

Diverse Yunnan & Ancient Beijing **1st April – 24th April 2006**

When you come to Yunnan, you are stepping into a wonderland of culture diversity with marvelous natural beauty. Follow us to discover this part of China, leaving your tyre tracks on this magical part of the earth. In Beijing, the capital city with a long history and splendid culture, climbing up the majestic Great Wall and strolling along the once Forbidden City, what you have seen and what you have experienced in this trip would be never forgotten.

Sat 01-Apr-06

London/Beijing

Fly Manchester to Paris or fly London Heathrow to Paris. Onward connection Paris to Beijing departing.

Sun 02-Apr-06

Beijing/Kunming

Arrive Beijing transfer flight to Kunming.

Upon arrival at Kunming, "the Spring and Flower City", our local guide will escort us to the hotel. The rest of the day is free at your own leisure.

***Kunming:** the capital of Yunnan Province, Kunming is a famous historical and cultural city. Living in the city are many nationalities including the Han, Yi, Miao, Bai, Hui, Naxi and Hani. With a mild climate in four seasons, it is known as "Spring City".*

Mon 03-Apr-06

Rest day - Visiting Stone Forest

***Stone Forest (Shilin):** acknowledged as "World Karst Landscape Museum", the Stone Forest shows a variety of unique shapes such as sword, mushrooms, tower, pillar, castle representing the greatest miracle that nature can present to human beings.*

Tue 04-Apr-06 Cycle 49km

Visiting Western Hills & Dragon Gate.

***Dragon Gate:** the steepest spot on the Western Hills, you can have a spectacular views after getting there by climbing up the winding old stone stairs.*

Bus from Kunming to Anfengying, then Cycling from Anfengying to LuFeng.

The road from Kunming to Anfengying (50km) is very busy with traffic, so this section by bus, then cycling today will be from Anfengying to Lufeng along the old Burma road paved with asphalt, mostly flat. Stopping at Yanglaoshaopo (the name of a mount) on the way to take photos of rural life far below down the hill. The slope down from Yanglaoshaopo is 8-km long which will be the bonus for today.

Wed 05-Apr-06 Cycle 80km

Cycling from LuFeng to Chuxiong

Riding on the asphalt road partly along a small river, mostly flat, there are 3 tunnels (120, 148, 175 meters long respectively) along the way, so flash light is recommended. After Jiuzhuang, there is 10km uphill followed by 3 km downhill.

***Chuxiong:** the natural home to several branches of the Yi ethnic group, whose ancestors created the well-known ten-month solar calendar several thousands years ago. Thanks to its long history, splendid culture, old customs, enchanting songs and dances plus the hospitality of the local Yi people, Chuxiong has become a tourist resort of great mystery.*

Thu 06-Apr-06 Cycle 60km
Cycling from Chuxiong to Shaqiao County.

Overall the road is very good except 2-km near Shaqiao which is bumpy because of the damage by heavy trucks.

Fri 07-Apr-06 Cycle 62km
Cycling from Shaqiao County to Xiazhuang County.

Lots of slopes today along the road with consecutive curves, which you need to pay attention to. The road condition is good except a very short part at the very beginning.

Sat 08-Apr-06 Cycle 91km
Cycling from Xiazhuang County to Binchuan County.

Most of the road is smooth and with new asphalt. It is an enjoyable day for the scenery of rice paddies, fish ponds and plants.

Sun 09-Apr-06
Rest day - Visiting Jizu Mountain– known as the Fifth Buddhist Sacred Mountain in China.

***Jizu Mountain:** the holy shrine for Buddhist pilgrims, it is famous as one of China's "Four Well-known Buddhist Mountains".*

Mon 10-Apr-06 Cycle 54km
Cycling from Binchuan County to Haidong County.

Today is one of the hardest days with 10-km uphill and 11-km cobbled and bumpy downhill to the Lake Erhai. Compensation is the nice view of the layers of colour on the mountains with villages and forests. It's pleasant to take a walk on the beach of the lake before or after dinner.

