

China - Tibet - Nepal



Highlights of Tibet

Adventure Travel tour | 14 days | US\$2350 | Beijing | Lhasa | Gyantse | Shigatse | Sakya | Everest Base Camp | Kathmandu

This trip starts in Beijing the epi-centre of China, it embodies China's incredible history and manic race to the future. During two days we will explore some of Beijing's highlights, walk on the 2000 year old Great Wall, wander around the Tiananmen Square, explore the Forbidden City and visit the Temple of Heaven. The Tibetan region has been coveted for centuries; at first glance one wonders why a place so barren that makes life so difficult for the people living here has such appeal. As soon as you set foot on the Tibetan plateau you will understand why. Perhaps it is because of its sparseness and because everything is harder at this altitude, it allows its magic to shine through.

Tibet is endless in its plains and summittless in its peaks. It is a rugged beauty that will take your breath away and steal your heart at first glance. It's perhaps knowing how much it is treasured by the Tibetan people that will make you see it through their loving eyes.

It is almost as though Tibet has a serene soundtrack echoing with Monk's chanting that follows you as you explore its hidden riches. The people are all at one strength, persistence, devotion, compassion and innocence embodied. When you look into their eyes there is almost no need for words, you can see the soul of Tibet. When you first cast eyes on Mount Everest you begin to understand where this magic might be rooted. The mountain has a life force.

This trip is designed to show you all that makes Tibet such a special place, from its Monasteries to the Himalayas. Kathmandu is the perfect place to end our trip. The vibrant, colorful, chaotic city of Kathmandu is a real travelers delight. Staying in comfortable hotels and having private transportation will allow you to appreciate your surroundings all with a good night's sleep.



Itinerary

Day 1 | Beijing

China's capital of Beijing is a city evolving at lightning pace. As soon as you arrive it will seem like you get caught up in all the excitement. When you arrive on Day One there are no activities planned, so take some time to relax or head out and see a bit of the city. On arrival at our starting hotel look for a message in the lobby with details of when we will be meeting. At the meeting in the evening you will meet your fellow travelers and your Grasshopper tour leader, we will follow our meeting by heading out for some world famous Peking Duck!

Day 2 | Beijing

We head out early today for a jam packed day seeing the sights. We will be accompanied by a local guide who will provide us with a greater insight. We will travel north of the city where our first stop will be the Great Wall of China at Mutianyu. This amazing feat of engineering stretches 6000km westwards along the mountain ridges north of Beijing, it was originally constructed to protect the Chinese empire from the Mongols to the north and not only served as a fortification but a means of communication to get word quickly if there was an attack. We will take a break at midday for an included picnic lunch on the wall. On the way back to the city we will stop and marvel at a more recent feat of engineering; the "bird nest" stadium, home to the 2008 Summer Olympics. In the late afternoon we visit the Forbidden City and the Tienanmen Square, at night we can take in an optional acrobatic or Kung Fu show.

Day 3 | Lhasa | 3660m - 12080ft

We have a transfer in the morning to the airport for our flight to Tibet. The flight takes us right across the Tibetan plateau and provides us with spectacular views of the sprawling mountains below. After landing at Gonggar Airport we meet our Tibetan local guide. It is a further 2 hour drive by private transportation to Lhasa where we check into our hotel. Because of the sudden change in altitude it is advisable to relax and take it easy for the remainder of the day to become acclimatised.

Day 4 | Lhasa | 3660m - 12080ft

Today we visit several of Lhasa's many monasteries in the expert care of our local Tibetan guide. One of our stops is the Sera Monastery, one of the most well-preserved monasteries in Tibet and home to several hundred monks where they live and study. After lunch we visit the Norbulingka, the summer palace of the Dalai Lama. The gem in the crown today is Jokhang Temple; the temple is one of the most sacred sites in Tibet and is a pilgrimage destination for many devout Tibetans. Surrounding the Jokhang Temple is the Barkor area- a maze of narrow cobbled streets that forms the central market area of Lhasa.

