

Tibet, Mount Kailash and the Saga Dawa Festival

Trip Code: TMK

Version:



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



HIGHLIGHTS

- Lhasa's fabled Potala Palace, Jokhang Temple and Drepung Monastery
- Rongbuk Monastery and views of Everest's stunning north face
- Gyantse, Shigar and the exciting new road route back to Nepal via Kyirong

- Trek the 'kora' around Mount Kailash and witness the annual Saga Dawa Festival

AT A GLANCE

- 3 days trekking
- Max altitude - 5600 metres
- Join at Kathmandu

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

North of the Himalayas in a distant province of Tibet, the strikingly symmetrical Mount Kailash is revered as the centre of the universe by Buddhists and Hindus alike. Our epic journey to this remarkable mountain begins with the exciting flight from Kathmandu to the Tibetan capital of Lhasa, where we have 2 full days to acclimatise and to see the best of the city's landmarks, including the astonishing Potala Palace, the Jokhang Temple and many other important Buddhist monasteries and buildings.

Then, heading westwards across the Tibetan Plateau via the important monastery towns of Gyantse and Shigatse, we'll take a diversion to the Rongbuk Valley beneath the singularly spectacular north side of Mount Everest. Continuing our journey across the north side of Shishapangma, we'll take a break beside the stunning and sacred Lake Manasarovar, before proceeding to Darchen on the south side of Mount Kailash. Before setting off on our challenging 3-day trek around the mountain, which crosses the 5600 metre Drolma La, we will be able to attend the prestigious annual Saga Dawa Festival which culminates in the erection of a huge prayer flag-adorned flagpole at Tarboche. Completing the 46 kilometre Kailash 'kora' over 3 days, we will have the chance to visit the important monasteries on the route, take lots of photographs, and interact with the Tibetan pilgrims with whom we are sharing the trail. Finally, with the sins of a lifetime washed away (reputedly) we will return to Nepal via the new border crossing point at Kyirong. The introduction to your holiday is a necessary 3 days in and around Kathmandu, during which time your Tibet visas are processed. Here, we have devised a thoughtful programme to show off the very best of Nepal's colourful capital. With both a Nepalese and Tibetan guide, comfortable private transport and the best standard of accommodation in each of the places we stay, this is a unique and unforgettable travel experience.

Is this holiday for you?

This holiday combines the classic overland tour from Lhasa to Mount Kailash including the diversion to Mount Everest at Rongbuk, with the 3-day Kailash circuit trek. The roads are steadily improving in Tibet and virtually all the route is now good tarmac. The group will travel in a comfortable private vehicle - a minibus for smaller groups or a coach for larger groups. We will also stay in the best standard of accommodation in each of the places we visit. This can vary from 4-star hotels to quite basic lodge accommodation at Rongbuk and at Chiu Gompa and for 2 nights during the circuit of Kailash. Having flown up to Lhasa, there will be 11 days touring and sightseeing (including exploring on foot) before reaching Mount Kailash. For most of this time we will be at or above 4000 metres, which means everyone should be well acclimatised ahead of the 3-day, 46-kilometre trek around Kailash. This walk is

on a well-marked and reasonably straightforward trail and includes the quite challenging crossing of the Drolma La (5600m) on the second day. Well acclimatised regular trekkers will cope well with this short trek.

Itinerary

Version:

Extensions

When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.



Chitwan Jungle Extension

The jungles of southern Nepal are an interesting counterpoint to trekking in the foothills or the high Himalaya. Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge provides a relaxing and comfortable base for a wildlife safari and cultural village experience. During two days of wildlife viewing in the Chitwan National Park 'buffer zone' - the interface area between visitors and the animals that live at Chitwan - you will be accompanied by expert guides on safaris by jeep by boat and on foot.

3 days from
US\$1,680 per person



Kathmandu Tour - Nagarkot and Bhaktapur

The Kathmandu Valley contains the cities of Patan, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu itself, all of which were once independent kingdoms. An exploration of the valley's historic and cultural sights is an excellent way to begin or end your adventure in Nepal. Highlights of this tour includes a very early drive up to Nagarkot on the Kathmandu Valley rim, the perfect place to watch a Himalayan sunrise. This is followed by a tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bhaktapur, renowned for its temples and traditional buildings.

1 day from
US\$175 per person

Holiday Information

What's Included

- Professional English-speaking Nepali and Tibetan tour guides
- Trek support staff during the 3-day Kailas circuit
- Kathmandu and Lhasa airport transfers
- Flight from Kathmandu to Lhasa
- Tibet visa arrangement and fees
- All land transport involved in the itinerary
- All accommodation as described in the trip dossier
- All meals throughout the holiday
- Guided sightseeing programmes in Kathmandu and Lhasa
- FREE Sleeping bag and down jacket hire is available for this holiday on request

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Nepalese visa
- Tips for guides and other local staff
- Miscellaneous expenses - souvenirs and drinks etc

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Kathmandu.

