Tibet: In China and in Depth
Tibet: In China and in Depth

China claims Tibet (the Tibetan Autonomous Region) as its own, but Tibetans have always considered themselves Tibetans, not Chinese. The thousands who live outside Tibet are both part of China and apart from it. In this 12-day journey, visit temples, cities and villages and see how Tibetans keep their cultures and religion alive.

Politics & Perspectives

Travelers: 20
Places visited: Linxia, Xiahe, Rebkong, Lijiang, Shangri-La
Itinerary: 12 days, 11 nights
1. Welcome to China
2. The Labrang Monastery
3. The Artistic Capital of Tibet
4. A Home to Many Lamas
5. A Day With Nature
6. The White Buddha Temple
7. The Little Tower Temple
8. The Venice of China
9. The Road to Shangri-La
10. Shangri-La
11. Nixi Black Pottery
12. Homeward Bound

Journey Highlights

- Visit Linxia, with its more than 90 mosques.
- See the Labrang Monastery, with more priests than anywhere outside Tibet itself.
- Dine with Tibetans in their homes to learn more about their lives.
- Learn about the beautiful cloth thangkas of Rebkong and the black pottery of Nixi village.
- View deep gorges and the view from high mountains.

Itinerary

DAY 1  Welcome to China

Arrive in Beijing on your own, and fly to Lanzhou, capital of Gansu Province. Upon arrival in Lanzhou, meet your guide and transfer to the hotel. A trip briefing will be followed by a welcome dinner. Gansu Sunshine Plaza Hotel, Meal: D

DAY 2  The Labrang Monastery

Visit the important Islamic center of Linxia, then head to Xiahe, at the confluence of Tibetan, Hui Muslim, Han Chinese and other ethnic groups. Visit the Labrang Monastery, one of the six great monasteries of the Gelugpa (Yellow Hat) School of Tibetan Buddhism, the largest Buddhist sect, led by the Dalai Lama. Labrang Civil Aviation Hotel, Meals: B, L, D
DAY 3  The Artistic Capital of Tibet

Transfer to Qinghai Province and Rebkong (Tongren), often called the artistic capital of Tibet, known for its thangkas, elaborate, colorful paintings on silk or other cloth. Visit the Wutun Monastery — which is really two monasteries. Visit the house of a local Tibetan family to experience life as they live it. Regong Hotel, Meals: B, L, D

DAY 4  A Home to Many Lamas

Visit the Longwu Monastery, one of the leading monasteries in the Amdo Tibetan area, with more than 800 lamas living inside. Built in 1301, the monastery has many golden-eaved temples and labyrinthine alleyways, and a 40-foot-tall gilded statue of the founder of Gelugpa Buddhism, Tsongkhapa, one of the largest of its kind in Qinghai. Travel to Xining, capital of Qinghai Province and an important stop on the Silk Road. Qinghai Hotel, Meals: B, L, D
DAY 5  A Day With Nature
Visit Sun and Moon Mountain, whose 11,500-foot summit offers a superb panorama of prairie and farmland. Head to Kokonor (Qinghai) Lake, the largest lake in China, and the largest saltwater lake as well. Travel to Bird Island, a breeding ground for thousands of wild geese, gulls, cormorants, extremely rare black-necked cranes and other bird species. Bird Island Hotel, Meals: B, L, D

DAY 6  The White Buddha Temple
After breakfast, drive to Xihai via Gangcha. In Xihai, visit the White Buddha temple and spend time with a local Tibetan family. In the afternoon, transfer back to Xining. Qinghai Hotel, Meals: B, L, D

DAY 7  The Little Tower Temple
In the morning, visit the huge Kumbum Monastery in Xining, also called the Little Tower Temple. This complex, founded in 1583, is another of the six most important Gelugpa monasteries. It houses remnants of The Tree of Great Merit, said to have the face of Buddha on every leaf and the trunk. Later, fly to Lijiang. Banyan Tree Lijiang, Meals: B, L, D

