

Wind Horse Holidays, Inc

Tibetan New Year (Losar) and Greater Prayer Festival (Monlam) Feb 17-26, 2007

Duration

09 Nights/10 Days

Trip Grade

Moderate

Land Cost

US\$ 1250 (2-3 pax)

US\$ 1140 (4-5 pax)

US\$ 1050 (6-9 pax)

US\$ 290 Single Room Supplement

US\$ 550 Internal Airfare to and from Beijing

The costs are subject to change

Group Size

Min 2 Max 11

Dates

Feb 17-26, 2006



This trip highlights the two great Tibetan festivals-Losar which is Tibetan New Year and Monlam-the Greater Prayer Festival. You will celebrate Losar festival with Tibetan families in Lhasa and attend the mask dance performance of Monlam festival in Kumbum Stupa of Qinghai-the hometown of 14th Dalai Lama and Tsongkhapa-the founder of Gelugpa Order of Tibetan Buddhism.

You will visit the cultural and historical highlights of Lhasa that includes Dalai Lama's palaces, major monasteries and markets. The train journey from Lhasa, across the Tibetan plateau to Xinning is another attraction of this trip. This section of the railway line is the highest one in the world and offers magnificent views of the plateau and Kunlun and Tangula mountain ranges.

Itinerary

Feb 17: Arrival in Lhasa

Flight to Lhasa, afternoon free for acclimatization. In the evening, you will join a Tibetan family at the New Year's Eve Dinner (Gutor) gathering, followed by burning of effigy (Gortu).

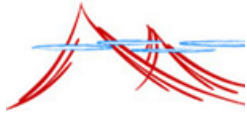
Tibetan's New Year Eve dinner is called "gutu," made of beef and mutton, turnip and flour lump. It's a social gathering and full of fun and laughter. Sometime, the dumpling contains some inedible objects like stone, piece of wood, coins, salt, pepper, charcoal and wool. When people eat and find

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the object in the mouth, the laughter fills the room. Actually, each object has some meaning and indicates your fortune in the New Year.

The feasts include a substantial amount of 'Dresi' a sweet buttered rice with added raisins, 'Droma', which is rice boiled with small potatoes, various meats, fruits, breads, chang, butter tea among others. 'Kapse', a fried sweet that comes in different shapes and forms, are a must. Tibetans are supposed to see in the New Year with these sweets piled high on their tray.



After dinner, they hold a ceremony to drive away ghosts. Tibetan family makes a dough effigy which represents the collective evil and ill will of the past year and woman of the family carries the pot out of the house and a man follows her with a burning torch made of wheat stalks shouting "Get out! Get out!" . The effigy is burnt in the middle of a cross-section, surrounded by the whole family members. They

throw the remains of the *gutu* and the torch while the children set off the fire crackers.

The whole city of Lhasa illuminates by torches and resonant with the sound of firecrackers. This ceremony is conducted to get rid of all the negative forces at the end of the year so that the New Year will begin unencumbered.

Enjoy the celebration. Overnight hotel Dhodgu or Gorkha or similar.

Feb 18: At Lhasa, attend the New Years Day celebration

Today is the New Year's Day. Observe the worship offered by Tibetans in Jorkhang Temple and Sera Monasteries.

In the morning of New Year's Day, the family gets up early; puts on new clothes and finest jewelries, makes offerings of barley flour mixed with butter and sugar at the family shrine, and then goes to monasteries after breakfast. On that morning, tens of thousands of Tibetans swarm into the Jokhang, Zhaibung and Sera monasteries, and the Potala Palace, all in Lhasa, to worship Buddha. People add roasted highland barley, wheat, and juniper and cedar branches into the burning incense burners on Barkhor Square. Smoke fills the area.

Enjoy the festival and while visit the monasteries as well.

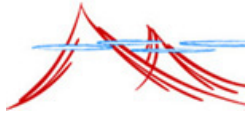
Jorkhang Temple is holiest and most sacred site in Tibet where devout Buddhists make their pilgrimage, sometimes performing prostration (3 steps, 1 prostration) throughout their journey. It is said that pilgrims may take as long as 17 years to complete their pilgrimage on foot.

