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13 days Essence of Tibetan Kham in Western Sichuan

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Chengdu
Rilong
Danba
Tagong
Ganzi
Dege
Pelyul
Litang
Daocheng
Yading
Xinduqiao
Chengdu

Explore the "Essence of Tibetan Kham in Western Sichuan," where pristine landscapes meet unique Tibetan Khampa traditions. Dive into a world of snow-capped peaks, lush valleys, and timeless Tibetan culture for an unforgettable journey.

Type

Private

Duration

13 days

Theme

Pilgrimage Tour, Culture and Heritage, Natural scenery

Trip code

WSKT-01

Price

From \$ 2,321 per person

Itinerary

Discover the unparalleled beauty and rich cultural tapestry of the Tibetan Kham region in Western Sichuan. The "Essence of Tibetan Kham in Western Sichuan" journey offers travelers a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in pristine landscapes, ancient monasteries, and the timeless traditions of Tibetan communities. Every twist and turn reveals a new vista, from snow-capped peaks to lush valleys, making it a must-visit for those seeking an authentic and unforgettable Tibetan experience.

Day 01 :

Chengdu / Rilong (Mt. Siguniang), about 4-5 hours' drive /210km, Visit Shuangqiao Valley



Start the tour today by driving to Rilong in the morning. The drive takes about 4 hours. Enjoy the beautiful alpine scenery as you enter the mountain ranges of Western Sichuan. Climb Mt. Balang (4,400M) and stop at the Maobiliang view platform for the first panorama of the four peaks of Mount Siguniang. Afterwards, head to Rilong [3,200 m (10,500 ft.)], which is the primary base for visiting Mount Siguniang. In the afternoon, visit the Shuangqiao valley, one of the three famous valleys of Mount Siguniang National Park. This valley offers views of over 10 snow mountains, each over 4,000m high, with peaks, trees, grasslands, streams, and water drops in their pristine natural state, untouched by man.

Day 02 :

Morning visit to Changping Valley / Drive to Danba Zhonglu Tibetan village, about 3 hours drive/110Km

Morning visit Changping Valley, another main valley of Mount Siguniang National Park to enjoy the spectacular scenery of Mount Siguniang. Situated at the foot of Mount Siguniang, Changping Valley is 3,600 m (11,811 ft.) above sea level. During your trek along the stream flowing through the valley, observe the four peaks of Mount Siguniang in the distance. As you traverse the mountain range, admire the steep ridges of the mountains, which draw travelers worldwide. Often referred to as the 'Alps of the Orient', a local Tibetan legend says that Mount Siguniang's four peaks represent four beautiful girls. As you cross the cypress pass of Changping Valley, discover ancient monasteries and learn about local Tibetan customs. In the afternoon, drive to Danba and explore the Gyarong Tibetan village. Delight in the beauty of Zhonglu Tibetan village and its surrounding vistas. If the weather allows, enjoy a stunning sunset.

Day 03 :

Danba/Tagong/Daofu (Dawu), about 6 hours drive/250km

In the morning, drive to the Suopo Tibetan village to marvel at Danba's magnificent watchtowers. Continue to Tagong, entering the area of the Khampa Tibetans. The route from Danba to Tagong offers stunning views including the holy Mount Yala, one of the most beautiful mountains in western Sichuan. Upon arriving at Tagong, visit the Tagong Gompa, a quintessential Tibetan monastery on the grasslands. The temple is adorned with statues, painted walls, Thangkas, and the scent of incense, complete with monks in carmine robes. Proceed to Daofu and stop en route to see the Huiyuan temple at Bamei, founded in the 18th century by the 7th Dalai Lama. The 11th Dalai Lama was born here. From the monastery, enjoy a panoramic view of the grassland meadows of Bamei. Admire the landscapes during your journey and visit the traditionally decorated Daofu Residences in Daofu, renowned for their intricate wood-carvings and paintings. Spend the night in Daofu county.

