

## Songtsam “Exploring Eastern Tibet” 7N/8D



*“In Tibetan culture legend has it that in another time and space there is a kingdom called Shambala. It is a quiet and peaceful kingdom because everybody there knows the source of happiness.”*

**Mr Pema Dorjee**  
Founder & Chairman of Songstam

From Nyingchi to Bome travelling along the National Highway 318, this journey is a collection of the most stunning landscapes found in eastern Tibet. From the river valley and canyon to the forest areas and agricultural region of Lhasa, the vitality of thousands of years is in full bloom here. The Buddhist temples bath in the sun, the monks walk piously, the glaciers shine brightly, and the birds fly high and come from afar. All roads lead to the final destination, the holy city of Lhasa, to witness and experience the converging faith of the “place of gods”.

### Songtsam Lodge Bome (2,700m)

Bome lies in the neighbouring area between the Himalaya and Nyenchen Tanglha mountain range of east Tibet. Also known as the “Swiss Alps of Tibet”, Bome is a paradise with its weather being warm in the winter and cool in summer. The area features primeval forests, snow-capped mountain ranges, stunning rivers and holy lakes and splendid glaciers.



### Songtsam Lodge Laigu (4,200m)

Our highest property set on a cliff side facing glaciers and nestled among the area's snow-capped mountains and lakes. The lodge also uses state of art oxygen concentrator technology to achieve a 24-hour closed oxygen supply. The floor heating is imported from Denmark and the floor-to-ceiling triple-layered vacuum glass windows provide warmth and UV protection whilst at the same time offering breathtaking views of Rawu Lake.



### Songtsam Linka BasongTso (3,400m)

Songtsasm Linka BasongTso lies beside the Basumtso Lake, an alpine lake at the middle and upper reaches of the Ba River, which is the largest tributary of the Nyang River. Basumtso Lake is surrounded by mountains, and its climate is mild. The snowy mountain, the crystal lake, the lush trees, the monastery and the villages make up a perfect paradise.





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### Songtsam Linka Lhasa (3,700m)

Built on the edge of an old park our retreat offers spectacular views of the nearby Potala Palace located only 5 kilometers away. From the hotel's slaked lime coloured walls to the indigo carved windows and fish-fin shaped facade, all of these architectural details pay great respect to traditional artisans, Tibetan culture, and ancient wisdom. Rooms exhibit a unique combination of modern and traditional Tibetan aesthetics that are elegantly decorated with wooden floors, wall tapestries, and handcrafted copperware. Each room is also fully equipped with oxygen concentrators to relieve AMS and ensure good rest.



## Trip Schedule

**Program starts from Nyingchi and ends in Lhasa. All information in this itinerary is accurate to the best of our knowledge but please note that changes to our trips can and do occur.**

Day	Overnight Location	- Activities
Day 1	Songtsam Lodge Bome (2,700m) Deluxe Room L, D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pick up from Nyingchi Mainling Airport.</li> <li>- Drive over the sacred Sejila Snow Mountain pass to see the Namcha Barwa Holy Mountain (weather permitting). The Namcha Barwa peak is the highest in Nyingchi prefecture and the 15th highest in the globe. Its colossal triangle body is covered with deep snow and mists all year round (2 hour drive).</li> <li>- Have lunch at a local restaurant.</li> <li>- Continue driving along the Palong Tsangpo River and through dense forest towards Bome (2.5 hour drive).</li> <li>- Check into Songtsam Lodge Bome and relax with welcome drinks and locals snacks.</li> <li>- Welcome dinner at the lodge.</li> </ul>
Day 2	Songtsam Lodge Laigu (4,200m) Deluxe Room B, L, D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- After breakfast visit Gang Village and hike into the original spruce forest (3 hours).</li> <li>- Have picnic lunch at the Gang Village.</li> <li>- In the afternoon, depart for Ranwu driving along the Palongzangpo River (4 hours).</li> <li>- Check into Songtsam Lodge Laigu, adapt to the altitude and enjoy the Laigu Glacier view.</li> <li>- Have dinner at the lodge.</li> </ul>
Day 3	Songtsam Lodge Laigu (4,200m) Deluxe Room B, L, D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experience the magnificent sunrise on the lodge's terrace in the morning (weather permitting).</li> <li>- After breakfast head to Duosong Tso, a holy and secret lake without any tourists, to witness the pristine forest, blue lake, and snow-capped mountains (3 hours).</li> <li>- Lunch at the lodge.</li> <li>- In the afternoon visit the pilgrimage temple of Xiudeng, a 500-year old monastery that accommodated 5 living Buddhas during its more glorious years (2 hours).</li> <li>- Dinner at the lodge.</li> </ul>

