



## Tibetan Wonders Dossier

Immerse Yourself | 24 Days | Physical Level 4

Kunming – Dali – Lijiang – Zhongdian – Lhasa – Shigatse – New Tingri –  
Rongbuk – Gyantse – Tsedang - Chengdu

This journey takes you through the diverse landscapes of Yunnan Province up to ‘the roof of the world’ where you will experience the wonders of Tibet. Explore mountain monestaries and Himalayan vistas before taking in the ultimate view of Everest.

- Explore the fascinating Stone Forest
- Experience the mighty Tiger Leaping Gorge
- Walk the spiritual Barkhor Circuit of Lhasa
- See Mount Everest from Rongbuk Monastery
- Travel along the spectacular Brahmaputra River
- Meet the Giant Pandas in Chengdu



### Tibetan Wonders tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless travelling land only)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated on your itinerary
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) and Local Guides
- Visa fees for Australian passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

*The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, meals not stated in the itinerary, insurance of any kind, customary tipping and early check in or late check out. These are all payable locally.*

### Immerse Yourself – Active Tour:

Designed for those who wish to be further immersed in the authentic charm of Asia; tours in our Immerse Yourself range include more cultural and active experiences. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience. These tours include:

- Cycling and walking through classic sites
- Unique cultural experiences and encounters
- Off the beaten track destinations
- More evenings at leisure for independent exploration

### Physical Level 4:

'Tibetan Wonders' is rated as a physical level 4 tour. A good level of fitness is required as you need to be comfortable walking for 2-3 hours and covering longer distances. As a whole, this itinerary requires a high level of fitness involving hiking and travelling to remote areas where tourist facilities are less developed. This itinerary visits several remote locations where hotel facilities are extremely basic, especially in Rongbuk. Please read the accommodation section at the end of this dossier for more information.

This itinerary visits several areas of high altitude. If you have an existing respiratory, vascular or coronary condition, we recommend checking with your doctor before undertaking this itinerary. You will spend a period of 14 days above 3,000m from Day 8 to 22, driving over several passes that are above 4,500m and sleeping above 3,000m. Mount Everest Base Camp is at an altitude of 5,200m. AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness) occurs in some people when they travel to altitudes over 3,000m (9,840 feet). Mild symptoms of AMS include dizziness, fatigue, nausea or loss of appetite, breathlessness or headache. AMS symptoms are experienced by people of varying ages and levels of fitness, and usually the symptoms will subside after a day or so. If symptoms worsen, you should seek medical advice and descend in altitude immediately. It is recommended to drink more water, nonalcoholic and non-caffeinated drinks and avoid exertion at altitudes over 3,000m.

Of course, our National Escorts and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. If you require any more information about the pace of the tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

## Altitude:

This itinerary visits areas of high altitude. If you have an existing respiratory, vascular or coronary condition, we recommend checking with your doctor before undertaking this itinerary. The following parts of the itinerary have high altitude:

1. Jade Dragon Snow Mountain near Lijiang. Sightseeing is at Yunshaping (Cloud Fir Meadow) which has an altitude of approximately 3,240m. Please note that the town of Lijiang, where you will be staying overnight is not at high altitude.
2. The town of Zhongdian has an altitude of 3,200m.
3. Lhasa is at an altitude of 3,650m
4. Gyantse is at an altitude of 4,050m
5. New Tingri is at an altitude of 4,342m
6. Mt. Everest Boundary Monument is at an altitude of 5,200m

AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness) occurs in some people when they travel to altitudes over 3,000m. Mild symptoms of AMS include dizziness, fatigue, nausea or loss of appetite, breathlessness or headache. These usually develop over the first 36 hours at altitude and not immediately on arrival. AMS symptoms are experienced by people of varying ages and levels of fitness, and usually the symptoms will subside after a day or so. If symptoms worsen, you should seek medical advice and descend in altitude immediately. It is recommended to drink more water, non-alcoholic and non-caffeinated drinks and avoid exertion after arriving in altitude over 3,000m.

Making sure you are well hydrated (by drinking lots of water and refraining from alcohol/caffeine) before and during the tour, as well as exercising to improve your aerobic fitness before you leave, are generally considered to be excellent ways to prevent or alleviate the severity of mild AMS. If you smoke, your doctor will probably also advise you to stop several weeks before your tour. If you have an existing respiratory, vascular or coronary condition, we recommend checking with your doctor before undertaking this tour. Take this Tour Dossier with you to your appointment to explain the altitude at which you will be travelling. Information on AMS can also be found at [http://www.travelvax.com.au/resource\\_files/Travel-Tips---Altitude-Sickness.pdf](http://www.travelvax.com.au/resource_files/Travel-Tips---Altitude-Sickness.pdf).

