

Ganden to Samye Trek

Trip code	0
Package name	Ganden to Samye Trek
Duration	12
Max. elevation	5250 m
Level	MODERATE
Transportation	grounded vehicals depending on group size
Accomodation	Hotel, Lodge and Camping twin sharing bed basis during the trip
Starts at	Ganden
Ends at	Samye
Trip route	kathmandu - Lhasa - Ganden - Yama do - Tsotuo tso - Wango - samye - Yarlung - Ganggar
Cost	USD 3,250 per person

Highlights

Trip Highlights

- Memorable trekking experience by following the famous route
- from Ganden Monastery to Samye Monastery.
- Beautiful high plateau landscapes and peaceful
- local rural villages along the trekking.
- The scared sights in the holy city Lhasa on the Roof
- of the World.

Overview

The Ganden – Samye trekking trail is the most popular trekking route crossing 2 mountain passes, beautiful alpine lakes and nomads in the beautiful Tibet.

Ganden to Samye Tibet trekking route is regarded as one of the best treks in the world. It is a fulfilling and pleasant pilgrimage trip with much to offer, an overview of Tibetan Buddhism and religious culture, blue holy lakes, high snowy passes and mountains, lush alpine meadows, sporadic herders' camp, tranquil Tibetan villages, time-honored sacred sites, finally culminating at the barren, desert-like surroundings near the Samye Monastery. Along the high passes, you will find secluded valleys — only inhabited by high-altitude nomads and their yaks. This is also a well-used pilgrimage route for Tibetans for it is convenient to combine a visit to Ganden (the principal monastery of the Gelugpa) with a reasonably direct but hard walk to Samye (Tibet's first monastery). Though it is an attractive route, do not underestimate the trek. Starting at 4180m (13,940 feet) at Ganden Monastery, passing Shogu-La Pass at 5250m (17,224ft) and heading toward the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet, Samye Monastery 3540m (11,600ft), the trek is a challenging and the altitude gains are higher than what is often recommended. Only those with experience trekking and camping in higher-elevation wildernesses should attempt this trek unsupported. If you're coming straight from Lhasa, you should spend at least one night at Ganden Monastery to acclimatize. Excursions to the Tandruk Monastery (which holds wonderful specimen of Tibetan art) and the Yambulakang castle (the home of the Yarlung Kings) are also included in our itinerary. With lot to offer in both aspect of pilgrimage and the scenic beauty of central Tibet, this trip is one of the must do trek in the rooftop valley of Tibet.

Trip Itinerary

Day 1 : Fly from Kathmandu to Lhasa

Take the scenic Himalayan flight of 1 hr and 10 mins to Lhasa. Upon arrival at Lhasa airport, you will be greeted by our local guide and driver and transfer to hotel in Lhasa. Upon arrival at hotel, check in the hotel and relax, rest for the rest of the day, acclimatize, we may take a short walk around the Barkhor old town area. Overnight stay in hotel.

Day 2 : Sightseeing in Lhasa

Today in the morning we will visit to the Jokhang monastery which is located in the heart to the old city, after Jokhang we will go to visit the summer palace of the Dalai Lama's. In the afternoon after the lunch we will be visting the Sera monastery which is one of the biggest monasteries in Tibet. Finally in the evening we would suggest you to go for around in Bharkor Street following thousands of pilgrims circumambulation the Bharkor Street.

Norbu Lingka (means "The Jeweled Park") is a palace and surrounding park in Lhasa, built from 1755. It served as the traditional summer residence of the successive Dalai lamas; Norbulingka

is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is a unique representation of Tibetan architecture. Norbulingka Palace is situated in the west side of Lhasa, a short distance to the southwest of Potala Palace. Norbulingka covers an area of around 36 hectares (89 acres) and considered to be the largest man made garden in Tibet. Norbulingka Park is considered the premier park of all such horticultural parks in similar ethnic settings in Tibet. During the summer and autumn months, the parks in Tibet, including the Norbulingka, become hubs of entertainment with dancing, singing, music and festivities. The park is where the annual Shun ton or 'Yoghurt Festival' is held. Norbulingka consists of several palace complexes, such as the Kelsang Potrang, Tsokyl Potrang, Golden Linka and Takten Migyur Potrang built for different Dalai lamas. Each palace complex is divided into three sections – the palace section, the section in front of the palaces and the woods. Norbulingka both reflects the ethnical, religious features of the Tibetan people and embodies the architecture style. It is of great cultural value and was listed by UNESCO as a World Cultural Heritage Site in 2001 as an extension of Potala Palace

