

Detailed Trip Notes

Wild China: In the Footsteps of the Plant Hunters With Mary Moody

Trip Duration - 16 Days

Grade - Introductory

Activity – Short trek, day walks, adventure touring

Accommodation – 13 nights hotel and lodges

Optional – 3 day extension



Welcome to World Expeditions

Thank you for enquiring about our WILD CHINA: In the Footsteps of the Plant Hunters with Mary Moody.. At World Expeditions we are passionate about off the beaten track travel as it provides our travellers with the thrill of coming face to face with untouched cultures as well as wilderness regions of great natural beauty. We are also committed to making sure that our range of unique itineraries are well researched, affordable & manicured for the enjoyment of our small groups – philosophies that have been at our core since 1975 when we began operating adventure holidays. Each of our adventures is accompanied by an expert guide and a local crew– people who are dedicated to providing us with the very best travel experience, who have incredible local knowledge and who share our vision of authentic exchange and real exploration with a responsible tourism approach. Whether we like our adventures to include trekking, touring, cycling, mountaineering, kayaking or cruising World Expeditions can make it happen for us. We hope we will join us for a life changing experience!

The Trip

ENJOY THE TEMPERATE, ALPINE AND HIGH GRASSLAND FLORA OF THE BAI, NAXI AND TIBETAN HIGHLANDS

This journey takes us through the temperate and alpine regions of spectacular Northern Yunnan with a chance to see flowers and plants from 2,600metres to 4,200metres and also to the deep valleys descending to 1,900metres between the Yangtze Mekong Divide.

The Chinese Himalaya contains the greatest diversity of plant life in the world and these are the regions explored by French, English and American botanists during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The adventurous US based plant explorer Joseph Rock recorded an enormous number of rhododendron species including Rhododendron rockii, named in his honour, and Rhododendron muliense. In the early 20th century the English planthunter Frank Kingdon Ward collected seed of the famous Meconopsis betonicifolia (blue poppy) and wrote the definitive book on the region, titled Land of the Blue Poppy. Frenchman Pere Jean Pierre Armand found the amazing Davidia involucre (dove tree) and other explorers in search of the regions unique flora included George Forrest, Ernest Wilson and Robert Fortune.

Yunnan has over 2,500 varieties of flowering plants and the province is most famous for well loved genus including camellia, azalea, magnolia, primrose, lily, orchid, gentian and the rare and highly priced meconopsis (blue poppy). Camellias have been in cultivation in China from the 6th century. Camellias grow in Tengchong in the south all the way to Lijiang and there is a 600 year old Camelia tree in Yufeng temple in Lijiang. Orchids grow over a vast region in Sichuan, Guizhou and in Yunnan stretching from Xixuabanna to north of Lijiang and Diqin Prefecture, Yunnan being home to the largest variety.

More than two hundred species of Azalea grow in Yunnan - on the slopes of the Cangshan , Jade Dragon , Haba as well as all the way north to Dechen. Meconopsis grow on the slopes of the mountains between 3,000 to 3,500m. There are of course hundreds of other species of flowers to excite the imagination of any botanist - bougainvillea, all hues of roses, clematis, peony, iris, primula, saxifrage and the famous and Incarvillea zhongdianensis, both found growing in Gyalhang.

"...The Yunnan and Sichuan provinces of south west China have it all. Spectacular snow capped mountains, dramatic gorges and ancient forests provide a perfect backdrop for the predominantly Tibetan culture with its picturesque villages, Buddhist monasteries and frontier towns. Add to that a colourful annual festival and my three weeks in the region rate very high on my best trips list..." RICHARD l'ANSON head of

Lonely Planet Images and author of Lonely Planet's a guide to taking better pictures.

Your Escort

The tour will be led by Mary Moody, a former presenter on the ABC's Gardening Australia and the author of three best selling travel memoirs - Au Revoir, Last Tango in Toulouse and The Long Hot Summer as well as numerous gardening books and magazines. Mary has lead many botanical trips throughout the years from France to Bhutan. She will add tremendous experience, knowledge and humor to the journey.



Why Travel with World Expeditions?

Our guides and vehicles are the best available and to ensure the smooth operation of all trips, our partners in China continually work with us to improve our itineraries to ensure we are taking the 'paths less travelled'. The rapidly developing and ever changing face of China makes this an ongoing challenge. Further, our expert escort, Mary Moody, has worked with World Expeditions for many years, developing and pioneering new itineraries.

