

SOUTHWEST CHINA - "Beyond the Clouds" 15 days tour 15 Day/13 nights departing from London



Magnificent extraordinary climatic and scenic diversity makes this region a travel paradise yet to be discovered.

CHENGDU-The capital of Sichuan province with its bamboo forests is the natural home of the Giant Panda.

KUNMING- The city of "Eternal Spring" and famous for the Karst formations of its Stone Forest

DALI-Ancient picturesque town and capital of the traditional Bai minority peoples

LIJIANG-Lijiang is an UNESCO World Heritage protected town with well-preserved traditional buildings

ZHONGDIAN – Also known as SHANGRI-LA on the edge of the Tibetan plateau.

Tour ends in the dynamic city of SHANGHAI.

This tour is carefully planned so the traveler can enjoy the contrasts of scenery in this region in a relaxed way, free time to explore the local area, meet the local people in their traditional costumes and to select their own choice of meals when not included in the itinerary



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DAY BY DAY ITINERARY



DAY 1: Our journey begins as we fly to SHANGHAI from London

DAY 2: On arrival transfer for the connecting flight- MU 294 11.05-14.20 to CHENGDU for 2 nights stay. This afternoon free time to relax or explore the local area. Tonight welcome ceremony & dinner in MINSHAN LHASA HOTEL.- CHENGDU. B/ D (L in flight)

DAY 3: Today, we have a full morning visit to the Panda Breeding and Research Centre and discover the breeding and preservation methods of the giant panda's. There will also be an opportunity to take photographs with the Pandas. A once in a lifetime experience. In the afternoon we return to Chengdu and discover the city with its narrow streets and busy market. In the evening an opportunity to appreciate the famous Sichuan Opera with the fantastic "Changing Faces" B / D. Overnight Chengdu.

DAY 4: We depart our hotel and transfer to the airport for our flight to KUNMING (MU 5852- 12.10-13.20) After airport formalities, meet your guide and transfer to hotel. Kunming, the capital city of Yunnan, is well known as the City of Eternal Spring. Take a city tour to the Western Hill, whose skyline resembles a sleeping beauty, lies by the western shore of the Dianchi Lake, offering the best scenery and the finest temple in the region: the *Dragon Gate*, a grotto complex of rooms, sculptures, archway and tunnel chiseled along sheer cliff by local stonemasons from 1781 to 1853, and the *Huating Temple*, the biggest Buddhist complex in Kunming. Overnight in KUNMING JINJIANG HOTEL for 2 nights B / D (L in flight)

DAY 5 : A rare experience today, we Drive to the *Stone Forest* (85 km, 1.5 h). An extremely rare geological phenomenon dating back to 270 million years ago, the Stone Forest is 80 hectares of karst limestone pillars in fantastic shapes that resemble a forest viewed from a distance. It is also home to the Sani tribe, a branch of the diverse Yi minority renowned for their diligence, embroidery and dancing. On the way, visit a *Yi minority village*. After back to Kunming, stroll in Cuihu Park. Free evening & overnight in Kunming B/L (D on own account)

DAY 6: Depart by coach for a scenic drive along part of the famous "Burma Road" to DALI via Chuxiong. Approx.4 hours (with stops) 360 kilometers.

explore the *Dali Ancient Town* with a history of 1,300 years, which is the home to Bai minority. Dali is one of the most charming and relaxing spots in China. It is a small unspoiled town with a dusty medieval atmosphere and traditional cobblestone streets and a beautiful setting, with mountains on one side of the town and Erhai Lake on the other. Two ancient city gates and parts of ancient walls still stand.

