



## VOLKSWAGEN BEETLE CAR'S HISTORIC TIBET RIDE 2006 "KATHMANDU - LHASA - EVEREST BASE CAMP - KATHMANDU" (Duration: 21 nights / 22 days Overland Tour)

### ***A brief history of Beetles in Nepal and an historical opportunity:***

Aside from having the highest mountain in the world how many other countries can boast of having their first automobiles carried in on the backs of sturdy village men?

Volkswagen Beetles first appeared in Nepal when there was little road infrastructure in the country. After training some local mechanics in Beetle repair and maintenance a German businessman set up the first Volkswagen dealership in Kathmandu, the capital city, in 1963 with the first sales - to American Embassy staff - in 1964.

That dealership has long since disappeared but the number of Volkswagens in Nepal now number in the hundreds. Some are in almost mint condition while others languish in some by-gone era aristocratic family's backyard garden, overgrown with creepers and shrubs and home to a multitude of insects and small animals. Many of the Beetles currently on the roads of Nepal have been salvaged from exactly this kind of fate – certain death for the vehicle - by nostalgic lovers of the car or simply by thrifty owners who saw a cheap way to acquire a reliable workhorse.

Until recently new parts were unheard of and parts availability was subject to finding trashed engines in said backyards and junkyards and doing the necessary swap – working piece from trashed engine for broken piece in running engine – or fabricating from scratch. But now, thanks to some enterprising local individuals with a love of the car who have set up contacts with distributors in the west, parts are steadily becoming more available in this remote Himalayan kingdom. Due in small measure to this and in considerable measure to the sheer perseverance and tenacity of the Beetle owners who have kept their cars roadworthy through thick and thin of the parts availability scene, the Beetle is enjoying a revival of sorts here.

So what better way to pay tribute to this phenomenal car and its presence in the Himalayas than to achieve a historical first and drive twenty of them from Kathmandu to Lhasa, capital city of the roof of the world, Tibet, and back to Kathmandu via the northern base camp of Mount Everest, passing through at least three five-thousand meters mountain passes.

Over a 3 week journey the cars – and the drivers - will be taken through their paces on these mountainous terrains. So along with the requisite spares, the cars will be accompanied by five mechanics –a ratio of one mechanic per four cars - in a separate support vehicle. And because of the altitudes, in between the driving there will be periods of acclimatization and rest for the drivers to avoid or minimize the effects of mountain sickness which can be life threatening if not treated early and promptly.

In the process of creating history the drivers will also get a chance to visit Buddhist monasteries steeped in their own history, see some breathtaking mountain vistas and experience a unique driving experience and the ultimate Fahrvergnügen as only one can, driving a Kraft Durch Freude Wagen / Der Käfer / Kübelwagen / La Coccinelle (*ladybird* in France) / Maggiolino (*Maybug* in Italy) / or, as it is known here, Bhyaguthay Gaari (frog-car) through some of the highest mountain passes in the world.



***A cult car, the Beetle has stimulated people's imaginations for more than half a century and this new journey will spark renewed interest in what is undoubtedly THE car of the century and establish it once and for all as the "king of all cars".***

***TIBET- The Roof of the World***, is a sacred land of myths and mysteries and inhabited by the ever smiling people, has not only exerted a magnetic pull upon travelers for centuries but also spies, missionaries, scholars, geographers, mystics, soldiers and cranks, etc. Yet, few intrepid, serious and determined have been able to make it.

Tibet was opened to tourism in 1985. Before this, it avoided influence from the West and this country developed its unique culture and religion independently. Since Tibet was governed by the spiritual leaders, monasteries and religious institutions were the backbone of power so the importance and prestige were shown by the size and magnificent architecture of these buildings. Tibetan Buddhism contains many elements of their older religion, "Bon Po" which worshipped the sky, moon, sun, fire, soil and even evil spirits and this is why a monastery such as Tashilhunpo contains thousands of unique statues, paintings (thangka), religious and historical books that to visit in detail would take weeks. The Monasteries are crowded by pilgrims who often travel long distances to fulfill their vows and wishes and their emotions show that religion still holds a very important place in their daily lives.

