

MOMENTS on the road

Adventures in Yunnan (10 Days)





ON THE ROAD EXPERIENCES

BACK ROADS | HIDDEN GEMS

We love road journeys. They are by far our favourite way of traveling. We think the world of western China and the countries that border on this region – think Vietnam, Lao, Thailand, Myanmar, for example.

On the Road Experiences is all about sharing with like-minded travelers just how beautiful a road journey in these varied lands can be. Now turn the page to find out what we've come to love so much...





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Itinerary Map



Day-by-Day

Day1

Arrival in Kunming –
Preparing for your journey

Day2

Dali and Xizhou –
To the heart of the Nanzhao
Kingdom

Day3

In Xizhou –
Explore pretty Xizhou and Dali

Day4

Xizhou to Shaxi –
Across the hills to Shaxi and back
in time

Day5

Shaxi to Tacheng –
Along the Yangtse into the Three
Parallel Rivers Region

Day6

In Tacheng –
Walking with the monkeys and a
day off the road

Day7

Tacheng to Shangri-La –
Up and up to the edge of Tibet

Day8

Shangri-La to Lijiang –
On to the Naxi Kingdom

Day9

In and around Lijiang –
Exploring the Land of the Jade
Dragon

Day10

Departure –
Life goes on...

Yes, it is possible...

A driving holiday in this part of the world is indeed possible. We take care of everything. All you need to do is come, drive and enjoy a rare adventure!

Adventures in Yunnan will take you and your family through some of Yunnan's best loved destinations like Dali, Lijiang and Shangri-La and via some little-known gems on an itinerary designed specifically for families to enjoy together.

On this leisurely itinerary you and your children will join a range of fun activities and share new experiences. Explore markets, wonder through Shaxi's cobbled streets, watch endangered monkeys in Tacheng and visit a lively Tibetan monastery in Shangri-La.

The basic itinerary is eight days long with an optional extension to Lijiang for those who are able to take a ten-day holiday.

There will be opportunities to interact with the region's colourful minorities and try delicious local foods throughout the journey, which we hope will give your family a wonderful opportunity to experience a new, beautiful and unexpected side of China together.

With comfortable accommodation throughout, travelling in our spacious cars and supported by On the Road Experiences' friendly and professional team, you will enjoy a comfortable and stress-free holiday on this self-driving journey.

On the Road Experiences has paved the way for you to drive in your own properly insured SUV, so that you can enjoy the romance of a classic overland journey without any of the logistical headaches that typically accompany such journeys...

Journey of discovery



“Awaking in
China’s RURAL
COUNTRYSIDE...”



Xizhou, taken by an 11 year old



“ Take a lake shore
DRIVE and enjoy the
BEAUTIFUL sunset
reflections...”

“Stepping BACK
in TIME...”

A Bai minority village near Shaxi



“Explore SHAXI’s beautiful old town - much of which dates from the MING Dynasty...”

Beautiful old town of Shaxi

“A small section
of the ANCIENT
TEA HORSE TRAIL...”





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財源永茂

利

財如晚日

“CHINA as in
TIMES GONE BY...”

德滨雅居

Cobbler and artist in Shaxi...



“Your JOURNEY
in the THREE
PARALLEL
RIVERS region...”

The Yangtze's upper reaches

“Lunch in
THE MIDDLE OF
NOWHERE...”

In the Tacheng lodge



“ SLEEPING
WELL while
FAR AWAY from
anywhere...”

“Visiting the
CUTEST
MONKEYS in
the world...”



Yunnan Snub-Nosed monkeys

“A colourful
WELCOME as
you APPROACH
TIBET...”



Tibetan prayer flags



“ Along the way,
one of the **LARGEST**
MONASTERIES in
SOUTH-WEST China...”

“RED-ROBED
MONKS in
Shangri-La...”

At the Ganden Sumtseling Monastery

“A chance to
PURIFY
YOUR MIND?”



Prayer Session at Ganden Sumtseing Monastery



“The TIGER
LEAPING GORGE...
where the YANGTZE
makes you
TREMBLE!”

“LIJIANG
is touristy, but
there ARE
HIDDEN GEMS to
DISCOVER...”



Jade Lake not far from Lijiang...

Jade Dragon Snow Mountain seen from the Black Dragon Pool, Lijiang...



