



# TIBETAN RAILROAD

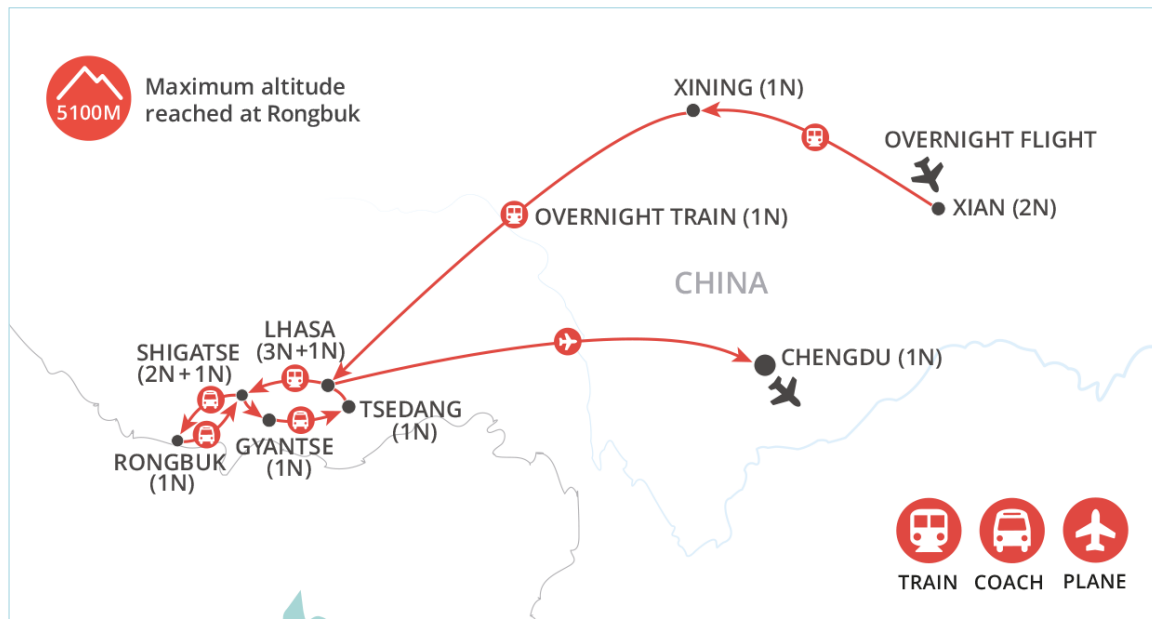
Go Beyond Tour | 18 Days | Physical Level 4

Xian – Xining – Qinghai-Tibet Railway – Lhasa – Shigatse – Mt Everest Base Camp – Shigatse – Gyantse – Tsedang – Lhasa – Chengdu

All aboard the world's highest railway as you travel from Xining in western China up and over the 5,072 metre Tanggula Pass and across the stark beauty of the Tibetan Plateau to Lhasa. An incredible feat of engineering that passes spectacular lakes and mountains and crosses huge plains and permafrost at the "roof of the world", the Qinghai-Tibet Railway puts you right in the heart of Tibet's gigantic landscapes.

- Overnight on the Qinghai-Tibet Railway, the world's highest train
- Stand in awe of Mt Everest
- Experience the spectacular Terracotta Warriors in Xian
- Discover the palaces, temples and monasteries of Lhasa, Shigatse and Gyantse
- Dine on delicious local Tibetan cuisine

## TOUR MAP



## TIBETAN RAILROAD TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless travelling land only)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated on your itinerary
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) and Local Guides
- Visa fees for New Zealand passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

*The only thing you may have to pay for is personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, meals not stated in the itinerary, insurance of any kind, customary tipping and early check in or late check out. These are all payable locally.*

## GO BEYOND TOURS:

Venture off the beaten track to explore fascinating destinations away from the tourist trail. You will discover the local culture in depth and see sights rarely witnessed by other travellers. These tours take you away from the comforts of home whilst rewarding you with experiences of a lifetime. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

#### PHYSICAL LEVEL 4:

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All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights.

