MINYA KONKA TREK

Trekking in wild and remote China, bordering Eastern Tibet

- Trek beneath Minya Konka (7556m), the highest peak beyond the Himalaya
- Meet the distinctive Khampa and Minyak communities of the Kham region
- Discover the Great Mani Pile of the Tagong Plateau and overnight at Konka Monastery
- See Pandas and Red Pandas at the Breeding and Research Centre at Chengdu

China, Trek & Walk, 15 Days

1 night lodge, 1 night monastery, 5 nights camping, 1 night homestay, 6 nights hotel, 14 breakfasts, 13 lunches, 14 dinners, max group size: 12, 8 days trekking, 4 days cultural tour and sightseeing, max altitude - 4900 metres

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

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Introduction

This superb adventure in remote China combines the experience of real Tibetan culture with a spectacular trek through the beautiful valleys of Riwoche and Moxi to the Monastery below the ice-fluted shark's fin of Minya Konka (7556m), the world's third highest peak outside the Himalaya. Situated on the eastern edge of the Tibetan Plateau, Minya Konka is also one of the most sacred mountains to Tibetan Buddhists, equal in status to Mount Kailas in Western Tibet. Impressive mountain panoramas and austere glaciers, babbling brooks and river torrents, azure blue lakes, enchanting mixed woodland, grazing yaks and their nomadic herders, shortens, mani walls, prayer flags and elaborately decorated Gompas can all be found here.

Our week long trek begins just south of Kangding, the 'Gateway to Tibet'. We make a steady ascent of the Riwoche valley with its soaring cliffs and fast river torrents. At the head of this valley we enter a high grazing area where we will encounter the temporary settlements of the nomadic yak herders. Climbing to cross the 4900 metre Bhuchu La, we then descend the beautiful Moxi valley eventually entering forests of rhododendron, juniper, birch and oak which in October become a riot of Autumnal colours. We stay overnight in the Konka monastery and the climax of our trek is the climb to the ridge above for unrivalled views of Minya Konka and the Daxue range of 6000-metre snowy peaks. Although Minya Konka is the undoubted centre-piece of this great trekking holiday to a little visited mountain region of Sichuan, there is much more to the holiday than this, admittedly, superbly photogenic mountain.

If you want to see real Tibetan culture, this is where you should come. This holiday will give you an insight into the rural life of the Kham region and also of the Minyak people who are an ethnic group distinct again from their Khampa neighbours. Combined with a fascinating journey through Sichuan province, with its many spectacular monasteries, gigantic 'hill paintings' and the great Mani Pile of Tagong, and sightseeing in the city of Chengdu, including the Pandas at the world famous breeding centre. This is a world class trekking holiday and also a real adventure and travel experience in an area visited by very few Westerners.

Is this holiday for you?

This holiday combines a week long trek with a cultural experience staying and touring in Western Sichuan - an area steeping in Tibetan culture. The trek to Minya Konka is not long or sustained but it travels through rugged country, generally at a high altitude and across a high pass of 4900 metres. The average walking day is around 5 - 6 hours with one longer day across the Bhuchu La of 8 or possibly 9 hours. In general the underfoot conditions are good and we follow a well established trails used by the semi nomadic Yak herders who travel through these valleys. Though altitude will of course be a factor, this short trek is suitable for experienced hill walkers with a good level of fitness. Please note that this is a real adventure in an area rarely visited by other groups. Organised trekking is still in its infancy in this part of the world and therefore services will be more basic than you may have experienced trekking in the Himalaya. This holiday is perfect for those who are seeking to trek in remote areas and who are happy to accept the pioneering nature of the trip.

Holiday Itinerary

Day 1: Meet at the group hotel in Chengdu. A single timed transfer from Chengdu Airport is provided.

Meet at the group hotel in Chengdu. A single timed transfer from Chengdu Airport will be provided. Depending on arrival times there may be some time to look around our immediate environs. Close to the hotel are many shops selling traditional goods as well as supermarkets, cafes and restaurants. In the early evening we will have a briefing from the tour leader and we will then head out for a dinner in one of the local restaurants serving traditional Sichuan cuisine.
Day 2: Drive to Kangding (2550m) through the Mount Erlang tunnel.