“The lovely winding alleys of LIJIANG'S OLD TOWN are a UNESCO World Heritage site...”



“ Where
DR. Joseph Rock
lived and worked
to **INTRODUCE**
northwest **YUNNAN** to
the outside world...”

Naxi minority lady in Yuhu, near Lijiang

Day-by-day



Day 1 Arriving in Kunming and preparing for your journey

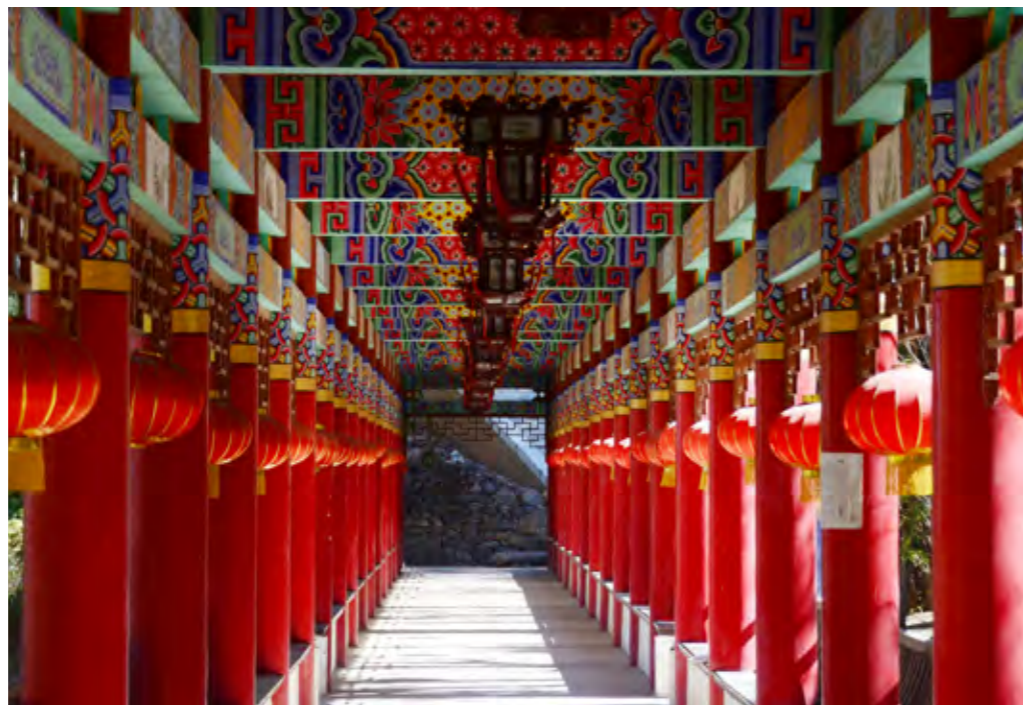
Arrive in Kunming according to your own arrangements.

We will meet you at the airport and transfer you to your hotel. If you require a temporary Chinese driving license, we will take you to the hotel via the Vehicle Licensing Bureau. All the documents for your temporary license will be prepared; you will just need to take a simple eye test and sign the forms.

After settling into the hotel, you may want to go for a stroll along the city-center Green Lake where many locals enjoy relaxing hours. The vicinity of the lake bustles with people young and old and throughout much of the year is lush green. Depending on the season, energetic migratory birds make the lake their temporary home.

In the evening, enjoy a group dinner together in a lovely, local restaurant near your hotel and attend our staff's safety briefing.

Dinner will be an opportunity to begin to acquaint yourself with the many flavours of Yunnan's cuisine and to meet your fellow travellers.



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: NA

Duration: NA

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 1850m

Overnight: 1850m

Hotel

Greenlake Hotel, Kunming
[****]

Day 2 To the heart of the Nanzhao Kingdom

Today you will drive to Dali and on to Xizhou, home of the Linden Centre – a lovingly converted Bai minority mansion, where you will stay for the next two nights.

Today's route is designed to ease you into driving in mainland China...mostly on a wonderful highway that allows us to gain distance from Kunming, the capital of Yunnan province.

Yunnan has one of the best road networks in China, as today's drive will demonstrate. As you leave the big city behind you will soon see small villages beside the highway nestled into the landscape. Many of these houses belong to the Yi minority, recognizable on the paintings of the sun on their houses, as the Yi worships the sun.