Day 5 | Lhasa | 3660m - 12080ft

This morning we visit the Potala Palace, which dominates the city of Lhasa from its hilltop perch. An impressive and dramatic building, it was the main residence of the Dalai Lama and also houses numerous grand staterooms and many important chapels. This location has had a palace on its site since the 5th or 6th century, but the present palace dates mostly back to the 17th century. This afternoon we visit the Drepung Monastery to continue our truly awe-inspiring day. Originally founded in the 14th century it was once the largest monastery in the world at its prime it had a population of over 10,000 monks. The population has dwindled down to several hundred, but much remains here of significance since it was relatively left unscathed during the Cultural Revolution.

Day 6 | Lhasa | 3660m - 12080ft

A free day in Lhasa where you can leisurely explore further, revisit a favorite monastery or simply sit in a café overlooking the Barkor and watch the pilgrims as they pass the Jokhang mumbling their prayers and spinning their prayer wheels. You can also shop or just peruse the local goods at the stalls lining the Barkor. We can also arrange for an optional tour (not included) to other local sights such as the Tibetan



Medical Centre, Ganden Monastery and Tsurphu Monastery

Day 7 | Gyantse | 3950m - 13035ft | Drive 216km

Today we set off on our overland journey through the Tibetan plateau. Travelling by private transportation along the Friendship Highway we cross the Khamba La pass [4794m] from which there are stunning views across the lake to the snowy summits of majestic Himalayan peaks. We continue westwards over another high pass; the Karo La pass [5045m] where we are treated to the spectacular sight of a huge glacier dipping down to within a few hundred meters of the road. After passing through beautiful valleys and warm Tibetan villages we arrive in the town of Gyantse, our stop for the night.

Day 8 | Shigatse | 3900m - 12870ft. | Drive 90km

Before departing Gyantse, we stop to visit the Gyantse Dzong and Gyantse Kumbum. The Dzong is a fort dating from the 14th century from which there are amazing views of both Gyantse itself and the surrounding Nyang Chu Valley. The Kumbum is an impressive gold-domed stupa which contains many small chapels and beautiful murals depicting different aspects of Buddhism. After our sightseeing we continue on to Shigatse, only 90km away, and arrive in time for lunch. Shigatse is the second largest city in Tibet and after exploring the local market we head to the Tashilhunpo Monastery for an in depth guided tour. Tashilhunpo Monastery is one of the largest functioning monasteries in Tibet and is home to the Panchen Lama, only second in importance to the Dalai Lama in Tibetan Buddhism.

Day 9 | Sakya | 4300m - 14200ft | Drive 145km

Today we continue on our journey, as we travel the landscape is barren yet breathtaking. Just beyond the small town of Lhatse we cross the highest pass of our journey, the Gyamtso La [5220m]. We arrive in Sakya and visit the monastery which was built in the 13th century and houses some 30,000 volumes of ancient Buddhist scriptures or Sutras.

Day 10 | Rongbuk Everest Base Camp | 5000m -16500ft | Drive 60km

From Sakya we descend to the plains, passing lonely monasteries and the camps of nomadic herders. We deviate off the Friendship Highway and head south over dirt roads and rocky terrain towards the main Himalayan range. The view from today's highest pass at 5150m is incredible with uninterrupted views stretching from peak to peak. As we approach Everest is initially hidden from view, but as we turn the corner into the Rongbuk Valley it appears with majestic presence. We stay overnight at a Guest House run by the Monks who call the shadow of Everest home.

Day 11 | Nyalam or Zongmu | 2000m - 6600ft

No trip to the Himalayas is complete without understanding the life force that surrounds Qomolangma (Mount Everest), which means goddess mother or mother earth in Tibetan. Prepare to be taken under the spell of Mount Everest as today we take the short hike up to Base Camp (5200m) in the morning. Stand at the feet of the sleeping giant and you will never forget this moment for the rest of your life. There is plenty of time to snap away and take the experience all in. We head back down and continue on dirt tracks until we rejoin the Friendship Highway and drive to Tingri where we stop for lunch. Back on the road we once more we are rewarded with magnificent views of the surrounding peaks of Shishapangma, Cho Oyu, Menlungtse and Gauri Shankar. We continue on and begin our descent from the Tibetan Plateau to Nyalam or Zongmu just 30 km before the Nepalese border. With dramatic suddenness, everything appears incredibly lush and green.

