

Mount Kailash Trek with Saga Dawa Festival, Tibet

Journey from Nepal to Tibet across the roof of the world, trek with pilgrims on the famous Kailash Kora and join the celebrations at the Saga Dawa Festival.



Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

Holiday overview

Style	Trek
Accommodation	Hotel, Tea Houses, Lodges
Grade	Strenuous
Duration	24 days from London to London
Trekking / Walking days	On trek: 12 days
Min/Max group size	5 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 5
Trip Leader	Local Leader Tibet
Land only	Joining in Chengdu, China
Max altitude	5,630m/18,472ft, the Dolma La Pass, Day 17

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available



Watch related videos online: [Mount Kailash Trek](#)

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Departures

Group departures

2025 Dates:

Sat 24 May - Mon 16 Jun

Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 5 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday. If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

Your guide



For the Langtang trek in Nepal, you will have an English speaking Nepalese trekking leader appointed by our agents in Kathmandu. You will meet your leader for the Tibet section at the border on Day 12.

The leader's job is primarily to look after the group, liaise with the local crew, handle hotel and airport and check-ins, and in fact do all the little jobs that will help make your holiday trouble free.

Your trip highlights

- Drive across the vast Tibetan Plateau, a truly epic journey with sensational views.
- Earn great karma by completing a circuit (Kora) of sacred Mount Kailash, the holiest mountain in the Himalaya
- Trek in the company of hundreds of devout pilgrims and join them in their celebrations at the famous Saga Dawa Festival
- Enjoy a spectacular acclimatisation trek in the Langtang Valley in Nepal before travelling to Tibet.

At a glance itinerary

Days 1-2	Fly to Kathmandu.
Day 3	At leisure in Kathmandu while agents deal with Tibet permits.
Day 4	Drive to Syabru Besi.
Days 5-8	Start Langtang trek. Trek to Lama Hotel and on to Kyanjin Gumpa.
Days 9-11	Climb Tsergo Ri and return to Syabru Besi.
Day 12	Drive from Syabru Besi to cross border to Kyirong town in Tibet.
Days 13-14	Drive to Drongpa and continue to Darchan
Days 15-16	Drive to Tarboche, meet yaks and start trek. Trek to Diraphuk. Rest and acclimatisation day.
Days 17-18	Cross the Dolma La and trek to Zutul Phuk Monastery. Continue to Darchan.
Day 19	Complete the Kailash Kora and trek to Tarboche. Attend the Saga Dawa Festival. Return to Darchan.
Days 20-21	Drive to Saga and continue to Kyirong.
Day 22	Cross the border into Nepal and drive to Kathmandu.
Days 23-24	At leisure in Kathmandu and fly to London.

Trip summary

Mount Kailash is both the most sacred and most perfectly formed mountain in all the Himalaya. With its remarkable pyramid summit, four great faces and towering position atop the Tibetan Plateau it attracts numerous pilgrims of many faiths, keen to set eyes upon the holy mountain and to perform a sacred kora (or circuit) to cleanse their sins.

Before you follow in their footsteps, your adventure starts with a classic tea house trek in the stunning Langtang Valley in Nepal. Here you acclimatise on quiet forested trails through the mountains that are home to a myriad of birds and animals including the elusive red panda. You will also meet the local Tamang and Yolmo Sherpa people carrying wood, weaving bamboo and cultivating their fields using age-old techniques. The high point of your trek is Tsergo Ri which, at almost 5,000m, has superb panoramic views of the surrounding peaks.

Well acclimatised you now continue northward, crossing the border into Tibet and making your way overland, across the vast plains of the high Tibetan Plateau to reach Tarboche, the starting point of your Kailash trek. Here you will join many pilgrims as you trek for five days to circumnavigate Kailash, moved both by the simple devoutness of your fellow travellers and by the magnificence of the awe-inspiring scenery. At the end of your kora you can celebrate your accomplishment in style, joining the vibrant celebrations at the Saga Dawa festival at the foot of the mountain.

The significance of Kailash

Mount Kailash is known as Khang Rinpoche 'Precious Jewel of Snow' and they see it as the navel of the world. It is said that a stream from the mountain pours into a nearby lake and from here rivers flow in the four cardinal directions, the River of the Lion Mouth to the north, the River of the Horse Mouth to the east, the River of the Peacock Mouth to the south and the River of the Elephant Mouth to the west. Strangely enough, four major rivers do indeed originate near Kailash - the Indus, the Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra), the Karnali and the Sulej. Tibetans believe that Kailash is the residence of Demchog, a fierce-looking tantric deity, who lives there with his consort, Dorje Phagmo. It is also a particularly special place for Tibetans in that their poet saint, Milarepa, spent several years here meditating in a cave.

The mountain is said to be at the heart of the ancient Shangshung Kingdom, the supposed land of origin of the pre-Buddhist Bonpos. Mount Kailash is their soul-mountain (lari), which they also call Yungdrung Gu Tse, the Nine-story Swastika Mountain. This is the place where the sect's legendary founder, Tonpa Shenrab, descended from heaven to earth. In the 11th century, with the revival and ascendancy of Buddhism in Tibet, Milarepa, the poet-saint and patriarch of the Kagyupa sect, was the dominant influence in the area. This came to pass when Milarepa defeated his Bonpo arch rival, Naro Bonchung, in a series of magical contests. Relic traces of this epic battle can be seen from time to time along the ritual circuit (Kora) around Mount Kailash.

