

## KAILASH MANASAROVAR ITINERARY

**1st Sept: Arrival Kathmandu :** You will be met at arrival at Kathmandu and transferred to the hotel. That afternoon is free to relax. In the evening we have a short briefing session followed by dinner.

**2nd Sept: Sightseeing tour around Kathmandu valley :** After breakfast we leave to do a tour of the interesting Pashupatinath Temple and Gujeswari. Overnight at hotel in Kathmandu. *(B, L, D...)*

**3rd Sept: Kathmandu to Nyalam (3750 m / 12300 ft) via Zhangmu (157 kms) :** Today we drive eastwards passing through the pleasant scenery of agricultural countryside and descending to Dolalghat. The trail follows the Bhote Kosi River and then heads towards Kodari on gravel roads and landslip areas. At Kodari, we complete Nepal immigration formalities and cross the friendship bridge on foot to meet representatives from Tibet. Then we drive for 45 minutes through lush green hillsides and cascading waterfalls to Zhangmu town by land cruisers, where we complete Chinese immigration formalities and then continue our drive for another 2 hours through the lush green landscape to Nyalam. Check into the guesthouse.

**Trivia:** All of Tibet is on Beijing time. Due to this, the Ngari region of Tibet, which is so far west of Beijing, is dark at 8 a.m. and there is sunlight until about 9 p.m.! *(B, L, D...)*

**4th Sept: Acclimatization day at Nyalam (3750 m / 12300 ft) :** Rest day at Nyalam for acclimatization. After breakfast, we set out to the edge of the town to climb a small ridge for a fantastic view of the mountain range. Return to the lodge for lunch. Later, one can stroll through the town bazaar or visit the nearby monastery. Overnight at the Guest House. *(B, L, D...)*

### **5th Sept : Nyalam - Saga (4300 m / 14100 ft; 291 kms)**

Drive from Nyalam to Saga via Laluna-La (pass) (5050 m / 16564 ft), Lake Paigu - Tso and the Tsang Po (Brahmaputra River). The terrain starts with a rough drive over land slid areas climbing gradually with increasing altitude to arrive at Laluna – La (pass) marked by prayer flags and cairns with skeletal yak heads with horns. From here, leave the main trail to Lhasa and head west descending to the serene and beautiful Lake Paigu - Tso for lunch. Descend further to the crossing on the Tsang Po (Brahmaputra River). Cross the river then drive to the hustle and bustle of the Saga town. Overnight at Hotel / Camping. *(B, L, D...)*

### **6th Sept : Saga – Paryang (4360 m / 14300 ft; 160 kms)**

Drive from Saga via New Zongba, (4360 m / 14300 ft) - 160 km to Paryang. The guesthouse has dormitory style accommodations. Because of the frequent use of the lodge facilities by pilgrims and lack of water supply, the amenities are basic and not very hygienic. For camping groups, there are beautiful campsites along the Paryang River another 30 minutes beyond the village. Overnight Camp / Guesthouse. *(B, L, D...)*

### **7th Sept : Paryang - Lake Manasarovar (4727 m / 15510 ft; 100 kms)**

Drive from Paryang to Lake Manasarovar via Mayum La (5151 m / 16890 ft) Driving past Kongyu Tso through the village of Thongchen, we camp near Hor village on the banks of Manasarovar. Lake Manasarovar, Hindus believe, was created by Brahma as a reflection of the depth of his soul - Manas and represents the female energy of Yoni of the Universe, while Mt. Kailash symbolizes the male energy of the Lingum. Lake Manasarovar is the highest body of fresh water in the world. Holy also to Buddhists, it was once surrounded by 8 monasteries.

Dinner and overnight camp at Manasarovar. (*B, L, D...*)

#### **8th Sept : Rest and explore Lake Manasarovar.**

Rest day at Lake Manasarovar for acclimatization. Dinner and overnight camp at Manasarovar. (*B, L, D...*)

#### **9th Sept : Manasarovar to Darchen (4560 m / 14950 ft; 1½ -2 hrs drive)**

Drive from Manasarovar to Darchen via Ashtapath / Serlung Gompa (5200 m / 17061ft) from where we get a view of Mt. Kailash. From here we drive to Darchen to commence the circumambulation around Mt. Kailash. It is believed to be the physical embodiment of the mythical Mount Meru, said to be the center of the universe or 'navel of the world'.

Mt. Meru is often depicted as a mandala and its image occurs throughout Buddhist and Hindu parts of Asia. The circumambulation of Mt. Kailash (6714 m / 22028 ft) is an important pilgrimage for religious. We stay at guesthouse in Darchen & complete all our formalities for the parikrama such as hiring of yaks, porters, etc.