## Country Profile: China

China's civilisation is the oldest in the world and has a history dating back over 5,000 years. With 56 ethnic groups, 22 provinces and eight major dialects, China has a rich and varied culture and way of life. It is home to a wealth of tourist sights and cultural relics, which entice our guests to return again and again to this exciting destination.

## Joining Your Tour

The tour is 24 days in duration including international flights. Please note that due to flight schedules passengers may arrive/depart on Day 2.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only, the price includes visa fees and your arrival/ departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to reservations. Join the tour on Day 1 in Kunming and end the tour on Day 23 in Chengdu. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

## Itinerary Changes

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances, we will make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

- Due to local restrictions to help protect the environment, customers can no longer visit the original Mount Everest Base Camp outside Rongbuk. As an alternative, a new “Base Camp Boundary Monument” site will be visited on a two-hour walk in the Himalayas.
- The family visit whilst in Shigatse on Day 13 is no longer permitted. As an alternative there will be a Tibetan dinner and dance Performance (please note, the dance performance depends on availability).
- We have removed the Momo dumpling making lesson in Lhasa on Day 11.

## Itinerary – Tibetan Wonders

### Day 1-2: Kunming

Fly to the relaxed city of Kunming. You will be met at Kunming airport in the Arrivals Hall by your Local Guide and/or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer 1 hour to your hotel. Depending on your time of arrival the rest of the day is yours to start soaking up the local culture. This evening a tour introduction will be held in the hotel. Food and drinks will not be served at this meeting. It is simply an opportunity for your group to meet and learn more about travelling in China. There is no touring today.



#### Destination Information

**Kunming** – Nicknamed China's 'Spring City' due to its temperate weather, Kunming is the capital of Yunnan Province. Kunming has long played an important city for trade due to its significant location on the borders of Southeast Asia.

### Day 3: Kunming

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

This morning, drive around 1 and a half hours to wander through the unusual limestone rock formations of the UNESCO listed Kunming Stone Forest. Sightseeing here involves up to 2 hours walking on paths and steps to view the maze of rock pinnacles, lakes and ponds. This afternoon, visit the Western Hills, often referred to as 'Sleeping Beauty Hills'. Dine on local Across the Bridge Noodles in the evening.



#### Destination Information

**Kunming Stone Forest** – Located 120km south east of Kunming, the Stone Forest consists of thousands of narrow, fantastically shaped pillars of rock, scattered over an area of more than 80 hectares. The park is designed so that you can follow a walkway through the formations of water pools and grey pinnacles, the tallest of which is over 30m high.

**Western Hills** – Kunming's Western Hills are also known as 'Sleeping Beauty Hills'. From a distance, they have the appearance of a lady lying beside Dianchi Lake with her face upward and her hair trailing into the water.

### Day 4: Kunming - Dali

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Drive approximately 4 hours to Dali, a charming town that offers a peek into bygone China. Wander around the charming Ancient Quarter and visit the Three Pagodas.

### Destination Information

**Dali** – Sandwiched between the Jade Green Mountains and serene Erhu Lake, Dali is naturally striking in its setting. Mainly a base for the Bai people, Dali has played an important role in the history of south China and was once a post on the old Burma Road.

**Three Pagodas** – Presented in a perfect triangle, the Three Pagodas date back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century and were built under the Nanzhao State. Made of brick and white mud, the Pagodas are known for their resilience, having survived many natural disasters, including earthquakes.

### Day 5: Dali

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Visit Mount Weibao (Weibaoshan), one of China's fourteen sacred Taoist mountains. Steeped in legend, the mountain features 20 Taoist temples nestled on its forested slopes. Enjoy a 4-hour walk to a handful of these intricately decorated temples, stopping at Qinxia Temple where you will be met by a Taoist priest for a relaxing meditation session.



### Destination Information

**Weibaoshan** – Dotted with Taoist temples dating back to the Ming and Qing dynasties, Weibaoshan plays a spiritually important spot in Yunnan Province. Weibaoshan is also one of fourteen sacred Taoist mountains.

