

# Journey Down South

## 10 days | Guilin to Lijiang



*Get off the beaten track and see the highlights of China's scenic south. Discover dramatic landscapes, trek in the beautiful Yunnan Province and meet the locals at eco lodges and homestays.*

### HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

#### Trip Highlights

- **Guilin/Yangshuo** - free time. Karst landscape, riverside villages, quirky street markets. Local fisherman and Commorants. Sailing, rafting, hiking and outdoor pursuits
- **Kunming** - Stone Forest. Opt to visit Western Hills or Dragon Gate Grotto
- **Lijiang** - UNESCO-listed Dayan Old Town, Tiger Leaping Gorge - trekking/walking
- **Wenhai** - Jade Dragon Snow Mountain
- **Lashishai District** - Naxi indigenous community, Yi Village
- **Liming** - Thousand Tortoise Mountain

#### What's Included

- Breakfast daily, 6 lunches, 3 dinners
- 5 nights Standard hotels (Superior and Deluxe available on request, 1 night simple Eco Lodge, 1 night Guesthouse and 1 night Homestay (with Naxi indigenous family)

- 1 night sleeper train (4-berth sort sleeper cabin) - Guilin to Kunming
- Touring and excursions as per itinerary
- Guided trekking and guiding at points of interest
- Airport arrival and departure transfer day 1 and day 10
- English speaking specialist guides at local sights
- All relevant transfers and transportation
- Entrance fees to all included sites

#### What's Not Included

- International flights and visa
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture

### DETAILED ITINERARY

#### Day 1 : Guilin

Welcome to Guilin, Guangxi Province! Airport arrival and transfer to your hotel.

#### Overnight - Guilin

#### Day 2 : Yangshuo

Guilin - Yangshuo. This morning drive onwards (approx 1.5hrs) to Yangshuo. Renowned for its striking, if bizarre scenery, vast areas of karst limestone outcrops which rise up from flat rice paddy fields. From Yangshuo it is possible to take a relaxing cruise by simple bamboo raft or motorised long boat along the Yulonghe River, passing an endless procession of peaks and remote

villages. The local fishermen use trained cormorants to catch fish and local village boys paddle out to the river boats with all manner of curios. **Overnight - Yangshuo (B)**

#### Day 3 : Yangshuo



Choose to go boating along the Yulonghe or Yu Long rivers, cycling, hiking, rafting or rock climbing or simply spend the day exploring this charming village laden with quirky shops, tea shops, antiques, art t-shirt designers and souvenir curios. Maybe take a calligraphers or beginners art class with a local painter or enjoy a morning class at the 'Cloud 9' cooking school. **Overnight - Yangshuo (B)**

#### Day 4 : Reed Flute Caves

Yangshuo - Guilin - Kunming. Returning to Guilin we tour the enormous Reed Flute Caves. Take an afternoon stroll along the picturesque riverside foot bridges and paths before our overnight train journey to Kunming. **Overnight - Sleeper Train (B, L)**

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## Days 5-6 : Kunming & Lijiang



Kunming - Lijiang. Capital of Yunnan Province, Kunming lies 2000m above sea level. Its gentle weather and abundance of flowers have earned it the name 'City of Eternal Spring'. Arriving mid morning, hotel check in and free time. Visit the stunning Western Hills or the Dragon Gate Grotto if you choose. On day 6 visit the petrified Stone Forest, before flying onward to Lijiang. **Overnight - Kunming (1), Lijiang (1)** (B:2, L:2)

## Day 7 : Trek to Wenhai

Lijiang – Wenhai. Seeing the reflection of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain on the surface of a picturesque lake, is the highlight of the 3 - 4 hour hike toward Wenhai Eco lodge. Upon arrival explore the village and drink tea with a local family. **Overnight - Wenhai Eco Lodge** (B, L, D)

## Day 8 : Lashishai Homestay

Wenhai - Lashishai home stay. This morning you visit Yi Village before embarking on a 4 hour hike to visit the Lashishai community. Here, you'll meet and stay overnight with a traditional Naxi indigenous family. **Overnight - Lashishai homestay** (B, L, D)

