

TREASURES OF TIBET

Lhasa, Shigatse, Gyantse & Chengdu



This once in a lifetime journey takes you to the mystical land of Tibet and on to Chengdu. Tibet is one of the most beautiful and special places on earth: stunning Himalayan Alpine scenery, sacred Buddhist Monasteries, and one of the most unique, spiritual and traditional cultures in the world. Finishing the tour in China you will have the rare opportunity to observe the magnificent pandas in their natural environment.

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Tibet. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important details such as flight details, insurance and visa requirements.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 1: UK to Lhasa

Depart London on your scheduled overnight flight to Lhasa Airport in Tibet, via Chengdu in China.

DAY 2: Lhasa D

On arrival into Lhasa you will be met by your local guide and transferred to your hotel. The rest of the day will be at leisure in order to acclimatise to the altitude.

DAY 3-4: Lhasa B/L/D

After breakfast this morning you will visit the spectacular Potala Palace, the spiritual and symbolic heart of the Tibetan nation. After lunch visit the Jokhang temple, Lhasa's other main attraction. After breakfast on day four visit the Norbulingka, which translates as the Treasure Garden and is also known as the Summer Palace. The summer palace is where the Dalai Lama would have lived and spent most of his time until he reached the age of eighteen and was ready to take on greater

responsibilities. After lunch a short ride will take you to the 600 year old Sera Monastery.

DAY 5: Lhasa to Shigatse B/L/D

Today you will be leaving Lhasa and travelling by train to Tibet's second city, Shigatse, passing by rural villages, mountain peaks and rivers. After lunch on arrival you will have a chance to explore the Tashilhunpo monastery. Now home to Tibet's largest number of monks, this vast complex of buildings, temples and prayer halls is essentially a walled town in its own right. The temple of Jampa – the future Buddha - housing the world's largest gilded statue and the Monastery's assembly hall with its stunning courtyard are not to be missed.

DAY 6: Shigatse to Gyantse B/L/D

This morning you will be travelling to Gyantse with an opportunity to visit a traditional Tibetan family's house on the way – a great insight into Tibetan culture and the central role religion plays in their lives. After lunch you will visit Pelkor Chode Monastery and the monumental Gyantse Kumbum, a chorten 35 metres high and built on six floors, filled with thousands of exquisite original paintings. The monastery, founded in 1418, is surrounded by ancient red-bricked battlements and still receives a steady influx of wondering pilgrims. It is no wonder this is one of Tibet's must see attractions.

DAY 7: Gyantse to Lhasa B/L/D

Today leave Gyantse to embark on a journey that will take you through some of the most stunning scenery in the world, Yamdrok Lake and Karo La Glacier. Make sure you bring your camera to capture some truly mesmerising photo opportunities.

DAY 8: Lhasa to Chengdu B/L/D

After breakfast transfer to the airport and take your flight to Chengdu. On arrival take a tour of the city including the People's park and the Wide and Narrow alleys.

DAY 9: Chengdu B/L/D

Today takes you to experience a once in a lifetime trip to the Chengdu Panda Breeding and Research Centre, home to one of China's largest habitat of pandas. In the evening enjoy a delicious Sichuan dinner.

DAY 10: Chengdu to UK or Extension B

After breakfast transfer to Chengdu International Airport for your flight back to the UK, or continue on to your chosen extension.

If you have chosen an extension this will start on day 9 of the tour, with your final night in Chengdu at the end of your extension.

Hotel Information

Lhasa (4 nights): 4★ Fourpoint by Sheraton Hotel - No. 10, Bo Linka Road, Lhasa, Tibet (Xizang), China, 850000.
Telephone Number: +86 89 1634 8888

Shigatse (1 night): 4★ Shigatse Hotel - 13 Shanghai Middle Rd, Shigatse, Xigaze, Tibet, China, 857000. Telephone Number: +86 892 882 2525

Gyantse (1 night): 4★ Yeti Garden Hotel - No 11 Wei Guo Lu, Gyantse, Tibet, China. Telephone Number: +86 892 8175555

Chengdu (2 nights): 4★ Tibet Hotel - 46 Beijing Middle Rd, Chengguan, Lhasa, Tibet, China. Telephone Number: +86 891 680 8886

All accommodation is 4★ and features an en suite bathroom, air-conditioning/heating, TV and coffee making facilities. Mercury Holidays has visited and inspected all of the hotels to ensure that they meet the high standards of service which we require for our clients. If the hotels detailed are not available, alternatives will be used of a similar standard. Final confirmation of your hotels will be sent in a document approximately two weeks before you travel.

Meals

Breakfast is always western style and served in the hotel each morning. Lunch and dinner will be taken in local Tibetan and Chinese restaurants and served with either one beer or soft drink. A variety of restaurants are visited giving you the chance to experience a range of dishes and flavours.