DAY 8  The Venice of China
The canals that wind through Lijiang give this city the nickname of the Venice of China. In the morning, go sightseeing in the ancient town of Lijiang. After lunch, move on to Wenhai Snow Town for a visit to the wizard of the Yi minority group. Dinner will be in a local home for authentic local flavor. Banyan Tree Lijiang, Meals: B, L, D

DAY 9  The Road to Shangri-La
Drive to Shangri-La with stops on the way at Zhiyuan Monastery, with its three gilded Buddhas on a lotus throne; the bend where the Yangtze River reverses direction; the ancient towns in Shigu; and Tiger Leaping Gorge, one of the deepest river gorges in the world. Dinner will be on your own tonight. Songtsam Retreat, Meals: B, L

DAY 10  Shangri-La
This city, formerly known as Zhongdian or Gyalthang in Tibetan, was renamed in the early 21st century to evoke the utopian paradise described in the 1933 novel “Lost Horizon.” In the morning, visit the Songzanlin Monastery, the largest in Yunnan. Talk with a living Buddha or the bishop, if one is available. Visit Ringha Temple and an orphanage. Songtsam Retreat, Meals: B, L, D

DAY 11  Nixi Black Pottery
Drive to Nixi village to learn about Nixi black pottery, where the process has not changed in thousands of years. Visit Yunnan’s only Tibetan monastery of nuns as well as the Monastery of East Bamboo Forest. Dinner will be in a local Tibetan family’s home, allowing you to experience the life of local Tibetans. Songtsam Retreat, Meals: B, L, D

DAY 12  Homeward Bound
After breakfast, transfer to the airport for flights to Beijing via Kunming, and then home or onward. Meal: B

Dates & Pricing

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Pricing and Inclusions: Quoted Tour prices are per person, double occupancy except where indicated. Prices include programming, planning, handling and operational charges and are based on current rates of exchange, tariffs and taxes in effect at the time of publication. We reserve the right to increase Tour prices to cover increased costs, tariffs, taxes and V.A.T. received after prices are published and to reflect fluctuations in foreign exchange markets. We will not give a breakdown in the price of a Tour or its parts. Modification of Tour content size will not affect the published price.

Exclusions: Quoted Tour prices exclude: trip insurance; airfares between points on the Tour; international airfare, including airfare and other transportation to and from the Tour (unless otherwise noted); costs associated with obtaining passports or entry visas; airport departure taxes (unless otherwise noted); excess baggage charges; gratuities to the Tour directors, drivers and guides; meals other than those specified in the itinerary; sightseeing not included in the itinerary; and personal expenses such as laundry, communication charges and optional activities (which are subject to availability).

Reservations and Payments: The Tour deposit amount is listed on the Website or in your brochure. The deposit is required in order to confirm your booking. Upon receipt of the deposit, the Operator will send you confirmation of your booking. Your final payment date will be listed on the confirmation. If a Tour is already full, we may accept deposits on a standby basis. If space becomes available, you will have the choice of joining the Tour by paying in full or forfeiting the space in return for a refund of your deposit. Final payment is due ninety (90) days prior to departure unless otherwise indicated on the Website or in the brochure. If your reservation is made within ninety (90) days of departure, the entire cost of the trip must be paid at the time of the request in order to secure confirmation.

Travel Insurance: We strongly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation and medical insurance. The Operator will provide the insurance applications along with your booking confirmation. Any questions about what travel insurance does or does not cover should be addressed directly to the travel insurance company. If you decline insurance coverage, you will personally assume full responsibility for any financial loss associated with your travel arrangements, and you could lose your travel investment and/or have to pay more money to correct the situation.

Single Travelers: Tour prices are based on double occupancy. Single travelers will be expected to pay the single supplement fee.

Cancellation by You: We must receive your cancellation notice in writing by email, fax or overnight courier, and your cancellation date will be the date on which we receive your notice.