Kailash also has immense importance to other religions of the Indian subcontinent - For Hindus, Mount Kailash is the earthly manifestation of Mount Meru, the spiritual centre of their universe, described as a fantastic 'world pillar' 84,000 miles high, around which all else revolves, its roots in the lowest hell and its summit kissing the heavens. On top live their most revered god, Shiva, and his consort, Parvati. And for Jains, another Indian religious group, Kailash is the site where their first prophet achieved enlightenment. For the older, more ancient religion of Bon, it is the site where its founder, Shanrab, is said to have descended from heaven. Kailash was formerly the spiritual centre of Zhang Zung, the ancient Bon Empire that once included all of western Tibet. Bon people walk around the mountain in a counter clockwise manner, unlike the other religions.

Over the centuries, pilgrims of differing faiths have journeyed immense distances to achieve enlightenment or to cleanse themselves of sin at Mount Kailash, braving physical obstacles along the way, altitude and harsh weather, as well as the danger of bandits. The most pious of the pilgrims prostrate themselves at full length around Kailash, stretching out flat on the ground, then rising, walking to the point that their hands touched and repeating the process. It is an awesome spectacle to meet a group of pilgrims performing this feat.

There is also an 'inner kora' that passes two lakes to the south of Kailash. Tradition dictates that only those who have made 13 circumambulations of Kailash (or one circuit in a Wind Horse year) may follow this inner route.

To a Mountain in Tibet

Esteemed travel writer, Colin Thubron, travelled to Kailash with Mountain Kingdoms and released a deeply personal account of his adventure to great acclaim. It makes superb reading if you are thinking of going on this fulfilling trip.

Special notes

Acclimatisation and our route to Kailash

On this itinerary we are offering a trek to Langtang in Nepal before entering Tibet which will provide a good degree of acclimatisation. Then the gradual drive up and across Tibet over several days gives further time to adjust to the altitude of the Tibetan Plateau. When you trek around Kailash you should be well acclimatised.

By trekking in Langtang we can also take advantage of the road border at Rashuwagadi/Kyirong, This is just a short distance north of Syabru Besi, the start/end point of the Langtang trek and means that you can now drive direct to the border without the need to return to Kathmandu.

Drive times

Roads in Tibet have much improved over the last 10-15 years but please be aware there are still sections that are bumpy, dusty and unpaved. Driving delays, check-posts and time-wasting bureaucracy are not uncommon and therefore our driving times are a guide only and should be taken with a large pinch of Tibetan salt!

Your trip itinerary

Day 1: Depart London.

Depart London on your overnight flight to Kathmandu.

Overnight: In flight

Day 2: Arrive Kathmandu. Group transfer to hotel.

On arrival in Kathmandu you will be met and transferred to your hotel. The rest of the day is free for you to relax or explore the local area. You're staying in the Thamel district of Kathmandu, the tourist heart of the city, so there are numerous shops, cafes, bars and restaurants right on the doorstep to enjoy. Your hotel is also the home of the Museum of Nepali Art (MONA) and you may like to browse their interesting collection of artworks during your stay.

Overnight: Kathmandu Guest House or Similar, Kathmandu

Day 3: At leisure in Kathmandu.

Today our local agents will be dealing with your Tibet permits and they will collect your passports and permit fees.

Meanwhile you will have the day at leisure to explore Kathmandu. Kathmandu's Durbar Square, the historic centre of old Kathmandu with its many ancient palaces and temples, is just a 20 minute walk from your hotel through Kathmandu's ancient bazaar. You could also walk or take a taxi to visit Swayambunath Temple (also known as the Monkey Temple) famed for its whitewashed dome and golden spire from which four all-seeing Buddha eyes look out in every direction.



If you fancy exploring further afield you could visit Bhaktapur, another of the ancient cities of the Kathmandu valley. In Bhaktapur's ancient Durbar Square you will see more fine palaces, temples with gilded roofs, open courtyards and magnificent windows elaborately carved in wood. Here, the side streets being mostly brick paved and traffic free, still have a distinctively medieval feel to them.

Overnight: Kathmandu Guest House or Similar, Kathmandu (Meals: B)

Day 4: Drive to Syabru Besi, 1,420m/4,659ft - 6-7 hours.

In the morning, after an early breakfast, you will be picked up for the drive from Kathmandu to Syabru Besi, a small village on the banks of the Bhote Khosi. This is quite a long drive taking around 6-7 hours. First you drive out of the Kathmandu Valley, over the valley rim and descend to the bustling town of Trisuli Bazaar where you start the drive north up the valley of the Trisuli River, ascending from 546m/1,791ft, to Dunche, 1,950m/6,397ft, making the climb by frequent zig-zags in the road. Just before Dunche you reach the gates of the Langtang National Park where you have to sign in. From here you descend all the way to the Trisuli River at the village of Syabru Besi, 1,420m/4,659ft. Beginning your acclimatisation trek from here allows you to experience some of the best trekking country in Nepal.

Overnight: Tea House (Meals: BLD)

Day 5: Trek to Lama Hotel, 2,380m/7,808ft - 6-7 hours.

