



Epic Dreams

30 Days

Fully Inclusive from the UK

This is an exciting tour to bring out the adventurer in you. The tour begins in Sichuan Province visiting Chengdu and Leshan in China, before exploring the mystical land of Tibet. Then journey to the spectacular Mount Everest Base Camp before arriving in the fascinating land of Nepal.

This tour spends 7 days above 3,000m with a maximum altitude of 5,200m.

Fully Inclusive price includes:

- International flights and current taxes
- Domestic transportation
- Accommodation
- All meals (excluding drinks)
- Touring with Guides and entrance fees
- Visa fees for UK passport holders

Welcome to Wendy Wu Tours

China continues to amaze, fascinate and thrill our passengers, many of whom have travelled to one country in Asia with us, then another, year after year. We urge you to keep in mind all the rewards, as well as challenges of travelling in a country with a history, culture and attitude so unlike your own.

A typical day's sightseeing may include the bustle and noise of a city street, sights and smells of a local market and interacting with the locals. Travelling in China requires patience and potential delays are to be expected due to standards of service. There is a low level of English spoken throughout China, so your local guides or National Escort will be indispensable during your trip.

Almost everything will be different to what you may be used to. We have found that our passengers who embark with a sense of humour and adventure, who accept that things do not always go to plan, are those who find their experience most rewarding. It is essential that all passengers recognize the demands of factors such as basic facilities and cultural differences they may encounter in some areas.

Book now on **0844 499 3899** visit **www.wendywutours.co.uk** or see your preferred travel agent.

Your Tour Dossier



This document is designed to be read in conjunction with the other pre-departure information provided by Wendy Wu Tours including the tour itinerary as described in our brochure and/or website. It aims to provide a straightforward description of the physical activities involved in sightseeing or travelling during the tour.

If there are any particular challenges, from the length of time spent on your feet, the length of drives and flights, to the standard of remote accommodation; they will be explained here.

All passengers must read this document to ensure the itinerary is suitable for their interests and physical capabilities. This is not your final itinerary and therefore does not mention all the sites visited.

Epic Dreams - Active Paced Tour

These tours can involve long periods of sightseeing on foot, climbing of stairs and getting on and off boats, and are physically more demanding. Some easy trekking may be involved, as well as travel to remote areas and areas of high altitude, reaching up to 5,000m. These tours could involve long days of driving and overnight train journeys. These programmes require a good level of fitness.

Accommodation on these tours may be in basic hotels or camps. These programmes require a good level of fitness. Of course, our local guides always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance, but they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. The more difficult aspects of this itinerary involve areas of high altitude and very long driving distances. The section below also has estimates of driving times, distances and the altitude reached each day.

NB Please note that times and distances listed in the tour dossier are approximate.

Days 1-2: UK/Beijing

On day 2, you will be met at Beijing International Airport in the arrivals 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 approx. 1hr to your hotel

Day 3: Beijing/Urumqi.

Transfer to the airport for an afternoon flight to Urumqi (flight duration is 4.5hrs). Transfer approx. 40mins to your hotel and check-in overnight. Although the time zone officially remains the same as Beijing time, people and businesses in Xinjiang Province run on an unofficial time two hours behind. This means shops and banks will be open from 10am-7pm or later - you may be eating dinner at 9pm. This evening a tour introduction will be held in the hotel. There will not be food or drinks served at this meeting; it is simply a chance for your group to meet and learn more about travelling in China.

1 night at 3 star hotel / Limited western dishes for breakfast

Day 4: Urumqi/Kashgar

There will be easy sightseeing this morning before transferring to the airport for an afternoon flight to Kashgar (flight duration 1hr and 45mins). Transfer approx. 10mins to hotel and check-in for 4 nights.

4 nights at 3 star hotel / Limited western dishes for breakfast / Kashgar altitude 1,354m

Days 5-6: Kashgar/Lake Karakul day trip

Temperature can drop dramatically at the lake so take a jumper and windproof jacket today. This is a full day trip, starting with approx. 3-4hrs drive south-west along the Karakoram Highway, up into the Pamir Range. The ground surface is very uneven here, and it can get quite windy. There is only one alternative for lunch, a simple canteen-style restaurant which can get noisy and crowded but the food is good. Enjoy approx. 2-3hrs of sightseeing on foot. The return drive to Kashgar takes approx. 2.5hrs.

