Abercrombie & Kent



CULTURES OF YUNNAN & TIBET

Immerse yourself in the bygone cultures and impossibly beautiful mountains of China’s Yunnan province and Tibet. Journey along the ancient Tea Horse Road, so-named for the Chinese who traded tea for Tibetan horses.

Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries

Asia, China, Tibet

11 days from AU$9,850 pp

Private

Journey Overview

Immerse yourself in the bygone cultures and impossibly beautiful mountains of China’s Yunnan province and Tibet. Journey along the ancient Tea Horse Road, so-named for the Chinese who traded tea for Tibetan horses. Discover villages built on age-old customs, tea and herbal medicines. Venture deeper into mountains filled with extraordinary natural beauty and Buddhist temples. Then, climb even higher to Lhasa and peel back the many layers of Tibetan culture.

Journey Highlights

- Appreciate age-old customs at a traditional tea ceremony
- Roam the ancient streets of Shuhe, a UNESCO-listed village
- Enjoy true Tibetan hospitality in a local family home
- Meet a world-renowned Chinese medicinal practitioner
- Learn the traditional arts of script printing and incense-making
- Visit one of Tibet’s great six monasteries, Sera Monastery



Itinerary

Day 1: Kunming – Lijiang (2,400m)

Arrive at Kunming, where you will be assisted with the onward flight to Lijiang. Transfer to the beautiful Intercontinental Lijiang Ancient Town Resort. Settle in and explore at your own pace.

Intercontinental Lijiang Ancient Town Resort (Club Intercontinental Room)

Day 2: Lijiang

Discover the many charms of Lijiang's UNESCO listed Old Town as you stroll through the cobbled streets amongst the weathered, postcard-perfect wooden houses. Cross ancient timber footbridges over the network of spring-fed canals. Continue up to the auspicious Wang Gu Lou Pagoda, which stands sentinel above the city as a beacon of protection and good fortune. Next, take your seat in an old tea house to partake in an important ritual – a tea ceremony. Spend the rest of your afternoon at leisure.

Intercontinental Lijiang Ancient Town Resort (Club Intercontinental Room) | Meals: B

Day 3: Lijiang

Head beyond the city to Bai Sha Village, the former capital of the Naxi kingdom. Wander through this intriguing village and seek out the site of the 16th century Bai Sha Murals. Then, accept your invitation into the home of Dr. Ho, a 96-year-old herbal medicine practitioner who for years has been treating the villagers for free. Later, learn centuries-old traditions in the national Embroidery Institute. Continue overland to Jade Dragon Snow Mountain to enjoy the colourful and dynamic Mountains and Rivers song and dance performance, which will draw you into the world of Yunnan's myriad ethnic groups. Continue to Shuhe, 'the hometown of springs', one of the earliest Naxi settlements. Meander through this well-preserved town on the Tea Horse Road and seek out the local cobblers whose leatherwork is said to match the best in Italy.

Intercontinental Lijiang Ancient Town Resort (Club Intercontinental Room) | Meals: B

Day 4: Lijiang – Shangri-La (3,300m)

Journey overland to Shangri-La (formally Zhongdian) on the Yunnan-Tibet Highway. Pause en route at the ‘First Bend’ in the Yangtze River to see this auspicious site where the mighty river flows south out of Tibet. Next, visit the charming Naxi village of Shigu, with its large 16th century stone drum memorial. Continue to the dramatic Tiger Leaping Gorge and see where, according to folklore, the desperate animal leapt across at its narrowest point to escape a hunter. A short hike in this dramatic canyon reveals the Yangtze River roaring 4,000 metres below on the gorge floor. Arrive into Shangri-La late this afternoon.

