

## Kailash Saga Dawa Festival - ACSF

21 days: Beijing to Kathmandu

### What's Included

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- Your Welcome Moment: Welcome Moment - Meet Your CEO and Group
- Your Local Living Moment: Rongbuk Monastery Guesthouse, Rongpu Si
- Great Wall entrance
- Forbidden City tour
- Trans-Tibetan railway
- Kumbum visit
- Potala Palace visit
- Jokhang Temple visit
- Sera Monastery visit
- Yamdrok Tso visit
- Tashilunpo Monastery visit
- Sakya Monastery visit
- Pelkhon Chode Monastery visit
- Kailash kora
- Lake Manasarovar visit
- Saga Dawa festival experience
- Everest Base Camp visit
- Border crossing support
- Internal flight
- All transport between destinations and to/from included activities

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and G Adventures. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

**VALIDITY:** Valid for all trips departing January 1st, 2015 - March 28th, 2016

### Itinerary

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**NOTE:** Accommodations vary per departure and are subject to change until tour start date; they are not final and should be used as examples only. Travellers may login to the G Adventures App to view accommodations specific to their departure.

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#### Day 1 Beijing

Arrive at any time.

There are no activities planned until an evening welcome meeting.

#### **Your Welcome Moment: Welcome Moment - Meet Your CEO and Group**

Your opportunity to meet your CEO and fellow travellers, and learn more about your tour. Opt to join the group for a local meal afterwards. Don't forget to see the notice in the lobby (or ask reception) for the official time and place to meet up with the group.

#### Day 2 Beijing

Visit the Great Wall of China with time in the late afternoon to explore Beijing.

Set out early for the Great Wall at Mutianyu. Spend the day wandering from tower to tower along this magnificent feat of construction.

Opt to see a Shaolin Monk Kung Fu Show, the Beijing Opera, or the Beijing Acrobats.

### **Private Vehicle**

Beijing

Travel out to the Great Wall and back.

### **Great Wall Mutianyu Visit**

Beijing3h

Climb the rolling hills of Huairou County at Mutianyu, one of the best-preserved sections of the Great Wall. Enjoy scenic views as the wall winds along mountain ridges, and take brag-worthy photos of the wall from any of the 22 towers. The Great wall is an incredible piece of engineering stretching 6000 km west from the mountain ridges north of Beijing. It was originally constructed to protect Chinese empires from nomadic northern tribes, and even though it failed in this purpose, it's still one of the country's most remarkable achievements and an iconic destination. The Mutianyu section of the Great Wall is located about 80km away from the Beijing City Center. The walk is approximately 5 kilometres and will take 2 to 3 hours depending on your level of fitness.

### **Optional Activities - Day 2**

#### **Shaolin Monk Kung Fu Show**

Beijing

90-180CNY per person

Watch this moving performance of choreographed martial arts, complete with a story line to follow.

#### **Beijing Opera**

Beijing

120-180CNY per person

Enjoy this form of traditional Chinese theatre that combines music, vocal performance, mime, dance, and acrobatics. Dating back to the late 18th century, this form was extremely popular in the Qing Dynasty court and has come to be regarded as one of the cultural treasures of China.

#### **Beijing Acrobatics Performance**

Beijing

Enjoy an evening of spectacular acrobatics performed by some of China's most talented performers and athletes. This unforgettable spectacle features Chinese-style tricks, like plate-spinning, contortion, foot-juggling, and a host of circus-style acrobatics, too.

### **Days 3-4 Beijing/Lhasa**

Take a guided tour of the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square before boarding the Trans-Tibetan Railway to Lhasa.

Enjoy learning about Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City before using some free time to explore more of the capital.

In the evening, depart on a 48-hour train journey to Lhasa. Enjoy watching the scenery completely change as you climb onto the Tibetan Plateau.

We aim to get the best sleeping berths available on each train journey. During peak season (summer) we cannot guarantee which beds will be available.

### **Tiananmen Square**

Beijing

Explore one of the world's largest public squares and the symbolic centre of Chinese power. Framed by the Gate of Heavenly Peace with its Mao portrait, Mao's Mausoleum, the Great Hall of the People, the National Museum, and with elaborate flag raising and lowering ceremonies at dawn and dusk, it's a place of pilgrimage for the Chinese tourists who consider it the heart of their nation.

### **Forbidden City Tour**

Beijing2h

Our CEO will steer around crowds and help make the most of a visit to the Forbidden City.

### **Basic Overnight Train (beds)**

Beijing - Lhasa48h

The train trip is a long, yet rewarding, journey through the heart of northern China then south across the Tibetan Plateau. The spectacular scenery make this a once-in-a-lifetime train journey.

### **Optional Activities - Days 3-4**

#### **The Pearl Market**

Beijing

Free

Shoppers get ready. The Pearl Market is great place to get souvenirs for friends and family! This market is well known for the verity of pearls but, make sure to also check out the other vendors selling goods like crafts, clothing, and silk.

