

## ITINERARY – Top of the World Tour to TIBET 2012

Day 1	Depart Melbourne Arrive Chengdu <b>Chengdu</b> - Transfer to hotel. In the evening enjoy the culinary delights of a <b>Sichuan banquet</b> while getting to know each other.	<b>Hotel Chengdu</b>
Day 2	Spend the day exploring and shopping in the Tibetan quarter of Chengdu. In the evening we will be entertained with a <b>traditional Sichuan Opera performance</b>	<b>Hotel Chengdu</b>
Day 3	<b>Leshan</b> An early rise to meet the Giant and Red Pandas at the <b>Chengdu Panda Breeding &amp; Research Centre</b> where they are housed in semi- naturalistic, spacious compounds, this offers the best way of seeing the pandas. Then we will head to Leshan approx 2.5 hr drive and an afternoon visit to the <b>Big Buddha in Leshan</b> , Overnight stay in Leshan.	<b>Hotel Leshan</b>
Day 4	<b>Chengdu</b> Another early morning start as we return to Chengdu. Afternoon free to explore or go shopping.	<b>Hotel Chengdu</b>
Day 5	<b>Kangding</b> Today we start our journey up to Ganzi (Khandze), overnight stay in Kangding at 2600m. Geographically and ethnically it is very <b>Tibetan and a beautiful picturesque town.</b>	<b>Hotel Kangding</b>
Day 6	Spend some time in the morning exploring the markets in Kangding before a short drive to our next stop in the town of <b>Lhagong</b> . This part of the trip is done in easy stages to help everyone acclimatize to the altitude. Time this afternoon to take in the sights, <b>visit the stupa and temple</b> , or simply relax.	Hotel Lhagong
Day 7	<b>Luhou</b> Today we travel to Luhou for an overnight stay at 3700m. During the day we will travel over mountain passes, across grasslands and along rivers, passing nomad camps and through some very beautiful country.	Hotel Luhou
Day 8	<b>Ganzi</b> Breakfast this morning at a <b>typical Tibetan farmhouse</b> about an hour's drive out of Luhou on the road to Ganzi. Continue on to Ganzi (3600m) and spend the rest of the day either resting or go exploring what will be the home base for the next week or so. Ganzi is an interesting, bustling little town with lots of life on the streets, surrounded by mountain peaks. Here you will have time to sit by the river and watch mani stones being carved or wander the fascinating fresh produce market or purchase some jewellery or exquisite fabrics. There is plenty to occupy oneself here in this remote, rural town. During our days in Ganzi we will be arranging time for travellers to meet their <b>sponsored children and nuns.</b>	Hotel/homestay Ganzi
Day 9	Today we will visit the <b>Ganzi Monastery</b> situated on a hill overlooking the town, once the largest Gelupa Monastery in Kham. If you prefer to walk back to town it is an interesting walk through the old Tibetan part of town. In the afternoon we will take a short taxi ride to <b>Nyimo and Baroona nunneries</b> to meet the nuns.	Hotel/homestay Ganzi
Day 10	Today we take another short trip outside Ganzi to visit <b>Gyawanta Nunnery</b> . We will spend the day with the nuns and have planned for an <b>overnight camp</b> at the nunnery. All tents and bedding will be provided.	Camp Gyanwanta
Day 11	<b>Shinay</b> Today we have a short drive through the farmland to the village of Shinay near Ganzi ( <b>Geshe Sonam's family village</b> ) Enjoy lunch with the family and explore the village to watch people go about their daily lives, visit local <b>chorten</b> or walk along the river to the <b>hot springs</b> below the village. We offer everyone a traditional <b>Tibetan homestay</b> in the home of a Tibetan family to experience a traditional Tibetan life, or more hardy souls may enjoy another night's camping on a nearby hill (breath-taking view)	Homestay Camp
Day 12	Morning time in <b>Shinay</b> to wander the village before heading back to Ganzi. A visit to a <b>hot spa</b> in town is on the agenda for this afternoon. Overnight in Ganzi	Hotel/homestay Ganzi
Day 13	<b>Yarti and Trarka Nunneries</b> We will experience yet another overwhelming welcome from the nuns at two nunneries today. Tonight we are staying at Trarka nunnery in their very comfortable guest rooms.	Trarka Nunnery
Day 14	<b>Gaden Choeling Nunnery</b> Visit the sixth of the local nunneries or some may prefer a quiet day in town.	Hotel/homestay Ganzi
Day 15	<b>Ganzi</b> Last day in Ganzi and today we meet all the students from the local area as they come in to meet with Geshe Sonam and the Ganzi committee and receive their half yearly sponsorship payments. It's a busy day and the tour group will have the opportunity to be in the thick of it by volunteering to help with the management of the day's proceedings.	Hotel/homestay Ganzi
Day 16	<b>Nyarong Gorges</b> We say goodbye to Ganzi and begin the homeward trip, but travelling a different route. We travel through the Nyarong Gorges area for an overnight stay in the town of Xilong. Nyarong is a region of great natural beauty; heavily forested, with steep watersheds, grassy alpine pastures, and the deep turquoise ribbon of the Nyagchu or Yalong River bisecting the county from north to south through a magnificent sheer-cliffed gorge.	Hotel Xilong
Day 17	<b>Lithang</b> Drive to Lithang. At just over 4000m, Lithang is actually higher than Lhasa and one of the highest towns in the world. It is a trade town in a high, grassy valley where every summer, they hold one of Tibet's biggest horse racing festivals, an event that draws Tibetans (and tourists) from all over. Several famous Buddhists are from Litang including the 7th and the 10th Dalai Lama. It has a beautiful, huge monastery (Litang Chöde) up on the mountain side overlooking the town.	Hotel Lithang
Day 18	<b>Kangding</b> Drive to Kangding for overnight stay.	<b>Hotel Kangding</b>
Day 19	<b>Chengdu</b> Drive to Chengdu, check into Hotel to relax for a little while. In the evening we will visit the <b>night market</b> and Chinese tourist village at Jinli St.	<b>Hotel Chengdu</b>
Day 20	<b>Chengdu</b> Free morning for shopping and an introduction to the modern shopping precincts of Chengdu for those interested in some upmarket shopping. In the afternoon an expedition to the Peoples Park in downtown Chengdu is planned	<b>Hotel Chengdu</b>
Day 21	<b>Chengdu</b> Transfer to Airport for our <b>flight to Australia</b>	
Day 22	Arrive Tullamarine Airport	