

See the Annular Solar Eclipse at the "Top of the World" June 21, 2020

# Discover TIBET! & the Annular Solar Eclipse



*Come Explore With The Planetary Society! • June 10-23, 2020*

Dear Travelers:

We invite you to explore Tibet in 2020 and see the Annular Solar Eclipse June 21, 2020.

Centerline of totality for this Eclipse arcs from Ethiopia, across Tibet and China. We will see the eclipse at the "Top of the World" in Tibet. It will be an excellent location for viewing the eclipse.

Our adventure will begin with a visit to Chengdu, vibrant capital city of Sichuan. We will then fly west to explore the cultural heart of Tibet. The Tibetan Plateau has long been a place of fascination for Western naturalists and explorers.

Our first destination in Tibet will be Tsedang near some of the oldest villages and sacred sites in Tibet. They pre-date Buddhism in this area by more than a thousand years.

Lhasa is renowned for its sacred sites, and has profound spiritual significance to the Tibetan people. These include Jorkang Temple, the Potala and Norbulinka Palace, the residences of the Dalai Lama, and Ganden Monastery, poised dramatically on a ridge that overlooks the upper reaches of the Lhasa Valley.

We will also explore Namco Lake which lies in a basin at 15,500 feet elevation. Here the air is extraordinarily clear, offering luminous vistas of glaciated peaks that encircle



the basin. Semi-nomadic families live here during summer, tending their herds of yaks and ponies.

Northeast of Namco Lake we will reach our site for the Annular Solar Eclipse where we will watch the "Ring of Fire" cross over the Tibetan Plateau. It will be a fascinating experience!

Although the Tibetan Plateau is quite high, we will spend most of our time at moderate elevations. Lhasa is 11,700 feet above sea level. After a few days, most visitors acclimatize and do

fine at these elevations. Our highest point overall is the pass that leads to Namco Lake at 16,900 feet. We will see the eclipse at 15,000 feet. This excursion probably will set a few personal altitude records for our travelers!

We hope that you will join us to explore Tibet and the 2020 Annular Solar Eclipse. Space is limited, so please let us know right away.

Sincerely,

Bill Nye  
The Science Guy®  
CEO

THE  
**PLANETARY**  
SOCIETY

# Itinerary

## Days 1-3: USA to Hong Kong & Chengdu

Depart from Los Angeles International Airport on Cathay Pacific Airways for Hong Kong, crossing the International Date Line en route. On Day 3 arrive in Hong Kong and take a connecting flight to Chengdu. Transfer to our *Hotel (2 nights)*. Enjoy a walking tour along Chengdu's Fujiang River and welcome dinner. (D)

## Day 4: Chengdu Pandas

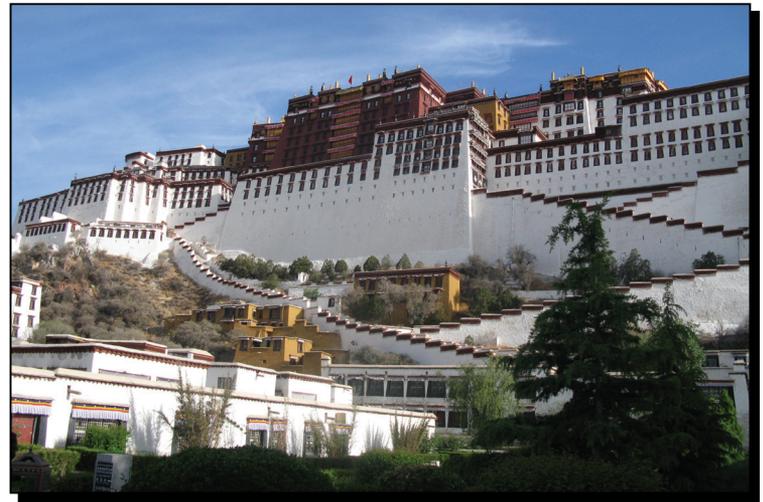
This morning, we will visit the giant panda breeding center in Chengdu, one of three locations for panda breeding and conservation in Sichuan. Naturalistic surroundings enable us to view pandas acting much as they would in the wild. In the afternoon, we'll visit the Chengdu Museum with superb historical collections.

## Day 5: Lhasa & Tsedang, Tibet

This morning, we will fly from Chengdu to Lhasa, Tibet, heart of the Tibet Autonomous Region. We will then drive to ancient Tsedang to the southeast of Lhasa, situated in a sunny and fertile valley. We will then begin to explore this historic location. *Zedang Hotel (2 nights)*.

## Day 6: Chonggye-Valley of the Kings

Today, we will explore Chonggye, where Tibet's early rulers are entombed in the "Valley of the Kings". Here an earthen



terrace is said to hold the burial chamber of Songtsen Gampo and his two wives, Chinese and Nepali. The view from the terrace is memorable, of wheat fields, hillside monasteries, and encircling peaks. After lunch, we will walk or ride ponies to the hilltop castle of Yambu Lhakang, a structure that predates Buddhism in Tibet by nearly 1,000 years and is one of the first fortified castles in Tibet.

