

# THE BEST OF TIBET

A Motorcycle Journey to the Roof of the World

(Duration: 15 Nights / 16 Days)

TIBET- "Roof of the World"

## DETAILED ITINERARY

2019



### **Day 01,:** Arrive in Kathmandu.

Upon arrival you will be met by our airport representative and transferred to the hotel and sightseeing to

#### **Swyambhunath Stupa**

**Swayambhunath Stupa** is a UNESCO WORLD Heritage Site. This ancient stupa is the most sacred Buddhist shrines of Nepal. Legend has it that when Kathmandu Valley was a lake 2000 years ago, a single lotus flower grew at the center of the lake. When Saint Manjushree, the Bodhisatva drained the lake with a single slash of his sword, the lotus settled on top of a hill and magically turned into a stupa. Hence, Swayambhunath is also known as a Self-Created stupa.

Transfer back to the hotel after the sightseeing.

*Overnight at Hotel Shankar/Shambala in Kathmandu [B/-/-]*

### **Day 02,:** In Kathmandu.

#### **Visit Boudhanath Stupa, Pashupatinath temple and Bhaktapur.**

Today, set out to explore other sites in Kathmandu valley and around.

After having breakfast at the hotel, transfer to Boudhanath. This will take a short drive of around 5- 6 minutes (if traffic allows).

**Boudhanath Stupa** is one of the most imposing landmarks of Kathmandu and is a center of Tibetan Buddhism. The stupa is built on a massive three level mandala style platform and is 36 meters (118 feet) in height. The base of the stupa is adorned with 108 small images of the Dhyani Amitabha Buddha and inset with prayer wheels. Thousands of pilgrims circle the stupa in a clockwise direction each day spinning the prayer wheels. It is said that each spin of a



prayer wheel is the equivalent of reciting the mantra. The stupa's massive mandala makes it one of the largest spherical stupas in Nepal. The ancient stupa is one of the largest in the world. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Stupa is on the ancient trade route from Tibet that enters the Kathmandu Valley by the village of Sankhu in the northeast corner. Tibetan merchants have rested and offered prayers here for many centuries. When refugees entered Nepal from Tibet in the 1950s, many decided to live around Boudhanath. The Stupa is said to entomb the remains of a Buddhist sage, perhaps parts of the Buddha's body (bones, teeth), or sacred texts and other ceremonial objects.

After visiting the largest spherical stupa of Nepal, transfer to Pashupatinath Temple. It will take around 4-5 min drive from Boudhanath.

The magnificent **Pashupatinath** temple with its astonishing architectural beauty is situated on the bank of the sacred Bagmati River. Dedicated to the Hindu God of Destruction, Lord Shiva, this temple is regarded as the most scared of all Lord Shiva temples. Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the temple comprises of a richly ornamented pagoda that houses the sacred linga or phallic symbol of Lord Shiva.

Every year thousands of pilgrims from all over the world come to pay homage to this temple. Non-Hindu visitors are strictly prohibited to enter the temple however; they are permitted to view the temple from the east banks of the River Bagmati.

Pashupatinath is also Nepal's most renowned Hindu cremation site. In the Hindu Culture, after a person is dead, his/her body is wrapped in cloth, placed on bamboo litters and brought to the cremation site where the eldest son in the family burns the body. The ashes from the dead body are collected and swept into the River Bagmati that eventually joins the Holy Ganges. Arya Ghat, is of special importance because it is here the members of the royal family were cremated. The main cremation site is Bhasmeshvar Ghat, which is the most-used cremation site in the Kathmandu Valley.

Later transfer to ancient medieval city of Bhaktapur.

**Bhaktapur:** Perched on a hill at an altitude of 1,401 m, Bhaktapur or Bhadgaon, literally the 'City of Devotees' is a major tourist destination that takes visitors back in time. Bhaktapur lies 12 km east of Kathmandu city on the Arniko Highway that leads to the Chinese border. Bhaktapur is still untouched by rapid urbanization and has managed to retain its brick paved roads, charming red brick houses and a way of life that goes back to medieval times. This ancient city is also famous for pottery and woodcarving amply displayed on the squares and windows respectively. The extraordinary Bhaktapur Durbar Square is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and its monuments reflect the glory days of the Malla Dynasty.

