TibetanGuide
MIMA DHONDUP

MT. KAILASH PILGRIMAGE KORA
– 20 days / 19 nights Group Tour –

Tashi delek! Tibetan Guide Travel Tours is your trustworthy boutique travel agency based in Lhasa that offer bespoke guided tours across the Tibetan Plateau. Being a Tibetan owned business and with highly experienced Tibetan drivers and tour guides, we well know our traditions and mother land. We are confident that you would not be disappointed if you choose our services; safety and customer satisfaction is our priority. We have our own tourism license and one of the few authorised to receive foreign groups and apply for their Tibet Travel Permit without any intermediary.

Proposed itinerary

Day 1: Lhasa arrival [3650m] **[– , – , D]**
Welcome to Lhasa! Our Tibetan staff will warmly greet you and accompany you to your hotel. Lhasa is one of the highest cities in the world. We understand that the high altitude of Tibet can be challenging for some, so we recommend taking your time to acclimatise. Rest assured, we will provide all the necessary support to ensure your well-being. Remember to drink plenty of water and get plenty of rest to minimise any symptoms of altitude sickness. Prepare to begin your journey of a lifetime! *Overnight in Lhasa.*

Day 2: Lhasa sightseeing: Potala Palace & Jokhang Temple. **[B, – , –]**
At the scheduled time, we'll begin our tour by visiting the iconic Potala Palace. Built in the 17th century by the Fifth Dalai Lama, this magnificent palace offers breathtaking views over Lhasa and houses the Dalai Lamas' private quarters, grand ceremonial halls and numerous chapels filled with sacred Buddhist treasures. Afterwards, we'll visit the revered Jokhang Temple, founded in the 7th century during the reign of King Songtsen Gampo and considered the holiest temple in Tibet. Immerse yourself in the rich cultural heritage of this magical land as you stroll through the vibrant Barkhor Old Quarter, following pilgrims from across the Tibetan Plateau on a kora around the Jokhang Temple. Kora is a term used in Tibetan Buddhism that refers to the practice of circumambulating a sacred site, such as a temple, stupa, or mountain, as an expression of devotion and a way of accumulating spiritual merit. The practice involves walking clockwise around the site, often reciting mantras and prayers, in the belief that this practice brings blessings, good fortune and spiritual purification. *Overnight in Lhasa.*

Day 3: Lhasa sightseeing: Drepung & Sera Monasteries. **[B, – , –]**
After breakfast, we'll head to the outskirts of Lhasa to visit Drepung Monastery. Founded in 1416, Drepung was once the largest and most powerful monastery in Tibet, housing over 7000 monks. Along with Ganden and Sera, it is one of the three great monastic universities of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism, also known as the Yellow Hat School. Drepung was also the residence of the early Dalai Lamas before the construction of the Potala Palace. In the afternoon, we'll visit Sera Monastery, where we'll witness the famous philosophical debates between Buddhist monks. With animated gestures, rhythmic clapping and lively exchanges, the monks challenge each other's understanding of Buddhist teachings in a centuries-old tradition that remains an essential part of their monastic education. It's a fascinating experience and one of the highlights of any visit to Lhasa. *Overnight in Lhasa.*

Day 4: Ganden Monastery and Drak Yerpa Hermitage day trip [140km] **[B, – , –]**
We will begin the day with a visit to Ganden Monastery, located atop a hill in the Kyichu Valley, 50 km from Lhasa. It is the main seat of the Gelug Sect and was founded by Tsongkhapa in 1409. You may also do a kora around the monastery, offering peaceful views over the typical Tibetan landscape. After lunch, we'll head to the off-the-beaten-path site of Drak Yerpa, a complex of meditation caves and temples, one of the holiest pilgrimage sites since the 7th century. The visit involves about 2–3 hours of walking on a hillside. We'll then return to Lhasa for some free time. *Overnight in Lhasa*.

Day 5: Lhasa – Tsedang – Samye [210 km, 3575m] **[B, – , –]**
Let the adventure begin! We will head southeast towards the Yarlung Valley, the cradle of Tibetan civilisation. Today's plan includes exploring the region where the ancient Tibetan kings unified Tibet in the 7th century. Our first stop will be at Tsedang, the fourth most important city in Tibet, where we will visit the Yumbulagang Palace, which dominates the valley from the top of a hill. Considered the first construction in Tibet, it resembles a medieval fortress. Next, we will visit the Samye Monastery (8th century), the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet. The monastery's unique architecture forms a gigantic mandala, following the structure of the universe according to Buddhist cosmology. If time permits, we will also visit the Temple of Traduk today. *Overnight in Samye*.

