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Lhasa

Tibetan Butter Lamp Festival (Ganden Nga-choe Festival), typically in December, honors Tsongkhapa, the Gelug Sect's founder in Tibetan Buddhism. Participate in this 5-day winter Tibetan Festival tour for a deep dive into Tibetan culture.

Type

Private

Duration

5 days

Theme

Festival, Winter getaways

Trip code

TFT-06

Price

From \$ 552 per person

Itinerary

Ganden Ngamchoe (Lotus Lantern Festival) is a religious festival that celebrated since Great Gelugpa (commonly known as the Yellow Hat Sect) founder Tsongkhapa's death on the 25th of the 10th Tibetan month in 1419, his teaching influenced almost whole Tibet in 15th century and became most active sect among three others, his follower Tibetans celebrate the day as his death anniversary for commemorating their reverend teacher, gradually it is celebrated in whole Tibet. On that day Tibetans light butter lamps on their roof and pray for him, and the monasteries also light thousands of butter lamps all around the monasteries and all monks gathered in the main assembly hall to pray, for dinner Tibetans eat Pathuk(Tibetan hand-make pasta dough noodles).

Day 01 :

11 Dec. 2025 / 30 Nov. 2026: Arrival at Lhasa (3,658m)

Upon arrival at Lhasa airport or train station, to be met and transferred to your hotel / hostel in Lhasa. Afternoon have a good rest to acclimatize the high altitude. Overnight at Lhasa.

Day 02 :

12 Dec. 2025 / 01 Dec. 2026: Lhasa City Tour - visit Potala Palace and Jokhang Temple (B)

Today is your first day of sightseeing on the Tibetan high plateau, so we've purposefully arranged visits to only the **Jokhang Temple** and **Potala Palace**.

In the morning, meet your guide at the hotel for a short walk to the magnificent Potala Palace, a cardinal landmark globally recognized as a symbol of Tibet. This historic site served as the former seat of the Tibetan government and the winter palace of the Dalai Lamas. The Potala Palace comprises the rooftop White Palace, the Dalai Lama's living quarters, and the central Red Palace, used for religious functions. The Palace now serves as a museum and was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994.

In the afternoon, visit the Jokhang Temple, the most sacred temple in Tibet, built in the 7th century and situated in the heart of Lhasa's old town. The temple is typically bustling with local pilgrims and those from other parts of Tibet during winter. The circuit around it, known as Barkhor Street, is one of the most devout circuits and the central market in Lhasa city, an ideal

place to buy souvenirs.

Day 03 :

13 Dec. 2025 / 02 Dec. 2026: Lhasa City Tour - visit Drepung monastery and Sera monastery (B)

Today you will be arranged to visit two significant Gelugpa (Yellow Hat) monasteries in Lhasa **Drepung** and **Sera**.

Drepung Monastery, founded in 1416, served as the seat of the Dalai Lama until the 5th Dalai Lama constructed the Potala Palace. Located on the outskirts of Lhasa, Drepung was once the world's largest monastery, housing over 10,000 monks at its peak in Tibetan history. The monastery is renowned for its annual Shoton Festival in August, during which a large Thangka is displayed on the nearby mountains.

In the afternoon, you will visit Sera Monastery, founded in 1419 by Sakya Yeshe, a disciple of Tsongkhapa. Sera grew to become one of the largest monasteries in central Tibet, accommodating approximately 5,000 monks. The monastery is famous for **its monk debates**, which occur every afternoon at 3:00 pm, except on Sundays. It's believed that these debates foster a deeper understanding of Buddhist philosophy and help monks attain higher levels of comprehension of Buddhism.

Day 04 :

14 Dec. 2025 / 03 Dec. 2026: Tibetan Butter Lamp Festival - Morning Ganden Monastery and Evening Jokhang Temple Square for the Festival (B)

After visiting these monasteries, you might be eager to explore more natural beauty.

In the morning, drive approximately 60 km east to **Ganden Monastery to join the Nga-choe Festival**, the largest among the six major monasteries of Gelugpa. Beyond its stunning architecture and religious significance, the view from the top of Ganden Wangpo Hill is absolutely breathtaking. Kichu Valley lies behind Ganden Monastery; a hike around the monastery for a bird's-eye view of the valley is highly recommended.

In the afternoon, drive back to Lhasa for some free time. In the evening head to **Jokhang Temple Square for the Butter Lamp festival**. As the sun sets, Barkhor Street is adorned with lamps. Believers chant scriptures in unison, mourning Master Tsongkhapa. Their harmonious murmurs float from the temple to the heavens, reaching the abode of the gods and Buddhas.

Day 05 :

15 Dec. 2025 / 04 Dec. 2026: Lhasa airport / train station send-off (B)

Your guide and driver will see you off at the airport or train station, end of the trip.

Inclusions

Tour notes:

Please note prices are based in CNY.

General inclusions:

All required government taxes and fees.

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

All required Tibet permits and domestic travel documents.

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.

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

Airport and/or train station pick-up and drop-off.

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.

Flight tickets or train tickets in and out of Lhasa (Please note: We can offer you train and/or plane tickets in and out Lhasa from all cities within China. Please check the latest price with us via email.)

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info@windhorsetour.com

+86-28-85593923

Generated: Thu, 01/30/2025 - 13:39