Dinner and overnight stay at the guesthouse. (*B, L, D...*)

#### **10th Sept : Darchen to Driraphuk (4890m / 16040ft; 18 kms; 6 hrs)**

Drive to Sersang Valley and start the Parikrama (Kora) of Kailash. In the morning after breakfast we drive to Chukku Gompa, where we would meet our porters & yak. After reorganizing the load we start for the trek. The normal pilgrim's route stays on the east bank of the Lha Chu. But for better views of Kailash and generally better campsites, we cross the west bank trail across a scree slope to arrive at a good camping ground at Damding Donkhang (4890 m / 16040 ft), a grassy spot that offers good views of the West face of Mt. Kailash. It is also known as the Valley of yaks as one can see hundreds of yaks grazing on the meadow. We continue on a rocky path walking along the Belung Chu and Dunglung Chu streams as the North face of Kailash comes in view. On the opposite side of the Lha Chu you can see several groups of nomad tending herd of goats and yaks. As one reaches the Gompa and a frugal guesthouse at Drira Phuk, we are rewarded with a fine view of the North face of

Mt. Kailash. The three lower hills in front of Mt. Kailash from this point are the Manjushree, Avalokitesvara and Vajrapani representing wisdom, kindness and power. Dinner and overnight camp at Drira Phuk. (*B, L, D...*)

#### **11th Sept : Driraphuk to Zutulphuk (5150 m / 16890 ft; 22 kms; 10 hrs)**

After an early breakfast we start trek from Driraphuk and cross the Lha Chu on a wooden bridge. If one continues to trek up the Lha Chu, one would reach the true source of the Indus. The Kora route takes a serious climb on to a moraine eventually meeting the trail from the East bank. The trail now climbs more

gently to a meadow full of fat marmots (phiya) at 5212 m / 17095 ft. Climb past piles of clothing at Shiva-tsal (5330 m / 17490 ft). As apart of their custom, Tibetans leave an article of clothing or a drop of blood here as part of leaving their past life behind them. Continue past thousands of small rock cairns to a large cairn at 5390 m passing the Dikpa Karnak, a sin testing stone. It is said that those without sin can squeeze through the narrow hole between the boulders while a sinner no matter how small cannot pass through!

The trail now leads across a boulder field and climbs through large rocks to a tiny stream. Climb onto a ridge and continue gently on to the Dolma La at 5630 m / 18470 ft. A big boulder on the pass representing the goddess Dolma (better known by her Sanskrit name Tara) is festooned with prayer flags and streamers.

It is traditional to leave and take something as part of the collection of coins, prayer flags, teeth and other offerings attached to the rock. The trail from the west side of the pass is steep and rocky at first and then begins a series of switchbacks as it passes Gauri Kund. Many more switchbacks and steep descents leads to the valley and then further descend for about an hour to arrive alongside the Lham Chhukhir at 5150 m / 16890 ft), the evening's campsite on the banks of a river. Overnight in tents.

(B, L, D...)

### **12th Sept : Zutulphuk to Lake Manasarovar (52 kms; 6 hrs)**

At Zutul-puk Gompa (4790 m / 15710 ft) there is a cave in which the saint Milarepa is said to have meditated. It is said that he adjusted the height of this cave to make it more comfortable. His footprint still remains on the roof. Trek along the Jhong Chu (River) to a bridge, cross it before descending to 4610 m, the last prostration point (Chaksal Gang) from where we get good views of Manasarovar lake but no views of Mt. Kailash. Actually the vehicles can come up to this point but if one does want to continue on to Darchen to complete the full circle, a trek for about one hour through Mani walls and carved yak skulls will lead you back to Darchen. Upon arrival at Darchen, get on the waiting vehicles & drive to the campsite (2 hrs) flanked by the settlement of Hor to the northeast corner of the Lake Manasarovar. Dinner and overnight camp at Manasarovar.

(B, L, D...)

### **13th Sept : Drive from Lake Manasarovar to Saga (400kms; 12 – 13 hrs)**

Overnight stay in a guesthouse.

(B, L, D...)

### **14th Sept : Drive back to Zhangmu via Nyalam (389 kms; 11- 12 hrs)**

Dinner and overnight at hotel in Zhangmu.

(B, L, D...)

### **15th Sept : Drive back to Kathmandu via Kodari (135 km; 5 to 6 hrs)**

After breakfast proceed to Chinese immigration office to complete immigration formalities. After the clearance of border formalities we drive down a very steep section of switchbacks to the Friendship Bridge, which spans the Bhote Kosi River and marks the Chinese - Nepalese border. We say goodbye to our Tibetan guide and driver and walk to Nepalese Immigration Control in Kodari where we will be met by our Nepalese staff. After completing the re-entry formalities we continue the 135 km drive to Kathmandu which, depending on road and weather conditions, should take about 4 to 5 hours. Dinner and overnight at hotel in Kathmandu.

(B, L, D...)

**16th Sept : Departure for Kathmandu airport.**

Final Departure.

*(B...)*

**Tour Ends...**