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Songtsen Gampo built this temple during his reign in the 7th century. Located in the heart of old Lhasa, the site of the Temple was once a lake. It houses one of the 2 rare Buddha statues Princess Wenchang had brought over from China, the latter credited for introducing Buddhism into Tibet. The temple was further expanded under the rule of the 5th Dalai Lama. Today, the temple houses other precious and sacred relics

Barkhor Street. All visitors and pilgrims heading towards Jokhang Temple must pass through the busy Barkhor Street and it's Square in front of Jorkhang Temple. For a glimpse of real Tibet, walk past the narrow lanes in between the stalls and shops into the back alleys. There are many smaller temples, shrines and even mosques to stumble across; quaint shared quarters of the locals sharing one central water pump in the courtyard, grocery shops.

Potala Palace, this legendary palace built by the first foremost king Songtsen Gompa is atop a hill and dominates Lhasa sky. It was expanded to its present structure during the 17th century by the 5th Dalai Lama. This 13 story 1000 room citadel served as the headquarters of the former "church-state" of the Tibet and was home to successive Dalai Lamas, who from the latter half of the 18th century used it as their winter palace. The palace is enlisted by UNESCO as a world heritage site.

Sera Monastery, 5 Kms north of Lhasa, is one of Lhasa's prettiest monasteries. Once a community of more than 5,000 monks resided here and was virtually extinguished by the Chinese. The restored monastery sits below the brow of hill on which *tsongkhapa* built a hermitage and spent several years mediating. One of the monk's disciples began building Sera in 1419, completing it a few years later.

Feb 19: Sightseeing of Lhasa.



Sightseeing of Lhasa and observe the New Years celebration activities.

Today is the second day of the Tibetan New Year. From today, people begin visiting their relatives and friends, exchange greetings and gifts. They feast on rich holiday foods, drink highland barley liquor, play mahjong, dice and card games, and sing and dance around huge bonfires at night. The revelry continues for from three to five days.

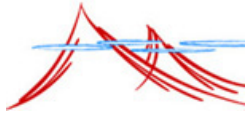
Norbulingka Palaces, also known as the Summer Palaces for the Dalai Lamas, is amidst 40-ha park. Among others, the most visited one is the palace of the 14th Dalai Lama which was built in a fusion style of both Tibetan and Western from 1954-1956. The living quarters were modern in comparison with the Potala Palace, complete with indoor plumbing and bathtub (compliments from the British), imported European furniture, ornate chandeliers and a mysterious box that looked like an antique radio (a gift from India). Photography

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is not allowed.

Drepung Monastery, situated to the west of Lhasa city, was the largest and richest of the three major Yellow Sect monasteries in Lhasa, and it also became the most powerful. As the most powerful of the “Gelukpa” monasteries, Drepung had seven colleges and, at its height, housed over 10,000 monks. It owns many splendid murals, elaborate statues and other rich treasures. A giant golden statue of Buddha “Jiangba Tongzhenma” sits near the precious conch shell.

Jorkhang Temple

Feb 20: An extra day in Lhasa

Today, you will have opportunity to visit some of the villages near Lhasa yet remote by civilization. Get an opportunity to mingle with the Tibetan families and exchange greetings.

Feb 21: Take train to Xinning.



Take train to Xinning. Overnight in the train. Soft sleeper compartment.

Qinghai-Tibet section of the railway is the world's highest railway, and some 960 kilometers of the tracks were laid at 4,000 meters above sea level, with the highest parts reaching 5,072 meters. The railway is still the world's longest plateau railroad which extends 1,972 kilometers from Qinghai's provincial capital Xining to Lhasa in Tibet.

Travelers can enjoy the world-class tourist sites along the newly-built line during the trip. All the carriages of the trains are installed with oxygen-

supplying equipments and every passenger will be provided with an oxygen mask. It will take 26 hours to complete the journey. Stations are built at the scenic spots.

Feb 22: Arrive Xinning.