After a lunch in nearby Chuxiong we will drive on the same superb modern expressway that we used earlier today to Dali – formerly the capital of Yunnan's Nanzhao Kingdom.

Dali, the population of the region is predominantly the Bai minority and you will see ladies wearing

the traditional Bai headdress all over Dali. Tourism is now the mainstay of Dali's economy, but in years gone by the city was the capital of the Nanzhao Kingdom, which ruled a swathe of what is today Yunnan Province and northern Burma between the 8th and 9th centuries AD.

From Dali it is only a short drive north Xizhou, where you will stay for two nights in the award-winning Linden Centre. The Centre comes complete with a playroom, a fleet of bicycles, a roof terrace and a well-stocked bar—something for everyone!

Slowly, we're sure, you will feel your workday stresses ebb as you ease into the rhythm of travelling.



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 360 km

Duration: 4.5-5.5 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 2000m

Overnight: 2000m

Hotel

Linden Centre, Xizhou [****]

Day 3 Explore pretty Xizhou and Dali

Today we will arrange a variety of activities for you to experience the interesting area around Xizhou. Your day could be spent like the following: After visiting a nearby market in the morning, where you can try local snacks and practice your Chinese you will drive to a Batik factory in a nearby village and have a hands on Batik learning experience. After a local lunch

we will return to the hotel for a short rest. The afternoon can be spent riding around Xizhou by bicycle ride or horse-drawn cart. Other activities are available (including cooking or calligraphy classes). Please let us know what you're interested in!

Please note, breakfast and dinner are included, lunch and activities are on your account.

Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 0-20 km

Duration: 0-30 mins, depending on your chosen activity

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 2000m

Overnight: 2000m

Hotel

Linden Centre, Xizhou (****)

Day 4 Across the hills to Shaxi and back in time

Today you will make the short drive from Xizhou to Shaxi, crossing the Cangshan Mountains that loom to the west of Lake Erhai.

The drive may be short, but it often takes longer than expected after stopping en route to explore villages and markets, as well as for photo

opportunities and a picnic lunch.

Shaxi is an incredibly well preserved caravan town. Spend the remainder of the afternoon after your arrival wandering its cobbled streets, exploring further afield on bike, or relaxing at the hote – a former Ming dynasty coaching inn – imagining that you are about to set out on the long road to Lhasa as countless tea caravans have done before you...

Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 150 km

Duration: 3-5 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 3000m

Overnight: 2470m

Hotel

Laomadian Inn, Shaxi (***)



Day 5 Along the Yangtze into the Three Parallel Rivers region...

We will start the day with a short trip to a local kindergarten in Shaxi, and a chance for your children to experience a very different kind of school day (not possible on weekends). From Shaxi, we will set out for Tacheng.

While the first part of the drive is on a busy road, the last half is on a beautiful road that runs alongside the upper reaches of the Yangtze, here known as the Jinshajiang, or 'River of Golden Sand'.

You will drive along the Yangtze in a broad, but gradually narrowing valley, more or less level with the river. In a tiny village called Qi Zhong, you will turn west, leaving the Yangtze behind, and drive a little distance further until you come to the idyllic hamlet of Hada where, to your great surprise,

you will find a beautiful lodge set in one of Yunnan's loveliest regions.

The lodge is located between the Yangtze and Mekong rivers, where some of the best old-growth forests in the world can be found. This region also harbors one of the most

fertile valleys in Yunnan with two crops of rice annually and fruit trees. The semi-wild boars of the area, which feed on wild nuts before winter, make the best ham in the world. Tacheng is also famous for Naxi and Lisu villages with charming distinctive black-roofed farmhouses.

Tacheng lies in the "Three Rivers Region", where the Yangtze, the Mekong and the Salween Rivers flow within a hundred kilometers of each other. The three valleys are home to one of China's richest natural habitats, as we will discover on tomorrow's outing...