### Day 6: Dali – Lijiang

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Drive 2 ½ hours to Shaxi, a former ancient market town on the famous Tea Horse Road and enjoy some easy sightseeing around the old town as well as a local lunch. Continue 1 ½ hours to the quaint town of Lijiang where you will have free time to explore the Old Quarter.



### Destination Information

**Shaxi Ancient Town** – An important trading point on the Ancient Tea Route from the Tang Dynasty, Shaxi has arguably been called the most well preserved town on the Ancient Tea Route.

**Lijiang** – A beautiful tapestry of cobbled streets, rickety wooden buildings and sultry streams, Lijiang is a vision of idyllic wonder; a great place to just take a stroll and soak up the atmosphere.

**Day 7: Lijiang**

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

A magnificent mountain, the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain comprise several peaks, the tallest of which is 5,500m. Today, you will explore one of the beautiful high meadows and enjoy the amazing vistas. To avoid the large crowds of people queuing at the same time, the local government's tourist authority allocates a time to each group. The bus will drive to the base of the mountain, from where you will take a 10-minute chairlift to Yunshaping (Cloud Fir Meadow) at an altitude of approximately 3,200m. From the chairlift, there is a wooden pathway to the meadow, which takes approximately 1 hour to walk. Descend by chairlift and re-board the bus. There are ruthless souvenir sellers near the bus park so be firm to avoid any hassle. Later, visit Baisha Village to admire the fascinating Baisha Frescoes, painted during the early Ming Dynasty, and see the intricate creations of the Mu Family Embroidery School. Sightseeing at Baisha Old Town is leisurely. Next, meet a Shaman who will demonstrate how to write ancient Dongba characters, before you attempt this quirky art form yourself. Finally, sample traditional Naxi cuisine.



*Please note this section of the itinerary is subject to change at late notice. Your local guide will keep you informed of any changes as they are made aware.*

**Destination Information**

**Jade Dragon Snow Mountain** – Jade Dragon Snow Mountain is known for its mysterious ambience and snow-covered peaks and is considered the Holy Mountain amongst the Naxi ethnic group and other ethnic minorities in Lijiang. Popular for hiking, mountaineering, botanizing and skiing, Jade Dragon Snow Mountain attracts thousands of visitors every year who enjoy exploring its lofty peaks.

**Baisha Old Town and Frescoes** – Once the capital of the Naxi minority group, the Baisha Old Town is home to typical Naxi architecture and a great place to see the Naxi people going about their daily lives. The Baisha Frescoes date back to the early Ming Dynasty and are made up of 44 pieces. Most of the paintings depict religious stories from Taoism and Buddhism.

**Mu Family Embroidery School** – Watch as locals make intricate pieces of embroidery and take advantage to buy a piece yourself.

**Day 8: Lijiang - Zhongdian**

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Start the day with a visit to the picturesque Black Dragon Pool where you can enjoy spectacular vistas of the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain. Drive approximately 2 hours to Tiger Leaping Gorge. Over 3,000 metres deep and with a backdrop of snow-capped mountains, it is one of China's most extraordinary sights. The whole area is spectacular – prepare for breathtaking views. The bus will drop you off at the southern end of a walkway which follows the gorge as far as the upper rapids. It is a newly constructed, even walkway. There are sedan chairs offered by local vendors, which can be organised at your own cost. Lunch today will be a simple meal as the choice of restaurants in this area is limited. Continue another 2 ½ hours to the Tibetan monastery town of Zhongdian, also known as Shangri-La. On Arrival, visit the Dafo Temple and enjoy free time the Old Town.



Please note Zhongdian is at an altitude of 3,200M. All passengers should rest and stay well hydrated to acclimatise to the higher altitude.

#### Destination Information

**Black Dragon Pool** – Constructed in 1737 during the reign of the Qing Dynasty, the Black Dragon Pool is a popular pond in Lijiang which offers stunning vistas and walking opportunities. From this area, visitors can enjoy beautiful panoramas of the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, the tallest mountain in the area. It is said that there is a black dragon living within the pond's waters, hence the name.

**Tiger Leaping Gorge** – Tiger Leaping Gorge is believed to be one of the deepest and most dramatic gorges in the world, measuring at 16km. Hiking along Tiger Leaping Gorge has become incredibly popular, as those who do can view its roaring stream, cascading waterfalls and magnificent scale – great for those who crave an adventure.