Tue 11-Apr-06 Cycle 80km
Cycling from Haidong County through northern part of Erhai to the exotic town of Dali referred to as "a place of rich literature".

It's an enjoyable riding day by cycling around the northern part of the beautiful Lake Erhai to get to the other side of the lake, passing through many Bai villages to reach Dali old town.

***Erhai:** in the shape of an ear, covering 250 square kilometres, with its vast pool of water shining under the sun like a sheet of vivid green and the snow mantles of the Cang Mountain reflecting quiveringly in it, it is known poetically as "Silver Cang Mountain and Jade-like Erhai".*

Dali located on the side of the Cang Mountain 400 kilometres to the west of Kunming, it is a historical and cultural city inhabited by Bai people, most of whom live in the houses consisting of three rooms and a screen wall.

Dali Ancient Town: first established in 1382 AD, with a moat surrounding, this old town has a typical layout like a chessboard, old-timey roofed buildings with dark blue tiles and the white and grey tall walls.

Wed 12-Apr-06

Rest day - free day in Dali.

Thu 13-Apr-06 Cycle 61km

Cycling from Dali to Eryuan Village.

Part of the road is the old one with asphalt, today, there is a 3-km-long slope, which is quite difficult. But overall, today's ride is quite easy. You can enjoy the hot spring in the hotel in the afternoon.

Eryuan: a Bai village with long history, there are many historic sites including houses, temples and other buildings in good preservation.

Fri 14-Apr-06 Cycle 66km

Cycling from Eryuan Village to Jianchuan Village.

After riding 11km, you will pass Niujie Street market with lots of pedestrians, be careful when going through the crowd. The road becomes curving with a big 10km long slope after 29km, where you need to pay attention to.

Jianchuan: a very important harbor in ancient times, its Tang Dynasty grottos in the Shibao Mountain have been praised as the "Dunhuang Grottoes in Southwest China".

Sat 15-Apr-06 Cycle 78km

Cycling from Jianchuan to Lijiang which is an UN World Heritage Site

The road condition is quite good for the whole day. After riding 30km, there is a 10km long very steep slope with consecutive curves which is one of the most difficult parts in the whole tour. (There is an alternative: cycling detour about another 12 km to get to Lijiang, which will be easier for you with more gentle slope).

Lijiang: in the northwestern part of Yunan and one of the famous historical and cultural cities in China, its main attractions include the ancient town of Dayan, Yulong Snow Mountain, Tiger-Leaping Gorge, and the first bend of the Yangtze River. The ancient Lijiang city has been listed for World Cultural Heritage.

Sun 16-Apr-06

Rest day - free day in Lijiang.

Refreshing in Lijiang and enjoy a full day trip to the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, the Baisha Mural Paintings and the Black Dragon Pool Park. Enjoy Naxi Ancient Music tonight at Dongba Theatre.

The Jade Dragon Snow Mountain: it is so called because it looks like a flying jade dragon from afar. The mountain consists of 13 peaks and sprawls 35 km from north to south, its glacier is the closest to the equator in the Northern Hemisphere. By taking the cable car up to certain height, you can enjoy the expansive mountain views and snowy scenery.

The Baisha Mural Paintings: *located in Baisha Township, 8km north of Lijiang, there are altogether 53 groups of mural paintings in different temples with fine and smooth lines, bright colors, vivid pattern and harmonious composition. Painted from the early days of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) to the early Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), these mural paintings are an artistic representation of the different religious cultures such as Buddhism, Lamaism, Daoism and the Naxi Dongba religion.*

Black Dragon Pool Park: *where you can see the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain from afar and the reflection of the mountain in the pool a clear day, this park is the source of the water system of the Old Lijiang Town as the clean spring from Jade Dragon Snow Mountain gathers here.*

Naxi Ancient Music: *a classic music reputed as a "living fossil of Chinese music", one of the oldest survivors in the world dating back to the Han Dynasty with its origin of "Dong Jing music" of Taoism, this unique music has been long lost in the rest of China, but has been passed on through the generations in Lijiang. By adding their own play techniques and understanding, Naxi people have made the music remain vigorous, elegant, serious and folk-rooted for centuries.*

Mon 17-Apr-06 Cycle 3km
Cycling from Lijiang to Qiaotou Town.