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 210 km

Duration: 4 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 2470m

Overnight: 2000m

Hotel

Songtsam Lodge, Tacheng

(****)



Day 6 Walking with monkeys and a day off the road

We will take a break from long-distance driving today and start the day with a visit to the Baima Snow Mountain Nature Reserve, where it's possible to watch the wild Yunnanese snub-nosed monkeys that gather on the hillside to breakfast on the moss and lichen that park rangers hang from the trees – a great outing for budding naturalists! The rare species of Yunnan Golden monkey (*Rhinopithecus biteti*), is one of the world's most endangered primates: less than 2000 can be now found in the wild. They live at the highest altitude (3,000-4,500m) of any primate, except for humans.

After a morning walk through the nature reserve, we will return to the hotel for lunch and an afternoon at leisure. Sit and relax in the sun on

your balcony, take a dip in the hotel's small swimming pool or stroll through the vineyards that surround the hotel to a nearby Naxi village, the choice is yours.



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: very little

Duration: 1 hour

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 2000m

Overnight: 2000m

Hotel

Songtsam Lodge, Tacheng
[****]

Day 7 Up and up to the edge of Tibet...

Today's drive is short, all the better to enjoy some more the Tacheng region after breakfast and then one of the largest Tibetan monasteries (the Ganden Sumtseling) in Shangri-La in the lovely afternoon light, bright and crisp as it is at this altitude. While Shangri-La is far from Lhasa, this region is nonetheless imbued with Tibetan "flavours", from the red-robed monks to the golden-roofed temples, from the weather-beaten faces of the Tibetan people to the colourful prayer flags, from the white stupas that protect the region to robust houses that dot the landscape. While Shangri-La's atmospheric old town was tragically destroyed by a large fire in January 2014, it's still possible to get a taste of the region's Tibetan culture in the area surrounding the imposing Songzanlin Monastery.

In the evening we will enjoy dinner together in the hotel restaurant. Your hotel in Shangri-La overlooks the monastery, located slightly

outside the town itself. If you need to rush home, we can book an evening flight to Kunming for you. Please contact us to make the arrangements.

Note: This is the highest stop on your journey with us. Please be prepared to take everything more slowly to help your body adjust to the altitude – and ask us for details of what else you can do to prevent altitude sickness from impacting your holiday.



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 125 km

Duration: 3 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 3300m

Overnight: 3300m

Hotel

Songtsam Retreat, Shangri-La
[****]

Day 8 To the Naxi Kingdom

Today's drive will take you to Lijiang, at the heart of a Naxi minority region, stopping en route at Tiger Leaping Gorge (weather permitting), where the Yangtze River is funneled through a deep, narrow canyon. Travellers who opt for the Lijiang Extension will stay at the edge of Lijiang's old town in the Intercontinental,

a fantastic hotel that echoes the architecture of the old town—itsself a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of Yunnan's most well-known destinations. Spend the remainder of the afternoon exploring the old town (make sure to take a map!) and shopping for souvenirs or even splashing around in the hotel's indoor swimming pool. Guests who need to depart today will fly out from Shangri-la at any time convenient for them.

Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 105 km

Duration: 3 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 2470m

Overnight: 2470m

Hotel

InterContinental Lijiang (*****)

Day 9 Exploring the Land of the Jade Dragon (Lijiang Extension only)

This morning we suggest an early-morning walk through Lijiang's quaint old town. Best explored in the morning before the tourist buses arrive, you will see old Lijiang at its best. After lunch visit the tiny village of Yuhu, Joseph Rock's home while he was stationed in the Yunnan region. Yuhu is a

pretty Naxi minority village very close to Jade Dragon Snow Mountain. It feels a few decades away from Lijiang's busy old town thanks to the fact that it remains more or less undiscovered. For those who want to explore the village on a horseback, we will be happy to make the arrangements.

In the evening, we will get together for a final night dinner, time to share memories and smiles from our journey together...

Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Depending on your chosen activity

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 2470m

Overnight: 2470m

Hotel

InterContinental Lijiang (*****)



Day 10 Life goes on...

Today you will start your journey home. After breakfast at the hotel, you will be taken to Lijiang Airport to catch a flight back to Kunming (50 minutes, the one-way economy class ticket is included in your journey). You will be free to start your onward journey from Kunming any time after 1pm today (but check with us before you make your flight bookings). We hope that you will all return home with many beautiful new memories from your adventures in Yunnan!





Choice of Cars

We include in the package price an SUV we procure from Avis or Hertz or another reputable car rental company. Most of the SUVs are Toyotas, but on occasion Mitsubishi's or other brands may also make an appearance. For some itineraries, we are able to offer you an option to upgrade your car to the new models from Audi.

