Prayer flags flutter on wind-swept passes, snow-capped Himalayan peaks touch cobalt skies, plains of green barley and yellow canola shoulder treeless brown slopes and mountain monasteries echo the chants of monks. The sights and sounds of Tibet are fantastic and, for many, magnetic.

Kathmandu is our rendezvous point, where we spend a day touring before taking a spectacular Himalayan flight to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. To help us acclimatize, we leisurely explore Tsedang and the burial site of the ancient kings.

On our way to Lhasa, we visit Tibet’s first monastery, Samye, on the shore of the braided channels of the Yarlung Tsampo, the world’s highest river. In Lhasa, we see the towering 1,000-room Potala, the former winter palace of the Dalai Lama. We visit the religious sanctuaries of Sera, Drepung and the Jokhang, Tibet’s most religious structure. In the streets of Lhasa, we can walk with Tibetan pilgrims around one of the holiest paths in Tibet, the Barkhor.

The journey continues to Gyantse and Shigatse, via the

FACTS & HIGHLIGHTS
- 17 land days • Maximum 16 travelers • Start and finish in Kathmandu, Nepal • All meals included • Includes 1 internal flight • Discover Kathmandu, Nepal • Explore the Jokhang Temple, Drepung Monastery and Potala Palace in Lhasa • View Mount Everest • Meet Tibetan pilgrims and monks • Traverse the Tibetan Plateau and the Himalayas • Visit (hike or drive) to Everest Base Camp • See the sites of Gyantse and Shigatse

DEPARTURE DATES & PRICE
Oct 09 – Oct 25, 2017 - $5995 USD
Oct 12 – Oct 28, 2018 - $6195 USD

Activity Level: 2
Comfort Level: 10 days over 9,000 feet. Some rough/dusty roads and long drives. Temperatures can be cold at night at high altitude.

ACCOMMODATIONS
Comfortable hotels with private bathrooms. 1 night in communal Tibetan Yurt tents at Everest Base Camp & 1 night in very basic guesthouse with non-western shared bathrooms. NOTE: accommodations outside major cities can be quite basic compared to general western standards. We encourage bringing a sleeping sheet and travel pillow.
14,600-foot Karo La Pass, overlooking Yamdrok Lake far below. In Gyantse, the Khumbum Stupa is open for the curious who want to view its 1,000 Buddhas.

In Shigatse, we wander through the buildings of Tashilhunpo Monastery and observe the beautiful paintings and funerary pagodas of former Panchen Lamas. We continue our overland journey to Rongbuk Monastery, the highest in the world. From here, Mount Everest, or as the Tibetans call it, Qomolangma “Mother of the Earth” is a formidable and magnificent sight. At 29,035 ft (8,850 m) Mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world.

Leaving the plateau, we descend through the Himalayas. The land becomes greener as we head into the Kathmandu Valley, concluding one of the world’s great overland journeys.

**Combines with…**

Yunnan and some Bhutan departures. If traveling via Bangkok, combines with Angkor Wat.

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**DAY 1 ARRIVE IN KATHMANDU, NEPAL**

Arrive in Kathmandu and transfer to our centrally located hotel. The rest of the day is free to explore this historic and vibrant city. Tonight we meet for an orientation session. Overnight in Kathmandu. (Altitude 4,600 ft/ 1,400 m)

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**DAY 2 KATHMANDU — OLD CITY**

Today, we explore the old city of Kathmandu. We visit Swayambhunath — an ancient stupa sacred to Hindus and Buddhists, and the majestic stupa at Boudhanath. We visit Pashupatinath — the holiest place in Nepal — located on the shore of the Bagmati River. Thousands of pilgrims from all over the world, particularly from Nepal and India, pay homage to this temple
Boudhanath Stupa.
every day. Overnight in Kathmandu. (Altitude 4,600 ft/1,400 m)

**DAY 3 FLY TO LHASA - JOKHANG TEMPLE, BARKHOR BAZAAR**

Fly from Kathmandu to the high altitude airport of Gonggar outside of Lhasa.

