



TOP OF THE WORLD, OVERLAND IN TIBET

15 DAYS DEPARTING 16TH APRIL 2012

DETAILED ITINERARY

The magnificent monasteries and breath-taking mountain vistas of Tibet await you on one of the most spectacular journeys, to the roof of the world.

You will delve deep into the heart of Tibet's mystical culture, explore the magnificent Potala Palace in Lhasa, cross the Pang-la Pass to the Rongbuk Monastery which is one of the highest monasteries in the world. Travel along spectacular roads through the arid Tibetan plateau to Gyantse, at the head of the old trading route to India.

A highlight of this trip is your journey to the North Everest Base Camp at 5,200 metres. This was camp for the 1924 British Expedition of Mallory and Irvine.

The final section of this extraordinary journey will see you descending through an impressive gorge and winding your way through the terraced hillsides of Nepal back to Kathmandu.



DAY 1 16th April

KATHMANDU

Arrival at Kathmandu Airport where you will be met on arrival and taken to your hotel.

Your local guide will give you an orientation of Kathmandu and you will have the afternoon free to explore. The shopping district of Thamel offers some great bargains and a large range of clothing and interesting artifacts, where you can test your bargaining skills with the store-keepers.

This evening there will be a briefing with our local guide over dinner.



DAY 2 17th April

KATHMANDU

In the morning you will explore Kathmandu with a sightseeing tour. Visit Bodhnath Stupa, one of the biggest Buddhist shrines in the world, where you can observe Buddhist monks in prayer in the monasteries surrounding the stupa. You will also visit Pashupatinath, the most famous Hindu temple located on the banks of the holy Bagmati River. Here you can see Hindu holy men (sadhus) meditating, pilgrims bathing and occasionally funeral pyres burning on the ghats. The rest of your time in Kathmandu is free for further sightseeing and exploration.

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3 18th April

GONKAR, LHASA

This morning you will be transferred to Kathmandu airport for one of the most spectacular flights in the world. The flight path takes you along high mountain peaks, crossing over the Himalayan mountains to the high Tibetan Plateau. Upon arrival at Gonkar (Lhasa Airport), you will be driven to Lhasa (which means 'Land of the Gods'), in the heart of Tibet. Lhasa is located at 3650 metres above sea level on the northern slopes of the Himalayas, and is over 1,300 years old. The drive from Gonkar takes about 1.5 hours. This afternoon you will check into your hotel with time to rest.

Meals: Breakfast

DAYS 4 - 6 19th - 21st April

LHASA

The Eastern end of Lhasa is prominently traditional Tibetan, and over the next 3 days you will visit some magnificent sites which are UNESCO World Heritage Listed, including the Potala Palace, the Jokhang Temple Monastery and the Norbulingka Summer Palace. The Jokhang Temple was constructed in the 7th Century AD to house the statues of Budha.

You will also visit Depung Monastery and Sera Monastery. Deprung Monastery was founded in 1416 by a disciple of Tsong Khapa, and was the biggest and richest monastery in Tibet and is where each new Dalai Lama was trained. At its height Deprung had over 10,000 monks. Sera Monastery became famous for its tantric teachings.

The Barkhor Street Market is a circular street around the Jokhand Temple in the centre of the old section of Lhasa, it is the oldest street in a very traditional style in Tibet, where you can enjoy bargaining with local Tibetan vendors for the handicrafts which are rare to be seen elsewhere in the world. Bakhor Street is one of the most important religious paths along which pilgrims walk around Jokhang Temple while turning prayer wheels in their hands through centuries.

Meals: Breakfast



DAY 7 22nd April

GYANTSE

This morning you will travel to Gyantse along the Friendship Highway. This is a most spectacular road which traverses high mountain passes and crosses plateaus. The drive will take approximately 6 to 7 hours through Tibet's richest farming areas, across the Brahmaputra River as it winds its way down to the Bay of Bengal. At an altitude of 3939 metres, this is the highest major river in the world. You will enjoy views over the huge Yamdrok Tso Lake (the Turquoise Lake) while climbing to Karo-la at 5010 metres before arriving into the historic town of Gyantse. Home of the Kumbum Monastery and amazing Buddhist murals, Gyantse was once a major trading centre with India.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8 23rd April

GYANTSE - SHIGATSE

The morning will be spent exploring Gyantse and the Palcho Monastery (also known as the Pelkor Chode Monastery or Kumbum Monastery). This afternoon a 3 hour drive will take you across the Tibetan Plateau to Shigatse (the 2nd largest city in Tibet).