Today the journey is definitely part of the experience as we set off on a 360 km drive, travelling deep into the hill country. Our intended route will take us through the 4 km-long Mount Erlang tunnel. Before the tunnel opened to traffic in 2001, it was necessary to travel over the mountain on a difficult road subject to frequent landslides or travel all the way around the mountains. The tunnel, which cost nearly 57 million US dollars to build, has dramatically reduced the time and difficulties of the journey from Sichuan to Tibet. The tunnel is subject to occasional closures for repairs and if we cannot use this shortcut, we will have to follow the fast Jingkun Expressway south to the Dadu river valley and then follow this mighty river upstream to Kangding, an incredible journey in itself. Taking the tunnel we should reach Luding in 4 - 5hrs. From here another major series of civil engineering achievements have created an impressive suspension bridge and tunnel, which could take us rapidly to Kunding. If time is short, this is the most efficient, but less scenic, route. A more interesting alternative is the old road, now with a much smaller flow of traffic, which follows the Dadu River through a narrow gorge with a series of small farms and villages. Arriving at our destination of Kangding (2550m) in the Eastern Tibetan province of Kham, we check into our hotel and have some time to relax before dinner. Kangding, known as the ‘Gateway to Tibet’, is an historical border town between Tibet and China, much fought over and eventually taken by Manchu troops in the 18th century. Once an important trading town where Chinese brick tea was carried by porters from Chengdu and other centres to trade for Tibetan wool, Kangding or Dartsedo to give it its Tibetan name, is now the capital of Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. The town is split by the Dadu River, which is channelled through a large square in the town centre. This is a lively place where folks of all ages gather in the morning and evening to do Tai Chi or play games.

Day 3: Acclimatisation walk in the Pao-Ma Hills (2900m). Drive past Laoyuling (3060m) to our homestay.

From the hotel we have a drive down to the central part of Kangding, which is the launching point for visits to two monasteries located in the Pao-Ma Hills. There is a tourist cable car here imported from Germany but as we are seeking acclimatisation we will spurn the ride and instead take a winding track that climbs up into the hills. Reaching the upper station of the cable car we enter a park and visit the first gompa. Behind this, a series of steps through woods adorned with prayer flags leads to a large stupa and beyond this, to a large amphitheatre. More stairs lead on up through woods to the second gompa (2900m), providing not only useful acclimatisation for us, but also a fantastic view over Kangding and the gorge of the Dardu River. Afterwards we descend the steps and trails back down to the town. We will take lunch in a local restaurant before we meet our driver and journey towards Laoyuling (3060m) where we will stay as guests of our Tibetan horsemen who will accompany us on the trek. Here we will get a first taste of our cook’s fare and can enjoy a convivial evening before setting off on trek.

Day 4: Trek to the first camp at Da-Cao-Ba (3500m).

Today we have a relatively gentle introduction to the journey. The distance we can walk in a day is limited by our elevation gain while we are still acclimatising to the altitude. We may opt to drive some of the way today, or leave a walk of around 3 - 4 hours, partly along a farm track to reach our first camp near Da-Cao-Ba (3500m). This will be our first day settling into the camp routine and so it is convenient that we will have a relaxed start to organise everything.
Day 5: Trek to a camp in the Upper Riwoche Valley (3900m).

Following the river on an undulating trail with the occasional steep climb, we trek through a wooded and hilly landscape surrounded by high cliffs and glimpsed higher peaks into more open country. At this stage of the journey we are still acclimatising to the altitude and it is important to adopt a relaxed pace. We also have plenty of stops for photographs and to take in the spectacular views. We make camp in the upper Riwoche Valley (3900m) by a new settlement of herders' summer huts.

Day 6: Climb to camp below the Bhuchu La (4332m).

Today the view opens out as we steadily gain height and we cross the river to its west bank on a wooden bridge. Ahead and to the southeast, we can still see the peak of 'Little Konka' and, to our left, Jiazi (6540m). A deep gorge running down to the main Riwoche valley from across the river marks the way to the climbing base camp for this impressive little cousin of our sacred peak. As we continue up to the head of the valley the trail starts to climb more steeply. We cross the river again on a simple wooden bridge and make a final climb to emerge onto a large open grazing area. There may yak herders' tents here at the time of our visit and they are sure to give us a warm welcome. We set up our own camp below the imposing face of Riwoche Feng (6376m) and within sight of our pass, the Bhuchu La. Altitude at camp is 4332m or at an alternative campsite further up the valley and a little higher still.