Maximum altitude today 3,550m

Day 7: Kashgar

Leisurely sightseeing today, approx. 3hrs on foot. On the next day when at the animal market, please pay attention to the activities going on around you. Men test riding their ponies

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for example, are known to collide with oblivious bystanders. Beware of pickpockets within and around the Bazaar.

Day 8: Kashgar/Yecheng

Today's drive is approx. 4hrs (260kms). Drive for approx. 1hr (70km) south along Route 315 on a sealed but very bumpy road to Yengisar. Easy sightseeing in Yengisar at knife factory. Drive a further approx. 1.5hrs (125 km) to Yarkand for lunch. This afternoon, drive approx. 1hr (70kms) to the larger town of Yecheng to stay overnight. In clear weather, K2 is visible from Yecheng; 270km away to the south west, across the Pakistan border. At Yecheng Route 315 ends and the highest highway in the world, Route 219, begins. Your group's Tibetan Local Guide will join you from Yecheng.

1 night at 3 star hotel / Limited western breakfast / Maximum altitude 1380m/ Yecheng (sleep) altitude 1300m

Day 9: Yecheng/Mazha

Today's drive is approx. 8hrs (241km). From Yecheng you will be travelling along the Xinjiang-Tibet Highway, Route 219, the highest road in the world. This morning you will change to 4WD vehicles to travel to Lhasa. Additional drivers will join you; however the National Escort will remain with you. For the next two weeks, you will travel across the Aksai Chin and Tibetan plateaus at a significant altitude. This region is largely uninhabited and lacking in any sort of tourist facilities, yet offers some of the world's most incredible scenery. Easy sightseeing this morning in Yecheng in the market area around Jama Masjid (Friday Mosque), which is only open on Fridays. From Yecheng there is a 90km stretch of good sealed road, then a dirt road for the next 45km. The road is sealed again as it ascends over the Kudi pass (our first mountain pass) at 3,193m and then passes through village of Kudi. The road then ascends again to cross the Chiragsaldi Pass at 4883m and descends into the Aksai Chin Plateau to the small settlement of Mazha. It is very windy in Mazha.

1 night in basic rooms near Mazha / no hot water, showers or western breakfast dishes / Maximum altitude 4883m/Mazha (sleep) altitude 3728m

Be prepared for sudden changes in weather – bring clothing for very hot and very cold temperatures each day, as well as sunscreen, hat, lozenges, water and a scarf to protect your face against the dusty wind.

Day 10: Mazha/Hongliutan

Today's drive is approx. 6hrs (246km). It will be very steep and windy. The first part of the drive ascends sharply to the Haicha pass (*Xaidulla La*) at 4,930m and then enters the Karakax He Valley. Continue over the Koshbel la pass at 4290m and on to Hongliutan and nearby town of Tianshuihai.

1 night in basic rooms near Hongliutan / no hot water, showers or western breakfast dishes / Maximum altitude 4930m / Hongliutan (sleep) altitude 4900m

Day 11: Hongliutan/Duoma

Today's drive is approx. 6hrs (350km). From Duoma to Old Tingri is the dustiest section of driving along the route. This is also a significant gain in altitude so take it easy and drink lots of fluids. From Hongliutan the road is badly corrugated and there has been extensive roadwork recently, which will probably still be going on. The road climbs over the Satsum pass at 5280m and then continues through Sumxi, which marks the Xinjiang/Tibetan province border. The second pass at Qienshan la is the highest you will cross, at nearly 5400m altitude, before descending on a rough road through a dry valley to Duoma.

