



## Tibetan Wonders Tour Dossier

Discovery Tour | 24 Days | Active

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

Journey through the diverse landscapes of Yunnan Province up to the 'roof of the world' where you will experience the many wonders of Tibet while admiring ancient monasteries and Himalayan vistas.

### Tour Highlights:

- **Kunming** - The capital of Yunnan Province
- **Dali** - Nestled between Erhai Lake and the Cangshan Mountains and home to the Bai Ethnic group
- **Lijiang** - A veritable 'living museum' set at the foothills of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain
- **Zhongdian** - The 'Land of Shangri-La', a predominately Tibetan town that is home to the Songshanlin Monastery
- **Lhasa** - Capital of the 'roof of the world' and centrepiece of Tibetan culture
- **Shigatse** - Visit Tashilhunpo Monastery
- **Rongbuk** - See the world's tallest peak at Everest Base Camp
- **Gyantse** - Third largest Tibetan town and home to the mystical Gyantse Kumbu, and Pelkor Monastery
- **Chengdu** - Home to the Giant Pandas



## Tibetan Wonders Tour Inclusions

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- 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)
- Visa fees for Australian passport holders

*Personal expenditures e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, meals not stated in the itinerary, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary are at your own expense.*

## Discovery Tours

Designed for those who wish to be further immersed in the authentic charm of Asia; our Discovery Tours include more cultural and active experiences. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts or Local Guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience. Our Discovery tours include:

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

## Active Tour

'Tibetan Wonders' is an **Active** tour. This is the most demanding level of tour Wendy Wu Tours offers. As a whole, this itinerary requires a high level of fitness involving hiking and travelling to remote areas where tourist facilities are less developed.

Our National Escort 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.

## 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 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. 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 civilization 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 repeatedly to this exciting destination.

## 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 whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

The following itinerary changes have been made to the 2017 itinerary to improve the flow and pace of sightseeing:

- Removed one night in Zhongdian, you will now spend 2 nights here.
- A one-night stay in Old Tingri has been removed.

## Joining Your Tour

The tour is 24 days in duration including international flights. Travellers booked on 'Land Only' arrangements should make their own way to the starting point. Join the tour on Day 2 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.

## Important Information Regarding Itinerary Changes and Flight Delays

Due to unforeseen circumstances, flights can be delayed, and therefore connecting flights may be missed. If you find yourself in this situation, please contact our China office on **+86 21 5888 5681** or **+86 159 0929 1082** (24 hours) to urgently advise your arrival details have changed. Please ensure you have your trip number, tour name (both included in your final documentation) and new arrival details (flight number and arrival time) handy to pass on to our local office in China. This will ensure your National Escort/Local Guide can be informed of your most up to date information and an arrival transfer will be arranged accordingly. We will endeavour to arrange a transfer as soon as possible however, delays may occur.

If we are not advised of late changes and missed connections, Wendy Wu Tours cannot guarantee someone will be able to meet you upon arrival in China as our local office will have no way of knowing which flight you will be arriving on. Wendy Wu Tours will not be responsible for providing reimbursement of transportation costs from the airport to your hotel in the event that our local office was not advised of changes to arrival times.

## Tibetan Wonders Itinerary

### DAYS 1 - 2: AUSTRALIA TO KUNMING

Fly overnight to the relaxed city of Kunming, capital of Yunnan Province. On arrival into Kunming, you will be met in the arrival 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 approximately one hour to your hotel. A tour introduction will be held in the hotel either this evening or the next. 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. Depending on your time of

arrival, the rest of the day is yours to start soaking up the local culture.

Meals included: None

### Destination Information

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

### DAY 3: KUNMING

This morning drive 1 and half hours to the Stone Forest. Spend the morning exploring the unique limestone rock formations of the Kunming Stone Forest, which involves around 2 hours foot along cobblestone paths. Return to Kunming for an afternoon at leisure and dine this evening on the delicious local delicacy, Across the Bridge Noodles.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

#### **Destination Information**

**Kunming Stone Forest** - Located 120km southeast 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.

**Across the Bridge Noodles** - Across the Bridge Noodles are a type of rice noodle soup from Yunnan Province served in a broth style. Usually accompanied by meat, bean curd and vegetables, this is a truly therapeutic dish.

