

# exodus

*Discovery, Wildlife & Adventure*

Trip Notes: ACL

TIBET EXPLORER

Issued: April 2004

## INTRODUCTION

Tibet, the 'forbidden' land, protected by the great Himalayan chain in the south and west, and even more inhospitable mountains to the north and east, has haunted the ambition of travellers for centuries, and it is only in the last fifteen years that more than a handful of travellers have managed to penetrate its remote secrets. Although there are now frequent visitors to Tibet the allure is still there: the very remoteness, inaccessibility and mystery are still enough to attract most people. Tibet is a land of great beauty, of vast landscapes and glittering peaks, high altitude desert, densely forested gorges, brilliant skies, clean rivers, and little modern development.

Tibet (Xizang) is currently an autonomous region of the People's Republic of China, situated west of China proper and covering 1,225,000 square miles. It is mostly a high plateau and wilderness of mountains, little of which is below 3000m. Most of the plateau is desert or moor land, blanketed by snow during the harsh winter, but providing good grazing for yak and sheep in the summer months. The central Yarlung Tsang Po valley and its tributaries (which include the Lhasa River) are more fertile and enjoy a more temperate climate, but it is only in the southeast corner of Tibet, where the Arun and Yarlung Tsang Po plunge down to Nepal and India respectively, that the empty plateau gives way to a lush, forested landscape.

The heart of Tibet is its religion - a highly developed form of Buddhism introduced from India and conditioned by the traditional Bon religion. It dictated the whole way of life for many centuries, and the focal point of all communities was the monastery, which held economic sway over every family. This traditional way of life was catastrophically affected by the annexation of Tibet by China in 1959, and the departure of the Dalai Lama. The more secular programme of modernization saw the dismantling of the religious infrastructure, and the Cultural Revolution resulted in the wholesale destruction or abandonment of most of the monasteries and religious schools - tearing the heart out of the body of the community.

Centuries of tradition cannot however be changed in a few years, and even after years of attempt to impose communism, and the terrible destruction wrought during the Cultural Revolution, the old traditions and culture are very much alive and kicking. This is now aided by a significant change of policy, which has seen many monasteries and temples renovated and restored, though sadly many of the finest wall paintings and works of art have been lost for ever. Belief and prayer are now generally tolerated, and many previously banned festivals are being reinstated. However, over the last few years there has been a determined effort by the Chinese to reduce the influence of the Dalai Lama, most obviously reflected in the selection of a Panchen Lama different from the one chosen by the Dalai Lama, and the banning of photographs of the Dalai Lama. Political expression and the independence movement are kept firmly and sometimes brutally in check by the Chinese authorities, although many Tibetans in the countryside are able to live relatively unaffected by Chinese influences.

The march of progress has resulted in considerable land reform, and a real attempt to increase crop production from subsistence level. In many places this has been successful, while in others the economy still, necessarily, revolves around goats, sheep and yaks - that amazing high altitude cow. Hydroelectric and geothermal schemes are in hand (not always environmentally sound), and there are rich minerals to be

exploited, examples of which can be seen in the traditional Tibetan jewellery.

We are sometimes asked whether it is right to assist the Chinese economy by organising tours to what many people consider to be an occupied country. The Dalai Lama has stated that he believes westerners should visit Tibet so that Tibet and the Tibetans do not become isolated, and our belief is that the Tibetans themselves, in general, regard the presence of westerners in Tibet as a positive factor. As far as possible, we only use Tibetan guides or Chinese guides sympathetic to Tibetan culture, and wherever possible use facilities that are Tibetan owned and run.

## TRAVELLING IN TIBET

Although there are quite a number of organisations in Tibet offering travel facilities for foreigners, it has to be said that many of them are not of a very high standard, particularly with regard to guides, many of whom have little knowledge of the places they are taking you to. We believe that in this respect we are more able than most to offer a consistently high standard of service.

The demand for seats on the flights between Kathmandu and Lhasa always exceeds capacity in the peak month of August, and is not unusual at any time. This coupled with the occasional outright cancellation of the flight - for weather or other reasons - means it is not impossible that you may not fly on the day planned. Our contacts with China Southwest Airlines in both Kathmandu and Lhasa are excellent, and it is rare for any of our passengers not to fly as scheduled, but it is nevertheless a possibility. In some cases, the only sensible alternative is to travel between Lhasa and Kathmandu by road, fairly fast.

