

Boundless Yunnan
*Retrace the Ancient Southern
Silk Road & Torch Festival*



Guaranteed Departure
August 4-15, 2012 China Package
USA departure is on August 3, 2012

TRIP OVERVIEW

In Yunnan, stunning mountain scenery is matched by the fascinating minority cultures far less visited by outsiders and eager to share their history as tea and jade traders along the famous tea & horse caravan. Indeed, modern day travelers to this corner of China are re-tracing the once flourishing trade links used in this region between Tibet, Burma and China. With an abundance of local handicraft and traditions refined over centuries of isolation from the mainstream of Chinese culture, the various peoples of Yunnan are a treat for budding Anthropologists everywhere.

During the trip, we'll also join the traditional Torch Festival, a once a year event that has been carried out down the centuries by the Bai ethnic people. Known originally in ancient times as the 'Festival of New Fire', the burning torches are imbued with a deep cultural significance of hope for the future.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Retrace the history of Yunnan and its great trading past
- Explore ancient villages and towns, some are key trading towns and home to various minority cultures
- Easy hikes through mountains, villages and gorges
- Visit a mix of regional historical sites including monasteries, nunneries and churches
- Take part in hands-on activities, such as paper making
- Join local people for Torch Festival Celebration

Duration: 12 days, 11 nights

Itinerary at a glance: Kunming – Shangri-la – Tiger Leaping Gorge – Lijiang – Shaxi – Dali – Kunming

Departure Date: August 4 – 15, 2012

Difficulty Level*: 4

Comfort Level*: Comfort

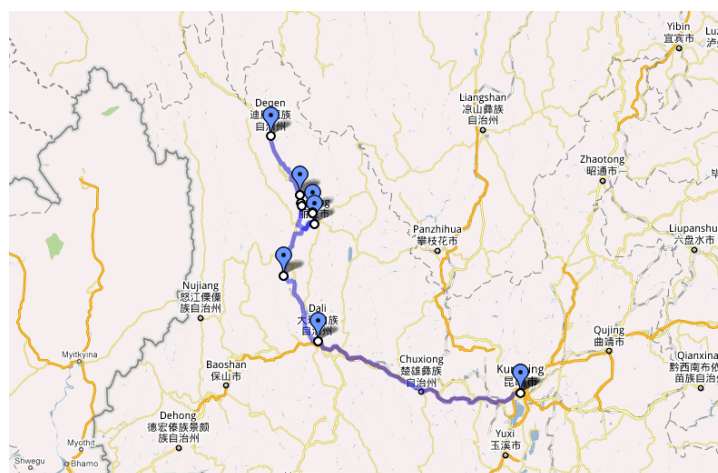
**please refer the [appendix](#) for difficulty and comfort level category details*

DESTINATION MAP

Map of China



Area of Visit



DAY-TO-DAY ITINERARY

Day 01: Kunming August 4, 2012

Fly to Kunming from any major city in mainland China, or directly from Hong Kong. Kunming is the capital and largest city of Yunnan Province. Blessed with one of the mildest climates in China, Kunming is well known as the “City of Eternal Spring”. Upon arrival, you’ll be met by our guide and transferred to the hotel. Then, we’ll have a walking tour of the city, starting from Green Lake Park, one of the major parks which are predominately a lake surrounded by greenery. It is sometimes described as a “Jade in Kunming”. You can always see locals doing exercise, taiji, walking, and feeding the red-beaked sea gulls. The welcome dinner features the most famous Yunnanese food, including “Over the Bridge Rice Noodles”. Why the name “Over The Bridge”? You’ll find out...

Included: d

Transfer times: 0.5 hours driving/ flying

Activity Level: 1-2 hours walking in city

Altitude: 1890 vertical meters during the day

Overnight in Kunming

4 Option: Grand Park Hotel or similar*

Day 02: Kunming to Shangri-La August 5, 2012

This morning, we have an early flight to Shangri-la. Shangri-La was formally named Zhongdian but renamed in 2001 after the novel “Lost Horizon”. The county is home to Tibetan people and also a gate way to Tibet. Upon arrival, take your time to relax and acclimatize. Wander around the old town and visit a small but well-reserved Tibetan Buddhist Temple – Cheng’en Temple. This is followed by a visit to a Tibetan family in that village.