From Syabru Besi you start your trek eastwards into Langtang. The trail crosses the Bhote Khola by a suspension bridge and you soon reach the Langtang Khola which will be your companion all the way to Kyanjin Gumpa. The trail starts as a moderate climb and zig-zags up the broad valley. Continuing up you will see the village of Thulo Syabru clinging to the high valley side and soon after you meet a trail which leads to and from the village. You then enter a deep gorge which marks the start of the Langtang Valley, and descend through a bamboo forest to the valley floor. Red pandas and Langur monkeys inhabit this forest. You reach the Langtang Khola and follow it up stream. You pass through the hamlet of Pairo (3 hours to here, altitude 1,700m/5,577ft) and reach the village of Bamboo, 1,950m/6,398ft, located by the riverside. The trail here is constantly being rebuilt due to

the river flooding and washing the trail away. Snowy mountains now frame the end of the valley. After an hour or so you cross a bridge to the northern side of the river and pass through the village of Rimche. Shortly after this you will briefly climb out of the forest to reach the village of Lama Hotel.

Overnight: Tea House (Meals: BLD)

Day 6: Trek to Thyangsyap above Ghora Tabela, 3,104m/10,184ft - 5 hours.

Today is important for acclimatisation. Leaving the tea house at Lama Hotel, you continue the climb up the Langtang Valley. The area here is densely forested with hemlocks, oaks, maples and rhododendrons - if you are very lucky red panda can sometimes be seen along this stretch. After a short while, the mighty peak of Langtang Lirung comes into view to the north. Passing a waterfall, you continue up the west bank of the Langtang Khola and pass through the hamlet of Gumnchok, which means 'trekkers' corner'. After a further couple of hours the valley begins to widen and the trail flattens. You arrive at Ghora Tabela meaning literally 'the stable of the horse'. This was once a resettlement project for Tibetans but no longer has any permanent residents. From here it is a further gradual climb of around half an hour to reach Thyangsyap where you will spend the night.

Overnight: Tea House (Meals: BLD)

Day 7: Trek to Mundu via Langtang, 3,450m/11,319ft - 2-3 hours.

There will be no rush to leave today as it is a short walk to your next overnight lodge. It is important for your acclimatisation to the increasing altitude not to ascend too high too fast. Leaving Thyangsyap you will continue through the forest until you climb above the tree line at around 3,150m/10,335ft. You are now approaching the area where the village of Langtang used to be before its destruction in the earthquake of 2015. It is now a huge landslide area which you will cross on one of the many paths which have been constructed to allow passage up the valley. There is a memorial to all those who lost their lives where you can pause and pay your respects. Continuing on up the valley you soon arrive in Mundu where you will spend the rest of the day resting and acclimatising.

Overnight: Tea House (Meals: BLD)

Day 8: Trek to Kyanjin Gompa, 3,870m/12,699ft - 4-5 hours.

From Mundu you continue up the ever-widening valley to Kyanjin Gompa. To the east you will gain great views of the peak, Dorji Lakpa, with Urkinmang peak to its left. Also to the south, the peaks of Naya Kanga and Pongen Dopku will come into view. After a steep, undulating trail you cross a rise and Kyanjin Gompa will appear. Kyanjin Gompa lies in an elongated amphitheatre surrounded by high, snow-capped peaks. After lunch, your guide might suggest a hike up the small hill to the north of the village at the height of about 4,300m/14,108ft. This offers great views of Langtang Lirung, the Langtang glacier, Kimshing peak with its glacier and, to the south, a long ridge on top of which is the Ganja La, a high pass that leads to Helambu.



Overnight: Tea House (Meals: BLD)

Day 9: Day hike to Tsergo Ri, 4,984m/16,352ft - 5-7 hours.

Today you have a challenging hill walk up Tsergo Ri - a conical-shaped peak just short of 5,000m/16,404ft. The high point of your trek, it's quite a tough climb, but you will be amply rewarded for your exertions at the top, with breath-taking, panoramic views of the surrounding snow-capped summits. This hike also provides valuable acclimatisation. You descend the same way back to Kyanjin Gompa.

Overnight: Tea House (Meals: BLD)

Day 10: Trek to Lama Hotel, 2,450m/8,038ft - 6 hours.

After your time spent in the upper valley it's time to return down the valley. As the next two days are mostly downhill you are able to cover a lot of distance. You will gain great views returning down the valley, especially with the sun filtering through the leaves once you have re-entered the forest.

Overnight: Tea House (Meals: BLD)

Day 11: Trek back to Syabru Besi - 5 hours.

It's a pretty walk today down through forest where you may see lots of pretty, small birds flitting through the forest. It will take about two hours to reach the village of Bamboo and you will probably have lunch here. Then you descend down, down, down, past the gigantic land slide, past the thunderous rapids and over the suspension bridge back into Syabru Besi. You will say goodbye to your Nepali porters here.

Overnight: Tea House (Meals: BLD)

Day 12: Drive to Rasuwagadi at the Tibet border - 15 km/45 min. Meet your Tibetan guide and drive to Kyirong - 23km, 2,800m/9186ft.

Today you will set off on for your exciting adventure to Tibet! Firstly you drive to the border at Rasuwagadi where you will say goodbye to your Nepali guide and meet your Tibetan guide and transport. Rasuwagadi only became Nepal's main modern international border crossing with Tibet in 2017 after the former Friendship Highway was damaged by the 2015 earthquake. There will be official immigration formalities to be covered on both sides of the border, which your guide will help you through. The Nepal side at Rasuwagadi is considerably more laid-back and ramshackle than the larger and more formal border post on the Tibet/China side.