The accommodation is, on a couple of occasions, very basic and the majority of roads are dirt and can be extremely bad. However, the spectacular scenery more than compensates for the occasional discomforts and disruptions associated with travelling in this area. It is best to approach travel in Tibet with a very adventurous spirit, and try and take advantage of any changes or unforeseen circumstances rather than treat them as disasters!

## TRIP PROFILE

This trip offers the opportunity to travel off the main tourist route as well as to enjoy the major attractions of Tibet. With plenty of time in Lhasa and the towns along the Kathmandu to Lhasa road, there is the chance to really gain some insight into Tibet and its culture. After spending time to acclimatise and get an introduction to Lhasa, we head off to camp at Nam Tso Lake. Returning to Lhasa we visit some of the monasteries nearby before a rugged and fairly demanding journey, across the roof of the world, towards Nepal. Along the way we stop to visit the important Tibetan towns of Jyangze and Xigaze before making our side trip to see the north face of Everest, and camp at Rongbuk. This is quite a tough trip, due to the high altitudes and bad roads, but the stunning scenery and cultural interest make it all worthwhile. The majority of hotels are of quite a reasonable standard.

## ITINERARY

From London: 21 days Start Sat end Fri  
From Kathmandu: 20 days Start Sun, end Fri

**The entry in bold at the end of each day indicates the type of accommodation normally used.**

*Please turn over*

**Day 1** Depart London Heathrow in the evening by scheduled service of Qatar Airways.

**Day 2** Arrive Kathmandu in the afternoon and transfer to our hotel. Those not flying with the group from London will join us at the hotel. **Hotel**

**Day 3** Today there is a half-day sightseeing tour visiting the temples of Bodnath and Pashupatinath. Bodnath is one of the largest Buddhist Stupas in the world and home to a large Tibetan population, whilst Pashupatinath is the most important Hindu temple in the country. The tour will end at lunchtime and there will be time in the afternoon for individual exploration of the Durbar Square area of Kathmandu or Swayambunath, the Monkey Temple, with it's all seeing eyes of Buddha overlooking the whole valley. There will also be a trip briefing today. **Hotel**

**Day 4** Early morning transfer to the airport, and board the plane for the flight over the Himalayas to Lhasa. If the weather is clear there is a wonderful view of Everest, Kanchenjunga and other peaks en route. On arrival at Gonggar airport (which is 90 km. from Lhasa), we meet our vehicle and drive east along the broad Yarlung Tsangpo valley to Zedang [Tsethang] (3400m). After checking in to our hotel, we drive south to see what is reputedly the oldest building in Tibet, the Yumbu Lakhang, a beautiful castle-like dwelling and monastery, dramatically perched on a spur looking out over the fertile valley below. If time permits we may be able to visit a small monastery close to Zedang, or an interesting carpet factory where you can see the whole process of carpet making. (Today's drive is a total of approximately 130 km.) **Hotel**

**Day 5** A short drive west along the Tsangpo valley brings us to the ferry that will take us across the river to Samye monastery on the north bank. The ferry journey may take an hour or more, as the boatman has to negotiate the sometimes-tricky currents and sandbanks. Once on land again, we travel in an old bus or the back of a truck (or similar basic transport) the few kilometres to Samye, Tibet's very first monastery, founded by Trisong Detsen in 779 AD. Very badly damaged in the Cultural Revolution, it has now been completely rebuilt, and although the new work is not as fine as the old, this is a magnificent example of Tibetan religious architecture, with wonderful painted wooden roof beams, and typical gilded roofs. Around the main building is a fine cloister, and there is now a substantial body of monks living and studying here. We return across the river, and continue west past the airport, then cross the bridge over the Tsang Po and turn north-east up the Lhasa valley, where we soon see the great bulk of the Potala looming over the city. ( Today's drive is a total of approximately 210 km.) **Hotel**