Day 6: Samye – Gyantse [280 km, 3980m] **[– , – , –]**
Get ready for an exciting day: we'll start driving west towards the Tsang region to ascend the Kampa-la Pass [4797m], where you'll witness the stunning Mt. Noijin Kangsang [7206m] and the breathtaking turquoise waters of the holy Lake Yamdrok-Tso. An unreal sight that will leave you spellbound all the way to the Karo-la Pass [5050m], where you'll marvel at the glacier that majestically hugs the roadside. If the group's timing allows, you'll have the chance to walk to Jayang-tso Lake and see the Kyangyong Glacier. Our last stop of the day will be at Ralung Monastery, founded in the late 12th century, nestled in a remote and serene area surrounded by stunning mountain landscapes. Although less visited than other major monasteries in Tibet, it holds great importance in Tibetan Buddhism, particularly for the Drukpa Kagyu lineage in Bhutan. Finally, we'll arrive in the charming town of Gyantse before dinner. *Overnight in Gyantse*.

Day 7: Gyantse – Sakya [237km, 4320m] **[B, – , –]**
Our first visit today will be to the Kumbum Stupa inside the Pelkor Chode Monastery, renowned for its exquisite Tibetan art paintings. From the top of the Kumbum, you'll also be treated to a magnificent view of the majestic Gyantse Dzong fortress overlooking the valley. On the way to Sakya, we'll make a short detour to visit the historic Shalu Monastery. Built in the 11th century, the monastery was partially destroyed by an earthquake in the 14th century and then rebuilt, resulting in a blend of architectural styles. Shalu Monastery boasts an impressive collection of Buddhist art and sculptures that are remarkably well preserved. It was a renowned centre of learning for various tantric practices and techniques, and some of these were described in Alexandra David-Néel's book *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*, which captivated readers worldwide. Returning to the Friendship Highway, we'll continue our journey to Sakya to end the day. The lucky ones might even witness the sunset from atop the monastery walls, accompanied by the hypnotising sound of the monks playing their dungcheng, a traditional long Tibetan horn. *Overnight in Sakya*.

Day 8: Sakya – Rongbuk (Mt. Everest) [240 km, 5000m] **[B, – , –]**
Another thrilling day! We'll reach one of the major highlights of our trip, near Mt. Everest North Base Camp [5200m]. First, we'll visit the stunning Sakya Monastery, the principal seat of the Sakyapa Sect founded in 1073 and one of the four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism. Its powerful abbots governed Tibet during the whole of the 13th century until they were eclipsed by the rise of the Gelugpa Sect. With its unique Mongolian-style architecture, this monastery stands out from any other you've seen before. The journey to Rongbuk involves crossing the high passes of Dong-la [4800m] and Gawu-la [5150m]. The Dong-la Pass offers the opportunity to see the little-known eastern face of Everest (Kangshung) and the Himalayas for the first time; and from the top of the Gawu-la you'll enjoy amazing views of several peaks, including Makalu, Lhotse, Cho Oyu, and Mount Everest. Rongbuk Monastery is located at the foot of Everest and is the highest monastery in the world. You'll spend the night at the tourist campsite located a few kilometres from the actual Everest Base Camp used by mountaineering expeditions, where you'll have direct views of Mt. Everest (Qomolangma). Since 2018, tourists have not been allowed to visit the EBC due to environmental protection, and there is now an eco-bus shuttle to access Rongbuk. *Overnight in Rongbuk*.

Day 9: Rongbuk – Saga [300 km, 4490m] **[B, – , –]**
For those eager to embrace an early start, witness the sunrise with breathtaking views of Everest's peak on the horizon [8848m]. After breakfast, we'll visit Rongbuk Monastery for a final view of Mt. Everest's North Face. Our journey then continues northwest, crossing high mountain passes with spectacular views of the surrounding Himalayan peaks, including Cho Oyu and Shishapangma, as well as the wild and stunning Peiku-tso Lake. *Overnight in Saga.*