- If we receive your cancellation notice ninety-one (91) days or more from the Tour departure date, we will refund fifty percent (50%) of the deposit amount and all of the Tour price to the extent that you have made that payment.
- If we receive your cancellation notice sixty-one (61) days prior to the departure date, we will retain twenty percent (20%) of the Tour price based on double occupancy, excluding optional payments.
- If we receive your cancellation notice sixty (60) days or thirty-one (31) days prior to the departure date, we will retain fifty percent (50%) of the Tour price based on double occupancy.
- If we receive your cancellation notice thirty (30) days or fewer prior to the departure date, we will retain one hundred percent (100%) of the Tour price.
- Any penalty imposed by an airline, including for airline service between points on the Tour (“Internal Air”) or travel to or from the Tour, is your responsibility.

Your decision not to participate on the Tour due to State Department warnings, fear of travel, illness or any other reason will be deemed a cancellation. If a flight or other delay for any reason prevents you from joining the Tour on the Tour departure date and time, you will be considered a no-show, and we cannot provide a full or partial refund or credit toward a future Tour, but you may join the Tour late if you wish.

Air Transportation during the Tour: Internal Air is not included in the price of the Tour. Estimated Internal Air costs will be identified separately on the Website or in your brochure. Internal Air costs and availability are subject to change at any time prior to final payment for your Tour and we reserve the right to increase Tour prices accordingly.

We will not change your seat assignment request on commercial aircraft without your permission. However, airlines often change seat assignments to satisfy their loyalty members or because of equipment changes (aircraft type). We are not notified of these changes in advance, and often travelers are not made aware of these changes until they arrive at the airport. We cannot be responsible for seat assignment changes made by the airline. Frequent Flier programs are private agreements between airlines and passengers, and we cannot be held responsible for mileage discrepancies involving airline loyalty reward programs.

Passports and Visas: You are solely responsible for complying with passport and visa requirements. For U.S. travelers, international travel requires a passport valid six (6) months beyond your intended return travel date. In many cases, you will also need to have multiple consecutive blank visa pages within your passport (the number varies depending on the destination(s)). Many destinations also require that visas be obtained prior to travel. It is recommended that you check with the U.S. Department of State website for the latest passport and visa requirements.

Cancellation or Substitution by Us: We will make commercially reasonable efforts to keep the itinerary as it has been published; however, the final itinerary may vary due to availability and factors beyond our control. We may substitute services such as hotels or goods of similar quality for any service or good stated in the itinerary. If a Times Journeys speaker (“Speaker”) cancels, the Operator will make every effort to find a replacement. You will not be refunded in whole or in part when the Operator is unable to find a replacement Speaker.

We reserve the right to cancel any Tour because of inadequate enrollment that makes the trip economically infeasible to operate or because of our concerns with respect to the safety, health or welfare of our travelers or staff. If we cancel a Tour, our liability is limited to a full refund of your payments to us and we will not be liable for any other costs, damages or refunds of any kind for any loss, delay, inconvenience, disappointment or expense whatsoever in such circumstances. If a Tour in progress must be interrupted or canceled, our liability shall be strictly limited to refund of the recoverable cost of any unused portion of the Tour.

Other Taxes and Fees: Some governments charge departure taxes and/or fees. These fees are the responsibility of each passenger traveling to the designated country and are not included in the Tour price unless stated.

Baggage: We assume no liability for loss or damage to baggage in transit to and from a Tour destination. Baggage is at your own risk at all times during the Tour (“Internal Air”) or travel to or from the Tour, is your responsibility.

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Children: Unless otherwise indicated in the Tour description, all Tour passengers must be at least ten (10) years of age. However, some activities contained within an itinerary may have a different age restriction than the overall minimum age requirement, in which case details will be provided at the time of booking. We reserve the right to marginally exceed the published maximum group size on family Tours to accommodate a family.

Suppliers Acts or Omissions: The Operator acts only as an independent contractor to supply or arrange for the travel services named in your itinerary or otherwise to procure services or goods from third parties such as airlines, hotels and other lodging providers, local hosts, guides, bus lines, car rental companies, driving services, restaurants and providers of entertainment (the "Suppliers"). The Operator and Times Journeys assume no responsibility for any personal injury, property damage or other loss, accident, delay, inconvenience or irregularity which may be occasioned by reason of any act or omission of any of the Suppliers.

Limitation of Liability: In no event will we be liable for any injury, loss, claim, damage or any special, punitive, exemplary, direct, indirect, incidental or consequential damages of any kind, whether based in contract, tort, strict liability or otherwise, to this Participant Agreement on their behalf.

