



TIBET: SHISHAPANGMA BASE CAMP



This information should answer some of your questions about the trip and give you a better idea of what we do day-to-day. It doesn't hope to answer everything. If you have any questions please get in touch.



Descending from Shishapangma base camp

- **Fly across the Himalayas to Lhasa**
- **Cross the Tibetan Plateau on an overland journey**
- **Overnight at Everest's North Base Camp**
- **Trek to Shishapangma's Base Camp**
- **Magnificent close up mountain views in a seldom visited area**

Tibet

Tibet - an enigma for many generations, a distant land shrouded in mystery and legend, situated beyond the Himalaya on a high plateau and with a long history of isolation from the outside world.

Many of us are drawn to visit this remote land, perhaps inspired by Harrer's 'Seven Years in Tibet', perhaps by dramatic photos of Everest's northern side, perhaps curious to see the impact the Chinese have brought to its unique culture.

The overland journey across the Tibetan Plateau will certainly leave us with a strong impression of Tibet's isolation.

Nepal

Wedged between India and Tibet, and dominated by the Eastern Himalayas, Nepal is situated on an ancient trading route between India and Tibet, and provides good access to the mountains on the border.

Trek details

We begin with a dramatic flight to Lhasa, and spend time acclimatising here before driving across the Tibetan Plateau to reach Everest's north side where we walk to base camp. A drive towards the Nepal/Tibet border leads to the small town of Nyalam where the Shishapangma trek begins. Following a yak trail, we head west towards the massif on a little used route to camp at its south base camp. The trekking is not too strenuous and passes through some magnificent scenery.

Flexibility

In Tibet, times and arrangements are sometimes adhered to less strictly than you may be used to and there are many rules, regulations and customs which can trigger changes to the itinerary. A flexible approach would be an advantage in the event of minor changes being made to your holiday. Time has been allowed for some give and take within the day to day itinerary.

Fitness

On some days the walking is strenuous because of the altitude but the days are not too long and the tracks are good. Previous walking experience is an advantage, but just as important are adaptability and an open mind.

Food & accommodation

In Kathmandu and Lhasa we stay in comfortable well located hotels and on the overland journey we stay in simpler hotels and guesthouses. The accommodation at Rongbuk is very simple and we will overnight at Everest base camp in teahouse tents. While travelling and in towns we provide breakfast only - see day to day itinerary for details.

On the Shishapangma trek we'll camp in two-person tents with a mess tent and toilet tent. On trek all meals are included and will be a mixture of eastern and western dishes, with cooked breakfast, lunch and three course dinners. We use experienced cooks, trained to incorporate western standards of hygiene and food preparation within the constraints of a mountain environment. Vegetarians will be well catered for and other dietary needs can also be met within the limitations of local availability.

Trekking life

A trekking day usually starts early, around 6 am. After breakfast (porridge, omelette, chapattis etc) we set off. Lunch will break the pace, for about an hour. We usually reach the campsite in the early afternoon, leaving time to wash/relax before dinner at around 7pm. Bedtime beckons early and by about 8-9pm you will be ready to fall into your sleeping bag.

Luggage

Your luggage will be carried by yaks. All you have to carry is what you need for the day: waterproofs, fleece, hat, camera, water bottle etc. A trek bag is ideal for your main luggage, plus a small lockable bag for items not needed on trek.

Climate

The best seasons for trekking in the Shishapangma area are May (pre monsoon) and October (post monsoon). This area is affected by the monsoon during July and August when rain can be expected, adding colour to the hillsides. Temperatures may be warm during the day (T shirts & cotton trousers) but at the high camps it could drop below freezing, especially at night, so you will need a warm sleeping bag. Rain or snowstorms are possible.

Altitude

Above 3000m, the air is thinner, the pressure is lower and there is less oxygen available in the atmosphere. Acclimatisation is the process by which the body adapts to these conditions. The key to acclimatisation is a good itinerary with a gradual initial height gain, walking at a slow and steady pace, and increasing fluid intake – drinking at least 4 litres a day is advisable above 3000m. Many people have some minor side effects from altitude, such as headache, nausea or general lassitude. The optional use of ‘Diamox’ has proved useful for some people, as this drug can reduce these symptoms. You will be given more information on ‘Diamox’ with your Final Information, between 8 and 10 weeks before departure.

Transport

We fly from Kathmandu to Lhasa (approx 2 hours). On the overland journey we will use jeeps or a bus depending on numbers.

