



Mt. Kailash Circumbulation and Manasarovar Lake Tour/Trek

Zhangmu / Kailash / Zhangmu
Duration: 16 nights / 17 days

In the hundred ages of the gods I could not tell the glories of (the Himalaya)...there is no mountain like (the Himalaya) for in it are Kailas and Manasarovar.

From the Hindu epic RAMAYANA

MT. KAILASH (6741 m) is perhaps the most sacred of Holy Mountains in TIBET. Together with the two lakes of MANASAROVAR & RAKAS, the region is one of the few truly nature wonders of the world., Three of the orient's greatest rivers; the BRAHMAPUTRA, the SUTLEJ, and the INDUS, all take their sources within a hundred kilometers of this " SNOW CAPPED JEWEL" which attracted Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Bon-po's from the four corners of Asia for centuries. MT. KAILASH - also known as TISE or KHANG RIMPOCHE (Jewel of the snow), has since the time immemorial been celebrated in many eastern cosmologies as MT MERU, the axis mundi (the center of the physical and metaphysical universe). For the Hindus, it represents the abode of Lord SHIVA and for the Buddhists, a terrestrial projection of the cosmic MANDALA of the FIVE DHYANI BUDDHAS & The Wheel of life.

People believe that a single Kora or Parikrama washes away the sins of a lifetime and Buddhists believe that 108 circuits secure Nirvana in this life. On the trek, one may encounter Bon Pilgrims circling the route counter clockwise or the very devoted continually prostrate themselves along the whole 32.5 miles loop. There is also the 'inner Kora' that passes two lakes to the south of Mt. Kailash. Tradition dictates that only those who have made 13 circumbulating of Kailash may follow this inner route. The mouth of the four great rivers are within 100 Km of the mountain-the Indus, The Brahamaputra, The Sutlej and the Karnali, a major tributaries of The Ganges. The Mt. Kailash circuit is 32.5 miles of strenuous trails which crosses the Dolma La. This pass is the route highest point at 18525 ft. At a large boulder is a collection of offerings where pilgrims traditionally deposit one item and take another.

Although the journey entails long rides by Land cruisers over Tibet's great western plateau through a region inhabited by few wild animals, holy lakes and the occasional nomad, this existing tour involving a four day trek with yaks in the remotest part around MT KAILASH and offers the most fascinating experience on the ROOF OF THE WORLD.



Itinerary

Day01 - Upon arrival at the Tribhuvan International airport meet, assist and transfer to the hotel. At the hotel lobby there will be short briefing about the trip whilst the guest are having welcome drinks. Passports will be collected to apply for the China Visa next day. Later the guest can retire to the allocated rooms for much deserved shower and rest.

Overnight at the Hotel Harati or similar.

Day 02- AM: Detail briefing about the trip to Tibet
Rest of the day is free to prepare for the trip.

Overnight at the Hotel Harati or similar.

Day 03 - Drive Kathmandu to Kodari 153 Km. Cross into Tibet (Zhangmu) and drive for another 2 hours to Nyalam.(3750) 53km. Check into the lodge.

Overnight at the Nyalam Guest House.

Day 04 - Rest day at Nyalam for acclimatization.

Overnight at the Nyalam Guest House.

Day 05 - Drive from Nyalam to Saga (4300m) 291km via Lalunala Pass, lake Paigu Tso and Brahmaputra River.
Because of the scarcity of camping sites in and around the village, we continue further driving for another 45 minutes to arrive at a beautiful campsite located close to the Saga river.

Overnight at the Camp.

Day 06 - Drive from Saga via New Zongba,(4360m) 160 km to Paryang.
The Yak hotel is the only livable hotel with dormitory style accommodations, but because of the frequent use of the lodge facilities by pilgrims and lack of water supply, the amenities are very dirty and basic. For camping groups, there are beautiful campsites along the Paryang river another 30 minutes beyond the village.

Overnight at the Camp.

Day 07 - Drive from Paryang to Lake Manasarovar (5410m) via Mayum La (5151 m)
Driving past Kongyu Tso through the village of Thongchen to camp near the Chiu monastery. (The Lake Manasarovar, Hindus believe, was created by Brahma as reflection of the depth of his soul-manas and represents the female energy of Yoni of



the Universe, while Mt. Kailsah symbolizes the male energy of the Lingum. At 14459 ft. Lake Manasarovar is the highest body of fresh water in the world. Holy to Buddhists alike, it was once surrounded by 8 monasteries. Buddhist believes in Queen Maya, Buddha's mother was carried here by the gods and some of Mahatma Gandhi's ash was carried here from India and scattered in the Lake.

Overnight at the Camp.

Day 08 - Rest and explore Manasarovar Lake.

Overnight at the Camp.

Day 09 - Drive from Manasarovar to Darchen (4560m) 1 ½ - 2 Hrs. to commence the circumambulation around Mt. Kailash.