Day 04 :

Daofu/Luhuo (Drango)/Garze, about 3 hours drive/170km

In the morning, drive alongside the Xianshui River to reach Luhuo. Here, you'll visit the Drango Gompa (or Shouling Temple), a renowned monastery of the Gelugpa sect in Luhuo County. In the afternoon, continue to Garze, stopping to admire Kasar Lake on the way. Garze is a bustling market town situated in a scenic valley surrounded by snow-capped peaks. This area, with its villages, temples, and monasteries, is a paradise for photographers! Later, visit the 500-year-old Garze monastery, one of the most significant Gelugpa religious sites in the Kham region, home to over 1,500 monks. If time allows, explore a local antique market. Overnight in Garze.

Day 05 :

Garze/ Manigango /Derge (Dege), about 4-5 hours drive/190km

Embark on a journey from Garze to Derge County, a roughly 4-hour drive. Visit the Dargre Gompa en route to Manigango. Stroll around Lake Xinluhai (Yulong Cuo) to relish the natural beauty and ascend Mt. Que'er Shan (4,950 m). Enjoy the picturesque views of distant snow-capped peaks and the Dege Valley. Derge, located on the Sugchu River bank, a tributary of the Yangtze River, is considered the heart of Kham Tibet. Spend some free time strolling in Derge and prepare for the next day's adventure.

Day 06 :

Derge / Dzongsar Tibetan village, about a 3-hour drive/110km

In the morning, visit Dege Gomchen and Parkhang (Dege Printing house) in the Sugchu valley. Derge is renowned for its 18th-century monastery housing a printing press still using traditional wood block printing techniques. This press produces a majority of the Buddhist scripture books used across Tibet. At the printing press, observe artisans hand-carving scripture tablets from woodblocks. This monastery holds an astonishing 70% of Tibet's literary heritage. In the afternoon, drive to the Menshod valley, where the famous Dzongsar monastery is located. This region preserves traditional customs and culture. The drive from Derge to Dzongsar takes about 3 hours due to the road's condition. Upon arrival, if you're not too weary, consider visiting a handicrafts center or a local Tibetan hospital. Overnight in Dzongsar.

Day 07 :

Dzongsar / Pelyul (Baiyu), about 2 hours drive/70Km

The Dzongsar Monastery, established in 746, is renowned for preserving its Tibetan philosophy teachings from ancient times. The present lama for this monastery is the globally recognized teacher, His Holiness the Dzongsar Jamyang Kyentse. In the morning, embark on a short hike to the Dzongsar monastery, situated on a hill, offering a panoramic view of the Menshod valley. Spend the remainder of the day exploring Dzongsar village and its surroundings to experience authentic Tibetan life. In the afternoon, head to Pelyul with a 2-hour drive. Pelyul is a picturesque town by the Ding Chu river. Upon arrival, visit the Pelyul Monastery (Baiyu Si), a renowned Nyingma Sect monastery with historical significance and numerous subsidiary temples. Overnight in Pelyul.

Day 08 :

Pelyul / Yarchen Gar / Xinlong, about 6-7 hours drive/260km

Today, you will drive approximately 2-3 hours to visit Yarchen Gar Monastery (Yaqing Si), established in 1985 as a religious center of the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Along with Larung Gar, these institutes are the two largest Buddhist learning centers on the Tibetan plateau. The monastery houses over 10,000 Sangha, predominantly nuns. Yarchen Monastery is located on a grassy island, bordered by rivers and mountains. The adjacent hills are dotted with small, box-like red meditation huts, each roughly 2 square meters in size. Nuns use these huts for meditation, especially during the 3-5 month-long winter retreats. At the hilltop, a statue of Padmasambhava (Lotus-Born) stands, offering visitors a panoramic view of the island. The scenery from this vantage point is as captivating as other notable monasteries in Kham. In the late afternoon, drive to Xinlong, taking in breathtaking views along the way. This drive is roughly 120km, taking about 3-4 hours. We'll stay overnight in Xinlong.

Day 09 :

Xinlong / Litang / Daocheng, about 6 hours drive/300km

In the morning, you'll journey alongside the Yalong River to Litang, passing through stunning landscapes. Litang, set on the Maoya grasslands, translates to 'a place as flat as a bronze mirror' in Tibetan. Historically, Litang has served as a crucial transit point on the ancient trade route connecting Tibetans from Tibet to local Hans in Kangding and Ya'an city. While in Litang, you will visit the Litang Monastery, which has significant ties with the 7th, 10th, and 11th Dalai Lamas. In the afternoon, proceed to Daocheng, a county cherished for its fertile land and rich Tibetan culture. It's a perfect place to rejuvenate before heading to Yading. Optional activities include relaxing in a hot spring and watching a Tibetan local dance show (at an additional cost). Stay overnight in Daocheng.