Today we explore the beauty and mysteries of Lhasa, from narrow winding streets and bazaars, to palaces and temples. In Lhasa, highlights include the Jokhang Temple, which is the religious and geographical center of Lhasa. From morning until night, the area is alive with the chants and prostrations of pilgrims, and the bartering in the nearby Barkhor Bazaar. Overnight in Lhasa. (Altitude 11,450 ft/3,490 m)

**DAY 4 LHASA - DREPUNG AND SERA MONASTERIES**

Explore more of Lhasa today with some of the “must-sees”, which are the Drepung and Sera monasteries, two of the largest religious centers in Tibet. Drepung is the largest of all Tibetan monasteries and at its peak, the monastery housed 15,000 monks. It was also known for the high standards of its academic study.

Sera (wild rose in Tibetan) Monastery is well-known for its monks’ colorful debates on Buddhist doctrines. Overnight in Lhasa.

(Altitude 11,450 ft/3,490 m)

**DAY 5 LHASA - POTALA, DRAGON POOL, CHAGPORI HILL**

In the morning, we explore the magnificent Potala, the former winter palace of the Dalai Lama. Built of earth, wood and stone, the 13 stories of the palace
rise to a height of 380 feet and are filled with a maze of rooms - over a thousand in all. After leisurely taking in the astounding beauty of the Potala, we head to the Dragon Pool and then up to Chagpori, the hill that commands an excellent panoramic view of the entire Potala complex.

Tonight we have dinner in a Tibetan family restaurant. Overnight in Lhasa. (Altitude 11,450 ft/ 3,490 m)

**DAY 6 LHASA - NORBULINKA**

Today we visit Norbulinka, the former summer palace of the Dalai Lama, with 370 rooms of different sizes and a large garden covering an area of 46 acres. We overnight in Lhasa.

(Altitude 11,450 ft/ 3,490 m)

**DAY 7 TSEDANG - YAMBU LAKANG FORT, SAMYE MONASTERY**

On the wide open plains of the Tibetan plateau, we acclimatize to the high altitude. We cross the Yarlung Tsampo River and explore Tibet’s first monastery, Samye, built in the 8th century. Architecturally, it is built as a representation of the universe; the central temple represents Mount Meru and the temples around it represent the oceans, continents, and subcontinents that ring Mount Meru in Buddhist cosmology.

We take a short walk up the hill to see Tibet’s oldest building, Yambu Lakang, a fort perched high in the mountains overlooking a vast plain. Overnight in Tse-dang. (Altitude 10,170 ft/ 3,100 m)

**DAY 8 TO GYANTSE — VIA KAMBA LA AND KARO LA PASS**

In the morning, we begin the scenic drive to Gyantse, crossing Kamba La Pass (16,000 ft/4,794 m) and
the scenic Karo La Pass (16,800 ft/5,010 m), which climbs between two lofty mountains, Nozin Khang Sa (24,000 ft/7,223 m) and Ralung (16,000 ft/6,236 m). The descent leads us to the sacred moraine blue lake of Yamdrok Tso (Turquoise Lake or Upper Pasture Lake in Tibetan). Our drive concludes in Gyantse, a small bustling town steeped in history, once a capital of a small kingdom. Overnight in Gyantse. (Altitude 13,050 ft/3,977 m)

**Day 9 Palcho Monastery, Khumbum Stupa, To Shigatse**

In the morning we visit the Palcho Monastery, which is comprised of 16 monasteries representing different sects and schools of Buddhism in Tibet. It is regarded as a unique and fine example of tolerance between different Buddhist practices. We also visit Khumbum Stupa, one of the largest and holiest monasteries in Tibet. We continue from Gyantse to Shigatse and enroute we will stop at Shalu Monastery which dates back to the 11th century. Overnight in Shigatse. (Altitude 12,600 ft/3,840 m)

**Day 10 Shigatse Sights**

Today we explore the fantastic Tashilhunpo Monastery, the official residence of the Panchen Lama and home to over 700 monks. In the afternoon, there will be some time to explore on your own. Overnight in Shigatse. (Altitude 12,600 ft/3,840 m)