**Zhongdian** – Seen as the joining point between Yunnan and Tibet, Zhongdian is a beautiful Tibetan town home to rugged scenery and remote temples. Known in Tibetan as Gyalthang, the town is said to be the location of the author James Hilton's fictional land of Shangri-La.

#### Day 9: Zhongdian

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today, visit the Songzanlin Monastery, one of the most significant centres of Tibetan Buddhism outside of Tibet. There are steep steps to climb at the monastery. From Songzanlin Monastery take a leisurely walk in the stunning countryside for 2-3 hours to Napahai Grassland. In the rainy season the grasslands become a lake, and this ever-changing area is popular with birdwatchers and nature lovers alike. You will be provided with a packed lunch for today. Later, visit a Tibetan-style village where you will learn how to make Tibetan Butter Tea and taste home-cooked dishes.



#### Destination Information

**Songzanlin Monastery** – This 17th century monastery is the largest of its kind in Yunnan. The Songzanlin Monastery is sometimes referred to as the 'Little Potala Palace' due to its resemblance to its bigger counterpart in Lhasa. The Monastery is coated in beautiful golden roofs and is a fusion of Tibetan and Han Chinese architecture.

**Napahai Grasslands** – Napahai is Shangri-La's largest grassland covering an area of 66 square kilometres, sitting at 3270 metres above sea level.

**Tibetan village** – Gain an insight into how the local people live, maybe taste some local snacks and see the traditional Tibetan architecture.



**Day 10: Zhongdian – Lhasa**

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Fly 2 hours to Lhasa, the heart and soul of Tibet. The afternoon is free to relax and acclimatise to the altitude.

*Please note Lhasa is at an altitude of 3,650M. All passengers should rest and stay well hydrated to acclimatise to the higher altitude.*

**Day 11: Lhasa**

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Wander around the Barkhor to see traditionally dressed locals, stalls of religious trinkets and prostrating pilgrims. Inside the Jokhang Temple, the sacred centre of Tibetan Buddhism, the devotion is palpable as queues of people worship in the flickering light of yak butter candles. There will also be a visit to the Sera Monastery, a renowned seat of Buddhist learning, to watch the debating monks. Please be sensitive whilst at the temple as religion is an extremely sensitive topic in China. This is not a chance to converse with the monks, you will be able watch



the monks debating between themselves and learning scriptures. Sightseeing at the Jokhang Temple and Sera Monastery will involve climbing many steps and walking over uneven surfaces in dim lighting.

**Destination Information**

**Barkhor** – Encircling the Jokhang Temple, the Barkhor is a cluster of narrow streets that acts as a circuit of pilgrimage for Buddhists round the Jokhang. There are many stalls here where you can peruse for Tibetan trinkets, religious relics and exquisite jewellery.

**Jokhang Temple** – Considered the most important and sacred temple in Tibet, the Jokhang Temple is located amongst Barkhor and dates back to the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The architecture is a simple blend of Indian, Chinese and Nepalese designs and is a mix of stunning colours both inside and out.

**Sera Monastery** – The Sera Monastery is one of the ‘Great Three’ monasteries in Tibet located 5km outside of Lhasa. Although its monk population is rather small, there is still a bustle of activity, especially in the morning and late afternoon, when you can see debates on religious theory.

**Day 12: Lhasa**

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

This morning, visit the iconic palace of Potala, the largest monastery in the world. Sitting atop Red Mountain, the Potala Palace is painted in a traditional Tibetan blend of deep red and stark white. At the Potala Palace there are over 1000 steps. Next, visit Norbulingka, Lhasa’s answer to Beijing’s Summer Palace, set in parkland just outside the city. Enjoy lunch at Snowland restaurant.



### Destination Information

**Potala Palace** – The former winter residence of the Dalai Lama, the Potala Palace has long been a symbol of Tibetan Buddhism, and the struggles between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government. Abandoned by the Buddhist spiritual leader in 1950, the Potala Palace now acts as a museum of old treasures and intricate shrines.

**Norbulingka** – Norbulingka served as the summer residence of the Dalai Lama from the 1780s to 1959. Set over an extensive park, Norbulingka is home to several chapels and palaces, as well as beautiful flower arrangements.