Day 10: Saga – Darchen [490 km, 4670m] **[B, – , –]**
Early this morning, we'll enter the semi-nomadic regions of Tibet's far west. Keep your eyes peeled for authentic Tibetan landscapes as we traverse the vast and lofty Tibetan Plateau — the largest and highest in the world — on this long drive. Following the course of the Yarlung Tsangpo River westwards, also known as the Brahmaputra in India, we'll arrive at the small town of Darchen, nestled at the foot of Mount Kailash. *Overnight in Darchen.*

Day 11: Trek to Dira-Puk Monastery [20 km, 5-6h, 5050m] **[B, – , –]**
Today marks one of the most special moments of our journey: the beginning of our pilgrimage kora around Mount Kailash, the most sacred mountain in Asia, revered by Buddhists, Hindus, Jains and followers of the Bön tradition. We first visit Tarpoche (Dharpoche / Tarboche), an important pilgrimage site at the foot of Mount Kailash, before beginning our sacred kora. The trek starts with a gentle ascent, offering views of the southwest face of Kailash as we enter the Valley of the Gods and follow the Lha Chu River towards Dira-Puk Monastery. *Overnight in Dira-Puk, at the foot of the majestic north face of Mt. Kailash, in a simple guesthouse (dormitory room without bathroom, with an outdoor latrine).*

Day 12: Trek to Zutrül-Puk Monastery via Drolma-la Pass [18 km, 6-10h, 4820m] **[– , – , –]**
The day will start frosty and present itself as a great challenge. Along the way, we pass Shiva-tsal, a sacred site where Tibetan pilgrims traditionally leave personal belongings as a symbolic act of letting go of their past lives. After a demanding four-hour ascent, we reach Drolma-la Pass (5630m), the highest point of our journey, adorned with colourful prayer flags. The descent is initially steep, passing near the sacred Gauri Kund Lake (Thukje Chenpo Tso), before gradually easing into a gentler walk towards Zutrül-Puk Monastery. *Overnight in Zutrül-Puk, in a simple guesthouse (dormitory room without bathroom, with an outdoor latrine).*

Day 13: Trek to Darchen [14 km, 3-4h] **[– , – , –]**
Compared to the challenges of the previous day, today's final stage is a much gentler walk. Following the Dzong Chu River through a beautiful valley, we gradually descend towards Darchen, completing our sacred kora around Mount Kailash. According to Tibetan Buddhist tradition, completing 108 koras is believed to lead to enlightenment — so only another 107 to go! We should arrive back in Darchen around midday. Optionally, after a short rest in Darchen, you can undertake the kora around Lake Manasarovar (Mapham Yum-tso) using the designated eco-bus service. *Overnight in Darchen.*

Day 14: Darchen – Zanda (Guge Kingdom) [270 km, 3740m] **[B, – , –]**
Today we travel through the extraordinary landscapes of Tibet's Wild West towards the tranquil oasis town of Zanda. Along the way, you'll become an explorer while visiting the Tsaparang Citadel, the last capital of the Kingdom of Guge and a site of great significance in the history of Buddhist art. Its remarkable wall murals display close links with Ladakh and Kashmir. You'll uncover hidden cave dwellings, twisting paths, and tunnels that connect the palaces, immersing yourself in a fascinating and ancient world. We'll end the day at Tholing Monastery, once the most important monastic complex in western Tibet and a major centre for the revival of Tibetan Buddhism. Surrounded by dramatic eroded landscapes and distant Himalayan peaks, Tholing offers a remarkable insight into the artistic and spiritual heritage of the ancient Kingdom of Guge. *Overnight in Zanda.*

Day 15: Tholing – Mapam Yumtso lake [320 km, 4600m] **[B, – , –]**
Today begins the end of your Tibetan journey through the most sacred Buddhist monasteries and greatest mountains on earth. After breakfast, we'll explore the arid and awe-inspiring landscapes surrounding the Dungkar and Piyang Caves, hidden treasures of the ancient Kingdom of Guge. Carved into sandstone cliffs between the 10th and 13th centuries, these cave complexes house stunning mural paintings that showcase an exquisite fusion of Indian, Kashmiri and Central Asian influences. Their mandalas and depictions of Buddhist deities offer a unique window into early Tibetan spiritual art. Thanks to their remote location, these sites have preserved their authenticity, making them an unforgettable experience for those seeking a deeper connection with Tibet's history, art and spirituality. We'll then drive back to Lake Manasarovar (also known as Mapam

Yumtso in Tibetan), one of the three most sacred lakes in Tibet. According to Hindu tradition, bathing in its waters is believed to cleanse sins and bring good karma. Before reaching the lake, we'll take a short detour to Tirthapuri, where pilgrims traditionally bathe in the sacred hot springs after completing the kora around Mount Kailash. *Overnight near the shores of Lake Manasarovar.*