1 night in local guesthouse at Duoma; dormitory style rooms / outside toilet, no showers, limited electricity, no western breakfast dishes / Maximum altitude 5390m / Duoma (sleep) altitude 4396m

Day 12: Duoma/Shiquanhe (Ali)

Today's drive is approx. 7hrs (230km). The road from Duoma descends into a scenic green valley with lots of antelope, this section of road is corrugated and rough, then passes by the Bangum (Niak Tso) Lake at 4,200m. Continue driving through Chinese settled town of Rutok Xian then ascend to cross the Lamela pass at 4763m and then descend to Shiquanhe. This is the capital of Ali County and marks the end of the Aksai Chin plateau. There are many shops here to stock up on batteries or snacks, etc.

1 night at 2 star hotel; no hot showers or western breakfast available / Maximum altitude 4763m/Shiquanhe (sleep) altitude 4245m

Day 13: Shiquanhe/Zanda

Today's drive is approx. 7-8hrs (215km). Leaving Shiquanhe this morning you will be able to enjoy a stretch of sealed road until turning off Route 219, when road ascends up to the Gor pass at 5135m, winding steeply past small villages. This section is narrow and steep, ascending to cross another high pass at Namru at 4900m then another at Ayi la at 5165m. From the summit you will be able to see Mt. Kamet for the first time. The road descends into a narrow ravine, climbs again to a plateau, where you can see Zanda in the distance. Continue driving to the Sutlej Dam, cross the river then drive back along the river to Zanda.

2 nights at a local guesthouse, dormitory style rooms / separate toilet, limited electricity and no western breakfast dishes / there are public hot showers available for additional cost / Maximum altitude 5165m / Zanda altitude 4500m

Day 14: Zanda

This morning, visit the ancient ruins at Tsaparang, located approx. 30mins drive from Zanda. Return to town for lunch and then visit Tholing Monastery (within Zanda town) this afternoon. Sightseeing involves steep climbing and walking over uneven ground.

Day 15: Zanda/Mt. Kailash

Total driving is approx. 6-7hrs (240km). The first drive involves several river crossings and two high passes over 5,000m, from which you will see incredible views of the Himalaya, and then re-join the Route 219 Highway. Continue driving along the highway and a dirt road to the small town of Taqing, which we will use as a base to explore Mt Kailash and Lake Manasarovar over the next 2 days. From Taqing you will have views of Mt Kailash to north, Mt Nemi Nani to south, which sits on the Tibet/Nepali border and is one of the highest mountains inside Tibet.

2 nights at local guesthouse in Taqing, twin or dormitory style rooms / separate toilet, limited electricity and no western breakfast dishes, there are public hot showers for additional cost / Maximum altitude 5040m/Taqing altitude 4600m.

Day 16: Mt. Kailash

Drive approx. 30mins on a dirt road to the start of the *kora* trail of Mt. Kailash. You will be given free time approx. 3hrs to walk along the trail; an opportunity to see travellers and devoted pilgrims alike embarking on their *kora* around the holy mountain. Return to the guesthouse in Taqing for a late lunch.

Maximum altitude 4810m.

Day 17: Lake Manasarova /Paryang

Total driving is approx. 7hrs (270km). There are often mosquitos at the lake, so bring your repellent today. Drive approx. 1hr along a dirt road to re-join Route 219 briefly, and then turn south towards Lake Manasarova. Spend approx. 1hr here. From here, drive back to Route 219 and continue (this section has road works and potholes) until the road climbs to cross the Houru pass at 4875m. On the descent, cross the Yarlung River (upper Brahmaputra), continue driving towards Paryang, passing many Tibetan nomad tents and their herd animals towards the end.

1 night at local guesthouse, twin or dormitory style rooms / separate toilet, limited electricity and no western breakfast dishes / Maximum altitude 4875m

Day 18: Paryang/Saga

Total driving is approx. 7hrs (240km). The road condition today is variable the whole way, from rough dirt to sealed road. Ascend to cross the Song la pass at 4698m, drive through grasslands and see the Yarlung River (upper Brahmaputra) before reaching the town of Old Zhongba. You have the opportunity to visit the old monastery (red hat Buddhism) here if open. From Old Zhongba, the road ascends to cross the Sanda la pass at 4827m with views of Annapurna Range in Nepal. It then winds alongside the Yarlung River and

ascends to cross the Niugu la pass at 4775m before a final descent to Saga.