### DAY 4: KUNMING TO DALI

Drive approximately 4 hours to Dali, a charming town that offers a peek of a bygone China. In Dali, enjoy some light sightseeing around Dali's Old Quarter and the symmetrical Three Pagodas.

Meals included: Breakfast and Lunch

#### **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 southern 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 9th 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

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 3-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 40 minute

meditation session. Return to Dali and visit the Golden Flower Tie Dye Shop.

Meals included: Breakfast and Lunch

#### **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 TO LIJIANG

Drive 2 hours to Shaxi, a former ancient market town on the famous Tea-Horse Road and enjoy some easy sightseeing around the old town. Continue driving 1 hour to the quaint town of Lijiang where you will have free time to explore the Old Quarter. There are many dining opportunities in this area at your own leisure.

Meals included: Breakfast and Lunch

#### **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

Jade Dragon Snow Mountain altitude 3,240m

A magnificent mountain massif, the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain incorporates 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 times to each group. The bus will drive to the base of the mountain where you will take a 10min ride on a chairlift from the base to Yunshaping (Cloud Fir Meadow) at an altitude of approximately 3,200m. From the chairlift there is a wooden pathway to the meadow and this walking route takes approximately 1 hour. Descend by chairlift and re-board the bus. Later visit Baisha Old Town to view the fascinating murals, painted during the early Ming Dynasty, and visit the Mu Family Embroidery School. Sightseeing at Baisha Old Town is leisurely. There are ruthless souvenir sellers near the bus park so be firm to avoid any hassle.

*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 of them. Jade Dragon Snow Mountain is at an altitude of 3,200m. All passengers should stay well hydrated to acclimatise to the higher altitude.*

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

#### **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 Naxi people are known for their Dongba pictograph writing style.

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

#### **DAY 8: LIJIANG TO ZHONGDIAN**

Jade Dragon Snow Mountain altitude 3,200m

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 its backdrop of snow-capped mountains, is one of China's most extraordinary sights. The whole area is spectacular – prepare for breath-taking 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 expense. Lunch today will be a simple meal as the choice of restaurants in this area is limited. Continue another 2 hours and 30 minutes on to the Tibetan monastery town of Zhongdian, also known as Shangri-La.

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

Meals included: Breakfast and Lunch

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#### **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**

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 here walk approximately 3 hours to Napa Hai Grassland enjoying the stunning countryside and a packed lunch. In the rainy season the grasslands become a lake and this ever-changing area is popular with birdwatchers and nature lovers. Later visit a Tibetan Village where you will pay a visit to a local family and learn how to make Tibetan Butter Tea. Tonight feast on a traditional home cooked Tibetan Style family dinner.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

#### **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.

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

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**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 TO LHASA**

Lhasa altitude 3,650m

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.*

Meals included: Breakfast

#### **DAY 11: LHASA**

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. Sightseeing at the Jokhang Temple and Sera Monastery will involve climbing many steps and walking over uneven surfaces in dim light.

Meals included: Breakfast and Lunch

#### **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 7th 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.

#### **DAYS 12: LHASA**

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

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over 1000 steps. A small torch can be helpful to make your surroundings clearer. This afternoon visit Norbulingka, Lhasa's answer to Beijing's Summer Palace. Visit a Tibetan arts and crafts shop and later learn how to make the local dish of Momo dumplings.

#### **Destination Information**

**Potala Palace** - The former winter residence of the Dalai Lama, the Potala Palace has long been a symbol of Tibetan Buddhism, and 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 TO SHIGATSE**

Travel for approximately 5 hours today across Tibet's stark plains to Shigatse. Dominated by a fort reminiscent of the Potala, Shigatse is Tibet's second city and the traditional home 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.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

#### **Destination Information**

**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 TO NEW TINGRI**

New Tingri altitude 4,342m

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

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

#### **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 TO RONGBUK**

Mt Everest Base Camp altitude 5,200m

Traverse for 2 hours amongst 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

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we make our way to base camp. Here, situated under the gaze of Everest's north face, the views of the world's highest peak are unsurpassed. You will have the choice of walking 2 hours to the Everest Base Camp 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: In Rongbuk the accommodation is 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 washbasin and a thermos of boiled water in your room; towels are not provided by the hotel.*

