

**INSIGHT TOURS:
PILGRIMAGE TO SACRED SITES IN EASTERN TIBET
FULL ITINERARY**

From: 31 July- 10th August 2017

Trip Duration: 12 days 11 nights

Starting: Chengdu, China

Finishing: Chengdu, China

Trip Grading: Regular itinerary, moderate walking

Accommodation: Hotels and guesthouses

Trip's cost: £1930/ €2250/ 2500us\$ per person (on a two person sharing basis)

Single room supplement: €350/£300/390 US\$

DAY 1

Activities: Chengdu (500m above sea level)

Airport pickup and hotel transfer. After settling into the hotel in the afternoon we will enjoy a traditional Chinese tea ceremony and dinner in an exclusive club inside the famous Wangjiang Park 'Bamboo Park'. Legend says that paper was invented in this park where hundreds of varieties of bamboo grow and elders practice the ancient art of Kung Fu every evening.

Our guide will briefly introduce the upcoming trip.

Overnight: Chengdu

DAY 2

In the morning we will proceed to Jingli, an ancient street where Tibetan craftsmen have practiced their trade for centuries. We will visit traditional handicraft shops and taste the local delicacies for lunch. There is also the option of visiting the giant panda breeding center depending on the group's wishes.

In the afternoon we will visit the Chengdu museum and later go to the Tibetan dance show at the Nationalities Dance Palace where we can enjoy some Tibetan food.

Overnight: Chengdu

Day 3

Activities: Chengdu to Dartsedo (2600m)

Distance: 380km

Drive time: 6-7hrs

After breakfast we will travel by car for around seven hours. On the way we will visit the famous Iron Bridge of the Mahasiddha Thangtong Gyalpo and stop for a traditional good luck chicken soup for our safe travels. Arrival in Kangding in the afternoon and after exploring the historical border town we can watch and participate in Khaita dances in the evening.

Overnight: Dartsedo

DAY 4

Activities: Dartsedo to Bamei (3450m)

Distance: 150km

Drive time: 4-5hrs

We will drive to Ragnaka (Xinduqiao in Chinese), a place of exceptional beauty that is reached by crossing over the first pass of Mount Tsedo. Then we drive to Lhagang where we will visit Lhagang Sakya Monastery and the nunnery. We will have a chance to admire the sweeping views

of the vast grasslands and the opportunity to ride horses with the nomads of the Minyak area.
Continue to Bamei.
Overnight: Bamei

DAY 5

Activities: Bamei to Dzogchen (3400m)

Distance: 400 km

Drive time: 7 hours

Leave Bamei and drive to Dzogchen Monastery through Ganzi town. On the way we shall see many alpine meadows and some majestic snowy mountain ranges. Ganzi is situated on very flat ground and many Tibetan merchants trade here. We can explore the town in the afternoon, see some local handicrafts and experience the bustle as nomads and modern day urban residents mingle. In the afternoon we continue the drive to Dzogchen Monastery passing through nomad lands. On the way we shall visit Manigango and the amazing Yilhung Lhatso Lake with its shores adorned with carved mani stones.

Overnight: Dzogchen Monastery

DAY 6

Dzogchen Monastery (4559m)

Distance: 0

Drive time: 0

Today we will visit one of the largest Nyingma monasteries in Kham. Dzogchen Monastery is recognized as the main pilgrimage site of Shakyamuni's relics in Tibet. It stands at an altitude of 4023m, in the hidden Valley of Rudog Kyitram. The monastery was founded in 1684-1685 on the advice of the 5th Dalai Lama. We will meet with the 7th Dzogchen Rinpoche and also Dzogchen Khyentse (a modern day *mahasiddha*) and visit the place where Dza Patrul Rinpoche practiced Toga. We will see sacred caves where many meditators still practice. At a sacred spot in the open grasslands we will hang our *lungta* prayer flags and enjoy a nomad style picnic.

Overnight: Dzogchen Monastery

DAY 7

Activities: Dzogchen to Galenting and Derge (3200m)

Distance: 148 km

Drive time: 5 hours

We visit Galenting, the seat of Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Wangchuk, Chogyal Namkhai Norbu's paternal uncle and meet the reincarnation of Khyentse Rinpoche's master, Kunga Palden. Next, we will pass the famous Trola mountain (5050m) and then descend to Derge, the capital of the former Kingdom of Derge. We will visit the renowned UNESCO protected woodblock printing house, where you can see Buddhist texts printed in the traditional manner, without the use of modern machinery.

Overnight: Derge

DAY 8

Activities: Derge and Dzongsar (3200m)

Drive Time: 3 hours

Derge Gonchen monastery, where Chogyal Namkhai Norbu studied at a young age. We then visit a temple built by Thangtong Gyalpo and explore the town. In the afternoon we will arrive in Menshed valley, where the famous Dzongsar Monastery is located. Tour Dzongsar Buddhist College where we can also go to the Tibetan hospital. Those interested can be visited by a Tibetan doctor.

Overnight: Dzongsar Monastery

DAY 9

Activities: Dzongsar to Nyarong (2970 m)

Distance: 295 km

Drive time: 5-6 hrs

The first stop will be Tromge monastery. Nyarong valley is a stronghold of the Nyingmapa school and is also associated with the Bon tradition. We will visit Nyala Pema Duddul's retreat place and monastery. Nyala Pema Dudul was a yogi who attained the rainbow body and was the master (amongst others) of Ayu Khandro, Adzom Drugpa and Changchub Dorje.

Overnight: Nyarong

DAY 10

Activities: Nyarong to Xinduqiao (3300m)

Distance: 268 km

Drive time: 6-7 hrs

We start our drive in the morning and stop in Tawu for lunch and enjoy a walk around Tawu valley. We continue our drive to Xinduqiao.

Overnight: Xinduqiao

DAY 11

Return to Chengdu. Farewell dinner together.

DAY 12

Breakfast at the hotel. Free morning and an opportunity to visit the old Tibetan shopping center before the airport transfer.

Please note: a minimum of ten participants is needed in order this trip to take place. Confirmation and full payment must be received by June 21st.

For any questions please email jamyang43@gmail.com

Included:

Private tours with local English speaking guide

All transfers included and transport throughout, in a modern bus with extra oxygen supply

Entrance fees to any tourist sites where applicable.

Meals

Government Tax & Service charge

Hotel and guesthouse accommodation

Excluded:

International flight ticket

Chinese Visa

Tips & personal expenses

Laundry

Travel insurance

Anything not stated above as included