



# Western Tibet (Ngari)

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## Best Views

- » Humla Karnali Valley from Shepeling (Simbaling) Monastery (p188)
- » Tagyel-tso, or anywhere along the northern route (p170)
- » Mt Kailash floating over the waters of Rakshas Tal (p178)

## Best Places off the Beaten Track

- » Gossul Monastery (p179)
- » Ruins of Shangshung in the Khyunglung Valley (p181)
- » Old Rutok (p186)

## Why Go?

Vast, thinly populated and with an average altitude of over 4500m, Ngari is Tibet's wild west, a rough and ready frontier occupying one of the remotest corners of Asia. For most travellers the main attractions of what is likely to be a three-week overland trip are the almost legendary destinations of Mt Kailash and Lake Manasarovar. Indeed, many of the pilgrims on this road have been planning a visit all their lives. For those less fussed by the spiritual significance of Mt Kailash, getting to one of the most isolated and beautiful corners of high Asia is likely to be an attraction in itself.

Until recently only the hardest of travellers made it to western Tibet, but freshly paved roads and a new airport means that the region is on the verge of embracing mass Chinese tourism.

## When to Go

May to June and mid-September to early October are the best times to head to Ngari, though June and July see huge convoys of Indian pilgrims booking out entire hotels on their way to Mt Kailash. April to October is best for the Drölma-la pass on the Kailash kora, as it's normally blocked with snow during other months.

The festival of Saga Dawa in May/June is a particularly popular time to visit Mt Kailash, and hundreds of pilgrims and tourists descend on the mountain. Some find the pilgrim atmosphere a highlight; others find the large numbers of trekking groups off-putting.



## Western Tibet Highlights

- 1** Join fellow pilgrims looking to erase the sins of a lifetime on the three-day trek around sacred **Mt Kailash** (p175)
- 2** Hike the sandy shores of holy **Lake Manasarovar** (p178), or just marvel at the intensely turquoise waters and snowcapped-mountain backdrop
- 3** Camp on the shores of the spectacular otherworldly lakes of **Tagyel-tso** (p170), **Dawa-tso** (p171) and **Peikuo-tso** (p168), as long as you are acclimatised