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

#### **Destination Information**

**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** - The Everest Base Camp 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 TO NEW TINGRI**

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

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

#### **DAY 17: NEW TINGRI TO SHIGATSE**

Return 4 hours by road to Shigatse today driving along the Tso La Pass and Gyatso La Pass enjoying the awe-inspiring views.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

#### **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 TO GYANTSE**

Gyantse altitude 4,050m

Explore the Tashilhunpo Monastery and join the pilgrims on their 'Kora' (circumnavigation) of the Monastery before

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driving 2 hours to Gyantse. This afternoon visit Gyantse Kumbum and the Tsang Traditional Folk House to visit a traditional kitchen to taste some local snacks and home-brewed 'chang'.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

#### **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** - 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 holy or sacred place or object.

**Gyantse Kumbum** - Dating back to 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 TO TSEDANG**

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.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

#### **Destination Information**

**Tsedang** - An important city in Tibet and the fourth largest. It 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 TO LHASA**

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 on 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.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

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### Destination Information

**Yumbulhakang 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 east 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** - 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 TO CHENGDU

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 just to relax in your hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast

### 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. A fast paced economy, which 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 definite, a necessity, a must visit on any trip to China.

### DAY 22: CHENGDU

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 and half hours on foot and there are electric carts offered by private vendors and can be organised at your own expense. Take a trip to the Shu Brocade and Embroidery Museum. Later, visit the people's park to see Matchmaker's Corner where you can watch parents search for suitable suitors for their children and visit a traditional teahouse. This evening enjoy a traditional Sichuan meal.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### 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.

**Shu Brocade and Embroidery Museum** - Brocade production has been an integral piece of Chinese history for over 2,000 years. At this museum, enjoy the opportunity to learn further how these richly decorative fabrics are created and take the opportunity to purchase a piece yourself.

**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.

**Sichuan Meal** - Sichuan 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 Sichuan hotpot.

### DAY 23: DEPART CHENGDU

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.

Meals included: Breakfast

*Late check-out is not included in our China group tours. If you wish to book a late checkout for your final day in Chengdu, please contact our reservations department who*

*can confirm additional pricing and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.*

#### **DAY 24: ARRIVE AUSTRALIA**

Arrive home today.

*Due to flight schedules, Brisbane and Perth passengers may arrive home on Day 23.*

### **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 6 months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

Visa application forms and all relevant documentation are due in our office 75 days prior to departure; if received after this date urgent visa processing fees will apply. Passports will be returned with your final documentation 2-3 weeks prior to your group tour's scheduled departure. If you require your passport to be returned earlier, a \$15 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.

A Tibet permit is included in the cost of your tour. We require a clear colour copy of your passport bio page and a copy of your valid Chinese visa. If this visa has been processed by our office we will make the necessary copy required. Tibet Permits are processed in China and are collected once you are travelling on your China group tour by your National Escort.

#### **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.

#### **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. Chinese dishes incorporate many spices and seasoning to create an explosion of flavours. Though Chinese cuisine can vary greatly from Chinese food we get in Australia, it is important to keep an open mind and be adventurous. Selected meals are included in our Discovery Tours, meals that are included (excluding drinks) are indicated in the below itinerary as Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

This itinerary travels through a region of China where far fewer foreign, especially western tourists visit. Hence, the hotels and restaurants are unaccustomed to catering for western travellers. Once you travel west from Lijiang you will find there are few restaurants and little variety in food produced. Mutton and yak are often the only meats available. Meals are usually simple vegetable noodle soups called thugpa or dumplings called momo. Very simple Chinese restaurants are becoming more common but even in the larger towns your local guides/cooking staff will need to find a suitable kitchen to instruct or assist in preparing your lunch and dinner. This can obviously mean that you may need to wait a while after arriving in a town before being served.

In the other areas of China more often visited by western tourists, the hotels serve some western dishes for breakfast. In this region there will be few if any western dishes for breakfast. Chinese and Tibetan breakfast dishes include cold vegetable/pickle dishes, bean curd noodles, soups, congee (a rice porridge), steamed buns with pork or sweet red bean and green tea. You may also be served fruit, a fried egg, or toast – although the bread tends to be very sweet and unlike the bread we have in Australia.

