

## Lhasa

Written by Administrator

Friday, 04 December 2009 04:55 - Last Updated Friday, 04 December 2009 05:58

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Lhasa was not at all what we were expecting. The city is quite sizable, although securely hemmed in by mountains, it is also immensely vibrant with a heady mix of Chinese new enterprise and Tibetan religious fervor. Its many temples, monasteries and the Potala act as focal points and dominate the fabric of the city as well as lending a sense of pride and identity. A heavy and highly visible police presence after recent rioting is the most striking detraction. We arrived earlier than expected having made little use of our planned contingency. So we decided to start sedately, mostly wandering the streets around the Jokhang monastery. These are alive with pilgrims making the kora around the monastery as well as less focused Chinese, Tibetans and tourists browsing the hundreds of small market stalls, shop fronts and restaurants. The atmosphere is intoxicating, friendly and easy to get happily lost in. We made few purchases but bartered for prayer flags, Nepalese and Tibetan clothing, antiques and jewellery – “cheapie, cheapie; how much you pay; just lookie lookie?”

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