TIBET- extremely remote and isolated by the most formidable Himalayan ranges is a fascinating world of timeless splendour, unique tradition and breathtaking scenery awaits all travelers to the Roof of the World.

<b>Full name:</b>	Tibet Autonomous Region of China
<b>Area:</b>	1.2 m. sq. km
<b>Population:</b>	3 million
<b>In Exile :</b>	300,000
<b>Capital city:</b>	Lhasa (Population 200,000)
<b>People:</b>	Tibetan & Chinese
<b>Language:</b>	Tibeto Burmese, Tibetan and Chinese
<b>Religion:</b>	90% Buddhist, 1% Muslim, 3% bon, 6% Others
<b>Government:</b>	Occupied by China in 1949/1950
<b>Currency :</b>	Yuan (Y 8.00 = US\$ 1.00)
<b>Geography :</b>	Tibet has border with India, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Burma
<b>Climate:</b>	Spring (May to June) – Best weather condition, May to Mid September Winter – (October to April)
<b>What to wear:</b>	Light weight clothing is recommended for May to June, Warm garments are required from September to April. An umbrella or a raincoat is a must for the Summer season.
<b>Voltage:</b>	Standard voltage only 220 volts.

***The Journey*** - The drive from Kathmandu to Lhasa to Everest Base Camp to Kathmandu is spectacular and arguably the best high-latitude overland tour in the world. Starting and finishing in two of Asia's most exotic cities, on the journey from Kathmandu to Lhasa to Kathmandu, in around 2000km over 19 days, we cross six major passes, traverse the backbone of the Himalayas and complete the world's longest downhill run and also have an opportunity to visit the Northern base camp (5210 m) of Mount Everest (8848 m).

Driving on the highest roads in the world is a physically and mentally demanding challenge and the journey from Kathmandu to Lhasa to Kathmandu is long and hard. It is exhausting and the difficult conditions test your internal and external fortitude to the fullest. However, the



rewards are extraordinary as the view of the world from the dizzying heights, the long and lonely expanse of solitude that envelops you is a humbling experience.

***Your view of the world and of yourself will never be the same again.***

### **Itinerary May 2006:**

**May 13:** *Arrive Kathmandu. Upon arrival, met by representatives and transferred to the Hotel.*

Rest of the day is free.

Overnight at the Hotel.

**May 14: Kathmandu**

**AM :** Visit the Workshop and introduction of participants and the Volkswagen Beetle Cars followed by briefing on the Tibet Journey and collection of passports for Tibet Visa.

Later drive around the city.

**19:00 Hrs – Welcome Dinner**

Overnight at the Hotel.

**May 15: Kathmandu (1,300 m) – Dhulikhel**

**AM :** Process for Tibet Visa at the Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu.

**10:30 Hrs – Flag off from Kathmandu.**

**13:00 Hrs - Arrive at Dhulikhel.**

**Dinner and Overnight at the Hotel.**

**May 16: Dhulikhel (1370 m) - Kodari (2200m) 90 Kms - Zhangmu (2,500 m) 8 Kms – Nyalam (3900m) 90 Kms.**

Early morning 3½ hours scenic drive to Kodari (Nepal/Tibet Border) through the beautiful Nepalese countryside. Upon arrival complete Nepali Immigration and start a short walk across the friendship bridge. Meet the waiting vehicles and support team from Tibet and drive 8 kilometers to Zhangmu.

**Zhangmu:** Known to Nepali as Khasa, hangs on a cliff face, its boomtown architecture having a temporary look: even the monastery roofs are sheathed in corrugated iron sheets.



Complete Chinese Immigration and customs and then drive 90 kilometers (2 hours) to Nyalam situated at an altitude of 3900 m.

Overnight at the Hotel.

**May 17: Acclimatization day in Nyalam (3750 m).**

Overnight at the Hotel.

