



Trekking the Planet

Discovering the Cultural and Natural Significance of the World



Where are we now?

- Darren and Sandy are in Lhasa, China (Tibet), located at 29° N and 91° E.
- We have traveled approximately 24,505 miles (39,437 kilometers) from our starting point in California.



People and Culture

- A Tibetan empire was established in the 7th century AD with Buddhism as the primary religion. Over subsequent centuries, eastern regions passed into direct Chinese rule. The remainder of Tibet stayed unified while passing through some periods of Chinese and Mongol lordships.
- A series of Dalai Lamas began rule in the 16th century as the political and spiritual leader. It is believed that each Dalai Lama is a reincarnation of the previous leader.
- China invaded Tibet in 1950. In 1959, the 14th Dalai Lama moved into exile in Dharamshala, India, where he lives today.
- Tibet is now one of five autonomous regions in China. A railway, completed in 2006, links Tibet with China's Qinghai Province and the rest of the country. It is the world's highest railway line. Travel from the Tibetan capital city of Lhasa to Beijing takes about 48 hours.
- The city of Lhasa is the largest in Tibet, with about one million residents. It is home to Potala Palace, the former home of the Dalai Lama.
- Common foods include tsampa (roasted barley flour), which is rolled into noodles or steamed dumplings. Salted butter tea is a popular drink.

Did you know?

When greeting honored guests, Tibetans place a white or yellow cloth around their neck. This ceremonial scarf is called a khada or khata and it can be white or yellow. It is typically silk and symbolizes purity and compassion of the giver.



sources: Wikipedia.org,
Tibetanbuddhistsociety.com



Potala Palace, 13 stories high and containing 1,000 rooms (source: PressclubofTibet.org)



Tsampa (source: Etours.cn)

Nature and Environment

- The Tibetan region comprises about 13% of China's total area and is the size of Western Europe. It is known as "The Roof of the World" with an average elevation of 16,000 feet (4,900 meters).
- The eastern portion of the region is covered with forest and farmland. Farming and herding take place here. In the north there are open grasslands and deserts. This area is sparsely inhabited. Most of Tibet's population lives in the south.
- The Yalong Tsangpo River, running through the south, is the highest river in the world with an average elevation of 13,100 feet (4,000 meters). It flows into India and becomes the Brahmaputra River there before continuing to the Bay of Bengal.
- Even at such high elevation many animals can be found in the Tibetan region. Himalayan pit viper snakes have been found as high as 16,000 feet (4,900 meters). The Himalayan mouse hare or pika have been observed at mountain elevations of 20,000 feet (6,096 meters), making them one of the highest living animals on earth.
- In 1995 a small horse was discovered in a remote Tibetan valley. Named the Riwoche horse, it stands only about 4 feet (122 centimeters) tall and has stripes of the backs of its legs.

Holy Lakes

Tibet has several sacred lakes. One of the largest is Yamdrok Lake, also known as Yamdok Yumtso. These lakes are considered to be deity dwelling places and have special powers. Pilgrims travel to walk around the lakes. Other holy lakes are Lhamo La-tso, Namtso and Manasarovar.



Yamdrok Lake (sources: Scenery.cultural-china.com, Pixdaus.com)



Riwoche horse and Himalayan mouse hare (sources: Treknature.com, Getglue.com)

Our Plans

- We left Kathmandu, Nepal and crossed the border into China (Tibet) by car. While in Tibet and en route to Lhasa we visited the site of Everest Base Camp and several monasteries. We drove as high as 16,437 feet (5,010 meters).
- In Lhasa we are spending two days to visit such sites as the Jokhang Temple, Barkhor Market / Bazaar and Portola Palace.
- After leaving Lhasa we will take several flights through China to get to Central Asia and Kyrgyzstan. We will begin a three-week exploration of this region, as well as complete our next trek.
- Keep those questions coming and we will answer as many as possible.

Yaks

The Yak is one of the main animals found in the Tibetan region. They are used for plowing and carrying materials over the challenging terrain of the region. Yaks can carry up to 110 pounds (50 kilograms) over passes as high as 16,404 feet (5,000 meters) at temperatures as low as -22°F (-30°C). They also are a source of meat, milk, leather and wool.



sources: [Funtrivia.com](http://www.funtrivia.com), Project-himalaya.com

More Information

- <http://www.afpmb.org/content/venomous-animals-g>
- <http://lifestyle.iloveindia.com/lounge/facts-about-tibet-2970.html>
- <http://factsanddetails.com/china.php?itemid=439&catid=15&subcatid=100>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dalai_Lama
- http://www.thefullwiki.org/Riwoche_horse
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibet>
- <http://www.tibettravelplanner.com/tibet-facts.htm>
- <http://factsanddetails.com/china.php?itemid=195&catid=6&subcatid=38>

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