Among the three durbar squares, the Bhaktapur Durbar Square is by far the most elegant with its large open space facing south. The extraordinary Durbar Square with its extraordinary monuments reflects the glory days of the Malla dynasty when art and architecture thrived in the three cities of the valley.

Walking around pottery square and witnessing the craftsmanship of locals creating clay pots from clay soil represents treasured legacy that still survives in the ancient city of Bhaktapur.

*Overnight at Hotels [B/-/-]*

### **Day 3: Ride Kathmandu to Syabrubesi (2135m/117kms/4hrs)**

Negotiate traffic out of the Kathmandu city to the Ringroad cross section - Balaju. From here, follow the Nagarjun highway to Kakani with the winding and narrow forested road. We will have a short break here to see the beautiful mountain views.

From here it is a steep winding descent till **Trishuli** but the scenery is fantastic. Deep forested areas, with clear flowing streams and waterfalls provide visitors of what Nepal is all about.

Trishuli - The beauty of the area is not easily forgotten. The rolling hills, the trishuli river, ethnic villages, suspension bridges all make it a very interesting ride.



Here we stop for the lunch.

After lunch head north and continue ride to Dhunche. From here steep descend on a winding and snaky trail till Syabrubesi.

Upon arrival at Syabrubesi check in to the lodge.

Rest of the day is free to relax or explore around the village.

#### **Overnight at the Lodge**



#### **Day 04: Ride Syabru besri to Kyirong Town (2700m/44kms/3hrs)**

After breakfast ride approx. 20 Km to Kyirong - Nepal / Tibet border, the last border town, complete Nepali Immigration formalities and cross the friendship bridge. Complete Chinese Immigration and met by guide and driver from Tibet. Proceed for China Custom clearance for the motorcycles and after completion, load up the gear on the waiting Landcruiser / Mini Truck and ride for another 24 kilometer to Kyirong town.

Kyirong, one of the frontier counties of Tibet Autonomous Region, lies in the southwest of Tibet and the southwest of Xigaze prefecture, covering 9,126 square kilometers with a population of 10 thousand. kyirong means in Tibetan happy village. kyirong Town is one of the important towns in Kyirong County, with a sea level of 2,700 meters. Pagba Monastery, Chagar Monastery and Qiangzhen Monastery are main monasteries of Kyirong and kyirong Jiangcun Nature Reserve is the famous beauty spot.

Up to 1960 one of the main trade routes between Nepal and Tibet passed through this region. Easily accessible from Nepal, it was used several times as an entrance gate for military actions from the site of Nepal against Tibet.

Upon arrival check in to the Hotel.

Rest of the day is free to relax or explore around the town to acclimatize.

#### **Overnight at the Hotel**

#### **Day 05: Ride to Kyirong Town to Saga (4640m/170kms/5hrs)**

After breakfast, ride through the beautiful Tibetan landscape. We enter a valley and the climb to a pass and then again descend into another valley one after another and each one more scenic than the next. Finally after about 3 ½ hours, we get a glimpse of the mighty Brahmaputra river or locally known as “Tsang Po” and ride along its banks for a while and take the bridge (newly constructed. In the earlier years, all passengers and vehicles had to be ferried across) to arrive at the hustle and bustle of the Saga town.

Upon arrival check in the guest house.

Rest of the day is free to relax or explore around the town.

#### **Overnight at the Hotel**

#### **Day 06: Ride Saga to Shakya (4300m/323kms/8hrs)**



Start the scenic ride from Saga to Sakya crossing over 5 passes, Heading to Sakya from an elevation of 4600 meters, the trail winds towards the South route. Now, the trail follows a route that brushes past Brahmaputra River. Further ahead, a river valley sprawls over and then traditional picturesque villages come into picture and Namring

being one of the biggest. This scenically rewarding ride provides plenty of opportunities for photography. On this long day's ride over the sandy and rocky landscape of Tibet, other sites like lake, nomads chasing hundreds of yaks and sheep, keep you busy.

