lots of energy can go for a short visit). After a 6-7h casual walk, we will stay just below the north face of Mt. Kailash near Dirapuk monastery (4900m) where we have one full rest day for acclimatisation. During the rest day we will have time to do some side excursions to the north face for two hours and/or to Dirapuk monastery where we can find a small cave in which the famous yogi Gialwa Gotsangpa practiced meditation for a long time!
- Day 9:** Now the heart of the kora begins. We slowly start to walk up to the Tara-Pass/Drölma-La (5630m) where we have a break before we descend to the valley. From here we trek all the way down to the Zutulpuk monastery (4790m). This will be a solid 8h hike and we will need all the energy reserves we have built up from the rest day before.
- Day 10:** Last the easy part is coming, we walk 3-4h to Darchen where we have lunch in a simple restaurant. Afterwards we will drive to Thirthapury and make the small kora there. Drive about 40 minutes 60km. After the visit of the monastery etc. we drive to Chiu gumpa where we stay in simple guesthouse with the most amazing view of Lake Manasarovar, Gurla Mandata (7728m) and Mt. Kailash.
- Day 11:** Full rest day! You can visit the Chiu monastery & stroll around the beach & collect stones or have a ritual bath in the lake and visit the hot springs for a good clean up.
- Day 12-15:** Manasarovar kora 4 days. This is so beautiful and cannot be put in words; however see some pictures of the vastness so you can imagine yourself.



Day 16: Saga Dawa festival in Tarpoche Early in the morning you will drive over to Mt. Kailash 30 km 45minutes and walk to the giant prayer flag pole where you attend the festivities together with the Tibetan pilgrims. After that around midday you drive Onwards the same way back via Paryang to Saga. simple G.H.



Day 17: Saga – Shigatse. You will drive the same way back to Shigatse. Overnight in Hotel.

Day 18: Shigatse–Lhasa this takes about 6h, if you start early then you have all late afternoon in Lhasa and can walk on the Barkhor! In Lhasa you stay in the old city part just 2 minutes by foot from the heart of Tibet the Jokhang temple and just 5-7 minutes from the Potala palace. Hotel (either 3 bed dorm 50CNY/ night or double, bath breakfast 200CNY ½ room) needs to be pre booked by us.

Day 19: Lhasa sightseeing, today you can visit the heart of Tibet the Jokhang Tempel as well as the Potala and stroll around the city for some shopping the guide will walk with you all around Lhasa.

Day 20: Early morning transfer to airport, flight to Kathmandu with beautiful Everest view. In Lhasa the Tibetan guide will accompanyny you to Gongar airport approximately 1,5h drive / 60 Km where you will fly out of Tibet. **End of service!**

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. Our arrangements are designed to allow sufficient time for acclimatisation.
- Accommodation will occasionally be in shared rooms (small dormitories). During the Kailash kora accommodation will be very simple. 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

Visa Nepal

Is best applied upon arrival in Nepal. You will need a passport photo. For your first entry in a calendar year 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

Will be obtained in Kathmandu. For this, we need one passport photo and a filled in Visa form please print out here; <http://snowjewel.com/visalinks.html> Visa - Fee 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.

Contact Information: Roger Pfister, Snow Jewel

P.O. Box 7003, Boudha, Kathmandu, Nepal

Phone: 00977-1-448 2351

Mobile: 00977- 9851 021 989

Skype: kailashroger

Email: roger@snowjewel.com

Webpage: www.snowjewel.com



May all beings be happy!