### **Hutong Walk**

Beijing 2h-4h

Take a walking tour through some of Beijing's traditional alleyways and backstreets (known as hutongs) and get a taste of this magnificent metropolis.

### **Day 5 Lhasa**

Arrive in Lhasa in the evening. Take an orientation walk around Barkhor Square and start acclimatizing to the altitude.

### **Free Time**

Lhasa Evening

Wander around and get to know the city.

### **Days 6-8 Lhasa**

Over three days, explore all Lhasa and the surrounding areas have to offer. Visit Barkhor Square, the Jokhang Temple, the Potala Palace, and either Sera or Drepung Monastery. With free time, opt to visit the local markets or find a teahouse to spend a few hours relaxing.

### **Barkhor Square Orientation Walk**

Lhasa 1h

Explore the square with your CEO and learn more about this city.

### **Potala Palace Tour**

Lhasa 2h

Enjoy a tour of Potala Palace, a magnificent structure and true architectural wonder built in the 1600s and steeped in history. This is where the Dalai Lamas would meditate, handle affairs of state, and eventually where their burial stupas remain. Check out the golden statues, three dimensional mandalas, ancient scriptures, and the devoted pilgrims who circle the palace day and night. This is truly a remarkable place.

### **Jokhang Temple Tour**

Lhasa 2h

Enjoy a tour of this beautiful temple, which has been called the spiritual heart of Tibet. Watch prostrating pilgrims circle the temple day and night, some of them traversing the extremes of the Tibetan landscape by foot to come here and celebrate their faith. Make a kora ("revolution" in Tibetan) of the Barkhor, the holiest devotional circuit, which surrounds the Jokhang and houses a market bazaar where people bargain for Buddha images, yak skulls with ruby eyes, woodcarvings, carpets, prayer wheels, and the odd goat's head.

### **Sera Monastery Tour**

Lhasa 1h30m

Visit the Sera Monastery and witness the monks engaged in lively debate, a philosophical practice they have held for hundreds of years.

### **Meals included: Breakfast**

### **Day 9 Lhasa/Gyantse**

Drive to Gyantse along the beautiful Yamdrok Tso lake.

The drive to Gyantse is a spectacular one, crossing three passes over 5,000m (16,404 ft) and skirting the shores of the beautiful turquoise lake, Yamdrok Tso.

### **Private Vehicle**

Lhasa – Gyantse 8h267km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

### **Meals included: Breakfast**

### **Day 10 Gyantse/Xigazê**

Visit the Pelkor Chode Monastery, Gyantse Kumbum, and Tashilunpo Monastery.

Take a short drive to Shigatse, Tibet's second largest town and the seat of the Panchen Lama, who ranks second in importance to the Dalai Lama.

Visit the Shigatse Bazaar. Stalls selling everything from slabs of yak butter to yak wool, prayer wheels, and rosaries line the streets and Tibetans vie with each other to win a sale. Opt to join the pilgrims on their evening kora (Tibetan for "revolution") around the perimeter of the monastery.

#### **Private Vehicle**

Gyantse – Xigazê 2h94km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

#### **Pelkor Chode Monastery and Gyantse Kumbum Visit**

Gyantse

Enjoy a visit to these two significant places in Tibetan Buddhism. Pelkor Chode Monastery was founded in 1418 and is regarded as the centre of Gyantse. Gyantse Kumbum (meaning 100,000 images) is an 8 story structure containing a seemingly endless series of tiny chapels full of Buddhist images – Buddhas, demons, protectors, and saints.

#### **Tashilhunpo Monastery Visit**

Xigazê

This massive complex is visited daily by hundreds of devotees, armed with yak butter to feed the lamps, who prostrate themselves around the stupas or walk up to the chapel that houses the 26m-high (85ft), gold-plated statue of the Maitreya (future) Buddha.

#### **Optional Activities - Day 10**

##### **Evening Kora**

Join the pilgrims on their evening kora ("revolution" in Tibetan) around the perimeter of the monastery.

#### **Day 11 Sakya/Rongbuk**

Travel to Sakya and visit the Sakya Gompa.

It is a 4-5 hr trip to Sakya, the base of the once politically powerful Sakya sect of Tibetan Buddhism. Its huge fortified walls are testament to the turbulent past of the region.

There is time in the late afternoon or early morning to explore the monastery and the ruins of north Sakya across the river.

#### **Private Vehicle**

Xigazê – Sakya 4h-5h 172km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

#### **Sakya Gompa Visit**

Sakya 1h

The Sakya Gompa is the seat of the Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism, founded in 1073. Its Mongolian architecture is unique and very different from what you'd find in Lhasa.

#### **Day 12 Rongbuk/Saga**

Enjoy a travel day through more beautiful scenery to reach Dzongba.

Spend the day driving across the Tibetan grasslands and a number of high passes. The scenery is fantastic and, depending on the time of year, you may see nomadic herders and their livestock.