Force Majeure: We assume no responsibility for any personal injury, property damage or other loss, accident, delay, inconvenience or irregularity which may be occasioned by reason of any matter beyond our exclusive control, including, but not limited to, a delay or cancellation that causes you to miss all or any portion of the Tour; acts of God, acts of government, war; terrorist acts, riots, disaster, weather extremes or strikes. We have no special knowledge regarding the financial condition of the Suppliers, unsafe conditions, health hazards, weather hazards or climate extremes at locations to which you may travel. You understand that health care standards, facilities and services abroad may be different or even inadequate for treating health conditions. For information concerning possible dangers at foreign destinations, we recommend contacting the Travel Warnings Section of the U.S. State Department at (202) 647-5225 or www.travel.state.gov, and click on “Travel Warnings.” For medical information, we recommend contacting the Centers for Disease Control at (877) FYI-TRIP or www.cdc.gov/travel.

Assumption of Risks and Release: If you participate in activities during your Tour, certain risks and dangers may arise, including, but not limited to, the risk of accidents in remote places without access to medical facilities, transportation or means of rapid evacuation and assistance; the hazards of traveling in unsafe or politically unstable areas or under unsafe conditions; the dangers of civil disturbances, war, extortion, kidnapping and terrorist activities; dangers and risks inherent in activities in underdeveloped countries; and dangers of local law enforcement activity. You hereby expressly assume all of these risks and dangers, and you hereby expressly agree to forever release, discharge and hold us and our agents, employees, officers and directors harmless against any and all liability, actions, causes of actions, suits, claims and demands of any and every kind and nature whatsoever, which you now have or which may hereafter arise out of or in connection with your Tour or participation in any activities in which you participate.

Arbitration and Waiver of Trial by Jury: You agree to present any claims against us within ninety (90) days after the Tour ends and to file any suit within one (1) year of the incident, and you acknowledge that this expressly limits the applicable statute of limitations to one (1) year. In lieu of litigation and jury trials, each of which is expressly waived, any dispute concerning, relating or referring to this Participation Agreement, the brochure or any other literature concerning your trip or the Tour shall be resolved exclusively by binding arbitration in New York City, New York, according to the then-existing commercial rules of the American Arbitration Association. Such proceeding will be governed by the substantive law of the State of New York. The arbitrator(s) and not any federal, state or local court or agency shall have exclusive authority to resolve any dispute relating to the interpretation, applicability, enforceability, conscionability or formation of this Participant Agreement, including, but not limited to, any claim that all or any part of this Participant Agreement is void or voidable.

Travel Advisory Warnings: You hereby consent to our use of pictures or video of you in our marketing materials without compensation. Facsimile or scanned transmission of any signed document shall be deemed delivery of an original. If there are any conflicts between this Participant Agreement and the Itinerary, this Participant Agreement shall apply. We reserve the right to decline to do business with anyone on a nondiscriminatory basis.

Active Elements, Medical Conditions and Special Assistance: Some of our Tours incorporate active elements such as hiking, climbing or canoeing; you are responsible for familiarizing yourself with the level of activity that will be involved in your Tour. You must disclose in your Participant Information Form (or at such later time when you become aware of such a condition) any existing physical or mental illness, disability, pregnancy or any other condition which may create a health hazard for yourself or others during the Tour, or for which you may require medical attention or special accommodation during the Tour. We will make reasonable efforts to accommodate your needs, but you must notify us at the time of booking for a determination of what assistance we can reasonably provide. We regret that we cannot accommodate you if you have special needs for ordinary daily activities, such as walking and dining. In no instance will our Suppliers or we physically lift or assist you on to or off any vehicles. If we cannot accommodate your special needs, you must be accompanied by a companion who will be responsible for independently providing the needed assistance.

We reserve the right to decline acceptance of anyone we consider unsuitable due to fitness level. We also reserve the right to remove you from the Tour, at your own expense, if your condition is such that it could create a hazard to you or others, or otherwise impact the enjoyment of other passengers.

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