Pristine China - Tibet, Yunnan, and Qinghai

Exploring pristine landscapes, natural wonders, historic treasures and cultural heritage in Xining, Lhasa, Mt. Everest Base Camp, Shangri-La, and Lijiang plus Great Wall Hiking in Beijing and overnight in Shanghai; optional Post-Tour Shanghai Extension

~ Led by ACT Director and Senior Tour Leader Joe Sinisi ~

16 Days / 14 Nights (September 10-25, 2016)
Specially Designed for Active and Adventurous Travelers
Tour Program Summary

China is a land of history and refinement unparalleled in the world. Attentive visitors are immersed in a sea of visual and cultural experiences unlike any other they may have had elsewhere. Each geographic area in China teems with its own identity as an energetic variation on the great theme of Chinese civilization. Tibet and Yunnan are truly unique and exotic regions of China, unspoiled by pollution and rich in culture and spiritualism.

This tour begins in Beijing with a visit to the remote and rugged Jingshanling section of the Great Wall. Enjoy a Beijing special cuisine before flying to Xining, nestled at the edge of the Tibetan plateau. See Qinghai lake, one of the world's largest alpine lakes and unique Danxia landforms before boarding the train to Lhasa. Travel over 1000 miles across the roof of the world to Lhasa, the holy city and capital of Tibet Autonomous Region. Visit the Potala Palace, Jokhang Temple, and Sera Monastery housing sacred Buddhist treasures dating back to the 15th century. Travel by vehicle into the heartland of Tibet, over high mountain passes and along the shorelines of Lake Yamdrok Yumtsso. Your sightseeing in the historic towns of Gyantse and Shigatse will allow you to experience authentic Tibetan way of life and culture. The Gyantse Dzong, Kumbum, and Tashilumpo Monastery are all unique and remarkable sites to explore.

The true high point of the trip will be an excursion and stay at Mt. Everest Base Camp, situated at 17,200 feet in the shadow of the world's tallest mountains. The is no purer air or brighter night stars anywhere on earth. Fly to Northern Yunnan, located in the eastern Himalayas and home of Khamba Tibetans. The renamed region of Shangri-La has always exercised a unique hold on the imagination of the outside world. Despite its increased exposure to modernity, this magical Buddhist land seems to exist in another dimension, and still retains much of the mystery that entranced early travelers to the region. Hike through Pudacuo National Park and Tiger Leaping Gorge, the world's deepest.

Travel by vehicle to Lijiang, where the original old villages and architecture have been well preserved through the centuries; meet with the local Naxi, Bai, Lisu, and Tibetan people plus many other ethnic minorities and enjoy the pristine scenery. You will hike along the mountain trails and lakes outside the Dayan Old Town and behold the magnificent views of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain.

Finish the tour in Shanghai for return home or an optional extension. Fly back home from Shanghai and arrive in the US the same day you left China.

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Tour Leader & Escort: Access China Tours' co-owner and director of marketing Mr. Joe Sinisi will be leading this tour. Joe co-founded Access China Tours 19 years ago to fulfill his passion for delivering high quality tour services to sophisticated travelers in exotic parts of the world. Although Joe has visited 78 countries on six continents, China remains his favorite destination and Tibet his favorite region. Join Joe experiencing the pristine and unpolluted regions of Tibet, Yunnan, and Qinghai. The high point will literally be visiting the Mt. Everest Base Camp at 17,200 feet. Joe will share his knowledge of Chinese and Tibetan culture, religion, history and cuisine on this unique trip designed for active and inquisitive travelers.
Tour Daily Itinerary

Sep 10  ➔ depart  Fly from North America to Beijing, China on a cross Pacific flight

Sep 11  Beijing  Arrive in Beijing this afternoon; met by our English-speaking tour guide and driver to transfer to the centrally located and restored Red Wall Garden Hotel (deluxe room) in a traditional 'hutong' neighborhood.

