

**Tibet Highway: Sichuan-Tibet****Southern Line:****(THS-002) Chengdu-Kangding-Litang-Daocheng-Yading-Batang-Zuogong-Bangda-Basu-Ranwu-Bomi-Nyingchi-Tsedang-Lhasa (15 Days)**

Entering Tibet via Sichuan-Tibet Highway is quite dangerous. However, tourists traveling this way are rewarded with the most beautiful landscapes.

Starting from Chengdu, passing by Ya' an, Kangding, Sichuan-Tibet Highway divides into northern route and southern route at Xinduqiao. Southern route traverses Ya' an, Litang, Batang, reaches Mangkang of Tibet; two routes link up again in Bangda, then, traverse Basu, Bomi, Nyingchi, arriving in Lhasa finally. Southern route is 2,149 kilometers long, passing

4,700-meter-high Litang. Most people choose southern route to enter Tibet since it is shorter and the altitude lower.

Pre- and post travel is also tailor-made up to your requests.

**Day 1/Arrive in Chengdu**

Arrive in Chengdu, the regional capital of Sichuan Province, is always praised as the Tian Fu Zhi Guo (Storehouse of the Heaven). Transfer to the hotel on arrival. (D)

**Day 2/Chengdu-Kangding (360km)**

After breakfast, begin our journey to Kangding directly. Kangding, a former outpost on the trade route to Tibet, is a fairly large city tucked within a river valley. The sidewalks of Kangding are crowded with Hui, Chinese Muslims, and Tibetans who have come down from the highlands to sell wild mushrooms, vegetables, yak skins and various paraphernalia. Today's drive will take approximately 6 hours. (B,L,D)

**Day 3/Kangding-Litang (306km)**

We'll have an early start today so we can have more time to explore this picturesque remote Tibetan town. At an altitude of just over 4000m, this is one of the highest towns in the world (Lhasa is 3700m). Situated high on a grassy plateau, Litang has the feel of a rough and tumble "Wild West" town. Khampas - dressed in yak skin coats, bedecked in colorful necklaces and hair ornaments, long daggers hanging from their belts - from the surrounding areas amble into town to stock up on food and supplies, play pool on the streets and hang out in the local teahouses. This small town is great for people watching and just strolling around. We will also visit the famous **Chang-Qing-Chun-Ke'er-Si monastery** and pay homage to the living Buddha with a personal interview. The

monastery here is now home to 1400 Yellow Hat sect monks. Once a hotbed of Tibetan dissent, this monastery was destroyed in the 1950s but has since been completely rebuilt. Today's journey from Kangding to Litang will take us approximately 5 hours. (B,L,D)

#### **Day 4/Litang-Daocheng-Yading (220km)**

Today we will reach the highlight of this journey - **Yading Nature Reserve**, home of three sacred Tibetan mountains - Chenresig (Avalokitesvara, 6032m), Jambayang (Manjusri, 5958m), and Chanadorje (Vajrapani, 5958m). Tibetan Buddhists believe that making a kora (pilgrimage) around these mountains brings great merit, and that the three mountains represent compassion, wisdom and energy - attributes one must cultivate on the path to enlightenment. The scenery here easily rivals that of national parks of the west such as Yellowstone and Yosemite in terms of spectacular, pristine mountain scenery. The drive from Litang to Daocheng will take approximately 4 hours (180km), and the trip from Daocheng to Yading (60km) will take approximately 3 hours as much of the road to the park is dirt track. We will spend the night in tent hotel. (B,L,D)

#### **Day 5/Hiking or horse riding in Yading**

From the reserve entrance we will traverse a beautiful wooded pathway leading to a valley set at the foot of the spectacular Mt. Chanadorje. We'll pass piles of mani stones by the side of the pathway and at the base of the Reserve's most stunning vistas. We'll also visit Tshonggo Gonpa (Chonggu Si in Chinese) - a small Tibetan temple, which Joseph Rock nicknamed "Bandit Monastery" (Joseph Rock, a botanist and explorer, conducted extensive explorations of northwest China and Tibet for Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology and National Geographic in 1924.). We will continue our hike to the foot of Mt. Chenresig, where we'll ascend a small but steep hill to view a beautiful mountaintop emerald green lake. Local lore has it that this magical lake can reveal your future if you spend a few moments in quiet contemplation by its side. We'll return to the meadow at the foot of Mt. Chanadorje and spend the night in a tent hotel. (B,L,D)

#### **Day 6/Yading-Batang (350km)**

Get direction back to Litang, driving into boundless Maoya Grassland, at an average altitude above 4,000m. Litang also hosts to a major horse racing festival in early August, attracting thousands of Tibetans from all over the plateau, and from Qinghai, Sichuan and Tibet. Then, get into the Haizi Mountains (4,700m), the mountain road condition is good. After the summit, go down to Batang, a westernmost town of Sichuan Province, located at the bank of Jinsha River. Batang is famed for the colorful folk songs, dancing and Tibetan opera, as well as the apples. (B,L,D)

