

Best of Yunnan and Beijing

13 Days | Shanghai to Beijing



SEMI-INDEPENDENT: Setting out from Shanghai uncover China's diverse Yunnan province, home to many of the country's ethnically diverse minorities. From the Bai ethnic group in Xizhou and Zhoucheng, to the Naxi culture in Lijiang. Marvel at the Three Pagodas and explore delightful Dali, stroll through sensational Shangri-La before finishing in bustling Beijing.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Shanghai – soak up Shanghai's old city, the Bund, Fuxing Park and French Concession
- Kunming – independently take in the highlights of Yunnan's capital
- Dali – take scenic chair lift for aerial views of the ancient city
- Three Pagodas – marvel at the grandeur of the Three Pagodas
- Xizhou Village – learn about Bai architecture in one of the towns finest structures
- Zhoucheng – discover Yunnan's largest natural village and "home of tie-dye"

- Baisha Village – uncover ancient murals in Liuli Dian Temple
- Shiguzhen – visit the Naxi town and the First bend of the Yangtze River
- Joseph Rock – visit the former residence of Austrian-born American Botanist who dedicated his life studying Naxi culture
- Tiger Leaping Gorge – stand in awe at one of the deepest gorges in the world
- Shangri-La – discover Tibetan culture at Songzanlin Monastery, Yunnan's largest Tibetan Buddhist temple
- Beijing – roam the streets of China's fascinating capital. Summer Palace, Kunming Lake, Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, and Jinshan Park
- Great Wall of China – hike to Mutianyu section of Great Wall and have picnic lunch amongst stunning scenery

What's Included

- 12 nights 5 star hotels
- 12 breakfasts, 9 lunches and 2 dinners
- One arrival transfer on Day 1 and One departure transfer on Day 13 included per booking
- All relevant transportation within China on private transport
- Economy flights Shanghai – Kunming and Shangri-La – Kunming – Beijing
- Second class train ticket Kunming – Dali
- Local guides for scheduled sightseeing in Shanghai, Kunming, Dali, Xizhou, Lijiang, Baisha, Shangri-La and Beijing

- Entrance to all sites mentioned in the itinerary
- Scenic chair lift in Dali
- Boat trip on Kunming Lake
- Foot massage in Beijing

What's Not Included

- International flights and visa
- Tip for your tour guide. We recommend you allow USD\$3 - 5 per day, per traveller. Tipping your guide is an entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Shanghai

Welcome to China! Arrive in Shanghai. Your local guide will help your check-in and get settled and offer suggestions for local activities and dining options. **Overnight - Shanghai**

Day 2 : Shanghai Sightseeing



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For our first morning in China's most populated city, we head to the Bund - an essential stop for any visitor to this metropolis, offering incredible views of the epic skyline. From here, we head to Shanghai Museum, housing one of the largest collections of ancient relics in China. After a lunch of delicious fried dumplings (a local specialty), we make our way to Shanghai's old city. Full of character and hidden treasures, this area offers respite from the city's frenetic pace. Our final stop for the day is the centre-piece of the old quarter, Yuyuan Garden. **Overnight - Shanghai (B, L)**

Day 3 : Shanghai to Kunming

Shanghai has many picturesque parks. This morning we stroll through one popular with locals performing their morning exercise rituals - Fuxing Park. We continue our exploration of Shanghai by foot with a walking tour through the peaceful tree-lined streets and colonial buildings of the French Concession. After lunch, we board a flight to Yunnan's capital - Kunming.

Overnight - Kunming (B, L)

Day 4 : Kunming to Dali



This morning we journey from Kunming to the ancient city of Dali. Our first stop is Dali's Old Town - a bustling historic area with classical architecture, parks, markets and temples. Next it's onto the Three Pagodas. Set at the foot of Cangshan Mountain and on the banks of the Erhai Lake, this picturesque spot is a symbolic structure within the ancient city. For an aerial view of Dali, we take a scenic chair lift, before checking into our hotel for the evening - the Linden Centre - a unique estate which previously served as a military barracks, hospital and kindergarten. **Overnight - Dali (B, L)**

Day 5 : Xizhou Village

This morning we drive to Xizhou Village, inhabited by the Bai ethnic group. Formerly a military stronghold protected by a lake and mountains, this picturesque spot is now a farming town lined with rice paddy fields. After a stroll through the town's market, we wander through the streets enjoying the unique Bai style architecture, visiting one of the town's finest structures - Yan's Family Compound. This afternoon you are free to enjoy the many activities on offer at the Linden Centre, including cooking classes, calligraphy, Mahjong or yoga to mention a few. **Overnight - Dali (B, L)**