'Tibetan Railroad' is rated as a physical level 4 tour. You'll need to be fit and adventurous to participate on this tour as on some days you will be active for most of the day. The terrain and altitude may be more challenging and the activities more physically demanding. This itinerary reaches high altitude and visits several remote areas where hotel facilities are extremely basic, including onboard the overnight train to Lhasa and the overnight at Mt Everest Base Camp.

This tour has been carefully designed to minimise the effects of Altitude Sickness whilst in Tibet. Please be prepared for mild symptoms of Altitude Mountain Sickness (AMS) which include dizziness, fatigue, nausea, loss of appetite, breathlessness, headache and disturbed sleep. These usually develop over the first 36 hours at altitude and not immediately on arrival, however you may develop symptoms sooner whilst onboard the train to Lhasa reaching 5,072 metres in altitude. AMS symptoms are experienced by people of varying ages and levels of fitness, and usually the symptoms will subside after a day or so. If symptoms worsen, you should seek medical advice and descend in altitude immediately. The following precautions may help to prevent or lessen the effects of AMS:

- Since fluid loss usually accompanies the acclimatisation process, drink plenty of fluids to keep properly hydrated (minimum of 3 - 4 litres daily) and eat carbohydrate food to keep the body properly energised and hydrated
- Do not overexert and only partake in light activity immediate after your arrival
- Don't smoke, drink alcohol or take other depressants such as tranquilisers and sleeping pills, as these depress the respiratory drive and reduce oxygen intake
- Assume any sickness at high altitude is AMS until proven otherwise
- Never ascend to higher altitudes while showing symptoms of AMS
- You must report any symptoms of AMS immediately to your National Escort
- Speak to your doctor prior to departure to discuss medication

Of course, our National Escort and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

### JOINING YOUR TOUR:

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The tour is 18 days in duration including return international flights or 16 days in duration based on 'Land Only'. Travellers booked on 'Land Only', the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour, or when booking pre and post night accommodation with Wendy Wu Tours.

Join the tour on Day 2 in Xian and end the tour on Day 17 in Chengdu. An informal Welcome Dinner will be held on Day 2 of the itinerary. If you miss this due to your arrival time, all information will be provided to you at breakfast the following morning.

### ITINERARY CHANGES:

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It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

## DETAILED ITINERARY

**Days 1-2: Fly overnight to Xian**

Meals: D

On arrival in Xian Xianyang International Airport, you will be met in the arrival hall by your local guide and/or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer approximately 1 hour to your hotel.

Early check-in is not included. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.



An informal Welcome Dinner will be held on Day 2. Late arrivals will receive a box dinner.

### Destination Information

**Xian** – Xian has long played a pivotal role in China's extensive history and has been a hub for cultural exchange, economic trade and national politics for centuries. Home to some of China's most ancient sights, diverse architecture and delicious fares.

**Day 3: Xian**

Meals: B, L, D

Spend the morning viewing the enigmatic ranks of the life-sized Terracotta Warriors. The Museum of the Terracotta Warriors and Horses is located approximately a 1-hour drive outside of Xian. From the bus park to the museum entrance is a 15-minute walk. There are electric carts offered by private vendors which can be organised at your own cost. There is no electric cart available for the return from the museum exit to the bus park. Within the museum area the warriors can be seen in three different 'pits', which are active archaeological digs. The site is large and will take about 2 and a half hours to explore. After this, visit the Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Workshop to see smaller models of the warriors being made.



Later, stroll on the beautifully preserved 14th century city walls that enclose Xian's old town. The local guide will give you time to explore the ancient city walls at your own pace. There are options here to hire a bicycle or an electric cart to drive along the length of the wall. These are offered by private vendors and can be organised at your own expense.

In the evening, enjoy a delicious feast of traditional Shui Jiao dumplings and a performance of Tang Dynasty dancing. Later, an optional Tang Ever-bright City night tour may be offered (time permitting, payable locally).

*Please note: If you wish to undertake a bike ride on the Ancient City Wall, we strongly recommend wearing a helmet.*

### Destination Information

**Terracotta Warriors** – One of the most significant archaeological discoveries of the 20th century, this unearthed terracotta army is comprised of over 7,000 soldiers, horses and chariots. The army was built in life-sized form by thousands of workers and designed by Emperor Qin Shi Huang to defend himself in the afterlife.

**Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Workshop** – See smaller versions of the enigmatic Terracotta Warriors being created at the captivating Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Workshop; even purchase your own portable soldier.

**Ancient city walls** – Dating back to the Ming Dynasty in the 14th century, the Xian ancient city wall is one of the best-preserved urban fortifications in China. The wall's ideal spot and layout gives visitors a bird's eye view over this fantastic city. Follow the locals' example and take a bike to get an ever more spectacular experience.

**Tang Dynasty Dancing Show** – Xian, previously known as Chang'an, was an important cultural and historical centre in not only China but in the known-world. The Tang Dynasty dancing show is an exciting exponent of this prosperous society and keeps alive the splendour of this period.

**Day 4: Xian – Xining**

Meals: B, L, D

Transfer to the train station to board the 5-hour bullet train to Xining, the capital city of Qinghai province in western China. Head to the Qinghai Tibet Cultural Centre to see the impressive 618-metre-long hand-painted thangka (a traditional Tibetan Buddhist painting) and the largest display in the world.



End the day at the lively night street markets and sample some of the delicious local cuisine.

Overnight altitude: 2,275m

*Please note: You will need to carry your own luggage on and off trains.*

### Destination Information

**Xining** – Xining, the capital of Qinghai province in western China, is a vibrant city situated on the northeastern Tibetan Plateau. Known for its diverse cultural heritage, it serves as a gateway to the Tibetan region and boasts a unique blend of Tibetan and Han Chinese influences.

**Qinghai Tibet Cultural Centre** – Located in the province of Qinghai, this center serves as a hub for cultural exchange, research, and education regarding the unique traditions, arts, and history of the Tibetan and other ethnic communities in the region. It is home to the largest display of thangka paintings, a Guinness World record, that took 400 artists four years to complete.

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**Day 5: Xining – Overnight train to Lhasa**

Meals: B, L

Explore the sacred Kumbum Monastery, also known as Ta'er Temple. Later, transfer to the railway station for your 21-hour overnight train to Lhasa on the Qinghai-Tibet Railway, the highest rail journey in the world.



*Please note: This train reaches 5,072m in elevation crossing the Tanggula Pass. The train is specially designed with oxygen supply system to help adjust to the high altitude. A shared 4-berth soft-sleeper cabin is included with 2 upper and 2 lower berths. Although we try to keep all the group members together in the same compartment, you may find yourself sharing your compartment with locals; an excellent chance to share your experiences. We cannot pre-purchase private use of the cabin or guarantee specific bedding arrangements. A dining carriage with basic meals is available and your guide will arrange for you to purchase some snacks prior to boarding. **Refer to page 15 for more information about travel onboard.***

### Destination Information

**Kumbum Monastery** – A renowned Tibetan Buddhist monastery famous for its striking architecture and historical significance. Also known as Ta'er Temple, it is a sacred pilgrimage site with a rich cultural heritage, housing numerous chapels adorned with intricate murals and sculptures.

**Qinghai-Tibet Railway** – A 'miracle' of engineering that traverses the Tibetan Plateau, connecting Xining in Qinghai province to Lhasa in Tibet. Spanning over 1,900 kilometers, it is the world's highest and longest plateau railway, offering breathtaking views of the Himalayas and facilitating transportation to the otherwise remote region.

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**Day 6: Arrive Lhasa**

Meals: D

Traverse the 5,072 metre Tanggula Pass and across the stark beauty of the Tibetan Plateau to the 'roof of the world', Lhasa. Watch from your window as you cross huge plains and permafrost, and pass spectacular lakes, mountains and wildlife. Whether you prefer to unwind with a book, engage in a game of cards, or enjoy a meal in the dining carriage, there's ample opportunity to relax during this scenic rail journey



Arrive in Lhasa, the heart and soul of Tibet, in the afternoon. The remainder of the day is free to relax and acclimatise to the altitude.

