



# CULTURE AND ECOLOGY OF LIJIANG

JOURNEY PREPARED FOR  
DISCOVERY COLLEGE HONG KONG





## JOURNEY MAP





## ITINERARY

Your journey begins in **Kunming** and ends in **Kunming**

Meals provided indicated as breakfast (B), lunch (L), and dinner (D)

DAY	LOCATION	ACTIVITIES
Day 1: Monday, November 28	<b>Hong Kong – Kunming – Lijiang</b> <i>Overnight Train</i> D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Afternoon:</i> Fly to Kunming by UO273 (1545/1815); Arrive in Kunming</li> <li>• <i>Evening:</i> Take overnight train K9606 (2200/0639+1) to Lijiang</li> </ul>
Day 2: Tuesday, November 29	<b>Lijiang</b> <i>Han San Ge Hotel</i> B, L, D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Morning:</i> Market game in local green market; bike to <b>Puji Village</b> and take a short hike to <b>Puji Temple</b> and meet the local caretaker</li> <li>• <i>Afternoon:</i> Return to Lijiang for lunch; attend a brief lecture on Naxi culture by professor <b>Guo Dalie</b> followed by <b>Dongba pictograph T-shirt</b> making activity</li> <li>• <i>Evening:</i> Explore Lijiang Old Town</li> </ul>
Day 3: Wednesday, November 30	<b>Lijiang</b> <i>Wenhai Eco Lodge</i> B, L, D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Morning to Afternoon:</i> Transfer to Yuhu; nature hike from Yuhu to Wenhai (4 – 5 hours)</li> <li>• <i>Evening:</i> Dinner at Naxi Villagers' home; overnight at Wenhai Eco-lodge</li> </ul>



DAY	LOCATION	ACTIVITIES
Day 4: Thursday, December 1	Lijiang Han San Ge Hotel B, L, D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Early Morning:</i> Short hike to bus pick-up; return to Lijiang to freshen up; transfer to Lashi Lake to visit <b>The Nature Conservancy's Project</b> - learn about sustainable development in greater Lijiang;</li> <li>• <i>Late Afternoon/Early Evening:</i> Transfer to <b>Huangshan Village</b>; school exchange and community service at local elementary school</li> <li>• <i>Evening:</i> Dongba dance learning workshop with local school children</li> </ul>
Day 5: Friday, December 2	Lijiang Overnight Train B, L, D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Morning to Afternoon:</i> Continue service work at Huangshan elementary school</li> <li>• <i>Evening:</i> Lijiang traditional pancake cooking workshop in the local family; Take overnight train <b>K9612/K9609 (2110/0559)</b> to Kunming</li> </ul>
Day 6: Saturday, December 3	Kunming – Hong Kong N/A B, L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Morning:</i> Arrive in Kunming; Breakfast; Visit Green Lake; Explore Bird &amp; Flower Market</li> <li>• <i>Afternoon:</i> "Cross the Bridge" noodle lunch; Transfer to Kunming Airport; Depart Kunming by <b>UO274 (1900/2100)</b></li> </ul>

**Note:** All information in this itinerary is accurate to the best of our knowledge but please note that changes to our trips can and do occur. This may be due to our effort to improve our program or logistical reasons such as changes in train/flight schedules, traffic conditions, weather conditions, or government policies. WildChina will make every effort to keep you informed of any changes but cannot be held liable for any alterations made to the published itinerary.



## JOURNEY READER

In this section, please find introductions to the highlights of your journey.

### DAY 1 – LIJIANG

#### **Lijiang**

Lying in the shadow of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, at an altitude of 7,874 feet/2,400 meters, the old town of Lijiang has entranced visitors for centuries with its architecture, quaint bridges and narrow canals. Kublai Khan praised Lijiang in 1254 and UNESCO classified it as a World Heritage Site in 1997, which turned Lijiang into a popular travel destination. Lijiang is the historic capital of the Naxi people but its key position on the Ancient Tea and Horse Caravan Trail made it a cultural and commercial hub for the exchange of goods and ideas between southwestern China and Tibet, Burma and India. The surrounding mountainous region is home to several other ethnic minorities besides the Naxi, all of which have languages, religions and cultures that are distinct from those of China's dominant Han majority, and less familiar to foreigners.

### DAY 2 – LIJIANG

#### **Lijiang Old Town**

Lijiang's atmospheric cobblestone streets, willow-lined waterways and decorative arched bridges offer ample opportunities for browsing souvenir and arts and crafts shops. Led by WildChina's experienced local guide, we will take a stroll down quieter side lanes for a more private and authentic experience. Encounters with Lijiang's Naxi residents, who, like their ancestors, depend on the mountain water that flows through the town's canals, will be a trip highlight.