**Day 11 Xegar, Base of Mount Everest**

Our journey today takes to the monastic town of Sakya (4,280 m), crossing two passes; the Tropu La (4,950 m) and the Lhakpa La (5,200 m). With clear

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Yamdrok Tso (Turquoise Lake)
skies, the Himalayas now stand ahead of us on the horizon of the plateau, like icebergs in a sea of sand. The highlights of Sakya are its two monasteries, located on either side of the Trum-chu River. After our deviation to Sakya, we take the road turning off the Friendship Highway and head west for Xegar. Overnight in Xegar. (Altitude 13,287 ft/ 4,050 m)

**DAY 12 RONGBUK MONASTERY - IN THE SHADOW OF MT. EVEREST**

Today we drive from Xegar to Rongbuk Monastery, the highest monastery in the world at 16,338 ft (4,980 m). While Rongbuk is not the oldest monastery in Tibet, it is located in a spectacular setting with Everest towering in the background. The Tibetan name for Everest is Qomolangma which means “mother goddess of the universe” and for many, even the name inspires visions of its snow-capped peak and black north face rising up into piercing blue sky. It is the highest mountain in the world, at 29,035 ft (8,850 m).

We then journey a little further past Rongbuk to our simple camp, which is the starting point of our Mount Everest hike. Get settled into our Yak tents and talk to the locals that live here as we get use to the altitude. Our camp is very basic with communal living. Basic beds line the walls with a wood stove in the middle for heat. Bring some warm sleeping clothes as it tends to get a little cold at night at this altitude. Overnight in Tibetan yurt (tents) with shared facilities.

**DAY 13 MT. EVEREST BASE CAMP HIKE (DRIVING OPTION), RETURN TO XEGAR**

Up early with the sunrise for our 2 hr morning hike to the Everest Base Camp. For those that do not want to hike, a local bus from the camp will be arranged to meet the group at camp. After a group photo with majestic Mt Everest behind us, we can either walk back or hop on the bus back to camp.

After catching our breath and some lunch, we journey back to “civilization” today as we travel by 4WD vehicles back to Xegar. Overnight in Xegar.

**DAY 14 TO KERUNG-RASUWAGDHI BORDER**

We continue driving across the dramatic Tibetan plateau to the recently opened Trans-Himalayan trading post of Kerung (5-6hrs approx) via the stunningly beautiful, Peiku Tso Lake - a spectacular drive on the road that cuts through the Himalayas; dramatic change in vegetation & landscape in such a short distance is truly mind boggling. Prayer flags flutter continuously, with the eternal Himalayan panorama facing us, leaving the rooftop of the world behind. The surreal scenery will leave you in awe. Overnight in Kerung. (Altitude: 10,499 ft/3,200 m)

**DAY 15 THROUGH THE HIMALAYAS TO NUWAKOT**

After customs & immigration formalities, we cross over to the other side of the Kerung - Rasuwagadhi border where you’ll board our vehicle for a bumpy 15km ride to the gateway to the Langtang region (1hr approx). Road conditions improve from Syabrubesi onwards as the rural scenes of Nepal will enchant you on your drive to the idyllic little hill-top village of Nuwakot (4-5hrs approx), hidden from the mainstream tourist route and famed of its much historic citadel. Later in the afternoon, take a leisurely stroll to the Nuwakot Bazaar - a centre-piece of the Nepalese story, embellished by the rich history behind the 17th century fortress and Royal palace, depicting the shap-
ing of far-flung tribes and of trans-Himalayan races into a unified kingdom. Overnight in Nuwakot.

