

# Yunnan & Tibet - Flowers In The Sky

A Culture and Hiking Tour in Northwestern Yunnan and Tibet with Focus on Wild Flowers, Religion, Village Life, and Ethnic Culture - Dali, Lijiang, Shangri-la, Lhasa, and Shigatse plus Beijing and Shanghai stopovers

16 Days / 14 Nights

Departures: May 13-28, 2017 September 02-17, 2017



ACCESS CHINA TOURS



Group and Private Fine Touring in China and Asia

## 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. This journey will focus on the natural beauty and wild flowers of northwestern Yunnan Province and the heartland of Tibet, and the unique cultures of Tibetan people and other ethnic minorities in the two regions, both are located in southwestern China.

**Yunnan** translates to 'South of Clouds'. 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 it will take an entire continent to express.

Locked away in its mountain fortress of the Himalayas, **Tibet**, known as Xizang Autonomous Region in China, has always exercised a unique hold on the imagination of the outside world. Despite its increased exposure to modernity, the magical Buddhist kingdom seems to exist in another dimension, and still retains much of the mystery that entranced early travelers to the region.

Your adventure begins in **Beijing** with a comfortable overnight stay. You will then fly to Yunnan to explore **Dali**, **Lijiang** and **Shangri-La** (Zhongdian) 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 outside the towns and behold the magnificent views of wild Rhododendron, Azalea, Primrose, and other wild flowers blossoming on the slopes of the eastern Himalaya Range. Alternative activities can be arranged for travelers who want to skip the hikes.

Wing on to **Lhasa** over the snowy peaks of the Himalaya. This Tibetan holy city draws many different kinds of visitors, from sightseers to mountaineers, scholars to trekkers. The Potala Palace, Jokhang Temple, Drepung Monastery, and Sera Monastery house the sacred treasures of Tibetan Buddhism, some of which date back to the 15th century. You will spend time exploring each of these sites and wander in the old market place "The Barkhor".

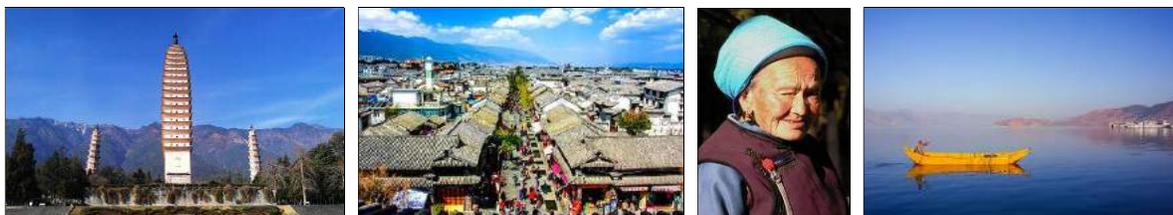
Travel by 4-wheel drive vehicle to the heartland of Tibet, over high mountain passes and along the shorelines of Lake Yamdrok Yumtso. Your sightseeing in the historic towns of **Gyangze** and **Shigatse** will allow you to experience authentic Tibetan life and culture. The Gyangze Dzong, Kumbum, and Tashilumpo Monastery are wonderful sites to explore and to enjoy.

Finally, fly from Lhasa to **Shanghai**, China's most populous city and economic powerhouse. Complete the tour with another conformable overnight stay. Pre and post tour extensions are available upon request.

Fly home from Shanghai or to your next destination in Asia.

## Tour Daily Itinerary

- Day 01 → depart Fly from North America to Beijing, China on your own booked flight
- Day 02 **Beijing** Arrive at Beijing Capital Airport, the world's 2nd busiest airport. Met by ACT representative and transfer by hotel shuttle to [Langham Place Beijing Capital Airport \(essential room\)](#) for check-in and rest. Balance of the day is for your own relaxation in the hotel.