Accommodation in these areas can be quite basic. Be prepared for shared toilet facilities, no running water, and often only multi-share rooms available.

#### **Private Vehicle**

Sakya – Dongba Full Day

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

#### **Day 13 Dongba/Tarchan**

Take another travel day to reach Darchen, home base for the Kora Trek. Follow the road across grasslands for the first spectacular view of Mt Kailash and Lake Manasarovar.

#### **Private Vehicle**

Dongba – Tarchan Full Day

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

#### **Day 14 Darchen/Kailash Range**

Staying in basic guesthouses, the full kora takes 2.5 days to complete. The experience and scenery are worth the effort.

The Saga Dawa Festival celebrates the day Lord Buddha Sakyamuni was born, achieved enlightenment, and passed away.

For over a 1,000 years, pilgrims have flocked to Mt Kailash to replace the Tarboche flagpole, a huge pole that stands on the Kailash kora, south of the mountain. The ceremony is led by a Lama from the nearby monastery and Tibetans and Buddhists gather here to attach their prayer flags, pray, and help erect the flagpole.

If you are unable to participate in the kora, it is possible to remain in Darchen with our drivers. Accommodation on the kora is extremely basic and food options are limited in their variety. It is a good idea to bring snacks.

### **Saga Dawa Festival**

#### **Kailash Range**

The Saga Dawa Festival celebrates the day Lord Buddha Sakyamuni was born, achieved enlightenment, and passed away. For over a 1,000 years, pilgrims have flocked to Mt Kailash to replace the Tarboche flagpole, a huge pole that stands on the Kailash Kora, south of the mountain. The ceremony is led by a Lama from the nearby monastery and Tibetans and Buddhists gather here that day to attach their prayer flags, pray, and help erect the flagpole.

### **Kailash Kora Day 1**

Darchen – Kailash Range 6h 20km

Start in Darchen and begin walking to reach the base of Mt Kailash. The trail passes by the Tarboche Flagpole and then winds into the Lha Chu Valley, complete with gorgeous views. Walk the path with pilgrims who have saved money their whole lives to have this moment. Soak in the atmosphere and take your time to appreciate the experience.

#### **Hiking**

Darchen – Kailash Range 20km

Hike 20km (12.4 mi) from Darchen around the base of Mt Kailash.

### **Day 15 Kailash Range**

Continue on the kora for the toughest stretch of the trek.

### **Kailash Kora Day 2**

Kailash Range 7h-8h 18km

Embark on the toughest part of our journey, to the Drolma Pass at 5,630m (18,471 ft). At this point, the pilgrims on the kora will undergo a symbolic death until they reach the Dromla Pass and are symbolically reborn. Trek for about 1 hr straight down to the Lha-chu Valley. Keep going for a few more hours to reach the simple guesthouse for the night.

#### **Hiking**

Kailash Range 14km

Hike 18km (11.2 mi) to the highest pass of the trek and back down into the valley.

### **Day 16 Kailash Range/Tarchan**

After completing the kora, relax in Darchen for the evening.

### **Kailash Kora Day 3**

Kailash Range 3h-4h 14km

Follow the river into a canyon and then out onto the Barkha plain. From here, it's just a 1 hr walk to Chiu Gumpa. You did it!

#### **Hiking**

Kailash Range 14km

Hike the last 14km (8.7 mi) to make it to Chiu Gumpa. Hurrah!

### **Day 17 Tarchan/Saga**

Drive south to Saga across the grasslands.

Take the south route, stopping at Saga for the evening.

Reflect on the magical experience you've had before continuing on to Mt Everest.

### **Private Vehicle**

Tarchan – Saga Full Day

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

## Day 18 Saga/Rongpu Si

Visit Rongbuk, the highest monastery in the world. Opt to hike to Everest Base Camp.

Take an exhilarating drive to reach Rongbuk — 5,000m (16,404 ft) and a mere 7km (4.4 mi) below Everest Base Camp. The view from here is utterly spectacular.

If your legs haven't given out yet, opt to hike the 7km (4.4 mi) to reach base camp.

Rongbuk is the highest monastery in the world and its guesthouse offers very basic accommodation, but the views that surround it more than compensate. Lie in bed and watch the moonlight illuminate the mountain.

### Private Vehicle

Saga – Rongpu Si 9h296km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

### Your Local Living Moment: Rongbuk Monastery Guesthouse

Rongbuk is the highest monastery in the world and its guesthouse offers very basic accommodation, but the views that surround it more than compensate. Lie in bed and watch the moonlight illuminate the mountain.

### Everest Viewpoint (North)

Everest Base Camp

Hike around 5 km (1.5 hours) up to an Everest viewpoint about 2.2km away from Everest Basecamp.

Even though the viewpoint isn't from the Basecamp, it doesn't mean the views will be any less breathtaking. Pack some water and your camera and get hiking for a tiny taste of what it's like to scale this magnificent mountain.