Day 7: Cross the Bhuchu La / Riwoche Pass (4900m) into the Moxi Valley (4100m).

It is essential to make an early start to enjoy the sunrise and condition of any snow that might be below the pass. Setting off trekking we immediately cross the river on a plank bridge. We head up the valley with the going fairly level for the first half hour before we start to climb on a good trail that gradually ascends the rolling hills above a grazing area. Views open out as we rise higher with retrospective views of Little Konka and Jiazi Feng (6540m), while ahead the soaring cone of Grsvenor (6376m) draws the eye. As we go higher still, we overlook a blue lake at the snout of the Riwochie glacier. At last the serrated ridge marking the very head of the Riwoche Valley comes into view and if we look carefully, we can just see the line of prayer flags that mark the Bhuchu La. From this point we have a further 40 minutes or so of trekking and a final steep pull to reach the summit at 4900 metres. We should reach the top of the pass after 3 or 4 hours of trekking from camp. Cresting the ridge we are confronted with an array of peaks of the Daxue range lining the Moxi Valley, including nearby Leduomanyin, and a host of near 6000 metre peaks. From this vantage Minya Konka itself is hidden by the snow-fluted ridges of Daduomanyin (6380m), Lagemanyin (6394m) and Zhongshan Feng (6886m). After a picnic lunch on the summit we begin a long descent that is steep at first on scree but with a good trail made for us by the horses. Eventually we reach the grasslands of the upper valley and the headwaters of the Moxi River, which we now follow downstream to reach our night's
camp at 4100 metres. This is the toughest day of the trek, but more than adequate compensation is provided by spectacular views and continuously interesting trekking.

**Day 8: Downhill to our second camp in the Moxi Valley**

We will make an early start for a long but gentle day of trekking as we continue down the long Moxi valley. The trek today is continuously interesting and at every turn, we encounter something new whether that be a lake formed by a natural dam in the river, a huge face of rock and ice glimpsed as we pass a side valley, or the many makeshift dwellings and chortens made by the people who inhabit the valley. The area is also teeming with birds of prey and small mammals. At one point we cross the river on a wooden bridge. If high water has swept it away we may have to call on the services of our horseman to escort us on horseback through the water. Tonight's is at 3660 metres and already we are benefitting from warmer climes and the added oxygen. Ahead we can make out the forests of the lower Moxi Valley but this evening we are still high in the 'alpine' zone.

**Day 9: Trek to Konka Monastery (3730m).**

A long but fascinating day of trekking today. We continue our descent of the Moxi Valley, passing further signs of habitation. For most of today we trek through a mixed woodland of rhododendron, juniper, beech and oak. As we descend the scale of the valley becomes giant. We cross several side valleys requiring the negotiation of small streams on a variety of bridges or stepping stones. After each gulley we have an interceding ridge, the climbing of which has the effect of popping our heads up above the forest for far-reaching views of the mountains to the south. During the October trek the colours of the forested hillsides are almost unbelievable as foliage of russet, ochre, rust and gold compete with one another to be the best dressed at the ball. After around 4 hours of generally downhill trekking we stop for a picnic lunch and afterwards the trail takes us back up and contours across the hillside as the river drops away far below us. Eventually we arrive at a trail junction with one path heading right and down to the valley and the other heading left and gently climbing. Taking the left turn we soon start to see religious symbols and chortens and within 30 minutes we see the monastery buildings with the sensational backdrop of Minya Konka. This is a very special place which makes itself felt by the hundreds of small shrines, chortens, mani stones and fluttering prayer flags and by the monastery itself. Tonight we will stay in simple accommodation within the monastery.