Daytime altitude: 5,072m

Overnight altitude: 3,700m

### Destination Information

**Lhasa** – Historically and spiritually a centre for Buddhism, Lhasa is home to many culturally significant sights, including the Potala Palace, Jokhang Temple and the Norbulingka Summer Palace. Set on the Tibetan Plateau, Lhasa is one of the highest cities in the world, reaching heights of 3,700m.

**Day 7: Lhasa**

Meals: B, L, D

Wander around the Barkhor to see traditionally dressed locals, stalls of religious trinkets and prostrating pilgrims. Inside the Jokhang Temple, the sacred centre of Tibetan Buddhism, the devotion is palpable as queues of people worship in the flickering light of yak butter candles. There will also be a visit to the Sera Monastery, a renowned seat of Buddhist learning, to watch the debating monks. Please be sensitive whilst at the temple as religion is an extremely sensitive topic in China. This is not a chance to converse with the monks, you will be able watch the monks debating between themselves and learning scriptures. Sightseeing at the Jokhang Temple and Sera Monastery will involve climbing many steps and walking over uneven surfaces in dim lighting. This evening, enjoy a tasty Tibetan dinner and dance performance.



Daytime altitude: 4,000m

Overnight altitude: 3,700m

### Destination Information

**Barkhor** – Encircling the Jokhang Temple, the Barkhor is a cluster of narrow streets that acts as a circuit of pilgrimage for Buddhists round the Jokhang. There are many stalls here where you can peruse for Tibetan trinkets, religious relics and exquisite jewellery.

**Jokhang Temple** – Considered the most important and sacred temple in Tibet, the Jokhang Temple is located amongst Barkhor and dates back to the 7th century. The architecture is a simple blend of Indian, Chinese and Nepalese designs and is a mix of stunning colours both inside and out.

**Sera Monastery** – The Sera Monastery is one of the ‘Great Three’ monasteries in Tibet located 5km outside of Lhasa. Although its monk population is rather small, there is still a bustle of activity, especially in the morning and late afternoon, when you can see debates on religious theory.



**Day 8: Lhasa**

Meals: B, L

This morning, visit the iconic palace of Potala, the largest monastery in the world. Sitting atop Red Mountain, the Potala Palace is painted in a traditional Tibetan blend of deep red and stark white. At the Potala Palace there are over 1000 steps.



Next, visit Norbulingka, Lhasa's answer to Beijing's Summer Palace, set in parkland just outside the city. Enjoy time at leisure this evening.

Daytime altitude: 4,000m

Overnight altitude: 3,700m

**Destination Information**

**Potala Palace** – The former winter residence of the Dalai Lama, the Potala Palace has long been a symbol of Tibetan Buddhism and the struggles between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government. Abandoned by the spiritual leader in 1950, the Potala Palace now acts as a museum of old treasures and intricate shrines.

**Norbulingka** – Norbulingka served as the summer residence of the Dalai Lama from the 1780s to 1959. Set over an extensive park, it is home to several chapels and palaces, as well as beautiful flower arrangements.

**Day 9: Lhasa – Shigatse**

Meals: B, L, D

Transfer to the train station for a 2-hour bullet train across Tibet's stark plains to Shigatse. Dominated by a fort reminiscent of the Potala, Shigatse is Tibet's second city and the traditional seat of the Panchen Lama. Spend the afternoon exploring the local markets.



Daytime altitude: 3,800m

Overnight altitude: 3,600m

*Please note – your luggage will be transported by road to Shigatse.*

**Destination Information**

**Shigatse** – Shigatse has been developed by the government to become the second largest city in Tibet. It has an interesting local market and one of the largest functioning monasteries in Tibet, Tashilhunpo.

**Day 10: Shigatse**

Meals: B, L, D

Visit Shalu and Tashilhunpo Monastery, which was founded in 1447 by the first Dalai Lama, and join the pilgrims on their 'Kora' (circumnavigation) of the Monastery.

**Destination Information**

**Tashilhunpo Monastery** – Founded in 15th century, the Tashilhunpo Monastery is the second largest in Tibet and is the largest functioning religious institution in Tibet.