**Days 6/7** These two days are spent in Lhasa, the religious, cultural and economic centre of Tibet. One of the highlights is the visit to the symbol of Tibet; the Potala Palace set high on Red Hill, the winter home of the Dalai Lama until 1959. The most sacred temple in Lhasa is the Jokhang, where people come from all over Tibet to visit and pray in this spiritual heart of the country. It was used as a military kitchen during the Cultural Revolution but has now been beautifully restored, with many priceless *thangkas* and statues adorning the chapels, and magnificent gilded roofs. Another great treasure is the Norbulingka – the old summer palace of the Dalai Lama - which he is alleged to have preferred to the Potala as the rat population was less! You will probably also want to spend a morning or afternoon wandering around the Barkhor, the old city, in company with the pilgrims. Around the Barkhor there are numerous stalls selling all sorts of handicrafts: brightly coloured boots and fur-lined hats, silver and turquoise jewellery, rosaries, prayer flags and charms, as well as beautiful (and cheap) Tibetan carpets, and all manner of ordinary household ware. During our time in Lhasa there may be an opportunity to visit an ordinary Tibetan household, and have a traditional Tibetan dinner, complete with the local barley beer, or *chang*. **Hotel**

**Day 8** We set out on the main road north through Tibet, steadily ascending the valley of the Tobing River, until we turn off up a side valley to the west to reach Tsurpu monastery, founded in 1189 by the first Karmapa, Dusum Kyenpa, who introduced the idea of reincarnate lamas, or *tulkus*. The 17th reincarnation, a boy of 17, recently escaped to Dharamsala in India. For many years he was in residence here, and many pilgrims arrived here every day to be blessed by him. Much of the monastery is still in ruins, but reconstruction is proceeding fast, and there is an active body of close to 100 monks. On the way we may stop to visit Myelan monastery and orphanage/school. Myelan is the home of the Bawa Rinpoche a small boy of 7 who is another important reincarnation of the Kagya sect, but who is now under house arrest in Lhasa. Returning to the main valley, we continue on to the geothermal power

station at Yangbajing, which supplies much of Lhasa's electricity. Turning northeast, we emerge in a very broad valley below the Nyanchen Tangla range; in summer this valley is a truly vast grazing ground, with many thousands of sheep and yaks taking advantage of the excellent pasture. Nomad tents are dotted around the landscape, and we visit one of these very tough but friendly Tibetan families and sample tea or *chang*. We turn off the main road towards the mountains, and either stay in very simple accommodation at Damxung or camp for the night. (today's drive is a total of approximately 217 km.). **Camping**

**Day 9** A short drive brings us to the top of the Nyanchen Tangla range, from where we get our first breathtaking view of the great Nam Tso, Tibet's largest lake, some 80 kilometres long and at an altitude of nearly 4,600 m., ringed by snow-capped mountains. Dropping down towards the lake, considered one of the holiest in Tibet, we spend a day exploring this extraordinary wilderness. Much of this exploration can be done on foot, but there is no compulsion to do a great deal of walking if you do not wish to. At most times of year there are many Tibetan pilgrims here, who take several weeks to circumnavigate the entire lake on horseback or on foot, visiting the various holy places around the lake, including some remarkable rock shrines. (Today's drive is a total of approximately 45 km.) **Camping**

**Day 10** We return to Lhasa by road, arriving mid-afternoon. **Hotel**

**Days 11/12** On one of these days we make an excursion to Sera and Drepung monasteries; two of the great monasteries of the Gelukpa (yellow hat) sect, just outside Lhasa. Then there is time to explore Lhasa on your own, perhaps visiting the Tibetan Medical College or the Ramoche temple (one of the oldest religious buildings in Tibet), or you may prefer to just sit in the Barkhor and watch the pilgrims circumbulate the Jokhang. **Hotel**

**Day 13** We set off down the Lhasa valley and re-cross the Yarlung Tsangpo, then turn upstream to climb steeply to the first of the four main passes to be crossed en route to Nepal. The Kamba La (4794m.) is traditionally the divide between 'front' and 'back' Tibet. At the top is a splendid panorama with the Yarlung Tsangpo, the great river of Tibet, behind us, while in front is a superb vista of the stunning scorpion-shaped turquoise lake of Yamdrok Tso and the peaks along Tibet's southern border. The road quickly drops down to the lake, and then follows the shore for a couple of hours. A short climb brings us to the Karo La (5010m.) passing close to a magnificent hanging glacier near the summit, and once over this we follow a line of mud built telegraph poles along a broad flat valley to Jyangze (Gyangtse), an important market town and trading crossroads. (Today's drive is a total of approximately 261 km.) **Hotel**

**Please note** that occasionally after heavy rains the road over the Kamba La can become impassable, and the alternative route to Xigaze up the Yarlung Tsangpo Valley must be used; in this case we will still visit Jyangze.

