

7-Day Yunnan Classic Tour to Kunming, Dali, Shangri-La, Lijiang

Trip overview

Embark on a captivating **7-day Yunnan highlights tour**, a journey that takes you from the "City of Eternal Spring" to the sacred peaks of the Himalayas. This classic itinerary is designed to showcase the incredible geographic and cultural diversity of China's most enchanting province.

Your adventure begins in **Kunming** with the otherworldly limestone formations of the **Stone Forest**. You will then travel to **Dali**, the ancient kingdom of the Bai people, to find serenity along the shores of Erhai Lake. Continue to the UNESCO-listed **Lijiang Old Town**, where cobblestone streets tell stories of the ancient Tea Horse Road under the gaze of the **Jade Dragon Snow Mountain**. Finally, ascend to the mystical highlands of **Shangri-La**, a Tibetan sanctuary of golden monasteries and alpine meadows. From karst caves to snow-capped peaks, this tour offers a perfect blend of natural wonders and deep ethnic heritage.

- **Durations:** 7 Days
- **Destinations:** Kunming - Dali - Shangri-La - Lijiang
- **Tour inquiry:** <https://asiachinatour.com/7-days-yunnan-kunming-dali-shangrila-lijiang-tour/>

Itinerary

Day 1: Kunming Arrival

Welcome to the "City of Eternal Spring"! Upon your arrival at **Kunming Changshui International Airport (KMG)**, you will be warmly welcomed by your private English-speaking guide and driver at the arrival hall.

You will then be transferred to your hotel in the city center in a comfortable private vehicle. As Kunming enjoys a mild climate year-round and sits at an altitude of approximately **1,890 meters (6,200 feet)**, it serves as the perfect gateway to acclimatize before heading higher into the Himalayas. After checking in, the remainder of the day is yours to relax or begin exploring. You might enjoy a leisurely walk around **Green Lake Park (Cuihu)**, where locals gather for morning exercises and music, or visit the nearby **Nanping Pedestrian Street** to sample Yunnan's famous "Crossing-the-Bridge" rice noodles for your first authentic dinner.

Accommodation: Hotel in Kunming

Meals: /

Professional Advice:

*Kunming's airport is located about 25 kilometers (15 miles) from the city center, and the drive typically takes 45 to 60 minutes depending on traffic. While the altitude is moderate, we recommend drinking plenty of water and getting a good night's rest to prepare for your journey ahead. If you arrive early, the **Flowers and Birds Market** in the old quarter offers a charming glimpse into the daily life of Kunming's residents.*

Day 2: Kunming to Dali - Stone Forest & High-Speed Rail

Start your morning with a tranquil stroll around **Green Lake (Cuihu Park)**, the "Emerald of Kunming." Here, you can witness the harmonious local life as residents practice Tai Chi and play traditional instruments under the weeping willows.

Next, you will drive approximately 1.5 hours to the UNESCO World Heritage-listed **Stone Forest (Shilin)**. This geological phenomenon, dating back 270 million years, features towering limestone pillars that shoot upward from the ground like a petrified forest. You will wander through the winding paths of the Major and Minor Stone Forests, marveling at formations like the "Ashima Stone," which carries a legendary tale of the local Sani people.

In the afternoon, you will be transferred to the railway station for a **bullet train journey** to Dali. Upon arrival, your local guide will meet you and transfer you to your hotel. As you enter Dali, you will feel the refreshing breeze from Erhai Lake and the presence of the towering Cangshan Mountains.

Accommodation: Hotel in Dali

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Professional Advice:

*The Stone Forest involves a fair amount of walking on stone paths; comfortable, non-slip walking shoes are highly recommended. While the bullet train to Dali is fast (about 2 hours), the scenery of the Yunnan plateau along the way is beautiful, so try to grab a window seat. Once in Dali, the altitude rises slightly to about **2,000 meters**, so stay hydrated. If you stay near the Old Town, the evening is perfect for exploring the "Foreigner Street" (Yangren Jie) for a mix of local Bai culture and relaxed café vibes.*

Day 3: Dali - Bai Heritage & Lakeside Serenity

Today is dedicated to immersing yourself in the rich culture of the Bai people and the natural beauty of the Dali basin. Your morning begins at **Xizhou Old Town**, a vital historical hub of the Tea Horse Road. You will admire the exquisitely preserved **Bai traditional architecture**, characterized by ornate gateways and "Three Rooms and a Wall Screen" layouts. Here, you will experience the **Three-Course Tea ceremony**, a traditional Bai ritual that represents the stages of life: bitter, sweet, and meaningful aftertaste.