Formalities completed you drive to your overnight hotel in Kyirong on the Tibet side of the border. The population of Kyirong is a mix of Nepalese and Tibetan. Traditionally the town was important in the cross border trade between Tibet and Nepal, as it was located on a major traditional trade thoroughfare between the two countries, but this importance had lapsed with the construction of the Friendship Highway to Zhangmu. The town also has an important place in history as it is said to be where the early Tibetan king, Songtsen Gomba met his new queen, the Nepalese Princess Brikuti. The great Indian master Guru Padmasambhava is also said to have passed through Kyirong on his way to Tibet and seeing the beautiful landscape, called the place Kyirong, meaning Happy valley.

Overnight: Phuntsok Rabsel Hotel or Similar, Kyirong (Meals: BLD)

Day 13: Drive from Kyirong to Saga, 4,460m/14,633ft, and continue to Drongpa - 293km, 7-8 hours.

This is a long and tiring driving day, but the scenery has to be seen to be believed. The sheer scale of the Tibetan plateau is staggering, with geological formations and strata across all of the earth colours and views of the Greater Himalaya. You drive past the beautiful Pelkhu Tso Lake, where you can clearly see fish swimming in the cold clear waters. You pass through the town of Saga, the last town of any size you drive through where there are a few shops to stock up on any last minute items. You continue to Drongpa. The road follows the Tang Po River for much of the way and you pass through a number of villages before reaching Drongpa and you may see herds of domestic yak, as well as their wild cousins, together with wild asses and marmots in the sandier areas. One area of sand dunes would not be out of place in a desert region with large crescent dunes encroaching on the road.



Overnight: Yajiangyuan Hotel or Similar, Drongpa (Meals: BLD)

Day 14: Long drive from Drongpa to Darchan, 4,575/15,010ft.

Today you will have a long drive, travelling west, to the town of Darchan, a small town set at 4,575m/15,010ft and almost directly south of Mount Kailash. The sacred lake of Mansarovar is located a short way south east of Darchan. Darchan itself is not a very prepossessing place being rather tatty and rundown, but its importance

lies in that it is the jumping off place for the Kailash Kora and is the last place for pilgrims on the Kora to buy supplies.

Once in Darchan your Tibetan guide will negotiate Chinese bureaucracy and your permits will be scrutinised and stamped. He will also meet with the man employed by the local state prefecture to organise the teams of yaks for paying pilgrims, to find yaks to carry your baggage. This whole procedure may well be a rather protracted business.

Overnight: Himalayan Kailash Hotel or Similar, Darchan (Meals: BLD)

Day 15: Drive to Tarboche. Meet yaks. Start trek and trek to Diraphuk - 5,210m/17,093 - 13kms/8mils, 5-7 hours.

Today you will drive to Tarboche. Tarboche is famous for its tall pole adorned with prayer flags, and as the site of Saga Dawa Festival which you will return to after your Kora. You will meet your yaks here and start the kora. Nearby is Chorten-Kangri: it is considered an auspicious act to pass through the small archway formed by the two legs of this chorten. From Tarboche you trek across the plain to Shershong, and after an hour you will see Chuku Gompa high on the hillside above. All the monasteries on the Kailash circuit were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. You will pass below Chuku Gompa which was one of the the first to be rebuilt and contains a few treasures that were rescued from the original gompas. There are some very interesting and little known connections between these monasteries and Bhutan. If time allows and you are feeling strong, the gompa is well worth a visit.

Your trail then continues through a most fantastic gorge, with stupendous flying buttresses on the western side and views up to Kailash on the east. The cliffs are incredibly impressive, unique and awesome, and walking is likely to be slow as you take in the cliffs, hanging valleys, side peaks and enormously long thin waterfalls coming off these. You will go past some stone huts and obtain a fine view of the west face of Mount Kailash before you see the bridge leading to Dira Phuk Monastery. Your lodge for tonight is located not far from Diraphuk Monastery.

Note: Please ensure today that all your gear in your kit bag is fully waterproofed as the yaks may ford the river, perhaps 50 or 60 cm deep, and although usually all bags will remain dry, an animal can stumble and you don't want to risk wet gear at this altitude!

Overnight: Lodges on the Kailash Trek (Meals: BLD)

Day 16: Rest and acclimatisation and exploration of the local area. Visit Dira Phuk Monastery.

Today you can explore this high region, enjoy the spectacular views of the north face of Kailash and visit Dira Phuk Monastery. Dirapuk's location on the northern face of Mount Kailash is believed to amplify its spiritual power. Devout pilgrims believe this vantage point offers the mountain's most potent views, enhancing the Kora's transformative potential. The north face of Mount Kailash is said to resemble the face of the Bodhisattva Chenrezig (Avalokiteshvara), considered the embodiment of compassion. You could explore some way from Diraphuk to get the most fantastic views of this north face and you might even be allowed to trek up close to the north face framed between its two 'disciple-mountains, Chana Dorje and Chenresi although the Chinese do not always allow this.



The original monastery of Dira Phuk has an illustrious history. It was destroyed during the 1960s but was later rebuilt. Legend has it that the great Tibetan yogi Milarepa meditated in a cave near Dirapuk, attaining enlightenment and leaving his handprint on the rock as a testament to his spiritual trip and you might visit this spot. Some even say that Milarepa might have actually climbed Kailash. The monastery is also known for a visit by the famous Yogin, Gotsangpa, a disciple of Milarepa, who is said to have stayed in this monastery from 1213 to 1217. Yogin Gotsangpa is known as the author of the first history and guide book of Mount Kailash.