**Day 10: Exploration above the monastery and descend to Tsemi (3450m).**

If the weather is clear this will be an undoubted highlight of the trip, even if the monastery is shrouded in cloud it is well worth making the effort to climb up above the gompa as cloud inversions are quite common in the valleys of Minya Konka. Climbing just a couple of hundred metres will often be enough to get above the cloud and in these
conditions the views of the peaks rising like islands above a cloud sea, are very special. The trail from the monastery to the viewpoint for Mnya Konka heads up through the woods and emerges onto open hillside just below the 4000 metre contour. The view across to the pyramid of Mnya Konka is sensational but even better from the ridge above which is a further 20 - 30 minute climb. From the ridge we can look down onto Mnya Konka's glaciers and the site of the original base camp. We can also see the Northwest ridge in profile and marvel at the feat of the four young Americans who climbed it in 1932, at that time setting an altitude record for the highest summit climbed. From our vantage we can also see an array of jagged peaks stretching north and south and we can trace our route through the Moxi Valley. Having taken in the scene and captured it on camera, we descend back through the forest, possibly back into cloud, until we reach the gompa again and follow the trail back to the junction of the previous day. Now we begin a descent through the forest adorned everywhere with prayer flags, until we reach the spread out dwellings of Tsemi Village (3450m) and we stay tonight in one of the village guesthouses.

**ACCOMMODATION**

**Lodge**

**ASCENT** 140M

**DISTANCE** 7KM

**TIME** 3 HRS

**TREKKING HOURS**

**MEALS** BLD

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### Day 11: Drive to Tagong

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**ACCOMMODATION**

**Hotel**

**MEALS** BLD

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### Day 12: Visit temple and Mani Pile then drive to Luding

Before leaving Tagong we will visit some of the sights in this Tibetan Autonomous Cultural Area. Firstly we visit the Lhagang monastery, a collection of buildings which includes a temple dedicated to Princess Wenchen the wife of the great Tibetan King Songsten Gampo. This is one of a number of temples of Princess Wenchen which were built along the route the couple travelled from the province of Amdo to Lhasa culminating in the Jokang itself at the centre of the Tibetan capital. As well as the stunning art work and statues of the gompa, there are also an array of gift shops here including one run by the monks and this is a very good place to buy souvenirs of our journey through the Tibetan lands of Sichuan. We then visit the Tagong Golden Tower, another gompa with gold adornments surrounded by prayer wheels, chortens and prayer flags. From here we have a fine view of Yala Peak, another very distinctive and sacred mountain. A little further on, we make a detour from the highway to visit one of
the most interesting sites in Tagong. Just below a sprawling village with labyrinthine streets of flat-roofed Tibetan houses, lies the great Mani Pile of Tagong. This structure built entirely of thousands upon thousands of intricately carved slates, piled one atop another is quite unique. The mani stones sit on top of gigantic prayer wheels which the faithful turn in their circumnavigations of the ‘Pile’ and as they do so, thousands of prayers are released to the heavens. The Mani Pile is overlooked by a gompa and a ridge above the monastery complex gives sensational views of Yala. Returning to the highway we follow this new smooth road which now climbs up above the grasslands with extensive mountain views to the Zheduo Pass (4200m). Here we have a fabulous final view of Minya Konka which now presents an almost conical shape with its flanking 6000-metre 'teeth' spreading out left and right. From the pass we make a long descent passing Kangding airport, one of the highest in the world and a series of switchbacks drops us down past lake filled valleys with the constant mountain backdrop, until eventually we see Kangding below. Entering the town we complete a circuit and we now follow the Dadu River back through its tremendous gorge until we reach the colourful Chinese market town of Luding where we check into our hotel.