## Day 19 Rongpu Si/Zham

Continue driving through the spectacular mountain passes, topped with prayer flags and wind-driven prayer wheels.

Continue down mountain roads and highways to Zhangmu, a border town with Nepal.

### Private Vehicle

Rongpu Si – Zham 9h290km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

## Day 20 Zham/Kathmandu

Cross the border and travel to Kathmandu. Enjoy some free time to get to know the city.

### Private Vehicle

Zham – Kodāri 1h-2h75km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

### Border Crossing (Tibet - Nepal)

Zham – Kodāri

Ready for a little more ink in your passport? Grab your bags and get ready to check another country off your bucket list.

### Private Vehicle

Kodāri – Kathmandu 3h-4h132km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

### Free Time

Kathmandu Afternoon

Start exploring the city.

## Day 21 Kathmandu

Depart at any time.

## What's Included

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Your Welcome Moment: Welcome Moment - Meet Your CEO and Group

Your Local Living Moment: Rongbuk Monastery Guesthouse, Rongpu Si. Great Wall entrance. Forbidden City tour. Trans-Tibetan railway. Kumbum visit. Potala Palace visit. Jokhang Temple visit. Sera Monastery visit. Yamdrok Tso visit. Tashilunpo Monastery visit. Sakya Monastery visit. Pelkhör Chode Monastery visit. Kailash kora. Lake Manasarovar visit. Saga Dawa festival experience. Everest Base Camp visit. Border crossing support. Internal flight. All transport between destinations and to/from included activities.

## Highlights

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Witness pilgrims replace the Tarboche flagpole, hike the ancient Kailash kora, visit spectacular palaces and incredible monuments, arrive at Everest Base Camp

## Dossier Disclaimer

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## Itinerary Disclaimer

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While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

## Important Notes

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### 1. ALTITUDE SICKNESS

This trip operates at altitudes over 3500m (max altitude 5630m). Whilst we travel slowly allowing plenty of time to acclimatise you may experience headaches, nausea, lethargy on arrival in Lhasa and on the Kailash kora. It is important to be aware of the affects of altitude on one's tolerance especially on long driving days.

### 2. PARTICIPATION IN KAILASH KORA

If anyone is unable to participate in the Kailash kora they may remain in Darchen with our drivers.

### 3. ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation in western Tibet (particularly on the Kailash kora) and at Everest Base Camp) is extremely basic - only multishare rooms may be available and little or no running water. Basic pit toilets.

### 4. WEATHER

The sun is intense - hat and sun screen are essential as well as drinking plenty of water as altitude exacerbates dehydration.

5. Peak season notice: Golden Week falls between October 1st and 7th, 2019/2020/2021. Please note that Golden Week is a semi-annual 7-day or 8-day national holiday for the people of China. This is a very busy time of the year for domestic tourists, so expect some crowding at major attractions. We recommend booking these dates well in advance as accommodations and transportation availability is extremely limited.

## Group Leader Description

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Your G Adventures group trip is accompanied by a G Adventures Chief Experience Officer (CEO) in China. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. You will also be accompanied by a Tibetan translator/guide outside Lhasa.

## Group Size Notes

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Max 14, avg 10

## Meals Included

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4 breakfasts

## Meals

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Eating is a big part of traveling. Travelling with G Adventures you experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available out in the world. Generally meals are not included in the trip price when there is a choice of eating options, to give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat. It also gives you more budgeting flexibility, though generally food is cheap. Our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. Your CEO will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. Included breakfasts will usually be asian style consisting of noodles or congee (rice porridge) or bread and eggs. Vegetarians will be able to find a range of different foods, although in some areas the choice maybe limited. For all trips please refer to the meals included and budget information for included meals and meal budgets. Food in Western Tibet is limited in variety - we recommend bringing snacks, museli bars etc for snacks on the Kailash kora.

## Transport

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Train, plane, private bus, 4x4, walking.

## Local Flights

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All local flights are included in the cost of your tour unless otherwise noted. It is important that we have your passport information at the time of booking in order to process these tickets. Internal flight tickets are issued locally and will be given to you prior to the flight departure.

## Solo Travellers

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We believe single travellers should not have to pay more to travel so our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers joining group trips are paired in twin or multi-share accommodation with someone of the same sex for the duration of the trip. Some of our Independent trips are designed differently and single travellers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price.

## Accommodation

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Hotels/guesthouses (11 nts), very basic guesthouses (7 nts, possibly multi-share), sleeper train (2 nts).

## About Accommodation

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Accommodation in western Tibet is very, very basic. After Saga there are only basic guest houses with multi-bed rooms, shared pit toilets, essentially no running water and electricity only in the evenings. A sleep sheet is recommended as whilst there is plenty of bedding and (in most cases) it does get washed, it can be dusty.

## Joining Hotel

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For details of your joining hotel please refer to your tour voucher, G Account, the G Adventures App or contact your travel agent.