### Day 13: Lhasa - Shigatse

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Travel for about 5 hours across Tibet's stark plains to Shigatse. Dominated by a fort reminiscent of the Potala, Shigatse is Tibet's second city and the traditional seat of the Panchen Lama. You will have some time on arrival to explore the local markets and try yak butter tea with a local family.



### Destination Information

**Shigatse** – Shigatse is a major town which has been developed by the government to become the second largest city in Tibet. It has an interesting local market and one of the largest functioning monasteries in Tibet, Tashilhunpo.

### Day 14: Shigatse – New Tingri

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Continue approximately 5 hours by road to New Tingri, admiring the awe-inspiring views of the mighty Himalayas as you go.



### Destination Information

**New Tingri** – Also known as Shelkar, New Tingri is located just off the famous Friendship Highway which connects Tibet with Nepal.

**Day 15: New Tingri - Rongbuk**

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Drive for 2 hours through some of the world's most incredible scenery, stopping en route at the world's highest post office, with the Himalayas dominating the horizon, as you make your way to base camp. Here, situated under the gaze of Everest's north face, the views of the world's highest peak are unsurpassed (weather permitting). You will have the choice of either walking 2 hours to the Everest Base Camp Boundary Monument or taking a 30-minute bus ride. You will reach the top height of your tour here at 5,200M. Visit Rongbuk Monastery, draped in colourful prayer flags, and stay overnight in the Rongbuk township.



*Please note, due to the isolated location of the Rongbuk township and limited hotel options here, the accommodation in Rongbuk is extremely basic with shared toilet facilities and no showers. There is no hot water.*

**Destination Information**

**Rongbuk Monastery** – Rongbuk Monastery is a Buddhist monastery near the base of the north side of Everest dating back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is said to be the highest monastery in the world.

**Everest Base Camp Boundary Monument** – The Everest Base Camp Boundary Monument offers spectacular views of Mount Everest and is the perfect place to soak up the thrilling atmosphere so apparent in the Himalayas.

**Day 16: Rongbuk – New Tingri**

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Wake up early to see a glorious sunrise over Everest before driving approximately 2 hours back to New Tingri for your overnight stay. The road is rough and muddy through this area.

**Day 17: New Tingri – Shigatse**

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Drive around 5 hours back to Shigatse, passing the Tso La Pass and Gyatso La Pass and enjoying the awe-inspiring views. The evening is at leisure.

**Destination Information**

**Gyatso La** – A high mountain pass at 5220 metres above sea level, Gyatso La is the highest point on the Friendship Highway between Nepal and China.

**Day 18: Shigatse - Gyantse**

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Visit Tashilhunpo Monastery and join the pilgrims on their 'Kora' (circumnavigation) of the Monastery. Afterwards, drive around 3 hours to Gyantse. This afternoon, visit Gyantse Kumbum as well as the Tsang Traditional Folk House to see a traditional kitchen and taste some local snacks and home-brewed 'chang'.

**Destination Information**

**Tashilhunpo Monastery** – Founded in 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Tashilhunpo Monastery is the second largest in Tibet and is the largest functioning religious institution in Tibet.

**Kora** – Kora is a type of pilgrimage and meditative practice in Tibetan Buddhist tradition. The meaning of Kora literally translates as 'circumnavigation' and involves pilgrims circling a sacred place or object.

**Gyantse Kumbum** – Dating back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Gyantse Kumbum is a 35km-high chorten and is considered the most important of its kind. Kumbum translates as '100,000' and refers to the thousands of images of Buddha houses inside.

**Day 19: Gyantse - Tsedang**

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Travel along the Brahmaputra River to Tsedang, called the 'cradle of Tibetan civilisation'. Today will be a long driving day of approximately 8 hours. Take a short stop on the way at Gangpo Ri, the "birthplace of the Tibetan People"

**Destination Information**

**Tsedang** – An important city in Tibet and the fourth largest, Tsedang is known for its ancient ruins and Samye, the first Tibetan Monastery, giving the city the nickname 'the cradle of Tibetan civilisation'.

**Day 20: Tsedang - Lhasa**

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Perched on a hill over the Yarlung River, legend says that the ancient Yumbulhakang Palace was the first building in Tibet and the palace of the first Tibetan king. Sightseeing at the Yumbulhakang Palace involves walking for about 30 minutes up a hill and there are also some steps. The remainder of the sightseeing is easy paced. Continue to Chang Chun Monastery and the King's Tomb before returning to Lhasa for an evening at leisure. Today's driving time is 3 hours.