Day 6 : Dali to Lijiang



This morning we have a short drive to the town of Zhoucheng, largely influenced by the Bai people, and known for its textile dyeing techniques. A traditional handicraft of the local people, tie-dyeing of Batik fabrics is a way of life here. After learning a little more about this colorful form of art, we commence our journey to Lijiang. **Overnight - Lijiang (B, L)**

Day 7 : Baisha Village

We have a busy day planned to explore the city and surrounding areas of beautiful Lijiang, starting with the peaceful Baisha Village. This quaint village is best known for its ancient murals, many of which are housed in Liuli Dian Temple. Next we visit a local resident of international fame, Dr Ho. This small, white-haired doctor was propelled into the limelight by an American travel writer, who named him "the Taoist physician in the Jade Dragon Mountain". We then head to the Jade Mountain, to visit Yugeng Monastery, and the former residence of Austrian-Born-American botanist, the enigmatic Joseph Rock. His house now serves as museum dedicated to the man who spent his life studying Naxi

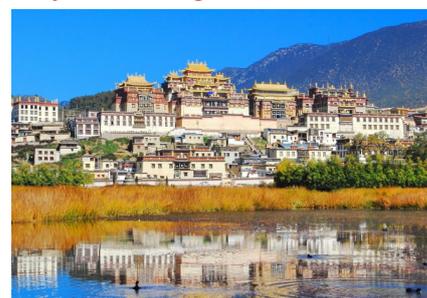
culture and Yunnan's rich wildlife. For our final stops of the day, we take in the views from Lion Hill and the relics of Dongba Museum of Naxi Culture, founded to raise awareness of the minority Naxi people of Yunnan. **Overnight - Lijiang (B, L)**

Day 8 : Lijiang to Shangri-La

Today we journey to Shangri-La with a few notable stops on the way, starting with the First Bend of Yangtze River and the old Naxi town of Shiguzhen. Named the "First Bend" due to the sudden 90-degree turn the river takes, this was a former place of military and trade significance. After visiting in the old town and viewpoint, we drive to Tiger Leaping Gorge - one of the deepest gorges in the world with spectacular surrounding scenery popular with hikers. Following a short exploration of the valley and UNESCO natural preservation area, we continue drive to Shangri-La, passing by Baishui Terrace.

Overnight - Shangri-La (B, L)

Day 9 : Shangri-La



This morning we wake up in the spectacular Shangri-La, also known as Zhongdian, heavily influenced by bordering Tibet. We take a walk through the cobbled lanes of Zhongdian Old Town, passing by Zhuangjin Tong - the world's largest prayer wheel at 21 meters high. Next we head to the viewpoint of Napa Lake - a nature reserve lying in the valley of a mountain plateau. Songzanlin Monastery is our next stop - the largest Tibetan Buddhist temple in Yunnan. We end our day by visiting a Tibetan family to better understand their unique way of life. This evening we come together for a farewell dinner on our final night in Yunnan.

Overnight - Shangri-La (B, D)

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Day 10 : Shangri-La to Beijing

Today we journey from the mountains of Shangri-La to the metropolis of Beijing, with a stopover in Kunming airport. Once settled in China's modern-day capital, we feast on the popular local dish the Peking Roasted Duck.

Overnight - Beijing (B, D)

Day 11 : Beijing Sightseeing



Beijing is famous for its back-streets, known locally as the 'Hutongs'. This morning, we visit the Hutong Museum, paying tribute to this unique part of Beijing's present and past. Next up is the grand imperial garden and former playground of the emperors - the Summer Palace, with a boat trip on Kunming Lake. Following lunch in a local restaurant, we move onto Tiananmen Square and the majestic Forbidden City, the world's largest palace complex. For our final stop of the day, we stroll up to Jingshan Park for evening views over the city. **Overnight - Beijing (B, L)**

Day 12 : The Great Wall

Following an early breakfast, we head north of Beijing to the largest military structure ever built - the Great Wall. We visit one of the best-preserved sections of the wall - Mutianyu and learn more about the history of this incredible ancient structure. Following an easy stroll over restored steps, we stop for a picnic lunch and take in the surrounding scenery. This afternoon we return to Beijing for a relaxing foot massage. **Overnight - Beijing (B, L)**

Day 13 : Beijing

Our tour comes to an end today with an included transfer to the airport for your onward flight. Alternatively we can arrange post tour accommodation if you'd like to extend your stay. (B)

HOTELS

The hotels listed below are ones which we frequently use on this tour. We reserve the right to substitute these hotels to ones of a similar standard when necessary.