Day 4	<p>Songtsam Lodge Bome (2,700m) Deluxe Room B, L, D</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- After breakfast drive to the mirror-like Rawu Lake surrounded by snow-capped mountains. Known for its tranquil and colorful water, the lake turns to dark blue or turquoise in accordance with the seasonal changes. Continue driving along the Palong Tsangpo River and through dense forest towards Nyingchi (2.5-hour drive).</li> <li>- Have lunch at Songtsam Lodge Bome.</li> <li>- In the afternoon take part in a traditional Tibetan paper workshop to make your own Tibetan paper using ancient techniques. Paper making dates back centuries and historically it was used for official documents and currency production. Tibetan paper is renowned for being insect proof and long lasting, which led to it being used to write contracts traditionally, as anything written on it would take a long time to fade - even after being soaked in water (2.5 hours).</li> <li>- Dinner at the lodge.</li> </ul>
Day 5	<p>Songtsam Linka BasongTso (3,400m) Deluxe Room B, L, D</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- After breakfast, depart for Lulang, pass by Lulang's immense forest to see the snow-capped mountains, meadows, cattle and sheep. (3 hours)</li> <li>- Have lunch at the local restaurant.</li> <li>- In the afternoon, visit the Zhaxigang Village.</li> <li>- Arrive at BasongTso and check into Songtsam Linka</li> <li>- BasongTso. (3 hours) Dinner at the hotel.</li> </ul>
Day 6	<p>Songtsam Linka Lhasa (3,700m) Superior Suite Room B, L, D</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- After breakfast visit the Basong Tso holy lake and Tsozong Gongba Monastery located in the middle of the lake on Tashi Island. Basong Tso is a holy turquoise coloured alpine lake located in the middle and upper reaches of the Ba River, which is the largest tributary of the Nyang River (the longest tributary of the Yarlung Tsangpo River).</li> <li>- Have lunch at the hotel.</li> <li>- In the afternoon, follow the G318 highway to Lhasa (4- hour drive).</li> <li>- Check into Songtsam Linka Lhasa and relax with welcome drinks and local snacks. Dinner at the hotel.</li> </ul>

Day 7	<p>Songtsam Linka Lhasa (3,700m) Superior Suite Room B, L, D</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In the morning visit the magnificent Potala Palace. Built in the 6th century, it is the iconic heart of Tibetan Buddhism and the highest palace in the world (2 hours).</li> <li>- Lunch at the hotel.</li> <li>- In the afternoon visit Jokhang Temple, the spiritual center of Tibet and the holiest destination for all Tibetan pilgrims. During both day and night you will witness lots of pilgrims praying in front of the temple (2hours).</li> <li>- Afterwards go to Barkhor Street to experience the most vibrant bazaar in Lhasa. A popular circumambulation for pilgrims it is seen as “a saint road” in the eyes of the Tibetan people. Here you can feel the local spiritual belief from pilgrims with different dresses and dialects from all over Tibet who pray devoutly along this street (1 hour). Farewell dinner at the hotel.</li> </ul>
Day 8	<p>Departure B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- After breakfast, transfer to Lhasa Gonggar Airport (1-hour drive).</li> </ul>





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### Trip Costs

Price unit: (USD)/per person

	Low Season	Shoulder Season	Peak Season	Holiday
Private Tour (Minimum 2 PAX)	4149	4639	4779	4789
Single Room Supplement	929	1119	1349	1629
Tibetan Permit & documents related	CNY 700 per person, CNY 150 for travel documents of Nyingchi, Shannan and Changdu district. Songtsam will assist with your application. Guests from HK, Macau, and mainland China do not need to apply.			

**\*Low season:** 19 Feb - 31 Mar

**Shoulder season:** 3 Jan - 5 Feb, 27 Apr - 30 Apr, 6 May - 30 Jun, 24 Aug - 14 Sep, 18 Sep - 30 Sep, 1 Nov - 30 Nov, 1 Dec - 22 Dec, 2024

**Peak season:** 1 Jan - 2 Jan, 16 Apr - 26 Apr, 1 Jul - 23 Aug, 8 Oct - 31 Oct, 23 Dec - 31 Dec, 2024

**Holidays:** 6 Feb - 18 Feb, 16 Mar - 15 Apr, 1 May - 5 May, 15 Sep - 17 Sep, 1 Oct - 7 Oct, 2024

#### **Land Costs INCLUDES:**

- All land transfers on well-maintained local transportation indicated in the itinerary.
- All admission fees and activities as indicated in the itinerary.
- All accommodation based on double occupancy.
- All meals starting from dinner on the first day to breakfast on the last day.
- Standard drinking water and snacks throughout the trip.
- Complimentary minibar in guest rooms.
- Service of local guides.
- Tibet entrance fee and travel document fee for foreign guests.

#### **Land Costs DOES NOT INCLUDE:**

- Medical, travel insurance, or evacuation insurance plans.
- Personal telecommunication.
- Domestic or international airfare to Shangri-La and from Lhasa.
- Excursions and activities not included in itinerary.

**Travel Notes:**

- Since you will be travelling in a high-altitude area, we do not recommend you join this trip if you have heart disease, high blood pressure, or respiratory disease.
- Due to the plateau's strong ultraviolet radiation please prepare 50+ sunblock and sunglasses.