- Day 03 → **Dali** Early breakfast in hotel. Meet your ACT representative in the hotel lobby and transfer by hotel shuttle to Beijing Capital Airport and fly **MU9747 (0640-1055)** to Dali. Met upon arrival by your private English-speaking guide and transfer to [The Sky Valley Heritage Boutique Hotel \(premier room\) similar](#) for check-in, lunch and some rest.

In the afternoon, picked up by guide and go to explore [Dali Old Town](#) for a walking tour and visit an [Ethnic Bai Minority Village](#). Tonight, enjoy a [Local Cuisine Dinner](#) in a local restaurant. <B-L-D>

- Day 04 **Dali** After breakfast this morning, head out with guide to visit the sublime [Three Pagodas](#), survivors of 1200 years of earthquakes and wars. Next ascend over 1000 feet to the [Qingbixi Scenic Park](#) by cable car for a great view and hike for a couple of kilometers to see local flora and fauna .
- After [lunch](#), enjoy a boat ride on azure [Erhai Lake](#) followed by touring a local market. Return to your village hotel for leisure or your own exploration; dinner is on your own. <B-L>



- Day 05 🚗 **Lijiang** After early breakfast, drive through the majestic [Canshan Mountains](#) to Lijiang. During our drive along the 'tea-horse trading route', we climb through some of the most beautiful scenery in southwestern China.
- En route, stop at the [Shaping Monday Market](#) where goods have been traded for centuries. Next, stop in [Shaxi Village](#) to visit the ancient market place and hike to the [Shibao Shan Grottos](#). These places were once busy trading stations along the Southern Silk Road linking southwestern China,

Tibet with Southeast Asia. You will have **lunch** in a local restaurant.

Late in the afternoon, we arrive in the frontier city of Lijiang. Check in to the [InterContinental Lijiang Ancient Town \(deluxe room\)](#) and have **dinner** in a local restaurant. Evening is free for your own relaxation. <B-L-D>



Day 06 **Lijiang**

Wake up in Lijiang, named “Beautiful River” by Kublai Khan. We are staying right in the center of this rugged isolated town designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Enjoy breakfast in hotel restaurant.

Today you will take a morning excursion to the iconic [Yulong Snow Mountain](#). Upon arrival at the mountain, take cableways up to the [Yak Meadow](#). Then, hike on trails and enjoy the great view of hillsides in flame with azalea, primrose and other wild flowers. **Lunch** in a local restaurant.

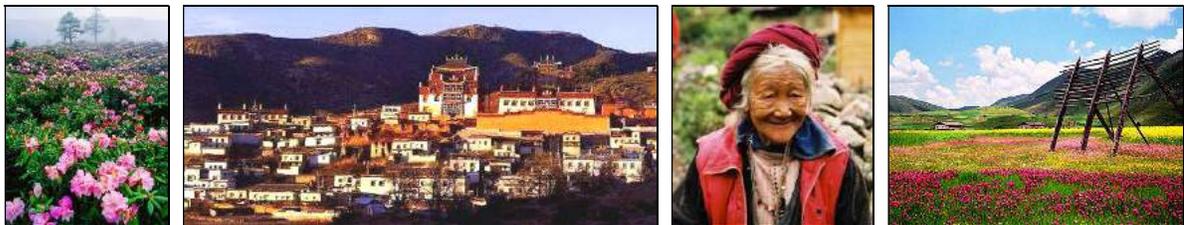
Afternoon excursion to the [Yuhu Village](#), a lakeside village at the foot of the mountains, where Joseph F. Rock once lived for 20 years for scientific research. Explore and enjoy the lakeside pasture full of wild flowers. Continue travel to the ancient [Shuhe Town](#) for a tour of the local market. Transfer back to hotel and remainder of the day is free . <B-L>

Day 07 **Lijiang 🚗 Walnut Garden**

After breakfast in hotel, check out and travel by vehicle to the [Tiger Leaping Gorge](#). Upon arrival, enjoy the stunning view of the gorge – 34 rapids of the Yangzi cut a deep gorge through the Hengduan Mountains and created one of the most spectacular natural wonders on earth making it the world’s deepest gorge with often over a 10,000 foot drop.

