

CHINA – RIDE ACROSS THE YUNNAN PROVINCE BY TRAIN IN 6 DAYS

ITINERARY

Day 1-Arrival in Kunming (-)

Your guide will meet and greet you at the Kunming Changshui International Airport.

Welcome to the **City of Eternal Spring! Kunming**, the capital of Yunnan province, is a lovely city. Its **elevation is 6,234 feet**, and its **nearly tropical climate** allows flowers to bloom all year long.

For 2,400 years, it was also the gateway to the **Silk Road**, which facilitated trade with Tibet, Sichuan, Myanmar, and India.

Overnight in Kunming.

Day 2- Kunming → Dali (B,D)

You will meet your guide and take a short walk to **Green Lake Park** (also known as Cuihu Park). If you get up early, you will see the various activities many Chinese practice in the morning, such as **Tai Qi,(Tai Chi) qigong (Qi Gong)**.

They consider physical exercise essential to their health and well-being.

You will probably also have the chance to attend a **mahjong party**. Mahjong is a very popular game in China, especially among older generations. Come to watch, and ask your guide to explain the rules!

Next, you will visit the **Yuantong Temple** (AKA “The Temple of Understanding Everything”), which is located at the foot of the Yuantong Hill. Founded during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), it is one of **the oldest Buddhist monuments in Kunming**.

You will be amazed by **the Golden Temple**, which takes its name from the gold leaf covering the main pavilion, standing on a small hill surrounded by pine and cypress trees.

In the afternoon, your visit to the interesting and informative **Yunnan Ethnic Minorities Museum** will help you understand Yunnan’s multiethnicity. **China has 56 officially recognized minority groups**, and during this journey, you will mainly learn about the **Yi** (the largest minority in Yunnan), **the Hui Muslims, the Buyi, the Bai, and the Naxi**. Our favorite part of the museum is **the fine collection of traditional dresses**.

For dinner, we have selected **an elegant restaurant – the 1910 South Railway Station Restaurant**. **This charming colonial style restaurant** highlights a forgotten period of Yunnan. China was never fully colonized by Western powers, unlike some of its neighbors in southeast Asia. However, concessions were granted to Western powers during the 19th century; Shanghai is one of the best known of such concessions.

In 1910, the French launched an ambitious expansionary project to link Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam (at that time a French protectorate), to Kunming. The project required a workforce of more than 60,000 men who often working in extreme conditions to lay over 279 miles of rail track, build more than 3,500 bridges, and dig over 170 tunnels.

After dinner, transfer to the train station for a night on the train en route to Dali. You will sleep in a **comfortable sleeping train cabin**. Expected departure time is 11:38 p.m., with an expected arrival time of 7:12 a.m.

Overnight on board

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Day 3-Dali (B)

Your driver-guide will meet and greet you at the Dali train station. Transfer to your hotel where you will have a hearty breakfast.

Dali is mostly populated by the **Bai ethnicity**. It was a **stronghold of the kingdom of Nanzhao** (from 738 to 902) and the epicentre of the **Dali Kingdom** (from 937 to 1253).

The Bai are distinguishable by their clothing, predominantly white (“Bai” means white in Chinese) and by their houses. You will be able to see many Bai people in the Dali old town and **encounter members from many other ethnic minorities at the market close to the Dali lake.**

Along the shores of the **Erhai lake** (96 square miles), set against the background of the impressive **Cangshan Mountains**, you will meet **Bai fishermen**. The pace of life for most local people remains as calm and tranquil as it was a century ago.

Discover the **Three Pagodas at the Chongsheng temple**. It is a mystical emblem of the town that **stands proudly at the foot of the Cangshan Mountains**. The impressive **Pagoda of the Thousand Awakenings**, built in the ninth century, is characterized by its square plan, and it symbolizes the influence of the Tang Dynasty in the region.

Toward the end of the day, stroll through the streets of the **old town of Dali**, and admire the **picturesque Bai houses**. Their front porches are distinguished by **beautifully carved arches**, and the **walls are adorned by paintings representing mountains, running water, birds, and flowers.**

Visit the **Catholic Church, which mixes Bai and European architectural styles**; it was built by the French in 1938.

Option: Depending on the weather, you will enjoy a barbecue in the evening or dine a freshly caught fish from the lake.

Overnight in Dali

Day 4-Dali → Lijiang (2,500m altitude) (B)

In the morning you will be transferred to the Dali train station to hop on a train to Lijiang. Expected departure time: 9:27 a.m., expected arrival time: 11:59 a.m.