Upon arrival at Lhatse continue further 26 km to Shakyia. Upon arrival at Shakyia check in to the Hotel.

#### Overnight at the Hotel



#### Day 07: Ride Shakyia to Gyantse (3950m/250kms/6hrs)

After breakfast visit Sakya Monastery, the centre of the Sakya order of Tibetan

Buddhism, was founded in 1073 by Konchok Gyalpo and during the rule of Sakyapas, the priest patron relationship between Tibet and China was established. Sakyapa rulers reigned over Tibet for nearly a hundred years from 13-14th century. Many of its priceless images, fresco statues, Holy Scriptures remaining today date back to the time of its founding.



Later head off for 115 kilometers flat stretch to Shigatse. The route today is scenic with only a small pass of 4300 m. Upon arrival on the outskirts of the Shigatse City, we stop for lunch at a local restaurant.

After lunch, continue on to Gyantse. The 90 kilometer journey seems like hours because of the 40 kmph speed limit imposed by the traffic police. There are regular check posts as well as Patrol cars to strictly implement the rule.

Gyantse is a pastoral town and still retains the charm of a traditional Tibetan town untouched by modern expansion. It made world headlines in 1904 when Colonel Young husband, who led British Expedition to Tibet, defeated the Tibetan army there. As a crossroad on the principle trade route to India, it used to be renowned for the excellence of its carpets. The compound, encircled by an impressive wall, once contained 19 monasteries, presided over by the still intact fortress perched atop a nearby mountain.

Upon arrival, check into the hotel.

Late PM: Sightseeing tour of **Gyantse Kumbum**, one of the most unique and magnificent buildings in Tibet consisting of 6 storeys complete with a Buddhists Hall and a prayer hall. It has 112 chapels and its walls are adorned with religious paintings. Built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it has withstood all battles and revolutions since. We also visit the **Pelkhor Chode Monastery** located near the Khumbum, it was founded in the 15th century. It has been remarkably well preserved and many of the statues and paintings inside it date back to the time of its founding.

#### Overnight at the Gyantse Hotel

#### Day 08: Ride Gyantse to Lhasa via Lake Yamdrok (3656m/287kms/7hrs)

Set out of Gyantse for Nagartse (100 kms) near **Lake Yamdrok** passing the Simi La (4200 m) and driving on a trail with fantastic views of the turquoise blue waters of the man made lake caused by the dam for the hydro project. Later we also cross the Karo La (5010 m) and the ride to Nagartse, a small village near the Yamdrok lake and an ideal place for a lunch stop.

Then ride along the picturesque trail of the colorful **Lake Yamdrok**, the Tibetan lifeline of the river Brahma Putra (Yarlung Tsangpo). **Yamdrok Tso or Turquoise Lake is a** lake of a glaring blue that radiates a near mystical charm. It is about 240 kms in circumference and is more like an Island sea. There are Yak herders around and the lake itself supports a population of scale less fish in its non-saline waters. It is about 124 km from Lhasa.





Later we ascend to **Kamba** La (4,794m) and have an opportunity to meet the Yak Herders with their finely decorated Yaks and Tibetan Mastiffs. A great photo opportunity and one can take pictures on a Yak or with a bunch of decorated Tibetan Mastiffs for a fee.

From here we descend to the main road head before embarking on the grand finale entrance to the Lhasa City.

**Lhasa** - capital of Tibet at an altitude of 3650m is situated on the north bank of the Kyichu River in the province of U (central Tibet). Two high craggy hills stand up in isolation from the valley floor. One, Red Hill, is topped by the Potala Palace and the other, Chockpori or Iron Hill, is crowned by a tall antenna. Lhasa in Tibetan means "Place of the Gods" and Potala Palace "the residence of the Dalai Lama (the god king), is the earthly representation of the celestial Palace of Avaloketswora, the Buddha of infinite compassion whose incarnation in the human form is believed to be the Dalai Lama. As Tibet's political, religious and cultural centre it is a city truly blessed by the gods, where life is unhurried, is people jovial and yet remaining staunchly independent.

