



Lhasa ལ་ས་

☑ 0891 / POP 500,000 / ELEV 3650M

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Best Places to Eat

- » Snowland Restaurant (p71)
- » Wooser Zedroe Tibetan Restaurant (p72)
- » New Mandala Restaurant (p71)

Best Places to Stay

- » Yabshi Phunkhang (p64)
- » Kyichu Hotel (p64)
- » Rama Kharpo (p65)

Why Go?

Despite rampant modernisation and expansion, Lhasa (the Place of the Gods) is still a city of wonders. Your first view of the red and white Potala Palace soaring above the holy city will raise the goosebumps, while the whitewashed old Tibetan quarter to the east continues to preserve the flavour of traditional Tibetan life. It is here in the Jokhang, an otherworldly mix of flickering butter lamps, wafting incense and prostrating pilgrims, and the encircling Barkhor pilgrim circuit that most visitors first fall in love with Tibet.

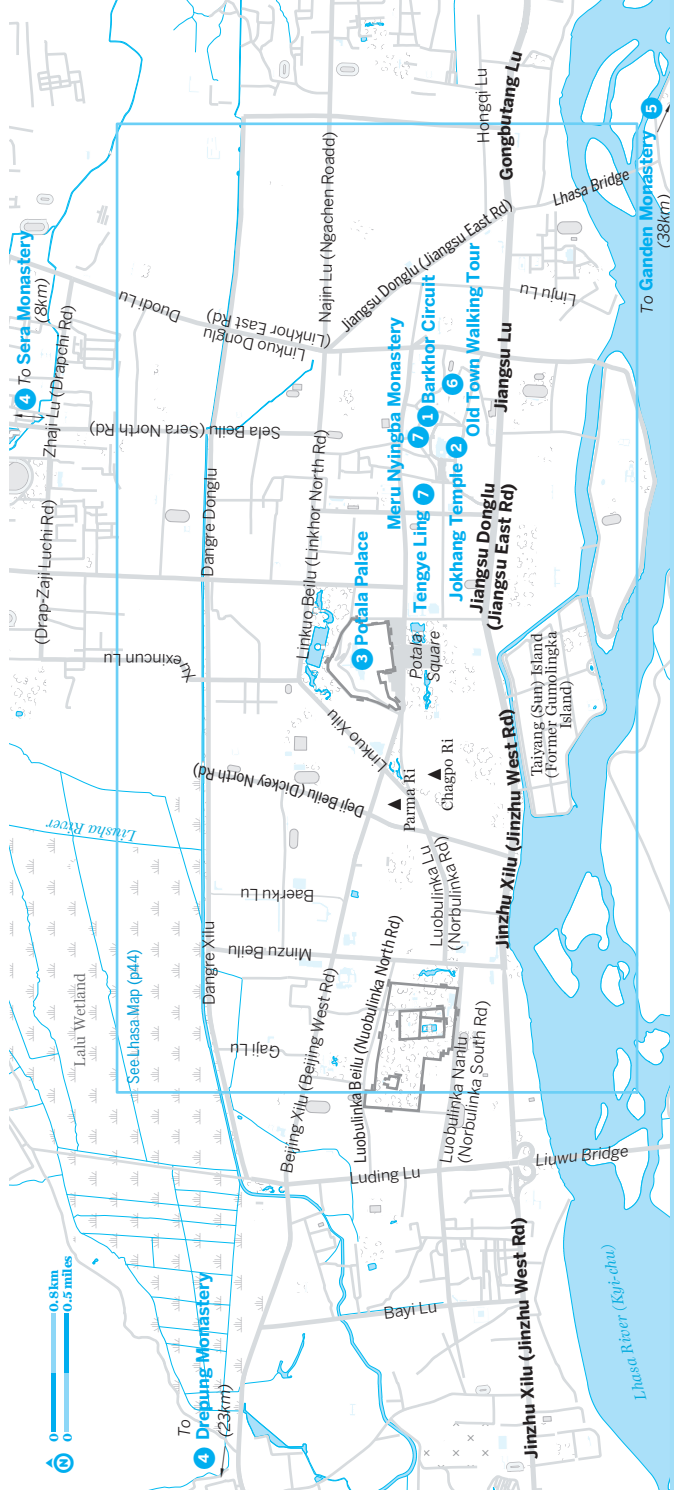
These days the booming boulevards of the modern Chinese city dwarf the winding alleyways of the whitewashed Tibetan quarter but it is in the latter that you should focus your time. Hired transport is not required in Lhasa and most guides will let you explore the city by yourself. If possible, budget a week to acclimatise, see the sights and explore the backstreets before heading off on an overland adventure.

When to Go

Temperatures are comfortable during April to September, with days surprisingly warm and nights pleasantly cool. Sunlight is strong at this altitude so always wear sunscreen.

The major festivals of Saga Dawa (spring) and Losar (winter) bring huge numbers of pilgrims to the city, and the August Shötun festival is also a major draw.

Accommodation can be tight during the first weeks of May and October and the months of July and August, when Chinese tourists flock to the city.



Lhasa Highlights

- 1 Follow monks, mendicants and fellow pilgrims around the fascinating medieval pilgrim circuit, the **Barkhor** (p43)
- 2 Join the lines of awed pilgrims around the glowing

shrines of the **Jokhang** (p45), Tibet's holiest sanctuary

- 3 Ogle the murals and stupas of the **Potala** (p52), the impressive but spiritless citadel of the Dalai Lamas

- 4 Take in a prayer meeting or some monk-debating at **Sera** (p83) or **Drepung** (p78), Tibet's great monastic cities
- 5 Take a day trip out to **Ganden Monastery** (p89) and

test your sin on its fascinating kora (pilgrim path)

- 6 Explore the architecture, teashops and craft workshops of Lhasa's backstreets on our **old town walking tour** (p66)

- 7 Track down one of Lhasa's delightful off-the-beaten-track temples, such as the **Meru Nyingba Monastery** (p45) or **Tengye Ling** (p61)