Included: b, sl

Transfer times: 1 hour flying

Activity Level: 1-2 hours walking

Altitude: 3300/1800, vertical meters during the day

Overnight in Shangri-la

4 Option: Guanguang Hotel or similar*

Day 03: Shangri-La August 6, 2012

Today we visit the Songtsam Monastery, the largest Tibetan Buddhist Monastery in Yunnan province, also referred to as “Little Potala Palace”. It belongs to the Yellow Hat sect of Tibetan Buddhism of the Gelukpa order of the Dalai Lama. We will walk following the local Tibetan’s pilgrimage trail around Songtsam Monastery.

Included: b, sl

Transfer times: 0.5 hours driving

Activity Level: 3-3.5 hours hike
Altitude: 3300, vertical meters during the day
Overnight in Shangri-la
4 Option: Guanguang Hotel or similar*

Day 04: Shangri-La August 7, 2012

Visit Nixi Tibetan village, where the villagers have specialized in hand-making black pottery for decades. Visit a local workshop and make your own pottery. Free time to wander around the ancient town.

Included: b, l
Transfer times: 1 hours driving
Activity Level: 2-3 hours walk in the village
Altitude: 3000, vertical meters for the day
Overnight in Shangri-la
4 Option: Guanguang Hotel or similar*

Day 05: Shangri-La August 8, 2012

Excursion to Mountain Shika, the main holy mountain here. We will hike up the mountain which should take about 4 hours and can then walk down or take the cable car.

Included: b, l
Transfer times: 1 hours driving
Activity Level: 2-3 hours walk in the village
Altitude: 3000, vertical meters for the day
Overnight in Shangri-la
4 Option: Guanguang Hotel or similar*

Day 06: Shangri-La to Tiger Leaping Gorge August 9, 2012

Today we drive to Tiger Leaping Gorge, en route, stop at Baishuitai. The lovely terraces in the region were formed by fresh mountain water slowly trickling down from Haba Mountain over millions of years, leaving the limestone terraces we see today. It is at this site the Naxi believe that their oldest Shaman, Dongbashiluo, first practiced and preached the Dongba religion. We then drive to Tiger Leaping Gorge and start hiking there.



Included: b, sl, d
Transfer times: 4-4.5 hours driving
Activity Level: 3-4 hours hike
Altitude: 3300/2200, vertical meters during the day
Overnight in Tiger Leaping Gorge
Guesthouse Option: Tea & Horse Guesthouse

Day 07: Tiger Leaping Gorge to Lijiang August 10, 2012

Continue hiking in Tiger Leaping Gorge, locally known as Golden Sands River, Tiger Leaping Gorge is a canyon on the Yangtze River. The name and legend behind this famously deep canyon says that a tiger made the 25 meter wide leap at this point to escape from a hunter. Visitors to this beautiful canyon can marvel at the site and wonder for themselves if there is any truth behind the tale.



Transfer to Lijiang ancient town, that has a history dating back 800 years, another influential town on the tea road. Arrive in Lijiang in the evening and explore the ancient town by yourself.

Included: b, l

Transfer times: 5.5 -6 hours driving

Activity Level: 5-6 hours hike

Altitude: 2700/2000, vertical meters during the day

Overnight in Lijiang

4 Option: Hansange Hotel or similar*

Day 08: Lijiang, August 11, 2012 (Festival)

Lijiang is a busy town due to its fame as a “UNESCO World Heritage Site”. To avoid the crowds and see its genuine charm, we get up early in the morning and walk on the cobblestone street, observing the town’s waterways and bridges and traditional Naxi architecture. After breakfast, walk to the local market, where we find the freshest and best local products. Don’t miss the Dongba Culture Museum in the home of the Naxi people. Dongba is the religion, culture and script of Naxi people. The museum has more than 10,000 Dongba cultural relics and various other historical artifacts. We can either walk or bike to Black Dragon Pool, where the museum is located. In the late afternoon, we learn more about Dongba culture by learning Dongba script and making Dongba Script T-shirts. **In the evening, transfer to Shuhe Old Town to celebrate Torch Festival with Naxi people.**

Included: b, l, d

Transfer times: 1 hour driving

Activity Level: 3-4 hours easy walk or 1-2 hours cycling

Altitude: 2400, vertical meters during day

Overnight in Lijiang

4 Option: Hansange Hotel or similar*

Day 09: Lijiang to Shaxi August 12, 2012 (Festival)

Today we drive to Shaxi, a historical trading town on the ancient tea route that reached the height of its prosperity during the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368–1912). **Join local people to make your own torch. In the evening, enjoy the Torch Festival party with Bai people**

Included: b, l

Transfer times: 2 hours driving

Activity Level: easy walk

Altitude: 2400/2000, vertical meters during the day

Overnight in Shaxi

4 Option: Hansange Hotel or similar*

Day 10: Shaxi to Dali August 13, 2012

Drive to Dali, an ancient capital of the Bai Kingdom of Nanzhao. En route, stop at Shibaoshan Grottoes, containing the 1300 year-old Buddhist rock carvings preserved as evidence of the spread of Mahayana Buddhism into Yunnan from Tibet.