It is the most sacred mountain in Asia. It is believed to be the physical embodiment of the mythical Mount Meru, said to be the center of the universe or 'navel of the world'. Mt. Meru is often depicted as a mandala and its image occurs throughout Buddhist and Hindu parts of Asia. Images of Mt. Meru occur as far away as Angkor Wat in Cambodia and Borobudur in Indonesia. The circumambulation of Mt. Kailash (6714 m /22,028 feet) is an important pilgrimage for religions. To Hindus, Kailash is the abode of Shiva, Tibetans call it Kang Rimpoche; Jains worship it as Mt. Asthapada, the peak from which the religion founder, Rishabanatha achieved spiritual liberation. Followers of Bon – Po, the ancient pre – Buddhist shamanistic religion of Tibet revere Kailash as the soul of Tibet. The circumambulation to the Hindus and Jains is known as Parikrama and Buddhists call it Kora. Tibetans often make the 52 kilometer circuit in a single day but the Indian Yatrees do it in three but this is also rushed. A four day trek is more enjoyable and rewarding.

Head west from the enclosed compound of Darchen leaving behind the village high above the Barkha plain and after 1 ½ Hrs. climb up to a series of prayer flags at 4730m from where you should have the first great views of Mt.Kailash. This is the first site of prostration known as Chaktsal-Gang. This is the first of the four chaktsal – gang on the Kora and offers an excellent view of the peak. Then head north up the Lha Chu valley and descend to , a tall pole adorned with prayer flags at 4750 meters. The prayer flags are replaced annually during the Sakya dawa festival on Buddha's birthday, the full moon day during the Tibetan month of May / June. Nearby is the Chorten – Kang – ni. It is considered an auspicious act to pass through the small archway formed by the two legs of this Chorten. The trail continues across the plain to Shersong and after about an hour arrive at the bridge leading to the Nyanri Gompa, perched high on the hillside above. All the monasteries on the Kailash circuit were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. Nyanri Gompa also known as the Chhuku Gompa because of the image of Chhuku Rimpoche it houses, was the first to be rebuilt and contains a few treasures that were rescued from the original gompas. Trek from Darchen to Chhuku bridge – 4 Hrs. and side visit to Chhuku Monastery – 30 minutes.

Set the campsite a little further from the bridge.

Dinner and Overnight at Camp.

Day 10 - Trek from Chhuku Gompa to Drira Phuk – 4 Hrs.



AM: Participate in the Saka Dawa festival.

Noon: After quick lunch start trek to Drira Phuk. The normal pilgrims route stays on the east bank of the Lha Chu but for better views of Kailash and generally better Campsites, cross the best bank trail across a scree slopes to arrive at a good camping ground at Damding Donkhang (4890 m) a grassy spot that offers good views of the West face of Mt. Kailash. It is also known as the Valley of yaks as one can see hundreds of Yaks grazing on the meadows. However we continue on further crossing the side streams Belung Chu and Dungleung Chu on rocks as the North face of Kailash comes in view. On the opposite side of the Lha Chu you can see several groups of nomads tending herds of goats and yaks. Pass their tents carefully like most Tibetans they keep ferocious Tibetan mastiff dogs. As one reaches the Gompa and a frugal guest house at Drira Phuk, you are rewarded with a fine view of the North face of Mt. Kailash. The three lower hills in front of Mt. Kailash from this vantage point are the manjushree, Avalokitesvara and Vajrapani representing wisdom, kindness and power. The Drira Phuk Gompa was rebuilt in 1985.

Dinner and Overnight at the Camp.

Day 11 - Trek Shabje Drakthok

Start trek from Drira Phuk and immediately cross the Lha Chu on a wooden bridge. If one continues to trek up the Lha Chu, they would eventually reach the true source of the Indus. The Kora route makes a serious climb on to a moraine eventually meeting the trail from the East bank. The trail now climbs more gently to a meadow full of fat marmots (phiya) at 5212 meters. This is a good campsite that will make the pass crossing easier than to have camped at Drira Phuk but it is dangerous to Camp at higher altitudes because of acclimatization problems. The snow covered pass to the right, the Khado Sanglam is protected by a lion faced Dakini goddess. Pilgrims may cross this difficult pass only on their auspicious 13th circuit of the mountain.

Climb past piles of clothing at Shiva-tsal (5330m) and Tibetans leave an article of clothing or a drop of blood here as part of leaving their past life behind them. Continue past thousands of small rock cairns to a large cairn at 5390 meters passing the Dikpa Karnak, sin testing stone. It is said that those without sin can squeeze through the narrow hole between the boulders while a sinner no matter how small cannot pass through. The trail now leads across a boulder field and climbs through large rocks to a tiny stream. Climb onto a ridge and continue gently on to the Dolma La at 5630 meters.

