

Qinghai-Tibet Highway ITINERARY**(THQ-003)****Beijing-Xining-Golmud-train to Lhasa-Tsedang-Gyantse-Shigatse-Lhasa-Shanghai (18 Days)**

From Xining (Qinghai Province) to Lhasa (Tibet), crossing four mountains, namely Kunlun Mountain (4,700m), Fenghuo Mountain (4,800m), Tangula Mountain (5,150m at the mountain pass) and Nyainqentanglha Mountain, spanning three rivers, Tongtian River, Tuotuo River and Chuma'er River, at an average altitude of 4,500m.

Choose train from Gulmud to Lhasa, not only to escape the tried and arduous long-distance driving, but also to appreciate the great scenery along Qinghai-Tibet Highway.

Day 1/Arrive in Beijing

Arrive in Beijing, the capital of China. Transfer to the hotel on arrival. (D)

Day 2/Beijing

Begin the day's activity with a visit to **Tian'anmen Square**, the largest urban square in the world. Tian'anmen was built in 1417 and served as the entrance gate to the Imperial Palace. Move on to visit the Imperial Palace, well-known as **Forbidden City** which is the large scale construction of the palace extended from 1406 to 1420. It was the imperial palace during the Ming and Qing dynasties. 24 emperors lived and ruled China from here. In the afternoon, visit **Temple of Heaven**, built in 1420 A.D., which was originally the platform to offer sacrifices to Heaven during Ming and Qing Dynasties. The buildings and parklands reflect an ancient Chinese thought of "the Heaven is round and the earth is square". Enjoy **Peking Duck** for Dinner. (B,L,D)

Day 3/Beijing

Today's highlight is the visit to the Great Wall, one of the "Seven Wonders of the World" and a symbol of Chinese civilization. Climb **Mutianyu Great Wall** (excluded Cable Car) to avoid the crowds. Then, drive to visit the statue-lined **Shenlu (Spirit Road)** leading to the Ming Tombs, here you can see some marvelous stone sculptures. The Ming Tombs area is for 13 deceased emperors of the Ming Dynasty. Visit the **Changling Tomb** which is the largest of the 13 as you can imagine it is quite impressive. (B,L,D)

Day 4/Beijing-Xining

Visit the enchanting **Summer Palace**, the largest and best-preserved imperial garden in China. As a masterpiece of Chinese landscape garden design, it integrates the natural landscape of hills and open water with manmade features such as pavilions, halls, palaces, temples and bridges into a harmonious and aesthetically exceptional whole.

Take an afternoon flight to Xining, the capital of Qinghai Province, where is mainly inhabited with Tibetan but also a home of Uygur, Kazak and Hui minorities. (B,L,D)

Day 5/Xining-Qinghai Lake

Begin today's sightseeing with the visit to **Ta'er Monastery** (Kumbum Monastery), one of the six biggest monasteries of the Yellow Hat Sect (Gelugpa Sect) of Tibetan Buddhism, and it holds plenty of precious relics and good editions of Tibetan scriptures. The famous butter sculptures, the barbolas, and the murals are considered to be the three most unique arts of superb craftsmanship. Then, head for Qinghai Lake and view of **Sun-and-Moon Mountain** on the way. Legend that Princess Wencheng left for Tubo for her marriage, she took out the Sun-and-Moon Treasure Mirror to see her homeland Chang'an (Today's Xi'an) when she past the mountain. Arrive at Qinghai Lake in late afternoon. (B,L,D)

Day 6/Qinghai Lake-Chaka-Dulan

After breakfast, visit **Qinghai Lake**, a salt lake situated in the province of Qinghai, about 100km west of Xining. Qinghai is the largest lake in China, located at the crossroads of several bird migration routes across Asia. Many species use Qinghai as an intermediate stop during migration, so it is also known as "Bird Islands" (Cormorant Island and Egg Island), which have been bird sanctuaries of the Qinghai Lake Natural Protection Zone since 1997. Then, drive to **Kaka Salt Lake**, whose bottom is covered with a layer of rock salt that is generally 5m thick, with a maximum thickness of 9.68m. The salt is naturally crystallized with big crystal, high purity and excellent taste. And it contains mineral materials, so looks dark green and hence it is called "green salt". Stay overnight in Dulan. (B,L,D)