Visit two villages near the town. Firstly, Zhoucheng Village which is famous for its hand-made Tie Dye traditions; wander around Zhoucheng's local market. Then visit Xizhou Village, an ancient Bai village, which is well-known for its delicate Bai style architecture with thousands years of history. Afterwards, we return to Dali Ancient Town and walk around the ancient town to discover some hidden corners.

Included: b, l

Transfer times: 2 hours driving

Activity Level: 3 hours hike up to mountain, 2-3 hours walking in the villages

Altitude: 2400/2000, vertical meters during the day

Overnight in Dali

4 Option: Landscape Hotel or similar <http://www.landscapehotel.com/>*

Day 11: Dali August 14, 2012

Today we drive to Mt. Cangshan, a mountain noted for its very rich, diverse flora that was first scientifically documented by Pierre Jean Marie Delavay in 1882. Take the chairlift up Zhonghe Peak and visit the temple.

Included: b, l, d

Transfer times: 2-3 hours driving

Activity Level: 4-5 hours hike up to mountain

Altitude: 4000/2000 vertical meters during the day

Overnight in Dali

4 Option: Landscape Hotel or similar <http://www.landscapehotel.com/>*

Day 12: Departure August 15, 2012

Today transfer to airport for a flight to Kunming, then connect your flight back home

End of Service.

QUOTATION

| | | |
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| LANDSERVICE COST <i>Based on 4* hotel</i> | Group Rate | USD 2,798 per person |
| | <i>Single Supplement</i> | <i>USD 360 per person</i> |
| DOMESTIC FLIGHT TICKET | Included in the package Kunming – Shangri-la & Dali – Kunming (one way ticket, economy class, including airport tax and fuel surcharge) | |
| | Beijing/Kunming Return Ticket or Shanghai/Kunming Return Ticket (economy class, including airport tax and fuel surcharge) | |
| SERVICE INCLUDES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation in selected hotels in standard room (2-person sharing) with bath/shower and WC. • All transfers mentioned in the program with private air-conditioned car/coach • Entrance fee for all sights mentioned in the program. • Fees for all activities mentioned in the program • Private English speaking tour guide for all mentioned program. • Meals mentioned in the program • 24 hours customer service telephone hotline (English speaking) • Drinking water on coach • Water, tea and coffee during meals | |
| SERVICE NOT INCLUDES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese Tourist Visa • International flight with tax and fuel surcharge • Alcohol beverage • Gratuities for guides and drivers • Personal expenses • Travel Insurance • All expenses not mentioned above | |

Note:

- 1. Group Size: Minimum 2 pax – Maximum 25 pax**
- 2. Booking Deadline: 1month prior to travel**
- 3. National Tour Guide included for group more than 10 pax**

APPENDIX

Difficulty Level

- 1 – Relaxed. Some physical stamina necessary, mostly relaxed pace of activity
- 2 – Easy. Up to 3 hours of (generally easy) physical activity a day
- 3 – Moderate. 3 to 5 hours of activity a day and/or elevation gain, higher altitude, longer distance, uneven terrain.
- 4 – Challenging. 5 to 7 hours of sustained physical activity throughout trip. Good levels of fitness and technical ability required.
- 5 – Extreme. More than 7 hours of activity and/or involving high levels of technical ability and stamina. Involves long days and distances, extended camping, high altitude or ascent for extensive days.

Comfort Level

- Basic – dormitory, shared bathrooms, basic camping
- Simple – homestay, farmhouse, 1 star hotel
- Comfort – 3 star hotel, private bath/comfort camping
- Boutique – 3+ star hotel, unique property, small/luxury camping
- Luxury – 5 star

Key Code for all of these options

- b: Breakfast (full)
- l: Lunch at restaurant or similar
- sl: Small Lunch or light lunch
- pl: picnic Lunch
- d: Dinner