On your arrival

On your arrival in Tibet you will be met by a representative from our local agent, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/China Travel Service rep. will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your national guide will be on hand 24 hours a day should you have any queries. However, if you need to contact China Travel Service during your stay the details are:

China Travel Service Head Office (Beijing)co.Ltd
Floor 30
38 Dong Sanhuan Beilu
Beijing
China
100026.
Tel: 0086-10-84514382 or 0086-10-85908336

Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for China Travel Service

Contact	Telephone number
Ms Linda Liu	Mobile: 0086-13911043036
Ms Katty Hu	Mobile: 0086-13426098858
When in Chengdu:	
Ms Qiu Hong	Office: 0086-28-86731711 Mobile: 008613908172036

Visas

You will require a visa for entry into China. We work closely with The Travel Visa Company who will be able to arrange your visa for you on your behalf. Please call them on 01270 250 590 and quote "Mercury Holidays". The cost of the visa is approximately £186.00, when calling the Travel Visa Company they will advise you of the most up to date fees. The visas take around 10 working days to issue and are valid for unlimited trips to China for 2 years from the date of issue. We therefore recommend that you apply for your visa 8 weeks before travel, however please be aware that your passport will be required for the application so make sure that you will not need it during this time.

You will require a visa for entry into Tibet. If you have a British passport we have included the cost of the visa in your tour and this will be arranged for you by our team in China. Therefore, you do not need to organise a visa for Tibet before you travel. **Please note:** we can only arrange a visa for British passport holders, all other nationalities are on request and you must check with us prior to booking.

Insurance

You must obtain suitable travel insurance prior to departure. Mercury Holidays is partnered with Holiday Extras which offer insurance at the following prices: **Worldwide (excluding USA)**

Age in years	Up to 64	65-74	75-85
Up to 17 days cover	£42	£79	£135

For all persons 86 years and over, please contact us for insurance prices. If you have an existing policy with another company, please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable

travel insurance from the date of booking.

Health and Vaccinations

It is strongly recommended that you check the latest health recommendations for travel to China and Tibet with your GP at least 4-6 weeks before travel. It is advisable not to drink the tap water.

Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with an average level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves full days of sightseeing, often on foot, and includes some climbing of stairs and getting on and off coaches. **This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties.**

Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 10, and the maximum will be 18. If in the unlikely event there are less than 10 people booked on your tour date then you may be asked to change to a different date. A full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

Tour Guides

This is a fully escorted tour with local guides throughout ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

Tipping

It is customary to tip your local guide and driver approximately £3.00 (CNY30.00) per person per day. For your convenience your local guide will collect tips at the end of each city visited, approximately £27.00 (CNY270.00) per person for the total duration. Tips are collected in Chinese Yuan.

Currency Exchange - Important

The currency in China and Tibet is the Renminbi, known as RMB or CNY. It is often referred to as the yuan. We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. US Dollars are



widely accepted in China and Tibet should you wish to keep an alternative currency on you.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry and extra drinks and snacks. Approximately £200 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour, depending on how much of a bargain-hunter you are!

Credit Card information

As normal practice you will be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card you may be asked for a cash deposit. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction and/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

What to Pack

- Warm clothing and thermals in winter
- Comfortable walking shoes • Camera & charger
- An electric plug converter - the voltage in China & Tibet is 220 Volts. However, there are many different types of electrical sockets throughout the country, it is therefore advisable to bring a multi-adaptor.
- Loo paper for public WCs

Flight and Airport Information

Your flight is to **Lhasa Airport** with **British Airways (BA)**, via Chengdu, and **China Airlines (CA)**, departing from **London Heathrow Terminal 5**.

Route	Depart	Arrive	Travel Duration	Identification Number
London Heathrow-Chengdu	17:35	10:45	10 hours 10 minutes	BA89
Chengdu-Lhasa	13:00	15:00	2 hours	CA4112
Lhasa-Chengdu	10:55	12:55	1 hour 55 minutes	CA4402
Chengdu-London Heathrow	12:15	16:10	10 hours 55 minutes	BA88

IMPORTANT: Please note that all flight times/numbers are given for guidance and are subject to change. Final flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

Baggage Allowance

Baggage allowance (per person): Each passenger is entitled to 20kg of hold luggage and hand luggage that you are permitted to carry one item of hand baggage (Max 5kg - 56x36x23cm) Weight restrictions will be finalized on E-ticket receipt. Should you wish to take additional luggage you will need to pay extra at check-in. Check-in should be at least 3 hours before departure.

Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking, lounges or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras - Tel. 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

Weather and Climate Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.

