



"See World Differently"

Pre & Extension Program

CN16 - Feeling The Pulse of The Tibetan Kingdom –Lhasa Only – 4Days

Detailed Day-by-Day Itinerary

Day 1: Fly to Lhasa



A spectacular flight above the Tibetan Plateau brings us to Lhasa, which at an elevation of more than 11,860 feet, is one of the world's highest cities. As the capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region, this vibrant and fascinating city has been the center of Tibet's political, religious, economic and cultural activities ever since the Fifth Dalai Lama moved the capital here in 1642. A city of contrasts, Lhasa offers the visitor an up-close look at some of Tibet's richest cultural wonders—in the midst of modern Chinese influences. A

Swan Travel local Tibetan guide will meet you in **Gonggar airport** as the Swan Travel service begins. During our drive from the airport into town, our guide will educate us about the area and offer some insights into Tibet's long and recently tragic history.

Since we have just made a sudden ascent from the lowlands to an altitude of over 3,700 meters (12,139 ft), the afternoon is left free for acclimatization. If energy permits, we can stroll onto **Barkhor Street**, the kora (the pilgrimage route) around the Jokhang Temple. Poking your head into local Tibetan markets, your eyes feast on strangely clad clansmen from Tibet's outlying regions as you peruse the wares of the many antique and thangka shops.

Overnight: Kyichu Hotel

Meals: D

Day 2: Lhasa—Potala Palace, Jokhang Temple and Tibetan Hospital



This morning's destination is the famous **Potala Palace**, an immense structure stacked atop Marpo Ri (Red Hill) high above the Lhasa Valley. Built on the site of a destroyed 7th-century palace, the Potala has housed each of the successive Dalai Lamas and served as the headquarters of the Tibetan government since its construction in 1645. The palace was the winter residence of the 14th Dalai Lama until he was exiled to India in 1959. The massive complex is comprised of

the secular White Palace and the sacred Red Palace along with their ancillary buildings including dormitories for the large staff of each Dalai Lama, schools, chapels, a printing



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house and tombs. It contains more than 10,000 shrines, 200,000 images, and 1,000 rooms. The palace was shelled during the 1959 uprising against the Chinese, but suffered only minor damage.

After lunch, we visit the nearby **Jokhang Temple**, the spiritual heart of Tibet. Each day, pilgrims from all across Tibet journey to this holiest of temples, some even prostrating themselves with each step throughout their trek until they reach the doorsill. Upon arrival, the pilgrims display their piety by reciting sacred mantras, kindling the continuously lit *chömay* (butter lamps) honoring deities with white scarves and spinning prayer wheels. With a history that stretches back more than 1,300 years, Jokhang was built by King Songsten Gampo to house two Buddha images belonging to his two wives—Princess Wen Cheng (daughter of Emperor Taizong of Tang China) and Princess Bhrikuti of Nepal. It is said that Princess Wencheng chose the site of Jokhang Temple—Lake Wothong, because she believed that the lake is a witch’s heart. She insisted that a temple must be built on top of it to purge its evil. The lake was filled in, but according to some people, a deep pool still exists beneath the temple. Aside from the palace’s intriguing past, pilgrims are drawn to the palace because it houses the statue of Jowo Sakyamuni (depicting the historical Buddha at age 12), which is believed to be one of the most precious objects in Tibetan Buddhism.

Stepping out of the temple, we head to the **Tibetan hospital** where we meet a Tibet Medication expert who will educate us on Tibetan Medicinal history, theory and practices.

Overnight: Kyichu Hotel (3-star)

Meal: B, L, D

Day 3: Lhasa–Pabonka Monastery, Sera Monastery and Dropenling Handicraft Development Center



In the morning, we shuttle the short distance to the ancient and seldom-visited **Pabongka Monastery**. Local legend claims that the surrounding land was home to two divine tortoises, a male and a female—which now exist as two granite boulders at this site. Carved into a rock at the entrance to the temple, you’ll see the mantra *Om mani padme hum*. In rough translation, the phrase says “Hail to the jewel in the lotus,” referring to the Buddhist belief that all people inherently possess the qualities necessary to achieve spiritual enlightenment. Embarking

on our walk, we follow a trail up to the **Tashi Chöling hermitage** for fantastic views of the Lhasa Valley. We continue up the ridge and along the flanks of Phurbu Chok to the Sera Tse hermitage and then to the Dode Valley. If we have more energy, we can walk down hill 30 minutes and reach a **nunnery** for short visit.



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Afterwards, we explore the **Sera Monastery**. One of the three main Gelupka monasteries in Lhasa, Sera is an important spiritual center for Buddhist monks. Depending on how we are feeling, we can take a short, easy walk to a nearby nunnery, taking in wonderful views of the entire city of Lhasa in the process. Inside the monastery, we stroll among the vast temples and college complexes, and mingle freely with monks going about their daily duties. Afterwards, we visit the printing center, where sutra texts are still printed by hand on the traditional Tibetan long paper. We have a chance to print our own as well. We then proceed to the animated debate courtyard. At the debate courtyard Tibetan monks energetically challenge each other's view and interpretation of the scripture, simultaneously honing their understanding of Tibetan Buddhism and debating skills. When the monk's point is made, he claps his hand loudly in front of his opponent to signal this opponent to respond. The lively debate provides an excellent contrast to the introspective side of Lhasa. Back to town, we will have a cup of yak tea at a local **Tibetan's home** where we converse with the family members and get a more personal and grounded understanding of their daily life. Afterwards, we visit the **Dropenling Handicraft Development Center**, a workshop and gallery that showcases handicrafts made in Tibet, by Tibetans. Established by the The Tibet Poverty Alleviation Fund, Dropenling seeks to provide economic incentives to preserve traditional Tibetan crafts and culture. At the center we see artisans making statues and thanckas.

Overnight: Kyichu Hotel (3-star)

Meal: B, L, D

Day 4: Excursion to Yamdrok Tso Lake

This morning we drive to **Yamdrok Tso Lake** (4408 m), one of the three holiest lakes in Tibet. There, we will enjoy the vista of the lake's pincer-shaped expanse of turquoise water, surrounded by the mysterious Mt. Donang Sangwari (5,340 m) on the peninsula beyond, and the snow peaks of Nojin Gangzang (7,191 m) in the distance. According to Tibetan legends, the lake is a fairy that descended to earth. As a significant sacred lake, many Tibetans believe that the lake's colors have spiritual meanings. Thus pilgrims would visit the lake prior to making important decisions. We enjoy a picnic lunch by this beautiful lake before heading to the airport for a flight back home. Swan Travel service ends at the airport.

Meal: B L



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Quotation for Program (Base on 2pax)

2008	Land Prices (CAD)		
Dates	11-14May	12-15Sep 10-14Oct	01-04Nov, 08 06-09Apr, 08
Land cost: above 2pax	From 910	From 890	From 850
Single supplement	95	95	90

Flights

Call for international air.

Call for tailor-made your private journey

Triple Discount

Additional discount of \$200 applies for children under 12 sharing a triple with two adults. The discount is for the child only.

Additional discount of \$100 applies for traveler who requests half-board service which is no dinner arrangement.

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.

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