## Day 7: Lhasa-Barkor Square

Today, we will depart for Lhasa, traditional cultural focus and modern urban center of Tibet. We will stay near Barkor Square in the old (Tibetan) part of Lhasa (*4 nights*), so it will be easy to walk in this fascinating, picturesque neighborhood. In Barkor Square crowds follow Lhasa's most important *Kora* (pilgrimage circuit), marked by four incense burners at the far corners.

## Day 8: Lhasa-Museum & Jorkang Temple

Today, we will visit the Provincial Museum, with fascinating historical relics, many of which emphasize the narrative of unity between the Chinese and Tibetan people. Afternoon visit to Jorkang Temple. The spiritual heart of Tibet, it houses the most revered Buddha image in all of Tibet, brought here by King Songtsen Gampo's Chinese wife in the 7th century AD. The temple is an extraordinary site, with incense heavy in the air.

## Day 9: Lhasa-Potala & Norbulinka Palace

We will explore two classic Tibetan sites today, the iconic Potala Palace, and Norbulinka, a landscaped garden-temple complex that served as the Dalai Lama's summer palace. The Potala is the most compelling image in Tibet, situated high on the "red hill" Marpo Ri, overlooking all of Lhasa. We will also see the New Summer Palace, built by the 14th Dalai Lama in the 1950's, with murals of Tibetan history.



## Path of the June 21, 2020 Annular Eclipse



### Day 10: Ganden Monastery

Today, we will visit Ganden Monastery, a temple complex situated on a hilltop overlooking the Lhasa River. Ganden is a place of great importance to all Tibetan people, especially those of the ascendant Gelukpa (Yellow Hat) Sect of Tibetan Buddhism. We will try to time our visit to coincide with the monks late morning chanting. Enjoy a picnic lunch in a meadow with a panoramic view of the Monastery.

### Day 11: Namco Lake

Today, we will visit the high Tibetan Plateau, skirting the 23,000-foot, glacier-covered Nyenchen Tanglha mountains and crossing a pass to Namco Lake, which sits in a shallow basin at 15,500 feet. The expansive beauty of Namco Lake is extraordinary. The lake covers hundreds of square miles and is encircled by grasslands and the glaciated mountains of Nyenchen Tanglha. *Hotel (2 nights).*

### Day 12: ANNULAR SOLAR ECLIPSE

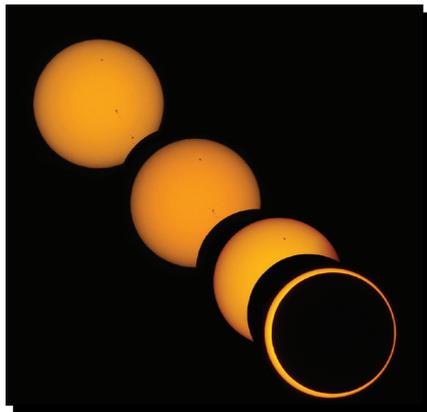
We will depart early for our eclipse-viewing site, situated on the centerline of totality of this rare celestial display. All participants will receive eclipse-viewing glasses. The Annular Eclipse will be at approximately 3:15 pm local time. As the Moon slowly comes between the Sun and the Earth, you will see the dark crescent of the Moon across the Sun and slowly advance to block 98.86% of the Sun's direct rays. This will produce the Annular Solar Eclipse with a dazzling "Ring of Fire" around the Moon!

### Day 13: Lhasa to Chengdu

Return to Lhasa this morning and fly from Lhasa to Chengdu today. Farewell dinner and performance of the traditional Sichuan Opera this evening!

### Day 14: Chengdu to Home

Transfer to the airport for our return flights to Hong Kong and the U.S. Arrive the same day.



## Reservations #1578

**Yes!** I/We want to join the **Tibet & Annular Solar Eclipse Expedition, June 10-23, 2020**, offered by **The Planetary Society**. Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ space(s). As a deposit, I/we have enclosed a check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (\$500 per person), payable to Betchart Expeditions Inc. Trust Account.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Member: \_\_\_\_ Planetary Society \_\_\_\_ AAAS \_\_\_\_ Sigma Xi \_\_\_\_ ACS

Accommodations Preference:

\_\_\_\_ Twin \_\_\_\_ Single \_\_\_\_ Twin Share \_\_\_\_ with a friend or  
\_\_\_\_ Nonsmoker \_\_\_\_ Smoker \_\_\_\_ assign a roommate

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Mail To: Tibet Eclipse 2020  
Betchart Expeditions Inc.  
17050 Montebello Road  
Cupertino, CA 95014-5435**

## Costs & Conditions

**Tibet Trip Fee:** \$4,995 per person plus airfare of approximately \$1,695 from Los Angeles to Chengdu, China RT, plus in-tour flights Chengdu/Lhasa RT \$695 per person. Singles are \$995 additional