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 9 24th April

SHIGATSE

Today you will explore the magnificent Tashilhunpo Monastery, which is the traditional seat of the Panchen Lama, the most important incarnation for Tibetan Buddhists, after the Dalai Lama. This impressive religious centre contains a giant statue of Buddha in the Temple of Maitreya, as well as an ornate tomb of the fourth Panchen Lama. This enormous Monastery is one of Tibet's most active monasteries.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 10 25th April

SHEGAR

Crossing over the highest pass on the way to Shegar, the Gyatsola Pass, at 5220metres above sea level you will be struck by the stunning views of the Himalayan peaks to the south. The countryside is dotted with busy villages and ruined monasteries.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



DAY 11 26th April

RONGPHU

You will be treated to breathtaking views of the North Face of Mt Everest (8848 metres) as you travel to the top of Pang-la Pass at 5150 metres. There will be plenty of photo opportunities before descending to the Rongphu Valley and a visit to the Rongphu Monastery which is one of the highest monasteries in the world.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 12 27th April

MT EVEREST BASE CAMP

With an early morning start, the walk to Everest Base Camp (5200 metres) from Rongphu is approximately 7km each way. This is a wonderful way to experience the beauty and enormity of the region and to capture photos of this once-in-a-lifetime adventure. You also have the option of reaching Everest Base Camp by horse drawn cart if you do not wish to walk. This north access to Mt Everest and the base camp was first used by the famous 1924 British Expedition of George Mallory and Andrew Irvine.

This afternoon you will drive to Tingri (4328 metres) for your overnight accommodation, and enjoy beautiful views of Cho Oyu, the 6th highest mountain at 8021 metres.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 13 28th April

ZHAGMU

From Tingri the road ascends to reach the Langlu-la Pass (5190 metres), where the scenery is again spectacular. The panorama also includes the 8000 metre high Xixapangma. From the top of the pass we descend nearly 3000 metres to the small town of Nyalam before continuing through amazing gorges to the border town of Zhangmu. As you near the border, the road is cut into cliffs high above the valley floor.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



DAY 14 29th April

KATHMANDU

Cross Immigration and drive down to the Friendship Bridge, entering Nepal. The drive through beautiful valleys and hills back to Kathmandu takes about 5 to 6 hours.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 15 30th April

KATHMANDU

Today you will be transported to the airport for your flight back home. Say farewell and take many wonderful memories with you of your adventures.

Meals: Breakfast



INCLUDED WITH THIS TRIP

- Access to country specific pre-departure information
- Flight from Kathmandu to Lhasa (value US\$356)
- Local expert guide in Tibet
- Plus local English speaking group leader throughout the trip with complete knowledge of altitude sickness and remote wilderness first aid experienced and accredited.
- Transfers to and from airports
- All ground transportation
- All accommodation
- Park entrance fees
- Fuel plus other activities as detailed in itinerary
- First aid kit

MEALS

As detailed in the itinerary

14 breakfast, 8 lunch, 7 dinner

ACCOMMODATION

2 or 3 star B&B in Kathmandu and Lhasa, basic in rest of Tibet

TRANSPORT

minibus/4WD vehicle, walking, plane, horse-drawn cart



NOT INCLUDED WITH THIS TRIP

- Visa fees - each member of the group must carry a valid passport (valid for at least 6 months beyond the duration of your trip) and have obtained the appropriate visas. You will need multiple entry Visa for Nepal. Your Visa for Tibet will be obtained in Nepal and cost is approx US\$115
- Tips, personal telephone charges.
- Travel Insurance (compulsory) - You will need to provide the policy number prior to departure. Your policy should include emergency evacuation.
- Items of a personal nature; postage, drinks and souvenirs
- Entrance and activity fees during free time which are not detailed on the itinerary
- Other meals not mentioned on the itinerary
- Medical Advice - Please refer to your GP or local travel clinic for up to date travel health advice for the area(s) you are visiting.



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