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Kunming
Yuanyang
Dali
Lijiang

This 12-day Yunnan Winter Tour combines the best of Yunnan, including visits to Spring city Kunming, Dali old town, and Lijiang ancient city, with the breathtaking Hani people's Yuanyang Rice Terraces in the south of Yunnan.

Type
Private
Duration
12 days
Theme
Winter getaways
Trip code
YE-08
Price
From £ 1,384 per person

Itinerary

The Winter Yunnan Tour combines the best of Yunnan province, with visits to Kunming, Dali, and Lijiang, along with the breathtaking Yuanyang Rice Terraces in the south. This comprehensive Yunnan tour invites travelers to explore the cultural heritage of historic towns, engage with local ethnic communities, and soak in the region's natural beauty, all while being captivated by the awe-inspiring landscapes of Yunnan.

Day 01 :

Arrive Kunming

Upon your arrival at Kunming's airport or railway station, your local guide and driver will be there to welcome you. They will accompany you to your downtown hotel. You have the rest of the day at your leisure to explore the city. Your knowledgeable local guide will be more than happy to offer suggestions for places to visit and activities to enjoy during your free time.

Day 02 :

Drive to Jianshui - Visit the Stone Forest and Jianshui Ancient City (B)

After breakfast, embark on a 5-hour drive to Jianshui, a renowned historical and cultural city with 1200 year history in China. Along the way, make a stop to marvel at the **Stone Forest** in Lunan, it is a vast natural wonder spanning 400 square kilometers (about 98,842 acres). It features towering stone pillars that resemble trees, creating a stone forest-like landscape. The Stone Forest consists of several distinct scenic spots, including the Greater Stone Forest, Lesser Stone Forest, Naigu Stone Forest, Qifeng Cave, Zhiyun Cave, Long Lake, and Dadieshui Waterfall. Spend some time to explore and take photos.

In Jianshui, you'll be arranged to visit the third largest **Confucius Temple** in China. This temple, boasting a traditional Chinese architectural style, has a history spanning over 700 years. What sets it apart is its unique representation of the cultural blend between the Han people and other ethnic groups from South Yunnan.

Afterward, explore **Jianshui old town**, where you can admire well-preserved ancient buildings and gain insight into the daily lives of the local residents. Don't miss the Chaoyang Gateway Arch, a distinctive landmark that graces the city of Jianshui.

Day 03 :

Jianshui Sightseeing - Drive to Yuanyang Rice Terraces

Begin your morning with a visit to **Zhu's Family Garden**, a prime example of opulent residential homes from ancient China. Explore a labyrinth of courtyards adorned with exquisitely designed pavilions featuring steep ridges, painted crossbeams, and intricately decorated ceilings.

Following your visit, journey to **Tuanshan Village**, the sole intact cultural village from the Qing Dynasty in Yunnan. This village offers a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in the culture and traditions of the Yi ethnic minority, who have called this village home for centuries.

In the afternoon, have a 3 to 4-hour drive to Yuanyang, renowned for its breathtaking rice terraces. It's important to note that the best time to see the terraces in their full glory is from January to March. Today you will stop at **Tiger Mouth Village** to capture the mesmerizing sunset. Be sure to have your camera at the ready to capture the terraces, which appear as if they were painted by an artist.

Day 04 :

Full day Tour to Yuanyang Rice Terraces

This morning, enjoy the splendid **sunrise at Duoyishu**, where the ever-changing reflections and shadows on the colorful water create a visually stunning experience. Afterwards, proceed to **a local market in Shengcun** where you can observe local ethnic people dressed in their traditional clothing and experience their way of life.

Following lunch, drive to the **Jingkou Hani Ethnic Village**, known for its distinctive mushroom-like houses. Take a leisurely stroll in the village and learn about the culture and history of the Hani Minority by visiting a Hani Showroom within the village. If you're up for it, you can consider a 1-3 hour walk through the rice terraces.

End the day with a visit to the **Bada Scenic Area**, where the sunset is truly breathtaking as the ever-changing colors make you feel like you're in a magical kingdom.

Day 05 :

Drive Back to Kunming

Continue your journey today with a trek to some local villages, allowing you to capture more spectacular views of the Hani terraced fields, which are renowned for their magnificent and extensive landscapes. Explore areas like **old Hani village Azheke** and **Huangcaoling market** to witness the grandeur of these terraced fields.

After returning to Kunming, the rest of the day is yours to freely explore and enjoy the city at your leisure.

Day 06 :

Bullet train to Dali - Dali City Tour

In the morning, you'll head to the train station to catch the bullet train to Dali. The train journey takes approximately 2.5 hours. Upon arrival, your local guide and driver will pick you up and start your day of exploration in Dali.

Your first destination is **Erhai Lake Park**, which offers the best vantage point for admiring the stunning beauty of Erhai Lake in Dali city. This remarkable lake is named after its distinctive ear-like shape and ranks among China's seven largest freshwater lakes.

Following that, you'll visit the **Three Pagoda Temple**, situated facing Erhai Lake. As the name suggests, this temple is home to three ancient, freestanding pagodas arranged in a triangular formation. These pagodas are considered symbolic landmarks of ancient Dali city, having withstood the test of time for over 1,800 years.

Concluding your day is a visit to **Dali Old Town**, where you'll encounter numerous traditional buildings and observe ethnic communities adorned in their unique traditional costumes.