Sera Monastery is one of the great Gelugpa School of learning centre and famous debate session of monks on Buddhist sciences of philosophy, metaphysics, psychology and epistemology. The history of Sera monastery is strongly connected to master lama Tsongkhapa (1357-1419) the founder of Gelug order, the much venerated and highly learned Guru in Buddhist sacred scriptures. It was under his divine tutelage that his disciple Jetsun kunchen lodroe Richen Senge established the Sera monastery complex in early 15th century AD.

Barkhor Street is the oldest traditional market in Lhasa. It circulates the Jhokhang temple and other Tibetan residential areas. In old Tibet you can buy goods from all over the world from the luxuries good like swatch to the handicraft products from China. In contemporary Tibet almost all the shops in Barkhor Street sells souvenir for visitors visiting Lhasa. Barkhor is also a spiritual place for Tibetan Buddhist all over the world. You will see thousands of pilgrims from all over Tibet prostrating and circumambulating the street as Jhokhang temple is located inside Barkhor Street.

Day 3 : Sightseeing in Lhasa

This morning we will visit the Potala Palace, which dominates the city of Lhasa. After visiting the potala palace you will have lunch time. In the afternoon after the lunch we will visit Drepung Monastery, the largest monastery in Tibet and the world according to many explorers.

Potala palace was built by Tibetan king Songtsan Gampo and later rebuilt by fifth Dalai Lama. It was the winter residence of the Dalai Lamas until peaceful libiration in year 1959. Its built on a rocky hill overlooking the city of Lhasa, the Potala Palace has a sturdy fortress-like appearance. It contains more than a thousand rooms spreading over an area of 1,300 feet by 1,000 feet. The stone walls are 16 feet thick at the base, but more finely constructed (without the use of nails) in the upper stories. The Potala Palace is made of two main parts, easily distinguished by their color: the Red Palace and White Palace. The two are joined by a smaller, yellow-painted structure that houses the sacred banners hung on the exterior for the New Year festivals. The rooms inside the palace are identified by numbers as well as names.

Drepung monastery is one of the three great Gelugpa monasteries of Tibet. Drepung is the largest of all Tibetan Monasteries. Freddie Spencer Chapman reported after his 1936 -37 trip to Tibet, that Drepung was at that time the largest monastery in the world and housed 7,700 monks , but sometimes as many as 10,000 monks . It was founded in 1416 by Jamyang Choeje Tashi Palden (1397-1449) of Lama Tsongkhapa main disciple.

Day 04: Drive from Lhasa to Ganden –about 1.5 hours’ drive, 56 km

Today after breakfast in the morning, start your drive. You head along the south bank of the Kyi Chu to Medro Gongkar, towards Ganden. On continuing eastwards you will drive past the Tibet University crossing the Lhasa East Bridge to the gas station. After a 56 km drive from Lhasa, you arrive at Ganden. Upon arrival visit Ganden Monastery- is the first Gelugpa monastery and has remained the main seat of this major Buddhist order ever since. Of all the other monasteries in Tibet, it is Ganden that has suffered the most at the hands of the red guards. Ganden has stupendous view of the Kyi-chu Valley and fascinating kora. The mountains round Ganden provide you a good warming up before the trek. At the south-west corner of Ganden is a large rock draped with prayer flags. You will further spend two nights here to acclimatize and prepare for your forthcoming adventure. Overnight stay in the Ganden.

Day 4 : Drive from Lhasa to Ganden –about 1.5 hours’ drive, 56 km

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Day 5 : Ganden (4180m)

Today is the day for acclimatization. Ganden is an interesting place to explore. The ochre walls of many of the buildings make a great backdrop for photographs. A large rocky cleft draped with colorful prayer flags, a religious destination among the locals of Ganden, is worth a visit. The locals can be seen circumambulating (kora) clockwise around this cleft. Enjoy the beauty of the Ganden throughout the day and stay overnight in Ganden.

