

Adventure Program

CN6 - Home of the Tibetan Buddhist Renaissance – 8 Days

Detailed Day-by-Day Itinerary



Day 1: General Orientation

We will be met by our guide at the **Xining** airport. Xining is a growing metropolis and a melting pot for the many cultures that inhabit nearby, include Tibetan, Muslim, Sala, and the Han Chinese. Time permitting, we will stop at the **Tibetan Medicine Cultural Museum**. Tibetan medicine has a history of thousands of years. Influenced by Tibetan Buddhism, it is performed following religious rituals. The Tibetan Medical Culture Museum

is the first museum to introduce Tibetan traditional medicine and culture. We will have a chance to have a glance at the biggest Tangka in the world. After settling in the hotel we dine at a local restaurant, stroll through a nearby **night market** and take in the sites and sounds of this melting pot.

Overnight: 4-star hotel in Xining

Meals: D

Day 2: Journey to the Sacred Land

We depart early and drive to Tongren, the centre of Regong art culture and the focus point of our journey. Our four-hour drive is dotted with interesting stops along the way.

90 to 120 minutes drive away from Xining, we arrive at **Dangcai Village in Pingan County**. This village has nurtured a disproportionate number of high lamas and living buddhas. Many have assumed the abbotship of Kumbun Monastery and Labrang Monastery. This village is also the former home of the 14th Dalai Lama who is currently exiled in India. The sutra hall where he practiced Buddhism is still preserved. If time permits, we will spent a short time and visit the **Dalai Lama's former residence**, for which we will need to apply for a special permit.

Another 60-90 minutes drive would take us to **Xunhuan**, a world far removed from the Tibetan towns. Xunhuan is a town inhabited by the Sala ethnic group, who migrated from Central Asia 800 years ago. They are strict Muslims and our stop here will take us for lunch at a delightful **garden-style Muslim restaurant** where we would sample



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Muslim food. After lunch, we walk around the town, visit homes and the mosque in the process of learning the Muslim's traditions before continuing on our way to Tongren.

Another 45 minutes of driving takes us to the **old residence of the late 10th Panchen Lama**, the second most powerful figure in the Tibetan hierarchy and revered by all Tibetans. Our stop here enables us to learn about the extraordinary feats of this holy man.

We arrive at **Tongren** in the late afternoon, where dinner awaits us.

Overnight: Huangnan Hotel (2-star)

Meals: B, L, D

Day 3: Temples and Their Art

Our day starts with a pilgrimage walk around **Longwu Temple**, one of the most important monasteries in the Amdo Tibetan area. At one time, it had 35 subordinate monasteries, including Labrang Monastery. Our walk around the monastery would be peppered by talks with monks in their daily ritual.

The afternoon is spent at **Nianduhu monastery**. Its large-scale barbola mural is considered the best in the area and the monastery houses a collection of rare cultural relics. This monastery is best known for its embroidery art. We visit some of the art shops where we can see how masters draw the embroideries.

We then visit **Guomari Monastery**, best known for its carving and sculpture. The Kalachakra Stupa, known as the first stupa in Amdo, rises 38 metres within a unique structure. It is most famous for the carvings that depict a heavenly and otherwise invisible world. The delicate scent of the sandalwood Kalachakra permeates the space.

A short walk from the Guomari Monastery takes us to a fort which **local families** have inhabited for hundreds of years. The fort is designed in a maze like fashion. As we walk in the early evening, with families returning from work, we can contemplate life hundreds of years ago.

Overnight: Huangnan Hotel (2-star)

Meals: B, L, D

Day 4: Temples and Their Art

Our morning is spent at the **Upper and Lower Wudun monasteries**. The monasteries are over a thousand years old and feature the natural mix of village and monastery, laymen and monks. Best known for their artistic perfection, we will take an in-depth study of the murals, tangka and statues, many of which are classics drawn by some of the best artists across the centuries including the late Luosang Nina. The **art school** in



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the monastery, which was set up in the 16th century, is known for its craftsmanship and fancy colors and enjoys great fame across the entire of Tibet. Today, over 90 monks attend the school. We will visit the school, see how they train and speak to the master artists about their art. Many of their paintings and sculptures can be found in the entire of Tibet.

The afternoon is left flexible. For those interested in arts, we will visit the **Tibetan art galleries**. Others can delve into local life by visiting a **Tibetan hospital** to understand the healing properties of this traditional art.