Meet our local representative at the train station. You will be transferred to the hotel and take rest. In the afternoon, stroll in the township of Xinning.

Xining is the capital of Qinghai Province which is a part of former Amdo region of Tibetan cultural area. Xining lies in the Huangshui River Valley with a lot of mountains and ravines, lake, forests, pasturelands and a great Gelug Monastery.

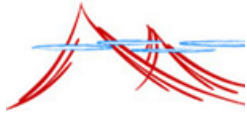
Feb 23: Xining-Kor Kor nor (Qinghai Lake) , overnight at Lake side.

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Qinghai Lake, also known as Kokonor Lake, located 180 km from Xining and at an altitude of 3,200



m above sea level, is the largest salt water lake in China. In Qinghai Lake, Bird Island is the most charming and attractive place. Situated on the western shore of Qinghai Lake, the island has largely due to the receding of waters off its shores, been turned into a peninsula. Though it covers an area of slightly less than 1000 square meters it attracts many migrating birds in spring and summer. To these hundreds of thousands of migrant birds, the island has become a very important bird sanctuary. Thousands of birds of different species such as geese, gulls, sandpipers and cormorants, nest on the island and the

sound of its calls, twitters is carried far and away. For these birds as well as bird watching enthusiasts, the island represents nothing short of a piece of heaven. Another attraction on the lake is Haixinshan where according to legend great horses were bred.

Feb 24: Return drive to Xinning.

Enjoy the view of the grassland and take some walks and later drive back to Xining.

Around the Qinghai Lake is the endless outstretching of grassland and wheat fields. In the distance, countless sheep, cattle and horses are grazing under the white cloud-dotted blue sky. Still farther away tower the snow-capped mountains. You will be overwhelmed by the serene beauty of the Qinghai grassland and forget that you are in such a populous China.

Feb 25: Monlam Festival Celebration at Kumbum Monastery.

Attend the Monlam Festival at Kumbum Monastery. Overnight Xinning.



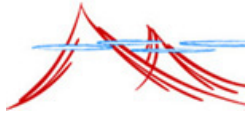
Kumbum Monastery, located 25km away from Xining, is one of the 6 major Gelug Monasteries and is the center of religious activities in the region. The monastery was built in 16th century to commemorate the memory of Tsongkhapa-the founder of Gelugpa sect of Tibetan Buddhism. The monastery, also known as Ta'er Monastery, is a group of fine buildings in a combination of both the Han and Tibetan styles of architecture on the mountain slopes. It has lofty temples and halls rising one upon another. The palace buildings, Buddhist halls, sleeping quarters, as well as the

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courtyards echo each other and thus enhance the beauty of the whole area. The Ta'er Monastery is rich in fascinating arts. The famous butter sculptures, the barbolas, and the murals are considered to be the three most unique arts of superb craftsmanship.

Kumbum Monastery is one of major venue of celebration of Monlam Festivals of Tibetan. Monlam means "Prayer" in Tibetan and great Buddhist services including unveiling of Giant Thangkas and cham (mask) dances are performed in the courtyard of the monastery. People celebrate the festival with great rejoice, feast and make merry.

Feb 26: Flight to Beijing.

You are transferred to airport for flight to Beijing. Service ends.

Land Cost Includes

Lhasa/Xining one way train soft sleeper tickets

Lhasa 4 nights, Xining & Qinghai Lake 4 nights hotel accommodation on twin/double sharing.

Daily breakfast.

New Years Eve dinner with a local Tibetan family.

Sightseeing as on itinerary including Tibetan village visit

All private transportations with heating

English speaking local guides.

All entrance fees as per itinerary

All necessary permits

Land Cost does not include

International airfare. Internal airfare has been separately quoted and has to be booked through us.

Lunch and dinner

Chinese visa fee

Extra expenses due to nature and unforeseen events beyond the control of the management

Extra expenses of personal nature such as drink, tip, laundry, phone etc

Travel Insurance

Important notes on Itinerary

Although we will do our very best to adhere to the itinerary and its schedule, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities, and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of Events. It is likely that there will be changes in the itinerary in terms of anything from the exact hotel used to the villages we may stop in for the night. Tour Guides and our crew will do everything to ensure that you are inconvenienced as little as possible.