Overnight: Lodges on the Kailash Trek (Meals: BLD)

Day 17: Challenging walk to cross the Dolma La Pass, 5,630m/18,472ft, and trek down Lham Chu Valley towards Zutul-Puk Monastery 4,790m/15,715m.

Today is the high point of your circuit crossing the Dolma La.

The Kora route makes a serious climb onto a moraine, eventually meeting the trail from the east bank. As you climb further, you will pass piles of clothing at Shiva-tsal, 5,331m/17,490ft. Tibetans leave an article of clothing, or a drop of blood here as part of leaving their past life behind them. Continuing past thousands of small rock cairns the trail leads across a boulder field, and possibly snow slopes leading up to the Dolma La at 5,630m/18,472ft. Here a large boulder on the pass representing the goddess, Dolma (better known by her Sanskrit name, Tara) is festooned with prayer flags and streamers. This is the physical and spiritual high point of the Kora. It is traditional to leave something as part of the collection of coins, prayer flags, teeth and other offerings attached to the rock. Money is pasted to the rock with butter and pilgrims make the requisite three circumambulations of the rock. This must be the world's largest collection of prayer flags.



If you meet Tibetan pilgrims here you may be invited to join them for a picnic in celebration of completing the hardest part of the Kora - remember to take a little food to share with them. Descending, the trail is rocky at first then begins a series of switchbacks as it passes the lake, Gouri-kund, which at 5,450m/17,880ft is the highest lake in the world, although almost permanently frozen. Devout Hindu pilgrims are supposed to break the ice and bathe in its waters. More switchbacks lead down to the valley and a stone guest house alongside the Lham-chhukhir at 5,148m/16,890ft where there is a footprint of Buddha, called a shapje, nearby. Yaks may be grazing around this area, and marmots may be out if it's a sunny evening.

The route makes a long, gentle, descent of the Lham Chu valley, the eastern valley of Kailash. When crossing the stream of the Khado Sanglam you reach the Third Prostration Station; look upstream for the holy view of the east face of Kailash. You trek down towards Zutul-puk Gompa - Zuthul means cave and the gompa is named after a cave in which the Buddhist saint, Milarepa is said to have meditated, eating only nettles. Among the miracles he performed were adjusting the height of this cave to make it more comfortable and his footprint still remains on the roof.

Your lodge tonight is located just below the Zutul-puk Gompa so you should have time to visit the Gompa.

Overnight: Lodges on the Kailash Trek (Meals: BLD)

Day 18: Trek to Darchan - 4-5 hours.

Your last full day of trekking is a beautiful hike. Continuing south, you cross a bridge over a side stream from Kailash, and then contour up as the river descends towards the plain. Ensure you stop regularly to check the view behind you - it is superb. After an hour and a half the valley closes in and you will be walking high above the river in a kind of a steepening gorge. On the walk today you are likely to be walking alongside many pilgrims, also descending. And indeed this section is one of the loveliest on the trek. Looking to west side of the valley you can clearly see a defined crash zone of where the Indian tectonic plate crashed into the Asian plate all those millions of years ago. It's possible to clearly see the buckling of the front end of the Indian plate and a dramatic change in the geology. Two professional geologists in one group helped to identify the oceanic rocks here at 4,600m above sea level and to point this all out to the group!

You make a dramatic exit from the river valley on to the plain at the Last Prostration Station at 4,609m/15,120ft. Your truck will meet you and the yaks will unload once they arrive. Rakas Tal glistens in the distance as you pass mani walls decorated with carved yak skulls. You trek a further 1½ hours west to Darchan along the edge of the plain to complete the kora. As you arrive in Darchan you can see the route heading up to the Inner Kora, but you would have to complete 12 more koras before you would be allowed on this route!

Overnight: Himalayan Kailash Hotel or Similar, Darchan (Meals: BLD)

Day 19: Trek to Tarboche to complete full Kora. Attend Saga Dawa Festival. Return to Darchan for the night.

Today you will trek back to Tarboche so you will have the full circuit. You trek west from the edge of town, firstly heading to a cairn and prayer flags at 4,730m/15,518ft. This is the first of four chaktsal-gang 'prostration stations' on the Kora and offers an excellent view of Kailash. Turning north up the valley of the Lha Chu, you descend to Tarboche, the site of the Saga Dawa Festival.



The Saga Dawa Festival is the most important religious day in Western Tibet, commemorating the birth, enlightenment, and passing away of the Buddha. The climax of the festival is the raising of a very tall flag pole which takes hours to slowly jack up, with teams of officials, and a brave man on top of the sloping pole. While this is going on pilgrims carry out Koras around the flag pole, revolving clockwise and chanting as they go. The valley fills up with pilgrims' tents and lorries and people come in their hundreds and thousands to be there on the final day. The local reincarnate lama from one of the monasteries on the inner circuit attends with his monks, and they carry out various ceremonies and make the Kora themselves blowing long Tibetan horns and crashing cymbals. Horsemen occasionally race around the Tarboche pole dressed in traditional costume. Mounds of incense are burnt, handfuls of printed prayers are thrown to the wind and people prostrate before the flagpole. The smell of burning juniper fills the air. There are stalls selling Tibetan handicrafts and 'sit in' meditation/prayer tents, magicians, and all manner of exotic Tibetan people with weird hats and colourful costumes.