Trip Highlights

- Stay at the world famous **Banyan Tree Ringha Resort**.
- Visit the **Alpine Botanical Institute**
- See the extraordinary formations of stone forest in **Kunming**
- Explore **Lijiang** ancient town and surrounding minority villages
- Walk along **Tiger Leaping Gorge** and **Yangtze Gorge**
- Journey at **Shangrila (Zhongdian)** with its imposing Ganden Sumtsanling Monastery
- See **Meili Snow Mountain** and the sacred **Ming Yong glacier**

- Journey along the **Tibetan** border and **pilgrimage routes**



Wild China Itinerary At A Glance

- DAY 1** Depart Australia
- DAY 2** Arrive Kunming
- DAY 3** To Dali (1900m)
- DAY 4** In Dali to Cangshan Mountains
- DAY 5** To Lijiang (2400m)
- DAY 6** In Lijiang
- DAY 7** Drive to Zhongdian (3300m) via Tiger Leaping Gorge
- DAY 8** In Zhongdian
- DAY 9** At Horse Festival (if in May 28)
- DAY 10** Dechen
- DAY 11** Pilgrimage route trek to Meyung
- DAY 12** To Dechen and Gyalthang
- DAY 13** Gyalthang
- DAY 14** Fly to Kunming
- DAY 15** Kunming; international flight
- DAY 16** Arrive Australia

OPTIONAL EXTENSION

- DAY 15** Fly to Kunming; to Jinhong, Xixuabanna
- DAY 16** Xixuabanna-Jinhong, Menghun, Menghai
- DAY 17** Xixuabanna- Jinhong and Ganlaba
- DAY 18** Depart Kunming
- DAY 19** Arrive Australia

Wild China Your trip cost includes:

- Exceptional escort, Mary Moody.
- International return flights, economy (excluding taxes)
- All accommodation in China on a twin-share basis.
- All meals as listed in the itinerary.
- All group transport including private 4WD, and flights.
- Transfers as required by the group itinerary (on group flights)
- Services of a expert tri-lingual local guide
- Organised sightseeing, entry fees and National park fees as outlined in itinerary.

No local payments policy: Local cash payments are becoming increasingly popular with many operators in the adventure travel industry. The policy seems to benefit the tour operators, more than the local economies or travellers, as it avoids local taxes and transfers the cost and risk of cash handling to travellers. In accordance with our Responsible Travel practices we have chosen a policy not to ask for such payments.

Wild China Your trip cost does not include:

- Airport and departure taxes (approx. \$600)
- Visa (required)
- Travel Insurance (compulsory)
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry and postage.
- Departure taxes (50 yuan for internal flights and 100 yuan for international flights)
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Tips and gratuities

Fast Facts

- Visas are required for all nationalities visiting China
- There are no statutory vaccination requirements for China, however you should consult your physician prior to travel for current information
- Group size is a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 16 people.
- A single supplement is available for this trip.

COST

6-9 passengers: \$6990
10+ passengers: \$6590
Single Supplement: \$900

Extension cost:

6-9 passengers: \$1700
10+ passengers: \$1400
Single supplement: \$205

*prices are per person, twin share, AUD

Please note: If you are booking as a single traveller, we will try to twin share you with another traveller of the same sex, unless you specify you would like to take the single supplement. If we cannot twin share you, you will need to pay the single supplement.

WILD CHINA Detailed Itinerary

DAY 1: 21st May DEPART SYDNEY

Depart Sydney: TG992 @ 2110
Arrive Bangkok: TG992 @ 0600

DAY 2: 22nd May ARRIVE IN KUNMING

Depart Bangkok TG 612 @ 1055
Arrive Kunming TG612 @ 1405

* Different flights from Melbourne and other capital cities.

On arrival in Kunming we will be met and transferred to the Kunming Hotel. If there have been no flight delays there will be time to visit the site of the International Horticultural Expo in 1997 where we will see a wealth of Yunnan's flora exhibited and beautifully arranged in a large area now set aside for year round floral exhibition. We will also visit a local flower market.

