Mt. Kailash Drive in Drive out Tour – 11 Days

11-Day Mount Kailash & Lake Mansarovar Express Overland Tour

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The Sacred Kailash Mansarovar Overland Pilgrimage from Kathmandu

Our signature **Kailash Mansarovar Overland Tour** offers an extraordinary 11-day spiritual pilgrimage across the Tibetan Plateau. This sacred journey holds deep spiritual significance for Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and Bon followers. Furthermore, Tibetans revere Mount Kailash (6,638 m / 21,778 ft) as the “Precious Jewel of Snow.” Consequently, pilgrims consider this holy peak the true center of the universe. Therefore, joining the **Kailash Mansarovar Overland Tour** offers a lifetime achievement for spiritual seekers and adventurers alike. First, your overland pilgrimage begins with a scenic drive from Kathmandu to Syabrubesi. After that, you cross the Friendship Bridge through Gyirong Port into Tibet. Next, you travel across the vast high-altitude plateau in private, oxygen-equipped vehicles. In addition, you will marvel at dramatic mountain passes, pristine wilderness, and snow-capped horizons along the drive.

Upon reaching the Ngari region, your **Kailash Mansarovar Overland Tour** reveals unmatched natural beauty. Specifically, you will visit the emerald-green waters of Lake Mansarovar (4,556 m / 14,947 ft). This holy lake sits just 30 km from Mount Kailash. Ancient glacial streams feed the lake, giving birth to four major Asian rivers. Finally, you perform the sacred 53-km Kailash Kora alongside expert mountain guides before driving back to Kathmandu.

Highlights of Kailash Mansarovar Overland Tour

- **Sacred Lake Mansarovar Puja:** Perform morning prayers along the holy lakeshore (4,556 m / 14,947 ft) and view Mount Kailash on your **Kailash Mansarovar Overland Tour**.

- **The 3-Day Sacred Kora Trek:** Hike the legendary 53 km circuit around Mount Kailash to reach Dirapuk Monastery.
- **Cross Dolma La Pass:** Reach the highest point of the pilgrimage at **Dolma La Pass (5,630 m / 18,471 ft)**.
- **View Holy Gauri Kund:** Admire the sacred emerald-green waters of Gauri Kund (Lake of Compassion).
- **Scenic Trans-Himalayan Overland Drive:** Pass alpine lakes like Peiku Tso, view Mt. Shishapangma (8,027 m / 26,335 ft), and cross the Brahmaputra River.
- **Complete High-Altitude Safety:** Travel with private oxygen cylinders, daily pulse oximeter checks, and an expert crew.

For complete details on physical preparation, read our detailed Nepal and Tibet Trekking Preparation Guide. You can also explore our alternative 15-Day Lhasa to Kailash Pilgrimage Package for a fly-in option.

Essential Gear & Packing Recommendations

Preparing your gear carefully ensures safety and comfort across high-altitude mountain passes. Daytime temperatures on the Tibetan Plateau often feel pleasant under direct sunlight. However, evening temperatures routinely drop below freezing at guest house stops. Therefore, we recommend wearing high-performance moisture-wicking layers rather than single heavy garments.

- **Layered Clothing:** Pack three pairs of thermal base layers (merino wool), quick-dry trekking trousers, and fleece mid-layers. A windproof down jacket rated for negative 10 degrees Celsius remains essential during early morning starts on your **Kailash Mansarovar Overland Tour**.
- **Footwear & Extremities:** Break in sturdy, waterproof high-ankle trekking boots well before departure. Bring 4 to 5 pairs of thick wool socks, insulated winter gloves, thin liner gloves, and a fleece beanie.
- **Sun & Eye Protection:** High-altitude UV rays reflect intensely off snow fields. Always pack Category 3 or 4 UV-blocking sunglasses, high-SPF sunscreen, and protective lip balm.
- **Trekking Hardware:** Carry sturdy adjustable trekking poles with rubber tips to reduce

joint strain during steep downhill sections. Bring a high-capacity power bank (20,000 mAh) because extreme cold drains electronic batteries quickly.