Songtsam Linka Shangri-La (Superior Suite) | Meals: BL

Day 5: Shangri-La

The area round Shangri-La introduces you to the fascinating Tibetan culture. First stop the Songzanlin Monastery, the largest in Yunnan, with a special visit to the Protector Temple. Continue onwards to a Khampa Tibetan village where herds of yak, mountain pony, sheep and goats graze on the spring pasture and the fields yield bumper crops of highland barley, buckwheat and potatoes. Meet with local families and get an exclusive glimpse into Tibetan life as you watch yak butter being made and enjoy tea with your hosts. Then, head to the 800-year-old working monastery, Ringha, where prayer flags flutter and the views extend over the Sudugang River below. Visit the Tibetan Culture Museum to delve deeper into Tibetan cultural and lifestyle traditions. Or visit a printing house to learn the art of traditional script printing.

Songtsam Linka Shangri-La (Superior Suite) | Meals: BL

Day 6: Shangri-La

Venture deeper into Tibetan culture today. Start at the Napa Hai Forest Reserve and discover a wonderful wetland area and paradise for birdlife. Next, visit the Nishi black pottery village to watch artisans shaping the clay with their hands and wooden tools. Onwards to the Scenic Moon Crescent Gorge and the Marriage of the Waters. Later, watch a demonstration on how to make Tibetan incense. Visit the Dongzhulin Monastery, soaring 3,000 metres above sea level, and lose yourself in this Buddhist cultural treasure house for pilgrims. Tonight, feast on a hearty Tibetan hot pot dinner – the perfect end to your day’s adventures. .

Songtsam Linka Shangri-La (Superior Suite) | Meals: BLD

Day 7: Shangri-La – Lhasa – Tsedang (3,700m)

Transfer to the airport for your flight to Lhasa, then continue overland to Tsedang.

Along the way, stop at Yumbu Lakang, said to be the first Tibetan palace. Wander amongst the towers, chapels, monks' rooms and buildings of this majestic structure, before journeying onwards to your hotel.

Tsedang Hotel (Deluxe Room) | Meals: B

Day 8: Tsedang – Lhasa (3,656m)

Journey overland to Lhasa, the heart and soul of Tibet. Along the way, pause at Samye Monastery, the oldest and most sacred of all monasteries in Tibet, dating to the late 8th century. Arrive in Lhasa, one of the highest cities on earth.

Shangri-La Hotel, Lhasa (Horizon Club Room) | Meals: BL

Day 9: Lhasa

Discover the city’s long history, unique culture and isolated location surrounded by the world’s highest mountains. Visit the Ani Tsankhung Nunnery, a Buddhist nunnery built in the 7th century by Songsten Gampo, before moving onto the Jokhang Temple, Tibet’s most revered religious structure, in the heart of Lhasa. Here, you’ll get a real sense of daily life in Tibet as people come together for one purpose: to express their devotion. Encircling the temple is Barkhor Square, where you can follow pilgrims from all over Tibet as they complete their *kora* (walking clockwise around a sacred spot). In nearby Barkhor Bazaar, lose yourself amongst prayer beads and wheels, carpets, and thangkas. After lunch, pause at the serene Sera Monastery, one of Tibet’s Great Six monasteries and a renowned seat of Buddhist learning. Explore the monastic city before watching the dramatic debates held in the outside courtyards as part of the monks’ training.

Shangri-La Hotel, Lhasa (Horizon Club Room) | Meals: BL

Day 10: Lhasa

Visit Sanggye Dhunghor, the Thousand Buddha Shrine, and count some 200 Buddha statues carved into a dramatic rock face. Then, climb to the Potala Palace, the UNESCO World Heritage site dominating the skyline of Lhasa. This intricate building was commissioned by the Dalai Lama in 1645 and became the winter residence of nine Dalai Lamas. See statues and treasured prayer halls at every turn and admire the walls exquisitely covered with frescoes depicting episodes from Buddhist scriptures, landscapes and historical events. Step outside where, on a clear day, the view of the Himalayas is magical. Continue to the Norbulingka, “the Jewel Park”, and bask in the tranquility of this 99-acre haven. Finally, venture inside the palace of the present Dalai Lama, left exactly as it was when he fled to India in 1959.

