

London to Lhasa

This 10 week [Asian Motorcycle Expedition](#) traverses the fabled Silk Road across a formidable expanse of territory, with a rich tapestry of cultures to uncover and extraordinary roads to ride. We take the road less travelled, through countries where tourism is only in its infancy.

From the far east of Turkey, through Iran and into Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan – heart of the Silk Road – and Kyrgyzstan. The Pamir Highway in Tajikistan, the Tibetan Plateau and the route to Everest are just some of the extraordinary roads to ride on what is an extremely challenging and unpredictable journey, testing your abilities both on and off the bike, before you reach Lhasa, Tibet.



You may join this tour in Istanbul, Turkey and can select this option when you make your booking; £1,200 discount will be applied.

IMPORTANT NOTE: We must submit all individual and vehicle details / documents to Chinese authorities three months prior to our start date. Therefore no bookings can be taken for this tour at short notice. Last date for booking is no later than 31 January 2019.

At a glance

Duration (days): 68
Miles Covered: 9000
Riding difficulty: Difficult
Unpaved Roads: 20%
Culture Shock: Large

Highlights

- The old imperial capital, Istanbul where Europe meets Asia. Visit the Blue Mosque, the Hagia Sophia & Topkapi Palace or maybe just bargain in the Grand Bazaar!
- Wander the tiny streets of the perfectly preserved Ottoman village, Safranbolu and overnight in a caravanserai
- Explore the unique moon-like landscape, underground cities, cave churches and houses carved in the rocks in Cappadocia and overnight in a cave hotel
- North through the Karakum Desert. Stopover in a teahouse and head for a night viewing of the Darvaza Gas Crater, known locally as “The Door to Hell”!
- Experience a yurt home-stay in the south to try the culinary delights of plov, manti or lahman! Great back roads through the mountains of Kyrgyzstan
- Kashgar and its Sunday livestock market, reputedly the largest in Central Asia is not to be missed
- Follow in the tracks of Genghis Khan, as we head into Uzbekistan and continue to follow the Silk Road to the ancient walled city of Khiva, where you can wander through the narrow alleys to see the mosques, minarets and madrasahs.
- Samarkand, with the UNESCO listed Registan and its three madrasahs. Break bread with the locals and enjoy fresh kebabs cooked over coals.
- Desert roads in Turkmenistan to the marble white capital city of Ashgabat.
- Ride the Pamir Highway through the sparsely populated mountain regions of Tajikistan. With its peak at 4,655m, this is the second highest altitude international highway in the world.
- The Wakhan Valley, bordering Afghanistan & the 2nd century Yamchun Fortress, with magnificent views of the Hindu Kush. Stay with local families in home-stays and try yak with onions.
- Over the Khitai Davan Pass at 5,300m. Enter Tibet, the ‘Roof of the World’. High altitude riding continues

past the sacred Mount Kailash.

- The holy Lake Manasarovar and explore the tiny Buddhist monastery.
- The Himalayas and take the spectacular road to Mount Everest Base Camp & Rongbuk Monastery and spin the golden prayer wheels.
- Lhasa! Visit the Potala Palace and the Buddhist temples of Jokhang and Barkhor.

Itinerary

This itinerary is for 63 days, covering around 9,000 miles (14,500 kms) across Europe, Turkey, Central Asia and China. It starts in London, UK and finishes in Lhasa, Tibet (China).

Week 1: Europe

Depart Ace cafe London. France, the Alps, Bavaria – Germany. Bled, Slovenia. Croatia & the Adriatic Coast and a night in Dubrovnik. Montenegro, Albania and Lake Ohrid. Greece – Mount Olympus and Meteora.

Week 2: Turkey

East meets West in Istanbul. Explore the Blue Mosque, Tokapi Palace and Hagi Sophia. Ottoman preserved village Safranbolu. Caves, rock formations and underground dwellings in Cappadocia. See the stone heads of Mount Nemrut. Erzurum and Mount Ararat.