**May 18: Nyalam to Tingri (4,350m): 160 Km.**

After breakfast, we drive past the check post at Nyalam and then continue to ascend towards the Thong la (5050 m) passing the village with the Milerapa Cave. The ascent is long and arduous but well worth the venture as the vista from the pass is awe inspiring. Weather permitting there is breathtaking panorama of the beautiful Himalayan ranges of Shishapangma, Gyachang Kang, Gauri Shanker and Cho Oyu and Mt. Everest but dwarfed by the vastness of the Tibetan plateau. From here a short drive brings us to Lalung La (5200 m) a non-descript pass only recognizable by the rock cairns and prayer flags. From here, the descent to Tingri is a pleasant one which should be reached in about 2 hours.

**May 19: Tingri / Xegar (4,350m)/ Lhatse (3990 m) – 142 kms.:**

Drive on the highest plateau of the world with typical view of the Tibetan landscape offering sheer feeling of standing on the roof of the world.

**Xegar:** Also called New Tingri is 70 kilometers from Old Tingri and is surrounded by Mountains and is another town that lies in the shadow of a great fortress. Even in ruins it is majestic. Seeming to grow out of the craggy brown rock, its sinuous wall bristles with watchtowers like stegosaurus spines. Isolated in 1855 by marauding Nepalese in search of booty, the Gurkhas cut off the dzong's water supply and settled in for a long siege. Shegar proper has little to recommend it except the highest post office in China.

After a short break we set off towards Lhatse. The trail ascends to the Gyatso La (5,220m) and then a steep descent on a gravel path along the banks of the river brings us to the bustling settlement of Lhatse.

Overnight at the Hotel

**May 20: Lhatse-Xigatse (3,900m): 151 Km.**

After the rigours of the previous day, this day is short and allows time to recuperate. The road for today is mostly on a level trail but there are ascents and descents as we first pass the Lagpa la (4500 m) pass and then the Tra la pass (3975 m) prior to our arrival at **Xigatse**, the second largest town of Tibet and the capital of Tsang, lying 354km west of Lhasa at an altitude of 3810 m and is reached in about 3 ½ - 4 hours.

PM : Sightseeing tour of the Panchen Lama's **Tashilhunpo Monastery:**

Founded in 1447 by Gendun Drup, the first Dalai Lama. It is the seat of the Panchen Lama who is second to the Dalai Lama in Tibetan Buddhist Hierarchy. The 5th Dalai Lama declared that his teacher, then the Abbot of Tashilhunpo, was a manifestation of the Buddha Amitabha and the Panchen Rinpoche. Tashilhunpo has one of the world's largest statues - a 9 storeyed gilded bronze statue of Maitriya, the future Buddha.



Overnight at the Hotel.

**May 21: Xigatse - Gyantse (3,950m – 90 kms)- Nagartse (4405m) -103 Kms (total 193 Kms) – 6 Hrs drive.**

After breakfast drive to Gyantse. **Gyantse** is a pastoral town between Lhasa and Xigatse. It is 90 of Shigatse (1 ½ hours drive). It still retains the charm of a traditional Tibetan town untouched by modern expansion. It made world headlines in 1904 when Colonel Young husband, who led British Expedition to Tibet, defeated the Tibetan army there. As a crossroad on the principle trade route to India, it used to be renowned for the excellence of its carpets.

The compound, encircled by an impressive wall, once contained 19 monasteries, presided over by the still intact fortress perched atop a nearby mountain. Here one visits the Kumbum Stupa and Pelkhor Chode Monastery.

**Kumbum:** It is one of the most unique and magnificent buildings in Tibet consisting of 6 storeys complete with a Buddhists Hall and a prayer hall. It has 112 chapels and its walls are adorned with religious paintings. Built in the 15th century, it has withstood all battles and revolutions since.

**The Pelkhor Chode Monastery:** Located near the Khumbum, it was founded in the 15th century. It has been remarkably well preserved and many of the statues and paintings inside it date back to the time of its founding.

***After the sightseeing tour we take a short respite for lunch and then drive to Nagartse, a small village located at the tip of the famous Yamdrok lake.***

Set out on the drive to Nagartse firstly ascending to the Simi la (4300m) and then traversing along the path following the man made lake. This area has flooded by constructing a Dam to produce electricity. Continue on the ascent till Karo La (5200m) with the yak hunders hut where one can take pictures with the yaks for a few Yuan. From here, descend down to the village of Nagartse which takes about 2 hours from the pass.