1 night at 2 star hotel, twin rooms / private toilet, electricity ok, hot showers, no western breakfast dishes / Maximum altitude 4827m / Saga altitude 4455m

Day 19: Saga/Old Tingri

Total driving is approx. 9hrs (350km). Today, start your journey to the roof of the world to see the magnificent Everest region. This region is very rocky and sandy, there is approx. 9hrs driving today along a minor road south of the highway. Although the road is poor you will be able to see incredible views of the varied terrain and nomadic tents, barley fields and ruined monasteries (*dzongs*). After turning off Route 219 the road towards Old Tingri crosses the Gyubuk la pass at 4745m, passes the Pega Sor Lake and continues across a wide floodplain to re-join the Friendship Hwy. Just before you reach Old Tingri you will get your first views of Everest. This is a very small town with not much to explore.

1 night at local guesthouse, twin or dormitory style rooms / separate toilet, hot showers available, electricity ok, no western breakfast dishes / Maximum altitude 4745m/Old Tingri altitude 4390ms

Day 20: Old Tingri/Mt. Everest

Total driving today is 160km. From Old Tingri it is a short drive to the entrance of the Qongalongma Reserve. Continue driving approx. 2hrs on dirt track and cross several streams (this section can get muddy and cause delays). Re-join main road and follow it to the Rhongpu Monastery – a clutter of buildings home to monks and summiteers alike. This simple hotel, with unrivalled views of the peak of the world is your accommodation tonight. This afternoon, take an expedition to Base Camp only 8km across the valley. You will have plenty of time to explore Base Camp at 5200m and see the nearby Rhongpu Glacier. Base Camp itself is dry and barren but the views of the north face of Everest more than compensate. Return to Rhongpu Monastery before dark.

1 night at local guesthouse or 2star hotel, twin or triple rooms / private toilet, no hot showers, meals are limited with only fried rice or noodles for all meals, electricity ok / Maximum altitude 5200m/Rhongpu Monastery 5000m.

Day 21: Mt. Everest/New Tingri

Total driving is approx. 3hrs (110km). It is a very early rise this morning to watch the sun rise from the roof. After breakfast there is easy sightseeing around the Rhongpu Monastery then depart for New Tingri. The corrugated and rough road heads north and ascends to cross the Pang pass at 5150m, which involves many hairpin turns. Re-join the sealed Friendship Hwy and drive to New Tingri.

1 night at 3 star hotel, limited western breakfast dishes / Maximum altitude 5200m/New Tingri (sleep) altitude 4340m

Day 22: New Tingri/ Shigatse

Total driving is approx. 5-6hrs (250km). Drive north through a valley then ascend to cross the Gytso la pass at 5220m. After reaching the town of Lhatse, ascend to cross the Tso la pass at 4500m and continue to Shigatse - a major town which has been developed by the Central Government to become the second largest city in Tibet. However, it still retains an interesting local market and one of the largest functioning monasteries in Tibet.

2 nights at 3 star hotel, limited western breakfast dishes / Maximum altitude 5220m/Shigatse (sleep) altitude 3900m

Day 23: Shigatse

Sightseeing at Tashilhunpo Monastery involves walking over steep uneven ground inside the monastery.

Day 24: Shigatse/Gyantse

Total driving is approx. 2hrs (90km). Drive along a sealed section of the highway to Gyantse. Visit Gyantse Kumbum inside the Pelchor Monastery and the Gyantse Fort. Sightseeing here involves approx. 2-3hrs on foot and some steep stairs – you should also bring a torch for the monastery as it is very dark inside.

1 night at 3 star hotel, limited western breakfast dishes / Maximum altitude 4000m/Gyantse (sleep) altitude 4000m

Day 25: Gyantse/Lhasa

Total driving is approx. 8hrs (260km). The direct road between Gyantse, Yamdrok Tso Lake and Lhasa, is under construction and closed at the moment so we need to return to the northern route, most probably via Shigatse. At the Lhasa River, turn south towards the Yamdrok Tso Lake (Turquoise), where the landscape changes dramatically. Ascend the Kamba la pass at 4780m to see views of lake sitting several hundred metres below. From Yamdrok Tso Lake, drive north to arrive in Lhasa in the evening. You will transfer from the 4WDs to a coach tomorrow morning.