Week 3: Iran

UNESCO listed city of Tabriz and the historic bazaar. Volcanic fort of Takht-e-Soleyman. Beautiful Esfahan, the Meidan Emam and Royal Mosque. Iran's capital city, Tehran, with Golestan Palace & Azadi Tower. The Caspian Sea and Gorgan

Week 4: Turkmenistan

Marble white capital city of Ashgabat. North through the Karakum Desert. A night viewing of the Darvaza Gas Crater – "The Door to Hell"!

Week 5: Uzbekistan

Desert terrain to the Ancient Silk Road Cities. The ancient walled city of Khiva & UNESCO listed Itchen Kala. Bhukara and then Samarkand, with the UNESCO listed Registan. Minarets, mosques and madrasahs abound. Termez.

Week 6: Tajikistan

The capital city, Dushanbe. Dirt roads of The Pamir Highway and Wakhan Valley, on the Afghanistan border. Khorog, the regional capital. 3rd century Yamchun Fortress. Experience home stays with the local villagers.

Week 7: Kyrgyzstan & China, Xinjiang Province

Overnight yurt camp at Sary Tash. Osh. The Tien Shan Mountains. Naryn. Torugart Pass to Xinjiang Province. The ancient city of Kashgar and a visit to the largest livestock market in Asia on Sunday. Don't get swapped for a camel!

Week 8: Tibet

Enter Tibet, the 'Roof of the World'. Ride at over 5,000 metres high. Remote settlements. Mount Kailash & the holy Lake Manasarovar.

Week 9: Tibet

Mount Everest Base Camp & Rongbuk Monastery. Shigatze. Lhasa. Potala Palace and the Buddhist temples of Jokhang and Barkhor.

Accommodation

There is a wide variety of accommodation. In Europe and Turkey we use 4* hotels. Iran's hotels are 3 – 4* but standards are generally lower than the equivalent in Europe, with the exception of the 5* hotel we use in Tehran.

For Central Asia, we also use 3* and 4* hotels, but as we push east, standards are not the equivalent of Europe and North America. In Iran and Central Asia, all rooms have en suite bathrooms and hot water. However wifi use may be restricted and not freely available.

There are a number of days across Xinjiang Province and Western Tibet, where we are very remote and accommodation is extremely basic, with no bathrooms, no hot water, no electricity. You need to be prepared to use communal outside toilets and there will be no showers for a few days in this area. You do not need camping equipment, but you must bring a sleeping bag for the home stay accommodation.

Good hotels are then available to use close to Lhasa and our final hotel in Lhasa is good 4* standard.

Whats Included

You have the benefit of booking with a UK tour operator who has in place Financial Payment Protection Insurance with Towergate Stevens & Chapman, so that your money paid to us in advance is protected in accordance with The Package Travel Regulations 1992.

Before you go

- The assurance of booking with a fully bonded UK operator, ensuring your money paid in advance is protected.
- Two day pre-departure team expedition briefing and GlobeBusters Guidance Handbook with all pre-trip information.
- Assistance with the procurement of visas for each country and provision of Letters of Invitation, if required.

En Route

- All accommodation on shared basis (or a single room, if booked). Note some locations do not have single rooms and are only multiple share basis and this has been taken into account when providing a single room price. We guarantee a single room for at least 90% of nights.
- All breakfasts
- One group dinner per week, with water or soft drink (no alcohol).
- Local overnight hotel parking charges.
- Euro Tunnel Train for you and your bike, Folkestone to Calais, and other ferry crossings en route (only if you start in London)
- Chinese Driving Licence & Chinese Bike Licence Plate for your motorcycle, required for travel in China (not if you finish in Almaty)
- Daily hard copy route notes with GPS co-ordinates, loan SD Card with GPS mapping for the region.
- Expedition Tour Polo-Shirt and Ace Cafe Goodies

Start in Istanbul

If you wish to meet the group in Istanbul, there is a reduction of £1000 (2017) / £1,200 (2019) to the published price. When you go to make your booking, tick the box to show you wish to start in Istanbul to get this reduction, which will be reflected in your booking confirmation.

