

---

## Trip Back in Time to Kham Tibet (Kham) | 11 Days

---



Protected by high mountain ranges, the region of Dérgé has preserved its cultural heritage and its authenticity. Traveling to these high valleys of Kham is a bit like having a trip back in time where you meet a fascinating people, holders of a great cultural and spiritual heritage. This travel is scheduled during the religious festivals of Dzongsar Monastery, a great opportunity to share the daily life of Khampas (residents of Kham) and their festivities in an atmosphere of communicative joy.

## Highlights

- Your Tibetan guide who introduces you to his culture.
- Visit of Dérgé region main monasteries.
- Two nights homestay in a lovely village with houses of traditional architecture.
- The religious festival of Dzongsar Monastery with masked dances.
- Beautiful landscapes Kham.

## Itinerary

---

### Day 1: Chengdu - Dartsédo (2,616 meters above sea level)

- Distance: 400 km. Approximate travel time: 7 hrs.
- Drive to Dartsédo (Kanding in Chinese). On your way you will see the tea plantations of Yaan region. The black tea, very appreciated from the Tibetans, comes from this region. Dartsédo, a border city between Chinese and Tibetan regions used to be an important spot for the trade of tea, medicinal herbs and wool.
- Overnight: Hotel.

### Day 2: Dartsédo - Kandzé (3,400m)

- Distance: 305 km. Approximate travel time: 6-7 hrs.
- Drive to Lhagang (Tatong in Chinese), a small Tibetan town in a nomads' region, down three hills that are considered as the three protectors of Tibet (Manjushri, bodhisattva of knowledge and wisdom, Avalokiteshvara, bodhisattva of compassion and Vajrapani, bodhisattva of power of all Buddhas).
- Visit of Lhagang Monastery. Built during the Qing dynasty (the last Chinese dynasty), it is important for the Tibetans because of its statue of Jowo (representation of the historical Buddha) considered almost as sacred as the one in Lhasa. The Chinese princess Wencheng, who had left to Tibet to marry the king Songtsen Gampo, carried with her a very impressive statue (that is now in Jokhang temple in Lhasa). The statue, thinking Lhagang was an ideal place asked if it could stay there. Then it was decided that another statue was to be built to replace the one that was supposed to go to Lhasa. This monastery is also remarkable because unlike most of the Tibetan temples, it has not been destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.
- Visit Gartar Monastery, built during the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the seventh Dalai-Lama and funded by the Chinese emperor Qianlong (Qing dynasty).
- After this visit, you will carry on your journey to Kandzé.
- Overnight: Hotel.

### Day 3: Kandzé - Yachen

- Distance: 130 km. Approximate travel time: 5 hrs.
- In the morning you will drive toward remoted, beautiful and wild areas that border the Yangtse River. You will go through the Dzodo pass (4 500 m), then by the Gyaltso pass (4 800 m) and you will arrive to the impressive monastery of Yachen where 13 000 nuns and monks of Nyingma tradition are living.
- Overnight: Hotel.

### Day 4: Yachen - Pelyül (3,260m)

- Distance: 80 km. Approximate travel time: 1,5 hrs.
- In the morning, you will enjoy observing the monastic activities of this great monastery.
- Drive to Pelyül (Baiyu en chinois).
- Visit Pelyül monastery. Founded in 1665 by Lachen Jampa Phuntsok, king of Dérgé, it became one of the main monasteries of Nyingma tradition in Kham.
- Overnight: Hotel.

### **Day 5: Pelyül - Méshö (3,350m)**

- Distance: 95 km. Approximate travel time: 3-4 hrs.
- Drive to Méshö valley. The road will take you to the Yangtse River, you will drive along it for a few kilometers before following another river in Méshö valley. This valley is called Méshö which means valley of medicinal plants in Tibetan because it is very rich in medicinal plants.
- You will then go to the small village of Gyalgen situated above Dzongsar Monastery, where a Tibetan family welcomes you. Thanks to your guide who will translate, you can discuss with your host and learn about their daily life.
- Overnight: Homestay.