Overnight: Huangnan Hotel (2-star)

Meals: B, L, D

Day 5: The Road to Spirituality (2,000m)

Today, we retreat into the **Kanbla National Forest and Geological Park**, itself an attraction for its unique ecosystem and geological landscape. The peaks, made of sandstone of tertiary red layer, take all sorts of interesting shapes and to add a final charming touch, the yellow rivers and its dams meander through this landscape.

While driving we pass by spectacular landscapes and Tibetan villages. Our goal today, however, is more than the beautiful landscape. Upon reaching the end of the road, we hike eight kilometers to reach **Nanzhong Valley**, the home of the Tibetan Buddhism renaissance. The hike takes us through danxia peaks and dense forest lines which lay on either side of the valley.

Over here, three famous religious sites lie on the east – **Nanzhong Nunnery**, **Aqing Nanzhou Monastery** and **Sang'adeji Monastery**, are found. Of different sects and practitioners, they co-exist along the Yellow Sect and the Red Sect alongside both monks and nuns. Nanzhong peak, lies on the West, and is referred to as the sacred place of the "second dissemination" of Tibetan Buddhism. (Here, Tibetan Buddhism was kept when the Chinese kings wanted to destroy it, and so was able to be revitalized.)

We spend the night at the Nanzhong Nunnery, the largest nunnery in Northwest China. Living conditions are rustic at best, but the nuns do not complain – they are peaceful and happy pursuing their religious gods. We spend the evening talking and discussing about different ways of life. Practicing Buddhism in such a place would surely be of help in attaining the lofty realms that most of us hope to attain but may never reach.

Overnight: Homestay at Nanzhong Nunnery (Very basic living conditions)

Meals: B, L, D

Day 6: Kumbum Monastery

After a home-made breakfast amidst the danxia landscape, we take a **short hike** to a nearby dam where we return to civilization through a boat-ride.



Lunch will be at a village overseeing the Yellow River, where we then drive towards Xining to **Kumbum monastery**, one of the six most important monasteries of the Gelukpa (Yellow Hat) school of Tibetan Buddhism. Built in 1577 in honor of Tsongkapa, the founder of the Gelukpa School, this remarkable monastery is known for its numerous figurines carved out of yak butter as well as its frescos and tangkas (silk tapestries). The compound consists of several temples built up and down a hill. The Da Xingtang, the meditation hall, is known for the long tangkas adorning the prayer hall.

We spend the night at a Tibetan style boutique hotel in the compound. During our stay we will also walk around the temple in the evening to observe first-hand the daily rituals of monks of this very famous temple.

Overnight: Tibetan style boutique hotel (approximately 3-star standard)

Meals: B, L, D

Day 7: Nomadic Life (optional)

This day we will drive to **Qinghai Lake** (3.5 hours). Qinghai Lake was considered the sea, and considered one of the holy lakes. We picnic on sand dunes, and then head to the grassland where images of nomadic Tibetan herdsmen come to light. We walk along the grasslands and have tea with nomads. We then drive to **Xining** and have dinner at a Xining local restaurant.

Overnight: Xining 4-star hotel

Meals: B, L, D

Day 8: Flying Home

After breakfast, you would be transferred to the airport to catch your respective flights back home. Service ends here.

Meals: B



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Quotation for Group (more than 4pax, guaranteed group departure)

2008

Land Prices (CAD)

| Dates | 06-19Apr | 11-24May | 12-25Oct | 02-15Nov |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Land cost: 4-22pax | 1,540 | 1,540 | 1,540 | 1,540 |
| Single supplement | 230 | 230 | 230 | 230 |

Flights

Call for international air.

Recommend to combing pre or extension trip in Beijing, Shanghai or Xi'an

Discount

This program does not provide half-board service.

Call our tour consultant for tailor-made your private journey

Price includes:

- Domestic economy flights and airport taxes.
- Land transfers for whole trip
- All accommodations on a twin-sharing basis, at the hotels specified in the itinerary where available
- All admissions and activity expenses as noted on itinerary
- Meals, drinking water, and soft drinks during meals as program indicates
- All programs as per itinerary
- Private tour guide and driver
- Tour leader service along the whole trip when group size is bigger than 10pax.

Price excludes:

- Discretionary gratuities for drivers, local guides, and staff
- Expenses of personal nature, e.g. mini-bar, laundry, telecommunications, alcoholic beverages etc.
- Travel insurance
- Excursions not included in the itinerary
- International flights and airport taxes
- GST