End in Almaty

You can depart from the group after Chychkan, Kyrgyzstan and ride two days (unaccompanied) to Almaty, via Bishkek. There is a reduction of £5,900 (2017) / £6,500 (2019). Our freight agent can then organise the air freight of your motorcycle back to a major European or North American hub. We do not include the freight in our pricing. If you finish in Almaty, you will pay the freight agent directly for this service. When you go to make your tour booking, tick the box to show you wish to end in Almaty to get this reduction, which will be reflected in your booking confirmation.

Motorcycle Freight (not if you finish in Almaty)

- Return road transport of your motorcycle from Lhasa to Tianjin, China.
- Group freight of your motorcycle (including crating, where required, and Customs Clearance) from Tianjin Port to the depot of our UK freight agent, or to other destinations if additional charges are paid.
- In transit insurance (excess of £500) for your motorcycle when being freighted

Support Crew

- Expedition Leader on a motorcycle to accompany the group.
- Motorcycle Support Rider, where the group is more than 12 riders
- Support Vehicle, equipped with satellite phone, spare fuel, water, tools, selected spare parts and emergency first aid kit, acting as a sweeper vehicle
- Support Driver, with motorcycle mechanical experience and first aid qualifications
- Second local Support Vehicle in Xinjiang and Tibet, with two National Chinese Guides, acting as fixers / translators (not if you finish in Almaty)
- Local fixers/translators that travel with the group in Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan

Please note that **international passenger flights are not included** in your price. Once this expedition is a guaranteed departure you will need to book your return flight from Lhasa (or Almaty).

*For non-UK riders, please contact us for your own **bespoke freight arrangements**. We can facilitate freight into London from major freight hubs in USA, Canada, Australia, South Africa and elsewhere. For EU riders, we can organise a bike collection to bring your bike to London. At the end of the trip, all bikes are freighted back to the UK for onward freight to your country of residence. Freight to and from the UK is at your own cost.

Useful Info

What type of bike do I need?

We recommend that you use a medium to large capacity dual purpose / adventure style bike. We support any make and model. Our Support Crew ride the Triumph Tiger 800XCx or Triumph Explorer XC. We also have lots of experience with the BMW GS range. What is important is that you have a reliable and robust bike that you are comfortable riding and has been fully serviced prior to the start and has new tyres.

What riding experience do I need?

This trip is not suitable for novice riders. It is our toughest expedition and is only suitable for those with advanced road riding skills, experienced in riding up to 400 road miles in one day and be confident at tackling up to 250 miles on challenging, unpaved roads. Three weeks of riding is at high altitudes over 4,000 metres, where it is often cold. Ideally you should also have other travel experience in developing countries, either on or off the bike.



How does motorcycle freight work?

We start the expedition from the Ace Café, London. If you are a non-UK resident, we can facilitate the freight of your motorcycle to the UK from your own country. We Customs clear your motorcycle and you simply need to collect it from our freight agent's depot and ride to London. This is an additional cost to you. At the end of the trip, all bikes are sea freighted back to the UK from Tianjin. From the UK, your motorcycle can then be freighted back to your own country – again at your own cost. If we get at least 3 riders from another country, we can do a separate sea freight arrangement direct to that country.

What about servicing & tyres?

There are no authorised motorcycle dealers for Triumph, BMW, KTM once we leave Istanbul and before China. All motorcycles must arrive at the start fully serviced and with new tyres. A minor service is then done around the half way point (Samarkand / Dushanbe). We also carry in our support vehicle a change of tyres – knobby tyres ([Conti TKC 80](#)) for the dirt roads ahead – for riders for the half way point (tyres at your cost)

Is it difficult to get fuel?

We have never had any issue with finding fuel. In certain regions, once en route, we will warn you in advance of any possible fuel shortages or if there is a route with a key fuel stop, where everyone must fill up with fuel to get to the next destination. It is not necessary to fit any after-market large fuel tank or carry fuel bottles, although some riders chose to do so. Our support vehicle also carries spare fuel for emergencies.

What is the average group size?

