



Eastern Tibet (Kham)

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Why Go?

Kham is the face you never knew Tibet had: a land of raging rivers and deep gorges, immense pine forests and azalea-filled meadows, outspoken monks and rebel nomads. In Kham the Tibetan plateau begins its descent towards the subtropical Sichuān basin, and the landscapes represent both extremes: you can drive over a scrubby high mountain pass dusted with snow and a few hours later be sliding your way through rainforest on a mud-bath road. And chances are you'll be the only foreigner in sight.

Most of Kham is off limits these days but, fortunately, the traditional territory of Kongpo, a cradle of early Tibetan civilisation, is open. In this lush, fairy-tale-like land there are intriguing distinctions in architecture, dress, food, worship (the area has a high number of Bönpo) and quirky legends regarding some of the towering figures of Tibetan history.

When to Go

➔ May and June are the best months to travel in eastern Tibet. There's less rain, temperatures are at their most comfortable and much of the landscape is covered in blankets of bright-yellow rapeseed flowers and, at higher elevations, blooming azaleas.



Eastern Tibet (Kham) Highlights

1 Staying with a Tibetan family in the charming village of **Tashigang** (p199).

2 Admiring the devotional spirit of pilgrims on the **Bönri kora** (p196).

3 Visiting the pilgrim power centre of **Draksum-tso** (p193) and its island monastery.