Ancient Yunnan: Kunming, Dali, Lijiang & Shangri La

KUNMING · DALI · LIJIANG · SHANGRI LA · YILIANG

9D 7N | 25–30 PAX | STARTS KUALA LUMPUR | BATIK AIR

Travel through Yunnan's dramatic shift from subtropical valleys to Himalayan plateaus, where historic towns and distinct cultures sit between some of southwest China's most striking landscapes. Over nine days, the route connects Kunming, Dali, Lijiang and Shangri La, revealing ancient Naxi heritage, highland scenery and the deep gorge carved by the Jinsha River. Each stop feels markedly different from the China most visitors know, yet the journey remains comfortably paced rather than rushed. With return Batik Air charter flights, accommodation, daily meals, high-speed rail and ground transport included, this tour suits travellers seeking a culturally rich route that ventures well beyond China's familiar eastern cities.

DAY

01

SUBANG

Depart Subang — the journey starts tonight

Your Yunnan journey begins at Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport (Subang) tonight. Check in for flight OD696, departing at 2140, and you arrive in Kunming at 0115 the following morning. It is a late-night departure by design — this routing means you lose no full day to travel, and you arrive ready to begin the moment you wake. Pack light carry-on essentials for overnight comfort; your checked luggage will make the journey with you.

Kunming Changshui International Airport — International arrivals are straightforward, and transfers to the city are organised. Keep your travel documents accessible for immigration.

DAY

02

DALI · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Kunming — then west into Dali

After arriving in the early hours, check in and rest before the day proper begins. Kunming earns its name — the City of Eternal Spring — for its temperate climate, and even a brief morning here gives you a sense of how unhurried it is compared to China's eastern megacities. The coach journey west to Dali is roughly four hours, with a lunch stop in Chuxiong on the way.

Dali Santorini — A lakeside complex styled after the Greek island, built for the view over Erhai Lake. You arrive by buggy; a tea break is included. Unusual by Chinese tourism standards — worth it for the light over the water.

Dali Old Town — The old walled city is one of the better-preserved in Yunnan. Foreigner Street (Yangren Jie) is where the town's long history of travellers converges; it is more liveable than touristy.

Nanmen Mosque — Prayer time at the southern gate mosque, in a city with one of the oldest Muslim communities in southwest China.

MEALS

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Dali Old Town

DAY

03

LIJIANG · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 2

Dali — along the lake, into the Muslim village

The day begins along the Erhai Ecological Corridor, the 130-kilometre path that traces the edge of Erhai Lake. This is Yunnan at its quietest — farmland, fishing villages and the lake stretching south into the haze. The afternoon shifts to something more specific: a visit to a Muslim village, where the community here has maintained its faith and customs since the Yuan dynasty.

Erhai Ecological Corridor — One of the most scenic stretches of Yunnan. The corridor connects wetlands, villages and waterside pavilions. Best in the morning before the tour coaches arrive.

Muslim Village visit — Dali's Hui Muslim community has been here for seven centuries. A visit to a local family includes a DIY session making Milk Fan (rubing) — a pressed fresh cheese unique to this region, and a staple of Yunnan halal cooking.

Coach to Lijiang — The drive northeast to Lijiang takes approximately two hours through mountain valleys.

MEALS

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Lijiang

DAY

04

JADE DRAGON · OVERNIGHT 2 OF 2

Jade Dragon Snow Mountain — and the show at dusk

This is the day most people come to Yunnan for. Jade Dragon Snow Mountain rises to 5,596 metres; the cable car delivers you to the glacier at 4,506 metres, making it one of the most accessible permanent ice fields in China. The altitude is real — go slowly on arrival and keep warm. Below the glacier, Blue Moon Valley earns its name: a series of turquoise pools cut through white limestone, best seen by buggy.

Jade Dragon Snow Mountain Glacier Park — The cable car ascent takes 20 minutes. Oxygen stations are available at the top. This is a high-altitude environment; sensible footwear and a warm layer are essential. Note: there are no halal restaurants on the mountain — packed halal meals are provided.

Blue Moon Valley — The lakes shift colour through the day. The buggy circuit takes you through the best viewpoints without the walking distance.

Impression Lijiang — The largest open-air performance in China, staged on a hillside at the mountain's base with Jade Dragon as the backdrop. Directed by Zhang Yimou, it features over 500 Naxi, Tibetan and Yi performers. The evening light at this elevation is unlike anything in the lowlands.

MEALS

Lunch Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Lijiang

DAY

05

SHANGRI-LA · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Lijiang to Shangri La — via the gorge

The road north from Lijiang to Shangri La climbs steadily into Tibetan plateau country. It is a beautiful drive and a meaningful one — by the time you reach Shangri La, you are at 3,200 metres, and the landscape, the architecture and the light have changed entirely. Tiger Leaping Gorge is on the way. Allow time for it.

