

# Highlights of Tibet

## 8 days | Starts/Ends: Lhasa



Discover the highlights of Tibet - the rooftop of the world, locked away in its Himalayan fortress! Discover enchanting Lhasa - home to the famous Potala Palace and Jokhang Monastery, the spectacular Yam Drok Lake, Gyantse's Kumbum, Tashilunpo Monastery in Shigatse and Yumbulakhang, the oldest palace in Tibet.

### HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

#### Trip Highlights

- Tsedang - Discover Yumbulakhang, the oldest palace in Tibet
- Lhasa - Marvel at the iconic Potala Palace and visit the sacred Jokhang Temple, Drepung, Sera and Norbulinka Monasteries
- Yam Drok Lake - Take in spectacular views of this beautiful sacred lake, surrounded by snow capped mountains
- Gyantse - See Khumbum Stupa, the largest chorten of its kind in Tibet, and visit Pelku Chode monastery
- Shigatse - Explore the striking Tashilunpo Monastery, seat of Panchen Lama and stroll around the free market of Shigatse.

#### What's Included

- Breakfast daily
- 7 nights - standard accommodation
- Arrival and departure airport transfer on day 1 and day 8
- Guided sightseeing in Lhasa, Gyantse, Shigatse and Tsedang
- Private chauffeur driven vehicles
- English speaking local guide during scheduled sightseeing
- Entrance fees to all included sites
- Tibet travel permit. Note: Tibetan travel permits are only issued from mainland China ie Beijing or Chengdu or from Kathmandu in Nepal, therefore prior to travelling to Lhasa you will need to spend a minimum of two days in one of these cities in order for us to arrange the permit for you

#### What's Not Included

- International flights and visa.
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture

### DETAILED ITINERARY

#### Day 1 : Lhasa

Lhasa. Arrive at Lhasa Gongkar Airport where you will receive a warm Tibetan welcome by our representative at the airport. Transfer to Lhasa (approx 70kms), soaking up the wonderful mountain scenery en route. Check into your hotel and spend the remains of

the day at leisure, to acclimatise. **Overnight - Lhasa**

#### Day 2 : Drepung & Sera Monastery

Today enjoy a guided tour of the autonomous region's capital. Visit the 15th century Drepung Monastery, which was formerly one of the largest monasteries in Tibet, once housing 10,000 monks and bustling Barkhor Street. Continue on to explore the Sera Monastery which is still a working retreat, 600 years after its foundation as a main teaching monastery, and it's one of the three great Gelukpa 'universities' once housing more than 5500 monks. **Overnight - Lhasa (B)**

#### Day 3 : Potala Palace & Jokhang Temple



On another full day of sightseeing in the fabled city of Lhasa, visit to the beautiful Potala Palace - the dominant landmark of Lhasa, towering 117 meters above the city below. Construction started on the red hill in

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1645 under the 5th Dalai Lama. This immense building is a masterpiece in design, 13 storeys high with walls 3 meters thick, containing over 1000 rooms, 10,000 shrines and 200,000 statues, it was both the residence of the current Dalai Lama and tomb of the former Heads of state. The entire building is made of stone and wood and covers an area of 130,000 square meters. The Potala is full of elaborate art work and frescos that tell many stories.

The highlight of the day is a visit to Jokhang Temple, the most sacred and important temple in Tibet and also the most captivating. There is an electric atmosphere at the temple as crowds of pilgrims travel around the chapels, praying and prostrating themselves. Then continue on to Norbulinka monastery - the Dalai Lama's summer palace which was completed in 1783 under the Eighth Dalai Lama. Set in beautiful grounds with fountains, chapels and pools, Norbulinka is located on the outskirts of Lhasa and it is from here that the present Dalai Lama fled in the 1950's. **Overnight - Lhasa (B)**