#### **Day 7/Batang-Mangkang-Zuogong (265km)**

Depart from Batang, driver further 36km to cross the Jinsha River, the natural boundary between Sichuan and Tibet. Arrive at the first town after entering Tibet - Mangkang (3,780m), the interchange of Sichuan-Tibet Highway and Yunnan-Tibet highway. Mangkang means "wonderful place" in Tibetan, the terrain is complicated with north-south rolling mountains and valleys. Span over the winding Lancang River and cross over the highest mountain on Sichuan-Tibet Highways - Dongda Mountai, at the altitude of 5,008

meters. Arrive in Zuogong. (B,L,D)

#### **Day 8/Zuogong-Bangda-Basu-Ranwu (291km)**

Proceed 100km to Bangda, where northern line and southern line of Sichuan-Tibet Highway converge. View of **Bangda Grassland** and **Bangda Airport** which located the highest altitude in the world. After passing Bangda, climb over the most precipitous Nujiang Mountain, and go down to Nujiang riverside after finishing the famous Ninety-nine Bends. Reach Basu, meaning "Village at the foot of the Warrior Mountain", is at altitude of 3,910 meters. Snow Mountains, primary forests and lyrical landscape combine together, greets you on the way. Proceed to Ranwu and stay overnight there. (B,L,D)

#### **Day 9/Ranwu-Bomi (129km)**

Take sightseeing of **Ranwu Lake**, 3,850 meters above the sea level, which has a water area of 22 square kilometers. The lake is surrounded by many scenic highlights, e.g. the Gangrigabu Snow Mountain in the southwest, the Azhagongla Glacier in the south and the Bosula Peak in the northeast. The green grassland around the lake, the sky-blue lake water and the white snow mountains constitute a very pretty watercolor. Go ahead to Bomi, means grandfather in Tibetan, located in the neighboring area between Himalaya and Nyainqentanglha Mountain of east Tibet. (B,L,D)

#### **Day10/Bomi-Nyingchi (Bayi) (235km)**

After breakfast, go ahead of Nyingchi and drive through virgin forest to Tongmai, the last natural barrier on Sichuan-Tibet Highway. Climb over Sejila Mountain, and you will see the warrior-like grand Peak of Nanjiabawa when coming by the mountain pass of Sejila (4,702m) on sunny days. Go down to Nyingchi County lied at Nyang River lower valley. Stay overnight in Bayi Town (2,400m), the seat of Nyingchi Administration. The town is surrounded by a thick, beautiful forest. The most impressive is the **Forest of Great Cypresses**. (B,L,D)

#### **Day11/Nyingchi-Tsedang**

Depart from Bayi Town, and head for **Basum Lake Scenic Zone**, and sightseeing of the chanting view of Nyang River, the largest one of Yaluzhangbujiang River (Yalung Tsangpo) among its five tributes. Basum Lake, an stunning alpine lake at the middle and upper reaches of the Ba River, is about 3,538 meters above sea level. The blue, limpid lake water reflects the verdant and picturesque snow-capped mountains around the lake combine into a charming scene. Then, drive along Yaluzhangbujiang River (Yalung Tsangpo) heading for Tsedang, viewing of scenes of valley and land fields, and the lush alpine forests. Stay overnight in Tsedang. (B,L,D)

#### **Day12/Tsedang-Lhasa (240km)**

Today' s highlight is the visit of **Yonbulakhang** and **Changzhu Temple**. Yonbulakang is the earliest palace in Tibet, on the Zhaxiciri Mountain. The first impression of Yonbulakhang gave people is always very big built, precipitous and uncommon, because surrounded by the wilderness and field ridge. Changzhu Temple, located at the south bottom of Gongri Mountain, is famous for its "Pearl Tangka", on which paints the image of

Kwan-yin Bodhisattva. Thangk is two meters long, 1.2 meters wide. Totally, cost 26 liang pearl, and it' s also embedded with diamonds, coral and other precious jewelry. Then, drive to Lhasa. (B,L,D)

#### **Day13/Lhasa**

The first day of sightseeing starts from Lhasa' s cardinal landmark- **Potala Palace**, a structure of massive portions. Its towering image has already appeared on various occasions, but your first sight of the Potala will still be an awe-inspiring moment. It takes at least a good 2-hour to visit those rooms, halls and chapels. Some 2km to the east of the Potala is the most revered religious structure and the holiest temple in Tibet - **Jokhang Temple**. Bustling with worshippers and redolent with mystery, the Jokhang is an unrivalled experience. The quadrangle of streets surrounding the Jokhang is the **Barkhor Market** - Lhasa' s most interesting pilgrimage circuit. This area of the Old Town is both the spiritual heart of Lhasa and the main commercial district for Tibetans. (B,L,D)

#### **Day14/Lhasa**

Sightsee of the Drepung Monastery, Sera Monastery and Norbulingka in Lhasa. **Drepung Monastery**, the largest and richest monastery in Tibet, was founded in 1416 by a disciple of Tsong Khapa under the patronage of a noble family and later enlarged by the Fifth Dalai Lama. Nowadays it stands as Tibet' s most important and largest monastic university in Tibet. **Norbulingka Park** (Treasure Garden) was built in the 1740s during the reign of the seventh Dalai Lama. Later it was renovated and enlarged and became the Dalai Lama' s Summer Palace. **Sera Monastery** is located a few miles to the north of Lhasa, is one of the three largest monasteries.

#### **Day15/Depart from Lhasa**

Transfer to the airport, and fly out of Lhasa. TOUR ENDS! (B)