



# BIKE ASIA

Adventure Cycling Specialists

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**The Trail of the Dragon**  
**Guangxi and Guizhou Provinces: Southern China**  
*Also advertised as Riding the Rising Giant*

| Day |                                                                  | Location  | Meals        | Kms cycled |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|------------|
| 1   | Arrive Guiyang                                                   | Guiyang   | D            |            |
| 2   | Transfer to start point (3 hours in vehicle)/<br>Cycle to Yongle | Yongle    | BD           | 30         |
| 3   | Cycle from Yongle to Rongjiang                                   | Rongjiang | BLD          | 75         |
| 4   | Cycle from Rongjiang to Congjiang                                | Congjiang | BLD          | 84         |
| 5   | Cycle from Congjiang to Zhaoxing                                 | Zhaoxing  | BLD          | 55         |
| 6   | Rest Day                                                         | Zhaoxing  |              |            |
| 7   | Cycle from Zhaoxing to Chenyang                                  | Chenyang  | BLD          | 104        |
| 8   | Transfer/ cycle to Pingan                                        | Pingan    | BLD          | 60         |
| 9   | Rest Day                                                         | Pingan    |              |            |
| 10  | Cycle from Pingan to Hudian Gu                                   | Hudian Gu | BLD          | 58         |
| 11  | Cycle from Hudian Gu to Guilin                                   | Guilin    | BLD          | 63         |
| 12  | Cycle from Guilin to Xingping                                    | Xingping  | BLD          | 74         |
| 13  | Cycle from Xingping to Yangshuo                                  | Yangshuo  | BLD          | 60         |
| 14  | Rest Day                                                         | Yangshuo  | D            |            |
| 15  | Departure day                                                    |           |              |            |
|     |                                                                  |           | <b>Total</b> | <b>663</b> |

\*Whilst every endeavour will be made to run the itinerary as stated, Bike Asia reserves the right to change any part of the itinerary at any time without notice due to weather, political, health and safety concerns.

*Cycling through the terraced hillsides of Guizhou Province and amongst the karst limestone peaks of Guangxi Province, you will experience a landscape that has been inspiring Chinese painters and poets for centuries, and still awes people today with its almost surreal beauty. We travel through areas known for their variety of ethnic minorities and we visit traditional villages where we get up close and personal with people in their everyday lives. This tour takes in the best of the well known sights and attractions in the region but is fundamentally designed to expose you to areas that receive very few tourists. With a mixture of well-made but quiet riverside and rural back-roads, several hill climbs and descents and awesome secluded off-road sections, this unique to Bike Asia cycle adventure is rural China at its absolute best!*

### Day 1 - Guiyang

Welcome to China! Today people will be arriving from different destinations and at different times so there are no activities planned. There will be a group meeting in the

evening once everyone has arrived, where we can go over all the formalities of the trip. After the group meeting we will head out for dinner together.

**Dinner**

### **Day 2 – Yongle – Cycling 30kms**

After breakfast we'll head south from Guiyang by vehicle, passing through Kaili and Leishan, and into the Dong and Miao minorities' autonomous region of South-Eastern Guizhou. Shortly after passing through Leishan we meet the bikes, already set up ready to go. Today we have just 30km to get us familiar with the bikes and cycling conditions. We start the journey with a 12 km descent which is followed immediately by a 9km climb, halfway we will stop for some lunch. Finally for the day we have another downhill section all the way into the small village of Yongle.

**Breakfast and Dinner**

### **Day 3 – Rongjiang - Cycling 75kms**

The day starts with some rolling hills before we have a formidable climb with a similar length descent into Pingyong for lunch at the halfway mark. After lunch the cycling is on a sealed road which gently undulates down the valley into Rongjiang. The traffic is very light, and we are unlikely to see more than a few buses and cars while we're cycling. Along the valley we pass Dong villages which, unlike in other parts of China, are built almost entirely from wood. After a wash and freshen up at the hotel, we'll head out for a hot-pot dinner in one of Rongjiang's many local-style restaurants.

**Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner**

### **Day 4 – Congjiang - 84kms**

This morning we visit the Rongjiang markets, just a minute's walk from our hotel. Every week, traders from all the surrounding villages converge on Rongjiang to sell wares ranging from hand-made brooms and sickle blades to unrecognisable fruits and spices to live yellow ducklings squeaking in a basket. This is a fascinating experience where we meet people of numerous different minorities, dressed in traditional clothes. There will be time for exploring the markets before getting on the bikes. The 84km ride to Congjiang cruises along the valley of the Duliu River, and we will see local Miao minority people working in the fields and boats on the river as we pass by.

**Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner**

### **Day 5 – Zhaoxing – 55kms**

After a delicious breakfast of Guizhou's "*hand-chopped rice noodles*", steamed buns, local bread and fruit, we will make an early start to Gaozhen, where we will see the first of this region's classic Dong minority architecture. Dong villages often feature impressive drum towers and "*wind-and-rain*" covered bridges. These sometimes huge structures are traditionally built entirely of wood without using a single nail. The morning's ride will take us high up into the mountains on a dirt backroad where there are spectacular views of the countless rice terraces shrouded in mist below. A roadside lunch on the other side of the mountains at Guandong will see us through the afternoon's ride past orange groves into Zhaoxing on sealed country roads. After 56km total we can relax at the lovely wooden hotel, perhaps with some home-made rice wine to help us celebrate, as we have a rest day following.

**Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner**

### **Day 6 – Zhaoxing – Rest Day**

Today is a chance to rest the legs or explore the Zhaoxing valley on the first rest day of the tour. Zhaoxing is a unique Dong village, being of a conurbation of 5 tiny hamlets, each with its own traditional drum tower and *wind-and-rain* Bridge, and small streams flowing amongst the streets. This entirely wooden village is surrounded on all sides by hillsides covered in rice terraces, a fantastic place for a walk. Here we can also learn a little about the Dong minority's culture. Originally having no written language, history

and legends were recorded in song, and the Dong are famous for their chorus singing and their unique wooden pipes.

#### **Day 7 – Chengyang – Cycling 104kms**

This is our biggest day! Starting early, we head over the first (7km) pass and then down a paved road that winds through picturesque rice terraces. Turning off from the main road, the next 10 km cycling through narrow valleys and ravines are very rough, bumpy and extremely muddy at times. Once we pass the town of Shuikou, we are into remote countryside that sees no other tourists. Here you will be rewarded with an insight into the lifestyles of the hardy farmers that till this steep hillside terrain into incredible rice growing terraces. After a break we have a long gradual off-road climb to the top of a ridge with stunning views of the surrounding mountains, terraces and villages. Following is a short, steep descent into lunch. From here the road is sealed but still quiet with little traffic. After some undulating terrain we have our third, and final, climb for the day for 13km. Following is a speedy 9km winding descent. The last 20km are more gentle undulations all the way to Chengyang where we have hot showers, hot food and cold beers waiting for us! This Dong village is famous for having the region's best example of a "Wind and Rain" bridge. Our guesthouse has views overlooking this impressive structure, waterwheels and rice fields. This is a great place to soak up the rural ambience and relax for the evening.

**Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner**

#### **Day 8 – Pingan – Cycling 60kms**

After an early morning breakfast we'll take a walk around picturesque Chenyang village before transferring (to avoid some heavy congestion) to outside the town of Longsheng where we jump back on the bikes. We have 33km of paved road from Longsheng to the spectacular village of PingAn. This traditional Zhuang minority village is perched high up on the mountainside in the middle of the Longji Rice Terraces – thousands of rice paddies cut into the mountain by the local people over hundreds of years. The last 6km of our cycling will take us from the valley floor climbing up dozens of hairpins to Ping An. This is a truly rewarding cycle to one of the highlight locations of the tour!

**Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner**

#### **Day 9 – Pingan – Free day**

Today we have another rest day to take in the extraordinary mountain views from the Zhuang minority, traditionally-built Liqing Guesthouse, nestled on the mountainside in Ping An. During the day we can take a walk to one of the view points over the rice terraces, or simply sit back with a beer and enjoy the view and the atmosphere on the terrace of this very special guesthouse. The owners, Ke yin and Lily, always make us feel at home and may offer us a sample of their special sweet rice wine. Those exploring the walking trails will soon discover that this area is also inhabited by people of the Yao minority, whose dress is quite distinctive and whose women often grow their hair so long it can touch the ground when untied!

#### **Day 10 – Hudie Gu – 58kms**

What goes up must come down, they say, and that is certainly true this morning, as we ride the twisting road back down the mountainside. We spend the day on quiet sealed roads undulating through pine and bamboo forests, often passing villages tucked away in the hills. We are now close to Guilin, and delicious Guilin-style rice noodles are on the menu for lunch at the roadside. In the afternoon we emerge onto a wide valley, but our destination for the night lies up a narrow gorge known as Butterfly Valley, where our hotel is located in a surprisingly picturesque setting. We will have a little free time for people to enjoy the walking paths in the valley.

**Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner**

### **Day 11 – Guilin – 63kms**

After breakfast at the hotel it's back on the bikes for a day of opposites. A morning of completely flat cycling on the best surface of the tour makes way for an afternoon of dirt road and rough off-road, as we take the most rural back-road towards the city of Guilin. We may get some speed up on the well-made highway, but we wouldn't want to race through the later part of the day as this is classic rural China in the city's backyard. We pass rice fields, fruit trees, and vegetable plots, as well as two reservoirs and farmyards full of chickens. Finally the karst peaks of Guilin's skyline appear in front of us and we roll into town to our hotel and a banquet of Sichuan style dishes.

**Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner**

### **Day 12 – Xing Ping – 74kms**

From Guilin we head out of the city where the adventure is in the chaos of Chinese city traffic! A tangle of cars, scooters, buses, silent electric bicycles, tricycles and a minority of traditional cyclists reveal how China has come a long way fast from the old tag of "Kingdom of the Bicycle". City riding is great fun and safe if you remember that here, going with the flow, is the *only* option. We'll stop for a break in the village of Daxu where we can soak up the old Ming Dynasty era architecture of the old town and its cobblestone street and surrounding farmland. From here we cycle a flat stretch alongside the famous bamboo-lined Li River. After a 3 km sharp descent into Cao Ping, we stop for lunch and take in what the Chinese often refer to as "the finest scenery under heaven" – Karst Mountains overhanging the beautiful blue/green Li River. After lunch we climb up into the mountains for an even more breathtaking view of this incredible landscape, finally arriving in the beautiful old village of Xing Ping in time to eat, shower and, perhaps, watch the sun set from our guesthouse roof-top terrace with an ice cold beer!

**Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner**

### **Day 13 – Yangshuo – 60kms**

Our final day of cycling is a great action-packed one as head up through the most beautiful part of the Li River by motorised raft. This section is famous for its beautiful karst mountains and is a fantastic start to the day. We ride away from the river and take stunning, hilly, quiet back-roads through fruit orchards, rice fields and dozens of tiny villages to Baisha town for lunch. Baisha is famous for its market where produce from the local area is sold as well as for its stone working industry. From Baisha we take our time riding off-road down the lush and serene Jade Dragon River valley, amongst paddy fields, and through villages overlooked on both sides by majestic karst mountains. We'll stop to check out the ancient Jade Dragon Bridge, the old town of Jiu Xian and, if it's hot enough, take a cooling swim in the clear running Jade Dragon River. Our last leg is a sealed 5km stretch through yet more Karst mountains before we emerge in legendary Yangshuo, for good reasons popular with travellers from all over the world, where we have two nights to celebrate the end of our cycling adventure!

**Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner**

### **Day 14 – Yangshuo – Free day/activity day**

Today we have free time to rest, relax and play in laid-back Yangshuo. Those who are interested can take a half-day cooking course in local Chinese dishes, learn Tai Chi or Kung Fu, take a calligraphy class, go rock climbing, swim in the river, paddle a kayak, go caving, hike along the river or up a karst mountain, indulge in a Chinese massage or acupuncture, cycle unlimited back-roads, watch a world class evening sound and light show, take a cormorant fishing tour, shop 'til you drop, or laze about in the many cafes, bars and restaurants. The options are really endless so we recommend that if more than three or four of these activities sound appealing, and you have the extra time, consider booking some additional accommodation with us! There are many options for accommodation in the Yangshuo area including staying in the comfortable and conveniently located hotel that we use on the tour in Yangshuo town, to a rustic

restful getaway in a peaceful rural village surrounded by farm life and beautiful scenery, all the way through to spoiling yourself in an international standard resort with spa's, saunas and an outdoor pool overlooking some of Yangshuo's prettiest river and mountain scenery.

### Day 15

This is departure day and you are free to leave at any time.

### Inclusions

- 14 nights accommodation (12 nights in comfortable hotels with twin share rooms, private bathrooms facilities etc, 2 nights in more basic hotels)
- All transport from the start point to the finish point (all transport mentioned in the itinerary, support vehicle while cycling, boat on day 13)
- Excellent Quality Mountain Bike
- Bike tools and spare parts
- Meals; Breakfasts (10), Lunch (9), Dinner (12)
- All water and snack food whilst cycling
- Bike Asia tour leader
- Local cycling guide, driver
- Support vehicle

### Bike Asia Travel style

We think cycling through a region for the first time with a group of like-minded people is a great way to travel in Asia. Our aim is to provide you with the opportunity to meet new people, learn about new cultures, experience different landscapes and most all to have some fun. Cycling is a major part of our trips – they are cycle tours after all. We have designed them so that they are accessible to people with a reasonable level of fitness. This trip is fully supported, so should you want or need to take a rest, there will be a seat for you and a place to put your bike. Our trips are also designed to allow you the opportunities and time to appreciate the environment, scenery and culture around you, and to participate in any activities that may be on offer. All the roads we use are chosen because they have very little traffic.

### Ethical travel

An integral part of travelling is to have a positive impact on the country that you are visiting. On this trip there are a number of things you can do to have a positive impact on the communities that we visit.

Dress Parts of China are still quite conservative. In rural areas (which make up most of this tour), and temples, overly revealing clothing is considered offensive. You should make an effort to dress more conservatively in these situations. Walking around a village in bike shorts is not appropriate so if you wish to cycle in just bike shorts you should have something with you, on the bike, to put on over the top (long loose shorts or a skirt/sarong). When visiting temples shorts are acceptable providing they cover the knee. Singlet tops are not acceptable in temples.

Phrase Book A highly memorable part of your travels will be the local people you meet. In the tourist areas some people will speak some English but away from these areas you should learn a few words of Chinese. We will teach you some of the basics but if you want to really interact we recommend bringing a phrase book.

Donations Often when coming on trips overseas people like to bring items such as sweets, pens and books for children or old clothing for families. While this is a fantastic idea, if distributed in the wrong way it can actually create more problems. Giving away anything to local people can create an expectation that visiting foreigner equals free give-aways. In some communities in Asia this has created whole villages where the only interaction is the locals asking for things. If you would like to donate anything to the communities that we visit we suggest that you give the items to us and we will then pass them on to development organizations, schools or whole communities. In

this way items are distributed to those really in need by those working in the communities.