## Day 4 : Yamdrok Tso Lake



Lhasa (via Yamdrok Tso Lake) - Gyantse. After breakfast depart Lhasa and journey to Gyantse. En route visit the Drolma Lhakang Temple, which is associated with the Buddhist teachings of Atisha (a revered Bengali scholar). You'll also stop at the elevated view point of Kampa La to soak up the incredible views of the spectacular scorpion shaped Yamdrok Lake. Yamdrok is one of Tibet's three sacred lakes and according to local mythology, it is the transformation of a goddess. At over 72kms in length, with electric blue water and surrounded by snow capped mountains, it's an incredible sight to behold. Continuing your journey, drive

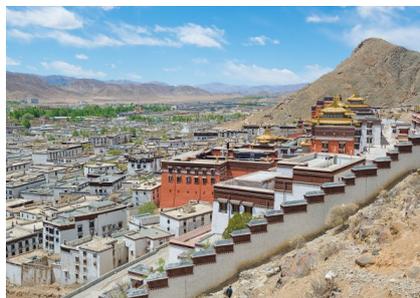
alongside Yamdrok lake for about an hour to reach Gyantse. Upon arrival spend the remains of the day at leisure. **Overnight - Gyantse (B)**

## Day 5 : Gyantse



Gyantse - Shigatse. Today after breakfast, visit Kumbum and Pelku Chode, two of the prime sightseeing spots in Gyantse. The giant, gold domed Kumbum stupa was founded in 1427 by a Gyantse prince, it has 9 floors and contains 77 chapels. Pelku Chode is the Monastery inside the same compound of Kumbum. Bidding farewell to Gyantse you'll drive on to Shigatse, Tibet's second most important city. **Overnight - Shigatse (B)**

## Day 6 : Shigatse



Shigatse - Tsedang. After breakfast enjoy a tour of Tashilunpo Monastery, which is the largest Yellow Hat sect monastery in Tibet and the seat of the Panchen Lamas. Tashilunpo contains chortens, temples and the Panchen Lamas palace, and at its peak it was home to 4,000 monks. The monastery is a striking red, white and black Tibetan structure with a golden roof. Within the monastery there is a 5 story temple, which contains a 26 meter high sitting statue of the Maitreya Buddha, cast from 6,700 ounces of gold and over 115,000 kg of copper, making it the biggest copper Buddhist statue in the world. After the sightseeing and strolling around the

free market, journey to Tsedang. **Overnight - Tsedang (B)**

## Day 7 : Yumbulakhang Palace

Tsedang - Lhasa. This morning visit Samye Monastery which was founded in the 8th century during the reign of King Trisong Detsen, with the help of the Indian Buddhist masters Padmasambhava and Shantarakshita, whom the king had invited to Tibet to help spread Buddhism. The first Tibetan monks were ordained here after examination, and are referred to as the Seven Examined Men. Over the centuries Samye has been associated with various schools of Tibetan Buddhism and today Tibetans of all traditions come to worship here.

Continue on to explore Yumbulakhang, the oldest palace in Tibet. It was believed that King Nyatri Tsenpo descended from heaven to build this palace in 2nd century BC and myths says it is the founding of Tibetan civilization. Yumbulakhang is constructed at the perfect crest of the hill divided into three different components; the tower, the chapel and monk's quarters.

Not far from Yumbulakhang is Tandruk Monastery, situated at the road side. It's said that renowned figures in the history of Tibetan Buddhism, such as Padmasambhava and Milariba, had practiced Buddhism nearby after it was built and the remaining relics are sacred land for the devotees. After a tour of the monastery travel back to Lhasa. **Overnight - Lhasa (B)**

## Day 8 : Lhasa

After breakfast transfer to Gongkar Airport for your onward flight. (B)

### KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

#### Tibet Country Guide

### Visa requirements

Visa requirements are subject to change and visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure

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from Tibet. All nationalities require a China visa and Tibet permit to enter Tibet. Please be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and therefore it is essential that you check current visa requirements with the embassy before travel.

Upon booking you will need to advise us of your international flight details and you will also need to provide us with the following: a coloured scanned copy of your passport information and photo page and a completed China Visa form. We will provide you with the form which you will need to print it out, fill in by hand and attach a passport photo. Then create a colour scanned copy of the completed visa form with photograph and email it back to us in PDF format.