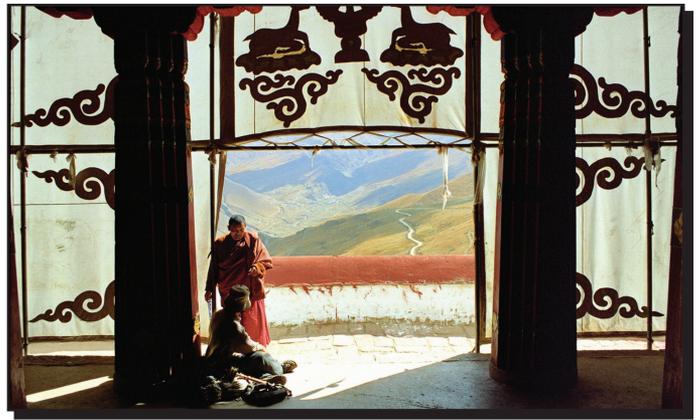
**Expedition Fee Includes:** Land transport; airport transfers; accommodations; all meals; tips to drivers and local guides; entrance fees; baggage handling; leadership, administration.

**Expedition Fee Does Not Include:** International air fare (quoted separately); in-tour flights; China visa fee; gratuities to leaders; personal items such as laundry, phone calls, alcoholic beverages, snacks; personal insurance.

**What to Expect:** This expedition is planned for travelers who would enjoy seeing the Annular Solar Eclipse and exploring the heritage of the Tibetan Plateau. This expedition will be a tremendous experience for travelers with an appetite for adventure who would enjoy a chance to see the Annular Solar Eclipse and to explore fascinating areas of Tibet and an eclipse at the "Top of the World."

Leading the expedition will be excellent guides with experience in Tibet. The group will travel 4 to 7 hours by bus or van on each of several days. On traveling days, we will take time for both planned and spontaneous stops to walk, photograph, and talk with local people. Walks will be at a leisurely pace suitable for discovery.

Weather is pleasant in Tibet during the early summer, with midday temperatures in the 70s to upper 80s and some rain. We will acclimatize as we adjust to the elevation. Around Lhasa, we will stay no higher than 11,700 feet and will drive over one pass at 16,900 feet. Two nights may be spent at 13,900 feet or may be spent in Lhasa with long drives to and from the eclipse site the next day. Skies should be clear but there is some possibility cloud cover could obscure the eclipse. Please be flexible concerning time schedules, hotels, food, bumpy roads, and mechanical breakdowns. (No smoking in vehicles or during lectures or meals, please.)



**Air Fare & Airline Ticketing:** International flights are on Cathay Pacific Airways. Please phone Betchart Expeditions at (800) 252-4910 for further information. AIR FARES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE UNTIL TICKETED.

**Accommodations:** Are in comfortable and reasonably clean Chinese and Tibetan hotels based on twin share. Expect a good bed, showers, western-style toilets, and carefully prepared food. Between hotels, some Asian toilets or bush toilets may be available. Single accommodations are available for supplement of \$995.

*For reservations, please mail a deposit of \$500 per person with the completed reservation form to:*

**Betchart Expeditions Inc.**

**17050 Montebello Road**

**Cupertino, CA 95014-5435**

**Phone (800) 252-4910** (toll free in USA)

or **(408) 252-4910** (International calls)

**Email:** [betcharttaunya@gmail.com](mailto:betcharttaunya@gmail.com)

**On the Web:** [www.betchartexpeditions.com](http://www.betchartexpeditions.com)

**Balance of land fee is due 90 days before departure.**

**Cancellations & Refunds:** The initial deposit is refundable up to 90 days before departure, less a handling fee of \$100 per person. There is no refund after the 90-day period unless your place is resold, then only the \$100 per person handling fee is withheld. There are no refunds for unused meals or other expedition features.

**Responsibility:** Betchart Expeditions Inc. and The Planetary Society act only as agents for the passenger with respect to transportation and hotels and exercise every care possible. We can assume no liability for injury, damage, delay, loss, accident, or irregularity in connection with the services of any airplane, ship, motorcoach, or any other conveyance used in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. We cannot accept any responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, acts of God, terrorism, or other causes beyond our control. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. We reserve the right to substitute another leader of similar expertise or to cancel any tour prior to departure in which case the entire payment will be refunded with no further obligation on our part. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour. No refund will be made for the unused portion of any tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The price of the program is based on current tariffs and rates, and is subject to change. Any tariff, exchange rate, or fuel increases will be passed on to participants. Baggage is carried at the owner's risk entirely. It is understood that the air ticket when issued shall constitute the sole contract between the passenger and the airline concerned. The airlines concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their plane or conveyance.

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Photographs by Dennis Schmitt, Don Nelson, Chris Carpenter and Virginia Smith-Rader.

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## Alaska Aurora Borealis February 27 - March 4, 2020

Come discover the great beauty of Alaska in winter, and see the greatest light show on earth! Take the train from Talkeetna to Fairbanks, passing lofty 20,310 foot Denali (Mt. McKinley) en route. See the Ice Festival in Fairbanks. Watch a local sled dog team, and see the Aurora Borealis dance across the night sky.

\$2,995 per person twin share + air

**For a detailed brochure, please call (800) 252-4910  
or email [betcharterri@gmail.com](mailto:betcharterri@gmail.com)**