Transfers are provided from/to Kathmandu Airport for all clients arriving on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary and departing on the last day of the Land Only itinerary.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All meals are included in the holiday price from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 23.

Food & Water

Drinking Water

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.

During this holiday we will have a wide variety of eating experiences, ranging from sophisticated international cuisine when in Kathmandu, to excellent Tibetan dishes in Lhasa and more basic, but still wholesome, Tibetan and Chinese meals on the road.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for special diets. Due to the nature of some 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 meals 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 this holiday the group will spend 3 nights in Kathmandu at the centrally-located 4-star Hotel Shanker or similar. There will also be a night at a very comfortable and authentic guest house in Bhaktapur and a night at a tourist-class hotel at Nagarkot on the Kathmandu Valley rim. In Tibet, we will use a very good standard of hotel accommodation in the larger towns and the best available standard of accommodation elsewhere, which on several occasions will mean quite basic guesthouses or lodges. Bedding is provided at these simple guesthouses but we suggest that you may also need a sleeping bag. All accommodation is allocated on a twin sharing basis. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. Depending on availability, single room occupancy can be pre-booked at supplementary cost. Extra hotel nights in Kathmandu can also be pre-booked.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led throughout by an experienced English-speaking Nepalese tour guide. When in Tibet there will also be a local guide, as well as one or more drivers.

Altitude

This holiday involves going to very high altitude. During the course of your trip you will be spending at least one night above 4000 metres and/or trekking to 5000 metres or above. 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](#). Unless you have previous experience of trekking above 4000 metres you should consult one of our trekking experts before embarking on this holiday. On this trip we carry a portable altitude chamber (PAC-bag) and/or bottled oxygen for use in emergencies.

Spending Money

Approximately £300 (or equivalent in US dollars, euros etc.) should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses including local staff tips. It is not necessary to obtain local currency prior to departure. Sterling, US dollars and euros are equally acceptable for exchange in Kathmandu and in Lhasa. However, outside of these cities, cash US dollars are more easily exchanged and in emergencies small US dollar bills can sometimes be used to make purchases. We recommend that you change approximately £150 into Nepal rupees on arrival in Kathmandu and £150 into Chinese renmibi in Lhasa. If you prefer not to carry all of your spending money in cash, it is possible to withdraw money from ATM's in Kathmandu (Nepalese rupees only).

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 local staff but they are very much appreciated. It is important to remember that tipping is voluntary and should be dependent on good service. Normally the bulk of the tips are given at the end of the trip and this is best done as a group. Most groups will give the tips with a bit of ceremony (or sometimes a party) on the last evening, to mark the end of the trip. On this holiday you may have two or more tipping 'ceremonies', as you use the services of local staff from two different countries. The level of tipping is entirely up to you but we realise that some guidance is needed and we suggest that you should be prepared to pay a total of £100 (in equivalent local currency) in tips. Depending on the make up of your support crew you will need approximately one third of this in Nepalese rupees.

Beat the Jet Lag

Our holidays are normally designed with minimal 'down time' at the start of the trip, but having a day or two at the beginning will have the additional benefit of allowing you time to get over the stress of a long journey or travelling across time zones, leaving you refreshed and ready for your holiday. We can easily arrange for you to have additional nights and airport transfers.

Baggage Allowance

Your main item of luggage should be a sturdy kit bag, duffle bag or similar. This will be carried during the Kailas trek by porters or pack animals and must weigh no more than 15kg. You should also take on your holiday a daypack of approximately 30 litres capacity. It is possible to leave items not required on trek at the hotel in Kathmandu. The baggage allowance on the flight to Lhasa is 20kg. For your international flights, please check the 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 the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders.

A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates (*see Health & Vaccinations below*), **and visas for your holiday**. Please ensure that you check the [FCDO](#) for the latest advice for **each country visited** before travel.

Visa Nepal

All nationalities require a visa. The visa process is partly automated and the fee is \$30 for 15 days, \$50 for 30 days, \$125 for 90 days. The visa is FREE for children under 10 years. The visa allows multiple re-entry. Payment must be made in cash and USD, GBP or Euros are accepted.

Part of this on-arrival visa process involves filling in a 'Tourist Visa Application Form' and you can simplify the procedure at Kathmandu Airport by filling this form in online (**within 15 days of travelling**) at [this link](#). This generates a receipt which you present (hard copy or saved on your phone) on arrival. This should allow you to go straight to the cashier to pay for your visa and has the potential to save you time in the visa queue.

Whilst these are not now needed for the visa process, we recommend that you travel with at least 2 spare passport photographs.

Visa Tibet (China) from Nepal

It is important that you do not make your own arrangements for a Chinese visa.

We will make the arrangements for a group visa to enter Tibet and have included the fee in your holiday price.

1). We need from you (at least 6 weeks before the trip departure) a good quality scan or photographic image of the information page of your passport which we will send to our agent in Kathmandu as a part of the visa process.

2). You must take with you 2 passport-style photographs (33mm width by 48mm height) which include your whole head and neck.