**Day 14** Jyangze is an attractive town dominated by the great fortress captured and destroyed by the British during their incursion into Tibet in the early years of this century. Apart from the fort, there are two particular points of interest in Jyangze: the Kumbum Stupa, reckoned the finest in Tibet and filled with innumerable manifestations of Buddha, some of which are very old; and the carpet factory, where the finest, most traditional carpets in Tibet are to be found. In the afternoon, we drive on through a landscape of fields and low hills to Xigaze (Shigatse), Tibet's second largest town at 3900m. Xigaze is situated near the junction of the Ngang and Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) Rivers, with many traditional low ceiling, flat roofed, mud brick Tibetan houses, but quite a lot of ugly modern Chinese buildings as well. It's a friendly and peaceful place, home of the Tashillunpo monastery, traditional seat of the Panchen Lama, and one of the great centres of Tibetan Buddhism. Unlike most religious buildings in Tibet, the Tashillunpo monastery was very little damaged during the Cultural Revolution, and contains numerous impressive chapels and prayer halls. Don't miss the giant statue of the Maitreya Buddha that contains 280 kg. of gold. Xigaze also has an interesting bazaar, where various traditional items can often be found at more or less reasonable prices. The afternoon will be spent sightseeing in this fascinating town. (Today's drive is a total of approximately 90 km.) **Hotel**

**Day 15** Leaving Xigatse we climb steadily to the top of the Tso La (4,050 m.). We then follow valleys containing a few small villages for a while before turning off the main road to drive to Sakya. In the 13th

century Sakya was the effective capital of Tibet because of its close links with the Mongols, the most important power in eastern Asia at this time. The monastery is best known for its magnificent statues, as well as several fine silver *stupas* and some superb wall paintings. After visiting the monastery we drive back to the main road and continue to Lhatze . We camp a few kilometres after Lhatze in a small valley at the bottom of the Gyatso La (4,400 m.). **Camping**

**Day 16** Another climb through virtually unpopulated high altitude moorland brings us to the summit of the Gyatso La (5,280 m.) with stunning views. After a long descent we arrive at Shegar where we must get our permit to visit Everest Base Camp. After a few more kilometres on the Friendship Highway we leave the main road and drive along a rough track for about four hours to Rongbuk (85 km.). This track is often in a pretty poor condition, so this can be quite a slow section and there are a couple of river crossings to negotiate: it is not unknown for these to be washed out. However, the scenery is breathtaking as we pass through small villages and then climb to a pass, the Pang La at 5,220 m., from where, on a clear day, we have a magnificent panorama of Everest, Cho Oyu, Lhotse, Gyachung Kang and Makulu. Monks and nuns from Nyingma sect live at Rongbuk; some speak English, learnt through contact with foreigners, and are generally very friendly. There is time in the afternoon to explore the area and visit the monastery. We camp near the monastery for the night, at around 5000m! **Camping**

**Day 17** In the morning the energetic can walk the 8kms to Everest Base Camp where there is a small hill with prayer flags; a memorial to climbers. The north face of Everest is right in front of us. It is also possible to drive to the base camp. If we did not visit the monastery yesterday we can visit today before leaving Rongbuk. If road conditions and river levels permit we drive back to the main road a different way avoiding the Pang La. This road takes us through picturesque villages and rolling hills to our camp at Old Tingri. On a clear day we have excellent sunset views of many Himalayan giants from Old Tingri. (If the rivers are high and the road unpassable we have to return to the main road the same way we came over the Pang La). **Camping**

**Day 18** After watching the sunrise over the Himalayas we head towards the Nepalese border. Scenically this is one of the most spectacular days of the trip. Leaving Old Tingri, the Himalayas are very much in view to the south as we cross barren plains, typical of the Tibetan plateau. As Everest recedes from view we have a splendid panorama of Xixapangma, the only 8,000 m. peak entirely in Tibet. A steady climb brings us to the summit of the Lalung Leh (5,050 m.); to the north is a vast open landscape with range upon range of mountains beyond, while ahead of us to the south the road drops into a gorge between the snow-capped peaks of the main Himalayan range. A long and sometimes steep descent brings us down to Milarepa's cave, the hermitage of one of Tibetan Buddhism's most famous saints. A little further on is the small village of Nyalam (3,750 m.) on the edge of a bare sided valley. We continue on down into a gorge, which narrows considerably. The road itself is a tremendous feat of engineering, testified to by the fact that 150 people died in its construction. In less than an hour we leave the stark scenery of Tibet and pass into an altogether different world, descending dramatically into a forested gorge until we arrive at Zhangmu just before the Nepal border where we spend the night. (Today's drive is a total of approximately 50km.). **Hotel**