### Destination Information

**Yumbulhakang Palace** – The palace has a very long history, and boasts many sculptures and paintings from ancient times. It was built for the first Tibetan King, Nyatri Tsanpo, in the 2nd Century BC. It then became the summer palace for Princess Wenchen and Songtsen Gampo during the reign of Songtsen Gampo himself.

**Changchun Monastery** – The Changchun Monastery is located on the eastern bank of the Yalong River. The legend about the monastery tells that once upon a time, the site of the monastery was an extremely deep lake. Living in the lake was a five-headed dragon. After Songtsen Gampo took control of Tibet, he wanted to drain the lake and build a castle there. So he invited two Masters to lure a big bird to attack the dragon. The bird and dragon fought and the bird chopped off two of the dragon's heads with its wings. Seven days later, the lake disappeared.

**King's Tomb** – King's Tomb includes the resting place of the kings, their wives and officials. The groups of tombs vary in size and cover a total area of 3 million square metres. According to Tibetan documents, there are 21 tombs here. The tombs are flat on top and piled with earth and rock.

### Day 21: Lhasa - Chengdu

Meals included: Breakfast

Fly 2 hours to Chengdu. On arrival, transfer to your hotel where the rest of the day will be at leisure. Your guide will be on hand to suggest activities or places to explore, or you can use the time to just relax in your hotel.

### Destination Information

**Chengdu** – China's symbolic western capital and the residence of the country's most lovable black and white bear, Chengdu has an abundance to offer. With a fast-paced economy that is dragging China's west into the 21st century, it is no wonder that Chengdu's appeal is growing year on year. As the gateway into Sichuan Province's large collection of sights, as well as Chengdu being its own trove of historical and cultural treasures, Chengdu is a must-visit on any trip to China.

### Day 22: Chengdu

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we will visit China's most famous resident, the Giant Panda at the Panda Conservation Centre, where you can learn about China's celebrated bear. See these lovable creatures in surroundings that mirror their natural habitat. It is not guaranteed that you will be able to see the feeding of the younger pandas, as this only happens at the start and end of each day. Sightseeing involves approximately 1 ½ hours on foot and there are electric carts offered by private vendors that can be organised at your own cost. Visit People's Park, Matchmaker's Corner, where you can watch parents search for suitable suitors for their children, and a traditional teahouse where you can try Chinese tea (at your own expense). This evening, enjoy a farewell dinner of traditional Sichuanese cuisine.



**Destination Information**

**Panda Conservation Centre** – With over 80 pandas holding residence, the Chengdu Panda Research Base is equipped with the latest technology and research materials to gain a further understanding in how we can protect the panda and maintain, if not increase, its numbers. The park is set up to resemble the mountain and forest regions in north Sichuan, the original home of the Giant Panda, with extensive bamboo trees and large green spaces. Red Pandas, the Giant Panda's lovable cousin, and flamboyant peacocks too roam the park, making for an interesting mix.

**People's Park** – People's Park is a pleasant respite from urban Chengdu. Here you can see beautiful golden koi, locals dancing and practicing tai chi, and most interesting of all, Matchmaker's Corner, where parents search for suitable boyfriends or girlfriends for their children.

**Sichuanese Meal** – Sichuanese cuisine is famous for its use of Sichuan pepper and chillies. These spices from the area are known for their 'mala' (numb and spicy) flavours, which seem to cool and heat your mouth at the same time. Famous dishes include Kung Pao Chicken, twice-cooked pork and spicy Sichuanese hotpot.

**Days 22-23: Depart Chengdu**

Meals included: Breakfast

Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred from your hotel to the airport, according to the departure time of your international flight. Depending on flight times you will return to Australia today or the following day.

Late check-out is not included in our China group tours. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day in China, please contact our reservations department who can confirm additional pricing and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.

## Tibetan Wonders Travel Information

### Visas

Entry visas are required by all visitors to China and Wendy Wu Tours' Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. We will supply you with all paperwork and submit the visa application on your behalf. Visas for China are valid for 90 days from the date of issue and allow you to stay in the country for up to 30 days. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

Visa application forms and all relevant documentation are due in our office 60 days prior to departure; if received after this date urgent visa processing fees will apply. Passports will be returned with your final documentation four weeks prior to your group tour's scheduled departure. If you require your passport to be returned earlier, a \$15AUD courier fee will apply.