**Kora** – Kora is a type of pilgrimage and meditative practice in Tibetan Buddhist tradition. The meaning of Kora literally translates as 'circumnavigation' and involves pilgrims circling a sacred place or object.

**Day 11: Shigatse – Mt Everest Base Camp**

Meals: B, L, D

Drive for around 6.5 - 8 hours through some of the world's most incredible scenery to the Rongbuk Township with stops along the way. See the world's highest post office, with the Himalayas dominating the horizon (please note, the post office is usually closed). Walk for approximately 20 minutes (one way) to the Everest Base Camp Boundary Monument - sturdy walking shoes are recommended. Situated under the gaze of Everest's north face, the views of the world's highest peak are unsurpassed (weather permitting). Visit Rongbuk Monastery, draped in colourful prayer flags, as well as the small Old Rongbuk Monastery. Stay overnight in a Tibetan tent camp or guesthouse, depending on the weather conditions.



Daytime altitude: 5,200m

Overnight altitude: 5,100m

*Please note: Due to government restrictions and to protect the environment of Mt. Everest, visitors are not allowed to visit Base Camp where the climbers stay overnight. You will enjoy the views of Mt Everest from a point further down the mountain. The accommodation is extremely basic and the only facilities are simple public toilets. The rooms are multi-bed rooms shared with other guests. Rooms are not ensuite and there is no hot water or showers. You will have a wash basin and a thermos of boiled water in your room; towels are not provided by the hotel. Ensure you bring layers to sleep in and keep warm. The location of the hotel however is unsurpassed: if the weather is good, you will be able to see Everest when you wake up!*

**Destination Information**

**Rongbuk Monastery** – Rongbuk Monastery is a Buddhist monastery near the base of the north side of Everest dating back to the early 20th century. It is said to be the highest monastery in the world.

**Day 12: Mt Everest – Shigatse**

Meals: B, L, D

Wake up early to see a glorious sunrise over Everest. The road is rough and muddy through this area. Drive around 6.5 hours back to Shigatse, passing the Tso La Pass and Gyatso La Pass and enjoying the awe-inspiring views. The evening is at leisure.

Daytime altitude: 3,800m

Overnight altitude: 3,6000m

**Destination Information**

**Gyatso La** – A high mountain pass at 5220 metres above sea level, Gyatso La is the highest point on the Friendship Highway between Nepal and China.

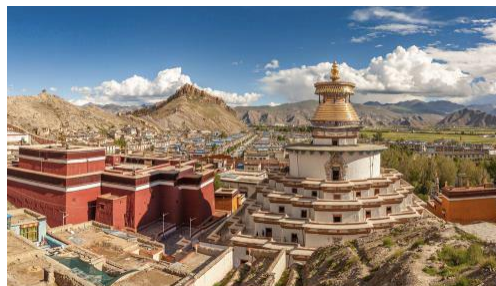
**Day 13: Shigatse – Gyantse**

Meals: B, L, D

Drive around 3 hours to Gyantse. This afternoon, visit Gyantse Kumbum as well as the Tsang Traditional Folk House to see a traditional kitchen and taste some local snacks and homebrewed 'chang'.

Daytime altitude: 4,050m

Overnight altitude: 4,050m

**Destination Information**

**Gyantse Kumbum** – Dating back to the 15th century, the Gyantse Kumbum is a 35km-high chorten and is considered the most important of its kind. Kumbum translates as '100,000' and refers to the thousands of images of Buddha houses inside.

**Day 14: Gyantse - Tsedang**

Meals: B, L, D

Travel along the Brahmaputra River to Tsedang, called the 'cradle of Tibetan civilisation'. Today will be a long driving day of approximately 8 hours. Take a short stop on the way at Gangpo Ri, the "birthplace of the Tibetan People".

Daytime altitude: 3,500m

Overnight altitude: 3,500m

**Destination Information**

**Tsedang** – An important city in Tibet and the fourth largest, Tsedang is known for its ancient ruins and Samye, the first Tibetan Monastery, giving the city the nickname 'the cradle of Tibetan civilisation'.