This evening, meet your fellow travelers and Tour Leader Joe Sinisi at a Beijing Cuisine Welcome Dinner at Hua’s Fine Dining Restaurant. <D>

Sep 12  Beijing  Breakfast in hotel. Drive northeast to the Hebei Province border to the remote and rugged section of the Great Wall at Jinshanling. Hike along the restored wall in clear air far from the capital. Upon return to the city, enjoy a true Beijing specialty 'Hot Pot Dinner' at the iconic local restaurant. <B-L-D>

Sep 13  Beijing  ➔ Xining  Breakfast in hotel. Transfer to airport and fly MU2078 (1045-1300; simple lunch on board) to Xining, capital of Qinghai province, laying at 7500 feet at the edge of the Tibetan Plateau.

Met by our local guide and driver, and immediately drive to GuiDe County to see the unique red sandstone "Danxia" Landforms. Return to Xining City by the evening. Enjoy a Local Cuisine Dinner in a popular restaurant. Stay overnight in Qinghai Hotel Xining (superior room). <B-D>

Sep 14  Xining  ➔ on train  Early breakfast in hotel; take an excursion to Qinghai Lake, one of the world’s largest alpine lakes situated at 10,500 feet. Enjoy hiking along the shores of this azure saline lake which is host to thousands of migratory birds.

After lunch in a local restaurant, travel back to the city and transfer to train station to board T222 (1701-1422+1; soft sleeper berth). This pressurized train will travel 1215 miles across the roof of the world rarely dipping below 10,000 feet altitude. Overnight on Train. <B-L>
Sep 15  🌟 Lhasa  After dawn, cross the **Tanggula Pass**, at 16,627 feet, the highest railway on earth. Observe the majesty of the Tanggula Mountains and Tibetan plateau grasslands until we arrive in Lhasa (elevation 12,000 ft.).

Upon arrival, met by our Tibetan guide and driver, transfer to check into the centrally located **Kyichu Hotel Lhasa (deluxe room)**. In the early evening, take a walking tour of the bustling **Barkhor Market** and enjoy dinner in a quality Tibetan restaurant.  

Sep 16  🌟 Lhasa  Breakfast in the hotel, visit the active **Jokhang Monastery** in the old city center; next enter the monumental **Potala Palace**, a 13 story, 1000 room hilltop structure and former residence of the Dalai Lama.

Have lunch in a local restaurant followed by a visit to the **Sera Monastery** where you may see young monks practicing Buddhist debating skills. If time permits, visit the unique **Ani Tsankhung Nunnery**.

Transfer back to hotel and dinner is on your own.  

Sep 17  🌟 Lhasa 🌟 Gyangze 🌟 Shigatse  Breakfast in hotel; drive toward Shigatse over the Gangdis Range into the heart of the high Himalaya region. En route, visit the sacred freshwater **Yamdrok Yumtso Lake** (elevation 14,600 ft.) at Ganbala Pass. Also make a brief stop at the **Karola Glacier** for a stunning view.

In Gyangze (13,200 ft.), visit the quiet neighborhoods of **Pelkor Chode** and the **Kumbum**. Continue driving onward to Shigatse (elevation 12,500 ft.) and check in the **Shigatse Hotel (standard room)**. Have dinner in a local restaurant.  

Sep 18  🌟 Shigatse 🌟 Mt. Everest Base Camp  Breakfast in hotel; drive towards the world’s highest peaks near **Rongbuk** via **Lhatse**, **Shegar**, **Gyatsola** and **Pangla passes**. Have lunch in a local restaurant on the way. Visit **Rongbuk Monastery**, which at 16,300 feet is the world’s highest monastery.

Have free time to acclimate or hike around the high alpine valley in the shadows of **Qomolangma (Everest)**, **Cho Oyu** and **Lhotse**. Have a simple dinner in the guest house and enjoy the most brilliant stars you have ever seen.  

**Rongbuk Monastery Guesthouse (standard room)**.
Sep 19  **Base Camp**  Before dawn, travel by vehicle to the Mt. Everest Base Camp (elevation 17,200 ft.) and the Rongbuk Glacier to enjoy sunrise viewing of the world's highest mountain. Exploration of the camp environs.

