



Earthbound Expeditions

# Lhasa and Everest Base Camp Tibet Tour

12 days, from US\$3,687 per person

Duration

**12 days**

Grade

**Moderate**

Max altitude

**5,236 m**

Start and end

**Kathmandu**

On foot

**Up to 1 hour a day**

Best season

**Apr to Oct**

Accommodation

**Hotels**

Meals

**All meals on the trek**

Group size

**Up to 4**

Getting there

**Drive in, fly out**

## Contact us

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## Lhasa and Everest Base Camp Tibet Tour Overview

An overland journey from Kathmandu across the Tibetan plateau to the north face of Everest, then east through Shigatse and Gyantse to Lhasa. This is the only Everest Base Camp that can be reached by vehicle.

### Tour overview

This trip crosses the whole width of southern Tibet by road, from the Nepali border to Lhasa, visiting the north side of Everest on the way. You drive over the Himalaya on day 4, spend a night at Rongbuk below the north face, and then travel east through Shigatse and Gyantse to Lhasa over two 5,000 m passes. Six of the twelve days are driving days, which is what crossing a plateau the size of western Europe involves.

### Everest by road

This is the only Everest Base Camp that can be reached by vehicle, and the view is very different from the Nepal side. On the south side you walk for ten days to reach the moraine at 5,364 m below the icefall, where the summit is not visible. Here a road takes you up the Rongbuk valley to 5,200 m, and Everest stands at the head of the valley with a clear view of its three and a half vertical kilometres, framed by the valley walls. It is the classic view of the mountain, and it requires no trekking.

### Who this trip is for

Travellers who want to experience Tibet rather than go trekking. There is very little walking: an hour at Rongbuk, the stairs at the Potala and a circuit of the Barkhor. Instead, the trip requires you to be comfortable with long days in a vehicle at altitude, and to have an interest in monasteries, as after Everest the trip focuses largely on them. It also suits people who cannot walk for ten days to Base Camp but still want a full view of Everest.

### Why we travel west to east

We drive in and fly out, which is the better direction for two reasons. It gains altitude gradually by road over three days, rather than taking you straight to 3,656 m on a flight into Lhasa, which is significantly safer. It also places Everest on day 5, before the monasteries, so the highest and coldest night comes while you are fresh rather than at the end of the trip.

## Itinerary

| Day | Route                                    | Hours   | Distance | Altitude |
|-----|------------------------------------------|---------|----------|----------|
| 1   | Arrive Kathmandu                         | –       | –        | 1,400 m  |
| 2   | Kathmandu valley sites                   | –       | –        | 1,400 m  |
| 3   | Drive to the Kerung border               | 7–8 hrs | –        | 2,800 m  |
| 4   | Over the Gyatso La to Tingri             | 5–6 hrs | –        | 4,300 m  |
| 5   | Rongbuk and the Everest viewpoint        | 3–4 hrs | –        | 5,200 m  |
| 6   | Rongbuk to Shigatse                      | 7–8 hrs | –        | 3,900 m  |
| 7   | Tashilhunpo, then Gyantse and the Kumbum | 2 hrs   | –        | 3,977 m  |
| 8   | Over the Karo La and Kamba La to Lhasa   | 7–8 hrs | –        | 5,010 m  |
| 9   | Potala Palace and the Jokhang            | –       | –        | 3,656 m  |

|    |                                   |        |   |         |
|----|-----------------------------------|--------|---|---------|
| 10 | Drepung, Sera and the Norbulingka | -      | - | 3,656 m |
| 11 | Fly Lhasa to Kathmandu            | 1h 35m | - | 1,400 m |
| 12 | Fly home                          | -      | - | -       |

#### Day 1

### Arrive in Kathmandu

We meet you at the airport and take you to your hotel. In the evening we brief you on the trip and, most importantly, the paperwork: your group visa is collected in Kathmandu, and the permits have already been issued in your name.