Please note that if you intend to arrive more than 24 hours before your tour commences or intend to stay in China after your tour has ended and you are NOT staying in a hotel you will need to register with the local police station. If you are staying in a hotel, registration is done on your behalf as part of the check-in process.

### Insurance

We strongly encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the originals.

Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

### Evenings at Leisure

To give you more flexibility and choice when travelling on selected tours in our Immerse Yourself range; we have carefully balanced special highlight meals with evenings at leisure so that you can explore the many culinary delights that China has to offer. Alternatively, you can use this time to enjoy the facilities of your hotel. Your National Escort will be happy to provide you with advice about good places to eat, and assist in the booking of transportation to get you there (at your own expense).

### Eating in China

Chinese cuisine is one of the most influential, diverse and flavoursome culinary styles in the world with a legacy stretching back thousands of years. Often you'll find that the local Chinese style is very different from what you're used to at home. We welcome people on our tours with a wide variety of tastes and as such try to present an array of food to suit everyone in the group. Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes, their individual flavours as well as the different ways they are prepared and cooked throughout China.

Dishes served in restaurants on our group tours are varied. Some will be vegetable-based with meat mixed in, and a few will be meat-based. Traditionally, Chinese people cook with a lot of vegetables because meat used to be hard to come by. Dishes often come pre-seasoned with soy sauce or other sauces. Our restaurants are well aware of the western palate – there are plenty of non-spiced options. Most meals are served with plain rice on

the side which is intended as an accompaniment to your meal. Unlike the western world, Chinese people do not normally pre-heat their plates and food can be presented at a variety of temperatures, which is a typical Chinese way of doing things. When eating meals on group tours, you will be seated around a circular table with other tour members. Dishes will be served in the traditional 'family style' on a lazy susan; meaning that various dishes will be laid out on a spinning turntable in the centre of the table top. These dishes are intended to be shared amongst the group – there is always more than enough to feed everybody. 'Family style' means that there is a pair of serving chopsticks for each dish which are used specifically to serve the food (please ask your server if you require a fork or spoon) and everybody will help themselves to all the dishes on the lazy susan. You will have an individual bowl, chopsticks and cup for your own use. Please be courteous and consider your fellow diners; if your favourite dish is on the other side of the table, it will make its way round to you soon! We find our customers really enjoy this sociable style of eating.

Your National Escort will do their utmost to cater for any special requests such as gluten free or vegetarian meals, however, people on restricted diets should expect complications. Although most Asian countries are now quite developed, only quite recently have they started to widely accept Western guests. Western food requirements are quite far removed from Asian food requirements, and even medical reasons can be quite difficult to explain. While our ground partners will do everything they can to cater for a wide range of dietary requirements on tour, we ask kindly for your patience and understanding that they cannot always be delivered to the standard you will be used to at home. It is recommended that passengers with food intolerances bring snacks or additional food items with them, especially when travelling further from major cities as not all dietary requests will be met due to the limited foods available.

Please read your travel guide which you will receive with your final documents for more information about eating in China. We recommend that when it comes to Chinese food, you stay open minded, try to be adventurous and always have a go with the chopsticks!

## Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between Australia and China. Our group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs. Please note that double bed requests can be made at time of booking but can't be guaranteed.

*Please note: In Rongbuk the accommodation is extremely basic and the only facilities are simple public toilets. Rooms are not ensuite and there is no hot water or showers. You will have a wash basin and a thermos of boiled water in your room; towels are not provided by the hotel. Ensure you bring layers to sleep in and keep warm. The location of the hotel however is unsurpassed: if the weather is good, you will be able to see Everest when you wake up!*

## Transport

**Coaches:** Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Main and inner-city roads in China have a reputation for



being very congested. For this reason, it may not always be possible to return to your hotel after sightseeing to freshen up before going to the restaurant for dinner. Roads in China have generally been improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the sections below are approximations only.

*Please note that seatbelts are not compulsory by law in China and therefore the Chinese people largely choose not to wear them. For this reason, some vehicles may not be fitted with seatbelts or they may be hidden underneath protective seat covers. It is recommended that where seatbelts are available customers must use them and remain seated at all times while the vehicle is moving. If you have any concerns, please notify your National Escort/Local Guides.*

**Air:** Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines. Pre-flight seat allocation is not available on international and internal flight sectors.

### Development in China

Though parts of China match the west in modernity and technological advances, it is important to remember that China is still a developing country and as such, many aspects of tourism in China do not have the solid infrastructure and safety standards as seen here in the west.

