

Adventure from Lhasa to Xinjiang

The 16 day tour from Lhasa to Mt. Kailash and onto Xinjiang is for those who are looking to go well off the beaten path in Tibet and into Xinjiang, the Chinese region of Central Asia. This adventure starts with a few days exploring the capital city of Lhasa and all the major monasteries and temples there. From Lhasa, you will then go to the turquoise colored holy lake of Yamdrok before visiting the nice town of Gyantse. You will then explore the massive Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in Shigatse, Tibet's second largest city. After Shigatse, you will start exploring the vast wilderness of Western Tibet starting in Saga. From Saga, you will go to Lake Manasarovar, which is holy to both Tibetans and Hindu's. Then you will spend a full day gazing out to Mt. Kailash, Tibet's most famous holy mountain. After Mt. Kailash, you will then wander around the ruins of the ancient Kingdom of Guge. From there, you will continue through the rugged wilderness until you reach Kargilik (Yecheng), the first major town in Xinjiang. This itinerary is just a suggestion and can be modified in any way. Please email or call us for more information.

Day 1: Lhasa

Welcome to Lhasa! Your guide and driver will meet you at the train station or airport and transfer you to your hotel.

Day 2: Jokhang Temple and the Barkhor Circuit

Lhasa, elevation 3650m, is the holiest city in Tibet and each day pilgrims from across the Tibetan Plateau arrive in the city to worship at one of the many temples found there. You will spend 3 full days exploring the city. The first day you will visit Jokhang Temple, the most famous temple in Tibet. From the rooftop you will see religious pilgrims prostrating in front to the Jowo Buddha statue inside the monastery. Afterwards, you will explore the endless maze of markets and restaurants that line the ancient Barkhor circuit. While exploring the Barkhor circuit, you will rub elbows with Tibetan pilgrims who are prostrating their way around the Tibetan Quarter.

Day 3: Potala Palace and Sera Monastery

In the morning, you will visit the Potala Palace, the most recognizable structure in Tibet. Built in the year 637, the Potala Palace rises 13 stories and has more than 1000 rooms. In the afternoon, you will visit the great monastery of Sera, where monk debates take place each day. If you are interested in hiking, there is a pilgrimage circuit around the monastery that takes about an hour to complete.

Day 4: Drepung Monastery, Ramoche Temple and the Tibetan Quarter

This day you will explore Drepung Monastery. Drepung was formerly the largest monastery in the world and is still one of the 3 most important monasteries in Tibet. Below Drepung is Nechung Monastery, the former home of Tibet's state oracle. In the afternoon, we will visit Ramoche Temple as well as a small nunnery in the Tibetan Quarter.

Day 5: Lhasa-Yamdrok Lake-Gyantse 260kms, 5.5 hours

You will travel from Lhasa to Yamdrok Lake, one of Tibet's holiest and most beautiful lakes. Yamdrok Lake sits at 4450m and is an amazing turquoise color. The 7191m Mt. Nojin Kangtsang can be seen in the distance. After visiting the lake, you will drive to the mid-sized town of Gyantse. Gyantse, elevation 3950m, is famous for its massive hilltop military fort and for the Pelkor Chode Monastery, which has the tallest Tibetan Buddhist stupa in Tibet.

Day 6: Gyantse-Shigatse 90kms, 1.5 hours

In the morning, you will depart Gyantse for Shigatse, Tibet's second largest city. Shigatse, elevation 3840m, is home to the Tashilhunpo Monastery. Along with exploring the monastery, you can also hike the ancient pilgrim circuit along with hundreds of Tibetan worshippers.

Day 7: Shigatse-Saga 450kms, 7 hours

From Shigatse, you will drive to Lhatse where you can explore the Lhatse Chode Monastery and observe the local Tibetan farming culture found in this town. From Lhatse you will begin going through the nomadic regions of western Tibet. Along the way, you will stop at the turquoise colored waters of Ngamring Lake before arriving at Saga, elevation 4490 meters.

Day 8: Saga-Paryang-Lake Manasarovar 485 kms, 8 hours

This day you will continue following the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra River going through vast expanses of grasslands that are home to yaks and sheep before arriving in Paryang, elevation 4590 meters. Afterwards, you will arrive Manasarovar, Tibet's holiest lake, which sits at 4590 meters. Manasarovar is an important pilgrimage destination for Tibetans as well as Hindu's from India and Nepal. From the lake, you can see Kailash in the distance.

Day 9: Lake Manasarovar-Darchen 35kms, 1 hour

In the morning, we will make the short drive to Darchen, the starting point of the trek around Mt. Kailash. From Darchen, there is a short trek to Gyangdrak Monastery, which has a great view of Kailash.

Day 10: Darchen-Zanda 290kms, 6 hours

From Darchen, we will continue driving west towards the ancient Kingdom of Guge. Along the way, you will see small herding villages and the unique landscape of western Tibet.

Day 11: Zanda and the Guge Kingdom 36kms, 1 hour

This day you will explore the ancient Kingdom of Guge located at Tsaparang. This mysterious place is nearly 1200 years old and is one of the wonders of western Tibet. You will be able to spend the full day exploring this very interesting area.

Day 12: Zanda-Ali 190kms, 4 hours

In the morning, you will depart for Ali, the capital town of western Tibet. The landscape along the way will continue to be barren grasslands with desert that is home to sheep and yak herders.

Day 13: Ali-Duoma 230kms, 6 hours

After breakfast, we will leave Ali and drive to the small town of Duoma. Along the way, we will stop and see the beautiful lake of Pangong Tso. Pangong Tso is a stunning lake that begins in Tibet, but ends in Ladakh, India. Duoma is very small and is the last sizable town before crossing into Xinjiang.

Day 14: Duoma-Dahongliutan 345kms, 8 hours

This day, you will drive through the nearly uninhabited region of Aksai Chin. This wilderness area sees very few travelers, but its barren landscape is quite amazing. The small town of Dahongliutan lies just across the Xinjiang line.

Day 15: Dahongliutan-Mazar 250 kms, 6 hours

In the morning we will leave Dahongliutan and continue driving through the Xinjiang wilderness to the small village of Marza. Marza lies in a narrow valley surrounded by high peaks.

Day 16: Mazar-Kargilik (Yecheng) 245kms, 5 hours

The final day, we will drop down out of the mountains and arrive in the mid-sized city of Kargilik, also known as Yecheng. From here, you will continue on through Xinjiang on your own.

This itinerary can be modified in any way. Contact us for prices and more information regarding this trip.