Radisson Blu Hotel Shanghai New World

The Radisson New World is a contemporary and comfortable hotel with all the conveniences of a business hotel. The guestrooms are spacious, plush and fully equipped for your lodging needs, many with magnificent views of the city. Amenities in the hotel include a spa, sky bar and a revolving restaurant at the top of the unique 208m tall tower.



Green Lake Hotel

Ideally located next to Kunming Green Lake Park is the Green Lake Hotel. Each luxuriously decorated guest room features cosy seating areas and windows overlooking the Green Lake or city, alongside amenities such as a flat-screen TV, minibar and complimentary WiFi. Guests can dine in one of the onsite restaurants and relax in the sauna after an action-packed day of touring.



The Liden Centre

This award-winning boutique hotel showcases traditional Bai heritage. The property has previously served as military barracks, a hospital and kinder garden since it was constructed in 1947. Each guest room is traditionally decorated with locally crafted furniture and features an electric kettle, hairdryer and bathrobes. There is a terrace

for guests to enjoy their morning coffee and a fitness centre for those looking to work up a sweat. Other facilities include a shared lounge, and an onsite restaurant serving Chinese cuisine.



InterContinental Lijiang Ancient Town Resort

Combining traditional and modern aesthetics the InterContinental Lijiang Ancient Town is ideally located overlooking the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain. Each spacious guestroom features a flat screen TV, Wifi, and large bathrooms featuring bath tubs and showers. Guests can unwind in the onsite swimming pool and spa which offers massages or facials or exercise in the onsite gym. The onsite restaurant serves a variety of Cantonese and Sichuan dishes, as well as local specialities and authentic Yunnan cuisine.



Songtsam Linka Shangri-La

Located 5 minutes from the Songzanlin Monastery Temple is a charming Tibetan-style hotel in the heart of Shangri-La. The traditionally decorated guestrooms feature a safety deposit box and cable TV. The property features two onsite restaurants, one serving local cuisine and the other serving Western dishes. Guests can also sip on a cocktail and relax on the terrace, enjoy a message or curl up by the fireplace with a good book.

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Fairmont Hotel

The boldly designed Fairmont is a luxurious hotel with natural light-filled interiors that are accented by contemporary Chinese artwork. The rooms feature a blend of traditional and contemporary Chinese style, with floor-to-ceiling windows and state-of-the-art amenities. The hotel also features renowned restaurants, bars and a large spa.



Our partners:

This tour is operated in conjunction with our trusted partner and you will join travellers who booked through different operators, not solely On The Go.

The sightseeing group may vary in size from 2 – 16 persons.

Airport arrival:

Our arrival procedure is as follows:

For tours starting in Shanghai

If arriving into Shanghai International Airport, after attending to immigration and customs, please proceed to the arrival hall.

Please have your tour voucher handy and make it available to our representative who will be waiting for you in the arrivals hall, holding a prominent On The Go Tours logo signboard, ready to escort you to our awaiting transportation and onward to your tour start hotel.

If, for any reason you have trouble locating our representative after waiting 30 minutes in the arrival hall or your flight to China is delayed please call the emergency contact number as stated on your tour voucher. Please do not leave the airport and travel to the hotel yourself. Please call the contact number as stated on your tour voucher.

Accommodation:

The accommodation on this tour depends on the location but generally we work with 4-5 star standard hotels and above. Our hotels are usually situated close to the main sights and town centres. Staff are friendly and there is often a bar and restaurant either on site or nearby.

All accommodation is included from the arrival day until check out time on the final day of the tour however there is an option to extend your stay and book additional post night accommodation

Time keeping:

Punctuality is very important throughout the tour and you will usually be given a time to meet your tour leader and the rest of the group in reception. In the event that you miss the meeting time you will have to make your own way to where the group are, this will be at your own expense.

Delays can occur on the trips, although they are rare we recommend you do not book onward travel too close to the end of the tour to allow time for delays. We take no responsibility for any missed flights or additional expenses if the group arrives late to the departure city.

Local guides:

This is a semi-independent tour and you will travel from place to place unaccompanied and meet the local guide and driver at each new destination that will conduct your sightseeing arrangements in this location.

Porterage:

In China most often porterage is not available at railway stations and you will be required to carry your own luggage. We recommend you pack as light as possible as there can be several flights of stairs and a lengthy walk to our awaiting transportation.