### **Day 6: Méshö**

- Visit Dzongsar monastery. This Sakya Monastery was founded in 1253 by Drogo Chogyel Pakpa. In the 19th century it became the seat of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, one of the greatest masters of the Sakya, Nyingma and Kagyu tradition of the 19th century.
- You will enjoy, amid the crowd of Tibetan pilgrims, the ritual masked dances of Dzongsar Monastery.
- Overnight: Homestay.

### **Day 7: Méshö - Dérgé (3,270m)**

- Distance: 110 km. Approximate travel time: 3-4 hrs.
- You will drive toward Pelpung Monastery which was the largest center of Kagyu teaching in eastern Tibet. Founded in 1717 by Tai Situ Chokyi Jungne VIII, the assembly hall is particularly impressive and has not suffered of destruction during the cultural revolution. Jamgon Kontrol Lodro Taye has also lived in this monastery.
- After this visit, you will carry on your journey to Dérgé. This town was once the capital of Dérgé kingdom, one of the most powerful of Kham. The kings of Dérgé played an important role in the preservation and the development of Buddhism and Tibetan arts, especially by establishing a printing house which became the largest and most renowned of the entire Tibet. Even today, the editions of Kangyur and Tengyur (Buddhist canon translated into Tibetan) are among the most requested by the monasteries.
- Overnight: Hotel.

### **Day 8: Dérgé - Manigango (3,800m)**

- Distance: 120 km. Approximate travel time: 3-4 hrs.
- Visit the printing house ("Parkhang" in Tibetan), and observe the traditional method of printing from engraved wood blocks.
- Drive to Manigango.
- Along the way, you will stop at the "Kham Dérgé Buddha stupa" built by a Tibetan lifesaving Association. This association is taking care, among other things, of animals, purchased by Tibetans, to allow them to escape from slaughtering and live a peaceful life.
- Your road continues to an impressive mountain range. The road climbs up to Tro-la pass at 5,050m where you can enjoy a beautiful landscape.
- Before reaching Manigango, you will picnic next to Yilhung Lha-tso sacred lake, one of the most beautiful in Tibet. It is said that people with a pure vision perceive it as the divine manifestation of the mandala of Cakrasamvara.
- Overnight: Hotel.

### **Day 9: Manigango - Tawu (2 980 m)**

- Distance: 260 km. Approximate travel time: 5 hrs.
- Drive to Tawu (*Daofu* in Chinese) famous for its traditional architecture and its big stupa.
- On the way, visit a Nyingma retreat center.
- Overnight: Guesthouse.

### **Day 10: Tawu - Rongdrak (2 100 m)**

- Distance: 216 km. Approximate travel time: 3 hrs.
- You will drive to Rongdrak (*Danba* in Chinese) in the central part of the Gyelrong's gorges area. The Tibetan people of Gyelrong, who speak an archaic Qiangtiques dialect, are renowned for their military

prowess and the bravery of their men. This area is now best known for its beautiful valleys and traditional architecture.

- You will spend the afternoon and the night in Tralung (*Zhonglu* in Chinese), a nice little village surrounded by fields, with pretty houses and of course its famous stone towers which origin and function remains an intriguing mystery.
- Overnight: Guesthouse.

### **Day 11: Rongdrak - Chengdu**

- Distance: 350 km. Approximate travel time: 7 hrs.
- Drive back to Chengdu.

*Please note that the transportation time is an estimation and doesn't include stops to go to toilets, take pictures... The travel time might also be longer related to weather, road constructions or local traffic police policies.*

## **Price 2017**

---

### **Price for a group of 6 to 7 persons:**

US\$ 1,496 per person in dual occupancy

US\$ 1,676 per person in single occupancy\*

### **This price includes**

- The transfers mentioned in the program, by private vehicle with driver
- Accommodation, breakfasts included
- Lunches and dinners (drink included: tea or mineral water)
- Entrance tickets for sites included in the program
- Services of an English-speaking Tibetan guide

### **This price excludes**

- Your Chinese visa fee
- Health and accident insurance
- Medical or repatriation costs
- Domestic and international airfares and/or trains tickets
- Extra expenses due to circumstances beyond our control
- Drinks and personal expenses
- Tips for guide and driver
- Fees in Chengdu

\* For homestay and in some guesthouses, it is not possible to have an individual room.