On the return back to Shigatse, check into **Shigatse Hotel (standard room)**. Have Dinner in hotel.  

-Sep 20  **Shigatse**  In the morning after breakfast, visit the Tashilumpo Monastery, a group of temples with fine murals and sculptures, and also home base of the Panchan Lama, second highest religious leader in Tibetan Buddhism.

Travel by vehicle back to Lhasa today. Along the way, stop by a Tibetan village or a local market; arrive in late afternoon and check into hotel and balance of the day is at leisure; overnight in **Lhasa Guyi Heritage Hotel (standard room)**.  

-Sep 21  **Lhasa**  After breakfast, transfer to Gonggar Airport and fly across the Eastern Himalayas on MU5940 (1205-1340) to Shangri-La (Zhongdian in Mandarin and Gyalthang in Tibetan), Yunnan Province (elevation 10,600 feet).

Met by guide and driver and transfer to the elegant boutique hotel **Songtsam Retreat Shangri-la (superior room)**. In the afternoon, visit the Songzanlin Monastery, the region’s largest Tibetan temple built by the 5th Dali Lama in the 17th century. Finish the day with a waterside hike around Napa Lake; return to dinner in hotel.  

-Sep 22  **Shangri-La**  Get up early this morning, after breakfast, go to visit Pudacuo National Park to view Shudu Lake and Bita Lake. Next drive towards Tiger Leaping Gorge, visiting Xiao Zhongdian Village on the way.

Have lunch in local restaurant. Upon arrival in Walnut Garden, check into the quaint **Sean’s Guesthouse (standard room)** and enjoy dinner at the hotel.  

-Sep 23  **Walnut Garden**  After breakfast, begin a 5-mile hike along trails in the gorge and enjoy breathtaking views of this amazing landscape including Yulong Snow
Mountain, a jagged peak soaring 18,340 feet into the air that has only been successfully climbed once. See the Tiger Leaping Gorge’s 34 rapids of the Yangzi River cut, one of the world’s deepest gorges.

Arrive at the Halfway House for lunch. Trek another hour and then get picked up by our vehicle and drive to Lijiang. Check into the fabulous Naxi architecture inspired InterContinental Lijiang Ancient Town Resort (deluxe room) for rest and refreshing.

Enjoy a walking tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Dayan Old Town followed by a Yunnan Cuisine Dinner in a local restaurant. <B-L-D>

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**Sep 24**

**Lijiang → Shanghai**

After Breakfast in hotel; transfer to visit the Yulong Snow Mountain. Take a cable car to the 14,000 foot Yak Meadow and hike through fields of alpine flowers. After lunch in a local restaurant, visit charming Shuhe town just outside Lijiang and finish the day in the Naxi Cultural Center and the Black Dragon Pool Park.

After an earlier dinner, transfer to airport and fly MU5868 (2010-2310) to Shanghai. Met by our Shanghai guide and driver, and transfer to Astor House Shanghai (deluxe room) for check-in and rest. <B-L-D>

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**Sep 25** → return

Breakfast in hotel; transfer to Pudong Airport and fly home. Or continue on for the 2-night Post-Tour Shanghai Extension. <B>

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**Optional Post-Tour Shanghai Extension**

**Sep 25**

**Shanghai**

Breakfast in hotel. Picked by guide in hotel lobby and go to visit the literati Yuyuan Garden, Old Town District, Shanghai Museum, and French Concession; take an evening Walk on The Bund after a Shanghai Cuisine Dinner. Transfer back to hotel Astor House Shanghai (deluxe room). <B-L-D>

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**Sep 26**

**Shanghai**

Breakfast in hotel. Go to visit Pudong District by getting on the observation deck of the World Finance Center, strolling and boating in Xinchang Water Village; lunch in a local restaurant.
Afternoon visit the **Ohel Moshe Synagogue** and the old Jewish Quarters. Return to hotel and rest of the day is free. <B-L>