### Chinese public holidays

If you are travelling within the below Chinese Public Holidays please note that celebrations last for several days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open, but may be crowded. Chinese New Year is on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and 25<sup>th</sup> January 2020. Golden Week public holidays fall annually between 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> May and 1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> October.

### Souvenirs

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs; so in each city, we will visit a museum or exhibition which demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone so we aim to take you to places which hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

### Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by both a National Escort and local guides. There will usually be no more than 18 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

### Tipping Policy

Local tipping is customary in Asia. However, this can often lead to awkwardness in knowing when it is appropriate to tip and how much, as well as ensuring you have a suitable amount of change available at the time. For your convenience, with years of experiences in providing the best customer service, Wendy Wu Tours

operates a kitty system on our Group Tours so your National Escort will look after this aspect of your trip for you. It also ensures that the amounts paid are reasonable for you but still fair for the local people. The amount is stated on each Group Tour page will be advised again on your final documentation. Tipping is in RMB and will be collected by your National Escort on arrival and distributed throughout the tour on your behalf. Any additional tipping on any of our tours is welcomed at your discretion. Further guidance for tipping contributions will be outlined in your final documentation.

### Packing list and Climate

Please refer to our website or brochure for detailed temperature charts.

You will find a complete packing list and a helpful climate chart in the 'Suggested Packing List', which will be included in the pre-departure information link sent within your deposit documentation. Seasonal weather patterns can be quite unpredictable. Up to the minute information on worldwide weather can be found on [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)

### Luggage

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each; a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

### Exchanging Cash

It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling to cities outside of Kunming, Lhasa and Chengdu. US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout China and other currencies such as Australian Dollars can generally be exchanged in hotels and airports provided notes are new and undamaged. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Your National Escort will remind you to do this before departure.

### Personal Expenses & Optional Tours

Personal Expense - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of \$350AUD per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available. In your Final Documentation an Optional Excursion Sheet will be included outlining the activities available in each city and local cost associated. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

### Climbing Steps

Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defense against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient

beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries, who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

### Vaccinations and Your Health

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful [www.travelvax.com.au](http://www.travelvax.com.au)

### Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au) as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

### After your booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

**Last updated 29/03/19**

### Travelling on an Active Paced Tour

We hope you are looking forward to what we are sure will be a trip of a lifetime. Before you embark on this adventure, we ask you to consider the points listed below that relate to our active paced tours. This will ensure you understand what is involved with an active paced tour and therefore help you decide if your chosen tour is right for you.

This is to ensure that your tour runs as smoothly as possible for you and your fellow tour members.

Please consider the following aspects of active paced tours prior to confirming your arrangements;

- While we believe that age is no barrier, please give special consideration to the fact that medical assistance and public infrastructure can be limited in these areas.
- There will be long periods of physical activity, including walking, climbing of stairs, in/out of boats. Tour participants who will travel with a cane/walking stick may come across difficulties. It is our experience that using a cane/walking stick in these areas where there are rough and uneven surfaces, stairs to climb and high altitudes, becomes difficult.
- Only limited meal options will be available. People with special dietary requirements should expect difficulties on these tours. Please understand that depending on the trip you are taking, you may be given very little or no meat.
- Your tour may include basic accommodation facilities including home stays, guest houses, truck stops and tented accommodation. This may mean, no or limited hot water, and no private bathroom facilities.
- There will be long periods of driving on often unsealed, rural and bumpy roads in vehicles ranging from tour coaches to local jeeps and canter vehicles.
- Altitude affects people in many different ways and a certain level of fitness is required in order to limit the effects. Please discuss how to manage altitude sickness with a health care professional.
- Overnight trains only have basic bedding in four berth compartments with limited or no ladder facilities to climb to the top bunk. You may be sharing with other tour members or locals.
- Some tours may have sightseeing en route to the next destination. Therefore participation is required or you will need to remain with the coach until the rest of the group has finished touring.

National Escorts/ Local Guides will endeavor to provide rest stops in your itinerary where possible. Please be advised that some days may have a more physical programme than others.

If you are comfortable with the above mentioned aspects of travelling on an active paced tour, we look forward to welcoming you on what is sure to be a unique and memorable experience.

However, if you have any hesitations please contact your valued travel agent or our reservations department to discuss the tour further or explore alternative options.