**Day 19** After completing the Chinese border formalities, we may have to walk down to the Friendship Bridge, as the road is sometimes impassable for buses. This is an easy walk of a couple of hours, or rather less if like the locals you use the shortcuts! Once across the bridge, we are in Nepal, and as soon as the formalities are complete, we pick up our transport. The road follows the Bhote Kosi valley down to its junction with the Sun Kosi at Barabise. We continue down the Sun Kosi past rice terraces, small villages and scrub woodland to Dolalghat where we leave the river and complete our journey to Kathmandu. (Today's drive is a total of approximately 130 km.) **Hotel**

**Day 20** The day is free, providing we have had no major delays crossing into Nepal from Tibet. There is plenty to do in Kathmandu itself or it is possible to visit Kathmandu's two sister cities, both in the Kathmandu Valley. Bhaktapur (Bhadgaon) is perhaps the one that has been least affected by tourism, with a wealth of temples and back streets to explore. Patan is famous for its metalwork and is a particularly good place to buy handicrafts. **Hotel**

**Day 21** We transfer to the airport in the morning for our flight to London. For those not flying with the group to London the tour ends after breakfast.

### Important note

The section of the road between Nyalam in Tibet and Barabise in Nepal is prone to landslides, and the timing of the itinerary through this section allows for some delays. If there are landslides, some walking is likely to be involved getting over or around the slides. We provide porters to carry your luggage in this event.

**Exodus offer a comprehensive range of trips in China, South East Asia and Japan. Please refer to the Exodus Brochures or the web site [www.exodus.co.uk](http://www.exodus.co.uk).**

**Occasionally, as stated in our brochure, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned. This may be for a variety of reasons – climatic, political, physical or other. In these circumstances we will make the best alternative arrangements possible that maintains the integrity of the original itinerary.**

### WEATHER

As nearly all of Tibet lies above 3000m it has a harsh climate. However, there are at least two distinct climatic regions, one of which comprises the high plateau north and west of the Yarlung Tsangpo valley and south of the Kun Lun and Altun Shan mountains (i.e. some 80% of the land area of Tibet), and the other the Yarlung Tsangpo and associated valleys (including Lhasa), which are considerably lower, and contain all of Tibet's main population centres.

The first region is largely uninhabited and is dry and unbelievably cold in winter; rain and snowstorms are common in summer, especially in the wild central section.

The second region has a rather different climate. In summer (from June to September) there is plenty of sunshine and blue skies, but the monsoon often makes its way across the Himalayas (particularly in the south-east) and at times there can be periods of heavy rain and cloud. The daytime temperatures are comfortable (max. 24°C in Lhasa) and the nights rather colder.

In autumn (October) the weather is generally dry and clear, with brilliant blue skies and maximum temperatures around 17 to 20°C in Lhasa. The days are pleasantly warm (provided there is sunshine), but the nights are cold, though rarely below freezing: as soon as the sun goes down the temperature falls rapidly.

### PRACTICAL INFORMATION

#### Flights from the UK

We use the scheduled services of Qatar Airways. Estimated flight timings are given below (to within 30 minutes); these were correct at the time of printing but they cannot be confirmed until approximately two weeks before departure. The flight from Kathmandu to Lhasa is on China Southwest Airlines who have an excellent safety record.

From	To	Departs	Arrives	Aircraft
Heathrow 3	Doha	2130	0625+	Airbus
Doha	Kathmandu	0800	1515	Airbus
Kathmandu	Doha	0815	1025	Airbus
Doha	Heathrow 3	1235	1755	Airbus

All times are local

#### Regional Flights

Exodus can arrange flights from the majority of the UK's regional airports that are more flexible and convenient than if booked separately. Please contact our sales team for details.

Please note that if booking your regional flights other than with Exodus, you must allow a minimum connecting time (**in addition to the international check in time**) of one hour at Gatwick, and 1.5 hours at Heathrow; this is longer than the official minimum connecting time, but baggage handling at Heathrow is known to be subject to delays.