Before booking, make sure to review official entry requirements on the Tibet Autonomous Region Official Tourism Portal or consult the China Embassy in Nepal Entry Guidelines.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What permits and visas do I need for the Kailash Mansarovar Overland Tour?

Entering Western Tibet from Nepal requires four official documents: a Chinese Group Visa, a Tibet Travel Permit, an Alien's Travel Permit, and Military/Frontier Permits. Border authorities strictly reject independent applicants. Your licensed tour operator submits all permit applications and visa filings 30 to 45 days before departure.

How difficult is the Kailash Parikrama (Kora) trek, and how should I prepare?

The 3-day, 53 km trek challenges your body through thin air rather than technical terrain during the **Kailash Mansarovar Overland Tour**. The hardest section occurs on Day 2 during the steep climb to **Dolma La Pass (5,630 m / 18,471 ft)**. Build your stamina with cardio exercises—such as brisk walking, stair climbing, and deep breathing—for two months before your trip.

Can I hire a horse, pony, or personal porter for the 3-day trek?

Yes. You can hire local Tibetan porters and horses at Darchen or Yam Dwar on the evening before the trek starts. These services cost between $300 and $450 USD in local cash (RMB). For safety over icy terrain, riders must walk on foot while crossing Dolma La Pass.

What is the best season to undertake the Kailash Yatra?

The travel season runs from **May to October**. Spring (May–June) brings clear skies and pleasant trekking weather. Summer (July–August) offers warmer days but brings rain along the Nepal border. Autumn (September–October) delivers crisp air and clear mountain views, though night temperatures drop quickly.

Can climbers ascend Mount Kailash?

No. Climbers have never scaled Mount Kailash, and government regulations strictly forbid mountaineering here. Four major religions—Hinduism, Tibetan Buddhism, Jainism, and Bon—revere the peak as sacred ground. Local laws protect the mountain strictly for ground circumambulation (Kora).

How do you manage Altitude Sickness (AMS) during the overland drive?

To prevent altitude sickness on your **Kailash Mansarovar Overland Tour**, our itinerary includes gradual elevation gains. We schedule rest nights in Gyirong Town (2,700 m) and Saga (4,640 m) before reaching Mount Kailash. Guides track blood-oxygen levels daily using pulse oximeters, carry medical oxygen cylinders in all vehicles, and monitor hydration.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Kathmandu & Group Briefing

Arrive at Tribhuvan International Airport (KTM) in Kathmandu. Meet our representative outside the terminal and enjoy a smooth transfer to your hotel. Use the rest of the day to unwind, attend a comprehensive group briefing, verify original passports for Chinese Group Visa paperwork, and perform final gear checks with your tour leader.

- Location: Kathmandu, Nepal
- Elevation: 1,400 m / 4,593 ft
- Accommodation: Overnight in Kathmandu
- Meal Plan: Welcome Dinner (D)

Day 2: Scenic Drive from Kathmandu to Syabrubesi / Rasuwagadhi

Depart Kathmandu early in the morning aboard a private 4WD vehicle or mini-bus. Wind through lush mountain ridges, river valleys, terraced farmlands, and traditional Tamang villages along the Trishuli River. Arrive at the border town of Syabrubesi or Rasuwagadhi by late afternoon.

- Location: Kathmandu to Syabrubesi / Rasuwagadhi, Nepal
- Elevation: 1,550 m / 5,085 ft
- Accommodation: Overnight in guest house in Syabrubesi

- Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner (B/L/D)

Day 3: Border Clearance at Gyirong Port & Drive to Gyirong Town

Walk across the Friendship Bridge connecting Nepal and China at Rasuwagadhi. Clear Nepal export control and complete Chinese immigration and customs formalities at Gyirong Port. Meet your local Tibetan guide and driver outside the terminal before taking a short, scenic drive up the Gyirong Gorge to Gyirong Town for essential altitude adjustment.