## Day 9 : Thousand Tortoise Mountain



Lashishai - Liming. En route to Liming (approx 3 hour drive) visit the town of Shigu, located

on the first bend of the Yangtze River. Here you undertake a 3 hour hike (or pony ride if you choose) to the 3000m summit of the Thousand Tortoise Mountain. After enjoying the spectacular panoramic views continue your walk (downhill) to Liming. **Overnight - Liming Guesthouse** (B, L, D)

## Day 10 : Tiger Leaping Gorge

Liming – Tiger Leaping Gorge – Lijiang. After breakfast head to spectacular Tiger Leaping Gorge on the Yangtze River. Some 16km long and up to 3000m deep, it is the world's deepest canyon. The gorge is so narrow at various points that legend has it a tiger once escaped pursuit by leaping across. Visiting the gorge, you'll have a chance to walk a section and take in the dramatic, yet stark scenery. After lunch return to Lijiang for your onward flight or onward journey to Dali, should you choose. (B)

### KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

#### Entrance fees

Entry fees to most sites are not included although reasonably priced. In China, we'll collect the entrance fees on Day 2 of the tour at the Welcome Meeting (the amount is noted under exclusions on the first page of this document). A comprehensive breakdown of the entrance fees is provided upon arrival. All funds collected in China for entrance fees and optional excursions (that you may wish to undertake) are payable in local currency - Chinese Yuan (CNY).

Note: If you are over the age of 60 at time of travel, a discounted ticket or free entry to some sites may be possible (subject to change by the government). Entrance fees will be collected in full on day 2, and your guide/s will attempt to get a discount at each site on your behalf. If a discount is obtained your guide will issue a refund at this time. Please make your guide aware of this (if you are eligible) at the Welcome Meeting so that the discount can be requested throughout the tour.

#### Tipping kitty

At the start of your tour at the Welcome Meeting, we'll collect a small tipping kitty

(the amount is noted under exclusions on the first page of this document) from all tour participants to cover tips throughout your holiday. This saves you the hassle of knowing when and how much to tip bellhops, luggage handlers, bus drivers, train conductors and other support staff throughout the tour.

This amount does not include a tip for your tour guide. For a job well done, we suggest USD\$3-5 per traveller, per day. Tipping your guide is an entirely personal gesture and ultimately the amount is up to you.

#### Groups & guides

Some of our group tours are sectors of a larger tour. Some travellers on your trip may only travel with you for part of your tour. It also might be that you end your holiday part way through a longer tour and others in the group continue on.

Guides: We believe the best way to see a country is through the eyes of a local and as such we only employ tour guides native to the country you are visiting. Our guides are passionate, caring, knowledgeable and fun, and by travelling with a local you get to see the wonders of the country through their eyes. Tour guides will remain with groups of 6 or more. Where groups are 5 or less, travel between cities will be unescorted with transfers at either side of the airport/train station and a local guide will conduct the scheduled sightseeing within each city.

### China Country Guide

#### Welcome to China - Arrival transfer

**For tours starting in Beijing** A complimentary airport arrival transfer is included when arriving into Beijing Capital Airport. After attending to immigration and customs formalities, please proceed to the arrival hall. If arriving to Beijing into Terminal 2, when exiting immigration to the arrivals hall, please turn right where our representative will be waiting. If arriving into Terminal 3 you will be met just outside the restricted area. The prominent sign depicting our company logo easily identifies our representative. Please have your Tour Voucher handy and

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make it available to our representative. Our representative will assist you with your luggage and escort you to our vehicle, for your transfer to your hotel.

**If, for any reason you have trouble locating our representative** after waiting 20 minutes (remember Beijing is a busy International Airport) or your flight to China is delayed, please call or send a text message (standard text message, not Messenger or WhatsApp) to the emergency contact number as stated on your Tour Voucher.

If you require a transfers from Daxing International Airport, this can be arranged at an additional fee, please speak with your reservations consultant for further details.

## Visas & passports

Visa requirements are subject to change and visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from China.

After booking your holiday, please provide us with your passport details as soon as possible so that we can proceed to book all services. Please be advised visa requirements are subject to change, therefore it is essential that you check current visa requirements with the embassy before travel. For information about visas, head to [www.onthegotours.com/China/Visas](http://www.onthegotours.com/China/Visas)

Please note: If you plan to renew your passport between now and your departure date, please let us know as soon as possible (not your soon to be old passport details). When booking accommodation, trains or flights, we must have the details of the passport that you will be carrying with you on your trip.

