

2021 | Telled Travel Vision

HORSE RIDING

DISCOVER THE TIBETAN NOMADIC LANDS
ON THE HORSE BACK



www.tibetanconnections.com



This 8-day trip will take place in the Tibetan regions of Gansu and Sichuan provinces. We will start from Lanzhou city of Gansu, a gate way city for Tibetan regions in Gansu and other neighboring provinces, it is the borderland of the Tibetan plateau. Once you are in Labrang, you will visit the prominent Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, meet with the monks, artists, farmers and nomads.

It is a good start to acclimatize and get an overview about the high learnings in Tibetan Buddhism – the institutions, art forms, architectures, and histories and so on. The town, Labrang is named after the monastery. It is indeed a college town, as the trades and services are used to rely on and only existed to support the running of this great institute. Here we will not only have a grand tour of the Tibetan Buddhist arts, also get hands-on experience from a Thangka painting workshop, with a comparative perspective of the western modern arts from the instructor. Outside of the monastery, the streets are bustling.

After two days, we will leave the town and go to the open space of the grasslands. We will go southward, ascending in attitude and deeper into the nomadic heartland, at the border of Gansu and Sichuan provinces.

The second part of the trip is featured with the learning of the current environmental challenge and how locally it has been tackled. You will talk with the local Tibetan environmentalists who have been fighting against the desertification of the grasslands for over 15 years. Getting to know these people and hear their stories at their workplace, tea house and archive room, will help you to get past that thin but hard-to-penetrate layer of “taking a trip”, and arrive at the next layer of knowing the complex of reality on the ground, and the creative measures that the local people take to face the challenges in their lives. Their stories have inspired the young generation of Tibetans to find the means of returning to the homeland, participating and making changes. We hope you will get inspired too.

There will be fun time too! Camping with nomads, see how they take care of the animal herds and do chores – milking, making butter and yogurts. Riding horses and have a great time being a nomad for two days.



Trip highlight

- Visit Tibetan Buddhist monasteries
- Meeting with local and foreign artist at their centers
- Talking with Tibetan environmentalists
- Camping with Tibetan nomads
- Ridding horses on the rolling grasslands.



TOUR OPERATORS & OUR VISION

Tibetan Connections is a locally operated tour company run entirely by Tibetan travel expertise. We are committed to offer you the best experience of Tibet possible. We pride ourselves in our high standard of customer services, and work hard to ensure you enjoy your journey in this breathtaking land. Our staff are experienced travel operators and guides who have not only worked in the Tibet travel industry for many years, but also received the trainings in tourism, safety, and customer satisfaction both in China and internationally. In accord with client preferences, our staff has led numerous luxury, budget, and adventure tours on the plateau for the past 20 years.

Our vision is to provide our clients with a lasting, enjoyable experience with which they learn about and witness the Tibetan life. We aim to empower Tibetan communities by hiring Tibetan tour guides, who are equipped with the cultural and language know-how to give our clients a deep understanding of Tibetan culture. We also patronize Tibetan restaurants and guest houses, and make sure to hire services directly from local nomads and farmers whenever possible. We strive to bring sustainable incomes to our local communities, organize socially responsible tours, and give back to our local communities by supporting local non-profit and charity projects.





Tashi Phuntsok

Tashi Phuntsok is the co-founder of the Tibetan Connections and has been working as a travel agent and guide since late 1990s, specializing tours through out the Tibetan regions and neighbouring ethnic regions in the western part of China. He spent his childhood as Buddhist monk in Tibet and later he went to India to continue his study where he studied English. Since he returned home, he has been traveling, discovering, and finding new travel destinations to share with the international travelers.

He has worked with many foreign organizations including the National Geographic, etc. and the authors of travel books such as " Eastern Tibet, The history of central Asia" and the Lonely Planet.

Since 2014, he also has been arranging the explorational trips for the Motor companies including BMW and Volkswagen. In 2016 he led a Volkswagen team and completed the world record of challenge by driving JETTA throughout KEKEXILI region (average elevation: Over 4500m/13,500ft, highest point 5300m).