Overnight at the Hotel.

**May 22: Nagartse - Lhasa (3,650m): 144 Km – 6 hrs.**

After breakfast, there is a scenic drive along the banks of the Yamdrok lake with picturesque villages and the beautiful scenery of Tibet. From the lake ascend to the Kampa la pass (4794 m) and then there is a steep descent of about 3 hours before arriving at the metalled road and the hustle and bustle of the forbidden city – Lhasa.

**Lhasa**, the capital of Tibet at an altitude of 3650 m, is situated on the north bank of the Kyichu River in the province of U (central Tibet). Two high craggy hills stand up in isolation from the valley floor. One, Red Hill, is topped by the Potala Palace and the other, Chockpori or Iron Hill, is crowned by a tall antenna.

Lhasa in Tibetan means "Place of the Gods" and Potala Palace " the residence of the Dalai Lama (the god king), is the earthly representation of the celestial Palace of Avaloketswora, the Buddha of infinite compassion whose incarnation in the



human form is believed to be the Dalai Lama. As Tibet's political, religious and cultural centre it is a city truly blessed by the gods, where life is unhurried, is people jovial and yet remaining staunchly independent.

Lhasa consists of two district parts consisting of different architecture, population and lifestyle. Old Lhasa, the Tibetan section, centres around the Jokhang Temple.

Its streets are narrow, between white washed stone houses whose walls slope inward as they rise. Windows are framed in black trapezoids, with protruding fan shaped eaves above. Many houses have brightly painted woodwork.

The Chinese section, was built in the last 30 years around the base of the Potala. It is characterized by straight, broad streets and utilitarian buildings that houses Chinese style department stores and all kinds of government houses. A Revolutionary Museum below the Potala displays the evidence of Chinese wrought economic and social change during the past 30 years.

In spite of it's forced pace of modernization, Lhasa has not lost it's soul. It is a friendly city where a Tibetan will always return a smile.

Overnight at the Hotel in Lhasa.

**May 23: In Lhasa:**

**AM : Sightseeing tour of Potala Palace:** This legendary palace built atop a single hill is synonymous with Tibet. First foremost king, Songtsen Gompo, it was expanded to its present structure during the 17th century by the 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. This 13 storey, 1000 room citadel served as the headquarters of the former "church-state" of Tibet and was home to successive Dalai Lama who, from the latter half of the 18th century, used it as their Winter Palace.

**PM : Visit the Jokhang Temple:** Situated in the heart of old Lhasa, it houses Tibet's most precious religious relic, a golden Shakyamuni Buddha which was brought as a gift by the Chinese Princess Wen Cheng on the occasion of her wedding to the Tibetan King, Songtsen Gompo.

Surrounding the Jokhang Temple is the bustling Barkhor market place, which is the religious and social focus of Lhasa. This, the spiritual centre of Tibet, is also the heart of Lhasa.

EVE : Tibetan Cultural program with dinner.

Overnight at the Hotel in Lhasa.

**May 24: In Lhasa :**

**AM : Sightseeing tour of the Drepung Monastery:** Drive 8 kms west of Lhasa to Drepung Monastery. Said to be the largest monastery in the world housing over 10,000 monks, it was founded in 1416 by the disciple of Te Tsonkhapa, founder of the Yellow Hat Gelukpa sect of Tibetan Buddhism. The second, third and the fourth Dalai Lamas lived and were entombed here. Drepung in Tibetan means 'Richmond'.



**PM :** Sightseeing tour of the **Sera Monastery:** 5 kms (3 miles) north of Lhasa, Sera's setting is one of Lhasa's prettiest. Once a community of more than 5,000 monks, it was a virtually extinguished by the Chinese. The restored monastery sits below the brow of hill on which Tsongkhapa built a hermitage and spent several years meditating. One of the monks disciples began building Sera in 1419, completing it a few years later.

