


1_CULTURAL TIBET TRIP in 8 days	
	Itinerary
day 1	Arrival in Lhasa, pick up at Gongga Airport (or at Lhasa train station) and transfer to the hotel to check in and rest. After nightfall, guests can walk to Potala Palace or Jokhang Temple, to enjoy the night view.
Distance: 70KM // Today's driving time: 1 hour // Altitude of accommodation: 3650M	
<p>Summary of the Day:</p> <p>After arriving in Lhasa, your guide will pick you up at Gongga Airport (or at the train station), and bring you to your comfortable hotel to check in, so that you can settle in, have a rest and relax. After nightfall, everyone can independently choose to go to Potala Palace to enjoy the charming scenery at night, or go to Jokhang Temple to experience a different kind of peaceful and beautiful night scenery.</p>	
	
day2	Thousand Buddha Cliff - Yaowang Mountain Viewing Platform - Potala Palace - Zongjiao Lukang Park
Distance: 100KM // Today's driving time: 1 hour // Altitude of accommodation: 3650M	
<p><i>Summary of the Day:</i></p> <p>Our first visiting point today is the Thousand Buddha Cliff with its ancient, exquisitely carved Buddha statues, which carry profound historical and cultural heritage. Seeing these carvings make people feel as if they have traveled through time and space, feeling the sedimentation of time and the power of religion.</p> <p>Next, we head to the Yaowang Mountain view point to take a panoramic view of the beautiful scenery of Lhasa City, and appreciate the unique style of the city from a bird perspective.</p> <p>Then we continue to the magnificent Potala Palace, the world-renowned Tibetan palace standing on the top of the Red Mountain of Lhasa. Its majestic momentum, magnificent architecture, and rich cultural connotations make visitors feel easily touched, and turn speechless.</p> <p>We finish the day with a visit to Zongjiao Lukang, a peaceful and beautiful park with fresh air and pleasant environment. It is a good place for people to relax and experience the integration of nature and culture.</p> <p>The goal of today's program is to fully appreciate the unique charm of Lhasa, gather first, but lasting experiences and precious memories while adjusting to the altitude on this first visiting day.</p>	
<p><i>Additional site information:</i></p> <p>The Thousand Buddha Cliff is situated in the north of YaoWang Mountains which is located in the southwest of Potala Palace. Several thousands of colorful Buddha statues of different sizes are carved one next to the other on the cliff. Very</p>	

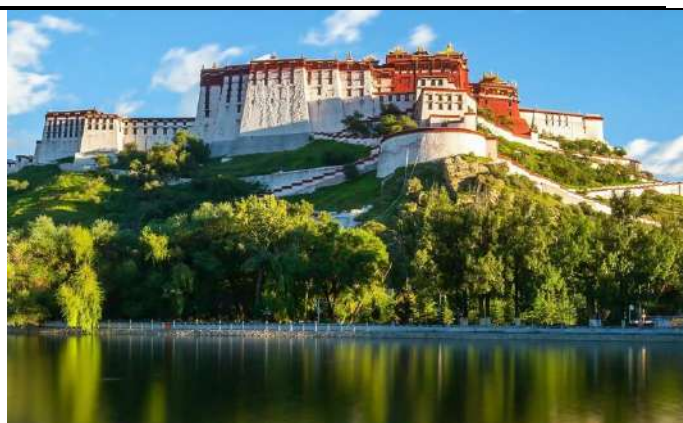
few tourists are coming to visit this place; mainly locals come here to worship and pray. The mountain is covered with carvings, and Tibetan praying flags in five colors are hanging everywhere, making visitors feel as if they are in a “Buddhist paradise”.

One can also describe this site as a Buddhist art world: The giant Sakyamuni carving, and the thousands of statues, big and small, arranged in good order on the cliff. Most of them are Guanying, Wenshu, Tara and Guarding Gods, it feels like a mysterious world of Buddhas, touching our soul deeply. Those delicate carvings done by Tibetan masters in several generations are still well preserved through several thousand years of erosion by wind and rain. After careful restoration work, the statues still have very vivid colors. They are a very important historical heritage for us to learn about Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan culture.