Then, start hiking along trails in the gorge and explore the flora and fauna in the area. Walk along the trail for some breathtaking views of this amazing landscape including [Yulong Snow Mountain](#), a jagged peak soaring 18,340 feet into the sky. This mountain peak has only been successfully climbed once. Hike 1.5 hrs to the [Halfway House](#).

After **lunch** break in a decent guesthouse, you will hike for another 1.5 hrs to the [Tina’s Guesthouse](#) for rest. Then, hike another 1 hr to Walnut Garden and check in [Sean’s Guesthouse \(standard room with private bathroom\)](#) for overnight staying, and enjoy the **dinner** at the hotel. <B-L-D>



Day 08 **🚗 Shangri-la** After breakfast in the guesthouse, you will be picked up by vehicle and travel

to Shangri-La (also called *Zhongdian* in Mandarin or *Gyalthang* in Tibetan). You will have a stop at Xiao Zhonglian Village, the highland pasture full of flowers in blossom. Arrive in Shangri-La and check in at Songtsam Retreat at Shangri-La (superior room) for refreshing and your own lunch.

In the afternoon, enjoy a short hiking near the Tibetan villages with your guide around the Napa Lake to watch birds and wild flowers. Return to hotel and enjoy **dinner** in hotel restaurant. <B-D>

Day 09 **Shangri-la**

Enjoy your breakfast in this beautiful hotel. Travel by vehicle to Pudacuo National Park this morning for a 5km hiking tour around the Shudu Lake and for a short hike at Bita Lake, where you can find various kinds of *Rhododendron Protistum* in different colors (*other flowers in summer time*).

After **lunch**, you will visit the Songzanlin Monastery, the region's largest Tibetan temple constructed by the 5<sup>th</sup> Dali Lama in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This is the most important working monastery in Southwest China reminiscent of the Potala Palace in Lhasa, Tibet. Admire the thangka murals, smell the yak butter lamps and look up at the golden rooftop poles.

Return in late afternoon to your hotel and dinner is on own. <B-L>

Day 10 **→ Lhasa**

After breakfast, you will bid farewell to Shangri-la and transfer to airport for flight **MU5939 (0840-1055)** to Lhasa in Tibet (*Xizang Autonomous Region*).

Meet your Tibetan guide upon arrival and transfer to hotel for check-in, **lunch**, and a good rest. Later in the afternoon, enjoy a guided walking tour in Luobulinka Park - Dalai Lama's summer retreat in the old days in which you will see some old trees and flower gardens.

Return to hotel and evening is free for your own relaxation adjusting to the higher altitude. The St. Regis Lhasa Resort (deluxe room). <B-L>



Day 11 **Lhasa**

Breakfast at the resort. This morning enjoy a guided tour of the famous and atmospheric Jokhang Monastery and Barkhor Market in the center of Lhasa.

After **lunch**, have a short hike from Babongka Monastery to Sera Monastery where you may be lucky enough to see young monks practicing Buddhist debating skills. After refreshing in resort, you go out this evening to enjoy a **Tibetan Cuisine Dinner** followed by a **Tibetan Dance and Song Performance**. Transfer back to resort after the show. <B-L-D>

Day 12 **Lhasa**

Breakfast in the resort. Today you visit the magnificent Potala Palace, seat of Dalai Lama's rule in the old days and treasure house of the Tibetan Buddhism. There are hundreds of chapels and shrines in this gigantic palace and it takes great effort for anyone just to climb up the steps to the main level to start the

tour. On the top, you get a gorgeous view of the city of Lhasa.

After **lunch** in a local restaurant, visit a local Tibetan family if it can be arranged. Transfer back to resort and balance of the day is free for your own exploration. At night, you might want to go to the public square in front of the Potala Palace for a remarkable lit-up view of the monumental building. <B-L>

Day 13    **Gyangze**   Breakfast in resort. Then bid farewell to Lhasa and drive to Shigatse along the provincial highway passing Yamdruk Yumtso Lake. Enjoy a short hiking tour along the lake's shoreline and then continue driving to **Gyangze**. On the way, stop by the roadside Karola Glacier for a short walk and photos. Have **lunch** in local restaurant.