- Location: Rasuwagadhi Border to Gyirong Port & Gyirong Town, Tibet (China)
- Elevation: 2,700 m / 8,858 ft in Gyirong Town
- Accommodation: Overnight in Gyirong Town
- Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner (B/L/D)

Day 4: Plateau Ascent Drive from Gyirong to Saga

Ascend steep mountain switchbacks onto the vast high-altitude Tibetan Plateau. Drive past the turquoise waters of alpine Lake Peiku Tso (4,590 m / 15,059 ft) while taking in views of Mount Shishapangma (8,027 m / 26,335 ft). Cross the Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra River) to reach the vibrant high-altitude hub of Saga.

- Location: Gyirong Town to Saga, Tibet
- Elevation: 4,640 m / 15,223 ft in Saga
- Accommodation: Overnight in Saga
- Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner (B/L/D)

Day 5: Overland Journey from Saga to Sacred Lake Mansarovar

Drive west across the open Tibetan Plateau past nomad settlements, wild kiangs, and grazing yak herds. Arrive at the shores of sacred Lake Mansarovar by late afternoon to catch your first awe-inspiring view of Mount Kailash in the distance. Spend the evening participating in quiet reflection and spiritual prayers along the lakeshore.

- Location: Saga to Lake Mansarovar / Chiu Monastery, Tibet
- Elevation: 4,556 m / 14,947 ft at Lake Mansarovar
- Accommodation: Overnight in guest house near Lake Mansarovar
- Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner (B/L/D)

Day 6: Holy Rituals at Lake Mansarovar & Drive to Darchen

Wake up to a serene sunrise over Lake Mansarovar. Spend the morning performing spiritual rituals, taking a holy dip, or visiting the cliffside Chiu Monastery overlooking the lake. In the afternoon, embark on a quick 1-hour drive to Darchen, the primary base town sitting at the foot of Mount Kailash.

- Location: Lake Mansarovar to Darchen, Tibet
- Elevation: 4,664 m / 15,301 ft in Darchen
- Accommodation: Overnight at Darchen
- Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner (B/L/D)

Day 7: Kailash Kora Day 1 – Trek from Darchen to Dirapuk Monastery

Take a short drive to Yam Dwar (Tarboch) to officially begin the sacred 53-kilometer Kailash Parikrama. Trek through the stunning Lha Chu Valley alongside glacier-fed streams. Arrive at Dirapuk Monastery by late afternoon to stand directly face-to-face with the immense North Face of Mount Kailash (6,638 m / 21,778 ft).

- Location: Darchen to Yam Dwar & Dirapuk Monastery, Tibet
- Elevation: 5,200 m / 17,060 ft at Dirapuk Monastery
- Accommodation: Overnight at guest house in Dirapuk
- Meal Plan: Breakfast, Packed Lunch, and Hot Dinner (B/L/D)

Day 8: Kailash Kora Day 2 – Cross Dolma La Pass to Zuthulpuk Monastery

Tackle the most demanding and sacred stretch of the circuit. Ascend steep trails to cross the high Dolma La Pass (5,630 m / 18,471 ft), where pilgrims hang colorful prayer flags. Pass the emerald waters of Gauri Kund (Lake of Compassion) before descending into the long valley to reach Zuthulpuk Monastery, home to Saint Milarepa’s cave.

- Location: Dirapuk over Dolma La Pass to Zuthulpuk Monastery, Tibet
- Elevation: 5,630 m / 18,471 ft at Dolma La Pass; 4,790 m / 15,715 ft at Zuthulpuk
- Accommodation: Overnight at guest house in Zuthulpuk
- Meal Plan: Breakfast, Packed Lunch, and Hot Dinner (B/L/D)

Day 9: Kailash Kora Day 3 – Complete Trek & Drive Back to Saga

Complete the final, gentle 10-kilometer leg of the Kora trek down to the pickup point near Darchen. Rejoin your driver and private vehicles, celebrate finishing the spiritual circuit, and enjoy a comfortable drive back across the plateau to Saga for a hot shower and rest.