With 9-km uphill and after riding 24km, you will go downhill till you get to the Yangtze River (Jinsha River), this part of the road is the old road which is a bit slippery, where you need to be cautious. Riding another 20 km along the river to Qiaotou.

Tue 18-Apr-06 Cycle 23km
Cycling from Qiaotou to Tiger Leap Gorge and then to Hetaoyuan (Walnut Grove)

Riding along the river between two Mountains, Jade Dragon Mountain and Mt. Haba for 10km till you get to the Middle part of Tiger Leaping Gorge, where the gorge becomes very steep and you need to be cautious of the possibility of falling stones. Visit the Tiger Leaping Gorge by descending more than 400 steps down to the river bed of the gorge. Continue to Hetaoyuan by bike, the road is a mixture of asphalt road, gravel road and muddy road.

Tiger Leaping Gorge: *extending for 15 kilometres from the Yulong Snow Mountain in Lijiang to the Haba Snow Mountain in Zhongdian, the Tiger Leap Gorge with a drop of 3,000 metres is believed to be the world's deepest canyon. The name of the gorge is attributed to the legend that a tiger had once jumped across the gorge at its narrowest section 30 metres in width. The gorge, in which the Jinsha*

River pounds furiously at its rocky shores in an awesome fashion, sending up skyfuls of white froth, is a dream place for adventurers.

Wed 19-Apr-06 71km to Yangtze
Cycling from Hetaoyuan (Walnut Grove) to Qiaotou, then drive about 3 hours back to Lijiang and Relaxing at the Old Town of Lijiang.

There is an option that you can continue cycling to the First Bend of Yangtze River in Shigu Town, and then bus back to Lijiang. In this case, the cycling distance will be 71km.

Thu 20-Apr-06
Lijiang / Kunming / Beijing
Transfer on internal flights to Beijing.

After breakfast, our local guide escorts you to the airport for your flight to Kunming and then transfer to your next destination Beijing. Upon your arrival at Beijing airport, our local guide will meet you and escort you to your hotel. The rest of the day is free at your own leisure.

Fri 21-Apr-06
Beijing

Today you will first visit the historic Tiananmen Square, and then the magnificent Forbidden City. In the afternoon, you will marvel at Beijing's splendid Temple of Heaven.

***The Tian'anmen (Gate of Heavenly Peace) Square:** the largest city square in the world and the spiritual heart of China, where the national flag is raised exactly at sunrise everyday.*

***The Forbidden City:** located in the centre of Beijing, used to be the imperial palace of the Ming and Qing dynasties with a history of around 600 years, it is the grandest integral palace complex still remaining in China.*

***The Temple of Heaven:** the place which was visited yearly by the emperors who performed intricate rituals to insure a good harvest for the whole nation at ancient times.*

Sat 22-Apr-06
Beijing

Today's full-day excursion will take you to the majestic Great Wall at the less visited Mutianyu Section and the Sacred Road.

***The Great Wall:** the most famous symbol of China and one of the world's most remarkable architectural wonders, it was built over 2,000 years ago and stretches about 6,700km.*

***The Sacred Road:** the path lined with stone statues of animals, mystical beasts and officials who serve the emperor in his afterlife, through which the sitting emperors would go to perform memorial rituals for the ancestors once a year.*

Sun 23-Apr-06
Beijing / London

Free in the day until our local guide escorts you to the airport for your flight back to your sweet home.

Fly Beijing to London Heathrow via Paris