

## 2009 Lhasa to Beijing 17 days / 16 nights

### Highlights

Chengdu, Giant Panda Research Base, Leshan, Mt Emei, Lhasa, Yamdrok Lake, Sky Train, Xining, Xian, Terracotta Warriors, Beijing, Great Wall of China

### Lhasa to Beijing

Take in the absolute best of China and Tibet on this journey, a diverse feast for the senses. You will have the chance to complement the experience of her must-see sites, such as the Great Wall and the Army of Terracotta Warriors, with culturally-rich Sichuan Province and the wild beauty of the Tibetan Plateau. Lhasa will entrance you; you will leave a changed person after walking the backstreets of the Tibetan Old Quarter alongside devout pilgrims, monks and merchants.

The quality of accommodation is a real highlight of this trip. Hotels are usually centrally located three or four-star hotels with private, western style bathrooms, air-conditioning, IDD phones, TVs and room heating. All road travel is in comfortable minibuses or mid-sized coaches. Your journey is escorted by both a Western tour leader, based on a minimum of seven travellers, and a local English-speaking guide in each location. Groups are never more than 15 travellers in size.

### Tour grading - ADVENTUROUS

Suitable for travellers with a good level of level of fitness, full and independent mobility; a keen sense of adventure is essential. The tour involves plenty of walking and stair climbing in high altitude conditions of over 4000m. Most visitors are likely to suffer from some form of altitude sickness. There are short rides on local buses (Mt Emei only), a local ferry trip, a boat cruise, two domestic flights and two overnight train journeys in an air-conditioned carriage, soft sleeper bunk (24 hours and 11 hours in duration). You will need to be able to handle your own luggage boarding and disembarking the train. There are some longer drives (up to three hours) on occasionally rough roads.

While accommodation is three to four-star or best available, this is not 'sanitised' travel; by day you will walk through markets and villages, meet local people, and sample local food. English is not widely spoken and a degree of patience and appreciation is required for travel through developing cities and stays in Chinese and Tibetan operated hotels.

### What's Included

- 14 nights accommodation
- Two overnight train journeys
- Breakfast daily and two lunches
- All transfers and road transport in modern, air-conditioned vehicles
- Tibetan travel permit (required in addition to your Chinese visa)
- Two domestic flights
- All sightseeing as specified (entrance fees not included; allow \$170USD)
- Expert Western tour leader (group size seven minimum) and local guides throughout
- Tour arrival and departure transfers

### Climate

Northern China is hot and humid from June to August, very cold and dry from November to February, and otherwise pleasant and generally clear. Tibet is warm and dry by day from June to August, and cool at night. Spring and autumn (April/May and Sep/Oct) see cool to cold days and very cold nights. Temperatures are well below zero from November to March.

### Itinerary

#### Day 1 - Arrive Chengdu

Upon arrival in Chengdu you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Tonight meet your tour leader (or local guide) for welcome drinks and a tour briefing. **Two nights YINHE DYNASTY**

#### Day 2 - Chengdu

Make a visit to the nearby Giant Panda Research and Breeding Base. Visit cultural sites and stop at a teahouse in the park.

#### Day 3 - Chengdu to Mt Emei

Take a boat cruise past the Big Buddha of Leshan and drive on to the sacred mountain of Emei. **One night HONGZHUSHAN HOTEL**

#### Day 4 - Mt Emei to Chengdu

Spend a day exploring the peaks, forests and monasteries of this mountain before driving back to Chengdu. **One night YINHE DYNASTY**

#### Day 5 - Chengdu to Lhasa

Fly across the Himalayas to Lhasa, the spiritual heart and soul of Tibet. You will have the remainder of the day to rest thereby enabling you to acclimatise to the 3600m altitude for the rest of your adventure. **Five nights THANG KA HOTEL**

#### Day 6 - Lhasa

Visit Tibet's most holy temple, Jokhang Temple. Explore the Barkhor Circuit, Sera Monastery and more.

#### Day 7 - Lhasa

Visit the iconic Potala Palace that dominates the landscape. Explore local markets, a site of holy rock paintings, and the Tibet Museum.

#### Day 8 - Lhasa

Take a walking tour through the Old Quarter backstreets and visit Drepung Monastery.

#### Day 9 - Lhasa

Enjoy a day-trip to stunning turquoise Yamdrok Lake.