Potala Palace is situated on the Red Mountain (MaBuRi Mountain) which is located in the northwestern part of Lhasa City. It was first built on the initiative of the 33rd generation of Tibetan kings in 631. When the Tibetan Kingdom was dismissed, the palace was seriously damaged by natural disaster and human destruction. In 1645, the 5th Dalai Lama rebuilt Potala Palace in order to strengthen the regime of Ganden Podrang (甘丹颇章) and its unity of state and religion. Later on it was enlarged and expanded gradually until today. Potala Palace was designed and built according to the structure of a Tibetan mandala, the area covers a total surface of 360,000 square meters, while the building covers 130,000 square meters, and the main building is 117m high and has 13 floors. It somehow takes on the role of a palace and a castle, combining under its roof a royal palace, a pagoda, a Buddhist hall, an administration office, a monk school and a monk dormitory with 1267 rooms. The main building is divided into the White House and the Red House. The first one is for preaching and living of the Dalai Lama, while the latter is the activity center and holy pagoda of the previous Dalai Lama. The Red House is surrounded by the White House, an indication of the social system of the unification of politics and religion in Old Tibet.

Potala Palace has been the winter residence for generations of Dalai Lama, and it has been also the ruling center of the Tibetan regime, starting from the 5th Dalai Lama. All important religious and political ceremonies were held here, as it is considered a highly important spiritual place. The architecture of Potala Palace and the collection of antique artifacts found inside the palace show the communication, exchange and melting of politics, economy and culture among all Chinese ethnic minorities over many generations. It is evidence that Tibet has been an integral part of China since ancient times.





day3	Jokhang Temple - Walk to Ramoche Temple & surrounding areas - Tangka Painting Academy
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Distance: 100KM // Today's driving time: 30min // Altitude of accommodation: 3650M

Summary of the Day:

Today we will explore Lhasa mainly by walking.

First we will step into the holy Jokhang Temple, where we will feel its uniqueness and devoutly pursue of the footsteps of faith, a place deeply filled with historical and religious atmosphere.

Next we will walk to Ramoche Temple and explore its surroundings, stroll along the quaint streets, and feel the tranquility and palpable peace of this area of Lhasa. Along the way, you can admire various traditional buildings, distinctive little shops, and people coming and going, a vivid picture of Tibetan daily life is slowly unfolding before your eyes.

Afterwards we will visit the Tangka Academy, where you can get a close look on exquisite and incomparable Tangka works, learn about the admirable skills of the artists and profound cultural connotations of the paintings, immerse yourself in the world of Tibetan Tangka art to appreciate its beauty and charm.

Today's program will allow us to experience the particular tradition and custom of Tibetan temples, while also gaining an understanding and insight into Tibetan daily life and its traditional art.

Additional site information:

Jokhang Temple: also called "ZuLaKang" or "JueKang" (which means "Buddhist Hall" in Tibetan language) is situated in the center of Lhasa Old District. Built by the Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo, in some ways we can say that Lhasa is called a "Holy Place" because of this temple. The temple was first called "ReSa", which later became the name of the city today: LhaSa. The initial building of Jokhang Temple was enlarged during Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties to become the temple we can see today. It has a history of more than 1300 years, enjoying the highest position within Tibetan Buddhism. The temple is the building of the golden age of Tubo regime (吐蕃 also called "Tufan", the name of Tibet in 7th-11th century), and it is also the oldest soil and wood structure in Tibet, introducing at that time a new building style in the area. Inside the temple there is a full-size statue of Sakyamuni when he was 12 years old, which was brought to Tubo Kingdom by princess WenChen from ChangAn (today Xi'An) during Tang Dynasty.

The architecture of Jokhang Temple combines Tibetan style, Tang Dynasty style, Nepali and Indian styles, and is considered a model for Tibetan religious buildings. All year round incense fire and smoke can be seen in front of the temple, many worshippers have been coming on a daily basis to press their head down praying, leaving a visible pit on the stone ground. The constantly lit up yak butter lamp is evidence of ages of Buddhist pilgrimages.

Ramoche Temple, called in Tibetan "JiaDaRaMuQie", is situated in 500m north of Balang Street in Lhasa. It began to be

built in the mid-7th century, initiated in 641 by Tang princess WenChen. The total surface is 4000 square meters; inside the temple is a full-size statue of Sakyamuni when he was 8 years old.

Ramoche Temple suffered several fires over history, most parts of the temple we see today were rebuilt later on. Only the first floor of the temple still dates from the early age. From the pillars in the hall we can see the prosperity of the Tubo regime, we can see carved lotus, grass and flowers, clouds and jewelry, and the six-syllable Sanskrit mantra. The main building has 3 floors: the first floor is divided into front hall, scripture hall and Buddhist hall, surrounded by the passage of praying wheels with Buddhist paintings on the walls. The splendid roof is tiled in shining gold, which can be seen from any location in Lhasa.