- Location: Zuthulpuk to Darchen & Overland Drive to Saga, Tibet
- Elevation: 4,640 m / 15,223 ft in Saga
- Accommodation: Overnight at Hotel
- Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner (B/L/D)

Day 10: Scenic Descent Drive from Saga to Gyirong Town

Enjoy a relaxing drive back across the Tibetan Plateau, descending from the high-altitude desert terrain down into the lush, green alpine gorges of Gyirong County. Settle into your hotel in Gyirong Town for a comfortable night of rest at a lower elevation.

- Location: Saga to Gyirong Town, Tibet
- Elevation: 2,700 m / 8,858 ft in Gyirong Town
- Accommodation: Overnight at hotel in Gyirong Town
- Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner (B/L/D)

Day 11: Cross Border to Nepal & Return Drive to Kathmandu

Clear Chinese export immigration at Gyirong Port and cross the Friendship Bridge back into Nepal. Board your private Nepali transport at Rasuwagadhi border and drive through the Trishuli River Valley back to Kathmandu, concluding your Mount Kailash pilgrimage.

- Location: Gyirong Port to Rasuwagadhi & Kathmandu, Nepal
- Elevation: 1,400 m / 4,593 ft in Kathmandu
- Meal Plan: Breakfast and Lunch (B/L)

Inclusions

- **Visas & Permits:**
  - Special Chinese Group Visa
  - Tibet Travel Permit (TTP)
  - Alien Travel Permit & Ngari Restricted Area Permits
  - All border entry, customs, and immigration clearance handling
- **Accommodation:**
  - Hotel accommodation in Kathmandu as per itinerary
  - Tourist-standard hotel accommodation in Gyirong and Saga
  - Standard local guest house in Syabrubesi/Rasuwagadhi
  - Basic pilgrim guest house/dormitory accommodation at Lake Mansarovar, Dirapuk, and Zuthulpuk
- **Meals & Catering:**
  - Full board meal plan: Daily Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner (B/L/D) throughout the trip as detailed

- Safe drinking water (boiled/mineral water) during the tour

- **Transportation:**
  - Private ground transport from Kathmandu to the Nepal-China border (Rasuwagadhi) and return
  - Private comfortable tourist bus/vehicle on the Tibet side
  - Luggage handling and support vehicles as required by local regulations
- **Staff & Support:**
  - Experienced Nepali tour leader/guide
  - Official licensed English-speaking Tibetan local guide
  - Professional local Tibetan driver
  - Kitchen crew and support staff for meals during the trek
- **Equipment & Extras:**
  - Duffle bag for trek luggage
  - Basic medical first aid kit (including pulse oximeter for daily oxygen level checks)
  - Portable oxygen cylinders for emergency high-altitude use in vehicles

Exclusions

- **International Travel:**
- International airfare to and from Kathmandu
- Nepal entry visa fee for foreign nationals (obtained on arrival at Kathmandu Airport)
- **Kora / Parikrama Personal Upgrades:**
- Personal pony/horse or helper/porter hire during the 3-day Kailash Kora
- **Insurance & Emergencies:**
- Travel, medical, and emergency evacuation insurance (mandatory; must cover high-altitude travel above 5,000 m and helicopter evacuation)
- Hospitalization, medical treatment, or emergency rescue costs
- Any extra expenses caused by unforeseen natural events (landslides, road blockages,

heavy snowfall) or political/border delays

- **Personal Expenses & Tipping:**
- Personal laundry, phone calls, internet, bar bills, snacks, and extra mineral water
- Personal clothing, trekking gear, and thermal wear
- Tipping for Nepali staff, Tibetan guides, and drivers
- Any extra accommodation or meal charges in Kathmandu if you arrive early or return early from Tibet