3 nights at 3 star hotel; limited western breakfast dishes / Maximum altitude 4780m/ Lhasa (sleep) altitude 3650m

Days 26 - 27: Lhasa

Over next 2 days, visit the following sites: Barkhor Square and Jokhang Temple, Drepung Monastery, Sera Temple, Potala Palace, Norbulinka. Sightseeing at all of the monasteries and palaces involves the climbing of stairs and walking over uneven surfaces in dim light.

NB: The itinerary in Lhasa is subject to the allocation of tickets into the Potala Palace, as the number of visitors to the site is now limited to protect the Palace.

Day 28: Lhasa/Chengdu

Drive approx. 2hrs (95km) south to the airport. Fly to Chengdu (flight duration 2hrs) and transfer to the hotel. The Panda Reserve is located only 10km from the city centre. It is not guaranteed that you will be able to see the feeding of the younger pandas, as this only happens at the very start and

end of each day. Sightseeing here involves approx. 1.5hrs on foot.

1 night at 3 star hotel; limited western breakfast dishes / Maximum altitude 3650m / Chengdu (sleep) altitude 600m

Day 29: Chengdu - UK

Transfer from your hotel to Chengdu Airport for your flight to the UK. Depending on your chosen airline, some flights to the UK will arrive the same day, whereas others will arrive the following day.

Day 30: UK

Arrive home.

Land Only

If you are travelling on a land only basis, then you will need to make your own way to the starting hotel in Beijing on Day 2. On Day 29, you will checkout from your Chengdu hotel, and continue as per your own arrangements.

Please refer to the Wendy Wu Tours brochure and/or website for details on departure dates, prices, itineraries, inclusions and tour extensions available as well as full booking conditions.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Before You Leave

Itinerary Changes - The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. The schedules of the domestic airlines in China are subject to frequent changes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your Local Guide or National Escort will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Roads in China have generally been improved over recent years, but some road construction and/or weather conditions may still lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day to day itinerary as printed; however order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

- **Potala Palace in Lhasa:** In late 2006, the Tibetan Government imposed a new system of allocating entrance tickets to the Potala Palace. To limit the number of tourists inside at any one time tickets must be bought in advance and are valid for a set time of day. Our local office will buy the tickets for our customers, so you do not have to queue for them. Please note that this may affect the order of sightseeing for the rest of Lhasa too.

Visas - A visa is required for entry into China and Nepal. Standard visa processing service is included in your tour cost. We will require your passport, completed visa application form for China and Nepal, and 2 passport photos, taken within the last 6 months, to process your visa. We will require all this information 8 weeks prior to departure. As per our standard visa processing service, we will have your passport for at least 4 weeks. In rare cases you may be required to provide further information or documentation to the Chinese or Nepalese embassy and or be required to attend an interview at the embassy in London. If this is the case we will notify you as soon as possible.

A Tibetan permit is required for entry to Tibet. Our office in China requires a copy of the Chinese visa and photo page of your passport to obtain the Tibetan permit. If our office is processing your visa we will pass these along. If you are processing your own visa you will need to provide us with this documentation.

Please note that if you intend to arrive more than 24 hours before your tour commences or intend to stay in China after your tour has ended and you are NOT staying in a hotel you will need to register with the local Public Security Bureau. If you are staying in a hotel, registration is done on your behalf as part of the check-in process.

Vaccinations and Your Health - We recommend that you contact either your GP or a travel doctor for advice on vaccinations and travel health. www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk is a comprehensive website that you may also find useful.

Climate - Please refer to our website for detailed temperature charts.