Continue on for the sightseeing tour of the **Norbulingkha:**

The 'Jewel Park' as it is known in Tibetan, was built in the 18th century and served as the Summer Palace of the Dalai Lamas. This colourful garden landscape was the site of picnic and public gatherings. The place is richly decorated, creating an atmosphere of peaceful repose.

Overnight at the Hotel in Lhasa.

**May 25: Lhasa**

**AM :** *Ride around the Lhasa City with photo stops at prominent places of interest.*

**PM :** *Free to explore or get prepared for the tough return ride to Kathmandu.*

**Overnight at the Hotel.**

**May 26: Drive from Lhasa / Shigatse (270 Kms)**

After the grueling drive over the pass to get to Lhasa, the trail today on tarred road is a pleasant and enjoyable one. The drive takes about 7 – 8 hours as we follow the Yarlung Tsangpo river and scenery of irrigation fields, yak hair skin boats, a typical scene of Tibet.

Overnight at the Hotel.

**May 27: Shigatse / Shegar (3,900m): 244 Km.**

Continue the scenic drive as we cross over Gyatchu La (5,220m), the highest pass en-route to Lhasa from where a road to Mt. Kailash bifurcates to the west. Xegar, also called New Tingri, surrounded by Mountains, is another town that lies in the shadow of a great fortress. Even in ruins, it is majestic. Seeming to grow out of the craggy brown rock, it's sinuous wall bristles with watchtowers like stegosaurus spines. Isolated in 1855 by marauding Nepalese in search of booty, the Gurkhas cut off the dzong's water supply and settled in for a long siege. Xegar proper has little to recommend, except the highest post office in China.

Overnight at the Hotel.

**May 28: Shegar / Everest Base Camp (5300 m) 110 Kms**

After purchasing the National park entry tickets for the participants and vehicles we drive to the check post. Upon clearance we head off towards Rongbuk. Firstly we slowly ascend to the Gyatso la (5200 m) pass and then descend for about 2 hours on a very steep and winding switch back descent to arrive at a small Tibetan Settlement of Tashi Dzom. From here the trail is more level as we continue to Rongbuk which takes about 1 ½ hour.



Upon arrival, check into the Rongbuk Monastery Guest House.

Overnight at the Rongbuk Monastery Guest House.

**May 29: EXCURSION TO MT. EVEREST BASE CAMP**

There is a new rule that vehicles are prohibited to travel beyond Rongbuk Monastery check post. For those wanting to visit Everest Base camp, there are horse drawn carriage that takes 2 visitors at a time and costs Yuan 30.00 (US\$ 3.50) per person for a round trip journey. For the more adventurous, the walk from Rongbuk to the Everest base camp is about 7 kilometers and follows the dirt road south; the Dzakar Chu, now much reduced in volume, is on your right. Soon the valley broadens and the road leaves the river to continue its ascent on the other side, swerving to avoid a rockslide.

At the base of the slide is *chorten*; at its top are the ruins of the Samdrupo Nunnery (a small chapel has been rebuilt). The Everest Base Camp is just beyond some moraine hills. The rest of the afternoon is free to explore this area and is possible to take a couple of short excursions beyond the Base Camp upon payment of a fee of US\$ 200.00 per person.

(The treks beyond EBC - Climb the moraines of the Central Rongbuk Glacier, immediately south of the camp, to some small glacier pools. The other is to trek to the Qianjing glacier. Head up a small canyon east of the Base Camp to a rough track that crosses a vast lateral moraine 200 m above camp. Follow this south on a relatively level platform high above the Central Rongphuk Glacier. At the end of the moraine is the Qianjing Glacier; about 4 hours walk from the Base Camp. To the south are the fine views of the Everest North Face.

Later return to the Rongbuk Guest House.

Note : After the rigorous drive of the early day, the day is spent relaxing in the tranquil atmosphere of the Tibetan landscape with fantastic views of Mt. Everest.