 **Shigatse**

In Gyangze, visit charming Gyangze Old Town, Pelkhor Chorten and Kumbum Monastery. Resume the overland journey and arrive in Shigatse by late afternoon; check in Gesar Hotel Shigatse (standard room) or similar. Enjoy a **Local Cuisine Dinner** in hotel restaurant. <B-L-D>



Day 14   **Shigatse**   Breakfast in hotel. Enjoy a privately guided tour in Shigatse, second largest city in Tibet. Visit Tashilumpo Monastery, seat of the Panchan Lama - the second highest Buddhist Monk in Tibetan religious hierarchy. Also tour the Summer Palace of Panchen Lama, a Tibetan carpet factory and a local market.

Have **lunch** in a local restaurant. Remainder of the day is free to your own exploration or relaxation. Dinner is on your own. <B-L>

Day 15    **Shanghai**   Breakfast in hotel. This morning, drive to Lhasa Airport (4-5 hrs) with lunch en route in local restaurant for flight **MU2336 (1515-2115)** to Shanghai with a stop Xi'an. Met upon arrival and transfer to check in InterContinental Shanghai Pudong (classic room). <B-L>

Day 16    **return**   Enjoy a relaxing breakfast in hotel; morning at leisure. You will be transferred from hotel later in the day to Shanghai Pudong International Airport and fly home. Service ends. *Optional Shanghai extensions are available.* <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.*

## Luxury, Deluxe & Boutique Hotels & Lodges Selected for Your Tour



Langham Place Beijing Capital Airport



The Sky Valley Heritage Boutique Hotel Dali



InterContinental Lijiang Ancient Town



Sean's Guesthouse Tiger Leaping Gorge



Songtsam Retreat at Shangri-la



The St. Regis Lhasa Resort



Gesar Hotel Shigatse



InterContinental Shanghai Pudong



## Tour Land Price Inclusions & Exclusions

**Tour Land Prices:**           **\$5,970 USD** per person double occupancy (for a group of 2-5 travelers)  
   **\$5,680 USD** per person double occupancy (for a group of 6-9 travelers)  
   **\$5,490 USD** per person double occupancy (for a group of 10-16 travelers)

**Single Supplement Cost:** **\$1,950 USD** for single occupancy in hotels throughout the tour

### **What's Included in 'Tour Land Prices'**

- Luxury, deluxe or boutique category hotel double occupancy accommodations with breakfast
- Coach class China domestic air tickets and ground transportation
- All tour related Chinese domestic taxes
- Arrival and departure transfers on tour dates
- Transfers and luggage (1 piece of 45 pounds per person for domestic flights) handling
- Pre-departure information packets and Tibet Travel Permit
- All sightseeing, visits, cultural events, and activities listed in the itinerary
- All meals (*all breakfasts, 12 lunches, and 6 dinners*) as specified in the itinerary
- Service of a private English-speaking Tour Manager/Leader (*for a group of 10 or more travelers*)
- Service of a private English-speaking local guide in each city where needed
- Private, clean, and newer motor vehicle with air-conditioning and a professional driver
- Gratuities to local guides and drivers (*for a group of 10 or more travelers*)

### **What's Not Included in 'Tour Land Prices'**

- International air tickets ( *will quote separately if requested*)
- Chinese visa processing ([www.mychinavisa.com](http://www.mychinavisa.com) or [www.mychinavisa.ca](http://www.mychinavisa.ca))
- Trip cancellation, baggage, accident, and medical insurance
- Meals not indicated as included and optional activities and events
- Gratuities to your Tour Manager/Leader; tipping for local guides and drivers (*for 2-9 travelers*)
- Items not listed and/or specified as included in the itinerary

**Cancellation Policy:** **\$600 USD pp deposit is required 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 *

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

Within 14 days of departure .....100% forfeiture of the tour price per person

*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.** 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.). 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.)