Language

The national language is Tibetan. There are many different dialects, but you should be able to pick up a few words or phrases from our guide or yak driver. Some of the trekking staff will be Nepali, so a willingness to attempt a few words in either Nepali or Tibetan will be appreciated.

Visa

You will need a multiple entry visa for Nepal which can be obtained on arrival at Kathmandu's Tribhuvan airport, current rate US\$40. Your Tibet travel permit and Chinese visa are included in the trip cost and will be arranged on DAY 2 in Kathmandu. An additional charge of US\$84pp currently applies to US passport holders for the Chinese visa.

Health

If you take care there should be no reason why you do not stay healthy. Frequent hand washing and care with drinking water is the key.

Equipment and clothing

Full details of the equipment and clothing required will be sent when you book. You will need good mountain equipment, a 4 season sleeping bag (or 3 season + fleece liner) and light clothing for warm day temperatures.

International Porter Protection Group

High Places has been endorsed by I.P.P.G. This means that we have agreed to treat our porters or local staff fairly, and to provide medical attention for them if needed.



Barkor Square, Lhasa

DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

This itinerary is flexible and should be seen as a guide only. Local conditions, weather or fitness could lead to changes in our daily plans. All times and distances are approximate. 'B,L,D' refers to meals included in the trip cost, i.e. Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.

This trip is 21 days ex KATHMANDU. The first and last days refer to the days of arrival in and departure from KATHMANDU, and may not be the days you leave or return home.

DAY 1 Arrive Kathmandu. (Hotel)

DAY 2 Kathmandu and sightseeing. Kathmandu (1527m) is a busy town full of contrasts and extremes. Temples, pagodas, religious shrines and a way of life centuries old all mingle with the hustle and bustle of 20th century architecture, traffic and western influence. We will have a guided half day city tour, then you can take off on your own for the rest of the day. Your Chinese visa and Tibet travel permit will be processed today. Hotel. (B)

DAY 3 Lhasa (3650).
A flight across the Himalayas to Lhasa - a tremendous experience! We transfer from Gonggar Airport into Lhasa (approx 1 hour). You will notice the altitude straight away, but we have allowed enough time here to acclimatise and each day you will feel stronger. Hotel. (B)

DAYS 4-5 Lhasa (3650m)
During these two days in Lhasa, there will be a combination of guided visits/walks and free time. Visits may include: Sera Gompa, one of the best preserved in Tibet, Norbulingka, the summer Palace of the Dalai Lama, Jokhang Temple, one of the most sacred shrines in Tibet, the Potala Palace, which dominates the city of Lhasa and was built in the 17th century on the same site as palaces built since the 5th or 6th centuries, and Drepung Monastery, once the largest in the world.



Surrounding Jokhang and close to our hotel is Barkor – a maze of narrow cobbled streets, and the central market of Lhasa. Hotel. (B)

DAY 6 Lhasa (3650m) *Sera monks debating*
A final day's acclimatisation in Lhasa is advised before setting off even higher across the Tibetan Plateau. Today is free for you to do as you please - on the last trip, a half day's strenuous walk up to Sera Tse Monastery (4050m), perched high on a cliff above Sera Gompa, provided both views and acclimatisation, then we caught a local bus back into town. Hotel. (B)

DAY 7 Gyantse (3950m)
Now better acclimatised, we set off on our overland journey. We cross Khamba La (4794m) then continue westwards over Karo La (5045m) past a huge glacier to reach Gyantse where we stay overnight. Hotel. (B) 260km drive, 5-6 hours. (B)

DAY 8 Shigatse (3900m)
We'll visit Gyantse Dzong this morning, a fort dating from the 14th century in a good position to overlook the town and surrounding countryside. We'll also see Gyantse Kumbum, a large stupa with many colourful murals.

We then continue on to Shigatse, a 90km/1.5-2 hour drive, arriving in time for lunch. The town is dominated by the ruins of the old fortress, which was built before the Potala Palace in Lhasa, but was reduced to ruins by the Lhasa uprising of 1959. In the afternoon there will be plenty of time to look around Tashilhumpo Monastery, the original seat of the Panchen Lama, set on a hillside with views of the whole valley.