Insurance - It is a condition of booking with us that you take out suitable travel insurance. You must provide us with the name of your insurers and their 24 hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

What to Expect on Tour

Development - Although China is developing quickly, it still lacks international standards of civil infrastructure and therefore tourist facilities. For example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade; concepts of personal responsibility are different to those in the UK. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in the UK. However, all of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an

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enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense as well as refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort/Local Guides.

Group Size – All our group tours are guaranteed to run subject to a minimum number of 8 travellers and a National Escort will accompany each group of over 10. The maximum group size varies depending on the tour, but is usually no more than 28 passengers.

Accommodation - 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 the UK and China. 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.

Accommodation in remote areas - Between Yecheng (Day 9) to Shigatse (Day 22), we will be driving through an extremely remote area, with villages, nomadic settlements, truck stops, army bases, small towns and very few 2 or 3 star hotels. To enable us to complete this amazing overland journey we will stay in some very basic accommodation, which is nonetheless the best available in the area.

The itinerary indicates the type of accommodation standard expected for each day. Please keep in mind that this is an indication only. Due to the remote location, the guides actually need to make arrangements in person and will do this as they drive the 4WD vehicles from Lhasa before meeting your group in Yecheng.

Here is an outline of the three types of accommodation expected for this tour:

“3 star hotel” - These places will have normal 3 star facilities including twin rooms with private western bathrooms, laundry service. Electricity is sufficient for hot showers and recharging batteries/electric devices, but it may not be available 24 hours.

“Local guesthouse” - These provide basic but comfortable accommodation and are usually run by families. Most guesthouses have generator or town supplied electricity for a restricted amount of time i.e. usually a few hours in the morning and evenings. Toilet and shower facilities may be shared. Whenever there is limited electricity supply, this will mean limited hot water supply also. If you are not able to shower, you can request a large basin of hot water from guesthouse staff for a ‘bird bath’ wash. There are sometimes bathhouses too which you can enjoy for a small extra cost. If you need to do laundry, you can request a large basin of hot water from guesthouse staff for this purpose too. Some guesthouses have dormitory style rooms, with both male and female group members sharing if necessary.

“Basic rooms” - Outside of the towns, the only accommodation available are the local motels built along Route 219, usually located near the army bases. These were built for the truck drivers, soldiers on break and other travellers along the highway and are very basic dormitory rooms. The rooms sleep up to 8 group members with both male and female group members sharing if necessary. These rooms usually have generator or town supplied electricity for a restricted amount of time i.e. usually a few hours in the morning and evenings. Toilet facilities will be basic (squat toilets without doors or partitions) and shared; there may not be any hot water or shower facilities available. Please keep in mind that these people come from some of the poorest and most undeveloped areas in the world, so facilities are adequate for them. As such, if you expect a tiled, disinfected bathroom you will be disappointed.

It is not essential to bring a sleeping bag; bed linen is provided at each type of accommodation and is adequate for the night temperatures. However, bringing a “sleep sheet” insert to use under the guesthouse’s linen is a very good idea. If you already have a compact sleeping bag, you may also like to bring this.

Electricity - When staying at either ‘local guesthouses’ or ‘basic rooms’ consider that most buildings will only have a few hours of electricity each day, from either the town’s supply or a diesel generator. The supply of electricity can be unreliable and the voltage is often unsteady and not advised for charging. We recommend that you rely on electrical devices (cameras, shavers, etc.) with replaceable batteries. You will be able to recharge batteries/electrical devices at most place, but not all. You need to bring a backup battery just in case. Shops and markets in this region will not stock reliable or genuine batteries, so it is better to bring batteries from the UK. We recommend you also bring a torch, as electricity is usually turned off during the night.

Altitude - AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness) occurs in some people when they travel to altitudes over 3,000m. Mild symptoms of AMS include dizziness, fatigue, nausea or loss of appetite, breathlessness or headache. These usually develop over the first 36 hours at altitude and not immediately on arrival. AMS symptoms are experienced by people of varying ages and levels of

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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.