Conditions of Participation

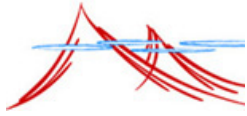
Your participation on a Wind Horse Holidays trip is subject to the conditions stated in the Participant Information Form, which includes the Agreement and Release from Liability and the

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Booking Conditions. We urge you to read this information carefully, and to call us if you have any questions.

Maximum Group Size

We try to make our group size small so that we can pay attention to each and every participant and provide personalized services as far as possible. We take maximum 11 participants in one group and guarantee the trip for minimum 2 sign ups.

Activity Level

This trip is designed for flexible, energetic people who like to be active, intellectually involved, and have a spirit of adventure with positive attitude towards culture and religion. We rate this trip between easy to moderate. It features 4WD vehicle-based sightseeing with light walks and village visits. You will have comfortable accommodation of Tibetan décor and hospitality with en suite bathroom with hot water, heating etc. Temperature during this time of the year will be pretty low. During the day time, the temperature is about 50 °F (10 °C) and at night it might fall to 20-25 °F (-4-5 °C). Chances of rain is very slim and you will have a lot of sun.

Many people feel the effects of high altitude right upon arrival at Lhasa. The usual symptoms are headaches, a bit of dizziness, fatigue, and loss of appetite. You'll need to walk slowly, rest more frequently, and drink ample fluids to avoid altitude sickness. To get the most out of the trip and enjoy the sightseeing tours, we recommend that you make a special effort to be in good physical condition. Daily brisk walking, Jogging and bicycling (or using a stair-climbing machine at your gym) is excellent preparatory exercises. Consult your physician if you have pulmonary and cardiac complains.

Equipment & Clothing

When we receive your booking, we send you a full tour dossier, which contains a suggested gear and clothing list. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us and we will be pleased to offer advice.

Passport and Visa

Your passport validity should be more than 6 months at the time of traveling and there should be enough blank pages for entry and departure seals. You will obtain Chinese visa beforehand and provide us a copy of your passport and Chinese visa for permit processing. Warning: Do not disclose about your Tibet intention for some good reason. As you have to enter China within 90 days from the date of issue, make sure that your visa does not expire before your travel date.

Entering Tibet is not leaving China. If you intend to fly back to mainland China after your trip concludes in Kathmandu, you must have a multiple entry visa.

You will collect a copy of Tibet entry permit from our representative at Beijing or Chengdu or can be shipped to your address, time permitting, at an extra cost.

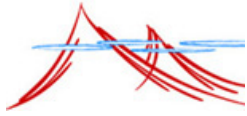
If your travel to Tibet begins from Kathmandu, Your Chinese visa/Tibet entry permit, which is called "Group Visa" and that comes in a letter size sheet with list of participants are obtained from Chinese embassy of Kathmandu. The visa has to be pre-processed through booked tour, though. So, you must have at least a couple of days in Kathmandu for visa work before your flight to Lhasa.

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Nepal visa can be obtained at the port of entry. Two passport size photographs have to be submitted along with trip application. A 60 days valid, single entry visa costs US\$ 30 that you have to pay in cash dollars, preferably in exact amount. Travelers visiting Nepal for 3 days or less will get gratis visa.

Guides

You will be accompanied by English speaking Tibetan Guide. They are trained, experienced and will take care of you from airport till airport.

Booking Formalities

We request USD 150 deposit plus internal airfare costs in order to process the booking. Upon receipt of your booking, we will get back to you in 7 to 10 days with status of air and hotels. Normally, the final payment is due 60 days prior departure but if the suppliers need payment earlier, we may contact you accordingly.

Tour deposit USD 150 can be paid by credit card. We encourage you to send the balance by US bank drawn checks or make wire transfer. Credit card payments are subject to additional 4% charges.

You can download trip application form the following link of our website.
<http://www.windhorsetours.com/reservation.php>

Call from USA and Canada

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