Finally the pole is pulled upright and the crowd roars its approval. Literally thousands of Tibetans will then rush out immediately afterwards heading north on the Kora.

You will return to Darchan to overnight.

Overnight: Himalayan Kailash Hotel or Similar, Darchan (Meals: BLD)

Day 20: Drive to Saga 6-7 hours.

You will leave early today as it is a long drive, firstly climbing to the Mayum La, 5,150m/16,896ft, from where you can savour your last views of Kailash. Then you drive down for half an hour to a police check post and head east on one vast plain which lies between the Greater Himalaya and the Trans Himalaya. You pass through Paryang, 4,600m/15,092ft, where you will probably have lunch. Driving on you cross a pass, the Soge La, 4,700m/15,420ft, and continue past a lake and on and on beside the Tsang Po river. The road now continues to the ferry near Saga, 4,480m/14,698ft, passing through the township of Drongba. (It is from here that a road now leads south into Nepal and the Kingdom of Mustang). You continue to Saga, very Chinese in character, where your hotel and (hopefully) hot showers await you!

Overnight: Station Manor Hotel or Similar, Saga (Meals: BLD)

Day 21: Drive to Kyirong - 4-5 hours.

You continue driving east and south. During today's drive, if weather permits, you should have views of Mt. Shishapangma, 8,046m/26,397ft, the world's thirteenth highest peak and the only 8,000m peak to lie wholly within Tibet. You will also have views of other Himalayan snow peaks including the mountains of Langtang, which you will have seen from the other side earlier in your adventure. You cross more plateau and over the the Gongtang La Pass and then the road starts its long descent, zig zagging down to lower altitudes, with the terrain changing from high Tibetan Plateau to the valleys and forests of the Himalaya.

Overnight: Phuntsok Rabsel Hotel or Similar, Kyirong (Meals: BLD)

Day 22: Drive to Border. Drive to Kathmandu. 7-8 hours.

You will drive to the border and complete formalities to leave Tibet/China and enter Nepal. On the Tibet side this may take between 1-2 hours depends on how fast the formalities go. Then you cross into Nepal and go through Nepal immigration and customs. Your transport will be waiting for you there and you drive to Kathmandu, returning to your hotel there for a final celebration of your epic journey.

Overnight: Kathmandu Guest House or Similar, Kathmandu (Meals: B L)

Day 23: At leisure in Kathmandu. Group transfer to the airport. Depart Kathmandu.

You will have time at leisure in Kathmandu today when you may do some sightseeing or shopping or simply relax at your hotel. Later there will be a group transfer to the airport for your overnight flight to the UK.

Overnight: In flight (Meals: B)

Day 24: Arrive London.

Our grading system

Mount Kailash Trek is graded as a Strenuous trekking holiday, as described below.

Strenuous

Our strenuous trekking holidays can involve anything from 10 to 30 days on trek and are often in remote areas, far from 'civilisation'. Rest days are interspersed but there may be up to 7 consecutive days of hard walking. Most treks reach altitudes of at least 4,900m/16,000ft and there will be a great deal of ascent and descent. The majority of our strenuous treks utilise camping, tea house or mountain lodge accommodation.

These holidays are suitable for fit individuals who have regular experience of mountain walking.

Trip altitude

Important - please be aware that this trip involves travel at altitude. Whilst all our itineraries are carefully designed to optimise acclimatisation to high altitudes, participants on this trip are likely to experience some symptoms of being at altitude. The Dossier pack we provide when you book your holiday includes comprehensive advice on safe travel at altitude. If you require further information or advice on travel at altitude prior to booking please contact the office to speak to an experienced member of our team. Alternatively we recommend www.medex.org.uk as a good source of information.

What the price includes

Mountain Kingdoms aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

What's included:

- ✓ 21 x breakfasts, 19 x lunches, 18 x dinners
- ✓ 4* hotel in Kathmandu on a twin share basis
- ✓ Tea house accommodation in Langtang on twin share basis
- ✓ Hotel/Lodge accommodation in Tibet on twin share basis
- ✓ Local English speaking guides - one for Langtang one for Kailash
- ✓ All portering on trek
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicles
- ✓ Sightseeing as specified
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK and UK departure tax (flight inclusive only)
- ✓ Group airport transfer for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)
- ✓ A good quality down jacket, four-season sleeping bag and liner (supplied in Kathmandu)
- ✓ A free high quality Mountain Kingdoms kit bag

Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

What's not included:

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Visa/permit fees - Nepal and Tibet
- ✗ Tips
- ✗ Lunch and evening meals in Kathmandu

Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

Our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag for their holiday (these are required for certain treks), will instead receive a free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle. These unique Water-to-Go bottles can also be purchased from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit [For further information about our campaign visit <https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign>](https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign).

Your accommodation

We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.

We use the best hotel there is in the outlying towns in Tibet but please be aware that service and plumbing come nowhere near European standards. In some, facilities are very basic with unreliable electricity and hot water supplies. A good sense of humour and patience is essential at these places.



Kathmandu Guest House or Similar, Kathmandu

The Kathmandu Guest House is a 4* hotel situated right in the heart of Thamel - the tourist hub of the city. Known as Kathmandu's 'original hotel' it has been extensively renovated over recent years and has good quality rooms, a spa, gardens and a restaurant. The hotel also houses the excellent Museum of Nepali Art (MONA) which showcases traditional and contemporary works of art - admission is free for Mountain Kingdoms guests.