Kunming is the capital of Yunnan province, one of the most diverse and beautiful regions of China. Yunnan is a lush, fertile and diverse region of China. Twenty-six minority races live in Yunnan today, including Tibetans, Yi, Naxi, Mongols, Lahu, and Lisu – indeed the region has the greatest concentration of minority nationalities of any province in China.

Kunming has a wonderful temperate climate all year round and has been called the city of 'Eternal Spring'. It boasts a tremendous variety of flowers all over the city, which is surrounded by mountains at an altitude of more than 1,500 m. In the evening there will be a welcome dinner at an ancient General's home - now a lovely restaurant - where we will sample a variety of Yunnan traditional cuisine. After dinner, if we are not too tired, we may visit the flower gardens at Green Lake and watch the T'ai Chi devotees practicing their art in the evening. Accommodation at Kunming Hotel. (D)

DAY 3: 23rd MAY TO DALI (1900M)

Later this morning we will take a flight to Dali.

Dali town resides in a long valley on the plains between the Cangshan Mountains and Erhai Lake. The historic home of the Bai people, this ancient town is the capital of the region. The old town stands at 1,900m above sea level. The valley is dominated by the nineteen peaks of the

Cangshan Mountains averaging 4,000m. Dali was the capital of the Nanzhao kingdom during the 8th and 9th centuries and at its height conquered much of Burma, parts of Vietnam and Thailand and parts of Sichuan province. Later Kublai Khan conquered the stone city of Pagodas. Dali is famous for its colourful people, its embroidery, rich agriculture and ancient architecture.

On arrival in Dali we will check in at the Asia Star hotel. After a rest and lunch we will drive out to the cable car for a journey up to the Cangshan mountains for our first taste of botanical exploration. Later there may be time for exploring the old walled town, followed by an early dinner and a good nights rest. Accommodation at the Asia Star Hotel. (BLD)

DAY 4: 24th May DALI AND CANGSHAN MOUNTAINS

Today we will drive out to the Cangshan Mountains and take a cable car ride up to the shoulder of the Cangshan Mountain in another direction and take a lovely walk to enjoy the flora and vegetation of the temperate region and enjoy good views of the whole Dali valley and Erhai Lake. We will have a full day to explore the flora on the Cangshan and our local guides will arrange packed lunches so that we have more time to explore the flora of the mountain.

In the evening, we will take a pleasant walk in the walled city soaking up the ancient history and the unique architecture of Dali. Dinner will your own choice tonight. (BL)

DAY 5: 25th May TO LIJIANG (2400M)

This morning we will take an early morning flight to Lijiang . On arrival in Lijiang we will be met and transferred to our hotel, the Grand Lijiang, which is at the entrance to the old town.

After a breakfast we will explore Lijiang. We will take time to wander the cobbled stone streets and explore the bustling markets. This city is home to the colourful Naxi people, easily spotted in their traditional blue dress. In the afternoon we'll visit the spectacular Black Dragon Pool and see traditional gardens, pavilions and bridges reminiscent of ancient China. Afterwards we will visit the Naxi Museum to gain an understanding of the culture of the local people; the museum is set beneath the amazing view of the snow capped Jade Dragon Mountain and we will then walk back to the ancient town and visit the trading square where caravans used to stop, seeing the

special system of water wells and other interesting sites in the old town at our leisure. The Naxi are the last people in China to play Song Dynasty tunes derived from Taoist scriptures, and on one evening we will enjoy performance by Naxi musicians after dinner. (BLD)

DAY 6: 26th May IN LIJIANG

We will drive on to Yuhu village, the ancient home of famed botanist Dr. Joseph Rock who prepared the first dictionary of Naxi language during the decades he lived in Lijiang. Rock was a bit of an eccentric and he became the world's expert on Naxi culture and the flora of this region. We will continue on to the Yufeng temple to see the oldest camellia tree of the region.

In the afternoon we can drive out to the mountain vistas at the base of the Jade Dragon mountain (5,596m) and take a cable car up to the higher reaches of the mountain. The entire Province has 1,3000 genus of flowering plants and a large variety are found on the slopes of this mountain - camellia, azalea, rhododendrons, gentian, primula, rose, flowering crab apple among a few.