Day 07 :

Drive from Dali to Shaxi Ancient Town via Xizhou and Zhoucheng Towns

In the morning, you'll drive to Xizhou town, an ancient and traditional Bai minority town. Here, you'll have the opportunity to immerse yourself in the **local morning market**, admire the Bai-style traditional courtyard architecture by visiting the **Yan's Compound of Bai Minority**.

Following your visit to Xizhou, the journey continues to Zhoucheng town, where you'll **explore the art of traditional hand-made Tie Dyeing** in the home of a local artisan.

In the afternoon, you'll journey to **Shaxi ancient town**, a lesser-visited gem along the ancient Tea Horse Road. Shaxi retains the alluring charm of traditional Chinese towns and is home to Bai and Yi minority communities. The town's stunning mountain vistas, pleasant climate, and rich history and culture create an immersive and delightful experience. Explore Shaxi old town with your guide if time is allowed. Your overnight stay will be in Shaxi.

Day 08 :

Morning visit Shibao Mountain - Drive to Lijiang Old Town

Morning explore **Shibao Mountain Scenic Area** near Shaxi, renowned for its numerous temples and some of the most impressive stone carvings in China. These carvings include depictions of the court of the ancient Dali Nanzhao Empire dating back to the 8th century, as well as magnificent examples of early Buddhist art.

Note: If your visit to Shaxi falls on a Friday, your first stop will be the Shaxi Friday market. On Fridays, the town bursts with vibrant energy as it hosts its weekly market day. People from neighboring villages flock here to engage in trade, offering an array of goods such as spices, cheese, local vegetables, and more. A visual delight, the market is further enhanced by the sight of women elegantly attired in their beautifully colored traditional clothing, contributing to the lively and picturesque atmosphere.

Afternoon drive to Lijiang, upon your arrival in Lijiang, check in the local hotel in old town. Freely explore the Square Street in the heart of Lijiang's Old Town, with four streets extending in different directions, each lined with stores offering a diverse range of goods and local snacks. It's a lively and vibrant area for exploration.

Day 09 :

Lijiang Sightseeing Tour - Tour to Jade Dragon Snow Mountain & Lijiang Old Town

Spend much of your time today enjoying the natural scenery and rich local culture in Lijiang. First, head to the **Jade Dragon Snow Mountain**, a 5,596 m (18,539 ft) glacier consisting of 13 magnificent peaks. Ride a cable car up to a high grassland meadow where you can witness the 13 peaks come to life in the distance. As you descend the mountain, every step will reveal a breathtaking view.

Afterward, head to **Baisha Village**, an ancient settlement of Naxi culture where you can explore the local architecture. The village is famous for the murals painted during the Ming Dynasty, blending with the artistic styles of the Naxi, Tibet, and Bai minority. Spend some time **visiting a local family in the village** and learn about their ancient culture, which is still in practice today.

In the late afternoon, drive back to Lijiang ancient town to visit the **Black Dragon Pools** on the northern edge of town. Enjoy an amazing view of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain in the distance and explore the traditional stone buildings and bridges here. This park is one of the best places to take photos of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain in Lijiang. Afterwards drive back to the hotel or you freely explore Lijiang old town on your own.

Day 10 :

Day Excursion to the First Bend of the Yangtze River and Tiger Leaping Gorge



Today, take an excursion to **Tiger Leaping Gorge**, with a stop along the way at the Stone Drum Town to witness the **First Bend of the Yangtze River**. Enjoy a spectacular view as the Yangtze River takes a sudden V-shaped turn at this point.

Tiger Leaping Gorge is located approximately 100 km (62 mi) northwest of Lijiang, nestled between Jade Dragon Snow Mountain and Haba Snow Mountain. It is renowned as the world's deepest gorge, with an elevation of 3,790 m (12,434 ft). Tiger Leaping Gorge offers one of the most exceptional hiking experiences in the Lijiang area. If you're a hiking enthusiast, you might want to consider a 2-day hiking tour in Tiger Leaping Gorge, with an average of 5-6 hours of hiking per day. Return to Lijiang in the afternoon and freely exploration on your own.

Day 11 :

Free day in Lijiang

You can take a bike to explore the Shuhe old town by yourself (most hotels provide bike rental service for 50-80 CNY, fee is on

your own). Or just enjoy the Lijiang old town. Stay overnight at Lijiang.

Day 12 :

Lijiang Train Station or Airport drop off, end the trip.

Today, you will be dropped off at Lijiang train station or airport for your onward journey, marking the end of your Yunnan tour. Safe travels!

Inclusions

Tour notes:

All of our tours can be customized to suite your requirements, interests and budget. It is our specialty! Please feel free to contact us.

General inclusions:

2 bottles of mineral water provided daily.

All required government taxes and fees.

Meals allowance for your guide and driver.

Your selection of 3, 4 or 5 Stars hotel (shared twin room, private bathroom and daily breakfast)

All entrance tickets as noted in the tour's itinerary.

Guide fluent in English, Chinese or Japanese that is certified by the state tourism build and from the local community. (If your native language is not listed please let us know, we are certain we can assist your needs.)

Transportation will be provided via a comfortable and clean car, minivan or tourist bus depending upon the groups size.

General exclusions:

International Travel insurance.

Personal expenses such as laundry, drinks, internet access, fax, telephone calls etc.

Tips for your guide and driver.

Flight and/or railway ticket(s) to the first city of the tour and departure from the last city of the tour.

Meals not specified in the itinerary.

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