Next, you will head to **Zhoucheng Village**, often called the "Hometown of Tie-Dyeing." You'll visit a local workshop to see how artisans use natural indigo to create intricate patterns on fabric, a craft passed down through generations. After lunch, enjoy a relaxing afternoon along the **Erhai Lake Ecological Corridor**. This scenic lakeside path offers stunning views of the crystalline water

against the backdrop of the verdant **Cangshan Mountains**. Your day concludes with a stroll through **Dali Old Town**, where you can walk the ancient city walls, pass through the majestic gate towers, and explore the vibrant **Foreigners' Street**, known for its eclectic mix of craft shops and cozy cafes.

Accommodation: Hotel in Dali

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Professional Advice:

Xizhou is the best place to try a "Xizhou Baba"—a delicious local savory or sweet crispy pancake. When visiting the tie-dye workshop in Zhoucheng, you'll have the opportunity to try the craft yourself; it's a wonderful way to create a personalized souvenir. For your walk along Erhai Lake, we recommend bringing sunscreen and a hat, as the high-altitude sun can be quite strong even on breezy days. In Dali Old Town, the views from the South Gate at sunset are particularly beautiful for photography.

Day 4: Dali to Shangri-La - The Great Gorge & The Tibetan Highlands

This morning, you will leave Dali behind and drive north into the heart of the Himalayas toward the mystical realm of **Shangri-La**. The scenery transforms dramatically as you ascend. En route, you will stop to witness the **First Bend of the Yangtze River**, where the mighty river makes a sharp 180-degree turn against the backdrop of lush mountains and traditional villages.

Continuing your journey, you will reach the breathtaking **Tiger Leaping Gorge**, one of the deepest and most spectacular river canyons in the world. You will hear the thunderous roar of the Jinsha River as it narrows and crashes through the canyon floor. After marveling at this natural power, you will finish the drive to Shangri-La (**3,200m**). Upon arrival, you will explore **Dukezong Ancient Town**, also known as the "Moonlight City." You will walk up to the top of **Guishan Hill** to help turn the **Grand Prayer Wheel**—one of the largest in the world—while enjoying a stunning panoramic view of the golden rooftops and winding alleys of Shangri-La.

Accommodation: Hotel in Shangri-La

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Professional Advice:

Today involves a significant gain in altitude as you reach 3,200 meters (10,500 feet). To prevent altitude sickness, we recommend walking at a slower pace than usual and staying well-hydrated. The drive from Dali to Shangri-La takes approximately 3 to 4 hours, but the stops at the Gorge make it a very active day. When visiting the Grand Prayer Wheel, remember that it is local custom to walk around Buddhist structures in a clockwise direction. As the temperature drops significantly in Shangri-La once the sun sets, be sure to have a warm jacket ready for the evening.

Day 5: Shangri-La - Tibetan Spirituality & Nomadic Highlands

Your morning begins with a visit to the magnificent **Songzanlin Monastery**, often referred to as the "Little Potala Palace." Built in 1679, this is the largest Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Yunnan and a stunning example of traditional architecture with its golden domes and intricate frescoes. As you wander through the sprawling complex, you will hear the rhythmic chanting of monks and experience the profound spiritual atmosphere of this high-altitude sanctuary.

In the afternoon, you will drive to the vast **Napahai Lake** (Napa Lake Nature Reserve). Depending on the season, this area transforms from a shimmering alpine lake into a lush wetland meadow. You will see yaks and horses grazing freely against a backdrop of snow-capped peaks. Along the road, you will be invited into a **local Tibetan family's home**. This intimate encounter allows you to experience the authentic highland lifestyle; you'll have the chance to taste traditional yak butter tea and *tsampa* (barley flour) while learning about the customs and hospitality that define this "Earthly Paradise."

