



**Escape2Tibet
Tibetan Escapade**

Kathmandu – Lhasa – Gyantse – Shigatse – Old Tingri – The Last Resort - Kathmandu

This is a private departure that begins with a magnificent flight across the Himalayan chain where several days are spent exploring the 'forbidden' city of Lhasa, including a visit to the Potala Palace, the winter residence of the Dalai Lama. This is followed by an overland drive across the Tibetan plateau, the highest country in the world, visiting ancient monasteries and seldom-visited villages, to the Nepal-Tibet border. (Clients may arrive from Chengdu/Hong Kong if they prefer).

This tour can be extended by a further two days to include a visit to the Rongbuk Monastery and a trek around the North Face Base Camp of Mount Everest. If the optional Everest extension is added, then Sherpa staff will be supplied to take care of you at this high altitude (5200m).

Duration : 12 days/ 11 nights – (2 nights Kathmandu, 7 nights in Tibet, 2 nights Kathmandu)

Accommodation: Comfortable 4-star Hotel in Kathmandu, Comfortable accommodation in Lhasa and local hotels in other Tibetan towns

The price for this itinerary is as follows:

US \$ TBC per person travelling based on minimum of 2 persons on a sharing basis,
US \$ TBC single supplement.

Tibet visa fees are extra and details will be advised at the time of booking.

This itinerary may be arranged on a private basis to suit your own dates (Note that flights to Lhasa normally operate on a Tuesday or a Saturday and this should be borne in mind when considering dates). We are also pleased to quote for a modified version of this itinerary which may be shortened or lengthened depending on your exact requirements.

Price Includes:	Price Excludes:
X4 nights bed and breakfast accommodation at Shangri-la Hotel (BB). Hotel in Tibet accommodation on twin sharing/bed and breakfast basis as per the itinerary Private 4-wheel drive vehicle throughout with an English speaking guide All monasteries entrance fees/All the necessary permits All sightseeing as per the itinerary One way Airfare for the sector of Kathmandu/ Lhasa.	lunch and dinner arrangements in Kathmandu and Tibet personal insurance price rises beyond our control (e.g.; increase in permit fees, airfares) charges for unexpected expenses such as landslides at the border which may result in additional expenses to hire porters etc personal expenses such as gratuities, laundry etc. personal clothing and equipment international departure airport tax international airfare Nepal and Tibet visa fees

ITINERARY
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Day 01: Arrival in Kathmandu



Upon arrival you will be met and assisted by an Escape 2 Nepal representative and transferred to Shangri-la Hotel which is located 15 minutes from the airport and 5-10 minutes from the tourist district of Thamel.

This Hotel provides comfortable accommodation and excellent facilities as well as one of Kathmandu's best gardens.

Day 02: In Kathmandu

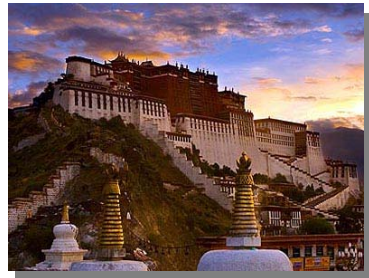
A pre-trip briefing will be conducted today in which maps and other general information will be distributed. This will also offer you the ideal opportunity to ask any last minute questions that you may have. Half day sightseeing tour of Kathmandu.

A half day sightseeing tour of Kathmandu City will also be arranged..

About Kathmandu: Once a traditional medieval city of breathtaking Newari architecture, Kathmandu is now fully grown into an urban capital with a population of one & half-million people. Nevertheless, it has not lost its magic, especially in the ancient, narrow streets and in countless temples and shrines where Buddhist and Hindu iconography mix in fantastic ways. Bodha is a 1,400-year-old stupa that attracts pilgrims from across Buddhist Asia. At Bodha, we see pilgrims circling the stupa to make a *kora*, turning the stupa's giant prayer wheels as they go. With new monasteries sprouting up all around it, Bodha is rapidly becoming a world center of Tibetan Buddhist study. Swayambu is an ancient Buddhist temple with commanding views of the valley. We make a steep climb of 300 steps to reach this stupa. Swayambu was established as a shrine around 500 BC and by the 13th century AD, had become an important center of Buddhist learning. Its eyes, painted on four cardinal points, keep watch over the Kathmandu Valley. Pashupatinath, with its triple-roofed temple, burning ghats, and wandering sadhus (holy men) along the sacred Bagmati, is one of four major sites of Shiva worship on the subcontinent. Its temples and ghats are set along the Bagmati because the waters of this river eventually river flow south to join the mighty Ganges, holy river of India. Entrance to Pashupatinath's inner temple precinct is for Hindus only, but from the outside, we are able to see the huge structure of Nandi, the bull, and a smaller statue of Hanuman. Overnight Dwarika's Hotel.