The architecture of Ramoche Temple combines Han and Tibetan styles. Being one of the earliest temples in Tibet, it was managed by Han monks at the beginning. Initiated by the Tang princess, it is until today a symbol of friendship between Han China and Tibet.



day 4 | Lhasa - Sangye Temple - Qingpu Spiritual Practice Site - Zhaxi Qudeng Tibetan Opera - Shannan

Distance: 220KM // Today's driving time: 4 hours // Altitude of accommodation: 3700M

Summary of the Day:

Leaving Lhasa today we first drive to the sacred Sangye Temple, which occupies an important position in the history of Tibetan Buddhism as it carries countless beliefs and wisdom of the Tibetan people. When you step into this land, you can immediately feel the solemnity and respect that spreads through the air. The ancient buildings emit a unique charm, and every detail seems to tell the glory and legends of the past, making visitors immerse themselves in this strong religious atmosphere and historical heritage.

Next, we will drive to the dreamland-like Qingpu spiritual practice site. Surrounded by high mountains and shrouded in clouds, Qingpu is like a pure land hidden in another world, full of tranquility and peace. Walking along the mountain path, it is as if one can touch the traces left by time. The footprints and stories left by those countless Buddhist practitioners make people feel in awe, bringing peace and deep comfort to their souls.

Afterwards we head to the birthplace of Tibetan opera called "Zhaxi Qudeng", which has a long and significant tradition with great artistic value for the Tibetan people. Until today this unique art form is still inherited, we will hear the sound of gongs and drums, see some dynamic and vivid performance scenes, and feel the strong vitality of Tibetan culture today. Every action and every singing style embodies the wisdom and talent of Tibetan ancestors, making us admire this long-standing cultural treasure.

Finally, we will arrive at Shannan, a place full of history and cultural heritage. This vast land has witnessed countless stories and changes over time. It is like a heavy history book, waiting for people to carefully read and taste, to explore the

mysteries and wonders hidden in the depths of time.

Every station of today's journey is like a shining pearl in the big picture of Tibetan culture, all parts connected through a colorful string.

Additional site information:

QingPu Spiritual Practice Site is situated in ShanNan ZhaNan county, only a few kilometers northeast of SanYe Temple, at around 4300m above sea level. Because it is very quiet and peaceful, many historical celebrities like famous master monks and Living Buddhas came here to practice, and many pilgrims constantly come here to worship.

QingPu became a very popular spiritual practice site, partly because of its microclimate and environment. The surrounding mountains are bare yellow soil, only the practice site is covered with green trees and flowers everywhere, water streams floating, crowds of birds singing.... QingPu is like a serene oasis, for body and mind.

SangYe Temple: the full name is “贝扎玛桑耶敏久伦吉白祖拉康”, meaning in Tibetan “Temple of prosperity, continuity and eternity”. It is also called CunXiang Temple, which basically means to “think about existence”. It is located in ShanNan region in ZhaNan county, inside SangYe Town, which is north of Brahmaputra River.

SangYe Temple was built starting in the 8th century during the Tubo regime, and it is said to be the first temple where the monks shaved their heads. The structure of the temple was designed according to the Tibetan universe. The Buddhist Hall in the center combines 3 building styles (Han, Tibetan and Indian), that is why the temple is also called the “Temple of 3 styles”.

The layout of the entire temple was designed according to the “Great Buddhist World” as described in the Buddhist scriptures. WuZi Hall (Uzi Grand Hall) represents the center of the world, which is XuMi mountain (Mount Sumero). The four halls surrounding the center hall represent the four major continents and the eight small continents, together with the sun hall and moon hall. The walls of the temple symbolize the walls of the universe. Four pagodas are standing around the main hall, in red, white, green and black, to eliminate all the bad spirits and demons, and to prevent disaster. In each direction of the temple walls is a gate, with the Eastern gate as the front main gate.



day5	Shannan – Yamdrok Lake - Rituo Temple - Karola Glacier - Shigatse
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Distance: 470KM // Today's driving time: 7 hours // Altitude of accommodation: 4000M

Summary of the Day:

This morning we start off from charming Shannan to continue our journey of discovery of Tibet.

We arrive first at the beautiful Yamdrok Lake, a vast and peaceful blue lake, like a precious gem left by heaven on earth.

