

Tibet Overland Tour with EBC

2015



Travelling in Tibet is one of the most sought out travel destination of the world. Either for pilgrimage, spiritual or for the sake of great scenery, Tibet has always allured many tourists from the globe. Tibet Autonomous Region lies in the southwest of China and in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. It is bounded to the north by Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and Qinghai Province, to the east by Sichuan Province, to the southeast by Yunnan Province, to the south and west by these countries: Burma, India, Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal. The region covers an area of around 1.22 million kms, which accounts for 12.8% of the total of China. Out of several activities and tours in Tibet, the best way to understand & visit Tibet is by taking a tour starting all the way from Lhasa and ending in Kathmandu. The excitement of being on the Roof of the world and the awesome natural beauty of Tibet is one of the highlights of the trip. Not to forget, the opportunity to reach the Everest Base Camp from the northern part is an added bonus. Long regarded as a land of mystery and magic, harsh yet exquisitely beautiful, Tibet is without a question a world apart. Overland tours reveal some of the best Tibet has to offer- high passes topped by colorful prayer flags, crystal clear lakes in indescribable shades of brilliant blue, snow capped ranges sheltering valleys, covered by field of barley and golden yellow rape. The current itinerary of Lhasa to Kathmandu Overland trip is the outcome of numerous feedbacks, trip reports of travellers. The course is designed in such a way that everyday travelers' body is adapting to the thin air of the Tibetan plateau while their minds are playing with the beautiful landscape, unique culture etc. All in all, travellers end this trip with an excited and relaxed mood.



Itinerary in Brief

- 01 arrival LXA / transfer to Yak htl x 04 nights
- 02 visit Drepung, Norbulinka and Sera incl vehicle and guide
- 03 visit Potala and Jokhang incl guide only
- 04 Lhasa
- 05 Yamdrok tso - Gyantse / Jianzang htl
- 06 Pelkhor Chode - Shigatse / S Lhandup htl
- 07 Tashilumpo - Sakya gomba / Sakya htl
- 08 Rombuk / Everest gh
- 09 Lao Tingri / Kangar htl
- 10 Kodari – Nepal border



Fixed Departure Dates

April: 09th & 23rd
 May: 07th, 21st & 28th
 June: 11th & 25th
 July: 09th, 23rd & 30th
 August: 13th, 20th & 27th
 September: 03rd, 17th & 24th
 October: 01st, 15th & 29th

Cost of the Trip

Tour Cost (9 Nights & 10 Days): Euro 870.00 per person
 Single supplement: Euro 190.00 per person

Additional Costs

- Seperate airport transfer euro 74 (01-03 pax)
- Separate station transfer euro 40 (01-03 pax)
- Pre-night accommodation Yak htl euro 45 per room including Breakfast
- Group Chinese Visa for European National: Euro 90
- Group Chinese Visa for American National: USD 198
- Flight ticket from Kathmandu to Lhasa: Euro 431
 (Subject to confirmation at the time of bookings with passport copies)

Port of Entry

1. Beijing (by train T27 to Lhasa)
2. Chengdu (by flight CA4401 to Lhasa)
3. Kathmandu (by flight CA408 to Lhasa)

Services Included

- Private transport
- Guide and permits
- Accommodation
- Yamdrok and Everest national park fees
- Tours in Tibet by
04-06 pax: Van
07-11 pax: Minibus
12-15 pax: Coach

Services Excluded

- All meals & personal expenses
- Other Entrance fees to monasteries and monuments while sightseeing
- Additional expenses which may arise due to circumstances beyond control of **Snowjewel** such as flight cancellations or delays, landslides, strikes etc



Detailed Day to Day Itinerary

Day 01: The flight to Lhasa from Kathmandu is spectacular. From Gongkar airport it is about 90 minutes drive to Lhasa, first along the Yarlung Tsangpo - the largest canyon in the world with a total depth 5,382 meters then into the Kyi Chu Valley.

Lhasa is connected to other parts of China by flight from Chengdu. The famous Qinghai Railway line has connected Lhasa to many other parts of China specially the first town Golmud by land. Everyday there is train leaving for Lhasa

from Beijing and Xian and specified days of the week from Chengdu etc.

Day 02 – 04: With relaxed pace to allow for the effects of altitude, explore the fantastic city on the roof of the world. The spiritual heart of Tibet is the Jokhang Temple and every morning is full of life as pilgrims bring offerings of butter and barley flour.

The Jokhang Temple is 1300 year old, golden roofed building at the center of the Barkhor Market. The most sacred and active Tibetan temples, it was founded by Bhrikuti, King Songtsen Gampo's Nepalese Bride, on a site chosen by his other wife (a Tang dynasty Chinese princess, Wenchang) as the principal geomantic power – place in Tibet.