**Day 15: Tsedang – Lhasa**

Meals: B, L

Perched on a hill over the Yarlung River, legend says that the ancient Yumbulhakang Palace was the first building in Tibet and the palace of the first Tibetan king. Sightseeing at the Yumbulhakang Palace involves walking for about 30 minutes up a hill and there are also some steps. The remainder of the sightseeing is easy paced. Continue to Tradruk Monastery and the King's Tomb before returning to Lhasa for an evening at leisure. Today's driving time is 3 hours.



Daytime altitude: 4,000m

Overnight altitude: 3,700m

**Destination Information**

**Yumbulhakang Palace** – The palace has a very long history and boasts many sculptures and paintings from ancient times. It was built for the first Tibetan King, Nyatri Tsanpo, in the 2nd Century BC. It then became the summer palace for Princess Wenchen and Songtsen Gampo during the reign of Songtsen Gampo himself.

**Tradruk Monastery** – Tradruk Monastery is one of the earliest Buddhist temples in Tibet, built in the 7th century. It lies on the eastern bank of the Yarlung River. "Tran" means roc and "druk" means dragon in Tibetan, as the monastery got its name from the legend that it could only be built after Songtsen Gampo had turned into a roc and conquered an evil dragon.

**King's Tomb** – King's Tomb includes the resting place of the kings, their wives and officials. The groups of tombs vary in size and cover a total area of 3 million square metres. According to Tibetan documents, there are 21 tombs here. The tombs are flat on top and piled with earth and rock.

**Day 16: Lhasa – Chengdu**

Meals: B, D

Fly 2 hours to Chengdu. On arrival, transfer to your hotel where the rest of the day will be at leisure before a farewell dinner this evening. Your guide will be on hand to suggest activities or places to explore, or you can use the time to just relax in your hotel.

**Destination Information**

**Chengdu** – China's symbolic western capital and the residence of the country's most lovable black and white bear, Chengdu has an abundance to offer. With a fast-paced economy that is dragging China's west into the 21st century, it is no wonder that Chengdu's appeal is growing year on year.

As the gateway into Sichuan Province's large collection of sights, as well as Chengdu being its own trove of historical and cultural treasures, Chengdu is a must-visit on any trip to China.

**Days 17-18: Depart Chengdu**

Meals: B

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Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred from your hotel to Chengdu Tianfu airport or Chengdu Shuangliu airport, according to the departure time of your international flight. Arrive back in New Zealand the next day.

Late check-out is not included. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged with a tour of Chengdu including the Chengdu Panda Research Base. Please contact our Reservations team to book.

## CHINA - TRAVEL INFORMATION

### VISAS & PERMITS:

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China Visas are not required for New Zealand and Australia passport holders for stays 30 days and under. For longer periods in China and/or other passport holders a visa will be required. Full details will be advised by Wendy Wu Tours upon booking.

Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into New Zealand.

Tibet - An entry permit is required for travel to Tibet and is included for all passengers. Changes can occur to the Chinese Government policies regarding the issue of these permits, sometimes at short notice. Wendy Wu Tours will keep all customers up to date with any changes regarding the issuing of Tibet permits that may affect our ability to operate this tour as per the original itinerary. In all cases, alternative arrangements are offered. There is no consular representation in New Zealand. Therefore, Wendy Wu Tours will forward information to our office in China to process and the permit will be provided to you locally.

Please note the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate; Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa. Your travel consultant will inform you if any changes are applicable prior to your departure.

### INSURANCE:

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We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original

### EATING IN CHINA:

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Chinese cuisine is one of the most influential, diverse and flavoursome culinary styles in the world with a legacy stretching back thousands of years. Often, you'll find that the local Chinese style is very different from what you're used to at home. We welcome people on our tours with a wide variety of tastes and as such try to present an array of food to suit everyone in the group. Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes, their individual flavours as well as the different ways they are prepared and cooked throughout China.

All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive group tours from dinner on the day of the groups' arrival until breakfast on the groups' day of departure.

Dishes served in restaurants on our group tours are varied. Some will be vegetable-based with meat mixed in, and a few will be meat-based. Traditionally, Chinese people cook with a lot of vegetables because meat used to be hard to come by. Dishes often come pre-seasoned with soy sauce or other sauces. Our restaurants are well aware of the western palate – there are plenty of non-spiced options. Most meals are served with plain rice on the side which is intended as an accompaniment to your meal. Unlike the western world, Chinese people do not normally pre-heat their plates and food can be presented at a variety of temperatures, which is a typical Chinese way of doing things.