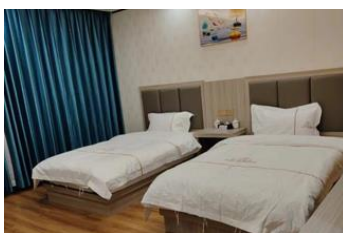
Tea Houses in Nepal

The rooms in tea houses are simple but comfortable. Most bedrooms have twin beds and mattresses. Sleeping bags are provided by our agent. There is a communal dining area, warmed by a wood or yak-dung burning stove, where most trekkers relax for the evening. There are also simple toilets and, in most cases, the opportunity to have a hot shower.

Single rooms in tea houses:



The tea houses we use usually have twin sharing rooms. For a variety of reasons, e.g. size, unreliable communication, it is not a reliable or practical possibility to guarantee single rooms in tea houses. Additionally, during the trekking season tea houses are very busy, and it goes against the ethos of mountain trekking to turn people away from shelter in lodges. If you are travelling without a companion and would like a single room in a tea house this may sometimes be possible upon payment of a small supplement on the spot (usually around \$10.) Alternatively if the tea house has an odd number of guests on the night you may be lucky and find yourself in a room on your own. However it is more likely you will share with someone (of the same sex obviously). This would most likely be someone within your group but when the tea houses are busy, it could even be someone else. Be prepared for this!



Phuntsok Rabsel Hotel or Similar, Kyirong

The Phuntsok Rabsel is a clean and spacious hotel in the centre of Kyirong. It is decorated in simple Tibetan style and has 27 rooms with comfortable beds and hot showers. There is an on-site Nepalese restaurant and Wi-Fi is available.



Yajiangyuan Hotel or Similar, Drongpa

The Yajiangyuan Hotel offers comfortable, modern accommodation with large rooms that have private facilities, a bar, a tea garden and a restaurant serving both Chinese and Western-style meals.



Himalayan Kailash Hotel or Similar, Darchan

This large, modern hotel is the best available in Darchan, with 192 guest rooms. Rooms are Tibetan design with Tibetan carpets, heating, warm quilts and bathrooms with en suite showers. There is Wi-Fi at the hotel.



Lodges on the Kailash Trek

As the Chinese authorities no longer allow camping on the Kailash Circuit local nomad people have built several large lodges for pilgrims and trekkers on Mount Kailash. These lodges provide very basic accommodation with shared bathroom facilities. We will do our very best to secure twin-share rooms, but as these are limited, we may occasionally have to use multi-share rooms instead: triple bed or small dormitories. For single travellers, we may be able to secure solo occupancy in a twin-share room for a supplement (please contact the office for prices). If we are unable to do so, single travellers will either be sharing with a person of the same sex in a twin room, or be in multi-share rooms.

The lodges do provide meals but we will send a cook and helper and our yaks will carry our own food to provide more varied meals than are locally available.



Station Manor Hotel or Similar, Saga

The Station Manor Hotel is one of the newer hotels in Saga. All the rooms have modern decor and offer air-conditioning, Wi-Fi, hot water and oxygen supplied throughout the day. Bottle water, hairdryers and slippers provide some additional creature comforts. The hotel has an on-site restaurant.

Meal arrangements

All meals on trek in Langtang and Tibet. Breakfast only in Kathmandu: 20 x breakfasts, 19 x lunches, 18 x dinners.

Flight arrangements

Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

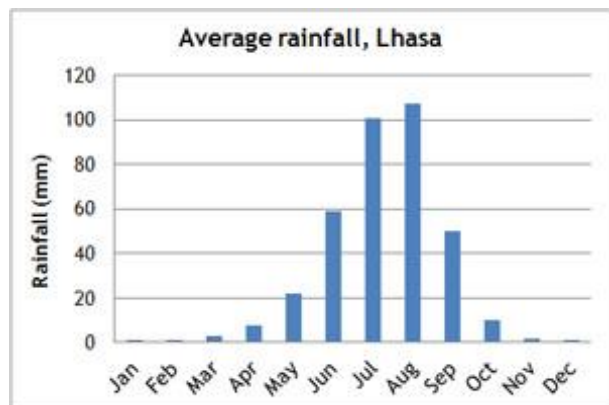
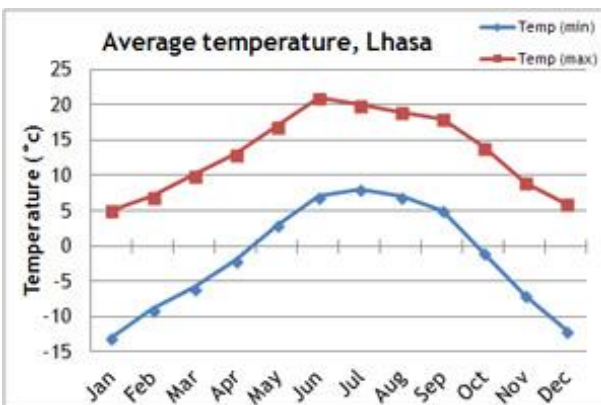
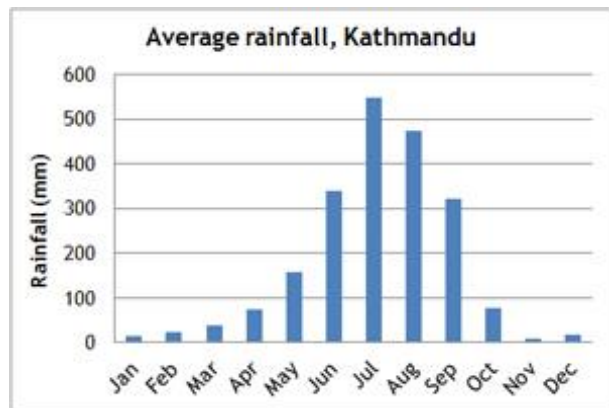
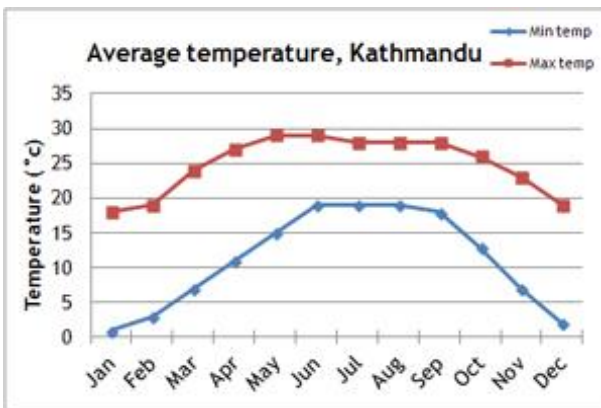
Further information

