Yunnan

Behold the myriad ethnic cultures of Yunnan in Kunming, Dali, Lijiang, Zhongdian plus Shanghai and Hong Kong

From the snow-capped mountains at the foot of the Himalayas to the tropical rainforests of the Mekong valley, from the Karst mountain ranges on the Yungui Plateau to the bamboo groves along the Shweli River, Yunnan Province stands distinctly apart from other parts of China. Within this single province, unmatched in the complexity and scope of its history, landscape and peoples, you will find a mix of geography, climates and nationalities that elsewhere on earth take entire continents to express.

There are 25 recognized ethnic minorities living in Yunnan, the greatest number in any single province. The indigenous groups include Dai, Bai, Wa, Lahu, Hani, Jingpo, Nu, Naxi, and Lisu. Ethnic minority population accounts for more than a third of the province's total. The rich and colorful ethnic cultures in Yunnan continue to attract visitors from around the world.

14 Days (Tour Code-CYN)

This tour departs on Sundays and returns on Saturdays. There are seven tour departures during the year and they are in March, April, May, June, September, October, and November. Please refer to the Dates & Prices or www.AccessChinaTours.com for 2010 and 2011 "Tour Dates", the current "Tour Land Price", "Single Supplement Cost", and "International Air Cost". Or call 1-800-788-1399."

Day 1 Depart North America

Fly to China from your home city. Cross International Dateline.

Day 2 Arrive Shanghai

Arrive at Shanghai Pudong Airport. You are met by ACT service staff and transferred by vehicle to your hotel. Meet your fellow travelers at the Evening Reception and learn more about the upcoming activities.

<Evening Reception> **Four Seasons Shanghai**

Day 3 Shanghai

After breakfast in hotel, begin your China experience by visiting the exquisite **Yuyuan Garden** located in the old city center, and the European Art-Deco architecture on the **Bund**. Look across the river at the towering structures of ultra-modern Pudong economic district.

After lunch, visit the marvelous **Shanghai Museum**, whose galleries contain world-class collections of ancient art and artifacts dating back millennia. The Bronze Gallery is probably the world's finest.

Wander around the former **French Concession**, represented by the leafy

Fuxing Park and colonial era architecture. Make a stop for a stroll at **Xintiandi**, a redeveloped neighborhood with coffee shops, trendy pubs, restaurants, and stores frequented by Shanghai's new class of yuppies.

Enjoy a fine Shanghai Cuisine Dinner this evening.

<B-L-D> **Four Seasons Shanghai**

Day 4 Shanghai → Kunming

Travel across the width of southern China by air to Kunming. The capital of Yunnan Province, dubbed "the city of eternal spring", enjoys year round mild weather due to its low latitude (25 degrees) and high altitude (1,890 m/6,200 ft). Kunming has a distinct character due to the plethora of southwestern ethnic groups inhabiting the area.

After check-in at your hotel, visit the thousand-year old **Yuantong Temple**, northern Yunnan's major Buddhist shrine and an active place of pilgrimage. Next, go to the **Western Hills** to get a bird's-eye view of **Dianchi Lake** and the cityscape. The vista across the azure lake is spectacular.

Finish the afternoon by walking through the tree-lined city center. Enjoy a Yunnan Cuisine Dinner in a local restaurant this evening followed by the ethnic song and dance performance **"Dynamic Yunnan"**.

<B-L-D> **Green Lake Hotel Kunming**

Day 5 Kunming → Dali

Morning excursion to the **Stone Forest**, about ninety kilometers through rolling hills southeast of Kunming. This area offers visitors a unique natural landscape of stark limestone pillars twisted and sculpted by the elements. From a distance, these stone pillars look indeed like a dense forest. Paths and stairs wind along the corridors, past rock pools to cliff balconies. Later, explore the **local markets** and **villages** of the ethnic Sani people.

Transfer to airport and take a short flight to Dali in the late afternoon. Met upon arrival and check into hotel before a Local Cuisine Dinner.

<B-L-D> **Regent Hotel Dali**

Day 6 Dali

More than one thousand years ago, Dali was a flourishing independent Buddhist kingdom of the Bai and Nanzhao peoples. Today, it is the cultural center of the Bais and an active market town.

Enjoy a fishing boat ride on the beautiful **Erhai Lake** and see the well-known **Three Pagodas** of Dali, 70 meters (230 ft.) tall and survivors of 1,200 years of turmoil and earthquakes. Take a cable car up to the **Cangshan Mountain** and visit the lovely **Qingbi Stream** scenic area and its vistas.

In the afternoon, explore the **Dali Old Town** , full of narrow streets and charming buildings reflecting the distinctive character of the ethnic Bai people. You will have the chance to visit a local resident's home and talk to the host. Check out the many small shops and restaurants along these quaint streets.

Enjoy a Local Cuisine Dinner tonight.

<B-L-D> **Regent Hotel Dali**

Day 7 Dali → Lijiang

Explore Dali's surrounding **Bai villages**. The Bai's colorful dress and architecture make them one of the most distinctive of China's ethnic groups. Most of the houses in their villages are built with gray bricks covered with tilted roofs and accented with upturned eaves. Visit Zhoucheng Village and see a family run **tie-dyed batik workshop**.