Day 12 | Kathmandu | 1350m - 4455ft | Drive 153km

Setting off from Nyalam we drive the last 30 kilometers to the Friendship Bridge, which spans the river which marks the border between China and Nepal. We say goodbye to our Tibetan guide and drivers and walk across the bridge to Kodari and the Nepalese Immigration Control where our local Nepalese crew meets us. After completing border formalities we continue the spectacular drive to Kathmandu, which under normal circumstances takes about 5 hours.

Day 13 | Kathmandu | 1350m - 4455ft



Today you enjoy a full day guided tour to explore all the sights of Kathmandu. Visit Durbar Square Palace Complex, one of the major attractions in Kathmandu Valley. Then move onto the religious site of Bouddhanth and Swayambhunath Stupa, the biggest and oldest of all the holy shrines in Kathmandu Valley. We end our tour in the beautiful city of Bhaktapur in the Kathmandu Valley

Day 14 | Departure day

Today is departure day, please remember to check out by midday, just let us know your onward international flight details for your included airport transfer.

Tour Details

Style

Adventure Travel Tour

Inclusions

- discover 3 different cultures in a 14 day trip
- all entrance fees and activities listed in the itinerary
- all transportation as listed in the itinerary - included flights Beijing - Lhasa
- local guides in Beijing, Tibet and Kathmandu
- Grasshopper Tour leader throughout the trip
- Great Wall of China
- Tienanmen Square and the Forbidden City
- Beijing Duck Dinner
- Jokhang Temple - spiritual heart of Tibet
- Potala Palace - former residence of the Dalai Lamas
- Sera Monastery, Gyantse Monastery, Sygatse Monastery, Sakya Monastery
- Everest Base Camp - North Face
- Kathmandu - full day guided tour

Group Size

Minimum 3, maximum 10

Food

Include meals: 11 breakfasts, 1 welcome dinner (Peking duck, vegetarian options available), 1 picnic lunch on the Great Wall

Accommodation

12 nights comfortable hotels, 1 night basic accommodation in Rombuk Monastery at Everest Base Camp. All accommodation is twin share, except at Everest Base Camp where it is multi-share.

The sleeping arrangements are for twin-share so if you are a single traveler you will be paired up with someone of the same sex. This ensures that whether you are traveling solo or with friends, everyone is paying the same rate.

Extra Accommodation

We can book additional accommodation in Beijing before or after in Kathmandu at competitive rates. Should you wish to extend your stay just let us know.

Beijing: single room 60 USD - double room 70 USD
Kathmandu: single room 35 USD - double room 45 USD

Arrival Details



Beijing Capital International Airport is located in northeast of Beijing 25km from the centre of Beijing city. The airport is relatively straight forward and most of the signs are also in English. Most international flights arrive at Terminal 3. There is a taxi stand outside the airport terminal building, ask them to use the meter. The taxi ride from the airport takes about 45 minutes and should cost around 130CNY (plus 10CNY for the airport expressway toll). Avoid taxi touts who tell you that they have a metered taxi parked outside the airport, they will most likely try to take advantage of you. We will contact you a few weeks before the tour starts for the details of the starting hotel, it is advisable to have the hotel name written in Chinese characters which we will provide.

Difficulty

We consider this trip achievable for anybody with an adventurous spirit and relatively good health, be prepared for some long travel days on bumpy roads. Some people can expect the inconveniences of travelling at high altitude, however they are very rarely serious and we provide 4 nights in Lhasa which should give you plenty of time to fully adapt to the altitude.

Altitude

Although our routes are carefully planned to allow for proper acclimatization you may feel some effects of altitude for the first few days or at higher altitudes. Breathlessness, lethargy and mild headaches are not uncommon and generally decrease as your body adjusts. 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 us first as the medication can often mask more serious symptoms if there is already a problem. 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 can occur above 1,800 meters and the likelihood of being affected increases as you ascend. The way to reduce the effects of altitude is to ascend slowly, until you have acclimatized. Poor acclimatization can result in headache, nausea, sleeplessness, difficulty breathing and swelling of fingers and glands. The only cure for AMS is to descend to lower altitude and your guide's decision on this matter is final.