Day 10 :

Daocheng / Yading Nature Reserve (Pearl Lake) / Yading Village, about 2.5 hours drive/110Km

In the morning, drive to Yading Nature Reserve. The journey boasts charming countryside views, and the excellent road conditions make it a smooth 2-hour drive to Shangri-la town. Here, you will purchase entrance tickets and board a local sightseeing bus to the terminal station - Zhaguanbeng (approximately 1 hour). From there, a hike leads to Chonggu Temple, offering views of the temple and the holy peak, Xiannairi. A subsequent 30-40 minute trek from Chonggu Temple will take us to Drolma-la tso (Pearl Lake), the best vantage point to view holy peak Xiannairi. After enjoying the scenery, walk about 1 hour back to Zhaguanbeng to take the sightseeing bus to your hostel in Yading village. Spend the night in Yading Village.

Day 11 :

Yading Nature Reserve (Luorong Pasture + Five Color Lake & Milk Lake) / Daocheng, about 2.5 hours drive/110km

In the morning, take the sightseeing bus to the terminal, Zhaguanbeng, from which you will reach the heart of Yading. From there, you will take the local battery car to Luorong Pasture (4150m), a natural grazing ground for local cattle and horses. Then begin your hiking tour (5km/about 4 hours) to Milk Lake (4600m) and Five-Color Lake (4700m). Alternatively, you can opt for horseback riding for the first 3KM to Sheshengya (optional, 305 CNY per person for a single trip), and then hike the remaining 2KM to Milk Lake and Five-Color Lake. Enjoy breathtaking views of the three sacred peaks: Mt. Yangmaiyong (5958m), Mt. Xianuaduoji (5958m), and Mt. Xiannairi (6032m). The round-trip hike will take approximately 6 to 7 hours. Afterwards, drive for about 2 hours to Daocheng. Stay overnight in Daocheng.

Day 12 :

Daocheng / Litang / Xinduqiao, about 7 hours' drive/350Km

After breakfast at the hotel, begin your drive back to Xinduqiao. Along the way, enjoy the beautiful landscapes. Xinduqiao is often considered a paradise for photographers; if you're a fan of photography, prepare to capture some stunning shots. Stay overnight in Xinduqiao.

P.S. If you're short on time, there are options to travel from Daocheng to Chengdu by air. Alternatively, you can continue your journey to Shangri-la in Yunnan if you wish to experience more of the authentic Shangri-la.

Day 13 :

Xinduqiao / Kangding / Chengdu, about 5-6 hours' drive/340km

Continue your drive to Chengdu via Zheduo Mountain and Kangding, taking in the scenic views along the way. Your Essence of Tibetan Kham in Western Sichuan tour concludes upon your arrival at your hotel in Chengdu.

Inclusions

Tour notes:

All of our tours can be customized to suite your requirements, interests and budget. It is our specialty! Please feel free to contact us.

General inclusions:

2 bottles of mineral water provided daily.

All required government taxes and fees.

Meals allowance for your guide and driver.

Please contact one of our Tour Advisors to get a custom quotation made to your requirements.

Where possible 3 star hotels will always be provided, if the city or town does not have then the local guest house or monastery guest house will be provided (i.e. tent / dormitory bed, no private bathroom etc.)

All entrance tickets as noted in the tour's itinerary.

Guide fluent in English, Chinese or Japanese that is certified by the state tourism build and from the local community. (If your native language is not listed please let us know, we are certain we can assist your needs.)

Transportation will be provided via a comfortable and clean car, minivan or tourist bus depending upon the groups size.

General exclusions:

Personal expenses such as laundry, drinks, internet access, fax, telephone calls etc.

Tips for your guide and driver.

Meals that are not specified in the tour itinerary.

Optional Attractions that are not specified in the itinerary.

Horseback riding at Mount Siguniang.

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