He sees himself as a traveler and explorer, and is very passionate of the land and culture. Among many services he and his team can offer, they are particularly experienced in high-altitude trekking and camping, as well as the cultural appreciations of the grottos and caves along the southern Silk Road, as well as the monasteries and retreat areas of Tibet.

TRIP INFORMATION

Region elevation and travel level

- Elevation: 3,000m–3600m
9,000ft–11,800ft
- Trip level: moderate

Food arrangement during camping

- Breakfast: eggs, locally backed breads, Yak yogurt, Jam, coffee, Tea
- Packed lunch: sandwich, apples, energy bars.
- Dinner: pasta with Tibetan yak Gruyere.

Accommodations and meals

- 3–4 star hotels & hostel with daily breakfast
- Full-facility Camping
- Local Chinese, Tibetan and Hui Muslim foods.

Tour leader and transportation

- Experienced trilingual Tibetan tour leaders who have more than 10 years of leading international clients.
- SUV with A/C and space for luggage

TOUR & CAMPING PREPARATION

Things that you need to bring for the trip

Clothes:

1. Cap / hat (covers neck and face from Sun).
2. Outdoor water-proof jacket.
3. Fleece (for morning and evening temperature / 10c-15c).
4. T-shirts, two (at least one long-sleeves for protection from Sun).
5. Quick-dry trousers.
6. Raincoat.
7. Trekking boots (waterproof is the best option. If it's brand new, pls wear and get used).
8. Cotton socks, two pairs.

Equipment:

1. Backpack, 20-25L (for your daily items, raincoat, packed lunch, water bottle, backpack rain cover).
2. Walking stick (1 for experienced trekker; 2 for beginner).
3. Water bottle (pls bring 1 or 2. We will fill water one time before the trekking each morning and carry by ourselves).
4. Sun block (SPF50+, PA+++).
5. Lipstick for sunscreen and moisture.
6. Sunglasses.
7. Headlamp (for your personal use. We provide the camping lamp for each tent).
8. Camera, and extra batteries for camera (no electricity during the trek).
9. Power bank for your cell phone charges.
10. Sleeping bag.

TOUR & CAMPING PREPARATION

Things that we will provide for the trek

Pls let us know if you need items except the listed below. For personal use:

1. Toilet papers.
2. Wet tissue.
3. Hand sanitizer.
4. Quick-dry hand towel.

Full camping facility:

1. Tents.
2. Air mattress for each person.
3. Air pillow for each person.
4. Camping lamp.
5. Dinning sets (table and chairs).
6. Dinning tent
7. Toilet tent.
8. All cooking equipment.
9. Plates, cups, bowls, spoons, forks, tissues.

TRIP ITINERARY

DAY BY DAY (PAGE 1)

D 1

Beijing -Lanzhou

Arrival in Lanzhou. Your local guide and driver will meet at the exit gate. Drive to Labrang via Linxia Hui Autonomies Region. Check in your pre-booked hotel. Take a short rest at your hotel rooms. And meet at hotel lobby at 7:00pm and join the welcome dinner at a Tibetan restaurant.

Driving hours: 3

lodging standard: 3 star hotel

Average altitude: 3,000m/9,000ft

D 2

Labrang monastery - artist workshop

Your guide will meet you at the hotel lobby at 8.30am. Our first site is Labrang monastery, which is the mother monastery of 108 other smaller monasteries in Gansu, Qinghai and Sichuan provinces. It is a comprehensive university in Tibetan Buddhism, with complete branches of studies and full lineages in Gelugpa tradition. It is about a 2-hour visiting led by your guide and the monk guide from the monastery. Afterward, we will take a kora (a walk) around the monastery with the local pilgrims. After lunch, we will take a short trip to Sangkog grassland just outside of the town where you can walk on the flowery grassland. Dinner will be arranged at a restaurant on the grassland. After enjoy your dinner, we will drive back to the hotel.