Dinner is of your own choice this evening, at your pace so you can rest up before the next day's journey to higher altitude. (BL)



Day 7: 27th May DRIVE TO ZHONGDIAN (3300mtrs) VIA TIGER LEAPING GORGE

After breakfast we depart for our five-hour drive to Zhongdian, also known as Shangrila or Gyalthang in Tibetan. En route we stop at the pleasant Stone Drum Village to view the first bend in the Yangtze River. The Yangtze flows south from Tibet into Yunnan and then turns north here for approximately 60 miles. We then head to the breathtaking Tiger Leaping Gorge, set between two huge mountains and descending over 3,000m into the river below and we stop at several points to enjoy the views.

We will pass through Naxi countryside, with its fields of red millet, sorghum, tobacco, rice and wheat with the snowy peaks of Yulong Shueshan towering above us. There will be many plants to observe on the way after crossing Yangtze and as we drive along the turbulent Shudu river, passing through the temperate forests of the Yi country. The Yi were a hunting and gathering tribe who collected medicinal plants. As we drive north we will have a sense of coming closer to the Roof of the World as we see the high snow capped mountains beyond the foothills of the Hengduan Shan.

We will be soon in the high plains and meadows of Gyalthang and see conifers and rhododendrons and the early grassland flowers. During the drive we will enjoy spectacular views of the snow-covered Yulong Shueshan and Haba mountains. Zhongdian is the County capital of Dechin Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Here the land levels off into large expanses of grassland dotted with Tibetan chalet-like villages and we will see the high plains and meadows of Zhongdian.

The rest of the afternoon is spent acclimatizing, before enjoying a dinner of Tibetan specialties. We will stay at Gyalthang Dzong or Songsan or similar hotel. (BLD)

DAY 8: 28th May THE HORSE FESTIVAL

In the morning we will drive out to Yufung shan the site of the annual Horse Festival in Zhongdian. We will arrive at the Horse Festival grounds and enjoy this annual gathering where skilled horsemen and women race and perform acrobatics. We will enjoy seeing the town and village folk gather for this fantastic event dressed in their best finery. The races are in a traditional style stadium and the surrounding is filled with colourful Tibetan tents, food stalls, family kitchen tents and tents where some families receive guests. People have picnics and if the weather is fine they will sing and dance in the evenings. This festival is traditionally to celebrate the summer and a time of plenty, following the long, hard winter.

The day begins with inaugural speeches and dances and a march past by the horse men and women. In some years spectators are treated to acrobatics on horses and some years there may be yak races or a parade of the Tibetan mastiffs. The races continue in the afternoon and there are different styles of races for both men and women.

We can walk around the grounds and enjoy the some of the games, too. In the evening there are street dances in the new town as well as the old town and old and young alike show off their dancing skills in the community. Dinner will be organized in the old town. (BLD)

DAY 9: 29th May IN ZHONGDIAN

In the morning, we visit the impressive Ganden Sumtsaling Monastery located on a hill in the old part of town. This five-story monastery is the second most important monastery in the world to Tibetan people, the Potala Palace in Lhasa being the most sacred. Seven hundred practicing monks reside here. The monastery was built in the 17th century by the 5th Dalai Lama and it houses numerous chapels, spectacular woodcarvings and paintings and is like a living museum of Tibetan culture.

This morning we are free to enjoy some time at leisure before heading to Ringha and the sacred monastery where we can enjoy lovely views back over Zhongdian. Here we will walk up to the temple of the 5 Wisdom Buddhas a very sacred pilgrimage site for all Gyalthang people. It is where people go to pray for good health and seek solutions and leave their problems behind. Dinner will again be organized in the old town and afterwards we will return to our hotel. (BLD)

DAY 10: 30th May DECHEN

Today we head off the beaten path and leave the tourists behind as we drive north along a valley of breathtaking gorges towards the Tibetan border. We pass the Napha Reserve, its scree slopes well known for *Meconopsis*, *Incarvillea* and the famous *Lilium zhongdianensis*, a lovely pink lily with maroon spots. We will continue on and pass villages of Nishi and Gonzo before reaching Punzera (Benzilan) at 2,100m. This is a warm oasis where oranges, pomegranates and olives grow. We continue traveling along the Yangtze River and leave behind the lush forests and drive into the rocky limestone spires of the Yangtze Mekong divide. We visit Dhondupling Monastery and see the change in architecture to the distinctly flat roof villages of central Tibet. We will pass rhododendron forests and meadows with *Primula*, gentian and also *Pedicularis* on the high Baima pass before we descend to Dechen. Reaching the trading town of Dechen nestled in a lush valley, the last post town before the Tibetan border.