On arrival in Kathmandu our Nepalese agent will brief you about the Tibetan Visa and you will be assisted in filling out the application form which you will have to sign.

The information which you will be asked to provide at that time will include:

- Your name; marital status; current occupation; employers' name, address and phone number.

- Your emergency contact; their name; nationality; occupation; relationship to you and telephone number.

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. 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. In addition you should check whether any specific vaccinations are needed to the regions that you are travelling to. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

Malaria

Malarial prophylaxis is not usually required for trips in the mountains, however if you are visiting rural and remote low lying areas then they might be necessary.

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.

Currency

The unit of currency in Nepal is the Nepalese Rupee.

Politically part of China, the unit of currency in Tibet is the Chinese Yuan Renminbi.

Preparing for your Holiday

It makes a lot of sense to spend some time before coming on a trekking holiday getting some additional exercise. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. Although the trekking on this trip is not long and sustained, hiking at altitude is more demanding than similar terrain at lower elevations. You should adopt an exercise regime leading up to your trip. Regular hiking in hilly country is the best training but any regular exercise such as cycling, running or swimming is also good for developing cardio vascular fitness and stamina. Before coming on the trip we recommend that you make time for some longer walks in hilly country. It is also a good idea to do some reading about the culture of Nepal and of Tibet before your trip.

Climate

At the time of this holiday in late spring, we will encounter daytime maximum temperatures of between 25°C and 30°C in and around Kathmandu and between 12°C and 20°C in Lhasa. At night on the Tibetan Plateau in late May the temperatures will fall close to freezing point and, at our highest overnight lodges in the Rongbuk Valley and on the circuit of Kailash, possibly as low as minus 5°C or even minus 10°C. Tibet is sheltered by the Greater Himalaya from the full effects of the monsoon and receives very little precipitation at any time of the year. Generally, we can expect blue skies and brilliantly clear conditions. However, weather in mountainous areas is notoriously difficult to predict, and short-lived storms can occur at any time of the year.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](https://www.gov.uk/travelaware)' 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 before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO 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 FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO 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.

Books

- Tibet. Bradt Guide
- Tibet. Lonely Planet
- Handbook. Victor Chan
- The Tibet Guide. Stephen Batchelor
- Abode of Snow. Kenneth Mason
- Seven Years in Tibet. Heinrich Harrer

Maps

Tibet - Reise Know-How. 1:500,000. Available www.stanfords.co.uk

Lhasa to Kathmandu - Himalayan Maphouse. 1: 700,000. Available Kathmandu

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.

Equipment Information

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 luggage to a minimum as this makes for the most comfortable travel experience.

You must bring the following items:

- Comfortable walking boots or shoes
- Trekking trousers
- Baselayer shirts
- Baselayer leggings
- Casual shirt and/or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Lightweight waterproof overtrousers
- Sunhat
- Warm hat

- Scarf or buff
- Sunglasses
- Thermal gloves
- Warm and waterproof gloves or mittens
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottle (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Travel towel
- Selection of dry bags (to keep your kit bag contents dry)
- Small padlock (to lock your kit bag)
- Daypack 30 litres
- Warm jacket (down)*
- Sleeping bag (comfort rated -10°C)*
- Sheet sleeping bag

Basic First Aid Kit including: antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), altitude (Diamox), painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, insect repellent, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).
Glucose tablets and multi-vitamin tablets are also a good idea.

The following items are optional:

- Travel clothes
- Trekking poles
- Trainers or similar for travelling
- Shorts
- Gaiters
- Pillowcase
- Swimwear (for the hotel pool in Kathmandu)
- Camera

Local Customs and Etiquette

During the course of this holiday we will visit several sites that are considered sacred to people of Buddhist and Hindu faiths. Please be respectful of local norms and customs in these places and pay attention to the advice given by your trip leader on how to dress and act. The Nepalese and Tibetan people are amongst the most polite in the world and are unlikely to let us know if anything we do offends but this does not mean they are not offended. We recommend that you always have a long sleeved shirt and trousers or full length skirt handy to put on when appropriate. In some places it will be necessary to remove your shoes or sandals and you should also consider bringing a pair of socks that can be quickly slipped on and off.

Notes

*FREE sleeping bag and down jacket hire is included in your KE holiday booking on request. Please make all requests at least 4 weeks prior to the trip departure date. Please note all hire / rental equipment is issued in Kathmandu. Please remember to allow room in your kit bag for these items.

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary starting at the hotel in Kathmandu. Transfers are provided from/to Kathmandu Airport for all clients arriving on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary and departing on the last day of the Land Only itinerary.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Kathmandu. Outbound flights will usually depart from the UK in the evening, arriving mid-afternoon on the following day (Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights will depart Kathmandu usually in the morning of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK later the same day.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

The Best Itinerary We recognise that, for most people, a visit to Tibet will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. So, we've set up an itinerary that includes all of the highlights and is timed to coincide with the Saga Dawa Festival. This trip has a maximum group size of just 11. Book early to avoid disappointment.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 10/08/2025 and the trip is subject to change