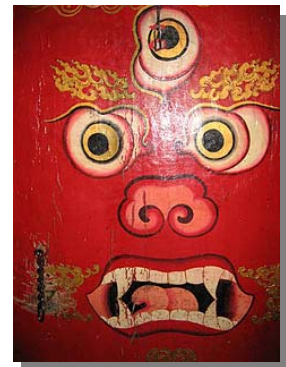
Day 03: Kathmandu- Lhasa, Tibet



Transferred to the International airport for the flight to Lhasa. This spectacular flight, on a China Southwest Airlines Boeing 757, takes us right across the main Himalayan range and provides us with magnificent mountain views. After landing at Gonggar Airport and meeting our Tibetan guide, it is a further 2 hour drive by Land cruiser jeep to Lhasa where we will check in to the Hotel Kyichu. The hotel is one of Lhasa's better properties..... with a Tibetan decor and friendly service. It is advisable to rest and take it easy for the remainder of the day due to Lhasa's altitude. However, for those feeling up to you can a take a stroll to the nearby Bharkor

Market place located close to the hotel.

Days 04 & 05 Lhasa (11,830') In Lhasa, we spend two days exploring, joining pilgrims who gather at the candle-lit altars at the Jokhang (Tibet's most sacred temple), walking in the Barkhor, a pilgrimage circuit that encircles the Jokhang, and visiting some of the massive, ancient monasteries of the Lhasa Valley. We also hope to visit some of the many small temples tucked off the main thoroughfare, places other travelers rarely visit. Overnights at hotel in Lhasa...

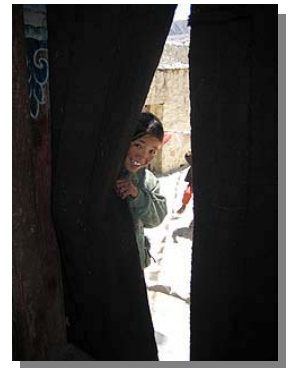


Breakfast each day and see our recommendations for a variety of restaurants located close to the hotel.



Lhasa & the Lhasa Valley: Tibet's enormous Potala Palace is a striking thousand-room monument that dominates the Lhasa skyline. From the roofs of the Potala, the view over Lhasa is unforgettable, and it is on the roof terraces that we can visit the Dalai Lama's residences and courtyard. Eight Dalai Lamas are buried in this famous building. The original parts of the Potala date back to the 7th century. We also visit Drepung Monastery, a former Buddhist university cradled in rock ridges five miles west of Lhasa. Drepung was once the largest and most powerful of the six great Gelugpa religious centers in Tibet. The kora (pilgrim trail circling a sacred place) around Drepung offers a panoramic one-hour walk with views of the Lhasa Valley and the monastery grounds. There is

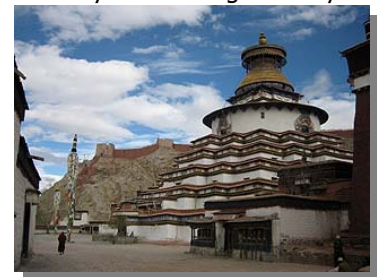
always something interesting to observe at Tibetan monasteries and temples, and we are likely to see monks engaging in ritual philosophical debates or chanting prayers and pilgrims in their devotional activities. We visit the Jokhang, Tibet's most sacred temple, a place that draws multitudes of pilgrims from all over the country. It houses Tibet's most revered statue, a magnificent image of Jowo Sakyamuni. We also walk in the Barkhor, a pilgrimage circuit that encircles the Jokhang and serves as Lhasa's central bazaar, where we find everything from precious Kham amber to prayer flags. One afternoon, we visit Norbulingka ("Jewel Park"), official summer residence for the Dalai Lamas and their families since the mid-18th century. Norbulingka is a park-like enclave surrounded by trees, ponds, and pavilions on the outskirts of Lhasa. The current Dalai Lama lived here until he fled to India in 1959 and his residential quarters have been left untouched, remaining furnished they were at that time.