We will stay at Namkatashi and enjoy the

awesome views over the Meili Snow Range. (BLD)



DAY 11: 31th May PILGRIMAGE ROUTE TREK TO MEYUNG

After a breakfast of local specialties, we will drive to the Mekong River and enjoy the panoramic sight of the sacred Kawakarpo Mountain (6740m). We will see the Ming Yong glacier descending from the waist of Kawakarpo. Prayers are offered and incense and juniper is burned before the beginning of all pilgrimages. We continue driving along the Mekong and to Melungtse village and start our day trek to the glacier. We have organized additional horse support for all members of the group and if the going gets tough we can use the horses to aid with our trek, which follows part of the pilgrimage route into the Meili Snow Mountains. The walk is through rocky terrain of the upper Mekong and in the month of June many alpine flowers will be in evidence. We will get close to the base of MingYong glacier and the temple overlooking the glacier. We then walk to the specially built platforms to gain impressive views of Kawakarpo towering above. MingYong glacier is the lowest glacier in Asia and surely one of the most spectacular. This area is in the top five for bio- diversity in the world and is in the center of the Meili Reserve.

We stay at a simple but clean and comfortable family lodge at the base of the glacier where a hot meal will be prepared by our staff. We'll enjoy stary nights here and enjoy the traditional hospitality of the Tibetan people. (BLD)

DAY 12: 1st May RETURN TO DECHEN AND TO GYALTHANG

We drive back to Gyalthang after breakfast stopping for lunch at Punzera and time permitting we will visit an ancient nunnery. Tonight we will stay in Gyalthang Dzong and have a dinner of special hot pot in the old town. We may be lucky enough to join the town folk for community dancing in the evening. (BLD)

DAY 13: 2nd June
GYALTHANG

Today you may either have a relaxing morning in Gyalthang or take a hike to the two lovely temples perched in the center of the old town Ta Guishan and Beiji temples where there is a lovely view of the old town. On the way back drop in at a Gallery cafe/teahouse to have a cup of tea (perhaps the health giving high mountain Oolong tea) as we enjoy the apple blossoms and the tinkling bells of the temple.

We will also visit the Alpine Botanical Institute here in Gyalthang.

In the early afternoon we will head to the Banyan Tree Ringha Resort, now recognised as one of the world's leading hotels. This will indeed be a special experience. We will have the afternoon to relax in the gardens, have a spa or massage. Dinner tonight will be in the hotel. (BD)

DAY 14: 3rd June
FLY TO KUNMING; AND FREE DAY

This morning you will feel like you never want to leave!!! However, in the morning we will check out and then fly to Kunming.

We will have the rest of the day at leisure in Kunming today. There will be no guide but you are free to ask the guide for advice before you part ways.(B)

* If you would like to stay longer in Gyaltang we can organise this for you. Please speak to your reservation consultant at World Expeditions.

DAY 15: 4th June
DEPART

This morning after breakfast you will have the morning to finish off any shopping or sightseeing you have not yet completed. Around lunch time you will be transferred from the hotel to the airport for your flight to Australia.

Depart Kunming: TG613 @ 1520
Arrive Bangkok: TG613 @ 1635

DAY 16: 4th June
ARRIVE SYDNEY
Arrive Sydney: TG993 @ 0715

****The itinerary may alter due to weather or local conditions.**

EXTENSION

DAY 15: 3rd June
FLY TO JINHONG, XISHUANGBANNA

On arrival in Kunming we will be met and transferred for lunch. In the late afternoon, we fly to Jinhong, by the beautiful Liu Sha river, a tributary of the Mekong River in southern Yunnan's fertile plains and the capital of Xishuangbanna. After dinner, we'll enjoy an evening walk through Jinhong town and enjoy the tropical weather. Jinhong's bustling outdoor food market, where vendors sell local dishes like barbecued fish on skewers and glutinous rice cooked in bamboo and bannana flowers cooked with egg. Overnight at Dai Garden or similar hotel in Jinhong. (BLD)



Day 16: 4th June
Jinhong, Menghun and Menghai

Xishuangbanna is the south western most part of Yunnan Province, bordering on Myanmar (Burma) and Laos and has a subtropical climate, with abundant sunshine, plentiful rain. It has a reputation for beautiful subtropical scenery and unique cultural attractions. Thirteen ethnic groups, including the Dai, Hani, Lisu, Yao, live close to each other, all with colourful customs and rich tribal traditions. Banna (short for Xishuangbanna) is also known as the 'Kingdom of plants and animals,' because of its rich flora and fauna.