It is recommended to drink more (water, non-alcoholic and non-caffeinated drinks) and avoid exertion after arriving over 3,000m. We have also designed our itineraries to ensure that you will be staying overnight at least 100m below the maximum elevation reached during that day. This is one of the most effective methods of acclimatising to increasing altitude. This itinerary reaches an altitude of 4883m on Day 8 when we leave Yecheng. We will spend a period of 19 days above 3,000m from Day 8 to 26, driving over several passes that are above 4,500m and sleeping above 3,000m.

Making sure you are well hydrated (by drinking lots of water and refraining from alcohol/caffeine) before and during the tour, as well as exercising to improve your aerobic fitness before you leave, are generally considered to be excellent ways to prevent or alleviate the severity of mild AMS. If you smoke, have an existing respiratory, vascular or coronary condition, we recommend checking with your Doctor before undertaking this tour. Take this Tour Dossier with you to the appointment to explain the altitude at which you will be travelling.

Drinking Water - Bottled drinking water is available to buy all over the place and you should get into the habit of buying a large bottle or two every day (it is incredibly cheap at approx. 2RMB per bottle). All drinks, including water are at your own cost.

Dogs in Tibet - Dogs, once raised as guard dogs by nomadic Tibetans, can be a nuisance in the streets of cities and small towns nowadays. They are treated quite differently to how we would treat our domestic pets and tend to fight on the streets, especially at night. It is advisable to keep your distance from any dogs and bring some earplugs so you're not disturbed during the night.

Luggage - Each passenger is limited to two (2) pieces of luggage:

Main luggage – with limited space during the 4WD section of this trip, this must be small, with a maximum weight of 20kg. You may need to carry your own luggage in remote places. On previous trips, our customers have found either a plastic, hard shell case OR a soft case (such as a backpack or canvas bag) suitable for the rigorous driving and dust of this route. If you are using a soft suitcase, you will need to protect the contents with a waterproof cover, which are available at camping and adventure stores, or simply wrap the contents in plastic bags before packing them. You might also consider bringing a soft bag that fits inside your main luggage, which you can use as an overnight bag – this way you will not need to take your main luggage inside every night during the overland journey. NB: Do not leave *any* valuables in the vehicle.

'Daypack' - a smaller bag to carry with you during the day, holding all the items you need to access during the day – both while driving and sightseeing. E.g. drinking water, hat, sunscreen, lozenges, toilet paper, insect repellent, camera and spare batteries, jacket etc.

Meals - This itinerary travels through a region of China where few western tourists visit. Hence, there are far less restaurants along the road, and hotels and restaurants are unaccustomed to catering for western travellers. In Xinjiang Province (from Urumqi onwards), you will find the food is different to what is known as 'Chinese food'. Geography and climate means that there are few vegetables and wheat is grown rather than rice, therefore noodles and flat bread feature heavily. The most common dishes are mutton kebabs with *naan* (Hui flat bread) or noodle soups with mutton. Vegetarians may find the lack of variety difficult and should consider carefully the suitability of this itinerary.

In Tibetan areas, produce is limited, usually barley, wheat, yak meat and milk are produced locally and anything else must be trucked in from other parts of China. Local dishes include simple vegetable noodle soups (*thugpa*) or dumplings called *momo*.

In Sichuan Province, the cuisine (known as *Szechwan* in the West) is distinguished by its use of ginger, chilli and the 'Sichuan peppercorn' called *fagara*. Each meal will usually have some mild dishes for those who don't enjoy eating hot or spicy food, but please bear in mind that the majority of local specialty dishes will be hot. If your group finds there are not any mild dishes served, please inform your National Escort/Local Guide so that they may resolve the problem for the next meal.

Simple, new restaurants are becoming more common but even in the larger towns the staff may not be used to serving groups, and this can obviously mean that you may need to wait a while to be served. In remote areas lunch will often be prepared as 'picnic style', prepared by the hotel that morning.

There will be few if any western dishes for breakfast. Chinese and Tibetan breakfast dishes include cold vegetable/ pickle dishes, bean curd noodles, soups, *congee* (rice porridge), steamed buns with pork or sweet red bean paste and green tea. You may also be served fruit, a fried egg, or toast – although the bread tends to be very sweet and unlike the bread we have in the UK. Black tea and coffee but can usually be requested. Fresh milk is not generally available.