Our hotel is located in the centre of the old town. Easy to walk to the famous "Foreigner's Street" for food and drink. Remainder of the day and evening free to explore fascinating Dali. Overnight: DALI LANDSCAPE HOTEL. B/ D

DAY 7:After breakfast we make a visit to the famous 9th century Three Pagodas of Chongsheng temple. Then we travel to Erhai Lake for a 1.5 hours cruise with a stop at Jinsuo Island. We then start our drive through the countryside and make stops at Bai villages to see traditional houses and colourful markets etc. Visit the village of Xizhou to see traditional merchant' tea house. Return to city and remainder of day at leisure or explore the wonders of the ancient quarter of Dali. B/L (D on own account) overnight DALI.

DAY 8: Morning departure for a train journey from Dali to LIJIANG (2 hours)passing by farmland and mountain scenery to 800 year old city of Lijiang. On arrival transfer to centrally located hotel for 2 nights stay. Lijiang is a UNESCO world heritage site Free time to explore. B /D. Overnight LIJIANG JIANANCHUN HOTEL.

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DAY 9: After breakfast we travel outskirts of Lijiang to make a visit to Yak meadow of the Jade Dragon snow mountain where we will take a cable car for fabulous views over the valley. (we travel up to 4300m above sea level today) On return to Lijiang we visit Shuhe old town. *It is the former city center of Lijiang and has a history of more than 1000 years.* In the evening a chance to enjoy a performance of ancient Naxi music overnight Lijiang.. B/L. D on own account.

DAY 10: In the morning we take in a visit to Black Dragon Pool Park with its moon embracing pavilion, five phoenix pavilion and Dongba village. Then start our journey to ZhongDian (Shangri-La). Drive approx. 4 hours. (200 kms) En-route we make a visit to the famous Tiger Leaping Gorge, one of the deepest gorges in the world with spectacular views. We also see the "first bend" of the Yangste River, arriving in Zhongdian (3400 m. above sea level) in the late afternoon. The stunning picturesque setting believed to be inspiration of the mythical Shangri La described in James Hilton's novel "The Lost Horizon". Free evening B /D (plus packed L) .Overnight: Gyalthang Dzong Hotel.

DAY 11: Today, a leisurely tour of Zhongdian taking in the main sights and Sumtsentling Monastery. We also visit a Tibetan home and old trading town centre. In the evening we have a local Tibetan dinner. B/L/D

DAY 12: Depart hotel and transfer to the airport for return flight via Kunming (1 hour on ground) to Shanghai. Flight No: MU 5811 09.55 –15.05) On arrival transfer to JUILONG HOTEL for 3 nights. Free evening to relax and/or enjoy Shanghai by night cruise. B / (L in flight) / D.

DAY 13: After breakfast a full day sightseeing in Shanghai visit includes the Yu Yuan gardens, Shanghai old town. The Bund and visit the French quarter Xintiandi. Plus a visit to the Shanghai museum. Afterwards enjoy the famous acrobatic show. B

DAY 14: Free day at leisure in Shanghai. B / D.

OR take our "optional" WATER TOWN tour. (approx. 1 hour drive from Shanghai) a charming landscape similar to that of Venice, Beautiful, free-flowing rivers run randomly throughout the town, accompanied by the long streets. Dozens of old stone bridges crisscross the picturesque area. Along the banks of the rivers stand ancient houses in the style of the Ming and Qing (1644 - 1911) Dynasties. You will greatly appreciate the most natural elements of this town as well as its friendly inhabitants. Return to Shanghai early evening.

DAY 15: Transfer to the airport by the MAGLEV (bullet train) for your return flight home, arrive at London Heathrow later the same day. / B

PLEASE NOTE: This tour includes areas of high altitude at the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain in Lijiang of 4500m. and in Zhongdian at 3200m. This should not be a problem although everyone should take care. If you suffer from heart or respiratory conditions or have other concerns please consult your doctor.



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CHENGDU MINSHAN LHASA HOTEL



KUNMING JINJIANG HOTEL



DALI LANDSCAPE HOTEL



LIJIANG JIANNANCHUN HOTEL

Now- known as
YINXIANG OLD CITY HOTEL



GYALTHANG DZONG HOTEL



SHANGHAI GREENLAND JIULONG HOTEL