For information about visas, head to <https://www.onthegotours.com/Tibet/Visas>

## Entrance fees

On our Tibet group tours, entrance fees are not included must be budgeted for by you. The total cost of the entrance fees which need to be paid locally, are noted under 'Exclusions' on the first page of this document. Entrance fee amounts are subject to change and as such upon arrival, your tour leader will highlight the exact total entrance fee cost for your tour. Entrance fees are to be paid in CNY and they will be collected on day 2 of your tour.

## Health requirements

You should seek medical advice for vaccinations and about medications before travelling.

### WATER

As tap water is not safe to drink in Tibet, only drink bottled mineral water which is readily available in hotels, shops and restaurants.

## Altitude sickness

An altitude of over 3,000 meters is defined as high altitude and given parts of Tibet are higher than this level, it is possible to experience differing degrees of symptoms which include headaches, nausea, dizziness, fatigue and shortness of breath. These symptoms will usually decrease in severity during acclimatization and mild cases of

altitude sickness should not interfere with light activity. It is important not over exert yourself if travelling to altitude and drink plenty of fluids and eat carbohydrate food to keep the body properly hydrated. Please report any symptoms of altitude sickness immediately to your tour leader.

It is your responsibility to discuss any pre-existing conditions or concerns with your doctor prior to booking and travel (if needed) to ensure you are fit to travel at these altitudes.

## Style of trip & group size

Local guides provide sightseeing and assistance at each port of call, the tours are not escorted throughout by a tour leader. On flights you will therefore travel without a guide and will be met upon arrival at your destination and transferred to your hotel. In Chitwan National Park guiding will be provided by the lodges own expert jungle guides. Transportation is a combination of internal flights and private air conditioned vehicles.

The number of travellers participating our Tibet tours and treks varies from week to week. Our maximum group size in Tibet is 15, with an average of 2 - 6 travellers on each departure.

## Temple etiquette

Please take particular care when visiting religious places, such as temples and monasteries. Dress and behave appropriately - don't wear shorts or sleeveless tops and do not smoke or hold hands. Shoes and hats should be removed. Within temples no carvings, statues or deities should be touched. Photography is prohibited in certain sections of the most sacred sites and please do not attempt to be photographed with Buddhist monks. If in doubt ask your local guide for further information.

## Currency climate and more

Please visit [www.onthegotours.com/Tibet/Travel-tips-and-useful-info](https://www.onthegotours.com/Tibet/Travel-tips-and-useful-info) for local customs, currency, WiFi and other helpful information to prepare you for your holiday.

## Shopping in Tibet

Shopping in Lhasa is a popular tourist activity and Barkhor Street Bazaar is the best place for it. In Barkhor there are lots of stalls, selling a wide range of goods including; Yak wool jumpers, silver ornaments, jewellery and handicrafts. Tibetan incense is a good souvenir, Tibetans use it to worship Buddha and drive away evil spirits. Thangkas (religious scrolls) are also very popular, the higher quality ones have a hand-painted image (rather than printed) in the middle, with very detailed backgrounds. The quality of Thangkas can vary dramatically, so take care when purchasing one.

In the tourism industry it's common practice for commission to be offered in exchange for recommending particular shops or suppliers. This can become an issue when clients feel obliged to purchase. We do our best to avoid this by monitoring all shopping experiences offered.

All shopping experiences on your tour have been noted in the itinerary and they have been carefully selected based upon positive feedback from On The Go travellers. You are under no obligation to partake in a listed shopping experience and you are most welcome to wait inside or outside the premises.

Although we only visit reputable retailers, please note that we cannot explicitly guarantee the quality of their products. All purchases made whilst on holiday with us are at your own discretion. Please make sure that you are completely happy with your purchase. On The Go cannot be held responsible for any items that you buy if they fail to meet expectation, or any shipping arrangements. Proceed with caution.

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