The town of Jinhong, is set along the Mekong River tributary and with its palm trees and hot weather has a sleepy atmosphere.

Your day will begin with a visit to a Dai village, the largest ethnic minority of the region, and are thought to be ancestors of the Thai people. They practice Buddhism with a strong element of spirit worship. We will take a walk through the village to witness a very special way of life dedicated to animal husbandary and growing rice. The Dai household consists of husband, wife (or in earlier

days, wives) and unmarried children. There is no caste system and women have considerable status. Villages have communal leadership being provided by an elected village elder, headman, or Buddhist monk. Women dress is very close to that of women in Thailand, whose people are believed to have descended from the Dai regions of Yunnan.

We will stop at the market where there is a good variety of tropical fruits on display - jackfruit, custard apple, mango, dates, pineapple, tamarind and banana as well as wild vegetables of the region and colourful displays of barbecued fish, pork and liver. There is always plenty of *ready to eat* rice noodle soups and dumplings, a Yunnan speciality. We continue to drive 70 km to the Ganlaba plains where we will stop at a lively local market to pick up some tropical fruit. We will visit the large Tropical Plant Garden, a Research Center of Kunming Botanical Gardens with vast grounds exhibiting unique flowers, shrubs and trees of the region. According to the Botanical Institute of Edinburgh, Scotland, Yunnan exhibits the richest biodiversity in the entire northern hemisphere. American botanist Dr. Joseph Rock, sponsored by Harvard, made countless expeditions to Yunnan, virtually living in Lijiang from 1922 to 1949. He sent more than 80,000 plant specimens and 1600 bird species back to the US and contributed numerous articles to *National Geographic* detailing Yunnan's botanic and cultural riches.

We will have dinner and overnight in Jinhong. (B)

Day 17: 5th June Jinhong

In the morning we will visit the Tropical Plant Research Institute and Medical Botanical Garden to learn about the regions plant biodiversity. Here a staff of nearly 1300 cares for a garden of plants of medical and economical value to the Province. The collection includes rubber, tobacco, nutmeg, pepper, sesame, oil palm, cocoa, and a fine collection of orchids.

Time permitting, we will visit a research center for indigenous Banana of the region.

Xishuangbanna is also home to a large variety of green teas and Yunnans famous Puer tea. You may want to taste some Puer tea whilst in the region.

In the afternoon we will take a flight to Kunming and overnight in Kunming. (BLD)

Day 18: 6th June Departure from China

This morning you have free time until your flight to Bangkok.

Depart Kunming: TG613 @ 1520
Arrive Bangkok: TG613 @ 1635

DAY 19: 7th June Arrive Sydney

Arrive Sydney: TG993 @ 0715

Trip Grading

Our Yunnan Explorer trip is graded as introductory although there is no commitment to extended walking on this journey we nonetheless want to keep the 'accent on the active'. We therefore advise that any physical training we complete before undertaking the trip will be to good effect. Part of the trip is also at altitude so the fitter we are the more this will enhance our experience.

Country Information

China never fails to conjure up a myriad of feelings, images and a sense of mystery. Its history cannot be summed up here in a few paragraphs and to fully appreciate the currents that have shaped the country and its people we must take the time to read at least one of the many excellent books available.

Within the almost four million square miles of China's vast territory live more than 1.2 billion people, which makes it the most populated nation on earth. For centuries, outsiders have yearned to visit China and it's only since 1976 that tourism really started. Initially, foreign visitors were only allowed to see a fraction of what the country had to offer, however, today it is possible to visit as many as 60 different areas. An increasing number of historical sites are also being restored and opened up to viewing for foreign tourists.

As much as China is keen to display its stunning scenery, historical sites and impressive cities, it is also dedicated to conveying something about how its society works. Although its political system has set it apart from the west, China is now moving forward in leaps and bounds, especially in the areas of trade and commerce. The major cities are indicative of the burgeoning economy of modern China.