A big boulder on the pass representing the goddess Dolma (better known by her Sanskrit name Tara) is festooned with prayer flags and streamers. It is traditional to leave and take something as part of the collection of coins, prayer flags, teeth and other offerings attached to the rock. This is the physical and spiritual high point of the Kora. The trail from the west side of the pass is steep and rocky at first and then begins a series of switchbacks as it passes Gauri Kund, the lake of mercy and 5450 meters. Many more switchbacks and steep descents leads to the valley and then further descend for about an hour to arrive alongside the Lham Chhukhir at 5150 meters, the evenings campsite on the banks of a river near Shabje Drakthok. Shabje Drakthok has foot prints on a huge rock which pilgrims believe belong to Lord Buddha.



Overnight at the Camp.

- Day 12 - Trek to Darchen and drive to Hor Qu
Trek from Shabje Drathok along the river, even though the trail is better and less marshy on the other side, it is better to keep to the west side of the river which is actually the main route as it becomes too large below to cross back. Follow the river continuously as the trail makes an uninteresting descent of the valley. When crossing the stream of the Khado – sanglam, arrive at another Chaksal Gang, the third prostration point and from which point is the last view of the east face of Mt. Kailash during the circumambulation. After about 2 ½ - 3 hrs arrive at the Zutul-puk Gompa 4790 m where there is a cave in which the saint Milarepa is said to have meditated. Among the miracles he performed were adjusting the height of this cave to make it more comfortable. His footprint still remains on the roof. Trek along the Jhong Chu River to a bridge, cross it and climb a little before descending to 4610 m, the last prostration point (Chaksal Gang) but sadly there are no views of Mt. Kailash but there are good views of Lake Mansarovar and Mt. Actualy the vehicles can come up to this point but if one does want to continue on to Darchen to complete the full circle, a trek for about one hour through Mani wallsand carved yak skulls will lead you back to Darchen.
Upon arrival at Darchen, board the waiting vehicles for about two hours drive to the campsite past the settlement of Hor Qu to the northeast corner of the Lake Mansarovar.

Overnight at the Camp.

- Day 13 - Drive from Hor Qu to Paryang – 9 Hrs..
Overnight at the Camp.
- Day 14 - Drive from Paryang to Saga– 8 Hrs.
Overnight at the Camp
- Day 15 - Drive from Saga to Nyalum. - 7 Hrs.
Overnight at the Hotel
- Day 16 - After breakfast drive to Zhagmu 2 hrs and complete the Chinese border formalities and drive for 8 kms. to the Nepal border.
Cross the friendship bridge and enter into Nepal at Kodari. Complete immigration formalities and board the waiting vehicles for the 5 hour drive to Kathmandu.

Overnight at the Hotel Harati or similar.

- Day 17 - Free for final minute packing and shopping until transfer to the airport for (June 10) final departure.



**MT. KAILASH
(KATHMANDU/ZHANGMU/KAILASH/ ZHANGMU/KATHMANDU)**

Total Duration: 16 nights / 17 days

No. of persons **4 and above**

NETT PER PERSON: US\$ 2048.00

Single Supplement: US\$ 150.00

Cost Includes:

- Arrival and departure transfers in Kathmandu in a private deluxe a/c Van / coach accompanied by an English speaking representative from Sacred Summits (P) Ltd..
- 3 nights stay at the Hotel Harati Or similar (3 star) in Kathmandu on bed and breakfast basis.
- Kathmandu / Kodari drive in a deluxe non a/c vehicle.
- Lunch on the Kathmandu / Kodari drive in a non A/C vehicle
- Fully organized 13 nights / 14 days Mt. Kailash program as per itinerary with accommodations in 2/3/4 bedded accommodations in Nyalam or on any enroute stopover hotels (whichever available) and on twin sharing basis at the Hotel Zhangmu in Zhangmu with all meals, and all camps on fullboard basis backed by landcruisers for the clients, a truck with sherpas, cook, food and trekking equipment such as North Face VE 25 (3man) tents, mattresses, toilet tent, dining tents, all Tibet permit and services of Yaks and Yak men to carry luggage during the trek around Mt. Kailash
- Kodari / Kathmandu drive in a non A/C vehicle
- Lunch on the Kodari / Kathmandu drive.



Cost Excludes:

- Nepal entry and re-entry visa fees.
- Tibet / Chiva Urgent Visa Fees of US \$ 62.00 for US Nationals and US \$ 45.00 for other nationals
- International airfares and airport tax on departure.
- Personal insurance and evacuation charges.
- Hire of Yaks/horses or porters for personal use
- Entrance fees to monasteries and photography charge (if applicable)
- Expenses of personal nature such as drinks, laundry etc.
- Tips for guide and porters
- Sleeping bags. (Available on hire in Kathmandu @ US \$ 1.50 per day / per bag)