Day 13: Visit Luding Chain Bridge and return to Chengdu

Luding Bridge is an important part of Chinese heritage. When it was built in 1706 by the Emporer Kang Xi of the Qing Dynasty it represented the only way to cross the mighty Dadu River other than by Sampan and therefore was the key to the tea trade with Tibet. The bridge has a 103 metre span and is 3 metres wide. It consists of 13 iron chains fixed to stonework at each end of the bridge. Nine chains are covered with slatted planks as the walking surface and the remaining four form rails. There are a total of 12164 chain links. At each end of the bridge, elaborate timberwork in unique Chinese style forms entrances to the bridge. Luding bridge was of extreme strategic importance during several conflicts including the communist revolution when famously in 1935, during the long March, the 4th regiment of the Chinese Workers and Peasants' Army captured and secured the bridge for the Red Army who were fleeing from pursuing Chinese Nationalist forces. Today the bridge is a major attraction and many Chinese tourists come to cross it. It is possible to hire Red Army uniforms from gift shops in the bridge housing and have your photo taken heroically waving the red flag on the bridge. Luding also has an interesting market and several coffee shops and we can enjoy part of the morning here before we set off on our journey back to Chengdu. This we will do either through the mountains via the Erlang tunnel or by following the Dadu River downstream to the highway and then turning north to reach Chengdu. By the former route it is 275km and approximately 4 hours and by the latter it is 370km and around 5 or 6 hours. Either way, we will enjoy a highly scenic drive and arriving in Chengdu, we check into our hotel and after freshening up, we can enjoy a celebratory dinner in a local restaurant.

Day 14: Visit to Panda Breeding Centre and independent Chengdu sightseeing

This morning after breakfast we will visit the Chengdu Panda Breeding Centre. The total world population of Pandas is less than 1000 and 80% of these are found within Sichuan Province. Located approximately 10km from downtown Chengdu, the Panda Breeding Research Centre is a well laid out park which is designed to resemble the pandas' natural habitat. Wide walkways through the park facilitate easy access to several panda viewing points. The pandas are separated from the public only by a dry moat and low fence so the experience is reasonably intimate. This is definitely not a zoo and the well being of the pandas is the number one priority here. Visitors are expected to be quiet, walk slowly and avoid flash photography. There is also a museum which has lots of information on the breeding programmes and history of the panda and a small film theatre shows educational films about the pandas. Besides the cute black and white bears, there are red pandas and black swans on a
picturesque lake. After the visit we take lunch in a restaurant and the afternoon is then free for independent sightseeing. Our guide will have lots of ideas of what to see in Chengdu and can arrange taxis as required. Places to see include the 339 metre high Chengdu telecommunications tower for glass-floored views over the city, the 'Peoples Park' where you can take tea in the famous Heming Teahouse, the Wenshu Monastery complex with its 300 Buddha statues and over 500 pieces of exquisite painting and calligraphy, or the 17th century Wuhou Temple with statues of important figures in Chinese history. For shopping there are several interesting streets such as Jinli Old street and 'Wide' and 'Narrow' Alleys, where all kinds of arts and crafts and traditional Chinese artefacts are sold from restored buildings representing architecture from the Ming and Quing periods. After our free afternoon, we round off our Sichuan experience with another dinner of traditional cuisine and we spend our last night at the group hotel.

Day 15: Departure day. A single timed transfer to Chengdu Airport is provided.

KE Land Only package services end after breakfast at the hotel. A single timed transfer to Chengdu Airport is provided.

Holiday Information

What's Included

- An experienced KE leader
- A professional English-speaking local guide
- Group airport transfers
- Visit to the Chengdu Panda Centre
- All accommodation as described
- All meals
- All land transport required by the itinerary
- All permits and entrance fees required by the itinerary
- All camping equipment (except personal equipment)
- While on trek a support crew including cook baggage ponies and their handlers

What's Not Included

- Visas
- Travel insurance
- Airport transfers other than group transfers
- Tips for local staff
- Miscellaneous personal expenditure - drinks etc.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

A single group transfer from Chengdu International Airport to the group hotel is provided. This transfer is timed to the arrival of the KLM flight from London Heathrow. A KE representative will meet group members at the airport and assist with this transfer. At the end of the holiday a group transfer from the hotel to the airport is provided.
This transfer is timed for the check-in for the KLM flight to London Heathrow. If you are travelling on other flights you may still use the group transfer if this is convenient. If your arrival or departure times do not allow you to take advantage of these complimentary airport transfers, you can arrange independent transfers at extra cost. Please contact the KE office. There are also shuttle buses which meet all flights and travel to the city centre (approximately 35 minute journey) or a taxi will cost around 100 Yuan (US$15-20). If you intend to use public transport to get to the group hotel please contact the KE office for assistance.