Day 7/Dulan-Golmud

After breakfast, traverses through Tsaidam Basin to Golmud. You will enjoy the geographic landscape included Gobi desert, Yadan Landscape, maybe Mirage is possible to be seen on the way. Arrive in Golmud in late afternoon, a Mongolian word meaning "a place concentrated with rivers". (B,L,D)

Day 8/Golmu-Lhasa (daytime is on the train)

Take Qinghai-Tibet train to Lhasa with hard seat ([Normally, it is impossible to get soft sleeper on halfway station](#)). The train will ride you through Kunlun Mountains, Wudaoliang, Tuotuo River, Tangula Mountain, Amdo, Nagqu, arrive in Lhasa at around 21:00. Pick up from the railway station and transfer to the hotel. (B)

Day 9/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. The rest of day is free. (B,L)

Day10/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. (B,L)

Day11/Lhasa-Tsedang

Drive to Tsedang, located by Yarlung Valley, it is the capital of Shannan Prefecture. Today's highlight is the visit of **Yonbulakhang** and **Changzhu Temple**. Yonbulakhang 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. (B,L,D)

Day12/Tsedang-Gyantse-Shigatse

Drive to Gyantse, and pass by **Yamdrotso Lake** for sightseeing. Yamdrotso Lake is one of the four holy lakes of Tibet, and legend has it that if the lake ever disappears, it will mark the end of Tibet. In Gyantse, visit **Palkor Monastery**, the symbolic architecture of Gyantse. On one side of the Palkor Monastery stands a white tower - **Kumbum Stupa**. It is said that there are altogether more than 100,000 Buddha statues engraved on the tower; hence the name "One Hundred-Thousand-Buddha Tower". Proceed to Shigatse, Miles away from Shigatse, you can already see the gold tops of Tashihunpo Monastery shining under the sun. Check in hotel on arrival. (B,L,D)

Day13/Shigatse-Lhasa

Shigatse, meaning "the fertile land", is the second largest city in Tibet. Pay a visit to **Tashihunpo Monastery**, the traditional seat of the Panchen Lama to perform their political and religious tasks. Tashihunpo's magnificent outside may make you gaps in admiration, its inside just offers you more religious tranquility and sincerity. This monastery houses the world's largest copper Buddha figure which is decorated with numerous luxurious jewels. Then, drive back to Lhasa. (B,L,D)

Day14/Lhasa-Yambajing-Lhasa

Today's highlight is to appreciate the Northern Tibet pastoral land & hot spring area --- **Yambajing**. The "Yambajing" thermal spring, which is located 120 km in the north of Lhasa.

(The hot spring fare is on the guests' side), and enjoy the **hot spring**. On the way, you will be greeted with the spectacular scene of vast Northern Tibet Grassland. Drive back Lhasa for overnight. (B,L,D)

Day15/Lhasa-Shanghai

Transfer to the airport, and fly to Shanghai via Chengdu (**No transfer at Chengdu airport**). Shanghai, known as "Paris in the East", is China's largest city, famous not only for its prosperous metropolitan feature and rich humanistic resources but also for a number of tourist attractions with modern flavor that have been developed in recent years. Transfer to the hotel on arrival. (B,D)

Day16/Shanghai

Visit the **Bund** in the morning, at the west shore of the Huangpu River, the splendid row of early 20th century Europe buildings remains the quintessential Shanghai sight. Pay a visit to **Yuyuan Garden**, a well-restored Suzhou-style garden, which was specially built for Pan's parents as a place to enjoy themselves a tranquil and happy time in their old age. The pavilions, halls, rockeries, ponds and cloisters are unique characteristic. And also take a walk through Chenghuangmiao (known as Yuyuan Garden Market) built in the fifteenth century during the Ming Dynasty. It filled with antique markets and specialty stores. Then, visit **Jade Buddha Temple**, built in 1882 to keep two jade Buddha statues which had been brought from Burma by a monk named Huigen. The two precious jade Buddha statues, one sitting Buddha and one Recumbent Buddha, are carved with whole white jade. Enjoy a fabulous **Acrobatic Show** in the evening. (B,L,D)

Day17/Shanghai

Day is at leisure. (B)

Day18/Depart from Shanghai

Transfer to the airport, prepare for boarding on your homebound flight. TOUR ENDS! (B)