Accommodation: Hotel in Shangri-La

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Professional Advice:

*Songzanlin Monastery involves climbing a series of steep steps to reach the main prayer halls—take your time and breathe deeply as the altitude here is nearly **3,300 meters**. Inside the chapels, photography is generally not permitted, and please remember to remove your hat as a sign of respect. When visiting the Tibetan family, trying the butter tea is a wonderful cultural gesture; if you find the flavor too strong, a small sip is perfectly acceptable. The weather at Napahai can be very windy, so a windproof jacket and sunglasses are essential for a comfortable visit.*

Day 6: Shangri-La to Lijiang - The Gateway to Naxi Culture

After a final morning in the crisp air of Shangri-La, you will begin your scenic 3-hour drive south toward **Lijiang**, descending slightly into the lush valley dominated by the towering Jade Dragon Snow Mountain.

Upon arrival, your first stop is the **Black Dragon Pool Park (Heilongtan)**. This is one of the most photographed spots in China; on a clear day, the snow-capped peaks of the mountain are perfectly reflected in the crystal-clear waters of the pool, framed by the traditional arched bridge and the Deyue Pavilion. It is a stunning introduction to the landscape of the Lijiang basin.

In the afternoon, you will enter the heart of **Lijiang Old Town (Dayan)**, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Unlike many ancient cities, Lijiang has no city walls, as it was built following the winding canals and waterways that flow from the mountains. You will wander through a labyrinth of cobblestone streets, crossing ancient stone bridges and exploring the vibrant market square. Here, you'll discover the unique culture of the **Naxi people**, from their mysterious Dongba pictographic script to the distinctive architecture of their timber-framed houses.

Accommodation: Hotel in Lijiang

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Professional Advice:

Lijiang Old Town is a literal maze—it's easy to get lost, but that is part of its charm! We recommend following the streams; they generally flow into the town from the north and out to the south, which can help you find your bearings. Black Dragon Pool is best visited in the afternoon for the best lighting on the mountain. As Lijiang is a major tourism hub, the main streets can be busy; your guide can show you the quieter back alleys where the "Old World" atmosphere is still very much alive.

Day 7: Lijiang Exploration & Departure

Your final day in Yunnan delves deeper into the authentic roots of the Naxi heritage. After breakfast, you will travel to **Baisha Old Town**, the earliest settlement of the Naxi people and the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Mu. Here, you will visit the **Baisha Murals**, a collection of fine paintings from the Ming and Qing Dynasties. These murals are a fascinating cultural fusion, blending artistic styles from Han Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, and Taoism.

Next, you will drive to the tranquil **Yuhu Village**, located at the foot of the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain. Built entirely of unique natural stones, this village offers a glimpse into a slower pace of life. You will visit the **Former Residence of Joseph Rock**, the famous Austro-American botanist and explorer who lived here for decades, introducing the world to Naxi culture and the region's incredible biodiversity.

In the afternoon, enjoy a visit to **Shuhe Old Town**. As an essential stop on the Ancient Tea Horse Road, Shuhe is often considered a quieter, more serene version of Lijiang Old Town, famous for its well-preserved stone bridges and bubbling springs. After a final local lunch and some time for last-minute exploration, your guide and driver will transfer you to **Lijiang Sanyi International Airport (LJG)** or the railway station for your onward journey.

Accommodation: /

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Professional Advice:

Baisha is an excellent place to find high-quality, hand-embroidered silk, as it is home to several traditional embroidery schools. While in Yuhu Village, look up for a stunning, unobstructed view of the Snow Mountain—it is much closer here than in the city center. If you are flying out, please note that the airport is about a 45-minute drive from the Lijiang area. We recommend scheduling your departure for the late afternoon or evening to ensure you can enjoy this final day of sightseeing without rushing.

Booking Policy

Cancellation Policy

Cancellation by Customer

- Cancellation received before 60 days: FREE of charge
- Cancellation received from 30 days to 59 days prior arrival date: 20% of total rate
- Cancellation received from 15 days to 29 days prior arrival date: 40% of total rate
- Cancellation received from 7 days to 14 days prior arrival date: 70% of total rate
- Cancellation received less than 7 days prior arrival date or No show: 100% of total rate

Children Policy

The rate for children applicable for one child sharing a twin or double cabin with two adults.

- For infant (<04 years old): Free of Charge
 - 04 - 11 years old without bed: 50% adult rate
 - 04 - 11 years old with extra bed: 75% adult rate
 - Above 11 years old with extra bed: 100% adult rate
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