Drive to Lijiang through spectacular mountain scenery and arrive at this UNESCO World Heritage Site by sunset. Check in at your luxury resort and dinner is on your own.

<B-L> **Banyan Tree Lijiang**

Day 8 Lijiang

Lijiang has long been the center of the Naxi people, a Tibetan-Qiang related ethnic group. The Naxis, orignally from northwestern China, have lived in the region for over a thousand years. They have created a unique pictographic writing system that is still in use today by some village elders.

The city's **Old Town** area maintains its traditional layout and atmosphere with hundreds of ancient houses and bridges built around rushing creeks . Our visit begins with a walking tour of the old town and the lively produce market.

This afternoon explore the **Black Dragon Pool Park** and **Naxi Dongba Culture Center**. We may witness a demonstration of some traditional crafts. Later on, take a stroll in **Shuhe Village**, a charming community with many traditional Naxi houses and ethnic shops. Enjoy a Local Cuisine Dinner.

<B-L-D> **Banyan Tree Lijiang**

Day 9 Lijiang

After breakfast, visit the **Baisha Village** on the outskirts of the city to see the ancient murals. Next, visit **Yufeng Tibetan Monastery** and the hundreds-year-old magnolia tree in the courtyard.

Continue travel uphill and head into the sky on a cable car up the **Yulong Snow Mountain** to enjoy the gorgeous views and to take a short hike on the Yak Meadow. The altitude of Yak Meadow is 4,500 meters (14,750 feet), probably the highest you have ever been.

Spend the rest of the day exploring Lijiang on your own. The city is a great place to get lost among the ancient houses, back lanes, narrow bridges, bustling local markets, and multinational crowds.

<B-L> **Banyan Tree Lijiang**

Day 10 Lijiang → Zhongdian

Travel by vehicle this morning to Zhongdian ('Gylthang' in Tibetan and now called 'Shangri-la County'). On the way, you will stop by the dramatic **Tiger Leaping Gorge** for an exciting yet easy hike. Here the Jinsha River (upper section of the Yangzi) cuts deep through the Hengduan Mountains and creates one of the most spectacular natural wonders on earth. Walk along the trail for some breathtaking views of

this amazing landscape.

Continue your journey after lunch and make a stop at **Xiao Zhongdian Village**. Arrive at Zhongdian late afternoon and check in the incredibly luxurious yet eco-sensitive Banyan Tree Ringha.

Each villa house and building at the resort was an original Tibetan farm house, relocated and redecorated elaborately in local Tibetan style. The resort blends seamlessly into the environs of Ringha Village and it is only here on this spot in China that you can behold the majestic unspoiled nature and normal village life while enjoying unparalleled comfort and pampering, all above eleven-thousand-feet altitude. This is truly as close as one can get to the legendary Shangri-la celebrated in the 1930s book and flim "Lost Horizon."

Enjoy dinner in the resort restaurant.

<B-L-D> **Banyan Tree Ringha**

Day 11 Zhongdian

Zhongdian area is the place where the legend of Shangri-la was thought to have originated. Today, Tibetans, Naxis, Lisus, Bais, and many other ethnic peoples live and work together side by side in this green plateau and mountain paradise.

After breakfast in the resort, visit the **Songzanlin Monastery**, a magnificent Tibetan temple that is the region's largest. It is the center of religious activities and receives Buddhist pilgrims and visitors from all over the country. Don't miss the wonderful roof-top golden poles and other artistic structural details.

Spend some time exploring the **Dukezong old town** area of Zhongdian to admire beautiful Tibetan arts and crafts. Eat Tibetan lunch in a local restaurant.

Take an excursion by vehicle to the idyllic **Bita Lake** for a pleasant hike through meadows with grazing

yaks and wild flowers such as rhododendron and azalea. The air on the edge of the Tibetan plateau is pristine, pure and exhilarating.

Back to Ringha Village to enjoy some traditional village life scenes. Leave time for the spa facilities and wonderful services available at this luxury resort. Immerse yourself in Shangri-la.

<B-L> **Banyan Tree Ringha**

Day 12 Zhongdian → Hong Kong

The romance of Shangri-la will linger on for a long time as you are transferred to the airport and fly to Hong Kong via Kunming.

Arrive in Hong Kong in late afternoon. Met and transfer to your hotel. Dinner is on your own.

<B-L> **Kowloon Shangri-la Hong Kong**

Day 13 Hong Kong

Hong Kong has always been inextricably linked to mainland China through family ties, trade, economy and traditions. British legacy is still quite apparent as well due to 155 years of colonial rule.

Take a half-day guided tour of Hong Kong Island. Ascend by cable car to the top of **Victoria Peak** for a spectacular view of the harbor, hills and masterpieces of modern architecture. Later, visit the south side of the island and the fishing **Village of Aberdeen**, where life styles seem unchanged for centuries. Finish your tour at beautiful **Repulse Bay** with white sandy beaches facing the South China Sea.

The afternoon and evening are at leisure. English signage and shopping opportunities abound.

<B> **Kowloon Shangri-la Hong Kong**

Day 14 Return Home

Transfer to airport and board your homebound flight. Arrive in North America on the same day. **<B>**