**Sep 25**  ➤ **return**  Breakfast in hotel; transfer to Pudong Airport and fly home. <B>

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**Changes to Itinerary:** Access China Tours has made all possible attempts to ensure the accuracy of tour itineraries. Circumstances beyond our control may occur. We reserve the right to change itineraries, sightseeing activities, and common carriers, and to substitute hotels when necessary. Service of a similar category and standard will be maintained if such changes are made. The Service Voucher in your last pre-departure packet will provide the operational itinerary summary, final transport and hotel information.
Deluxe, First Class, and Character Hotels Selected for Your Trip

Red Wall Garden Hotel Beijing

Qinghai Hotel Xining

Lhasa Kyichu Hotel

Shigatse Hotel

Rongbuk Monastery Guesthouse
Lhasa Guyi Heritage Hotel

Songtsam Retreat at Shangri-la

Sean's Guesthouse Tiger Leaping Gorge

InterContinental Lijiang Ancient Town Resort

Astor House Hotel Shanghai
Tour Land Price Inclusions & Exclusions

Tour Land Price: $5,380 USD per person, double occupancy for a group of 10-18 travelers
Single Supplement: $990 USD for single occupancy throughout the tour except on train
Post-Tour Shanghai Extension: $550 USD per person, double occupancy

What's Included in Tour Land Price:
- Deluxe or first class and character hotel accommodations, double occupancy
- Coach class Chinese domestic air, soft sleeper train and ground transportation while on tour
- All tour related Chinese domestic taxes and Tibet Travel Permit
- Arrival and departure transfers on tour dates
- Transfers and luggage (1 piece of 45 pounds per person) handling
- Pre-departure information packets
- All sightseeing, activities, and cultural events listed in the itinerary
- All meals as specified in the itinerary
- Service of a ACT Tour Leader and private English-speaking local tour guide in each city/area
- Private, clean, and newer vehicles with air-conditioning and professional drivers
- Gratuities to guides and drivers (for a group of 10+ travelers)

What's Not Included in Tour Land Prices:
- International air tickets (quoted separately)
- Chinese visa processing (www.mychinavisa.com for Americans or www.mychinavisa.ca for Canadians)
- Trip cancellation, baggage, accident, and medical insurance
- Gratuities to your ACT Tour Leader
- Items not listed and/or specified as included in the itinerary

Cancellation Policy: $600 USD pp deposit is due at sign-up. All cancellation notices must be received in writing and will become effective as of the date of receipt by Access China Tours. We assess cancellation fees of all tours according to the following schedule:

- 90 days or more prior to departure * ................................................................. $300 per person
- 89 to 60 days prior to departure * ................................................................. $600 per person
- 59 to 30 days prior to departure * ................................................................. $900 per person
- 29 to 15 days prior to departure * ................................................................. $1200 per person
- Within 14 days of departure .............100% forfeiture of the tour price per person

* Plus any charges assessed by government agencies, land suppliers, cruise companies and airlines.

Access China Tours will not grant partial refunds for any unused trip arrangements after the trip has commenced or any refunds to participants who do not complete any portion of the itinerary. Any airline tickets issued are subject to the carrier’s refund and cancellation policy. We strongly recommend you purchase trip cancellation/interruption insurance to protect your travel investment. Access China Tours reserves the right to cancel any tour(s) that has insufficient number of travelers. In this case, we will try to find an alternative tour for tour participants. If this is not acceptable, all money paid will be refunded in full and this will constitute full and final settlement for the client. However, Access China Tours will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by tour participants (e.g., non-refundable “advance purchase” air tickets, insurance & medical expenses, passport and visa expenses, etc.). If a tour is forced to be cancelled due to government’s travel warnings, declared or undeclared wars, hostilities, civil disturbances, strike, riot, epidemic, and quarantines, Access China Tours will refund all participants’ payment less any irretrievable expenses and loss (visa fees, airline penalties, communication cost, and non-refundable booking cost, etc.)