## Joining Instructions

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When arriving to Beijing International Airport, if you have not pre-booked an arrival taxi with G Adventures, you can take a taxi or the Airport Express Train.

Taxi: Follow the signs to the taxi ranks once you have come out of the baggage hall. The ranks are clearly defined, and traffic guards will systematically put you into a taxi. Print out the name of your hotel in Chinese. A taxi ride will take between 45min-1hour depending on traffic, and should cost between 95-120 Yuan (plus an extra 10 for the tollway).

DO NOT GO WITH ANYONE WHO APPROACHES YOU OFFERING A METERED TAXI WHICH IS PARKED IN THE LOT. THEY WILL RIP YOU OFF.

Airport Express Train: Once you have come out of the luggage hall, follow the signs to the underground Airport Express Line. This line takes you to the center of Beijing, to DONGZHIMEN, where you can take a taxi to your hotel (taxi fare is about 30 yuan). The Airport Express ticket costs 25 yuan. It takes about 16 minutes from Terminal 3 of the Airport to Dongzhimen. Train hours are from 6:30am to 10:30pm.



If you have paid in advance for an arrival transfer, a G Adventures representative will be at the airport to meet you. If for any reason you are not met at the airport, please call our local support line. If you are unable to make contact for whatever reason, please make your way to the joining point hotel via taxi.

Please note that Day 1 is an arrival day and no activities have been planned for that day other than your welcome meeting in the evening, so you can arrive at any time. Similarly the last day is a departure day during which no activities have been planned.

A G Adventures Representative will organize a short meeting soon after arrival, during which you will meet other tour participants and receive information about general and specific aspects of the trip. A welcome note will be left for you in the hotel so you have all the necessary information regarding the meeting time. If you arrive late, s/he will leave you a message detailing what time and where you should meet the next morning.

## **Arrival Complications**

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We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, as soon as possible please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your CEO (if you are not on a group tour please refer to the emergency contact details provided in this dossier). If you are unable to get in touch with your leader, please refer to our emergency contact details. If you have pre-booked an airport transfer and have not made contact with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, please call the transfer operator (number below).

As a last resort we recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel, following the Joining Instructions. Please apply to your travel agent on your return for a refund of the transfer cost if this occurs.

## **Emergency Contact**

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Should you need to contact us during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call either the G Adventures Local Operator (if one is listed below) or our G Adventures Local Office. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so they may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

### **AIRPORT TRANSFER**

If you have purchased an arrival through G Adventures or if an arrival transfer is included in the cost of your tour, please note that:

Your arrival transfer has been arranged based on flight information provided to us. If you are advised of a flight schedule change within 48 hours of your scheduled arrival time, we will do our best to rearrange your arrival transfer however we cannot guarantee this. If your arrival transfer does not arrive within 30 minutes after you have exited the arrivals area please take a taxi to your start point hotel

If your call is specifically concerning Beijing Airport Transfer complications please call our local G Adventures Transfer provider directly at:  
Ms Xiaofeng Chen (Beijing): +86 1391 0388 356

### **EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS**

Beijing Airport Transfer and Tour Assistance:  
+86 1391 0388 356 -Ms Xiaofeng Chen

After office hours emergency number: +86 187 0058 2383

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office, please call the numbers listed below which will connect you directly with our Sales team who will happily assist you. Hours of operation by region can be found [here](#).

Toll-free, North America only: 1 888 800 4100

Calls from UK: 0344 272 0000

Calls from Germany: 0800 365 1000

Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618

Calls from New Zealand: 0800 333 307

Outside North America, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

## **What to Take**

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What you need to bring depends on the trip you have chosen and the countries or regions you are planning to visit. We suggest that you pack as lightly as possible as you are expected to carry your own luggage. As a rule we try not to have to walk more than 15-20 minutes with your bags which is why we recommend keeping the weight of your bags between 10-15kg/22-30lb. Suitcases are not recommended

for G Adventures trips! Most travellers carry a backpack or rolling bag of small to medium size (no XXL ones please!) as they need to fit under the beds when travelling on sleeper trains. You will also need a day pack/bag to carry water, cameras and other electronics like ipods and mobile phones.

Do not bring any knives or swords into China (gifts or otherwise). If they do make it into the country, they will not be permitted on trains. If you purchase a knife or sword while travelling elsewhere before arriving in China your best option is to post/mail it home before entering the country as no post/mail companies in China will accept it as a parcel.