Altitude: 1,400 m   On foot: None, arrival day   Night: Hotel, Kathmandu   Meals: Dinner

#### Day 2

### Kathmandu Valley sightseeing

You visit the hilltop stupa at Swayambhunath, the river temples and cremation ghats at Pashupatinath, the great dome at Boudhanath, and the carved squares of Patan. Boudhanath is particularly relevant today, as you will spend the next week among the Tibetan people who built it.

Altitude: 1,400 m   On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs   Night: Hotel, Kathmandu   Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

#### Day 3

### Drive to the border at Kerung

The drive heads north out of the valley and up the Trishuli and Bhote Koshi gorges to Rasuwagadhi, then through the border formalities and up the far side to Kerung. The drive takes seven to eight hours, mostly climbing, and you finish the day 1,400 m higher than you started.

Altitude: 2,800 m   On foot: Drive, 7–8 hrs   Night: Hotel, Kerung   Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

#### Day 4

### Drive over the Himalaya to Tingri

Today the landscape changes completely. The road climbs out of the last green valley over a pass at 5,236 m and descends onto the plateau. From the top, on a clear day, you can see Shishapangma, Cho Oyu and Everest together. Tingri is a windswept village on a high plain, with the north side of the range on the skyline.

Altitude: 4,300 m   On foot: Drive, 5–6 hrs   Night: Hotel, Tingri   Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

#### Day 5

### Drive to Rongbuk and the Everest viewpoint

A morning drive up the switchbacks of the Rongbuk valley to the highest monastery in the world, at 4,980 m, followed by a short eco-bus ride to the base camp viewpoint. Everest stands at the head of the valley with a clear, unobstructed view, which is not possible from the Nepal side. We sleep at Rongbuk, which is cold and basic.

Altitude: 5,200 m at the viewpoint   On foot: Drive, 3–4 hrs, then a short walk   Night: Guesthouse, Rongbuk   Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

#### Day 6

### Drive to Shigatse

A long drive east across the plateau, descending to 3,900 m, which feels much easier after a night at Rongbuk. Shigatse is Tibet's second city and the seat of the Panchen Lama.

Altitude: 3,900 m   On foot: Drive, 7–8 hrs   Night: Hotel, Shigatse   Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

#### Day 7

### Tashilhunpo Monastery and drive to Gyantse

The morning is spent at Tashilhunpo, a working monastery of some six hundred monks with a twenty-six metre gilded Maitreya statue. A short drive then takes you to Gyantse to visit the Kumbum, a tiered stupa containing more than seventy chapels, and the finest single building on this route.

Altitude: 3,977 m   On foot: Drive, 2 hrs   Night: Hotel, Gyantse   Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

#### Day 8

### Drive to Lhasa over two passes

The most scenic driving day of the trip. You cross the Karo La at 5,010 m, passing a glacier that reaches almost to the road, and the Kamba La at 4,794 m above Yamdrok Tso, a turquoise, scorpion-shaped lake that fills the valley below. The road then descends into Lhasa.

Altitude: 3,656 m   On foot: Drive, 7–8 hrs   Night: Hotel, Lhasa   Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

#### Day 9

### Potala Palace and Jokhang Temple

In the morning you visit the Potala Palace, which has a thousand rooms and stands on a hill. Entry is by timed ticket, and there are many steps at 3,656 m. In the afternoon you visit the Jokhang, the holiest temple in Tibetan Buddhism and a far busier place of worship than the Potala, followed by the Barkhor circuit around it.

Altitude: 3,656 m   On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs   Night: Hotel, Lhasa   Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

#### Day 10

### Drepung Monastery, Sera Monastery and the Norbulingka

In the morning you visit Drepung, once the largest monastery in the world with around ten thousand monks. In the afternoon you visit Sera to see the debating courtyard, where the monks debate doctrine with a clap on every point. If time allows, you also visit the Norbulingka, the summer palace.

Altitude: 3,656 m   On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs   Night: Hotel, Lhasa   Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

#### Day 11

### Fly to Kathmandu

A morning flight of one hour and thirty-five minutes over the Himalaya, with the range you drove through visible from the left-hand windows. The rest of the day is free in Kathmandu, with a farewell dinner in the evening.