Driving hours: 1

Lodging standard: 3 star hotel

Average altitude: 3,000m/9,000ft

D 3

Thangka painting workshop

Breakfast buffet at the hotel and meet at the hotel lobby at 8.30am. Walk to the Snow Mountain Art Center. Meet Ms Tenzin Dolma, founder of the center and her students. The morning sessions will include an introduction of her works, basics in Thangkha painting, Thangkha painting as a traditional form of arts and its new trends. After a short break, the session on the hands-on painting begins. Lunch at Nordan cafe with Tenzin. In the afternoon, the workshop continues till 17.30. Group photo with the art center students. We will take 20mins walk to the Dongri Mountain which stands right in front of Labrang monastery, we will hold a short talk on Buddhist meditation follow by practicing 30 mins of meditation. Meet for dinner at 19.30.

Driving hours: 0

lodging standard: 3 star hotel

Average altitude: 3,000m/9,000ft

D 4

Labrang - Amchok - Tagtsang Lhamu (Chin: Lang Mu Si)

Breakfast buffet at the hotel. Meet your guide and driver at 8.00am with all your luggage. We will drive to Amchok, with splendid views of mountains and grassland. Our first stop is visit Shamtse Yak hair handcraft. It is one of the few companies in the region making handwoven scarfs, shawls and clothes using the highland Yak wool, which provides incomes for the local elder women. Meeting with Dolma Kyab, owner of the company and he will give you a short introduction of his works in starting small business for social benefits. Lunch in this small town and we will drive another 2 hours to Tsgtsang Lhamu, through rich nomadic grasslands with yak and sheep herds. We will stop 2-3 times to stretch our legs and for photographs. Arrive in Tagtsang Lhamu around 17.00. We will stay at Trachung Tsang Eco-lodge. Great location with mountain views. They also have a great cafe with large collection of books in Tibetan, Chinese and foreign languages.

Driving hours: 3-4

Lodging standard: Eco-lodge

Average altitude: 3,600m/11,800ft

TRIP ITINERARY

DAY BY DAY (PAGE 2)

D 5

Tagtsang Lhamu - Nego valley short trek - Meeting Mr. Huasang

We will have breakfast at 7.30am at the cafe. At 8.30am, we will walk down to Kerti monastery. The town Tagtsang Lhamu is divided by a river and belongs to two provinces. We will spend about half hour at the monastery, then we will do a short 1-2 hr walk in the Nego valley. Narrow, beautiful, covered by trees, a brook through, and caves, this is a holy site for hermits.

We will come back to the town for lunch. At 2:00pm, we will meet with Huasang and his team who have been working years to preserve the local nomadic land from desertification, revive the traditional culture, document the environmental changes and many more.

lodging standard: hostel

Average altitude: 3,600m/11,800ft

D 6

Tagtsang Lhamu - Kachuka nomadic pasture - camping

After the breakfast, we will leave to Kachuka where the nomads still live in the black yak hair tents on their summer pastureland. Along the road, we will be able to see some of works that Huasang and his team did, together with the local communities. Arrive at the camp site before lunch, We will prepare a simple picnic lunch. In the afternoon, you will have plenty of time discovering the area and visiting the nomadic tents. We will divide the group into small groups and help the nomads fetching their yaks from the mountains. After all the yaks are gathered, our host ladies will teach us how to milk the drills (female yak). Dinner will be ready by 7:00pm. we will have dinner at our camp with great sunset on the grassland.

Driving hours: 1

Lodging standard: camping

Average altitude: 3,600m/11,800ft

D 7

Kachuka - Tagtsang Lhamu.

The nomads start to gather their yaks early for morning milking and herding. After the breakfast, we will set off to ride for a short horse trekking. Our guide and local nomad friends will help you to ride and where to go. You may also ask the guide or nomads to go next with you in case you are not very familiar with riding horses. The horses selected for the trip will be gentle and the nomads friends will escort the whole time. Lunch will be ready at the camp at 12.00pm. At 1:00pm, we will start to drive back to Tagtsang Lhamu. Arrive at our hostel around 2:30pm. The afternoon is free time for relaxation. You may take showers, read or having a short hiking nearby, or walking to the town. Meet at 7:30pm for dinner.