When eating meals on group tours, you will be seated around a circular table with other tour members. Dishes will be served in the traditional ‘family style’ on a lazy susan; meaning that various dishes will be laid out on a spinning turntable in the centre of the tabletop. These dishes are intended to be shared amongst the group – there is always more than enough to feed everybody. ‘Family style’ means that there is a pair of serving chopsticks for each dish which are used specifically to serve the food (please ask your server if you require a fork or spoon) and everybody will help themselves to all the dishes on the lazy susan. You will have an individual bowl, chopsticks and cup for your own use. Please be courteous and consider your fellow diners; if your favourite dish is on the other side of the table, it will make its way round to you soon! We find our customers really enjoy this sociable style of eating.

Your National Escort will do their utmost to cater for any special requests such as gluten free or vegetarian meals, however, people on restricted diets should expect complications. Although most Asian countries are now quite developed, only quite recently have they started to widely accept Western guests. Western food requirements are quite far removed from Asian food requirements, and even medical reasons can be quite difficult to explain. While our ground partners will do everything they can to cater for a wide range of dietary requirements on tour, we ask kindly for your patience and understanding that they cannot always be delivered to the standard you will be used to at home. It is recommended that passengers with food intolerances bring snacks or additional food items with them, especially when travelling further from major cities as not all dietary requests will be met due to the limited foods available. We recommend that when it comes to Chinese food, you stay open minded, try to be adventurous and always have a go with the chopsticks!

**Please inform us of any allergies and/or special dietary requirements at time of booking**

#### **ACCOMMODATION:**

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Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between New Zealand and China. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone.

In China, plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room.

If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

\*Please note: The accommodation in Rongbuk is extremely basic and the only facilities are simple public toilets. The rooms are multi-bed rooms shared with other guests. Rooms are not ensuite and there is no hot water or showers. You will have a wash basin and a thermos of boiled water in your room; towels are not provided by the property. Ensure you bring layers to sleep in and keep warm. The location of the hotel however is unsurpassed: if the weather is good, you will be able to see Everest when you wake up!

### LUGGAGE:

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All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. In general, we recommend packing only as much as you can lift as you will need to carry your own luggage on and off trains. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

### PORTERAGE:

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Please be aware that portorage is not included on our tours in China You will therefore need to be able to handle your own luggage within the hotel and when using transportation like trains and coaches.

### TRANSPORT:

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**High-Speed Trains:** On this tour, you will take multiple high-speed “bullet” train journey’s. You will travel in second-class soft seats with air conditioning. For train journeys you must ensure that you pack liquids, aerosols and gels/lotions in your hand luggage as per recent regulations. Passengers are not allowed to carry any aerosols over 100ml. Passengers are also not allowed to carry flammable gases or liquids including styling gel, compressed air or insecticides; any explosives, magnetised material, knives (including Swiss Army knives), scissors or sharp items (medication is fine). Bag checks are conducted randomly and any of these items may be confiscated before boarding the train (in hand luggage or main luggage). The National Escort will inform you of specific details prior to boarding.

**High-Speed Train Facilities:** The second-class seats are in a 3 x 2 seating configuration. Facilities vary from train to train. Most carriages have a western style toilet. Most seats will have a foldable tray table and power socket for charging your electronic devices. There are dining carts on board if you wish to purchase your own additional food.

**Overnight Train to Tibet:** Your accommodation on board the overnight train is in an air-conditioned, shared 4-berth soft sleeper compartment. Each cabin has 2 upper and 2 lower berths. There are toilets onboard; a Western-style at one end of the carriage and an Asian-style at the other end. It is advisable to bring your own toilet paper. The beds and cabins are basic with clean linen provided.



There are no showers onboard and we suggest wearing comfortable clothing onboard to sleep in. Although we try to keep all the group members together in the same compartment, you may find yourself sharing your compartment with locals; an excellent chance to share your experiences. There is a dining carriage with basic food/snacks, and your Guide will arrange time to purchase additional food prior to boarding.