The water shimmering in enchanting sun light complemented by the surrounding impressive mountains, create a breathtaking and stunning picture. Standing by the lake looking at its lush color and breathing in the holy atmosphere of pure nature, it makes our hearts seem to be washed away.

We continue our way to Rituo Temple, a place where it seems that normal life has been long forgotten. This temple is standing on an isolated island, full of mystery and magic, quietly watching over Yamdrok Lake, witnessing the flow and changes of time. Standing on the island one can feel the tranquility and peace that transcends the mundane world. Time has slowed down here, making one feel intoxicated and their thoughts drifting along.

Afterwards we continue our drive and approach the magnificent Karola Glacier, a huge white dragon, lying horizontally among the mountains, emitting a majestic aura. The huge ice body and crystal clear ice layer make people marvel at the incredible craftsmanship of nature. Standing at the foot of the glacier, we can feel the waves of cold and be in awe towards the power of nature.

Finally, we arrive in Shigatse for the night. The city of Shigatse carries profound cultural heritage and historical value. It has a unique urban landscape and a strong humanistic atmosphere, allowing people to feel a different kind of splendor and richness here.

During today's journey from Shannan to Shigatse, each visited place has a unique charm and unforgettable scenery, allowing people's hearts to experience a distinctive deep feeling towards Tibet.

Additional site information:

“Yamdrok Tso” means Green Jade Lake in Tibetan language, it is situated in Gongga county and Langkazi county. It is listed as one of the three holy Tibetan lakes, together with Namtso Lake and Manasarovar Lake. It is the biggest inland lake in southern Tibet plateau on an altitude of 4441m above sea level. It is a unique natural scenic spot revealing a high plateau lake, snow mountains, islands, meadows, hot springs, wild animals, plants and temples. Yamdrok Lake is a typical dammed lake on high plateau, it is said to have formed over 400 million years ago due to glacial mudslides blocking the river channel. Its shape is irregular with many forks and winding lakeshores. It has three side lakes named Komtso, Chentso and Jutso, and there are three major snow mountain peaks in the west of the lake. One peak is Noijin Kangsang which is 7206 meters high. It is the most important holy mountain in Tsang region, and one of the four traditional holy mountains in Tibet.

Rituo Temple is said to be the loneliest temple in Tibet, with only one monk living in it. It is on the north side of Yamdrok Lake, surrounded by water from three sides, there is only a small lane connecting it to the land. It began to be built in the late 14th century and has a history of over 600 years. It is a Sakya temple, which was co-built by the saint monk Xiajiadunzhu and his nephew. There are only three buildings with the structure of the Chinese character 品. All are made of bricks and stone. The buildings are simple bungalows with white and yellow walls and ironed red roofs, the typical Tibetan style. One island with one temple and one monk, they together make a lonely world!

Karola Glacier: Situated at the junction between Nakartse county and Gyantse county in Lhoka region, about 70Km away from Gyantse county, it is one of the three biggest continental glaciers in Tibet as well as the Eastern source of Nianchu river. After leaving the Yamdrok Lake and crossing the Simila pass with an altitude of 4330M, we will arrive at the foot of Karola glacier. The altitude at the foot of the glacier is 5560m, the point to see the glacier is at about 5400m above sea level. North of it, we can see a hanging glacier formed by the southward drift of the Noijin Kangsang glacier.



day6	Shigatse – Tashilhunpo Monastery – Yangbajing – Lhasa
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Distance: 360KM // Today's driving time: 5 hours // Altitude of accommodation: 3650M

Summary of the Day:

Starting from Shigatse we continue the journey with our first stop at Tashilhunpo Temple, a grand Tibetan temple that carries once again a deep historical and religious significance. The buildings inside the temple are arranged in a neat and orderly manner, and the golden roof shines with a sacred light in the sunlight. The monks move through it, and the sound of reciting scriptures echoes back and forth, immersing visitors in a strong religious atmosphere, feeling the power of faith and the awakening of the soul.

We continue our drive to Yangbajing, enjoying the stunning scenery of the plateau along the way. When we arrive at Yangbajing, a geothermal landscape is displayed before our eyes, the steam makes us feel the magic and vitality that nature has bestowed upon this land.

While driving back to Lhasa, we can recall the visits and experiences of the last days, while admiring the beautiful scenery along the way. Arriving in Lhasa once again, the capital and holy city of Tibet, it feels like returning to the homeland of the soul, we return to this city that appears already familiar and close to us.

Additional site information:

Tashilhunpo Monastery: located at the foot of Niseri mountain in Shigatse, the name means “auspicious lamasery”, and was built in 1447.