As in the days of Marco Polo, travellers are still regarded as honoured guests and the locals delight in watching us watching them. Within the relatively short time that China's doors have been open to the West, few tourists have visited the rural parts of the country, including the remote region of Yunnan.

Yunnan Province is located in South Western China and is considered by many to be one of the most varied and interesting in China. The terrain varies from tropical rain forests of Xixuabanna in the south to the high snow peaked mountains and alpine forests of the north. Kunming the capital of Yunnan has earned itself the title 'Eternal Spring City' because of its mild, temperate climate year round and its wide variety of flowers and plants.

In Yunnan there is a huge variety of good cuisine. Meat, vegetables and fruits are always fresh. The air is probably one of the cleanest in China including in Kunming city. As one travels north into the lands of the Bai and Naxi, one is in alpine forested regions with clear water streams, pristine Lakes and lush villages and further north in the Tibetan region prayer flags flutter from the roof tops and yaks graze in the meadows.

It is the sixth largest Province of China and home to 50% of its minority people. With a population of over 40 million there are 26 different ethnic groups and tribes living in Yunnan including the Dai, Miao, Aini of the north, the Bai and Naxi living in the southern areas, the Yi and Lisu people of the north east and the Tibetans of the northwest. Yunnan has a great abundance of plants and animals and Northern Yunnan is considered one of greatest areas of biodiversity in the Northern hemisphere. Northern Yunnan has more than 200 varieties of rhododendron, over half the species in China. Over half of China's fauna is found in Yunnan. 60% of medicinal plants used in Chinese medicine come from Northern Yunnan. Joseph Rock, the American botanist made Lijiang his base for more than 30 years.

Culturally the Yunnan region is equally important, being the home of Bai, Naxi and Tibetan people and also that of Yi, Moso and Lisu. Each of these nationalities has their own festivals, practice their own secular as well as religious events and have wealth of songs and dances. Architecture and arts are varied from the traditional quadrangular Bai and Naxi homes with their fruit orchards to the simple log homes of the Lisu and Yi and the elaborately carved homes of the Tibetans. Wood craft, marble paintings and embroidery of the Bai are famous as are Naxi copperware and Tibetan paintings, carvings and yak wool woven cloth and silver and brass work that can be seen in all their splendour in the Tibetan Monasteries.

Climate

The southern Chinese provinces of Yunnan and Sichuan cover a broad range of microclimates from subtropical areas to high snow-capped mountains. In Kunming, the capital the temperatures generally vary from 10 °C (50°F) to 19 °C (66 °F) throughout the entire year. Lijiang has mostly a temperate climate with temperatures between 8 °C (46 °F) and 20 °C (68 °F). In the mountainous regions day time temperatures are generally in the range of 12 °C (53 °F) to 19 °C (66 °F) and can dip below 0 °C (32 °F) in the evenings.

We suggest we pack a waterproof jacket with hood for all departures.

Responsible Travel

The environments we travel through are fragile. It is our responsibility as visitors to minimise the impact of our presence.

World Expeditions were the proud recipients of the inaugural Australian National Travel Industry's Environmental Achievement award for our *Responsible Travel Guidebook*. This detailed guide to responsible & sustainable travel is provided to all World Expeditions clients before they travel. Please ask our consultant if we have not received your copy of our award winning book. Alternatively, we may like to download a copy from our website.

Adventure Travel

By its very nature adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected. In remote and developing countries do not expect standards we are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable and itineraries may be altered. To get the most out of your adventure it is important that we are flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise. If we are uncertain about your suitability for this trip we recommend that we speak with our consultant of travel agent.

How do we book?

To book this trip you will need to complete a booking form which is found at the back of our brochure or can be downloaded from our website. On completion, fax or post the form to **World Expeditions Sydney** along with your non-refundable deposit.

**World Expeditions
Level 5, 71 York St
Sydney NSW 2000
Fax: 02 8270 8401**

Important Note:

These trip notes represent the most current information for this itinerary, and may supersede any information in the current brochure, including but not limited to the itinerary and price.

**IF WE REQUIRE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THIS OR ANY OTHER ADVENTURE,
PLEASE CONTACT WER NEAREST WORLD EXPEDITIONS OFFICE.**

JG 11/08

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