Lhasa consists of two district parts consisting of different architecture, population and lifestyle. Old Lhasa, the Tibetan section, centers around the Jokhang Temple. Its streets are narrow, between white washed stone houses whose walls slope inward as they rise. Windows are framed in black trapezoids, with protruding fan shaped eaves above. Many houses have brightly painted woodwork. The Chinese section, was built in the last 30 years around the base of the Potala. It is characterized by straight, broad streets and utilitarian buildings that houses Chinese style department stores and all kinds of government houses.



In spite of its forced pace of modernization, Lhasa has not lost it's soul. It is a friendly city where a Tibetan will always return a smile.

### **Overnight at the Hotel**

#### **Day 09: Sightseeing Tour of Lhasa**

**AM:** Visit the Jokhang Temple : Situated in the heart of old Lhasa, it houses Tibet's most precious religious relic, a golden Shakyamuni Buddha which was brought as a gift by the Chinese Princess Wen Cheng on the occasion of her wedding to the Tibetan King, Songtsen Gampo.

**JOKHANG** dates back from the 7th century A.D. Legend says that Songtsen Gampo, who built the temple, threw his ring into the air, promising to build a temple where it landed. The ring fell into a lake and struck a rock where a white stupa miraculously appeared - an auspicious sign. Surrounding the Jokhang Temple is the bustling Barkhor market place which is the religious and social focus of Lhasa. This, the spiritual centre of Tibet, is also the heart of Lhasa.

**PM:** Visit Potala Palace - this architectural wonder - a spectacular edifice whose gold roofs soar high above the town and rise more than 300 meters above the valley floor and can be seen from all directions for miles around. The Potala Palace was built mainly during the Fifth Dalai Lama's reign in 1645-1693 and remained the centre of political and religious power for the Dalai Lamas until the 14th.

With over 1000 rooms, it contains the living quarters of the Dalai Lamas and their magnificent golden tombs after their death. Regents, tutors and other high lamas had apartments in the palace too. The Potala held the offices of government, a huge printing house and a seminary run by the elite order of monks who surrounded the God-King to train government officials. Hundreds of elaborately decorated chapels and shrines, halls and corridors contain thousands of gilded statues - Tibet's pantheon of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, saints and demons.

Today the Potala is a statue museum with 35 caretaker monks, but to thousands of Tibetan pilgrims, it remains a beloved shrine.

#### **Overnight at the Hotel**

#### **Day 10: Ride Lhasa to Shigatse (3950m/280kms/7hrs)**

After breakfast set out for Shigatse via the northern route. The route today is relatively straight forward but scenic at times when we ride along the Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra River).

Upon arrival at Shigatse check in to the guest house.

#### **PM: visit Tashilhunpo monastery.**



Overnight at the Hotel

#### **Day 11: Ride Shigatse to Shegar (4300m/245kms/6hrs)**

**AM:** After breakfast, proceed for the sightseeing tour of the Panchen Lama's Tashilhunpo Monastery founded in 1447 AD by Gendun Drup, the first Dalai Lama. It is the seat of the Panchen Lama who is second to the Dalai Lama in Tibetan Buddhist Hierarchy. The 5th Dalai Lama declared that his teacher, then the Abbot of Tashilhunpo, was a manifestation of the Buddha Amitabha and the Panchen Rinpoche. Tashilhunpo has one of the world's largest statues - a 9 storeyed gilded bronze statue of Maitriya, the future Buddha. Also visit the Flea Market of Shigatse and browse around this ancient market looking for souvenirs.

After the sightseeing tour, set out for the ride to Shegar (269 kms). Leave Shigatse and continue on the Friendship Highway to arrive at Lhatse in 3½ hours (156 kms). Then ascend to highest Gyatso La pass at 5228 m which is marked by an array of prayer flags and a gate. This is the highest point on this stretch of the ride. Descend a little and weather permitting; one can get a glimpse of Mt. Everest. Continue to descend and arrive at New Tingri/Shegar, a big bustling town in about 2 hours (113 kms).