#### Joining locally for 'land only' bookings.

If you wish to join the trip in the destination country you may do so. The local start point for this trip is the Royal Singi Hotel, Kathmandu. Details

of how to reach the start point are on the pre departure information, which is sent to you on booking. Land only prices are available from our sales team, our website or your agent.

### Airport Transfers

Airport transfers are included for those on group flights. Please note, however, that airport transfers are NOT included in the cost of the trip for those not traveling on the group's flights (even if Exodus have booked your flights, you will not receive a transfer unless it is on the dates and flights as outlined in the Trip Notes and brochure). Please note that the cost of a taxi is likely to be £3-5 should you decide to make your way independently.

### Passports and Visas

**Nepal** - Clients are now able to obtain a free transit visa on arrival in Kathmandu (if staying for 3 days or less) instead of a multiple entry visa. On arrival in Kathmandu, advise immigration of the date you will fly to Tibet and provide a passport photograph. They will then issue a 3 day transit visa free of charge. The same applies to your return to Nepal (unless you are staying longer than 3 days). If you are staying longer than 3 days either before and/or after your trip you will require a multiple entry visa depending on your plans.

**China** - The Chinese visa is obtained by Exodus as a group visa in Kathmandu, which is not entered in your passport; the cost is about US\$60 and you should bring this amount with you to Kathmandu in **cash dollars** (for American passport holders it is about \$80). Please note that U.S. travellers cheques, credit cards and other currencies are not accepted. For the group visa and Tibet permits, **we need to have a photocopy of the page(s) in your passport giving your personal details, and also your occupation, as early as possible**. If you need to get a new passport for the journey, please apply for this immediately, and send us the photocopy as soon as you receive your new passport. It is **VERY** important that the information you give us is 100% correct, as even a small error could result in your name not being on the group visa and a refusal of entry into Tibet.

### Vaccinations and Health

There are no statutory requirements unless you are arriving from an area designated as infected by cholera or yellow fever. We recommend vaccinations against polio, typhoid, tetanus, and hepatitis A.

*Exodus is not a medical service and you are strongly advised to consult your doctor or vaccination centre for up to date information.*

You should be aware that it is not unusual to suffer to some extent from the minor symptoms of altitude sickness (persistent headache, sleeplessness, and occasionally vomiting) during the first couple of days in Tibet; however, it is very rare indeed for anyone to suffer serious symptoms of acute mountain sickness. Although our trips in Tibet do not involve any strenuous physical activity, (apart from the possibility of a few hours negotiating landslides) it must be remembered that there is some hard and dusty travelling on bad roads, at high altitudes. Participants should be reasonably fit and healthy, and willing to cope with difficult conditions, and will be asked to complete a medical questionnaire.

### Accommodation

In Kathmandu we use the Royal Singi Hotel, a good 4 star hotel. The hotel is situated in the central part of Kathmandu, and most offices, many shops and restaurants are within easy walking distance. In Lhasa there are very few hotels of a good standard, and consequently demand often exceeds supply in the peak summer months. In Jyangze, Xigaze and Zedang we use relatively new hotels, built in Chinese style, which are of a reasonable standard though rather dated. The hotel in Zhangmu is much more basic. In all the above hotels we use rooms with private facilities, but the standard of finish in the bathrooms in particular is often low, and running water should be regarded as a possibility rather than a probability outside Lhasa, especially in the case of Zhangmu. Where it does exist, piped hot water is generally only available in the morning and evening; however, thermos flasks full of hot water are always available in the hotels. Likewise, electricity cannot be guaranteed. The hotel staff in these out of the way hotels work on the theory that they will be paid the same whether you stay there or not, and the standard of service can be casual at best.

Whilst camping we use two person tents with sewn in groundsheet.

### Additional Accommodation

If you require any additional accommodation either before or after the trip, we can book this for you (subject to availability) at the Royal Singi hotel in Kathmandu, provided you notify us at the time of booking. Payment for this must be made to Exodus or your agent, so that we can issue you with an accommodation voucher. Please note that a £5 booking fee is added to the invoice. For up-to-date prices please contact the Exodus office.

**Single Supplement** - If you wish to have a single room, a single supplement of £245 is payable at the time of booking. However, we cannot guarantee that you will have a single room every night, as there is often a shortage of accommodation in Tibet, especially in the peak season during late July, August, and early September. The single supplement does not include a single tent while camping.