Our groups are normally between 10 – 12 riders (some have passengers). Our groups are often very international and whilst the majority of riders come from the UK, we also get riders from USA, Canada, South Africa, Australia, Switzerland, Scandinavia, Spain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and so on. Groups are predominantly solo male riders.

Is this ride suitable for a passenger?

Every time we have operated this expedition, we have had riders successfully complete this ride with a pillion passenger. Your passenger needs to also be an experienced tourer. It is a tough ride and there are places where as a couple you will not get privacy on some nights, and bathroom arrangements can be primitive, which some women may find difficult.

Is there a support vehicle?

All our expeditions have a dedicated GlobeBusters Support Vehicle, driven by a GlobeBusters Support Driver. It is capable of carrying two motorcycle and two passengers. Our support vehicles carry a satellite phone, mobile phone, medical bag and spinal board, spare fuel, water, tools, some spare parts, some spare tyres. Our support vehicle provides temporary assistance to you if you have a mechanical problem or an accident and are injured. On this ride, we also have a second local support vehicle in Xinjiang and Tibet. These are not a luggage vehicles – you must carry your own luggage on your motorcycle. For more information, please see our [Support Vehicle](#) section.

Do I have to ride in a group?

No! We do not make you ride in convoy. We offer you the freedom to decide how you would like to ride. We give you a road book, GPS co-ordinates and hotel information. You can use this to self-navigate. If you prefer to ride with our Expedition Leader, then you can do this. However, there are some politically sensitive places where we must ride together. In Iran, China, Turkmenistan, whilst we don't have to ride in convoy, we need to make sure that we are travelling closely together. We will also ask you to ride in a group when we are crossing a border or if there is a security issue.

What documents do I need?

You will need your original documents as follows: Passport, Motorcycle Registration Document or Title, Driving Licence, International Driving Permit. Scan copies of your documents must be supplied to us no later than 31

December 2016 (or 31 December 2018 for 2019 Expedition). These are submitted to the Chinese Authorities and once logged cannot be changed. A Carnet de Passage is required for your motorcycle for travel through Iran. In addition, you must have travel/medical insurance and 3rd party motorcycle insurance (where available).

Will I need to get visas?

As visa requirements are dependent on your nationality and a complex with constantly changing requirements, we appoint a visa agency to assist with the process www.thevisamachine.com. They will have a dedicated GlobeBusters Portal on their website for you to order your visas, which they can get for all nationalities via the Embassies in London. The only exception to this is the Chinese visa, which MUST be obtained in your own country of residence. We will supply Letters of Invitation and hotel confirmations to you. At our pre-departure meeting, we cover this in detail to ensure you have all the right documents and visas in place.

Special note about logistics for entry and exit of China

Your price includes entry and exit of China, as part of the group arrangement. Our entry point is the Torugart Pass. Our exit point is Beijing / Tianjin. This is agreed as part of the permissions given for our group to ride overland across China, and is done well in advance of travel. You are not able to change your exit point after 31 December before the start of the trip. Should you wish to have a different exit point to the main group, you must inform us on booking and additional charges will apply, depending on the exit arrangement that you want.

What about my health when I am abroad?

Before you travel, we strongly recommend that you visit your GP or a specialised travel clinic to get advice on the recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures needed for the countries on this trip. As background, the websites listed below may prove useful.

<http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/>

<http://www.masta-travel-health.com/>

It is a condition of your travel with us that you have in place travel / medical insurance to cover you for medical treatment and repatriation if you suffer any illness or injury when on the expedition, including any injury sustained from riding or being a passenger on a motorcycle.

Please note that many countries on this route do not have the same level of medical infrastructure nor consistent medical standards that you may be used to. In particular, emergency services often may be a long distance away, with no co-ordinated response, or sometimes no medical response available within reasonable times.

Available Dates & Prices

Date	Rider Shared Room	Single Supplement	Passenger Shared Room	Bike Rental
Apr 19 – Jun 25, 2019	£17,595	£3,950	£10,495	Triumph Tiger 800: £5,457