

Adventure In China & Tibet

Day 1 Departure

Enjoy full meal service on your scheduled wide-bodied flight to Beijing.

Day 2 Arrive Beijing

Our English-speaking guide will meet us at the airport and accompany us on our transfer by private coach to our hotel in central Beijing. This afternoon, time permitting, we will travel to Olympic sites including the brand new **Beijing Stadium** where the opening ceremony and many events took place. We will enjoy dinner in a local restaurant.

Day 3 Beijing

Our morning commences in **Tian'an Men Square**, the world's largest public square (the size of 90 football fields). In the centre of the square stands the Monument to the People's Heroes, a 124-ft. granite obelisk, engraved with scenes from famous uprisings.

We continue with a visit to the **Forbidden City**, a massive complex of red-walled buildings and pavilions topped by a sea of glazed vermilion tile. It is by far the largest and most intricate imperial palace in China and receives more visitors than any other attraction in the country. Our visit will include the Inner Court, where only the emperor, his family, his concubines, and the palace eunuchs were allowed, and the Hall of Mental Cultivation, where emperors lived.

Our afternoon concludes with a visit to the **Temple of Heaven**, an enormous park and altar to Heaven directly to the south of the Forbidden City. Each winter solstice, the Ming and Qing emperors would lead a procession here to perform rites and make sacrifices designed to promote the next year's crops.

Tonight we will attend a **Martial Arts demonstration show**.

Day 4 The Great Wall Of China & Ming Tombs

This morning we will journey outside of the city for a visit to the **Great Wall of China**, one of the world's most awesome and impressive sights. The Great Wall snakes its way from east to west for nearly 4,000 miles, and has been in existence for over 2,600 years.

This afternoon we visit the **Ming Tombs**, where 13 of the 16 emperors who ruled China during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) are buried. This is the most extensive burial complex of any Chinese dynasty and the tombs are constructed in conventional fashion, with memorial halls at the front and burial chambers to the rear. Among the many Sacred Ways, the one at Ming Tombs is the best preserved and complete, it is the earliest and biggest stone archway existing in China today.

Tonight we will attend either an **Acrobat Show**.

Day 5 Fly Beijing To Lhasa

Morning transfer to the airport for the hour-long flight to **Lhasa**. The spectacular flight on China Southwest Airlines Boeing 757 crosses the main Himalayan range and the mountain views are magnificent. After arriving at Gonggar Airport in Tibet, it's a 2-hour drive to Lhasa where we will check in at the Hotel. It's advisable to rest and take it easy for the remainder of the day, due to Lhasa's high altitude.

Day 6 Lhasa

Today will be spent visiting several of Lhasa's many monasteries in the company of a guide and interpreter. One of these is the **Sera Monastery**, one of the best-preserved Buddhist monasteries in Tibet. Several hundred monks live and study within its whitewashed walls and golden roofs.

After lunch we'll visit the **Norbulingka**, the summer palace of the Dalai Lama, as well as the **Jokhang Temple**. This temple is possibly the most sacred shrine in Tibet and there is always a procession of devout Tibetans through the complex. Surrounding the Jokhang is the Barkhor - a maze of narrow cobbled streets, which is the central market of Lhasa.

Day 7 Lhasa

This morning we will visit the **Potala Palace** towering above the city of Lhasa. This spectacular building contains the private quarters of the Dalai Lama as well as numerous grand staterooms and many important chapels. There has been a palace on this site since the 5th or 6th centuries, but the present palace was constructed in the 17th century.

A visit to the **Drepung Monastery** in the afternoon will complete a truly awe-inspiring day. Founded in the 14th century, this monastery was once the largest in the world, housing around 10,000 monks. Nowadays the figure is down to several hundred, but there is still much here of interest as it was left relatively unscathed during the Cultural Revolution.

Day 8 Drive Lhasa - Gyantse

Today we start our overland cultural journey to Gyantse and Shigatse. Travelling along the Friendship Highway we cross the spectacular Khamba La pass from which we'll get stunning views of the snowy summit of Nazin Kang Sa looking across the waters of the Yamdrok-tso Lake. We then continue westwards over another high pass, the Karo La, from which you can see a huge spectacular glacier tumbling down to within a few hundred metres of the road. After passing through beautiful valleys and colourful Tibetan villages we arrive in the town of **Gyantse**. Our overnight accommodation is at a Hotel.

Day 9 Drive Gyantse - Shigatse

Before leaving Gyantse we'll have time to visit the Gyantse Dzong and Gyantse Kumbum. The **Dzong** is a fort dating back to the 14th century and it offers amazing views of both Gyantse itself and the surrounding Nyang Chu Valley.

The **Kumbum** is a large gold-domed stupa and its many small chapels house an impressive array of Tibetan Buddhist murals. .

Our Tibet adventure tour then continues to Shigatse, Tibet's second largest city. After exploring the local market we will make a detailed visit to the **Tashilhunpo Monastery**. This monastery is one of the largest functioning monasteries in Tibet and there is much to explore within its high surrounding walls.

Afterwards we make our way back to Lhasa, where we will check in at the Hotel.

Day 10 Drive Shigatse - Tsethang

Today we have a long drive to Tsetang, the third largest city in central Tibet. Southeast of Tsetang we can see the mountain Gangpo Ri . It has a special significance for the Tibetans as it is the legendary birthplace of its people.

Day 11 Visit To The Valley Of Tombs [Yarlung Valley]

Today our adventure trip will take us to the **Yarlung valley**, which is also known as the Valley of Tombs. Yarlung is considered the cradle of Tibetan civilisation. Creation myth locates the valley as the origin of the Tibetan people, and it was from Yarlung that the early Tibetan kings unified Tibet in the seventh century. We see the massive burial mounds of these kings in **Chongye**.

Yumbulagang, another major attraction of the area, is perched on a crag like a medieval European castle and is considered the oldest building in Tibet. After a full day's exploring in the Yarlung valley we return to Tsetang for the night.

Day 12 Fly Lhasa To Beijing

Morning transfer to the airport for the return flight to Beijing.

Our day will conclude on **Wangfujing Street** in the heart of Beijing. The street is often called the "Champs Elysees of the East" and has recently been renovated as a pedestrian street.

This evening we will have a special farewell **Beijing Duck dinner**.

Day 13 Departure From Beijing / Arrive UK

Our enjoyable and rewarding tour will come to an end as our guide accompanies us to the airport for the return flight home. You land back in the UK later the same day.