Shangri-La Hotel, Lhasa (Horizon Club Room) | Meals: BL

Day 11: Depart Lhasa

Transfer to Lhasa Airport for your onward flight.

Meals: B

Map


CHINA
Lhasa
Tsedang
Shangri-La
Lijiang
Kunming
ARRIVE/DEPART
AIR
ROAD

Accommodation

InterContinental Lijiang Ancient Town Resort



Located in the southern part of Lijiang Old Town, the InterContinental Lijiang Ancient Town Resort is an expansive property set amidst beautiful gardens and ponds combining modern comforts with traditional Naxi influences. Rooms emit a distinct sense of place with sophisticated décor and floor to ceiling windows that beautifully frame the breathtaking landscapes beyond.

There are four restaurants and bars offering Asian Fusion cuisine, traditional Chinese, western selections and a tea menu. The Tea Tree Spa offers a range of treatments and there is a large indoor pool and fully equipped gym.

Why we like it

- Walk out of the resort directly onto the cobbled streets of Lijiang’s old town
- Floor to ceiling windows with breathtaking views of Jade Dragon Mountain
- Large swimming pool
- Range of blissful spa treatments

Songtsam Linka Shangri-La, Northern Yunnan



The Songtsam Linka Shangri-La is a boutique lodge with 75 rooms and suites, each decorated with traditional Tibetan carpets and antiques. Some of the rooms are compact, but all have modern comforts and complimentary broadband and wireless internet access. The copper sinks in the bathrooms have been handmade, and all the bathrooms have been recently renovated.

The lodge is housed in a traditional Tibetan dwelling within this typical, self-sufficient Tibetan farming village.

One complimentary ticket for Songzanlin Monastery is provided for each guest at Songtsam Shangri-la.

Why we like it

- Songtsam Linka Shangri-La is the flagship property of the Songtsam lodges
- Located next to the Songzanlin Monastery, the largest Tibetan monastery in Yunnan province
- Decorated in Tibetan style with handpicked antiques
- One restaurant and a bar offering a variety of cuisine from western to Tibetan
- Leisure facilities include a sauna, hammam, Turkish steam bath and massages are available

Tsedang Hotel

Centrally located in Tsedang, Tsedang Hotel is the most comfortable place to base yourself from when exploring this party of Tibet. Rooms are bright and comfortable and equipped with individually-controlled air conditioning and heating system, cable TV and en suite bathrooms. There are three restaurants serving Cantonese, Sichuan, Western and Tibetan food and a charming garden.

Shangri-La Hotel Lhasa



Located within walking distance of some of the Tibetan capital's best-known attractions is the first Shangri-La hotel in Tibet which exudes local elegance within tranquil and ancient surroundings and distinctive Tibetan architecture, interior design and service.

Each of its 262 guestrooms and 17 suites features designs inspired by the Tibetan city - little touches of turquoise, a stone prized in Tibet, and bedside lights in the shape of prayer wheels, breathe character into every room. Views of the gleaming Potala Palace or the mountains are enjoyed from every room.

There are four exceptional restaurants: Shang Palace offers the best in Cantonese and Sichuan cuisine, while Altitude features live cooking stations with Asian fare and Tibetan and Indian specialities as well as Western cuisine. Take afternoon tea in the elegant Lodgers Lounge, and later head to Shamala for tapas and drinks while watching the sun descend over the Potala Palace. Here, too, you will find thoughtful details imbuing a sense of place; curtains like prayer flags hang over the Altitude buffet restaurant and a giant lotus flower dominates the ballroom.

Shangri-La Lhasa has everything you would expect from a luxury hotel – a well-equipped gym, spa and indoor heated pool – with the addition of unique Tibetan services. Guests can unwind in the oxygen lounge and reflexology pavilion while adjusting to the high altitude, then revive the body and mind at CHI spa with a soothing signature treatment.

Why we like it

- Stunning views of the Potala Palace or mountains from every room

- Tibetan inspired design
- Oxygen lounge to assist with acclimatisation
- Minutes from the best sightseeing in Lhasa

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