Driving hours: 1

lodging standard: hostel

Average altitude: 3,600m/11,800ft

D 8

Tagtsang Lhamu - Xiahe airport - Beijing

After breakfast, we will say good-bye and drive toward Xiahe airport. it is a 2-hour driving. Fly back out.

Driving hours: 2

Price details

Price is based on per person

Single supplement: **1200RMB** for whom who prefers to have his/her own room.

8,750RMB: Price for group size from 2-4PAX

7,800: Price for group size from 5-9 PAX

7,000RMB: Price for group size over 10-14 PAX

Price includes

- Ground transportation
- Accommodations (Hotel & Home stay / one standard room for 2 people)
- All meals
- Local tour guide
- All expenses for trekking and camping
- Thangka workshop expenses
- Our service fee

Price does not include

- Air tickets
- Travel insurance
- Entry fees for site visits

A gentle note on confidentiality

For the past twenty some years, we have enjoyed providing free information and consultation on anything our potential clients want to know about traveling in the Tibetan Plateau and the neighboring areas. Our tailor-made itineraries according to the clients interests and budgets, are based on one to one communications and informations we share. We therefore would like to ask you please not to share our itineraries to the third parties and help us keeping the itineraries confidential. This is your kind support to the small business like us. In the current situation with quite devastating effects on the tourism, we sincerely appreciate your understanding and supporting us to continue doing a good job in service.



Terms and Conditions

(Note: The term “client” is used below to indicate individual travelers, travel groups, and/or travel agencies liaising with Tibetan Connections (TC) on behalf of travelers and tour groups.)

- The client is requested to finalize and confirm his/her trip at least one month prior to travel.
- After finalizing his/her itinerary with TC, the client is requested to send the following information or documents in order to confirm his/her trip:
 1. Passport number
 2. Date of birth
 3. Occupation
 4. Photocopy of passport picture page
 5. Photocopy of Chinese visa
 6. Emergency phone number in the client's resident country. (In the rare event of an emergency, this phone number will allow us to contact your relatives or friends. We will not share your personal information with any external individuals, companies, or organizations.)
 7. Deposit (The client is required to send 30% of the total trip cost as deposit at the time of confirmation.)
- After paying a deposit of 30% at the time of confirmation, the client is requested to pay the remaining 70% upon arrival on arrival day (Day 1 of the trip). We are able to accept payment in the form of cash, bank transfer, or Western Union.
- If for any reason the client prefers not to carry a lot of cash on his/her person, we can accept the entire trip fee in a single installment at the time of confirmation. If the client wishes to postpone his/her trip and informs TC at least one week before arrival day (Day 1 of the trip), the deposit will not be returned but may be used as a deposit for the same or altered trip at a later date. Please note that in the case of postponement, TC cannot ensure trip costs will remain the same, as prices change depending on the time of year.
- If for personal, scheduling, or other reasons the client cancels his/her trip prior to arrival day (Day 1 of the trip), the deposit will not be returned. However, if the entire trip fees were paid in one installment at the time of confirmation, cancellation prior to arrival day (Day 1 of the trip) will result in a 70% reimbursement of trip fees.
- If the trip must end early or be canceled on or after arrival day (Day 1 of the trip) due to health problems, altitude sickness, natural disasters, or any other similar reason, neither the deposit nor any other portion of the trip fees will be returned to the client. However, if the trip must end early or be canceled due to political unrest or unforeseen governmental restrictions that cannot be compensated for by alternate arrangements, all trip fees minus both the deposit and fees for the days already traveled will be returned to the client.
- As a result of the politically sensitive nature of recent events on the Tibetan plateau, government regulations preventing non-Chinese nationals and individuals who are not local residents from entering certain areas are occasionally and temporarily instituted. Such regulations are not generally publicized prior to implementation. TC will make every effort to learn of any such regulations prior to travel and while fixing the itinerary with the client. However, in the case of unforeseen inability to enter a location listed on the client's itinerary, TC will alter the travel route by choosing alternative travel locations. We will to the best of our ability ensure the client remains satisfied with his/her trip.
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