#### Day 10 - Sky Train to Xining

Board the Sky Train for your spectacular high altitude train journey across the Tibetan plateau to Xining. **OVERNIGHT TRAIN**

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*Travel Indochina reserves the right to make itinerary changes as operational or other circumstances require.*

### Day 11 - Xining

Visit the famed Ta'er Monastery and the Great Mosque. This evening explore the bustling Shuijing Xiang markets. **One night JIAN YIN HOTEL**

### Day 12 - Xian

Fly to Xian where you visit the colourful Muslim Quarter, old city wall and pagodas. **One night GOLDEN TANG HOTEL**

### Day 13 - Xian

See the Terracotta Warriors, Xian's crowning glory, located just outside Xian, before taking the overnight train to Beijing. **OVERNIGHT TRAIN**

### Day 14 - Beijing

Visit the Temple of Heaven, Beijing Planning Exhibition Hall and Summer Palace. **Three nights NOVOTEL XINQIAO**

### Day 15 - Beijing

Explore Beijing's fascinating hutongs by rickshaw, visit the Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square and the Drum Tower. Witness a spectacular acrobatics performance.

### Day 16 - Beijing

See the Great Wall at Mutianyu.

### Day 17 - Depart Beijing

Today you will be transferred to the airport for your onward journey.

## Hotel Brief

### Yinhe Dynasty in Chengdu

Comfortable hotel and rooms located a stone's throw from People's Square at the centre of Chengdu, and close to the central shopping district of Chunxi Lu.

### Hongzhushan Hotel, Mt Emei

Peaceful hotel in the forests at the foot of Mt Emei. Close to local temples and walking trails. Chinese breakfast and décor but large, airy, spacious rooms.

### Thang Ka Hotel in Lhasa

Standard hotel with comfortable rooms located in the heart of the Tibetan old quarter just a short stroll away from Jokhang Temple.

### Overnight Train

First class, air-conditioned carriage with soft sleeper four-berth shared cabin. Lower or upper bunk, clean linen provided.

### Jian Yin Hotel in Xining

Comfortable hotel with quality rooms and a great location in the centre of town.

### Golden Tang in Xian

Comfortable rooms with a great location, this hotel is situated right beside the bustling Muslim Quarter in the centre of town.

### Novotel Xinqiao in Beijing

Western-style comforts and spacious, superior guestrooms make the Novotel Xinqiao a wonderful home base in the capital.

## Visa Requirements

All persons entering China require a visa. Travellers need a tourist visa which must be obtained from a Chinese Embassy or Consulate abroad before arrival and is valid for all international points of entry into China. Tibet is a part of China and as such the normal China tourist visa applies for Tibet. More detailed visa information is available in our pre-departure information. It is your responsibility to make sure that visa requirements are fulfilled.

## Health Issues

Good medical advice usually recommends vaccinations/prophylactics in advance of travel to China. We suggest that you consult with your doctor to discuss health care needs specific to your holiday.

## Insurance

You must be comprehensively insured as a condition of travelling with Travel Indochina. Insurance should include cover for personal accident and medical expenses, evacuation and repatriation, baggage loss, and cancellation or curtailment of your holiday. Your booking will not be confirmed if you cannot confirm possession of appropriate insurance, and our ground operations have the right to prevent you from travelling in the event that you cannot present your insurance details at the start of the tour. Your travel agent can organise travel insurance for you.

## Recommended Reading

- Sky Burial - Xinran
- Tibet Tibet: A Personal History of a Land Lost - Patrick French
- Heartlands: Travels in the Tibetan Land - Michael Buckley
- Duel in the Snows - Charles Allen
- The Search for Shangri-La: A Journey into Tibetan History - Charles Allen
- From Rice to Riches: A Personal Journey through a Changing China - Jane Hutcheon
- Oracle Bones - Peter Hessler
- Bamboo Goalposts - Rowan Simons

## A Responsible Travel Indochina

Travel Indochina practices a thorough, realistic Responsible Travel Policy, full details of which can be found in our website. Our policy includes a 'Guide to Responsible Travel', full of useful pointers which will make you a more 'responsible' traveller in Asia.

## Pre and post tour arrangements

If you would like to book pre or post tour hotel arrangements or are interested in doing additional quality touring before or after your Small Group journey, either contact Travel Indochina or your local travel agent.

## What next

Once your booking has been confirmed and you have paid in full you will receive a detailed itinerary for this tour, detailing day by day arrangements, as well as a pre-departure guide containing valuable information designed to help you get the most out of your holiday.

## About Travel Indochina

Travel Indochina has been operating small group journeys to Asia since 1993. Based in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, our idea is simple - escape the tourist traps to explore the essence of Asia's history, culture, natural beauty and most importantly, Asia's people. Another feature is the quality, character and location of our accommodation. Our travellers enjoy the combination of well thought out itineraries, tasteful accommodation, insightful western and local leaders, value for money, and our experience and base in the region.

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