## Packing List

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Additional Items:

Cold Weather:

- Long-sleeved shirts or sweater
- Scarf
- Snow Boots
- Warm gloves
- Warm hat
- Warm layers
- Warm waterproof jacket

Conservative Dress:

- Modest clothing that covers knees and shoulders (Long pants, long skirts, shirts that cover shoulders)
- Shawl or scarf (for temple visits)

Documents:

- Flight info (required) (Printouts of e-tickets may be required at the border)
- Insurance info (required) (With photocopies)
- Passport (required) (With photocopies)
- Vouchers and pre-departure information (required)
- Visas or vaccination certificates (With photocopies)

Essentials:

- Toiletries (required) (Shampoo, bodywash, soap, etc.)
- Binoculars (optional)
- Camera (With extra memory cards and batteries)
- Cash, credit and debit cards
- Day pack (Used for daily excursions or short overnights)
- Ear plugs
- First-aid kit (should contain lip balm with sunscreen, sunscreen, whistle, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, bandaids/plasters, tape, anti-histamines, antibacterial gel/wipes, antiseptic cream, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, rehydration powder, water purification tablets or drops, insect repellent, sewing kit, extra prescription drugs you may be taking)
- Flashlight/torch (Headlamps are ideal)
- Fleece top/sweater
- Footwear
- Hat
- Locks for bags
- Long pants/jeans
- Moneybelt
- Outlet adapter
- Personal entertainment (Reading and writing materials, cards, music player, etc.)
- Reusable water bottle
- Shirts/t-shirts
- Sleepwear
- Small travel towel
- Sunglasses
- Swimwear
- Watch and alarm clock
- Waterproof backpack cover
- Windproof rain jacket

Smart Dress:

- Smart outfit (For evenings out)

#### Train Travel (Optional):

- Slip-on shoes
- Small container with lid
- Travel cutlery
- Travel or camp cup

#### Trekking:

- Gloves
- Hat
- Hiking boots/sturdy walking shoes
- Hiking pants (Convertible/Zip-off and quick dry recommended)
- Snacks (Protein bars, chocolate, dried fruits, candies, energy sweets.)
- Socks (Trekking socks (woollen or synthetic, not cotton).)
- Thermal base layer (Woollen or synthetic, not cotton.)
- Walking poles (Highly recommended.)

#### Warm Weather:

- Sandals/flip-flops
- Shorts/skirts (Longer shorts/skirts are recommended)
- Sturdy water shoes/sandals
- Sun hat/bandana
- Swimwear

## Laundry

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Laundry facilities are offered by some of our hotels for a charge. There will be times when you may want to or have to do your own laundry so we suggest you bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap.

## Visas and Entry Requirements

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All countries require a valid passport (with a minimum 6 months validity). Contact your local embassy or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent. It is your own responsibility to have the correct travel documentation. Visa requirements for your trip will vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as far as possible, but rules do change and sometimes without warning. While we provide the following information in good faith, it is vital that you check the information yourself and understand that you are fully responsible for your own visa requirements.

Visa information specific to your destination and nationality can be found in our Important Pre-Departure Information page [here](#)

**\*\* Please be advised that if you have recently travelled to Turkey, or you are a Turkish citizen, it is possible that your Chinese visa will not be approved. Please contact your local embassy for further information. \*\***

**NEPAL** - Visas are available at the Nepal border town of Kodari. You will also need to provide two passport photos and the following fees in US dollars cash only: Multiple entry visa valid for 15 days - US \$25: Multiple Entry Visa for 30 days - US \$40 and Multiple entry visa valid for 90 days - US \$100

Please note that visas are the responsibility of the individual traveller. The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as much as possible, but rules do change. It is important that you check for yourself with the embassy of each country. Your travel agent can assist. Please, keep in mind that all countries require passports valid for at least 6 months from the moment of departure from the country.

**CHINA:** all nationalities require a visa to visit China

Most nationalities also need an official Letter Of Invitation (LOI) before they can apply for their Chinese visa.

You can obtain the LOI through our visa support agent in China. The visa support link you need to complete will be sent to you or your travel agent by email when you confirm your booking. You must read the instructions carefully and fill out all the details.

When filling out your Chinese Visa Application form, Please ensure that you list the same details as appear on your LOI when filling out your Chinese Visa Application form.

Passengers traveling to Tibet:

As Tibet continues to be a sensitive area for travel to the Chinese government you must refrain from listing Tibet as one of the places you are going to visit as your application form or your Visa will be

denied. We will provide you with the necessary documents to obtain your Chinese Visa, please use the details provided when filling out your Chinese Visa application form. Please submit a copy of your Chinese Visa to us once you receive it in order to arrange your permit for Tibet.

Norwegian nationals travelling to Tibet:

Please be advised that starting in 2018, travellers from Norway are now eligible to apply for a permit to enter Tibet. However, please keep in mind that applications made by Norwegians are being reviewed very carefully by the Tibetan authorities. If you are planning to travel with a Norwegian passport, please ensure that you have appropriate travel insurance in case your Tibetan Permit application is unsuccessful.

#### HOW TO FILL IN CHINA LOI FORM ONLINE:

As Chinese visas are dated specifically for entry and exit, please ensure you enter the correct dates as per your flights entering and exiting China. Please remember to put exactly the same dates when you fill out the application at the Chinese embassy. You will need to provide additional documentation to the consulate (i.e. flights tickets, hotel reservations) if these dates fall outside the duration of the tour.