Shopping:

China is a virtual Aladdin's Cave. Government-run Friendship Stores in almost all cities stock a range of fixed-price souvenirs and handicrafts and can offer a reasonable idea of what is acceptable in terms of quality and price. After a visit to the Friendship

Store, visit private stores, craft shops and local department stores. However, the best shopping is often at public markets. If you see something you want, buy it when you see it - prices don't vary greatly, but selection can vary from location to location.

Top buys include silk products, embroidery, Chinese calligraphy and paintings, ceramics, jade and stone carvings, lacquer ware, Chinese tea, Cloisonne, Mao reproduction propaganda souvenirs such as the famous 'Red Book', caps and buttons, personalised ink seals and clothing of every kind. Markets in Beijing and Shanghai commonly sell top quality ski jackets and leisure attire by big name brands. Additionally, copied goods such as handbags, watches and shoes are available in plentiful supply in these markets. Ethnic crafts are a speciality in some regions including Xi'an and Kunming. If wishing to buy antiques, proceed with caution. It's highly likely that the antique will be a skilful reproduction. However, if it is the real deal, you'll need paperwork the Chinese Administrative Department of Cultural Relics which must then accompany the article being exported.

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KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

China Country Guide

Visas

China Visa

Visas are required by all visitors to China. It is essential that a tourist visa is procured prior to travel. We will provide you with an invoice/itinerary indicating that you are travelling to China on a pre-arranged holiday. The visa is

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valid for entry within 3 months, so you cannot apply any earlier. Please ensure your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of return from China.

If you're a resident of the UK and would like someone to handle your visa application for you then we recommend CIBTvisas. Please visit <http://www.cibtvisas.co.uk/onthego> for more information.

Visa for Hong Kong

Most Western visitors to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China do not require a tourist visa issued in advance of travel. Currently, UK nationals can stay up to 180 days. Nationals of Australia, Canada, Eire, most other EU countries, New Zealand and the US do not require a visa for a stay not exceeding 90 days, while holders of RSA passports can remain for up to 30 days. If entering Hong Kong from mainland China and returning to mainland China a multiple Chinese entry visa is required.

Visa for Tibet

Tibet - If travelling to Tibet, a Tibet Travel Permit is required. The permit will be arranged by our office in China. Please contact On The Go Tours prior to departure for the most up to date Tibetan entry information.

The information above is not applicable for the Beijing and Shanghai Visa Free Tours

NOTE: Visa requirements are subject to change, please check with your embassy before booking this trip.

Climate

In all, China has a great diversity of climates. To sum it up - China experiences hot summers in most parts of the country, very cold winters in the north and comfortable winters in the south! Sep-Oct is warm to hot and dry across the country. Nov-Mar is winter with very cool temps in the north, whilst mild in the south. If combining the north and south, you'll experience 2 distinct weather patterns. Apr-May - perfect in the north, if a little humid and rainy in the south. Jun-Aug can bring a few showers.

Health & Water

You should seek medical advice before travelling to China from your local health practitioner and ensure that you receive all

of the appropriate vaccinations. As a guide it is recommended that you be vaccinated for Tetanus and Polio, if you haven't had a booster in the last ten years. Food and waterborne diseases are more common, so we recommend vaccinations for Typhoid (valid 3 years) and Hepatitis A (validity varies). There is a malarial risk in remote southern areas of China, so do check the current situation before travelling.

As tap water is not safe to drink in China, only drink bottled mineral water which is readily available from hotels, shops and restaurants. Make sure bottled water is sealed.

Currency

The currency of China is the Chinese Yuan. Pound Sterling, US Dollars, Euro and other major currencies can be exchanged in China. Exchange facilities are available at various bureau de changes and banks in major towns have ATMs or it is possible to get some before you leave home. It's advisable to request bank notes in smaller denominations, as it can sometimes be hard to get change from large notes and smaller notes are handy for smaller purchases and gratuities. Traveller's Cheques are not recommended as they're often difficult to exchange and incur high fees.

Time & Voltage

China is 8 hours ahead of GMT. The country operates on one time zone, so clocks are set according to Beijing time, meaning, given the size of the country, sunrise and sunset can occur at peculiar times! Voltage is 220v, 50Hz AC. Chinese plugs come in many designs: 3-pronged angle pins as used in Australia; 3-pronged round pins as used in Hong Kong; 2-pronged flat pins as used in the USA; or 2 round narrow pins as used in Europe. To cover all bases, pack a travel adaptor!

Essential Packing

As light as possible! In China, most often portorage is not available at railway stations and you will be required to carry your own luggage. Bags with wheels can be a hindrance when climbing several flights of stairs, though are a blessing when walking lengthy distances to reach our awaiting transportation. If travelling in early spring we

recommend you pack warm clothes, layering works best this time of year.