***Dinner and Overnight at the Rongbuk Guest House.***

**May 30: Drive from Everest Base Camp / Shegar / Tingri.**

This day we retrace our drive by the Gyatso La pass to arrive at Xegar in about 6 hours. However, we continue on to Tingri for overnight halt as it makes traveling to Nyalam the next day much shorter and less stress ful.

***Overnight at the Guest House.***

**May 31: Tingri / Nyalam (3900m): 160 Km.**

A long mornings drive on the highest plateau of the world. A long ascent brings us back to Lalung La (5,200m) and Thong la (5050m) from where there are magnificent views of the Himalayas. From here the descent is interesting as we again return to some greener pastures and gorges and follow the river that enters into Nepal. A sudden arrival at the Nyalam Pass (3,800m) brings us to the settlement of Nyalam.

Overnight at the Nyalam Guest House



**June 01: Drive to Nepal Tibet Friendship Bridge via Zhangmu (2,500 m):** 176 kms.  
The drive from Nyalam to Zhangmu takes about 2 hours. Upon arrival, complete border formalities and descend down to Kodari and the Nepal Tibet Friendship Bridge. Complete Nepal Customs and Immigration and drive to Kathmandu (128 Kms – 4 ½ hours).

Upon arrival, check into the Hotel.

EVE: Farewell Dinner

**June 02:** Free until final departure transfer to the airport for onward flight.

- **End of Arrangements \***

**Cost for**  
**The Volkswagon Beetle Drive to Tibet**  
**(Duration : 21 Nights / 22 Days – Kathmandu to Kathmandu)**

**THE NETT COST PER PERSON  
ON TWIN SHARING BASIS NAD GROUP  
JOIN IN BASIS WILL BE** **US\$ 4999.00**

**THE SINGLE ROOM SUPPLEMENT WILL BE** **US\$ 379.00**

**THE COST INCLUDES:**

- Transfer from International airport / Hotel / Airport in a private car, accompanied by an English speaking representative.
- 3 nights stay on twin sharing basis at a 4 star Hotel in Kathmandu with breakfast.
- Welcome dinner
- 1 nights stay at the Hotel in Dhulikhel with Dinner and breakfast.
- Visa Fee for Tibet and documentation
- 17 nights / 18 days Tibet drive accompanied by a well experienced Nepali trip leader driving in the lead car, 2 assistants doubling as reserve drivers and 2 well experienced Volkswagon Beetle Mechanics.
- Transportation of spare parts and mechanics from Kathmandu / Kodari



Kathmandu in a mini bus pre and post Tibet Tour.

- Support of One Japanese Made Land cruiser inside Tibet only (Kodari / Lhasa / Kodari)
- Support of 1 truck from Kodari / Lhasa / Kodari
- All necessary travel permits to Lhasa and Everest Base Camp.
- One good Tibetan English speaking guide from Tibet to escort the group and accompany them in all sightseeing tours as per the itinerary.
- Twin sharing accommodations on enroute stopovers at standard guest houses and 4 nights Hotel accommodation at the Hotel Tibet Grand in Lhasa with daily breakfast. (Note : Lunch and Dinner will be provided at the Hotel itself or at local restaurants)
- All monastery entrance fee as per the itinerary.
- Permit for Volkswagon Beetles
- Cost of fuel for VolksWagon Beetles cars
- Lunch on the Kathmandu / Kodari / Kathmandu drives at a local restaurant.
- Poterages at the Kodari border to transfer the equipments and spare parts from Nepal side to Tibet side and vice versa pre and post Tibet Tour.
- Farewell dinner.

**The cost excludes :**

- Refundable Deposit for Vehicles at the Zhangmu border.
- Nepal entry & and re-entry visa fee.
- Meals in Kathmandu apart from breakfast and Welcome Dinner and farewell Dinner.
- Personal insurance and evacuation.
- Sleeping bags and thermo-rest (for better insulation)
- Items of a personal nature such as bar bills, alcoholic beverages, bottled drinks and mineral water, extra mileage, personal gratuities such as tips to guides, drivers and trek staff
- Items not mentioned in the cost includes
- Costs incurred due to natural calamities, strikes, break downs and beyond the control of Sacred Summits (P) ltd and its associates.

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