The Barkhor is the holiest of Lhasa's Koras (devotional circumambulation circuits) and its most fascinating market around are shops, stalls, teahouses and cafes. The streets are filled with monks, pilgrims, street performers and hawkers. The atmosphere is an intoxicating blend of the sacred, medieval, commercial and exotic. The Potala Palace towers over Lhasa and is an enduring landmark of Tibet. Little remains of the original structure built by Songtsen Gampo other than its foundations. After Lhasa was reinstated as the capital of Tibet in the 17th century, the Great 5th Dalai Lama began construction of the White Palace (built 1645 – 53) employing 7000 workers and 1500 artisans. Norbulinkha is a 40 – Hectare Park to the west of Lhasa town and was built as summer residence for the Dalai lamas in the 18th century. The site was selected on account of its medicinal spring.

Day 05: Gyantse (3950m) is 254km from Lhasa. The drive is long, yet scenic across the Khamba la, Kora La (passes), along the shores of Lake Yamdrok Tso. Once an important trading town, Gyantse retains the feel of Old Tibet.

Day 06: In the morning, visit Gyantse's Monastery – Pelkor Chode. The main temple of Pelkor Chode, the Tsuklakhang was built 1418 – 1425 AC by the 2nd prince of Gyantse. It was an eclectic academy with 16 dralsang (colleges) belonging variously to Sakya, Butonpa, Geluk and Kagyu schools. All the dralsang buildings have been destroyed, however the main assembly hall was preserved along with its remarkable (15th images and Murals). The top chamber is decorated with fantastic madalas in Sakya tradition. Also visit Kumbum within the same complex. There may be also some time to visit the dzong (fort) that towers above the town. In the afternoon, we make a short 2-3 hours drive to Shigatse.

Day 07: In Shigatse, we visit Tashilumpo which is the seat of the Panchen Lama, second only in importance to the Dalai Lama. Panchen means a great scholar and was traditionally bestowed on the abbots of Tashilumpo. Its numerous halls contain a 21.6 meter wooden statue of Maitreya,



the future Buddha and elaborate, jewel encrusted reliquary chorten. After lunch drive via Sakya to Lhatse. Sakya was the seat of political power in central Tibet from 10th to mid 14th century. The fortified monastery is till head of one of the most important schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

Day 08: Turn off the Friendship Highway for a stunning drive through Qomolangma National Park to reach the tiny Rongphu Gumpa at 5000m. The view from here is utterly spectacular!

Day 09: Trek or drive the 7 kms to Everest Base Camp (5200m) before heading to Lao Tingri via a rough yet scenic track crossing small rivers and passes.

Day 10: Another high pass gives a last, spectacular view of the Himalaya before we leave the Tibetan plateau, descending to the Nepal China border town of Zhangmu. After completing border formalities the drive back to Kathmandu continues down the Bhote Koshi Valley.

Accommodations in the trip:

Accommodation in Lhasa is on twin share and deluxe rooms. In Gyantse, Shigatse, Lhatse and Lao Tingri are available on twin share in the best available hotels of the respective town. Depending upon the availability the bathrooms and rest rooms may be either shared or private facilities. Generally in this tour, accommodation will be provided on twin sharing basis and if you do not have single room bookings you may have to share rooms with another fellow passenger regardless of their age and gender. Accommodation is quite basic at Rhongphu / Everest GH

Transportation for the trip:

Tours in Tibet by

04-06 pax: Van

07-11 pax: Minibus

12-15 pax: Coach

(Tourist may not use public transport).

Water:

In the high altitude of Tibet it is important to drink a much higher quantity of water than you are used to. Always carry drinking water with you and have some nearby at nights, as

it is amazing how quickly you can dehydrate, even at rest. Tap water is not safe to drink however there may be a thermos provided in the rooms. Boiled water is OK for drinking. Bottled drinking water is available everywhere however we recommend taking water purification tablets or a bottle with an in-built filter as these are more environmentally-friendly option than bottled water.

Guides & Drivers:

You will be met at Gongkar airport or Lhasa train station on arrival and accompanied in Tibet by an English speaking guide. It is a TTB regulation that you be accompanied by a guide when traveling outside Lhasa. Guides in Tibet are licensed and controlled by the Tibetan Tourist Bureau and vary enormously in fluency and knowledge. Whilst we maintain a core of trained guides, there may be times when selection is outside our control.

The Physical Reality

The remote type of travel that we experience in parts of Tibet can be physically demanding and the effect that this will have on you, both physically and mentally should not be underestimated. Breakdown can occur. The terrain is very mountainous and you may be affected by altitude. It is rare that these occurrences result in more than minor delay or have serious impact on your trip, but the possibility remains.

Cultural Shock:

Tours in Tibet take you into areas well away from the usual tourist trail and into a world very, very different to that you know. There are places in Tibet where accommodation is very basic with limited access to running water, no showers for several days, pit toilets, simple food and little spoken or written English. Opportunities to 'get away' from the group are limited: patience, tolerance and humor will be required by all. All this can and does its toll on people and should not be underestimated – the rewards however are incredible.