When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

The nature of adventure travel

Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

Climate information



Extensions

Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400.



Extra nights in Nepal

If you would like to extend your stay in Nepal, you can add extra nights at your group tour accommodation or choose from our range of distinctive properties in Pokhara and the Kathmandu area. We can offer luxury resorts, heritage hotels, tranquil lodges and characterful cottages. Our selection includes Dwarika's hotel in Kathmandu and its sister property - Dwarika's Resort at Dhulikhel, Pavilions Himalaya at Pokhara, Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge and Shivapuri Heights Cottage. Individual extension leaflets for all these options can be requested from our office.



Kathmandu Valley sightseeing excursions

We can arrange half day or full day sightseeing tours taking you to the key cultural attractions of central Kathmandu or the Kathmandu Valley including the World Heritage Sites of Bhaktapur and Patan. Your tour will be led by an English-speaking guide and you will have a private vehicle and driver.



Bhutan extensions from Nepal

Whilst in the Himalaya, why not extend your Nepal holiday with a tour of the cultural highlights of Bhutan. We offer several extension options that include all accommodation, meals and sightseeing or we can tailor an itinerary to suit your exact requirements.



Wildlife extensions in Nepal - Chitwan, Bardia & Koshi Tappu

Visit Chitwan or Bardia National Parks home to a rich variety of birds and animals including elephant, rhinos, leopard and Bengal tiger. Stay in a comfortable lodge and enjoy a range of wildlife viewing activities. Alternatively visit the renowned Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve - one of the finest birdwatching and wildlife areas in all Asia.



Lumbini

Enjoy a three day extension to the birthplace of Buddha, one of the most important Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the world. Take the short flight from Kathmandu, and spend two nights in a comfortable 3* hotel, just steps from the Lumbini temple complex, with a full day to explore the fascinating UNESCO World Heritage Site in the company of your expert local guide.

Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

- We include a superb trek in Langtang, and the drive to Kailash, to provide the best possible acclimatisation.
- We use the road border from Nepal into Tibet meaning you do not have to return to Kathmandu after Langtang.
- We use comfortable, modern minibuses for your drives in Tibet.
- We include free hire of a down jacket, four-season sleeping bag and liner for your treks in Lantang and around Kailash. You will also receive a free high quality kitbag for you to use and keep.
- We use excellent, knowledgeable, English-speaking local guides.
- Our maximum group size is 12 for this trip. This provides for a genuine small group travel experience and helps reduce the negative aspects often associated with larger trekking groups.
- We have a wealth of Himalayan experience in the company, most of our staff have visited Nepal and love the Himalayas and many have also been to Tibet and visited the areas covered by this trip. If you have any questions about any aspect of this holiday please don't hesitate to give us a call on 01453 844400. Steve and Seraphina Berry have both been to Kailash.
- We offer a flexible service and can extend your holiday with extra hotel nights, upgrades and exciting activities.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.
- If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights Manager, April, for flight options, quotes and further information.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: www.mountainkingdoms.com or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.

What our clients say



I have given the trip an "excellent" tick since it is hard to criticise an organisation that succeeded in delivering what was, for me, a hugely valuable experience - where the location genuinely transcended my expectation.

- Mr L, London

The trekking and camping experience brought us very close to local people which I very much enjoyed. Going to such a remote area - magnificent!

- Ms S, London



Remote location, small group size, excellent trek crew and leader.

-Ms T, London

It was a very enjoyable adventure trip, well planned and full of interest. The way the places we stayed in gradually built up in altitude was very helpful. It was a tough trip in physical terms but a great experience

- Miss K, Hants

Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

Truly independent

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

Complete financial security

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

No Surcharge Guarantee

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

Award winning Responsible Tourism

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at www.mountainkingdoms.com.

Genuine small group travel

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

Loyalty Discount

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

Comprehensive information

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.



RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit www.tourismdeclares.com

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

Carbon Offsetting

Already doing:

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

Will do:

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

Reducing Carbon Emissions

Already doing:

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

Will do:

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.