Day 6 : Trek from Ganden to Yama Do (4250m), Trek: 5-6 hours, 17km

Today after breakfast tight up your laces for the trekking. We start our trekking adventure as we trek away from Ganden towards south along the Angor Ri. After ascending for 1 1/2 hours, you

see several cairns near a saddle. The trail further leads westwards descending to Hepu village. Here several houses become visible. 3 ½ hours of trekking brings you close to Shug La pass. Further we will hike up towards the Ani Panong. Ani Panong lies 1 hour away from Hepu. An hour of continuous ascent leads to lush meadows and soon appears Yama Do. Enjoying the scenic meadows and fresh air we halt overnight in Yama Do.

Day 7 : Trek from Yama Do to Tsotup Chu Valley, Trek: 4-5 hours, 10km

After breakfast in the morning, we resume our trekking. Leaving behind Yama Do, we climb eastwards negotiating boulders along the final climb atop 5250 meters of the Shug La, the highest point on this trail. The pass is distinctively marked with its large cairn wrapped in prayer flags and yak horns. After a brief stop at the pass to savor the grand vistas you make a sharp descent walking past a boulder field. The trail eventually opens into the valley. Up ahead in a distance the trail crosses the Tsotup Chu, a large stream with rich pastures of yaks, goats and sheep. You encounter several herders on the way. After trekking for 4-5 hours, you reach the Tsotup Chu Valley. Overnight camping in the lush valley.

Day 8 : Trek from Tsotup Chu to Herder's Camp, Trek: 6 hours, 14km

Today after breakfast as you turn away from Tsotup Chu Valley, you come across main water course following from the south-east and a tributary from the south-west. You take the route along this tributary followed by steep ascents for 30 minutes to a large basin and thereafter, the tributary disappears out of sight. The trail further opens into the valley progressing south to the Chitu La at 5100 meters capped with several cairns. The trail further brushes past a sheer rock wall on its south flank. Thereafter, follows a descent into a basin showcasing three turquoise lakes. Further on, the trail moves on to the west side of the stream and after 30 minutes we approach campsite. Many herders' camps can be seen at the nearby locations. Following the rock-strewn valley floor, you will head to a flat seasonal herder's camp in the east side of the valley. Soon after returning to the west side of the valley, you will be near to another seasonal herders' camp. Overnight camping in Herder's camp.

Day 9 : Trek from Herder's camp to Wango, Trek: 6-7 hours, 25km

Traversing through the lush scrub forest along the wide trail, you trek ahead, taking in the refreshing sights of verdant vegetation. The trail is dotted with fragrant junipers growing on southern slopes and rhododendron on the shadier slopes. There are many varieties of trees, scrubs, and rhododendrons in full bloom, and vistas of meadows that will take your breath away. Further ahead the village of Changtang comes into view, where the majority of the local villagers are engaged in animal husbandry. Yarlung Tsangpo valley can be viewed on the south. You can ascend steeply up to Yamalung Hermitage for one hour. But if you choose not to climb this ascent, you can simply wait near the bridge. Ancient history has it that Guru Rin Poche, after rigorous meditation attained spiritual enlightenment with the blessings from the deity of Amitayus (Tibetan: Tsepame) at Yamalung (also called Emalung). This hermitage houses small temples which shelters monks, sacred springs and stone carvings of 8th Guru Rin Poche, King Trisong Detsen and Indian pundit Shantarakshita. Stone houses come into sight after walking for one

hour to the village of Nyango. The trail overlooks the tributary streams cascading from the north-west to join the Samye valley. The old trade route from Lhasa to Samye via the Gokar La follows this valley. The trail further proceeds towards Wango and on further trek we head towards Pisha. Overnight stay in Pisha.