Travel Details

Please note that visas are the responsibility of the individual traveler. The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as much as possible, but rules do change. It is important that you check for yourself.

Make sure your passport is valid for at least 6 months after your return date. Be sure to check the date you require a visa from and the length of time you will need to cover, especially if you change countries during your trip

China Visa

Citizens from Singapore, Brunei and Japan are allowed up to 15 days stay without a visa. All other nationalities require a visa. Visas are NOT available on arrival. When filling out the visa application form, please list the starting hotel as the "company or person to visit in China". You require a single entry visa to complete this trip. The visa can be obtained from a Chinese embassy in your home country or using a visa service.

Tibet Visa

A TTP (Tibet Travel Permit) is required to visit Tibet. The permit will be arranged for the group by Grasshopper Adventures. Please provide passport and citizenship information to Grasshopper on booking so that the visa can be arranged. (we require a scan of the photopage of your passport that you will be travelling with asap after your booking)

Nepal Visa

Single entry visas are available on arrival at Kathmandu international airport and all land borders. Please note that the visas are only payable in USD cash. One passport sized photo is also required.



Tourist Visa:

- 15 days multiple entry – US\$25
- 30 days multiple entry – US\$40
- 90 days multiple entry – US\$100

Transit Visa:

Transit visa for one day can be obtained from Nepal's immigration offices at the entry points upon the production of departure flight ticket via Tribhuvan International Airport in Nepal, by paying US\$5 or equivalent convertible currency.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of participating in a Grasshopper Adventure that you hold travel insurance for the duration of the trip. Insurance must include comprehensive medical and emergency evacuation. Your travel insurance details will be checked by your group leader on arrival at the starting point hotel.

If you are looking for an insurer we can recommend World Nomads. [Click to see more details.](#)

Flights

International flights to the starting point and from the finish point are not included in the price of this tour. We can assist with the purchase of inter-Asia flights and/or provide advice if you are considering overland travel. All domestic flights as per itinerary are included.

Money

The official currency of Nepal is the Nepali Rupee which should be used for most transactions. Nepal now has modern banking systems with ATMs and money changers in the larger towns. In Nepal it is possible to use Visa/Mastercard or Cirrus/ Maestros cards to access cash at an ATM in the larger towns and cities that we visit. You should however, carry travelers cheques as a backup. Most international currencies can be exchanged so it is not necessary to bring only US dollars— AUD, EUR, CAD, NZD are all accepted at banks in major centers.

The official currency of China and Tibet Autonomous Region (China) is the Chinese RMB, or Yuan which is used for all transactions. China and Tibet have modern banking systems with ATMs and Bank of China branches in the larger towns. In Tibet it is possible to use Visa/Mastercard or Cirrus/Maestros cards to access cash at an ATM in the larger towns and cities that we visit. Most international currencies can be exchanged so it is not necessary to bring only US dollars—AUD, EUR, CAD, NZD are all accepted at banks in major centres.

For current exchange rates visit:

www.oanda.com

Costs

We recommend that you allow approximately US\$15 for food and general living costs per day. Shopping money should be considered extra to this amount. It is customary to tip the guides and drivers in Nepal and Tibet. You should allow approximately US\$30 for tips. Note: this is a guide only, feel free to tip more or less (or nothing) depending on your satisfaction. If you think your tour leader has done a good job you may also tip him/her. Again this is completely up to you.

Electricity

China works on a 220 volt system and generally uses an Australian style 3 pin plug. Sometimes you will also find two flat or round pin plugs which are standard in South East Asia. You can easily buy an adapter for much cheaper than home in country. (2 USD)



Packing

You need to consider bringing the following items:

<p>Personal Items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backpack • Long trousers • Shorts • Shirts • Warm jacket • Thermals • Woolen socks • Jumper • Hat • Sandals • Comfortable shoes • Swimming Costume • Rain/Wind coat • Sunglasses • Light Rain Coat • Toiletries • Tampons (hard to get in China) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Towel • Sunscreen (high protectionfactor) • Woolen Hat • First Aid Kit • Mosquito Repellent • Camera and Film/Memory • Alarm Clock • Gloves/scarf <p>Travel Items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passport with 6 months validity and 3 spare pages • Passport photo (3) • Travel insurance details • Flight tickets • Money - cash/credit cards/travellers cheques • Phrase book
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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 Tibet. Be aware that some drugs, including anti-malarials, have side effects at altitude. Please discuss this carefully with your doctor. Also be aware that we will be in remote areas and away from medical facilities for some time during this trip. We strongly recommend that you carry a personal First Aid kit as well as sufficient quantities of any personal medical requirements.