Its architecture style is remarkable, religious features are mixed with ethnic features, indeed combining each other, representing different eras including Tang, Song, Ming and Qing Dynasty. The whole monastery is grand in scale, and it is considered a unique representative of Buddhist architecture in entire Tibet. Numerous buildings have their own characteristics, using well Tibetan traditional techniques and craftsmanship to display the religious art of Tibetan Buddhism and the solemnness of the Panchen Lama Pagoda. Tashilhunpo Lamasery has become a holy Buddhist site due to its prominent religious position, while its layout is a unique architectural landscape with deep Buddhist meaning itself.



day7	Tibetan Handmade Incense experience - Sera Temple Scripture Debate
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Distance: 100KM // Today's driving time: 1 hour // Altitude of accommodation: 3650M

Summary of the Day:

A cultural exploration of Tibet needs to include the unique experience of Tibetan handmade incense. In the morning we will go to the local Tibetan incense workshop and personally participate with the master in the production process. Making Tibetan incense is not only a traditional craft, but also a spiritual practice. In this process, you need to focus on the present, eliminate distractions, and feel inner peace and tranquility.

After completing the production of your own Tibetan incense, we will go to Sera Temple to watch the scripture debate. Sera Temple is one of the most famous temples in Tibet for its sutra debate, which has a long history and profound cultural heritage. The debate usually takes place in the afternoon, and we can arrive at the Sera Temple in advance to explore the temple and finally find the debate venue. There are many places worth visiting, such as the Tsochin Hall, Maizacang, and Abazacang. We can appreciate exquisite Buddha statues, murals, and architecture, and feel the solemnity and mystery of Tibetan Buddhism.

During the process of debating scriptures, monks will divide into two groups and engage in intense debates with each other. They explore Buddhist doctrine and philosophical issues through questioning, debate, and explanation. The scene of debating scriptures is very interesting, and the actions and expressions of the monks are rich and diverse, full of passion and vitality. Their debating voices echo loudly throughout the entire temple. When watching the debate, you need to remain quiet and respect the practices and studies of the monks.

Today's program is a very meaningful cultural experience to finish your visit in Tibet. By participating in the production of Tibetan incense, we can learn about the traditional culture and handicrafts of Tibetan people. By watching the Sutra Debate, we can gain a deeper understanding of the teachings and philosophy of Tibetan Buddhism. During this last day, we can round up the impressions of the last week, taking a lasting insight of Tibetan culture and religion back home with us.

Additional site information:

Tibetan Handmade Incense:

Before making Tibetan incense, it is necessary to clean hands and clean utensils to express respect to the gods. The raw materials for making Tibetan incense usually include cypress, elm, sandalwood, clove, and rhododendron pollen. Each raw material has its own specific ratio and function, for example, cypress helps with combustion, elm helps with bonding, sandalwood has a calming effect, cloves can help with sleep, and rhododendron pollen can purify the air. Our teacher will show you how to mix your chosen ingredients together and then knead them into a paste by hand. Next

step is to put the paste into the mold and squeeze them into straight Tibetan incense. This requires certain skills and strength, and may require multiple attempts to master.

Sera Monastery: Its full name is “Sera Mahayana Monastery”, and it is one of the six major monasteries of Gelug school in Tibetan Buddhism. Together with Drepung Monastery and Ganden Monastery, they form the “Three Main Monasteries” in Lhasa. Sera is the latest one built among the three. Situated in Serawuzi mountain 3km north of Lhasa, surrounded by willow trees, it has been the place for the high monks and living Buddhas to teach and preach since ancient times. There are many small temples and nunneries around it.

Inside the temple are tens of thousands of Vajra statues, most of them are made locally. There are also many bronze statues brought from mainland China or India. In the main hall and scripture room numerous colorful fresco murals are well preserved. The most famous statue is the one of “Horse Head and Vidya”. The buildings of Sera monastery are dense but not crowded, diverse but not chaotic. The architecture is tailored to local conditions, and the main building is outstanding, reflecting the unique style of Gelug monastery. We can say that it is in itself a religious city.



day8	End of itinerary - drop off at Lhasa Gongga Airport
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Distance: 70KM // Today's driving time: 1 hour

Summary of the Day:

Our journey finally comes to an end, and you will be transferred to Lhasa Gongga Airport for departure.

We hope that this journey has become a precious and lasting memory in your life, and we wish that you look forward to eventually meeting with this magical land of Tibet another time again.

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