#### **Naxi Ethnic Minority**

The Naxi ethnic minority are the descendants of Tibetan Qiang nomadic tribes that, until recently, lived in matrilineal families. While Naxi rulers were always male, women maintained their power through the flexible "friend" system, or *azhu*, wherein couples would maintain separate residences while romantically involved. Any children born out these relationships would remain in the woman's house, while the man provided supported. Naxi people practice an ancient animistic religion, known as *Dongba*, that predates Tibetan Buddhism. Their unique pictographic writing system and culture has recently captured the attention of historians and linguists worldwide. Their language, style of dress and cuisine are distinct from those of Tibetans and Han Chinese.



### **Puji Temple**

Lying on the hillside in the northwest of Lijiang valley, Puji Temple is one of five existing monasteries in Lijiang. Built in the 18th century, the monastery was named after the village Puji, located about a 15 minutes drive from downtown Lijiang.

We'll take a short 30-minute hike to and from the temple. Once there, you'll get to meet with a young monk in charge of the monastery. Your guide will be happy to translate and speak to the monk for you, so you can better understand what he has to say.

### ***Dongba* Pictograph Workshop with Professor Guo Dalie**

One of the last remaining experts in his field, Guo Dalie is a specialist on the Naxi culture and *Dongba* culture. The last pictographic text in the world, *Dongba* is not easy to preserve. Because of the prevalence of Mandarin taught in school systems children of Naxi descent grow up barely understanding their own language.

After graduating from university in Beijing, surrounded by people of different ethnic backgrounds, Dalie became even more aware of his own identity as a Naxi. He worked in a local education bureau in Yunnan province for 17 years, including time during the Cultural Revolution when his studies were put on hold. Finally, starting in 1980, Dalie was able to put his time toward studying the Naxi; he became an ethnologist and wrote books about the Naxi for the next twenty years. In 1999, Dalie and his wife began a program to teach elementary school students about Naxi culture and *Dongba* script.

Dalie is committed to spreading *Dongba* script, and he has some interesting teaching methods. Our meeting with Dalie will include T-shirt making. We'll get to practice our own *Dongba* pictographs by painting them on T-shirts.

## **DAY 3 – WENHAI**

### **Wenhai Hike**

Graced with remarkable biodiversity, the Wenhai Valley is home 15 rhododendron species and over twenty percent of China's bird species. Your hike through Wenhai Valley will provide excellent views of Lijiang and even lead past a small reservoir to the Lijiang Botanic Garden and Research Station. Jointly run by the Yunnan provincial government, the Kunming Institute of Botany and the Royal Botanic Garden of Edinburgh, this station helps botanists study and protect the region's rich plant-life

The trail also passes the former residence of botanist and explorer, Joseph Rock, who wrote for publications like National Geographic in the first half of the 20th century, about the region's cultures and plants.



## DAY 4 AND 5 – LASHI LAKE AND LIJIANG

### **The Nature Conservancy (TNC) – Yunnan**

TNC's projects in Yunnan province are considered models of conservation, protection, and sustainable development in China. They have even led to the creation of the country's first national park, Pudacuo National Park, and convinced Beijing to enlist TNC's expertise in conducting a major assessment of the nation's conservation priorities. We'll arrange for a TNC Center representative to provide an overview of the group's cultural and environmental protection initiatives in Yunnan

### **Lashi Lake**

Critical to the human ecology and biological diversity of the region, Lashi Lake is home to two ethnic minority groups and the endangered black-necked crane. It is also the primary water source for the large downstream population of Lijiang. Unfortunately, the Lashi Lake watershed has been seriously degraded in recent years as upland forests have been cleared for farming and firewood. Soil erosion, flooding and chemical pollution of the lake have resulted. Meanwhile, the productivity of the area's fishery is declining as rare and endangered bird species are being over-hunted.

Despite the ecological concerns, Lashi Lake is still a lovely area where we will even have the opportunity to meet with some of its residents. In the course of our hike we'll learn how TNC, The Nature Conservancy, is tackling these environmental challenges by introducing new fishery management techniques, training locals on eco-tourism projects and promoting alternative energy sources like bio-fuel, solar, and hydro power.

### **Community Service at Local School**

While visiting Huangshan School, we'll have a cultural school exchange to learn more about local life. As part of our commitment to the village, students will join local students in a series of activities. During our school visits, we play games with local students and join them in their outdoor activities. Students will also have the opportunity to give something back to the local school through a service project. Past service projects in communities in Yunnan have included re-painting classrooms, building a library, and improving school sanitation facilities. As a communities needs may change over time, we will confirm the exact details of the service project closer to our date of departure.

## DAY 6 – LIJIANG TO KUNMING

Depart Lijiang for Kunming; take return flight to Hong Kong; end of Wildchina Services.



## ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

We have provided the information below to answer some of the journey-specific questions that are most frequently asked by our clients. Please feel free to contact us with any additional questions.

### TRIP DIFFICULTY

#### **Moderate Touring**

Your journey is considered a moderate touring. We spend up to 1 – 2 hours walking and biking. Hiking to Wenhai will take about 4 – 5 hours. In Lijiang, we stay in a comfortable 3-star hotel and one night in Wenhai Ecology.

### JOURNEY TYPE

This journey is a private experience that includes your party, as well as a WildChina guide and tour leader. Upon arrival at the airport you will be greeted by your WildChina guide and tour leader. The guides and leaders will accommodate for all your needs. Since this is such an intimate method of travel, guides are flexible about the itinerary and can more easily cater to your preferences.

### GUIDE SERVICES

The true face and heroes of WildChina, our guides have been rigorously selected for their combination of client servicing, local knowledge, and likeable personalities. Most of our guides are natives of the regions they cover and have worked with WildChina for years, appreciating the difference in our service standards, responsible tourism approach, and the exceptional clients we bring.

Guides are confirmed during booking.

#### **Your Guide**

Your WildChina guide will meet you at the airport to escort you throughout your private journey. Your guide will handle the logistics of your trip, including meals, hotel reservations, sites and activities, as well as providing you with information about the local region. Most guides are locals of the region where they work. They are excited to share their knowledge about local culture.



## MEALS

Meals are included, as listed in your itinerary. We strive to arrange meals that highlight authentic local cuisine in clean, local establishments. Some of the most innovative chefs in the world have started coming to China in recent years to stake their claim in the flowering Chinese urban dining scene, opening highly-acclaimed restaurants in Beijing and Shanghai; if you would like for us to include one or more of these restaurants in your itinerary, please contact us to discuss further. In small towns, remote areas, and on the road, we dine on local cuisine in small restaurants, local homes or at our campsite. While some of our meals may be somewhat different from that to which many guests are accustomed, WildChina believes in offering the opportunity to experience this vital aspect of local culture.

We request guests with severe allergies to consult their physicians prior to traveling and to bring all necessary medicines with them. Guests are highly encouraged to inform WildChina ahead of time of specific allergies, such as to peanuts, fish, etc., or sensitivities to MSG, so that we can do our best to ensure these items are not used in restaurant meals.

It is safe to drink bottled mineral water, but tap water, even in 5-star hotels, is not safe for drinking. WildChina will provide bottled water, tea and snacks throughout your journey.



## **SAFETY**

In general, China is a very safe country. Most locals will be friendly and excited to meet you. But while traveling on crowded trains or visiting cramped tourist sites, it is advisable to look after personal belongings, especially money, cameras or other valuable possessions. Though locals are friendly, tourists are often targets for petty theft.

It's good to remember as well, that laws in China are not the same as those in your home country. Laws regarding protests, demonstrations and drug use are severe. WildChina chooses the safest hotels in each region to prevent theft. Many hotels are equipped with safes for especially valuable items.

Keep your valuables in a secure place, keep an eye on your belongings, and your trip to China will be safe and smooth.

## **VISAS**

### **U.S. Citizens**

Nearly all foreign visitors to China will need a tourist "L" visa. Please get your visa at least 2 months before trip departure to avoid logistical problems. Though WildChina paperwork is not required to obtain your visa, WildChina is happy to provide an itinerary of your trip ahead of time if necessary.

Travelers must apply for a tourist visa in person at the Chinese Embassy or Consulate in their jurisdiction. If the traveler cannot go in person, someone else must visit the embassy on behalf of the traveler to submit the application; in some countries, this can include representatives from third party visa service companies.

If you're not a U.S. citizen please check the Chinese Embassy or Consulate online at [www.china-embassy.org](http://www.china-embassy.org) for further information.

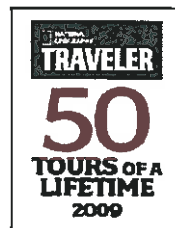


## About WILDCHINA

Our story began on the slopes of Tibet's Mount Kailash. The company founder and Yunnan native, Mei Zhang, found herself braving high altitudes and a harsh landscape without a guide. After completing the kora (pilgrimage route) and spending the night in an abandoned guesthouse, she awoke to beautiful snowcapped mountains alight with the sunrise.

The breathtaking view brought Mei a deep sense of fulfillment – yet she stood alone and exhausted from her journey. Disappointed by how little support was available for travelers looking to get off the beaten path in China, Mei was inspired to start her own business dedicated to offering high-end, stress-free and responsible travel to China's most remote and unique destinations. Her prescient insight became the company motto:

**“EXPERIENCE CHINA DIFFERENTLY!”**





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