Climate

Surprisingly, the Tibetan climate is not as harsh as many people imagine it to be. It is suitable to travel to Tibet from April to the beginning of November. If you only stay in Lhasa, you can visit anytime of the year. Sun radiation is extremely strong in Tibet. The sunlight in Lhasa is so intense that the city is called Sunlight City. The thin air can neither block nor retain heat so wide temperature extremes can be met in daytime and on the same night in Tibet. Most annual rainfall comes in the rainy season that starts from June to September. Usually it rains at night in Lhasa, Shigatse and Chamdo area.

Nepal has a generally temperate climate, however altitude makes distinct variations. The monsoon sweeps up from India each summer, making mid June to mid September humid and wet. The three other distinct seasons are all suitable for trekking and each has its own advantages. Changing global weather patterns have had their effect on the Himalayan climate and mountain weather is notoriously changeable. Always be prepared for a change in conditions and note that if severe or dangerous weather conditions occur your guide's decision on any course of action is final.

- Winter (December-February) It is cold and you will need to be prepared, but the air is very clear providing the best mountain views.
- Spring (March-May) Days are increasingly warm and the rhododendrons are in bloom. A very common and pleasant trekking season.
- Summer (June-August) The monsoon season. It will rain every day, although generally in the evening and night. The hills turn lush and green and at higher elevations the alpine plants will bloom.



- Autumn (September-November) The most popular trekking season where days are warm, but not hot; there is little chance of snow and skies are clear.

Positive Impact

An integral part of traveling is to have a positive impact on the country that you are visiting. On this trip there are a number of things you can do to have a positive impact on the communities that we visit.

Traveling is as much about how you visit as where you visit. Our guides and group leader follow detailed guidelines on acceptable behaviors and practices. These cover cultural considerations, reduction and disposal of waste and protection of endangered wildlife.

As travelers we will provide you with specific guidelines to help you make responsible decisions whilst traveling. These guidelines cover appropriate dress, etiquette for visiting homes and religious complexes, waste and environmental issues and endeavor to explain cultural behaviors which may seem alien to western travelers.

Dress

Nepal is still quite a conservative country. In rural areas and temples overly revealing clothing is considered offensive. You should make an effort to dress more conservatively in these situations. When visiting temples shorts are acceptable providing they cover the knee. Sleeveless tops are not acceptable in temples.

Phrase Book

A highly memorable part of your travels will be the local people that you meet. In the tourist areas some people will speak English but away from these areas you should learn a few words of Nepalese. We will teach you some of the basics but if you want to really interact we recommend bringing a phrase book.

Donations

Often when coming on trips overseas people like to bring items such as sweets, pens and books for children or old clothing for families. While this is a fantastic idea, if distributed in the wrong way it can actually create more problems. Giving items away to local people can create an expectation that a visiting foreigner equals free give away's. In some communities in Asia this has created whole villages where the only interaction is the locals asking for things. If you would like to donate anything to the communities that we visit we suggest that you give the items to Grasshopper Adventures which we will then pass on to development organisations, schools or whole communities. In this way items are distributed by those working in the communities who understand better the local needs.

Poverty

There a lot of poverty in Nepal which you will see. If you choose to give something to a beggar you must bear in mind the value of money in the country you are visiting. Many beggars can earn more than those who work unskilled jobs. There are organisations in Nepal who are working to alleviate this poverty issue and may be able to do more good with donations that you might like to make. Your Tour Leader will be able to provide more information about this.

Important

All information in these tour notes is researched with care and provided in good faith. The information subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Grasshopper Adventures.