Meal Plan

All meals are included in the holiday price from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 15

Food & Water

Sichuan cuisine has a great reputation within China and also in Chinese restaurants throughout the world. It is usually spicier than other Chinese cuisines although there is always sufficient non-spicy dishes to choose from on most menus. The food served during the trek is cooked from locally purchased ingredients by our trained trek cooks who never fail to impress. The emphasis is on providing a high-carbohydrate and largely vegetarian diet, which we have found to be easily digestible at high altitude. All meals while on trek and while staying in hotels are included in the trip price.

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a Water-To-Go bottle) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot provide special diets. Due to the nature of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Accommodation

During the holiday we will have 3 nights at a four star hotel in Chengdu and a total of 3 nights in comfortable tourist class hotels in Kangding, Tagong and Luding. Accommodation in all hotels is in twin or double rooms with ensuite bathroom. We will also have a total of 3 nights in basic homestay/monastery/lodge accommodation in Luoyling, in the Minya Konka Gompa and in Tsemi Village respectively. Though twin rooms should be available, it is possible that you will have to share with more than one other person on these nights, facilities will be shared. While on trek there will be a total of 5 nights wild camping. During this phase the group will have the use of a dining tent with tables and chairs and a toilet tent. Accommodation on trek is in 2 person mountain tents. If you are travelling alone you will be paired with another individual traveller. Subject to availability, single rooms and single tents may be available on some of the nights for a supplementary charge.
Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by an experienced KE tour leader travelling from the UK, who will be supported by a local English speaking guide. The tour leader will have the further assistance of a trek crew of cook plus baggage animals and their handlers.

Altitude

This holiday involves going to high altitude. During the course of your trip you will reach altitudes in excess of 3500 metres. This is not something that you should worry about; the human body is quite capable of adapting to a very wide range of altitudes, but it is important that we follow some simple rules in order to acclimatise successfully. Before coming on this holiday you should read the advice on trekking at high altitude. You can also talk to one of our trekking experts if you have any concerns about altitude. On this trip we carry a portable altitude chamber (PAC-bag) and/or bottled oxygen for use in emergencies.

Spending Money

Approximately £200 - 250 (or equivalent in US dollars, Euros etc.) should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses including around £50 - £60 (in equivalent local currency) for tips to local staff. It is not necessary to obtain local currency prior to departure. Sterling, US Dollars and Euros are equally acceptable for exchange in Chengdu or you can withdraw money from ATMs in Chengdu and Kangding. Note that most US credit cards will not work in Chinese ATMs but the majority of European cards are fine. If you are bringing your travel money with you we recommend that you carry this in the form of cash, since travellers cheques can be time consumming to exchange.

Guidance On Tipping

Tipping is the accepted way of saying ‘thank you’ for good service. Tips do not form part of the wages of your trek crew but they are very much appreciated. It is important to remember that tipping is voluntary and should be dependent on good service. Normally the tips are given at the end of the trek and this is best coordinated by the group rather than as individual tips. As a rough guide, we recommend that each group member contributes the equivalent of £50 -60 (in local currency equivalent) to a pool for these tips.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage, which should be a soft and sturdy duffel bag, and one day pack. Your bag on trek will be carried by porters or pack animals and should not weigh more than 15kg. It is possible to leave travel clothes and other items not required on trek at the group hotel in Chengdu and you may wish to bring a small bag for this purpose. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

Recommended Outdoor Retailers

www.keadventure.com  UK: +44(0) 17687 73966  US (toll-free): 1-888-630-4415
Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from Cotswold Outdoor - our ‘Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer’. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 15% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers. >> Find out more

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our Travel Insurance page for further information and to get a quote.

General Information

Passport & Visas

A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required for visits to countries outside the EU. The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. Please check the relevant embassy or consulate for other nationalities. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Visa requirements and charges are subject to change without notice. If you are travelling outside the EU you should have at least 2 blank pages in your passport for each country that you visit.

**Visa information is changing all the time. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel.**

**Visa China**

All nationalities require a visa. The visa fee is approximately GBP £171.50 (including handling fee) and you need to apply for it prior to departure. Please download the detailed information document: Visa PDF China.