## Health requirements & water

You should seek medical advice for vaccinations and about medications 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.

## Essential packing

Please check local temperatures so you can pack accordingly. Visit [www.worldclimate.com](http://www.worldclimate.com)

- 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 and umbrella for sun or rain
- Comfortable closed in walking shoes for climbing the Great Wall etc
- DEET based mosquito repellent and antihistamine cream
- Universal travel adaptor
- Tour Voucher and a copy of your travel insurance policy, spare passport photos and 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
- If your tour includes an internal flight, most airlines have a 20kg baggage limit
- Note: The government has introduced a policy for the purpose of environmental protection, whereby hotels no longer supply disposable items such as slippers, shower caps, tooth brush/paste, etc

## Porterage

Pack as light as possible! In China, most often porterage is not available at railway stations and you will need 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.

## Media restrictions

There are restrictions on all media, including social media and free press throughout China. 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 look at downloading a VPN, which is much easier to do before you go to China.

## WeChat:

Communication between the group and Tour Guide or Leader is best via the app: WeChat. Please install this App prior to your holiday as it is very hard to download the app once you have arrived in China. If you opt to open the WeChat account prior to arrival and it requests that you have to be contacted by someone already on WeChat before opening your account, don't worry, this can be done locally with your guide (just have the app downloaded ready to finalise opening your account locally).

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 on some of our "Signature Range" tours, clients are accommodated in 'soft class' sleeper cabins. Aboard each wagon are 9 compartments that comprise of 4 bunks per compartment. Four people of mixed gender 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. Each wagon offers a WC and hand basin facility. At one

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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!

For overnight travel on budget "Essentials Range" tours, clients are accommodated in "open" 6 berth bunks. We try to get all of our travellers in the same compartment/seating area so that you can have fun getting to know each other better, playing games etc. It is possible to upgrade to a four-berth soft sleeper on your trip, please contact us at time of booking for rates (upgrades are only possible if the open class ticket has not already been purchased and please note that you will be sleeping in another carriage to that of those in the 6 berth carriages).

## Shopping in China

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.

In the tourism industry it's common practice for commission to be offered in exchange for recommending particular shops or suppliers. This can become an issue when clients feel obliged to purchase. We do our best to avoid this by monitoring all shopping experiences offered.

All shopping experiences on your tour have been noted in the itinerary and they have been carefully selected based upon positive feedback from On The Go travellers. You are under no obligation to partake in a listed shopping experience and you are

most welcome to wait inside or outside the premises.

Although we only visit reputable retailers, please note that we cannot explicitly guarantee the quality of their products. All purchases made whilst on holiday with us are at your own discretion. Please make sure that you are completely happy with your purchase. On The Go cannot be held responsible for any items that you buy if they fail to meet expectation, or any shipping arrangements. Proceed with caution.

## Holidays & events

China has many important National Holidays and events that are celebrated throughout the country. During these times (the lead up to them and afterwards) there can be delays to public transport, the roads can be much busier and many sites are a lot more crowded as the locals take this time to visit family, celebrate the holiday and experience the wonders and amazing places within their own country.

During this time you'll likely to encounter a celebratory atmosphere, but an additional level of patience, flexibility and understanding goes a long way so that you may enjoy your holiday.

As tourists, you will be generally be unaffected and your tour guide will do their best to plan around these events. Though when initially planning your holiday, if you prefer not to travel when sites are crowded or are concerned about delays, then travelling during these holidays is possibly not for you. For more information: [www.timeanddate.com/holidays/china/2021](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/china/2021)

## 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.

Please visit [www.onthegotours.com/China/Travel-tips-and-useful-info](http://www.onthegotours.com/China/Travel-tips-and-useful-info) for what to wear, local customs, currency, WiFi and other helpful information to prepare for your holiday.

- Be prepared as the 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
- Chinese people are delighted if you make any attempt to speak Mandarin, even if it's only a couple of words

## 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! They can be a novelty and are easy to use. 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
- Always take some antiseptic hand gel or antibacterial hand wipes with you and BYO toilet paper as its rare in public toilets

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