We wish the car rental markets of China would be more developed and we could give you more choice, but this is not so: since we want to provide well-maintained and well-insured cars, the choice is rather limited.

But SUVs are in fact the right choice for driving journeys in this part of the world because they are spacious enough to accommodate a lot of luggage, photography equipment, and

good-and-bad-weather gear. Also, they reinforce the feeling of adventure, exploration and discovery...which is, in the end, the mood of journeys in this region, no matter how comfortable or even luxurious the night's hotel may be.

What's more, they offer sufficient clearance when required and thus add a sense of safety and all-round ability. (4-wheel drive capability is hardly needed in China these days since all roads are either very well-paved or, with good gravel, offer solid support.)

And so SUVs from reputable brands are our car of choice!

**“ ANY car,
as long as
it is an SUV”**



Adventures and Discoveries in Local Cuisines

While this itinerary is not one of our 'Foodie'-themed journeys, we do believe that each one of our journeys should introduce you not only to hidden gems of cultural and scenic beauty, but that sampling local cuisines is also a must.

Wherever you travel with us, we will order, with very few exceptions, dishes fresh and on location with an emphasis on local produce. It is not uncommon for our guides to venture into the kitchen to pick this, that or the other vegetable and to ask the cook to prepare them in the finest possible way. (On occasion we do pre-order a meal: this will normally be the case only for special occasions!)

Wine and beer is always included in our meals for you

to enjoy. (When we travel into high-altitude, we suggest moderation!)

Finally, if you have special dietary requirements are particularly interested in the culinary aspect of one of our journeys, please let us know.

For private journeys, we can, of course, tailor the meal experience to your taste (and budget).



What's Included / Best Months to Go...

Generally speaking, our journey packages and prices are all-inclusive. Once you've paid and you arrive at the starting point, you really won't have to take out your wallet again.

- **Cars** – a modern SUV is provided for all driving days, expertly maintained and serviced by Avis, Hertz, or other reputable car rental companies, and covered by the best insurance available, and hire car return from Lijiang to Kunming is also included
- **International Journey Host, Guide and Support Vehicle** – you will be accompanied by a registered Chinese tour guide, an On the Road in China host and a fully equipped lead car with a local support driver
- **Routes** – we provide an extensively researched and carefully designed itinerary and “state-of-the-art” satellite navigation system with a pre-programmed route for the journey. You will also receive a detailed pre-departure pack and route book for the journey
- **Driving License** – You will need a temporary Chinese driving license for which all arrangements and fees are included.
- **Fuel & Tolls** – we provide petrol for the car throughout the journey and pay all tolls



Best months to go...

JAN FEB **MAR** APR **MAY** JUN
JUL **AUG** SEPT OCT **NOV** DEC

- **Flight** – Your flight from Lijiang to Kunming
- **Airport Transfers** – all airport transfers are included
- **Hotels** – the best available or five-star accommodation is included in each overnight stop
- **Meals** – breakfast (a choice of Western and Local is provided), and lunch and dinner are included on all driving days, as are drinks.

Meals on non-driving days as specified above. Prepare for a culinary adventure!

- **Goodies** – you will enjoy an On the Road Home-Away-from-Home Kit containing wet towels, anti-bacterial gel and basic toiletries, and a daily picnic basket containing fresh fruit, fruit juice, water, and a mixture of sweets and nibbles
- **Other Essentials** – we provide each car with walky-talkies

- **Travel Insurance** – including 24-hour medical assistance, evacuation and repatriation emergency service
- **Tips & Entrance Fees** – basic tips and entrance fees for jointly attended activities are included
- **Activities, Meals, Transport** during ‘free times’ as indicated in this Journey Dossier
- **Top-up Collision Damage Waiver** insurance

What's Not Included

The only items not included in our prices are your flights to and from Kunming, your China visa, and personal purchases (e.g., gifts, souvenirs).



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“ A picture is worth a thousand words. True, but when it comes to a road journey, moving images are priceless. Please visit : <http://www.ontheroadexperiences.com/en/video-gallery>”





**ON THE ROAD
EXPERIENCES**

BACK ROADS | HIDDEN GEMS

“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