Shegar is surrounded by mountains and is another town that lies in the shadow of a great fortress. Even in ruins it is majestic. Seeming to grow out of the craggy brown rock, its sinuous wall bristles with watchtowers like stegosaurus spines. Isolated in 1855 by marauding Nepalese in search of booty, the Gurkhas cut off the dzong's water supply and settled in for a long siege. Shegar proper has little to recommend except the highest post office in China.

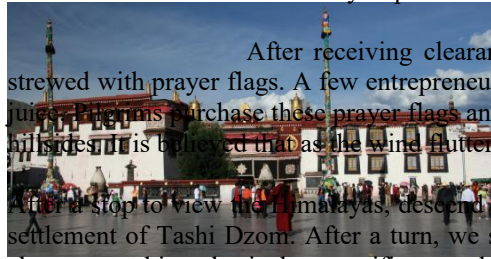
#### **Overnight at the Hotel**

#### **Day 12: Ride Shegar to Rongbuk and EBC excursion (5100m/112Kms/4hrs)**

From Shegar, set out for Rongbuk and arrive at the army check post where passports and permits are checked. After the completion of the formalities, ride for another 4 kilometers to arrive at a marker showing the diversion to the Everest Base Camp.



Enter 2 kms into the newly constructed gateway to arrive at another check post which is operated by the Quomolomgma National Park and is the gateway into the Quolomongma (Everest National Park). Here it is mandatory to present all the National Park entry permits for clients as well as the vehicles.



After receiving clearance, ascend on a zig zag trail to Gyawla Pass at (5200 m) which is strewn with prayer flags. A few entrepreneurs set up shop selling souvenirs, prayer flags and tea / cold drinks / can juices. Clients purchase these prayer flags and after writing the names of the family members stretch them along the hillside. It is believed that as the wind flutters the flags, their prayers reach heaven.

After a stop to view the Himalayas, descend once again zig zagging our way on 100 switchbacks all the way to the settlement of Tashi Dzom. After a turn, we suddenly arrive at Rongbuk and the Lodges. In the distance, towering above everything else is the magnificent and awe inspiring view of Mt. Everest – Mother of the Earth at 8848 m. Upon arrival, take a break for lunch at the Rongbuk Guest House.

As lunch is being prepared, a visit to the Rongbuk Monastery is quite an interesting and enjoyable one.

After lunch follow the dirt road south and the Dzakar Chu (river), now much reduced in volume, is on your right. Soon the valley broadens and the road leaves the river to continue its ascent on the other side, swerving to avoid a rockslide. At the base of the slide is chorten; at its top are the ruins of the Samdrupo Nunnery (a small chapel has been rebuilt). Here is now situated the tented settlement of Dza Rongphu which was relocated from the Everest Base Camp, which lies just beyond some moraine hills a mere 4 kilometers away.



**(Note: The new rules prohibit vehicles from going beyond Dza Rongphu area. Clients need to travel by the Government coach and it costs Yuan 50.00 for a round trip Ride).**

So board the coach for the 4 kilometer Ride to the Everest Base Camp area. (Look out for the blue sheep that inhabit the area but blend quite well in the rocky landscape). Upon arrival at the lonely bus stop by the marker stating that it is the Quomolomgma Base Camp at 5200 m. To go further from here requires an additional permit to either Advance Base Camp or a climbing permit for Mt. Everest.

After getting off the bus, ascend steeply to a small ridge with prayer flags which provides an unobstructed view of Mt. Everest and the open Tibetan plateau leading to the Camp II area. During peak climbing season, one can see scattered tented expedition camps below.

After being one with the mountain, descend to the Bus Park and board the bus for the ride back to Dza Rongphu. Here we can spend some time at the tented city for a cup of tea/ noodle soup or shop for souvenirs or even send a post card from the mobile post office which is considered to be the highest post office in the world at 5200m.

Later get geared up and then set off for Rongbuk and check into the Rongbuk Monastery Guest House.