- Food in China is very different and arguably better than your local takeaway! If you prefer western snack food, consider bringing a supply
- Sunglasses, hat, sunscreen, swim costume, basic torch/ flash light & umbrella for sun or rain
- Comfortable closed in walking shoes for climbing the Great Wall
- DEET based mosquito repellent & antihistamine cream
- Chinese plugs come in many designs: 3 prong angle pins similar, though smaller than those used in Australia; 2 prong flat pins (type A) or 2 round pins, European style (type C). To cover all bases, pack a travel adaptor!
- Two spare passport photos & a photocopy of your passport
- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs
- Plastic poncho to go over your jacket. Whilst site-seeing, you can be in the rain for an extended period and even a rain jacket can get soaked. You can purchase a cheap one locally, but we suggest taking one from home of a better quality that doesn't rip easily

PLEASE NOTE: If your tour includes an internal flight, that most airlines have a 20kg baggage limit.

Toilets/Washrooms

Public toilets, when found, are usually 'squats' - holes in the ground with footrests at either side and often don't possess a door! The custom is to wash with water from a jug or little pipe attached to the toilet using your left hand. Doesn't appeal? Here are some hints!

- Time yourself with the accommodations you are staying at
- If you are out and about, find the nearest hotel, restaurant, fast food outlet, or toilets at tourist attractions, which all tend to have Western style facilities
- Ask your tour guide to make a stop
- Pack a roll of toilet paper and anti-bacterial wipes for your own comfort

Media Restrictions

There are restrictions on all media, including social media and free press throughout China.

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Whilst on holiday, you will have limited or no access to social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Google Plus - so no Google Maps and no Play Store. To bypass the firewall, you could download a VPN. It is much easier to do this before you go to China.

WeChat: If travelling on one of our budget tours, communication between the group and Adventure Leader is via the app: WeChat. Please install this App and open an account before your trip as it is harder to do so in mainland China.

There is also limited international calling options, so please check with your local provider before leaving home, to source the best roaming or online options to keep in regular contact with family and friends during your travels.

Travelling By Train

Fast and efficient, China's first rail lines were laid in the 19th century, and today, the government continues to invest heavily in this crucial mode of transport which connects many parts of the country. When travelling during the day, 'soft' seats, that is to say 'upholstered' seats are provided. For overnight travel, clients are accommodated in 'soft class' sleeper cabins. Aboard each wagon are 9 compartments that comprise 4 bunks per compartment. Four people of mixed sex share one compartment. On occasion, dependent upon group size, you may be sharing with local people on the overnight journey, though sometimes dependent upon how the Chinese Railways Booking Office configure the bookings, the cabin may be filled with four of our passengers. A dining wagon serves reasonably priced Chinese food of the noodles and rice variety, along with snacks and drinks. A very simple menu is published in English. On the Beijing - Xi'an service, there is also a small bar serving drinks including alcohol. Each wagon offers a WC and hand basin facility. At one end, is a Chinese squat-style WC, whilst at the other end is a modern Western-style WC. Cabins are lockable from the inside and luggage is stowed in overhead compartments and under the bottom bunk. Bed linen and slippers are supplied, and often there is a TV mounted on the wall at the end of

each bed that may even work. Most channels are broadcast in Mandarin, excluding one English Channel, which has little of interest on it!

Porterage

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Shopping

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It's not like home!

Travel to far - flung corners of the earth involves lifestyles and conditions that are sometimes very different from what you are used to back home. You must come prepared to cope with unusual situations, local inadequacies and unpredictable events as and when they occur. Foreign travel is definitely not suitable for people who expect or demand everything to go exactly as planned. With the greatest respect and in the interest of your ultimate enjoyment you must understand this. Things can and do change in foreign countries.

- Be prepared as locals smoke everywhere in China
- The Chinese don't have an awareness of personal space, be ready to have people standing very close to you, nudge you or even walk into you, they are not being rude, it's just a very different culture
- Many tourists report scams in Shanghai, so be friendly but careful. Never ever follow a stranger anywhere
- Spitting and snorting is common in China as they see the use of tissues as unhygienic.
- Some locals won't queue and will often walk straight to the front of a line with no awareness or care of what they have done wrong
- Always take some antiseptic hand gel or antibacterial hand wipes with you and BYO toilet paper as its rare in public toilets. Squat toilets are very common, they can be a novelty and are easy to use
- Chinese people are delighted if you make any attempt to speak Mandarin, even if it's only a couple of words

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