Communication:

Email: Private internet bars can be found in main cities. Alternatively you can use business centers in China Telecom offices. Some websites have been blacklisted by the Chinese

government and cannot be accessed from within China

Telephone:

Be careful making international calls from hotels as they can be very expensive. Private telecom booths are cheaper and easy to use. To make international calls you will need a phone card bought from inside Tibet. All cities and even most small towns have mobile phone reception if your phone is enabled with international roaming

Post:

Receiving post is not recommended as we are usually doing something or travelling during the opening hours of most post offices. Allow up to 10 days for mail to arrive at international destinations. Writing the address in Chinese can help speed delivery

What to buy

The most common items you will find are religious items such as prayer flags, prayer wheels, thanogas, shawls and daggers. Traditional clothing and Jewellery are also available. Sometimes you will be able to find beautiful carpets available. Expect to bargain. Being polite while doing so will get you a better deal



Meals:

Meals are not included. Please allow Euro 10-15 per person per day for normal meals (Breakfast, lunch & Dinner) In Lhasa there is also quite a variety, although not as extensive as in Kathmandu. Elsewhere in Tibet the variety is much more limited. We would like to recommend must try dishes in Tibet
– Tsampa (barley flour mixed with yak butter) & Yak butter tea. An alternative to yak butter tea is cha ngamo, a sweet, milky tea. Chinese green tea is also widely available. Chang, a fermented barley beer is the local alcoholic brew. It is generally OK to drink however may be made with contaminated water.

Money

It is best to bring a mixture of cash and travelers cheques in major currencies - USD, CAD, EUR, AUD - and ensure you have a mixture of large and small denominations. Everyone's spending is different, but as a guide we suggest Euro 10-15 per person per day (if you drink or smoke this could be higher). Shopping is difficult to predict, but most people buy more than they intended.



Entrance fees required to pay during the tour:

Below are the list of cost of entrance fees and excursion you may have to

pay on the tour. Please note that these prices are subject to change during the travel and should be used as guidance only.

- Summer Palace, Lhasa -CNY 65
- Drepung Monastery, Lhasa -CNY 50
- Jokhang Temple, Lhasa- CNY 85
- Potala Palace, Lhasa- CNY 200
- Genden Monastery-CNY 50
- Pelkor Chode Monastery, Gyantse - CNY 60
- Tashilhunpo Monastery, Shigatse - CNY 80
- Sakya Monastery, Shakya-CNY 50
- Sera Monastery: CNY 50
- Rongbuk- CNY 25

Insurance:

It is essential that you take out comprehensive travel insurance prior to your trek. Your travel insurance must provide cover against personal accident, medical expenses, emergency evacuation and repatriation and personal liability. We also recommend that it cover cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects.

Health:

There are no specific health requirements for entry into Nepal or China. However, you should consult your doctor for up-to date information regarding vaccinations, high altitude

medication and medications for any reasonably foreseeable illnesses whilst traveling in Nepal and China.

Please be aware that medical facilities are not of the same standard you might expect at home. We strongly recommend that you carry a personal First Aid kit as well as sufficient quantities of any personal medical requirements (including a spare pair of glasses).



Altitude:

AMS (acute mountain sickness) is a serious issue. It is the result of the failure of the body to adapt to high altitude and can affect anyone, regardless of age or fitness. It usually occurs above 1,800 meters and the likelihood of being affected increases as you ascend. On arrival in Lhasa breathlessness, lethargy and mild headaches are not uncommon and generally decrease as your body adjusts. Taking it easy at first and maintaining adequate fluid intake is essential. Please advise your guide if you feel more severe symptoms and do not medicate yourself without discussing it with them first.

Climate:

Tibet is a land of climactic extremes and whilst it is not generally as harsh as expected, it is a good idea to be prepared for cold at any time of the year – it is wind chill rather than air temperature that makes the difference here. In central Tibet weather is usually mild from May through October. Evenings may be cool, particularly early or late in the season. Rain is frequent in July and August. In Western Tibet and at higher altitudes (Rhongphu, Namtso) it can be cold at any time of year if the wind is blowing off the mountains. From December into April travel in Tibet is possible, although you must be prepared for delays if passes become blocked by snow. Trekking is not possible at this time.

Packing for your Trip

- Comfortable shoes & Socks
- Fleece jacket or equivalent. It can get cold, even in summer
- Comfortable, informal clothing (shorts & singlet tops are not appropriate)
- Hat – a good idea as sun is very strong
- Gloves - wool or fleece & Scarf
- Thermal Underwear
- Sarong - a multitude of uses
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Sewing kit & Swiss Army Knife
- Money belt
- Toiletries (including lip slave and moisturizer)
- Torch / flashlight - headlamp style is ideal
- First Aid Kit
- Small Towel
- Small umbrella or rain jacket (June-August particularly)
- Sheet sleeping bag (you may feel more comfortable in some of the more basic guest houses where laundry is not a priority)





Contact Information: Roger Pfister, Snow Jewel
P.O. Box 7003, Boudha, Kathmandu, Nepal
Phone: 00977-1- 491 47 42
Mobile Nepal: 00977-9851 021 989
Skype: kailashroger
Email: roger@snowjewel.com



May all beings be happy!