Tiger Leaping Gorge — The gorge is carved by the Jinsha River between two mountains, with walls that drop over 3,000 metres to the water. One of the deepest river gorges on earth. Escalator access is available, which means this is accessible regardless of fitness level. Set aside an hour.

Burning Cream Center — This is a compulsory shopping stop as part of the tour programme; it is included in the itinerary. Allocation is approximately 30–40 minutes.

Dukezong Old Town — The old Tibetan quarter of Shangri La, built around one of the largest prayer wheels in Tibet. The town is best at night, when the lanterns are lit and the crowds thin. Tonight you walk it after dinner.

MEALS

Breakfast · Lunch · Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Shangri La

DAY

06

LIJIANG · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Shangri La — back to Lijiang through the plateau

The morning is spent in the high country north of Shangri La before the coach returns to Lijiang. Nah Pah Hai is a seasonal plateau lake surrounded by grazing meadow — at this altitude the scale of the sky is something you will not find elsewhere on this tour. Horse riding is available independently; it is not included in the package. The afternoon in Lijiang gives you proper time in the old town.

Nah Pah Hai Lake — A wetland reserve at 3,300 metres, used as a wintering ground for black-necked cranes. The meadow walk around the lake takes 30–40 minutes at a gentle pace. Note: horse riding is excluded from the package price and must be arranged independently if desired.

Black Dragon Pool Park — A classical Naxi garden in northern Lijiang with the most photographed reflection of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain. Visit in the late afternoon when the light is low.

Lijiang Old Town and Square Street — The Naxi old town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Square Street (Sifang Jie) is the commercial and social centre — the place to pick up Dongba craft goods and try Yunnan coffee.

MEALS

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Lijiang

DAY

07

YILIANG · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Lijiang to Yiliang — by high-speed train and coach

The high-speed train from Lijiang to Kunming takes approximately 3.5 hours in 2nd Class — a smooth, scenic descent through the mountains that would take four hours by road. Your checked luggage travels separately by coach and is waiting at the hotel in Yiliang. The afternoon in Kunming includes free time at Luosiwan Wholesale Market before the coach continues southeast to Yiliang for the night.

High-Speed Rail, Lijiang to Kunming — The train departs Lijiang station. Keep your hand luggage with you; large bags will be loaded separately. The journey is a good vantage on the landscape you are leaving behind.

Silk Store — A compulsory shopping stop in Kunming as part of the tour programme. Allocation is approximately 30–40 minutes.

Luosiwan Wholesale Market — A large covered market known for clothing, accessories and household goods. This is free time — budget and shop at your own pace.

MEALS

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Yiliang

DAY

08

KUNMING

Yiliang — the Stone Forest, and Kunming by night

Naigu Stone Forest is older than the dinosaurs — a field of black limestone karst pillars that have been forming for 270 million years. It is the lesser-visited counterpart to the more famous Shilin Stone Forest nearby, which means it is quieter, and the scale of it is easier to take in. The afternoon returns to Kunming for the final evening, ending with the night market and the city's iconic archways before an overnight transfer to the airport.

Naigu Stone Forest — One of the oldest stone forest formations on earth. The walking path through the columns takes 45–60 minutes. Wear comfortable shoes; the limestone surfaces are uneven in places.

Shuncheng Mosque — Prayer time in central Kunming at one of the city's principal mosques, built during the Ming dynasty.

Chongren Muslim Food Street — Kunming's main halal dining strip. An evening stroll here is the best way to understand how deep the city's Muslim heritage runs.

Golden Horse and Jade Rooster Archways — The decorative pailou that have marked the heart of Kunming since the Ming period. Worth seeing lit at night before you transfer to the airport.

MEALS

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

DAY

09

KUNMING

Fly home — Kunming to Subang

Flight OD697 departs Kunming at 0215 and arrives at Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport (Subang) at 0600. The tour ends on arrival. It is an early morning landing — arrange your onward transfer home in advance. Nine days, four cities, one high-altitude glacier, and a stone forest that has been here since before the first dinosaurs. Yunnan delivers in a way that most of China does not get credit for.

YOUR TRIP AT A GLANCE

What's Included

DEPARTS FROM	FLIGHTS	GROUP SIZE
Kuala Lumpur	**Batik Air**	**25–30 pax**

INCLUDED

- check Return economy class charter flight by Batik Air (OD696/OD697) from Subang Airport
- check 20kg checked luggage allowance (1 piece per person) and 5kg hand carry
- check 7 nights hotel accommodation with daily breakfast
- check High Speed 2nd Class train from Lijiang to Kunming
- check Lunch and dinner throughout the package
- check Air-conditioned transportation with experienced driver
- check Tipping for driver and guide

NOT INCLUDED

- Personal expenses and optional activities
- Horse riding at Nah Pah Hai Lake
- Travel insurance
- Any meals not stated in the itinerary
- Compulsory shop purchases (Burning Cream Center, Silk Store, Astaxanthin Factory)