The elevation at the departure point in Xining is 2,275 meters and climbs to 5,072 meters while crossing the Tanggula Pass before arriving in Lhasa at an altitude of 3,700 meters.

Each train is specially built with an air-pressure control system and two oxygen supply systems designed to assist passengers with the increase in altitude during the journey and minimise Altitude Mountain Sickness (AMS). Firstly, oxygen is pumped into the fully sealed carriages as the train gains altitude, keeping the oxygen content of the air you breathe around 23%; secondly, there are individual oxygen dispensing units with disposable tubes located in each sleeper compartment and throughout the train, which are free to use for anyone suffering altitude sickness. It is important to read the information on page 3 of this dossier regarding AMS, speak to your doctor prior to travel, and check your travel insurance coverage. During your tour, you must follow the advice of your National Escort and immediately report any symptoms so they may assist you along with the medical staff on the train.

A valid passport per passenger is required to purchase the train ticket to Tibet therefore we are unable to purchase additional tickets to book out the compartment for sole use.

Whilst we endeavour to book Wendy Wu Tours passengers exclusively in each cabin, you may be required to share the cabin with non-Wendy Wu Tours passengers.

**Coaches:** Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Roads in China have generally improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times.

Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road – not just 1-2 kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only. There may be sections of road where the surface is bumpy but our drivers will do their utmost to lessen the impact.

**Planes:** Internal flight/s are based on economy class, with reputable airlines. Lithium-Ion batteries, usually used in laptops, cell phones and digital cameras, must be carried in your hand luggage (not in your checked luggage). Portable chargers with a case that does not state the capacity or with a capacity of 160wh and more are not allowed on internal flights at all.

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

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On occasion, your guide will offer optional activities locally if time permits. A list of optional activities and approximate costs will be provided with your final documents. These can be arranged by your guide and are paid for locally.

### DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA:

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Though parts of China match the west in modernity and technological advances, it is important to remember that parts of China are still developing and as such, many aspects of tourism in China do not have the solid infrastructure and safety standards as seen here in the west.

Roads, especially highways, are of a different standard completely. Plumbing in all standards of hotels can be an issue (it is important to note that certain hotels in rural or remote areas may still encounter certain issues). Both Asian and Western-style toilets can be very basic, so we recommend you don't turn down the opportunity to go to a nice toilet when one is available; also, be prepared that not all public toilets, particularly outside of Lhasa, offer Western facilities.

### TIPPING POLICY:

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Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and China is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience, Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed to local guides and drivers throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the national escort.

If you are travelling in a smaller group with local guides only, then tipping is paid in each destination. To be fair to the guides we ask for slightly higher amounts per traveller with small groups.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy, but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour, we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

### EXCHANGING CASH:

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It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling to cities outside of Beijing and Shanghai. US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout China and other currencies can generally be exchanged in hotels and airports provided notes are new and undamaged. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Your National Escort will remind you to do this before departure.

### PERSONAL EXPENSES AND OPTIONAL TOURINGS:

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Personal Expense - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available.

Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

### GROUP SIZE:

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Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by both a National Escort and local guides.

There will be no more than 18 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu groups while you are travelling. All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 10 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

### CLIMBING STEPS:

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Sightseeing at nearly all the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defence against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs

This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside. People with knee or hip injuries who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

### VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

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We recommend that you contact either your doctor or Health centre for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Safe travel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful [www.safetravel.govt.nz](http://www.safetravel.govt.nz)

### BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

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We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.safetravel.govt.nz](http://www.safetravel.govt.nz) as in the event of an emergency, New Zealand Consular assistance will be more readily available.

Up until the day you travel, it is vital you keep up to date and familiarised with the entry requirements as these can change at short notice. You are personally responsible for completing any entry forms, conducting any covid tests (if necessary), etc and adhering to countries' specific entry requirements.

You can also access the New Zealand Government's travel advisory service for up-to-date information about your destination on the same website.

#### **AFTER YOUR BOOKING:**

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Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

Updated: November 2024