Day 06 Lhasa / Yamdrok Lake / Gyantse We head further to the historic outpost of Gyantse, crossing two high passes and visiting Yamdrok Lake ("Jade Lake"), one of the three largest lakes in Tibet and an oasis for migrating wildlife in certain seasons. There are dozens of islets within the lake on which flocks of birds roost. During some seasons, herders ferry their sheep across to these islets for safe grazing, since there are no predators on the islands. Yamdrok is a holy lake and a site of pilgrimage, so one of the islets contains a small monastery. We continue to Gyantse for overnight in a simple hotel...**BLD**

Day 07 Kumbum / Shigatse This morning we explore Gyantse Kumbum, the town's famous mandala-shaped monastery for a chance to see the mastery of the famed 15th century Newari artisans of Nepal. Because of Tibet's cold, dry climate, the murals are well preserved, whereas in Nepal, the monsoon and humidity has damaged many of them. Magnificent and gold-capped Gyantse Kumbum has two mysterious eyes painted on its

circular upper walls. Nearby is the well-preserved Pelkor Chode Monastery, founded in 1418. Later we drive across the Tibetan Plateau passing through high plains where nomads tend herds of yaks. There are ancient, ruined forts perched on distant hilltops and we see an occasional small villages with colorful prayer flags fluttering from atop the houses. We arrive at Shigatse, the commercial and political center of Tsang Province. We have the late afternoon free to explore the local market, filled with Tibetan artifacts, jewelry, cloth, and leather. Overnight at hotel in Shigatse...**BLD**



Day 08 Tashilunpho Monastery/Old Tingri

A long drive but spectacular scenery. Road conditions might allow us to detour to one of Tibet's oldest and most important Bon Po monasteries at Sakya. In the afternoon cross the a 5000m pass before reaching Xegar.



The views of Everest and Cho Oyu across the plains are spectacular from here.

Day 09 Lalung La / Shishapangma / Khasa / Nepal This has to be one of the most spectacular drives in the world. The road follows a gradual ascent up to the Lalung Lha at about 5000m – where the Himalayan giants seem close enough to touch. We feast our eyes one last time, enjoying particularly fine views of massive Shishapangma (26,397'), the planet's 13th highest peak, just 50 miles north of Kathmandu as the crow flies. It was the last of the world's 8,000-meter peaks to be climbed and is the only one entirely within Tibet.



The road then descends again before a crossing of the Nyalam pass is required that provides spectacular views of the Jugal Himal before finally descending through the Himalaya range and down into the beautiful, deep valley of the Bhote Khosi . We then continue our winding descent into the welcoming greenery of Nepal, passing through the immigration formalities at Khasa, crossing the "friendship bridge" across the Sun Kosi.

We spend tonight at the Last Resort Tented Camp where, for those interested, they even have Asia's highest Bunjee Jump (!). The camp is quite basic but offers a very pleasant environment in which to reflect of the past 8 days in Tibet and is a much better alternative to spending a night at the border town of Zangmu/Khasa.

Day 10 Last Resort / Kathmandu, Nepal We continue driving along the twisting road through the Sun Kosi Valley to the Kathmandu Valley. This is a beautiful drive through traditional farms and across rushing rivers.

Arriving in Kathmandu in time for lunch we settle into the Nepali-owned Dwarika's Hotel, a 5-star accommodation with a tranquil, award-winning courtyard. Our hotel is only a 10-minute taxi ride from the bustling bazaar of the Thamel district. Overnight at hotel...**B**

Note: Road conditions between Nepal and Tibet may deteriorate at certain times of the year resulting in routings having to be revised which may entail additional costs.



Day 11: Day in Kathmandu

Today enjoy a leisurely lunch at the exclusive Shivapuri Heights Cottage in the hills just north of Kathmandu.

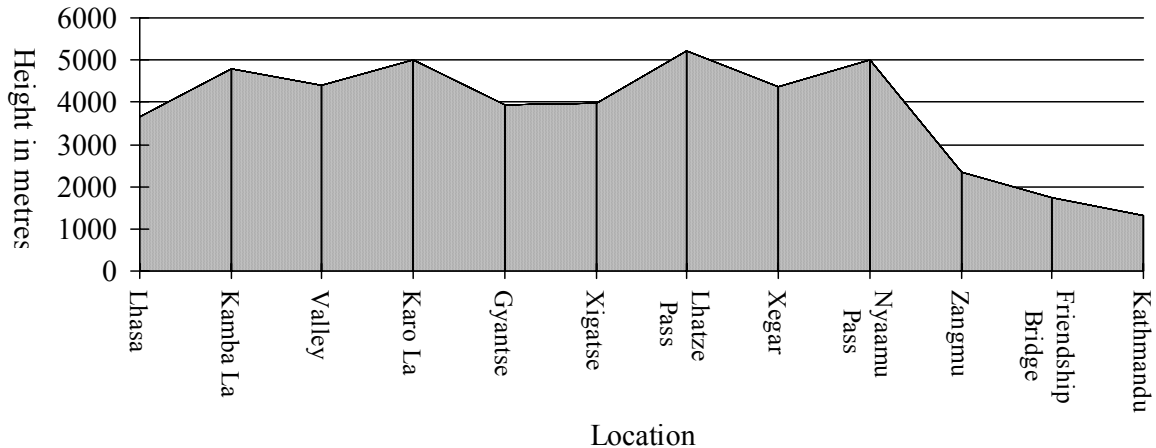
Overnight at the Shangri-la Hotel.

