

## **The Land of Snows: Mt. Kailash Circuit**

The 16 day tour from Lhasa to Lake Manasarovar and Mt. Kailash will take you up close to Tibet's holiest and most famous mountain. This journey begins in Lhasa, the cultural and religious heart of Tibet. Lhasa is home to Tibet's most famous and holiest temples. Each day, thousands of pilgrims prostrate around Jokhang Temple. Along with the famous monasteries of Sera and Drepung, Lhasa is a must see for anyone interested in Tibet! Each year, thousands of Tibetan pilgrims prostrate around Mt. Kailash. This tour will take you from Lhasa all the way to the start of the pilgrimage circuit. The three day trek around Kailash offers amazing views and an excellent opportunity to see traditional Tibetan culture. This itinerary is just a suggestion and can be modified in any way.

### **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, 1hour**

In the morning, we will make the short drive to Darchen, the starting point of the trek around Mt. Kailash.

#### **Day 10: Trek from Darchen-Dira Phug 18kms, 5 to 6 hours**

Walk along beautiful rocky cliffs and take pictures of breathtaking waterfalls. Take deep breaths of fresh air. From time to time, the face of Mt. Kailash will appear. Dira Phug sits at 5050m.

#### **Day 11: Trek from Dira Phug-Dolma La Pass 22kms, 8 hours**

Hike across a valley up to the Dolma-La Pass. By the late afternoon arrive at Zuthal Puk, the cave of miracles where the Tibetan poet-saint Milarepa once stayed.

#### **Day 12: Trek from Dolma La Pass-Darchen 14kms, 4 hours**

After finishing your circuit of Mt. Kailash, your car will pick you up and take you to Darchen. Stay overnight at Lake Manasarovar.

#### **Day 13: Darchen-Saga 490kms, 8 hours**

This day we will begin the journey back to Lhasa. From Darchen, we will follow the Brahmaputra River back to Saga as we pass through the nomadic regions of western Tibet.

**Day 14: Saga-Shigatse 450kms, 7 hours (option of going to Nepal border or to Everest Base Camp)**

You will continue traveling back to the Lhasa. This night you will stay in Shigatse, Tibet's second largest city.

**Day 15: Shigatse-Lhasa 260kms, 5 hours**

This last day you will go back to Lhasa. You will arrive in the city with plenty of time to stroll along the Barkhor a few more times to get any last minute souvenirs you may want.

**Day 16: Depart from Lhasa**

This itinerary can be modified in any way.