Since we're now a few hundred metres higher, the altitude will be more noticeable and the kora (clockwise circuit) round the monastery is a good way to acclimatise. It takes about an hour and mainly follows the boundary wall – if you lose your way, look out for a pilgrim to follow. Hotel. (B)

DAY 9 Shegar (4350m)
We continue along the Friendship Highway past camps of nomadic herders to cross the Gyamtso La (5220m) before descending to Shegar where we spend the night. Approx 5 hour drive. Guesthouse. (B)

DAY 10 Rongbuk (4920m)
Driving now towards the main Himalayan range, we cross the Pang La (5150), for an incredible Himalayan panorama and views of Everest and Shishapangma. As we approach Rongbuk, Everest lies directly ahead. We stay overnight in a very simple guesthouse. (B)



Everest from Rongbuk. Photo Paul Keeley

DAY 11 Everest Base Camp. (5090m)
Today we will walk to Everest Base Camp. It's only 8km away but feels further because of the altitude. Basic overnight luggage will travel by horse cart and we spend the night in a tented tea house to catch the morning and evening light. (B)

DAY 12 Nyalam (3700m)
After sunrise and breakfast we head back towards Rongbuk and set off again. Our route now crosses some beautiful hills to reach Tingri. After lunch we'll continue the drive, climbing up to Lalung La (5124m) and Shung La (5200m) for clear views of Shishapangma as well as Kambachen and Gauri Shankar. We carry on for another couple of hours to arrive in Nyalam in the late afternoon where our trekking crew awaits. Camp. (B,D)

DAY 13 Draboche (4050m).
The yaks are loaded up and we leave Nyalam, walking through cultivated fields at first, which lead on to a green glacial valley. Heading for a camp at Draboche we have the option of a detour to Dara Tsho, (4270m) a high holy lake, well worth the detour in you are feeling up to it for the views from the ridge approaching the lake. If the weather isn't clear today there will be another chance to visit Dara Tsho on the

descent. Drabocheh means 'Big Rock', named after an enormous erratic boulder near the camp. (B,L,D)

DAY 14 Shingdip. (4400m). From Drabocheh we climb steadily above camp following a vague yak trail and keeping an eye out for cairns above us on the horizon which mark our route. Climbing right out of the valley floor, we end up high above Tshongdu Chu River, and can look back down the valley towards Nyalam and the Khumbu mountains beyond. Following a grassy shelf, we carry on to camp at Shingdip. (B,L,D)

DAY 15 Shingdip (4400m).
An acclimatisation walk up the valley for views of Kong Tsho, a lake nestled beneath impressive Shishapangma's eastern slopes. We return to our campsite at Shingdip. (B,L,D)

DAY 16 Tiger Camp (approx 4800m).
From Shingdip we continue up to reach a camp where in May 06 we spotted droppings which were thought to be tiger or snow leopard. This is a short day but has been designed this way because of the altitude. There will be time in the afternoon to climb up towards Shishapangma's 'Ice Tooth'. (B,L,D)

DAY 17 Base Camp (5250m). Continuing on and up, we are gradually surrounded by massive peaks with the Shishapangma massif ahead and the Jugal Himal on the Nepali border to our west. South Base Camp is located in a cwm dominated by 6-7000m peaks, with Shishapangma peeping out over a rock barrier to the north. From Base Camp we can follow a rough route used by mountaineers to reach the foot of its snowy slopes. All around is a breathtaking panorama of peaks. Camp. (B,L,D)



DAY 18 Camp below Drabocheh. *Shishapangma. Photo Louse Ready*
An easy scramble up a scree slope gains access to another platform from which to view Shishapangma and the Jugal Himal. From here we rejoin our approach route and retrace steps a short distance to Tiger Camp. We continue easily down the valley to camp beyond Drabocheh. (B,L,D)

DAY 19 Zhangmu
A second chance to do the scenic detour to Dara Tsho before retracing our steps back to Nyalam. We say goodbye to the yak men then head off down the Friendship Highway to the busy Tibetan border town of Zhangmu. (B)

DAY 20 Kathmandu
We pass through the border formalities then continue through 'no mans land' to reach the Nepali border town of Kodari. From here, a series of hairpin bends lead from the

mountains down into lush green hills then on to Kathmandu. Approx 5 hour drive.
(B)

If you have any spare days, you may like to consider being dropped off at 'The Last Resort', a 'Shangri La' near the Tibetan/Nepali border in the form of a permanent tented camp set on the side of a canyon amongst lush greenery, a marked contrast to Tibet and more peaceful than busy Kathmandu. Enjoy a tranquil stay with beautifully cooked meals and walks to local villages OR for the adventurous there are rafting, canyoning and bungee jumping options!

DAY 21 Depart Kathmandu, or continue with your own arrangements. (B)



Water tub display at 'Last Resort'

ML 12/09