Altitude: 1,400 m   On foot: None, flight day   Night: Hotel, Kathmandu   Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

#### Day 12

### Departure

We take you to the airport. If you are continuing on a trek, we hand you over to the trekking team at this point.

Altitude: 1,400 m   On foot: None, departure day   Night: No overnight   Meals: Breakfast

## What's included

- Airport transfers & ground transport
- Licensed English-speaking guide
- Accommodation throughout the trip
- All permits & national park fees

- Meals as per the itinerary

### **Not included**

- International flights
- Travel & rescue insurance
- Personal trekking gear
- Tips & personal expenses
- Nepal entry visa (on arrival)

## **Packing list**

### **Luggage carried by vehicle**

A vehicle carries your luggage for the whole trip, so there is no weight limit to observe. The one bag that matters is a daypack for the hour at Rongbuk and the Potala steps. Bring your own sleeping bag for the unheated night at 4,980 m.

### **For the night at Rongbuk**

- A sleeping bag rated to -15°C. The guesthouse has quilts but no heating at 4,980 m
- A down jacket, to wear indoors that evening as well as outside
- A warm hat, and thermal base layers to sleep in
- Earplugs and an eye mask. The room is shared, and the clock is on Beijing time
- A head torch. Power at Rongbuk is unreliable

### **Clothing**

- Layers rather than one heavy coat. The vehicle is warm, the passes are cold, and you will be getting in and out all day
- Two fleeces, or a fleece and a light insulated jacket
- A waterproof shell, more for wind than for rain
- Comfortable walking shoes. Shoes are sufficient on this trip; you do not need boots
- Modest clothing for the monasteries, covering shoulders and knees, and a hat you can remove

### **Sun and dry air protection**

- Category 4 sunglasses. The light on the plateau at 4,300 m is the strongest of any of our trips
- SPF 50 sunscreen and lip balm with sun protection, in generous quantities
- A buff, for the dust on the Rongbuk road
- Moisturiser and a nasal spray. The air on the plateau is very dry, and nosebleeds are common

### **Health**

- Diamox if your doctor agrees, plus all your regular medication, in its original packaging
- Painkillers, rehydration salts and medication for an upset stomach
- A broad-spectrum antibiotic if your doctor will prescribe one
- Hand sanitiser and wet wipes, for the one night without a shower

## Documents and money

- Passport valid six months with two blank pages, plus three photocopies
- Four passport photographs for the group visa
- Your permit paperwork, printed, carried separately from the passport
- Travel insurance certificate covering 5,500 m and repatriation
- Chinese yuan in cash, and Alipay or WeChat Pay set up before you fly
- A VPN installed on every device before you leave Nepal

## Optional extras

### Namtso lake

from \$340, +2 days

A sacred lake at 4,718 m north of Lhasa, reached over the Lagen La at 5,190 m, and the most photographed place in Tibet after the Potala. The extension takes two days, and the night at the lake is cold.

### Two extra nights in Lhasa

\$310, +2 days

Time to visit Ganden monastery, see the Norbulingka in full, and spend longer in the Barkhor rather than only walking its circuit. Lhasa benefits from a slower pace more than the rest of this itinerary.

### Fly in as well as out

saves 2 days, costs \$260, -2 days

For travellers who are short of time. It removes the graded overland approach, which is the most important feature of this itinerary, so we generally advise against it.

### Everest Base Camp trek, Nepal side

from \$1,867, +16 days

See Everest from both sides in one trip. Travellers who have done both say the two sides feel very different.

### The Friendship Highway to Kathmandu

no change, same length

Drive out via Kerung instead of flying, reversing the itinerary. You spend two more days on the road and save the cost of the flight, but you miss the view from the aircraft.

### Single room where available

\$290

For the hotel nights in Kathmandu, Kerung, Tingri, Shigatse, Gyantse and Lhasa. At Rongbuk all rooms are shared, and a single room is not possible.

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: [enepaltrekking.com/everest-base-camp-tibet-tour](http://enepaltrekking.com/everest-base-camp-tibet-tour)