



Lhasa

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📍 0891 / POP 500,000 / ELEV 3650M

Includes ➔

Lhasa	40
Drepung Monastery	75
Nechung Monastery	79
Sera Monastery	80
Pabonka Monastery	83
Ganden Monastery	85
Drak Yerpa	88
Drölma Lhakhang	89
Shongse (Shugsheb) Nunnery	90

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Snowland Restaurant (p70)
- ➔ Woer Zedroe Tibetan Restaurant (p69)
- ➔ New Mandala Restaurant (p70)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ House of Shambhala (p66)
- ➔ Kyichu Hotel (p67)
- ➔ Rama Kharpo (p65)

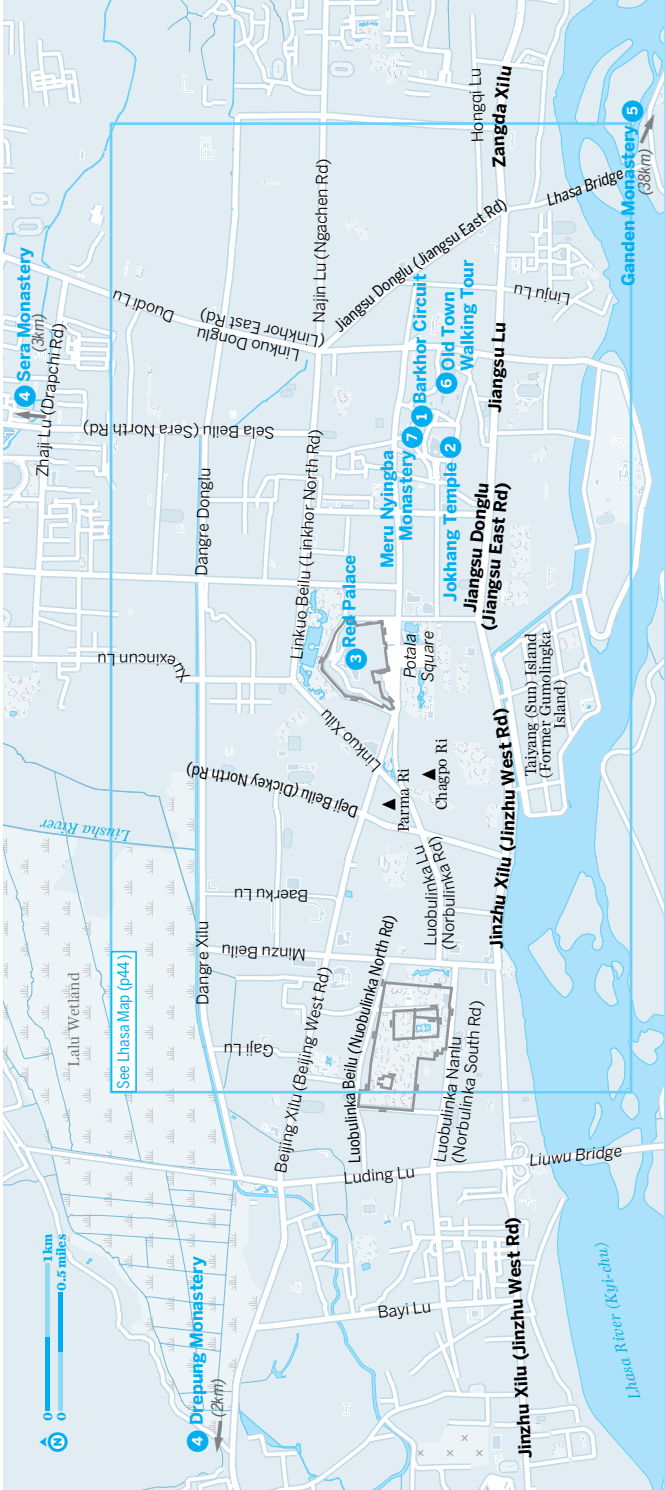
Why Go?

Despite rampant Chinese-led modernisation, Lhasa (literally the 'Place of the Gods') is still largely a city of wonders. Your first view of the red and white Potala Palace soaring above the holy city will raise goosebumps and the charming whitewashed old Tibetan quarter 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 Tibetan quarter but it is in the latter that you should focus your time. Hire 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 fascinating backstreets before heading off on an overland adventure.

When to Go

- ➔ Temperatures are comfortable from 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 Following monks, mendicants and fellow pilgrims around the medieval pilgrim path, the **Barkhor circuit** (p45).

2 Joining the lines of awed pilgrims around the glowing

shrines of the **Jokhang** (p47). Tibet's holiest sanctuary.

3 Ogling the murals and stupas at the **Red Palace** (p56) of the Potala, the

impressive but spiritless citadel of the Dalai Lamas.

4 Taking in a prayer meeting or some monk-debating at **Sera** (p80) or **Drepung** (p75). Tibet's great monastic cities.

5 Taking a day trip out to **Ganden Monastery** (p85) and testing your sin on its fascinating kora (pilgrim path).

6 Exploring the architecture, teashops and craft workshops of

Lhasa's backstreets on our old-town **walking tour** (p52).

7 Tracking down one of Lhasa's delightful off-the-beaten-track temples, such as the **Meru Nyingba Monastery** (p45).