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## Great Historical Sites of Central Tibet Tibet (U-Tsang) | 11 Days

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Lhasa, literally ‘The place of gods’ attracts Tibetans from all over Tibet who come to pay homage to the Jowo, a representation of the Buddha blessed by the Buddha himself and to the multitude of other great sacred places. We invite you to discover this unique city and the great historical sites of Central Tibet which remain the spiritual heart of Tibet.

## Highlights

- Your Tibetan guide who introduces you to his culture.
- Visit of U-Tsang most famous historical and holy places.
- Beautiful landscapes of Central Tibet (Yardrok Yum-tso, sand dunes on Yarlung Tsampo bank...).
- Lunch in a family, in a small Tibetan village located culturally between the two worlds of the Tibetan farmer and the Tibetan nomad.

## Itinerary

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### Day 1: Arrival in Chengdu and flight to Lhasa (3,650 meters above sea level)

- CHENGDU: Meet Global Nomad team member at Chengdu airport where he will give you your permit to Tibet before you take your flight to Lhasa.
- LHASA: You will be met at the Lhasa airport by your guide and driver. After checking into your hotel and relaxing for a while, you'll take a short walk to central Lhasa. You'll spend time in the lively central area where pilgrims from the entire Tibetan plateau gather. You'll stroll along the Barkor, (a lovely central street that winds around the Jokhang Temple), the shopping streets of the Tibetan district, and the Muslim street close to Lhasa's main mosque.
- Overnight: Hotel.

### Day 2: Lhasa

- In the morning you'll explore what many consider to be the heart of the Tibetan Buddhist world: the famous Jokhang Temple. The "Jo", as it is commonly referred to, was founded in the 7th century by the first great Buddhist king, Songtsen Gampo. Deep in the interior of the Jokhang you'll see what many consider the most sacred image of Tibet, the statue of Jowo Shakyamuni, a representation of the Buddha at the age of twelve.
- Visit the beautiful, flower-filled nun's convent of Ané Tsang Gung. The nunnery has a teahouse where pilgrims often stop to rest and enjoy a cup of Lhasa's sweet milk tea. You'll have the opportunity to meet and make some connections with the residents of this magical place.
- Visit Séra Monastery, one of three great monasteries connected with the Géluk School of Tibetan Buddhism. In a shaded courtyard you'll see lively philosophical debates that never fail to amaze visitors.
- Overnight: Hotel.

### Day 3: Lhasa

- Visit the towering, iconic Potala Palace. This thirteen-story building has two main sections: the White Palace, once the headquarters of the Tibetan administration and the winter residence of the Dalai-Lamas; and the Red Palace, which holds the chapels and tombs of the Dalai-Lamas.
- You'll join a procession of pilgrims to see hundreds of beautiful bas-relief rock carvings on Chakpori Hill, a hill facing the Potala Palace. This group of carvings is one of the largest of its kind in Tibet, some of them dating back over a thousand years.  
Visit the famous Norbulingka ("Jewel Park"), the summer residence of the Dalai-Lamas. This is one of the loveliest areas of Lhasa and you'll find it relaxing and invigorating to walk among the trees, ponds, palaces and pavilions.
- Overnight: Hotel.

### Day 4: Lhasa - Gyantsé (3,950m)

- Distance: 250 km. Approximate travel time: 6 hrs.
- You will head to Gyantsé. The road ascends the Gampa-la pass (4,794m), overlooking the deep blue turquoise waters of Lake Yardrok Yum-tso (the "Lake of the Scorpion"). You'll ascend to a second pass at 5,020 m (the Kharo-la), that offers an exceptional view of the glaciers of Néchen Gangzang's Mountains. You will then leave the main road and stop for a visit at Ralung monastery, a major center of the Drukpa Kagyü (a division of the Kagyü school of Tibetan Buddhism). Finally, the Friendship Highway will take you over the pass at Sémé-la to arrive at the city of Gyantsé. This city, situated at the

crossroads of trade routes to India, Bhutan and Nepal, was a center of great importance and power in Tibetan history during the 14th century.

- Before dinner, you'll have time to wander the streets of the old Tibetan part of town that lies at the foot of Gyantsé's huge stone fort.
- Overnight: Hotel.

#### **Day 5: Gyantsé - Zhikatsé (3,900m)**

- Distance: 90 km. Approximate travel time: 1,5 hrs.
- The morning is dedicated to exploring Pelkhor Chörten monastery and its huge, multi-story stupa: the famous Kumbum Chörten. The Kumbum Choten is a truly awe-inspiring sight, rising almost 35m high. Some of the frescos in its 77 chapels reflect 15<sup>th</sup> century Chinese and Nepalese influences, while many others mark the emergence of a uniquely Tibetan style of painting and sculpture.
- Overnight: Hotel.