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Call 1300 727 998 to speak to a Reservations Consultant

Black tea and coffee are not always served, but can usually be requested. Fresh milk is not generally available. Also, some restaurants don't serve alcohol and it is inappropriate to bring your own. Your Suggested Packing List suggests some snacks that you may like to bring with you from Australia. There are also some small supermarkets in Kunming where you can buy similar items (except UHT or powdered milk, which is best bought in Australia).

In Tibetan areas, produce is limited. Usually barley, wheat, yak meat and milk are produced locally and anything else must be trucked in from other parts of China. Local dishes include simple vegetable noodle soups (thugpa) or dumplings called momo. Sichuan cuisine (or Szechwan as it is still known in the west) is distinguished by its use of ginger, chili and the 'Sichuan peppercorn' called fagara. Each meal will usually have some mild dishes for those who don't enjoy eating hot or spicy food, but please bear in mind that the majority of local specialty dishes will be hot. If your group finds there are not any mild dishes served, please inform your National Escort/Local Guide so that they may resolve the problem for the next meal. Please note that long driving distances or road conditions may delay/alter your mealtime.

## 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 the Australia and China. All 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 double bed requests can be made at time of booking but cannot be guaranteed.

*'Local guesthouse'* - provides very basic but comfortable accommodation and are usually run by local families. Most guesthouses have generator or town supplied electricity for a restricted amount of time (i.e. usually a few hours in the morning and evenings) but this cannot be relied upon. Toilet and shower facilities may be shared. Whenever there is limited electricity supply, this will mean limited or no hot water supply also. If you are not able to shower, you can request a large basin of water from guesthouse staff for a 'bird bath' wash. There are sometimes bathhouses too which you can enjoy for a small extra cost. If you need to do laundry, you can request a large basin of water from guesthouse staff for this purpose too. Some guesthouses have dormitory style rooms, with both male and female group members sharing if necessary.

Please note that the Chinese government has strict environmental regulations in regards to the use of air conditioning and heating during certain times of the year. Hotels are only permitted to turn air conditioning on in the summer months from mid-May to mid-October and heating is permitted to turn on from mid-November to mid-March.

## 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 duration 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.

**Planes:** Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

## 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 Australia. It is important that our guests travel to China with an open mind and a sense of humour. All of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort/Local Guide.

## 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 28th January 2017 and 16<sup>th</sup> February 2018. Golden Week public holidays fall annually between 1-3 May and 1-7 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; for example, in Dali you will be able to visit a Golden Flower Tie Dye Shop; and in Lijiang we will take you to the Mu family Embroidery School to watch how these intricate works of art are created! 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/Local Guides. There will usually be no more than 16 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

Tipping while on holiday is a firm and expected element in the tourism industry and China is no exception. To remove the uncertainty and stress of not knowing how much is appropriate to tip or to whom, Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy for our group tours where a nominated tipping amount is paid upon commencement of the programme by each tour member. This amount is stated in all group pricing, however it is not collected in your final payment received by Wendy Wu Tours.

This nominated tipping amount is to be given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour, who will then distribute it amongst your main service providers – guides, drivers and attendants – on your behalf during the tour. Any other tipping, such as tips for bathroom attendants or hotel porters that are taking luggage to your room, is at your discretion based on satisfaction of services received, as are gratuities for additional requested special services.

The tipping amount is determined based on the total number of passengers travelling in the group. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the National Escort. The final tipping amount will be outlined in your final documentation, which is distributed 2 weeks prior to your tours departure

## Packing List and Climate

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 5kgs. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that Chinese 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 Beijing and Shanghai. 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 AUD\$350 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.

## Customs

The interior of all Tibetan monasteries is quite dark and usually lit by yak butter candles. Please remember to walk slowly and carefully, let your eyes adjust to the darkness and watch your step. Always walk in a clockwise direction along pilgrim circuits, around shrines, alters, temples and prayer wheels. If you are unsure of suitable and respectful behaviour within such places, please ask your National Escort/Local Guide's advice.

## 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 with deposit documentation via email. This includes important information and links to access the visa application form and instructions sheet online (if applicable). Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

**Updated 03 May 2017**

## 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.