### Food Included

In Nepal, breakfast only is included, and we suggest you allow about £50 for other meals in Nepal (you will need dinner on day 2, lunch and dinner on days 3, 19 and 20). In Tibet full board is included (drinks are extra). It should be noted that food in Tibet is often not of a very high standard, especially away from Lhasa, though our leaders and guides are good at finding the best food available.

### Extra Expenses and Spending Money

We suggest you allow a couple of pounds a day for drinks and incidentals.

There is a departure tax on leaving Kathmandu international airport of 1100 rupees (about £11), which you will have to pay both when you fly to Lhasa and also when you finally leave Nepal at the end of your trip.

You will need a small amount for options like dancing displays, etc. In the monasteries there are usually charges for photography inside the temples. This varies from monastery to monastery – your local guide will advise you on this.

Tipping is a tradition in Nepal and Tibet and we suggest you allow £1.50 to £2 a day for this.

### Local Payment

There is a compulsory local payment of USD\$200 payable to your leader on arrival in Kathmandu. This covers a proportion of the operational costs, which are paid in cash; this may include any of the following: included meals, transport costs, entrance and guide fees and some accommodation.

### Group, Staff and Support

Group size is normally 6-16 participants, accompanied throughout by an Exodus leader. Usually the leader will work with one of our bi-lingual, bi-cultural Tibetan (or occasionally Chinese) guides, who have a very good knowledge and sympathetic understanding of both Tibet and its culture. Additionally, local guides may be used in some locations.

### Transport

We normally use a midibus for most of the journey. We use either four-wheel drive all terrain vehicles or occasionally a truck for the journey to/from Rongbuk. Sometimes it is also necessary to use a truck for some short sections on the way to and from the Nam Tso Lake.

### Essential Equipment and Clothing

In addition to your "normal" daily clothes, you will need the following:

**Essential:** sleeping mat, 4 season sleeping bag; warm jacket; sunglasses, sunscreen, sunhat, torch, waterbottle.

**Recommended:** thermal underwear, gloves.

Sleeping bags and down jackets may be hired in Kathmandu. You will be sent details on booking. These should be reserved in advance through our London office.

### Exodus projects in Nepal

Exodus supports various projects in Nepal (see the Responsible Tourism section of our website for more details), including two tree nurseries in Manang, an orphanage in Patan, water projects and various schools. In the past groups have visited and donated clothes, pencils, books, paints etc to the orphanage and schools. If you have anything, which could be of

use to the orphanage or schools please bring them along and the Base Manager or your Leader will make sure they are distributed where the need is greatest (childrens clothes, books, games and school equipment are most appreciated). Please also note that we have a porter clothing bank in Kathmandu and if you have any clothes, boots etc you longer need or use these will also be appreciated.

#### Responsible Tourism Policy

**exodus has been highly commended in the British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow awards for our responsible tourism practices. For more information please visit our website.**

BRITISH AIRWAYS  
Tourism for Tomorrow  
Highly Commended 2002

Tourism can be a real help to local communities, providing income, positive cultural exchanges and a financial incentive to protect their natural environment. Ours is a 'total approach' to responsible tourism, covering everything from the way we plan and operate our trips to the practices of Exodus as a company. Exodus trips are designed to allow a high degree of economic benefit to the local communities; we buy local produce, eat local food and use local services, thus ensuring that as much money as possible is retained within the local economies and the host communities. With our responsible tourism policy we are continually reassessing our holidays, trying at all times to ensure that they are socially, economically and environmentally sound.

#### Travel safety

We are a responsible tour operator and for us the safety of our clients and staff is of paramount importance. We would not run any holiday that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the Foreign and Commonwealth Office advise against travel for any reason, we will contact anyone who is booked to travel to discuss alternatives. We check on a very regular basis with the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office and with our staff on the ground, and we follow their advice very closely.

#### IMPORTANT NOTE – PLEASE READ

*The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith, and covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip. Where differences exist in the information between these Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes are the correct version and supersede the brochure. In remote destinations abnormal conditions can prevail at any time, and all adventurous holidays can therefore be subject to unexpected changes; in order to enjoy them you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary.*

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**Exodus Travels Ltd., Grange Mills, Weir Road, London SW12 0NE**

**Telephone 0870 240 5550 - Fax 020 8673 0779**

**E-mail: [sales@exodus.co.uk](mailto:sales@exodus.co.uk) - Website: [www.exodus.co.uk](http://www.exodus.co.uk)**

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