Day 16: Mapam Yumtso lake – Saga [485 km, 4490m] **[– , – , –]**
You'll start your day by watching the sunrise over the holy waters of Lake Manasarovar. Afterwards, we'll visit Chiu Monastery before beginning our return journey eastwards towards Saga. We'll travel through arid landscapes dotted with sand dunes, enjoying spectacular views of the Himalayan Range and the vast Tibetan Plateau. *Overnight in Saga.*

Day 17: Saga – Phuntsokling – Shigatse [460 km, 3890m] **[B, – , –]**
Today, we'll leave the main routes behind and follow the Yarlung Tsangpo River to Phuntsokling Monastery [4010m], one of Tibet's hidden treasures. Originally belonging to the Jonang school, it flourished in the 16th–17th centuries under Jetsün Taranatha, who emphasized the Kalachakra Tantra. The monastery houses a monumental mural depicting the Buddha's life, designed by Taranatha around 1615–1630. After his death, having founded monasteries and promoted Buddhism in Mongolia, Taranatha's reincarnation was recognized by the Fifth Dalai Lama in the son of the Khalkha Mongol Khan. These incarnations became known as the Jetsün Dampa Hutuktu, spiritual leaders of the Gelug lineage in Mongolia. Although the Jonang tradition was later forcibly subsumed for political reasons, it persisted in secrecy in remote regions and endures to this day. The modern monastic complex is striking and photogenic and from here you can climb the hill to explore the ruins of the ancient dzong that once dominated the valley. In the afternoon, we'll continue on to Shigatse [3840m], Tibet's second largest city. If time allows, don't miss doing the Kora around Tashilhunpo Monastery to enjoy sweeping views of the valley and the imposing Dzong. *Overnight in Shigatse.*

Day 18: Shigatse – Damxung [333 km, 4290m] **[B, – , –]**
As early as possible, we'll visit Tashilhunpo Monastery, founded in the 15th century by the First Dalai Lama and traditionally the seat of the Panchen Lama. One of the highlights of our journey, its greatest treasure is the magnificent golden statue of Maitreya Buddha (the Future Buddha), a colossal 26-metre-high figure covered in gold and copper, considered one of the largest of its kind in the world. Afterwards, we'll head north-east towards the lesser-visited nomadic valley of Yangpachen, known for its natural hot springs, where you can enjoy spectacular views of the Nyenchen Tanglha Range before continuing to Damxung. *Overnight in Damxung.*

Day 19: Damxung – Namtso – Lhasa [300 km, 3650m] **[B, – , –]**
Crossing the Nyenchen Tanglha Range and the Largen-la Pass [5190m], we'll catch our first glimpse of the sacred waters of Namtso, the most beautiful lake in Tibet. We'll enter the vast Changtang Plateau, where the traditional nomadic way of life still thrives. At the lakeshore, reached by the designated eco-bus service, you'll be awestruck by the spectacular scenery of the snow-capped Nyenchen Tanglha peak [7162m] towering above Namtso's crystal-blue waters. After visiting Tashi Dor Monastery, we'll return to Lhasa. *Overnight in Lhasa.*

Day 20: Tibet departure **[B, – , –]**
Enjoy your final hours in Tibet exploring Lhasa at your own pace before we transfer you to the airport for your onward flight. ***End of our services.***

Mt. Kailash Pilgrimage Kora
19 nights Group Tour

PRICE : Contact us for the latest available rates.
– Single room occupancy available at additional cost (hotels only).

TOUR : Lhasa visits order might change depending on your travelling dates.
The max group size is 16 people.