Day 10 : Trek from Wango to Samye Trek: 6 hours, 14 km

Today after breakfast in the morning explore the Pisha. Pisha offers picturesque view of the lower Samye valley. At its lower end an undulating hill called Hepo Ri appears into picture. This is regarded as very sacred. We head further down and up following the trace trail. The trail winds through the ridge of Dragmar towards verdant fields and villages of Samye reviving ancient history. A partially rebuilt palace is nestled on the summit. History boasts that the palace is the birthplace of King Trisong Detsen and had a grand temple in the ancient time. Further off the road, you will find a small red and white temple which is believed to have been built under the shade of white sandalwood tree and nourished by the buried placenta of King Trisong in the ancient time but was chopped off during Cultural Revolution. Further on, the trail overlooking amazing spires leads to Sangbu village. On further walking from the Sangbu valley you will find a well-trodden track to Samye. Upon arrival to the Samye valley overnight stay in the valley.

Day 11 : Explore the Yarlung Valley

Today after breakfast in the morning, witness the Samye monastery bearing panoramic picture. Shortly after this insightful visit, you will drive to Tsedang, the third largest city in central Tibet. Tsedang is known as “the cradle of Tibetan Civilization” for two reasons: first, its mild weather and fertile land conceived the great Tibet dynasty; second, it’s the birthplace of the first Tibetans who were said to be the offspring of a monkey and a demoness. On the Southeast of Tsedang, you will get to observe mesmerizing views of mountain Gangpo Ri standing at 4,130 meters above sea level. Tibetans regard this mountain as their legendary birthplace and consider it to be immensely significant. You can eventually rest for the night at a comfortable guest house. You get to explore the Yarlung valley, which is also known as the Valley of Tombs. Ancient Tibetan history boasts that Tibetan civilization was originated from Yarlung valley. You can spot massive burial mounds of Tibetan Kings. Today’s sights include Tandruk (Trandruk) Monastery, a 7th century monastery, which holds fantastic wood carved altar, interesting relics and murals. Yambulakang, the castle perched dramatically on a pinnacle above the valley is the oldest known dwelling in Tibet, reputedly the home of the Yarlung Kings. According to a legend of followers of the Bon religion, Yambulakang was erected in the second century B.C. for the first Tibetan king Nyatri Tsenpo, who was descended from the sky. Yumbulagang became a shrine and under the reign of the 5th Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso, a monastery of the Gelugpa school. Yumbulakang monastery was severely damaged during the Cultural Revolution, though it has been extensively renovated since. The view from the castle is awesome. The tour continues to the west of Tsedang, crossing the Tsangpo River on a boat to Samye Monastery, founded in 779 AD, is in a green valley among barren mountains surrounded by a village. Samye Monastery is one of the most imposing sights of Tibet. Built between 763 and 75 AD modeled on the University of Otantapuri in India and planned as a representation of the universe, it has a collection of pagodas and temples. Overnight, stay in the luxurious hotel in Tsedang.

Day 12 : Drive to Gonggar Airport and Depart

Today you will be transferred to the Gonggar airport as per your flight schedule to onward destination.

Inclusions

What is included?

Airport pick up and drop as per the itinerary.

Tibet Visa Fee.

Necessary Tibet Travel Permit.

Daily breakfast at same staying hotel

Flight from Kathmandu - Lhasa.

Private Transportation by jeep/van in Tibet.

Sightseeing and entrance fee as per the itinerary in Tibet.

English speaking Tibetan guide.

All the Government and local taxes.

Hotel Accommodation on twin sharing basis in Nepal and Tibet.

Full board meals (Lunch, Dinner and Breakfast) with cup of Hot drinks during the trip in Tibet.

The above tour price does not include single room supplement. If you are a solo traveler, you need to share one room with another tourist (same sex in most cases); if you prefer to stay in one room by yourself, you will have to pay the single room supplement. And the exact price depends on market fluctuation in high and off season of Tibet tour. For the exact price, please refer to your travel consultant.

What isn't included?

Entry Visa fees - at present \$25 for 15 day, US\$ 40 for 30 day, and US\$ 100 for three month visa on entry into Nepal.

Lunch and Dinner in Kathmandu.

Insurance of any kind.

Personal expenses like beverage, mineral water and tips.

Loss, theft or damage to baggage and personal effects. (We strongly advise you to get personal travel insurance.)

Complimentary