Health & Vaccinations

Severe Allergies

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

**VACCINATIONS**

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you specific require any vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella), along with hepatitis A and typhoid. A certificate of yellow fever vaccination is required if travelling from countries with risk of yellow fever transmission and for travellers having transitted for more than 12 hrs through an airport of a country with risk of yellow fever transmission. On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. A good online resource is Travel Health Pro.
Dengue Fever

Dengue fever is a known risk in places visited. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you take precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

Currency

The unit of currency in China is Yuan Renminbi.

Electricity Supply & Plug

We recommend you check if you require an adaptor for your electrical items at: 
http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets/

Preparing For Your Holiday

Getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. You should be aerobically fit and comfortable with walking 7-8 hours for consecutive days. Hill walking, with a good amount of ascent and descent, is the best training, and we would suggest that you try to fit in a number of long weekend walks before you depart. Running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardiovascular fitness and stamina. There is little you can do to prepare for the altitude but if you have an excellent level of fitness this can help.

Climate

The Konka Shan range is located at the boundary of the south west and the south east monsoonal air masses and is influenced by both of these. As in the Himalaya, the majority of precipitation occurs between June and the end of August. At other times rainfall is very low. Winters are very cold which limits the trekking season to April-May and September - October. Daytime temperatures at these times will range from 17 to 22 degrees Celsius in Chengdu to 10 to 15 degrees in the mountains. At our highest camps the nighttime temperatures may drop below freezing and possibly as low as minus 10 degrees Celsius.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign & Commonwealth Offices’ Travel Aware campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The ‘Travel Aware’ website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE
office by reducing our plastic use. We have pledged to AITO’s Project Protect that 70% of our agents stop using single use plastic bottles.

Books


Maps

Mount Gongga Glaciers

A detailed map of the environs on Minya Konka at a scale of 1:25,000 published by the Chinese Institute of Glaciology based on surveys from the early 1980s and aerial photography from December 1996. Contours are at 20m intervals, enhanced by shading, plus graphics and/or colouring for exposed rock, scree, moraine, crevasses, vegetation, etc. Place names are given in both Chinese and Latin alphabet. The map highlights expedition routes and locations of camps.

Flight Information

Flight Inclusive Or Land Only?

On our website we display a UK Flight Inclusive package price and Land Only package price for the majority of our holidays.

Flight Inclusive Notes

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London Heathrow to Chengdu with KLM. Outbound flights will usually depart from the UK in the early evening, arriving the following morning (day 1 of the itinerary). Return flights will depart Chengdu in the early afternoon the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK in the evening on the same day. Regional departures and/or alternative carriers (not direct flights) are available as part of a flight inclusive package on request.

Please be aware that there are often only a limited number of seats available at the advertised price. To avoid paying flight supplements, we recommend that you book as early as possible, especially during peak times. If we are unable to secure seats at the price shown, or you have requested regional departures, we will contact you with an alternative quote. Please note that you may be asked to pay for your flights in advance of your final holiday balance. Note that if you book a package including flights with KE you will benefit from full financial protection.

Land Only Notes

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary joining in Chengdu. For clients making their own flight arrangements, Chengdu Airport is the most convenient for transfers to the group hotel. Please refer to the 'Joining arrangements & transfers' for further details.

Flights SHOULD NOT be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.
Why Choose KE Adventure Travel?

Operating since 1984, KE Adventure Travel has some of the most experienced staff in the business, with the proven ability to set up and operate a worldwide programme of adventures. Everyone has adventure travel at heart and joins at least one trip a year. It is this depth of experience that makes KE stand out from other adventure travel operators. When you contact KE, by phone or e-mail, or visit our office, you will find the help and advice you need, from someone who has actually done the trip and can give you the benefit of their first-hand experience.

KE can guarantee the very best in trip support, excellent food, a good standard of hotel and other accommodation, plus the back up of one of the most respected companies in the business. Client satisfaction is at the top of our agenda and almost 50% of our bookings each year come from repeat business. If you are looking for adventure then look no further than KE.

