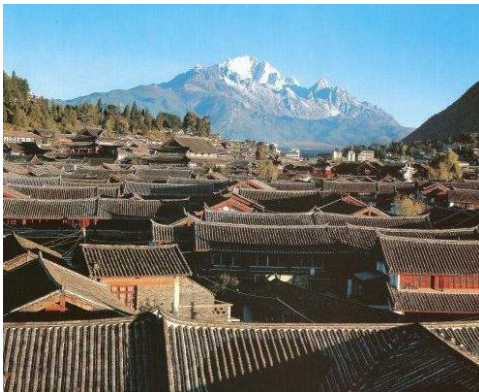




YUNNAN

THERE IS NO PLACE QUITE LIKE IT



A journey to Yunnan will take you to one of the most diverse areas of China; home to numerous hill tribes that have successfully kept their traditions alive, providing visitors a living link to the past, when their nomadic ancestors migrated freely through the mountainous areas of South East Asia.

Day 1 London

Fly from London Heathrow to Hong Kong with either Cathay Pacific or Virgin Atlantic

Day 2 Hong Kong - Kunming

Early morning arrival into Hong Kong, where you will connect with your onward flight to Kunming.

On arrival, transfer to your hotel.

Kunming is the largest and most ancient city of Yunnan Province and has a history stretching back over 2,000 years. Today it has a bustling street market lifestyle and a charming collection of wooden buildings still remain tightly squeezed along small alleys.



Day 3 Kunming - Zhongdian

Morning flight to Zhongdian. On arrival, you will transfer to your hotel.

Located 198 km north-west of Lijiang, Zhongdian, also known as Shangri la, was once the last stop in Yunnan for hardy travellers going into Tibet. Zhongdian is principally a Tibetan town and stands at 3200 metres. About an hour's walk north of the town is Songzanlin Monastery, a 300-year old Tibetan monastery complex with several hundred monks. It sits upon a hill surrounded by mountains and definitely merits a visit. In mid June Zhongdian plays host to a horse racing festival and for several days there is dancing, singing and eating.

Day 4 Zhongdian

Visit Songzanlin Monastery or 'Little Potala' as it is affectionately known; it is a spiritual place that invites you to discover the mystery and traditions of Tibetan Buddhism and is the largest Tibetan Buddhism monastery in Yunnan Province.

Day 5 Zhongdian

Visit Dhondrupling Monastery, located out of town and sits perched on the mountainside high above the Mekong River. The monastery still houses over 300 monks. On our return journey stop off at a Tibetan village to enjoy the delights of a cup of Yak Butter tea.

Day 6 Zongdian to Lijiang

Depart Zhongdian,, stopping at the Baishui Terrace at the foot of the Haba Snow Mountain, birthplace of the Naxi ethnic minority and widely accepted as the Holy Land of the Dongba Religion. Then continue onwards to the the spectacular Tiger Leaping Gorge, one of the deepest gorges in the world, where the Yangtze River roars through a narrow chasm, with towering mountains either side.

On arrival into Lijiang, check into your hotel.

Lijiang is home to the Naxi peoples and has a spectacular mountain backdrop. Naxi society is based on a matriarchal system which, although not as strong as it once was, is still very evident in their culture and language. The World Heritage old town is a delightful maze of wooden buildings and cobbled streets.



Day 7 Lijiang

Spend the morning exploring the delights of Lijiang and then in the afternoon visit black Dragon Pool.

Day 8 Lijiang

Take a trip out of Lijiang today, to see the views from the Jade Dragon Mountain, which dominates the skyline of Lijiang. On the way back into the town, see the well-preserved frescos in the small village of Baisha.

Day 9 Lijiang to Shaxi

Drive south to Shaxi, stopping at the holy Buddhist Mountain of Shibaoshan en route. Located deep in the Himalayan foothills, Shaxi is a culturally diverse town, home to the Bai and Yi minority peoples. Shaxi once played an important role as a bustling trade station on the Tea and Horse Caravan Road, an important branch of the Silk Road. Just over one thousand years ago, this ancient trade route connected Tibet with Eastern China. In exchange for teas from Yunnan, Tibetans traded their famous breed of horse to Song Dynasty officials in eastern China, who were busy defending their territory from invaders from the north.

Day 10 Shaxi to Dali

Continue our journey onwards to Dali, where you will check into the Linden Centre for three nights.

The Linden Centre offers the intrepid traveller a true immersion into authentic China. Guests reside in an expansive and luxurious courtyard home in Xizhou. The facility is a nationally protected heritage site that has been restored to its former dynastic elegance.

Each day at the Centre is different, with a constant flow of activities and experiences available. What stays the same is a personal interaction with the authentic cultures, traditions, values, and daily life of the Bai people of Xizhou Village and beyond. Some experiences are observational, while others are more participatory. The strong educational component of a stay at the Centre includes a wide palate of expert guidance on the diverse traditions of the region. We are also proud to offer unique chances to join in volunteer efforts that benefit the immediate community of Xizhou.

Day 11 Dali

Today your guide will accompany to picturesque Erhai Lake, where you'll be able to take a small boat to one of the lake's islands. Back in Dali you have the rest of the day at leisure.



BEST TIME TO VISIT

Winters are a little chilly while summers bring the most visitors, therefore spring and autumn are the best times to visit. Towns like Lijiang and Dali are very well known and as a consequence can get crowded, therefore it is always good to be an early riser, when most people are still sleeping.

YOU CAN EXTEND YOUR STAY

- Stop over in Hong Kong on the way to or from Yunnan.
- Alternatively it is possible to travel via Bangkok, Beijing or Shanghai
- See more of Yunnan by visiting the Stone Forest
- Relax at the end of your trip - Thailand
- See some of the China's classic sites in Beijing or Xian.

HOTELS

Grand Park Hotel, Kunming

The Grand Park hotel is located next to the charming 17th century Green Lake Park and within easy walking distance of the city centre.

Gyalthang Dzong Hotel, Zhongdian

Gyalthang Dzong Hotel is a typical Tibetan building but with a unique architecture in "Tibetan lamasery" style. A lamasery is a monastery for lamas - Buddhist monks who are spiritually qualified to lead people towards enlightenment. Opened in 1996, the hotel features 47 well-equipped rooms that exude style and elegance.

Crowne Plaza, Lijiang

Situated inside the ancient town, the Crowne Plaza is a 5 minute walk to the Square Market, the hub of Lijiang. The hotel features exquisite rooms with Naxi and Dongba ethnic charm.

The Linden Centre, Dali

The Linden Centre at Yang Pin Xiang has been completely restored to the full elegance of traditional Bai style and at the same time renovated to Western modern standards. Feng shui design principles were employed by the home's original owners, and have been respected and advanced in the recent renovations. The complex is graced with four exceptional courtyards and gardens. Lush water ponds, mature bamboo, and blooming flowers and greenery abound, with indigenous centuries-old statues accenting cherished spots throughout the compound.

To discuss your perfect trip, please contact us on 01278 722460 or drop us an email at info@silksteps.co.uk.

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