### **Accommodation**

#### Following hotels or similar:

Dartsédo :	Kamba Jiari Hotel (3*)
Kandzé :	Norbuling Hotel (2*)
Yachen :	Yachen Hotel (1*)
Pelyül :	Huangting Hotel (2*)
Dérgé :	Derge Hotel (2*+)
Manigango :	Manigango Pani Hotel (2*)
Tawu :	Guesthouse
Rongdrak:	Guesthouse – Padmo's house
Chengdu:	Holly's Hostel (2*)

*Please note accommodations listed are rated and assessed by Global Nomad*

*1\* = Basic accommodation*

2\* = Simple and clean

3\* = Nice, very comfortable

Homestays – Very limited comfort. There are no bathrooms, a basin and hot water will be provided for washing (hands, face, teeth, etc.). There are very basic Tibetan style toilets outside.

## Warnings

---

Due to the high altitude of the places visited, it is essential to be in good physical condition to register to this trip. If your health is not so good, you should check with a doctor before taking the decision of coming to Tibet. During the trip, it is important to drink a lot of water (at least 2 liters per day).

We reserve the right to modify the itinerary should circumstances beyond our control, namely those related to the specific situation of Tibetan areas, require us to do so.

It is strictly forbidden to talk about political matters with guides and Tibetans in general. This could have extremely serious consequences for them, the driver, the local agency and all agencies' employees. Likewise, it's forbidden to bring anything that could make local authorities unhappy.

During the trip, clients must follow the instructions of the guide and of the local agency.

## Local Travel Agency who organizes the trip

---



KHAM UTPALA ADVENTURE  
Room 603, No. 2 Jianshe Road, Lucheng Town,  
Kanding, Sichuan Province  
China

## A responsible trip

---



This GN certified trip is beneficial to the local population and contributes to the sustainable economic development of Tibetan society.

Inspired by ethical and sustainable tourism (ATES), the GN label verifies in-depth consideration of the needs and requirements of the local population and culture, providing the following guarantees:

✓ **Maximisation of local participation**

Your trip is created, organized and escorted by Tibetans. The travel agency and the guide will always be Tibetan but it might happen that the driver is not Tibetan if there are no good Tibetan drivers available.

✓ **Respect and promotion of the local culture**

Our Tibetan partners are very careful in ensuring their trips are respectful to their culture. They are also uniquely positioned to personally show you the beauty of their cultural heritage, their philosophy, and their deeply engrained joy of living.

✓ **Respect of the environment**

Agencies and guides are committed to following norms and principles minimizing any negative impact on the environment.

**Global Nomad** receives a commission from local agencies organizing this trip, enabling it to provide Tibetans entrepreneurs with advice, training courses, and promotion for their products. Thanks to your support we are able to provide tools that allow the Tibetan people to develop skills promoting their own native culture, ultimately benefitting themselves and their communities.

For more information visit our websites or contact us by e-mail.

Promotional site: [www.globalnomad-tibet.com](http://www.globalnomad-tibet.com)

Professional site: [www.globalnomad-services.com](http://www.globalnomad-services.com)

E-mail: [contact@globalnomad-tibet.com](mailto:contact@globalnomad-tibet.com)

## Traveler Code of Conduct

---

This code of conduct is not exhaustive but summarizes briefly what Tibetans expect from foreigners visiting them. While traveling in Tibet, your guide will give you more explanation about why and how to observe these cultural codes.

### Respect for Tibetan customs

#### In a monastery

- When visiting a monastery, do not touch religious images and objects and avoid taking photographs inside the monastery or temple unless it is authorized.
- Do not wear shorts, tank tops, or other revealing clothing when visiting monasteries.
- Do not smoke or drink alcohol in the monasteries.
- Do not enter the enclosure of a monastery if your breath smells of alcohol or garlic.
- Remember to always walk around monasteries and stupas in a clockwise direction, except for in Bonpo monasteries.
- Do not point fingers at representations of gods or great lamas. Instead, gesture with your hand open and palm up as a sign of respect.
- Keep money in small change for poor pilgrims around the monastery; however if they are too numerous, you can push them away as locals do.
- Take off your hat at the entrance of the monastery.
- Do not throw tissues or spit into fires.
- Do not urinate near monasteries, rivers or near roads.