Upon arriving in Lijiang, you will meet and greet with your guide before transferring to the hotel.

In 1999, **Lijiang** was designated a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. You will be charmed by this magnificent **labyrinth of traditional redwood and brick houses** topped with **grey slate roofs**. **Canals, stone bridges and cobbled streets** weave among the houses. The **sweet scent of fresh flowers** that emerges from the small courtyards of Lijiang gives the city a **unique atmosphere**. It's a **paradise** in the heart of Naxi culture.

Originally from Tibet, the Naxi first lived as nomads in Sichuan. Two thousand years ago, they finally settled in Yunnan. Most Naxi now live in Yunnan and Sichuan.

The Naxi have a **special expertise in canal building**, which accounts for why each house has running water. Their **literature, religion, and social organizational** structure are very different from the rest of China. Some of them are “**matrilocal**”, meaning that couples move in with the wife’s family, as well as “**matrilineal**”, which means that succession favors females over males.

Lijiang is also known as the “**Big Inkpot**” due to the network of canals that flow through the village, resembling an inkpot that has been knocked over. After crossing over this impressive labyrinth of alleyways, you will arrive at the “**Lion Hill**” which offers a fantastic view of the village below. You can rest at the top, sip a coffee, and enjoy the panorama!

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Afterward, you will visit **Mu Palace**. The Chinese Empire warlords ruled this magnificent residence during the **Mongol Dynasty** (13th century). The palace is a **vivid example of Ming and Qing architecture** and is based on the same style of architecture as the Forbidden City in Beijing.

After visiting the palace, you will head to the end of **the old town** to enjoy the **local market**. There you will see locals still **dressed in traditional clothing** selling teas, vegetables, fruits, and even daily tools.

The cobbled streets of Lijiang can sometimes be slightly slippery, so we recommend wearing sturdy shoes with tread!

Overnight in Lijiang

Day 5-Lijiang - Jade Dragon Mountain – Lijiang - Kunming (B)

For your last day in Lijiang, you will head toward **Jade Dragon Mountain**, which stands beautifully at the north of the city. The mountain, also called **Satseto** in the **Naxi language**, takes its name from the **God of War in the Dongba religion**. We selected the **Yak Prairi** so that you can admire the mountain in a **quiet and rural atmosphere**. The **view over the glacier is just as stunning** as the one from the common tourist's viewing point.

On your way back to Lijiang, you will pass by **Lashi Lake**, which lies at an elevation of **8,202 feet**. This area is known as **National Wetland Park**.

Next, you **will ride a horse** along the historic **Horse Tea Trail**. You will be amazed by the **dense forest, the waterfalls, serene temples, and the local Naxi farm life**.

Transfer back to your hotel, where you will be able to rest before taking the train back to Kunming. You will be transferred to Lijiang train station and spend the night in a sleeper cabin.

Expected departure time is 8:35 p.m., and expected arrival time is 6:05 a.m. the next day.

Day 6-Kunming departure (B)

Your guide will meet and greet you, and you will have your last Chinese breakfast before returning home.

Transfer to Kunming Airport

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DETAILS

- ❖ **Tour duration:** 6 days
- ❖ **Price starts at:** USD \$955 per person; price based on 2 people sharing a double occupancy room
- ❖ **Group Size:** Private tour, minimum 1 person
- ❖ **Season:** all-year long
- ❖ **Country visited:** China
- ❖ **Comfort level:** Standard 2 to 3-star hotels; 4-to 5-star hotels available
- ❖ **Level of difficulty:** Easy
- ❖ **Transportation:** Train
- ❖ **Accommodation:** Private double occupancy room
- ❖ **Additional Information:** To enter China for tourism purposes, a visa is requested, and your passport must be valid for at least 6 months.
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1089.html#entry_requirements

Note: you will take 3 trains during this journey, but the local guides (in Kunming, Dali, and Lijiang) won't be on board with you. Your stop will always be the final destination of the train ride.

- ❖ **What's included:**

- 2 nights in the train sleeping cabin, 3 nights in hotels room
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary
- English speaking guides in Kunming, Dali, Lijiang
- Tours and transfers, as mentioned, by private air-conditioned vehicle
- Entrance fees for mentioned visits

- ❖ **What's not included:**

- Visa fee to China
- International airfare to and from China
- Personal expenses
- Meals not mentioned in the program
- Tips, Travel insurance

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