**DAY 16 EXPLORING ANCIENT BHAKTAPUR & PATAN**

Descending from Nuwakot, we soon follow the course of the Trisuli river to emerge on to the main arterial highway to the capital city (3hrs approx). Entering Kathmandu, the drive continues to the medieval town of Bhaktapur. After lunch, we explore the walled city of Bhaktapur, an ancient city that has been lovingly restored to its authentic style. This medieval town of Bhaktapur, is known though for its woodcarvers and “peacock” windows. We also visit Patan and its lesser known, but equally impressive Durbar Square. The second largest city in the valley, Patan is also known as the “City of Arts”. Overnight in Bhaktapur. (Altitude 4,600 ft/1,400 m)

**DAY 17 DEPART BHAKTAPUR**

A morning departure from Kathmandu for international flights home.
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. HOW BIG ARE THE GROUPS?
Each group is limited to 16 participants. Small groups are an important ingredient in adventure travel. They allow for more interaction and more personalized service throughout the itinerary.

2. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?
All accommodations throughout; all meals, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); bottled drinking water throughout the trip; all internal transportation; airport transfers on day 1 and departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); all day trips and entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary; tips for hotels (porterage), national guide, bus driver, restaurants and spot guides; services of a trip leader.

3. WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?
International flights, tips to ElderTreks tour leader, alcoholic drinks, visa’s and travel insurance.

4. ARE THESE “EDUCATIONAL” TOURS?
Yes, in the broadest sense of the word, “educational”. We visit cultural centers and historical sites, and have talks and discussions on many aspects of history, culture and nature. But this is only a portion of the educational experience. We believe that it is equally educational to meet local people on a non-commercial basis, visit their homes and even try to learn a few words in the native language. Sometimes the most “educational” moments are spent sipping a cold drink in a street market.

5. HOW DO WE TRAVEL DURING THE TOUR?
All local transportation is included in the land price of the trip. We use minivans and jeeps for our land travel. We also have one internal flight and a return boat journey crossing the Yarlung Tsampo River.

6. WHAT ARE OUR ACCOMMODATIONS LIKE?
We always stay in good accommodations, where rooms have a private bath or shower. We choose our accommodations on the basis of location, atmosphere and local charm. In areas with limited accommodations, we always stay in the best available. That said, accommodations outside major cities can be quite basic compared to Western standards. Note Day 11 to 14 the accommodations are very, very remote and basic. Day 12 common room sleeping with outhouse toilets and no showers.

7. WHAT ABOUT THE WEATHER?
The best times to visit Tibet are April/May and October/November. The weather is generally mild, with daytime temperatures in the 60’s°F (16°C) and 70’s°F (21°C). The nights can be considerably cooler and the temperature drops as we climb in altitude.

8. WHEN IS PAYMENT DUE?
A non-refundable deposit of $500 or £300 GBP (plus insurance if you require it) is due at time of booking and will reserve your place on the tour. Payment of the full land cost is due 100 days before departure. Cancellation charges are applicable and are outlined in the “Terms and Conditions” section of our brochure.

9. IS MEDICAL INSURANCE REQUIRED?
Insurance coverage is not included in the cost of your trip. Please note that medical insurance is mandatory for this adventure. ElderTreks offers comprehensive travel insurance and we are happy to provide you with a quote if you call our office. If you are purchasing insurance elsewhere, please ensure you provide the details to ElderTreks as soon as possible.

*Please note those travelers with pre-existing medical conditions must take out travel insurance at the time of deposit

10. WHAT SHOULD I TAKE ON THE TOUR?
There is a detailed “What to Take” list in our Trip Kit, which we will send to you after you have booked the trip.

11. WHAT MEALS ARE INCLUDED?
All meals during the itinerary are included, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day. We eat a variety of local foods prepared in a wide range of settings. In many cases, we simply order a number of dishes and share, allowing you to sample new foods and decide what you enjoy best.

12. CAN YOU ARRANGE MY FLIGHTS?
We would be happy to take care of your air arrangements. ElderTreks offers personalized flight itineraries — not group flights. Stop over en route, come in a few days early, or extend your stay. Call us for a customized flight itinerary.

13. WHAT IF I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION?
If you have any further questions about the trip, please do not hesitate to contact our office for additional information. A Trip Kit containing further details on the destination will be sent to you once you have booked the tour.