Please do not submit the below application until 3 months prior to your entry into China. The details will be forwarded to our local agent in China and you will be emailed your Chinese Invitation Letter (With day by day Itinerary) only once we are within 60 days of the trip start date.

Once you have received your LOI you can apply for your visa by going to the nearest Chinese embassy. Please, remember that it is your responsibility to check whether passport details, name spelling and dates on the LOI are correct.

As of April 3rd, 2018, all Chinese visa application forms must be typed. Handwritten forms will no longer be accepted.

Following the successful implementation of their 144 hour visa free program for the Shanghai district, The Ministry of Public Security of China have announced the extension of the 144 hour visa free program for provinces of Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei. As of the 29th of December 2017, over 50 foreign nationals can now enter or exit via one of the following ports:

- Beijing Capital International Airport
- Railway West Railway Station
- Tianjin Binhai International Airport
- Tianjin International Cruise Homeport, or
- Shijiazhuang Zhengding International Airport in Hebei Province and Qinhuangdao Harbor.

## Detailed Trip Notes

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The Kailash kora is tough, but within the capabilities of any healthy person. No particular level of physical fitness is required, although stubbornness (endurance) helps. Walk at your OWN pace – slow and steady is the way to go – being fit or unfit is not the primary control here, it is how you deal with altitude.

DO NOT RUSH! The only reward for trying to prove something by being first is nausea, vomiting and a splitting headache!

GO SLOWLY – plod on at a steady pace, pause, standing to rest – don't sit too often – it is harder to get going again.

Don't care about whether others are ahead! The path is clear, your guides keep track of where you are. There is plenty of time so walk at YOUR pace regardless of how far behind you may think you are.

Remember the sun is intense – wear sunscreen and sunglasses.

It is colder than you think, especially in the wind – if you take off layers whilst walking make sure to put them on again as soon as you stop or are in the shade – don't wait to get cold.

Due to Internet restrictions, some popular websites and applications – including social media sites like Facebook and email services like Gmail – may not work in China. If you think these restrictions may affect you, we suggest you do research before your departure in order to be prepared. Bear in mind the availability of websites and apps can change without notice at any time.

## Spending Money

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Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

## Money Exchange

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As currency exchange rates in Asia fluctuate often we ask that you refer to the following website for daily exchange rates: [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com).

As of May 2011 the exchange rate for China was 1 USD = 6.5 CNY (Chinese Yuan) and 1 USD = 70 NPR (Nepalese Rupees).

Cash (Chinese Yuan) is the best method of money in China. There are some ATM machines at international airports and major cities that accept Visa and debit cards but these should not be relied on as a source of funds. We recommend the use of cash and traveller's cheques in major currencies (USD, CAD, GBP, EUR, AUD, HKD) as a backup. Major credit cards are accepted in a few shops (except for AMEX and Diner's) but they may charge a 2-4% transaction fee.

\*\*\*Tibet is still part of China, therefore Chinese Yuan is used in Tibet as well.

## Emergency Fund

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Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD \$200 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

## Departure Tax

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For China departure Tax is included in all International and Domestic tickets. For Nepal the International Departure tax is 1695 Nepalese Rupees or 1300NPR if travelling to SAARC Countries (India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka)

## Tipping

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Traditionally in China tipping is not expected and thus there is no need to tip in restaurants and your general interaction with locals; however, tipping is customary - though not compulsory - in the tourism industry and not only shows an expression of satisfaction it may also be of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use. You may do this individually, or your CEO may offer to collect the money and tip as a group.

Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from 1 to 3 USD per person per day depending on the quality and length of the service; ask your CEO for specific recommendations based on the circumstances and culture. Giving a tip should be seen as a formal 'thank you', and the action should in no way be awkward. The best method of tipping someone that has served the whole group is to plan in advance, and not rush when it comes to saying goodbye. It is one of the most direct ways that you can have a positive economic impact within the Tibetan community.

Also at the end of each trip if you felt your G Adventures CEO did an outstanding job tipping is appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline \$5 USD per person per day can be used.

## Optional Activities

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Beijing  
- Shaolin Monk Kung Fu Show (90-180CNY per person)  
- Beijing Opera (120-180CNY per person)  
- Beijing Acrobatics Performance  
- The Pearl Market (Free)  
- Hutong Walk

Gyantse  
- Evening Kora

## Health

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Please note inoculations may be required for the country visited. It is your responsibility to consult with your travel doctor for up to date medical travel information well before departure.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information well before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit and hand sanitizers / antibacterial wipes as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that sometimes we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities, and for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc. In Asia pharmacies tend to stock the same western drugs as you get at home but they are usually produced locally so please bring the full drug name with you when trying to purchase a prescription drug. When selecting your trip please carefully read the brochure and itinerary

and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please refer to the Physical and Culture Shock ratings for trip specific information. G Adventures reserves the right to exclude any traveller from all or part of a trip without refund if in the reasonable opinion of our CEO they are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group.

Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) is a condition that affects many travelers to high altitude. It is caused by a lack of Oxygen and generally occurs at heights above 2500m.

AMS Symptoms include: Loss of appetite, Headache, Nausea, Vomiting, Lethargy / Fatigue, Dizziness, Insomnia / disturbed or poor sleep

The main risk for the development of AMS is ascending too quickly. A slow ascent lets your body acclimatize to the altitude and avoids AMS. AMS occurs equally in males and females, the old and the young, the fit and the unfit. Those who have experienced AMS on previous journeys to high altitude may be at increased risk for developing it again.

\*Avoid alcohol, salt & any medication containing codeine. (These can cause dehydration and/or depress breathing).

\*Drink plenty of fluids – at least 3-4 liters per day.

\*A high carbohydrate diet will aid ventilation and efficient use of oxygen.

\*If drinking alcohol or coffee make sure you compensate with extra water.

\*Avoid over-exertion in the initial days at altitude.

Some drugs have also been used to prevent AMS. The most commonly used is acetazolamide (Diamox) which is normally given as one 250g tablet, taken twice a day, beginning at least one day before ascent above 2500m. Diamox can make you pass more urine than usual, cause pins & needles in fingers and toes and may make carbonated drinks taste flat.

\*Painkillers such as aspirin and paracetamol may be suggested for the headache.

\*Diamox may be useful (250g every 8 hours)

\*Sleeping in a sitting position can aid breathing & headache while sleeping.

\*Those with moderate or severe symptoms or whose symptoms persist despite a day or two of rest should descend until symptoms have improved.

## Safety and Security

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Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage. When travelling on a group trip, please note that your CEO has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Your CEO will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your CEO will assist you with options available in a given location please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

Protests and Demonstrations- Protests and demonstrations, even those that are well intended, have the potential to turn violent with no warning. Counter protests can also turn violent. Action by security forces to disperse demonstrators and protesters may occur at any time. If you are in an area where demonstrators or protesters are gathering, avoid the temptation of staying for a good photo opportunity and leave the area immediately.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards) have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).

Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk.

We take all prudent measures in relation to your safety. For ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling, please visit:

[www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/](http://www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/)

## **Trip Specific Safety**

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We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

## **A Couple of Rules**

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Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

## **Travel Insurance**

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Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your CEO, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy please bear in mind that all clients must have medical coverage and that we require a minimum coverage of USD 200,000 for repatriation and emergency rescue. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. If you have credit card insurance we require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

## **Planeterra Foundation - the non-profit partner of G Adventures**

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Planeterra International Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to turning travel into impact by helping local communities earn an income from tourism. Planeterra connects underserved local communities to the benefits of tourism by developing and supporting small community-owned businesses. These businesses support Indigenous people, empower women, grant youth access to employment opportunities, and protect the environment. Planeterra also works to ensure these businesses have a thriving customer base by integrating their projects into G Adventures' itineraries globally.

G Adventures is Planeterra's largest corporate donor, covering all operating costs, so 100% of your donation will bring opportunity to people in need.

G Adventures Dollar-a-day Program - Make Every Day Count - Turn your travel into impact with [Planeterra Foundation](#).

Did you know? Most communities around the world do not benefit from tourism. Give back to the places you visit on your travels by creating opportunities for local people to earn an income, and protect the environment.

Make every day count by donating \$1/day for the length of your trip, and join us in empowering the communities you will visit when you travel. 100% of your donation goes directly to Planeterra projects.

## **Local Dress**

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In Asia the dress standard is more conservative than it is back home. When packing try to pick loose, lightweight, clothing that will keep you cool in the usually hot and humid climate of Asian summers. In predominately Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim countries we ask that you dress respectfully and avoid very short shorts/skirts and singlets/tanktops when visiting temples or mosques or other holy sites - in Tibet only tourists will be seen in skimpy clothing and whilst you will not cause offense you can expect comment.

## **Feedback**

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After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us that we'll give you 5% off the price of your next G Adventures trip if your feedback is completed on-line within 30 days of finishing your trip. Your tour evaluation will be e-mailed to you 24 hours after the conclusion of your trip. If you do not receive the tour evaluation link in the days after your tour has finished, please drop us a line at [customersolutions@gadventures.com](mailto:customersolutions@gadventures.com) and we will send it on to you.

## Newsletter

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Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from G Adventures, subscribe at [www.gadventures.com/newsletters/](http://www.gadventures.com/newsletters/)

Stay current on how our company invests in our global community through our foundation - Planeterra. Sign up for [Planeterra's monthly news](#) to learn more about how to give back and support the people and places we love to visit.

## Minimum Age

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You must be 18 to travel unaccompanied on a G Adventures tour. For minors travelling with a guardian over 21 years old, the minimum age is 12.

## International Flights

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Check-in times and baggage allowances/restrictions vary by airline and can change at any time. For the most up-to-date information for your flight, please contact your airline. We recommend checking in online in advance to avoid potential delays at the airport.