Group Tour Leaders

All of our holidays are accompanied by an experienced leader, some of whom have worked with KE groups for many years. Many are professional guides and instructors with an unrivalled knowledge of the areas in which they work. In many parts of the world, we recruit local guides with appropriate training and experience. In addition to having the technical skills to ensure your safety, KE expects its leaders to be active members of the group. A leader should be fun to travel with and ready to share with you their enthusiasm for adventure travel and their knowledge of the area. Alongside the group leader, there will be a local support crew, which could be just a driver, or a complete team of guides, drivers, porters, mule-herders and cooks. The hard work of our support crews, along with the fascinating insight they can offer into their local culture, is integral to providing you with the very best adventure travel experience.

Sustainable Tourism

Since we ran our first trip in 1984, we have been committed to keeping the world’s most beautiful places pristine by minimising our environmental impact. Recognising the fragility of the world’s wilderness environments, we keep our groups small and operate according to a ‘Mountain Code’, which is provided to all groups, trek leaders, agents and staff. We make sure that our local staff are well treated and well paid, we respect indigenous cultures, take care to protect the environment of the places we visit and take every opportunity to make a positive contribution wherever we travel. Our philosophy of ‘leaving nothing but footprints’ has been integral to KE’s approach right from the start over 30 years ago. In recognition of our efforts we are proud to have achieved the highest award of 5 Stars for Sustainable Tourism by AITO.

We continue to travel responsibly, and more information on our policy, practice, and specific projects can be found at www.keadventure.com, and on the website of our partner charity the Juniper Trust: www.junipertrust.co.uk. KE’s Mountain Code is issued to our staff, trek leaders and overseas agents, and we recommend it to our clients, too!

Booking Your Holiday

The easiest way to make your booking is online. You will need to pay a deposit at the time of booking. This is normally £200 but for some holidays with special permit fees or internal flights, this may be more. The amount of deposit required for an individual holiday is given on the dates and prices page of the holiday. Late bookings will require full payment. We cannot confirm any booking until we receive your fully completed booking form.
Adventure Travel Insurance

It is a condition of joining any of our trips that you are insured against medical and personal accident risks (to include repatriation costs, air ambulance and helicopter rescue services). We also strongly recommend that you take out holiday cancellation insurance, as all deposits paid are non-refundable. Please ensure that your insurer is aware of your KE Adventure itinerary and can agree to cover the activities being undertaken. You will then need to advise us of your policy details and complete an Insurance Declaration Form.

CAMPBELL IRVINE DIRECT travel insurance is available to EU residents and will cover the majority of KE Adventure holidays. It has been designed to provide cover for activities normally excluded by other insurers such as trekking, mountain biking and climbing. Please note that certain activities may attract a higher premium. In addition ‘Campbell Irvine Direct' cannot provide cover for KE climbing trips above 6000m. Cover for these can be obtained through either the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) or Snowcard.

TRAVELEX is a USA based insurer offering travel insurance, which can be used by US citizens and US residents only. KE recommends the "Travelex Select" package for our holidays. If your holiday involves using mountaineering equipment (ropes, harness or crampons), for climbing or glacial travel, you should consider the "Adventure Plus Pak" optional upgrade on the Travelex Select Plan. Please refer to the 'Description of Coverage' for a summary of the terms, conditions, exclusions and limitations of the applicable Protection Plan. This policy will also cover KE climbing trips above 6000m.
Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum. The packed weight of your bag while trekking should be no more than 15 kgs.

You Must Bring The Following Items:

- Hiking boots
- Socks
- Trekking trousers
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Underwear
- Baselayer shirts
- Casual shirt and/or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses
- Gloves or mittens
- Headtorch with batteries
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottles 1 Litre x2 (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Small towel
- Selection of dry bags (to keep kit bag contents dry)
- Daypack (approx. 30 litres)
- Sleeping bag (comfort rating -15°C)
- Thermarest or similar sleeping mat
- Warm jacket (down)
• Basic First Aid Kit including: A broad spectrum antibiotic, antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), altitude (Diamox), painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, insect repellent, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).
• Small padlock (to lock kit bag)

The Following Items Are Optional:

• Trekking poles (recommended)
• Training shoes or similar for camp use
• Shorts
• Baselayer – thermal leggings
• Gaiters
• Sleeping bag liner
• Scarf or buff
• Travel clothes
• Camera
• Repair kit – (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
• Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Please note: This document was downloaded on 4 Sep 2020, and the trip is subject to change.