#### **Overnight at the Rongbuk Monastery Guest House**

#### **Day 13: Ride Rongbuk to Thingri (4348m/78kms/3hrs)**

After breakfast, set out for excursion to EBC at 5200m. Later, ride out to Thingri by retracing the route from Everest Base camp till the 26 kilometer marker. Leave the main road and take the small dirt track on the left leading to the river. Cross the bridge and head off with a steady climb through scattered Tibetan settlements. The road passes directly through the village and then descends steeply. On the other side of the ridge, we then start the climb through valleys with scenic views of the Tibetan landscape and fast flowing river to the highest plateau of the world. This area is still dry and dusty and has not been paved yet and allows for some entertaining off road riding.

Dusty and weary we arrive at the high Tibetan plateau with good views of Cho Oyu (8201 m) and enter the settlement of Thingri in about 3 hours by covering a distance of 70 kilometers. Thingri used to be an important trading post where Sherpas from Nepal exchanged rice, grain and iron for Tibetan wool, livestock and salt. It gives

its name to the broad upland basin more than 4,500 meters high that is known as the Thingri plain. Shallow, fast-flowing rivers of melted snow water make its grassy meadowland ideal for grazing by livestock.

Upon arrival check in to the guest house. Rest of the day is free to relax or explore around the town.

#### **Overnight at the guest house**

#### **Day 14: Ride Thingri to Kyirong via Paikut Tso (2700m/286kms/7hrs)**

From Thingri we Ride on the highest plateau of the world with typical view of the Tibetan landscape offering sheer feeling of standing on the roof of the world. Cross the Lalung La (5,200m) and Thong La (5050 m) from where, weather permitting, here is a breathtaking panorama of beautiful Himalayan ranges including Mt. Everest (8,848m) but is dwarfed by the vastness of the Tibetan plateau.

The road passes through the desolate plain of Digur Tang with its enormous sand dunes and the snowcapped peaks of Shishapangma (8012m.) and Langtang (7232m.) in close proximity to the south. Leaving the Bum- Chu basin we descend towards Pelkhu Tso (4600m.) a stunningly beautiful lake into which the glacial streams of Da-Chu and Lha-Chu drain.

After spending some time at lake continue ride to Kyirong Xian. From here continue ride towards Kyirong Town (approx. 70 Km).



Upon arrival check in to the Hotel.

Rest of the day is free to relax or explore around the town.

#### **Overnight at the Hotel**

#### **Day 15: Ride Kyirong Town to Kathmandu (1370m/180kms/hrs)**

After breakfast, ride down 24kms to the border of Nepal and Tibet. Here the porters will transfer the luggage to the Nepal side and we bid farewell to our Guide and driver from Tibet. Complete Chinese Immigration and then cross the small makeshift bridge and enter Rasuwa gadhi, Nepal.

Met by representatives from Nepal to assist and complete Nepal Customs and Immigration.



Rasuwa is rich in natural resources. Langtang mountain range stands to the north of Rasuwa. The northern parts of the area largely fall within the boundaries of Langtang National Park. Gosainkunda Lake, Ganja La Pass, and Tamang village in Bridim are the major highlights of Rasuwa for tourism. The Goshainkunda Lake, also known as "Frozen Lake", one of the most beautiful mountain lakes lies in the Langtang region. There are about 108 *kundas* (lakes) in this area. Saraswati Kund, Bhairab Kund, Surya Kund and Gosaikund are most important ones. Langtang valley is another attraction in Rasuwa which is aptly called the valley of glaciers; mountains rise soaring toward the sky. The valley offers pine forest, swift mountain streams, rugged rock and snow-

descend along the winding road, we will ride along the edge of the Langtang national park which will fall on your left. Most of the ride today will be slow and steady as this section is the major entry for

goods to Kathmandu from China. We will come across big trucks and the road is just big enough for it. So giving way and waiting turns at corners and narrow stretches is time consuming.

Upon arrival, check into the hotel.

#### **Overnight at Kathmandu**

\*\*\*END OF

ARRANGEMENTS\*\*\*

#### **Enkelrum :**

**5 350:-**

**Resans pris:**

**79 000:-**

**Passagerare:**

**65 000:-**





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