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## **Trip Expectations**

**Trip difficulty:** This journey is considered moderately strenuous when touring and moderate when hiking. Our itinerary includes full days of activities, which start early in the morning and end in the evening. Each person can respond to a change in altitude differently so in the event of altitude sickness we would move to a lower altitude. After plenty of rest, symptoms usually subside. For more information we advise consulting with your doctor.

**Road conditions and transportation:** Depending on the size of the group, we travel in well maintained SUVs or vans. Experienced Songtsam drivers drive all vehicles. Some sections of the road follow winding mountain paths and are bumpy especially when some parts are under construction. We will make stops at beautiful villages and scenic spots on the way and will prepare water and snacks for the road trips.

**Weather:** During this trip you will experience diverse temperatures. The temperature can change from 20 degrees centigrade to 5 degrees centigrade within one day. Wearing layers of clothes is advisable to allow for changes in temperature.

**Meals:** During your journey you will get to try Tibetan cuisine, which includes a good amount of barley flour-based items such as dumplings and noodles, as well as red meat such as yak and mutton. At Shangri-La, Meili, Rumei, Laigu, and Lhasa properties plus all contracted hotels, we will provide set menus, which combine Tibetan and Chinese cuisine.

**Emergency evacuation and procedures:** We suggest all travellers purchase an International SOS (an AEA company) Service Plan, which provides emergency evacuation to the nearest medical facility of international standards.

**Trip escorts:** Our well-trained local guides are specialists on Tibet and the local region and will travel with you throughout the trip. All originating from different villages and areas, all Songtsam guides have stories to share about their hometowns, which provides deeper travel experiences for all guests to understand the local culture and geography.

## **The Songtsam Story**



Some memories never fade. It seems like only yesterday that Songtsam founder and Chairman Mr Pema Dorjee was on his way back to Shangri-La with ambitious plans to shoot a documentary of his childhood home. While it had been many years since he had last set foot in his native land, fond memories came pouring back. He remembered the excitement of climbing local mountains as a young boy, the intimate solitude of his town's temples, and the people who helped define him as a person.

Finally, he was home. The rush of emotions made him wonder: How could he give back? What more could he do? Soon it all became clear. He thought about the region's rich culture and how he could create a way for travellers to come and experience a new way of life. A place that was more than the usual hotel and gift shops, a place where guests could immerse themselves in living history. So Pema turned his family's small guesthouse into the first Songtsam lodge.

Inspired by the rich Tibetan culture, he worked with local artisans and members of the community to help produce and run Songtsam Lodge Shangri-La. Eleven properties and eighteen years later, Pema's vision continues to grow, and so does the Songtsam experience.

## About the Area



The great China tectonic plate runs into the Tibetan Plateau in northern Yunnan, forging high mountain ranges with soaring snow-packed peaks. Three major rivers, the Yangtze (Jinshajiang), Mekong (Lancangjiang) and Salween (Nujiang) run through deep gorges with wild, untamed scenery. This charming destination is diverse in nature and culture due to its unique geography, indeed, one can experience all four seasons in just one day. Due to the vast range in altitude, travellers can quickly move from cold snowy mountains to warm flower-filled valleys.

Northwest Yunnan is the richest area in China in terms of biodiversity, boasting unique flora and fauna, and is possibly the most biologically diverse temperate region on earth. This is the original location of the world's gardens: in spring and summer, the surrounding hills are blanketed with rhododendrons and camellias. The Victorians collected and brought these to the Western world. The temperate forests and lowlands contain over 3,000 species of orchids and more than 200 of the world's 400 species of rhododendron. In summer time, strikingly blue irises are in blossom along the mountain paths.



Bird watching and cycling bring travellers in close proximity to all kinds of migrant birds at their winter heaven around Napa Lake, including the black-necked crane – the holy bird for Tibetans. High in the forests between the Mekong and Yangtze River lives the rare Yunnan Black snub-nosed monkey (*Rhinopithecus biteti*), one of the world's most endangered primates - fewer than 2,000 are now found in the wild. These monkeys live at the highest altitude (3,000-4,500m) of any animal primate.



Historically, people were separated by the soaring mountains and deep gorges in this area, facilitating the development of the most distinctive ethnic cultures. Kham Tibetans in Diqing are characterized by their big white wooden houses and colourful customs, which differ from Tibetans in other areas of Tibet. In this area along the Lancang River, although the shining golden roofs of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries sparkle in the light, Tibetans here follow Catholic teachings and practice their ceremonies at small Catholic churches surrounded by vineyards. Travelling from the highlands to the banks of the rivers, styles of housing and costume change. The Lisu people, another ethnic group, dwell close to the water in the mountain valleys.



The Tea Horse Road, an ancient trade route linking tea-producing areas with Tibet, connects the mountains and deep gorges as well as different ethnic groups. For hundreds of years, horse caravans travelled along this route carrying tea to Tibet and India, and bringing other commodities back home. This route has formed a corridor rich in culture, as different groups interact with each other in their daily lives. Today, one can travel around this area journeying along different parts of this ancient trail.