Day 01 Lhasa arrival [3650m].
Day 02 Lhasa sightseeing: Potala Palace & Jokhang Temple.
Day 03 Lhasa sightseeing: Drepung, Nechung & Sera Monasteries.
Day 04 Ganden Monastery and Drak Yerpa Hermitage day trip [140km].
Day 05 Lhasa – Samye [210km, 3575m]: Yumbulagang Palace, Samye Monastery, Traduk Temple.
Day 06 Samye – Gyantse [280km, 3980m]: Yamdrok-tso Lake, Karo-la Glacier, Ralung Monastery.
Day 07 Gyantse – Sakya [237km, 4320m]: Pelkor Chöde & Shalu Monasteries.
Day 08 Sakya – Rongbuk (Everest) [240km, 5000m]: Sakya Monastery, Qomolangma National Park, eco-bus to Rongbuk Monastery.
Day 09 Rongbuk – Saga [300km, 4490m]: Views of Mt. Cho Oyu, Mt. Shishapangma and Peiku-tso Lake.
Day 10 Saga – Darchen [490km, 4670m]: Prepare for Kailash trek.
Days 11–13 Mt. Kailash Kora [52km, max. altitude 5630m].
Day 14 Darchen – Zanda [270km, 3740m]: Tsaparang Citadel & Tholing Monastery (Guge Kingdom).
Day 15 Zanda – Manasarovar Lake [320km, 4600m]: Dungkar & Piyang Caves, Tirthapuri Monastery.
Day 16 Manasarovar – Saga [485km, 4490m]: Chiu Monastery, sand dunes, Himalayan views.
Day 17 Saga – Shigatse [460km, 3890m]: Phuntsokling Monastery.
Day 18 Shigatse – Damxung [333km, 4290m]: Tashilhunpo Monastery.
Day 19 Damxung – Namtso – Lhasa [300km, 3650m]: Namtso lake, Tashi Dor Monastery.
Day 20 Tibet departure.

INCLUDED
All necessary travel permits for Tibet (delivery to any address within mainland China).
Experienced English-speaking Tibetan guide, plus an additional Tibetan assistant for groups over 12 participants.
Transportation within Tibet (airport/train station pick-up and drop-off at any time — no extra fees).
All entrance fees to temples, monasteries, and palaces.
All environmental protection fees for lakes, glaciers, and national parks.
Accommodation in shared twin rooms with breakfast, as described in the itinerary (hotels only, except Samye).
At Mt. Everest Tourist Campsite: private room in a tent, with shared common areas and outdoor public latrines (breakfast included; no private bathroom).
At Mt. Kailash Kora: dormitory-style guesthouse accommodation (no breakfast, no bathroom).
Driver's and guide's meals and accommodation. Vehicle fuel, tools, and repairs if needed.
Porters to carry baggage during the Mt. Kailash Kora (horse riding available at additional cost).
Oxygen tank for emergencies & bottled mineral water available in the group vehicle (fair use, 2 bottles/day).
Welcome dinner.

ACCOMMODATION: 15 nights in hotels / 4 nights in guesthouses.
LHASA: Saikang Grand Hotel 4* or Thangka Hotel 4*.
SAMYE: Samye Monastery Hotel (no breakfast).
GYANTSE: Nyangchu Manor House Hotel 4*.
SAKYA: Nyetsang Hotel 4*.
RONGBUK: Everest Tourist Campsite Tents or Rongbuk Monastery Guesthouse (upgrade subject to availability).
SAGA: Vienna Hotel or similar.
DARCHEN: Mt. Divine Hotel or similar.
KAILASH KORA: basic guesthouse dormitory room without bathroom (no breakfast).
ZANDA: Kailash Hotel 4* or similar.
MANASAROVAR LAKE: Guesthouse (no breakfast).
SHIGATSE: Gesar Hotel 4* (VIP Building).
DAMXUNG: Namtso Holy Goat Manor Hotel.

Mt. Kailash Pilgrimage Kora
19 nights Group Tour

**At Mt. Everest, you can stay either in the monastery guesthouse (which has a toilet but no shower; hot water and heating are available, though the pipes may freeze in winter) or at the tourist tent camp, offering shared rooms of different sizes and an outdoor public latrine. During winter, depending on weather conditions, we may stay at the 8848 Hotel in Basum Village.*

NOT INCLUDED

China / Nepal visa (ask us for details).
Hand delivery of Tibet Entry Permits at mainland China airports.
Accommodation, visits, or transfers in Mainland China / Nepal.
Plane or train tickets to/from Tibet.
No breakfast provided at Samye hotel or any guesthouse stays.
Meals, drinks, and other personal expenses not specified.
Additional porters or a horse for personal use during the Kailash Kora (horses cannot be shared).
Personal travel / medical insurance (highly recommended).
Expenses arising from unforeseen events, whether third-party or weather-related (delays, cancellations, floods, landslides, snowfalls, natural disasters, etc.).
Tips for the guide and driver (optional, but expected if the service has been satisfactory).
Anything not specified under the “Included” section.

By joining this tour, you agree to our booking conditions, terms and policies