#### In a family home

- When you are invited into a family's home, always allow the host, the elderly and children to enter a room first.
- Tibetans do not eat horse, dog or monkey meat, and do not eat fish in certain areas; please respect their eating habits.
- When you receive a gift, always present your two hands to receive and lean slightly forward as a sign of gratitude.
- Say "Tashi Delek" to the family and sit according to the arrangement provided by the host.
- When you go to sit or if you want to get up, avoid crossing over people who are seated; instead, go around them.
- In a nomadic tent, do not step over utensils for food, which are often placed on the floor, or over religious objects.

- In a tent, people can sit crossing their legs on the ground, but this position is not permitted for women except for nuns.
- Do not touch a stove (for men); do not place your feet, shoes, or socks over a stove.
- If babies are present in the family, do not approach too near them and do not touch them without the agreement of the host.
- When you leave your host, you may hug or shake hands but in no case should you kiss.
- When you visit a nomad's tent, avoid any physical contact with women so as not to embarrass them.

## Environment protection

### Minimize Waste

- Bring your own reusable water bottle; you will be able to refill it with boiled water when trekking and in towns you can sterilize tap water with chlorine/iodine tablets or drops.
- Bring a small daypack or a cloth bag when you go shopping instead of having things wrapped in polyethylene bags in order to reduce plastic waste (which sometimes ends up in cattle's stomachs in the countryside). The cloth bags handed out at supermarkets can be reused many times.
- Bring rechargeable batteries including a small (solar) battery charger if you use a flashlight or other electronic devices. Batteries are often just buried along with the regular garbage, posing the risk of hazardous chemicals leaking into the ground water.
- Buy food with little packaging and especially try to avoid canned food or drinks. The manufacturing of cans is very energy intensive, as is their recycling.

### Buy Locally

- Favor local snacks over imported goods: buying dried peaches, apples, cheese, walnuts, popped barley, tsampa, etc. not only reduces long transport distances but also benefits the local economy
- Buying traditional handicrafts made by Tibetans helps promote traditional skills which rely on local resources and environmentally friendly processing techniques. Never buy souvenirs made of endangered species.

### Trekking: Leave no Trace

- Bring all waste back to a major city, including toilet paper and cigarette butts.
- Keep a distance of at least 50m from watercourses when defecating, washing yourself, your hair, clothes, or dishes. Use a bucket and biodegradable soap and shampoo. Waste water should be dispersed widely so it can be filtered through the soil.
- Use a small shovel to bury human waste at least 20 cm deep. Feces contain many pathogenic microorganisms that are responsible for gastro-intestinal diseases.
- Respect wildlife (keep at a distance, never feed wild animals, avoid loud voices and noises) and don't pluck plants and flowers; they are possibly endangered or threatened species and might have an important function in their ecosystem.
- Use existing trails and campsites. At high altitudes plants grow very slowly, and once the vegetation cover has been damaged it can take years to regrow.
- Do not make wooden bonfires (unless you are in an area with abundant forests). Wood is a scarce resource in Tibet, and cutting trees or uprooting bushes adds to erosion and desertification.

### Transportation

- Consider purchasing a "myclimate" ticket in addition to your regular flight ticket to counterbalance the negative environmental impacts of air travel. "myclimate" ([www.myclimate.org](http://www.myclimate.org)) is a non-profit foundation that offsets CO2 emissions by investing in renewable energies and energy efficient technologies. Tibet is particularly affected by global warming; try not to contribute to it.

- In cities, use public transportation or “manpower” (cycle rikshaws, a rented bike, your feet) instead of taxis to reduce motorized traffic and air pollution.

GLOBAL NOMAD  
7<sup>th</sup> April 2017