Day 12: International flight

Transfer to the International airport for your final departure from Kathmandu.



LHASA – KATHMANDU TOUR GRADIENT OUTLINE



This is intended to illustrate only an overall 'feel' for the route and does not show all the daily ascents & descents

The conversion to feet is as follows:

500m = 1640ft 1000m = 3280ft 2000m = 6560ft

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TRAVEL IN TIBET

The following information is very important and we urge you to read it carefully.

Travel in Tibet is a true adventure. Tibet's long isolation, rugged travel conditions, and the fact that tourism is still relatively new here all make for exciting but unpredictable travel. Traveling here may have its uncertainties and difficulties, but the warm, devout Tibetan people, the stark beauty of the landscape, and the fascination of the culture, with its many beautiful monasteries, make our trip in Tibet an experience of a lifetime. Flexibility and an open mind on your part will make the trip more enjoyable for all participants.

Tibet is an occupied country that has undergone a campaign of cultural destruction at the hands of the Chinese Communist government. This is very clear from the physical evidence of ruined monasteries, the stories of brutality recounted by the Tibetans, and the major presence of army and public security personnel. The Tibetan people have a strong commitment to the independence of their country, and resentment towards the Chinese is still strong. The demonstrations that occurred in Lhasa are an indication of this; the state of martial law that was imposed at that time was lifted in the early 1990s, and now tourists are able to travel and visit all the major points of interest there.

All arrangements within Tibet are handled through a local government-recognized tour agency, and we cannot assume responsibility for the quality of services or adherence to our trip itinerary within Tibet. You may have experienced excellent services in other parts of China, but the standard of operation in Tibet is not comparable. We will do everything possible to ensure that the trip meets your expectations, but the following points should be clearly understood:

1) Government Regulations: The Chinese government may make last-minute changes in their tourist regulations, possibly in response to political developments or demonstrations in Tibet. It is possible, though unlikely, that trips in Tibet could be canceled at the last minute.



2) Itinerary Changes: Trip itineraries may be changed due to weather, government restrictions, transportation problems caused by road conditions or vehicle breakdowns, or other circumstances beyond our control. As trip itineraries may be significantly changed at any time, we cannot guarantee that you will visit each destination described in the trip itinerary. We will do everything possible to run each trip exactly as planned, but no one should go to Tibet with just one destination in mind. For example, on one trip, unannounced military maneuvers prevented a group from visiting Rongbuk and Everest Base Camp, and an alternative trek route in Central Tibet, which was enjoyed by all, was substituted.

3) Additional Costs: We are not responsible for any additional costs required by changes in the itinerary or in flight schedules (such as additional flights, hotel nights or meals not included in the scheduled trip itinerary). Payment for any such additional services will be required at the time received, and everyone should bring extra funds in the form of travelers checks, cash, or credit cards (American Express or Visa) for such emergencies.

4) Quality of Services: Despite working with the best tourism operators in Tibet, and booking what we consider to be the best hotels, the quality of hotels, hotel food, and vehicles can vary considerably. While our groups are normally provided with comfortable Japanese minibuses or 4WD vehicles and the best available hotels, we cannot guarantee either of these. Vehicle maintenance can be required at any stage of your journey. There are no first-class hotels anywhere in Tibet, but we always try to obtain the best possible. Under these circumstances, we cannot assume responsibility for the quality or conditions of lodging or vehicles.

5) Road Conditions: Travel conditions in Tibet are extremely rugged. Most roads are unpaved (except near Lhasa), creating rough and uneven surfaces that often mean very bumpy and dusty traveling conditions. Flash floods, landslides and mudslides often result in delays or late arrivals, so the potential of having to ford rivers or walk through considerable sections of rocky, muddy or slippery roads does exist.

6) Medical Services: You should be aware that medical services are extremely limited in Tibet except in the city of Lhasa. In the event of illness requiring evacuation, there are risks involved. Depending upon the point where we are in the itinerary, an evacuation may take several days. You should bring an ample supply of any prescription medicines you know you need.

7) Commitment to the group: The support of the group is a key element in making these difficult trips successful and enjoyable experiences for all group members. It is the responsibility of each group member to contribute to the well being of the group as a whole, through patience, understanding, and the willingness to help out as needed. It is very difficult to break off from the group except for extreme medical emergencies. This means that the entire group must enter and leave Tibet together on the same flight. You must be fully committed to traveling with the group regardless of any changes that occur in the trip itinerary.

Travel in Tibet is still one of the world's true adventures. With a positive, flexible attitude, your trip to Tibet will be most rewarding and enjoyable!