

Cycling in Tibet



Highlights

Welcome to the Roof of the World! The Tibetan Plateau is a landscape like nothing else on Earth, an epic, empty expanse of breathtaking majesty. Spend 16 days cycling in Tibet discovering this enigmatic region.

Exact, exciting and eco-friendly, cycling is without doubt one of the best ways to discover a country. It's a million miles from the usual travellers' trail: there are no trains to catch, no 4am starts, no watching the sublime country pass you by from the back seat of a packed bus. Better still, travelling by bike allows you to interact with peoples and places in a much more intimate fashion than is possible on many tours, where you're forever surrounded by coachloads of other tourists in default travel mode: stop, snap, shop, split. On tours like these the main things are planned for you – hotels, routes, even the best time of year to travel – leaving you free to enjoy the awesome biking!

This 16-day tour offers a unique mix of millennia-old culture and scenery of jaw-dropping grandeur. Starting from the vibrant city of Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province and a major Chinese cultural centre, you'll head out into the rice paddies of the Sichuan Basin to begin a gentle climb up to the Tibetan Plateau. Plotting a course through wide river valleys lined with soaring snow-topped mountains, you'll soon reach the sweeping Tibetan grasslands, where you'll visit ancient monasteries and even meet a few nomadic yak herders! Ride on over high mountain passes, where colourful prayer flags flutter in the breeze under a sky of the purest blue – the defining image of this magical region. It's then back down to Sichuan for some leisurely cycling, fine dining and even a visit to a panda breeding centre before the tour comes to close back in Chengdu.

Is it for me?

This has got 'trip of a lifetime' written all over it - a blockbuster adventure off roads less travelled! Clearly, though, it's not suitable for everyone. If you're planning to spend two weeks on a bike you're going to need to be in pretty good shape, and some off-road experience is desirable. The terrain is mixed, with 80% paved roads and 20% unpaved and dirt roads, and daily distances range from 10-120km, totalling 800km. Bear in mind also that you'll be spending 15 days in the company of up to ten other cyclists, so if you're not the social type you might not enjoy this element. This said, past travellers talk about the excellent camaraderie on tour, and many stay friends long after the trip has finished.

Accommodation

Accommodation for this tour is included in the price on a shared twin basis. You'll be staying at guesthouses, hotels and forest cabins, mostly en suite and all clean and comfortable. Meals are all wholesome and hearty affairs: continental breakfasts, picnic lunches and camp-style dinners, all prepared using fresh, locally-sourced ingredients wherever possible. You'll also have plenty of opportunity to visit cafes and restaurants along the way; look out for local specialities like Fu Chi Fei Pian (thinly sliced spicy meats) in Sichuan and a whole host of yak-based foods in Tibet (yak cheese, yak pizza, yak bolognese, Yakult, etc. etc.).

Details

Getting there

Air: Chengdu Airport

Rail: Direct to most Chinese cities

Prices from

2,203 GBP (16 days) per person

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Price includes

Prices include transport, meals, accommodation and activities for the duration of the trip as per detailed itinerary. Escape Leader plus bilingual local guide. All group entrance fees.

Prices do not include airfares, visas, airport taxes, optional meals, optional activities and excursions, vaccinations and personal equipment.

Price details

A single supplement of NZ \$650 applies

Bike hire (if required) NZ \$400

Typical Duration

16 days

Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed

Travellers should bring

Personal gear, list supplied on booking.