#### **Day 6: Zhikatsé - Tsétang (3,500m)**

- Distance: 340 km. Approximate travel time: 7 hrs.
- Drive to Tsetang, in the vicinity of the Yarlung Valley.
- Stroll around the streets of Tsétang's old town.
- Overnight: Hotel.

#### **Day 7: Tsétang**

- Distance: 80 km. Approximate travel time: 2 hrs.
- Visit Yumbu Lakhar, the first palace of the kings of the Yarlung Dynasty (7th-9th centuries). This building (now rebuilt) is considered to be one of the oldest examples of Tibetan architecture. It overlooks the magnificent valley of Yarlung, cradle of Tibetan civilization.
- Visit the old temple of Tradruk, the main shrine of Yarlung valley.
- Visit the Chongyé Tombs, where 22 kings of the Yarlung Dynasty (6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries) are buried.
- Overnight: Hotel.

#### **Day 8: Tsétang - Samyé (3,400m)**

- Distance: 50 km. Approximate travel time: 2 hrs.
- Drive to Samyé Monastery. On the way you can admire the beautiful landscapes of the sand dunes on bank of Yarlung Tsampo River.
- Visit Samyé, Tibet's first monastery. It was founded in the 8th century by the second religious king Tristong Detsen, who decreed that Buddhism be the state religion and Samye be its first monastery. The monastery layout, buildings, and walls were designed to serve as a map or cosmological representation of the universe. The many buildings on the site display various Indian, Nepali, and Tibetan architectural styles of the past two thousand years.
- You can hike on Hépori Hill to enjoy a beautiful view of the monastery, and do the kora (ritual circumambulation of Samyé Monastery and Hépori Hill).
- Overnight: Hotel.

#### **Day 9: Samyé - Lhasa**

- Distance: 195 km. Approximate travel time: 5 hrs.
- Visit Chinpuk where hundreds of hermits practice meditation in small houses or caves which entrance are closed by large stones. It is possible to walk (1-4 hours walking) in this sacred site provided you don't disturb the hermits. Picnic next to the local nunnery.
- Drive back to Lhasa.
- Overnight: Hotel.

#### **Day 10: Lhasa – Ganden Monastery - Lhasa**

- Distance: 90 km. Approximate travel time: 3 hrs (roundtrip).
- You'll travel to the monastery of Ganden, 45 km from Lhasa. Ganden monastery was founded in 1409 by Tsongkhapa, the great reformer of Tibetan Buddhism. Ganden is the main seat of the Géluk school of Tibetan Buddhism. Unlike the protocol followed by many other monasteries, the title "Abbot of

Ganden" (*Ganden Tripa*) cannot be conferred by heredity or reincarnation but depends entirely on the candidate's scholasticism and merit.

- Lunch in a family, in a small Tibetan village located culturally between the two worlds of the Tibetan farmer and the Tibetan nomad. Thanks to your guide who will translate, you can discuss with your host and learn about their daily life, see dri (female yak) milking... You will have time to walk leisurely through the village and to the local temple before returning to Lhasa.
- Overnight: Hotel.

### **Day 11: Departure from Lhasa**

- Transfer to the airport for your return flight.

*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**

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

US\$ 2,230 per person in dual occupancy

US\$ 2,564 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
- "Tibet Autonomous Region" entrance permit fee
- Airfare from Chengdu to Lhasa (Day 1) and from Lhasa to Chengdu (Day 11)

### **This price excludes**

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

### **Accommodation**

Following hotels or similar:

Lhasa : Dekhang (3\*) - Tibetan style hotel

Tsétang : Tsétang Hotel (3\*)

Samyé : Monastery Hotel (1\*)

Gyantsé : Gyantsé Hotel (2\*)

Zhikatsé : Gesar Hotel (3\*) - Tibetan style hotel

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

*1\* = Basic accommodation*

*2\* = Simple and clean*

*3\* = Nice, very comfortable*

## Warnings

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Due to the high altitude of the places visited, it is essential to be in good physical condition to register to this trip. During the trip, especially the first few days and above 4,000 m, 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

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TIBET KAWA KARPO INTERNATIONAL ADVENTURE  
Xianzudao Xiqu Gongyulou  
Gate nr 15, Room 1  
Lhasa, TAR  
Managers: Samdup and Lhakpa  
E-mail : fitsamdup@yahoo.com

## A responsible trip

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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

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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  
4<sup>th</sup> April 2017