In Xinjiang province, the Muslim culture also means that some restaurants do not serve alcohol and it is inappropriate to bring your own. In this case, please consider that you can enjoy a beer etc. later in your hotel room or bar.

Please note that long driving distances or road conditions may delay/alter your mealtime.

You might like to bring some food supplies and snacks with you, from either the UK, or the small supermarkets in Guangzhou or Urumqi. These might include tea/coffee bags, drinking chocolate, instant soups or noodles, biscuits, energy bars, dried meat, milk powder sachets and anything else you cannot live without. There are also small shops and market stalls along the way where you can buy a surprising amount of snacks such as instant noodles and muesli bars. Make sure anything you buy is safe and clean – dried fruit, nuts or unwashed fruit, etc. are not a good idea.

Within monasteries - The interior of all Tibetan monasteries is quite dark and usually lit by yak butter candles. Please remember to walk slowly and carefully, let your eyes adjust to the darkness and watch your step. Always walk in a clockwise direction along pilgrim circuits, around shrines, alters, temples and prayer wheels. If you are unsure of suitable and respectful behaviour within such places, please ask your local guide's advice.

Finding your way - Many of the places in this region have several different names – so you may find it confusing when researching the route or looking at a map. None of these are incorrect as such; there are many languages and cultures in this region. For example, one town may have four different names used in the Chinese, Uyghur, Tibetan and Indian languages. The Tibetan name is frequently spelt phonetically when translated by English speakers, so 'x' becomes 'sh'. The result could be six different names for one place.

Here is a list of places along the Epic Dreams route and their alternatives:

- Urumqi – Wulumuqi - Wushi
- Kashgar – Kashi
- Yecheng – Kargilik
- Yarkand – Shache
- Mazar – Mazha
- Hongliutan – Dahongliutan
- Duoma – Domar
- Zanda - Zhada
- Guge Kingdom - Tholing and Tsaparang
- Taqing – Darchen
- Mt. Kailash - Kang Rinpoche - Kailas –Gangdise
- Shrine - Chorten – Stupa
- Lake Manasarovar - Map Yum Tso -Mapam Yunco
- Mt. Everest – Qomolangma
- New Tingri - Shegar – Xegar
- Old Tingri - Dingri - West Tingri -Gang'ga
- Shigatse - Xigaze
- Jyantse – Gyantse
- Tashilhunpo - Zhanshilunbu Si
- Yarlung Tsampo - Brahmaputra River
- Tibet – Xizang
- Fort – Dzong
- Monastery – Gumpa

Money - Banks and hotel exchange desks in Guangzhou, Urumqi, Lhasa and Chengdu will recognise and accept cash and/or travellers' cheques in Sterling. In other towns, the few bank branches are frequently closed, run out of money or staff just refuse to deal with currency they are unfamiliar with. Your Local Guide will recommend a place to exchange or withdraw enough money for the Yecheng to Lhasa section of the trip. Most customers would find that 2000RMB (equivalent to GBP £200) is more than enough. If you have strong shopping urges you may like to take more.

Tipping - As with most countries, tipping is a way of life in China. For our passengers' convenience we ask for a compulsory amount to be paid at the beginning of our group tours to cover tipping for guides, drivers, restaurant staff etc. Approximate tipping amounts can be found in our brochure and/or website; however exact tipping amounts will be stated in your final documentation pack.

Optional Extras - Our tours are planned to be as fully inclusive as possible. However, from time-to-time your National Escort or Local Guide may suggest optional tours/sightseeing in addition to the standard sightseeing planned for that city. Such options are at an additional cost, with prices ranging from 100-300 Yuan per person (payable in local currency). If you do not wish to take part in any optional extras, you will have the option of enjoying some free time at leisure or to return to the hotel.

After Your Booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form, help sheet, and a China travel guide. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approx. 2 weeks prior to departure, and will include a travel wallet, badge, lanyard, suggested packing list and a phrase book, along with your final itinerary and international etickets.

Last Updated June 2011