**Poverty** In this part of China there is poverty which you are likely to see, since we cycle through some fairly remote rural areas. If you choose to give something to a beggar you must bear in mind the value of money in the country you are visiting. There are organizations which are working to alleviate this poverty in China and they may be able to do more good with your donations. Your Tour Leader will be able to provide more information about this.

**Support Organizations** In China there are a number of organizations which we hope you can support in one way or another. Your Tour Leader will provide more information on these as you travel.

### **Group size**

Minimum 3

Maximum 12

### **Accommodation**

There is a mix of accommodation styles on this trip. 12 nights are in good standard hotels/guesthouses; twin share, private bathrooms, hot water, television, air-conditioning etc; 2 nights are in more basic style accommodation – possibly without private bathrooms, i.e. shared washing and toilet facilities, sometimes Chinese style squat toilets. We are staying in these places because, travelling by bike we get to travel through some of the smaller, rural areas, and this means of course that we are limited in our choice of accommodation – sometimes we are staying in the ONLY guesthouse. Whilst not having all the facilities that you may be accustomed to at home, we can safely say that these small, family-run places make up for that in location, views, atmosphere and friendly service. Hygiene is very important to us and our passengers so we try to use accommodation with a good level of cleanliness. All the sleeping arrangements are for twin share and if you are a single traveller you will be paired up with someone of the same sex. This ensures that whether you are travelling solo or with friends, everyone is paying the same rate. We choose hotels (where possible) which are comfortable, clean, centrally located places and which are adequate in every way.

### **Pre/post trip Accommodation**

If you would like us to organise some extra nights accommodation either before or after the trip at our starting or finishing point hotel, just let us know when you book the trip.

### **Travel to the start point**

This trip starts in Guiyang (Airport Code KWE), the capital of Guizhou Province. It is not an international airport (equipped for customs and immigration) which means that you will have to fly into Guiyang from one of the other major cities/airports in China. Examples are Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen or Guilin from which there are many flights every day. To check flight details, time and cost look at the following website:

Ctrip: <http://english.ctrip.com/>

It is in English, reliable, and you can pay for these flights by credit card. You can also book domestic China flights through us (service charge applies per ticket) at competitive rates for travel to the start of the tour and for onward travels in China after the tour. Just let us know when you book.

### Travel from the finish point

The trip finishes in the town of Yangshuo. It is 85 kilometres (one hour 15 min) from Guilin International Airport by car.

Guilin is an international airport with connecting flights to:

- Hong Kong (HKG) – *China Southern Airlines and Hong Kong Airlines*
- Bangkok (BKK) – *Bangkok Airways*
- Kuala Lumpur (LCCT) – *Air Asia*
- Macao (MCM) – *Air Macao*
- Beijing (PEK) – *Air China, China Southern, China Eastern*
- Shanghai (SHA & PVG) – *Air China, China Southern, China Eastern*
- Guangzhou (CAN) - *Air China, China Southern, China Eastern*
- Seoul (ICN) – *Asiana Airline*
- *Singapore(SIN) – Jet Star*

**Transfers:** Individual arrival and departure transfers can be organised through us. Please indicate that you would like a transfer when you make your booking.

### Bikes

Bikes are included in the trip cost. Our mountain bikes are entry-level standard UCC Mountain Bikes. We keep them well-maintained, in as near new condition as possible and we travel with all necessary tools and spare parts. Your Bike Asia leader/ mechanic will fix any bike problems.

- | Hard tail (front suspension) with Gila Pro Forks
- | Shimano Acera 24 speed gears
- | TEKTRO hydraulic disc brakes
- | On/ off road dual purpose tyres
- | One bottle cage
- | Ergonomic seat
- | Sizes 15", 17", 19" or 21". Please specify your bike size when booking.

You may wish to bring your own pedals, cleats, saddle or handlebar extensions, as we can easily fit them to our bikes.

You are of course welcome to bring your own bike. Keep in mind though, that while we offer maintenance and spares for the bikes we provide, we can't guarantee that we can cater to your particular bicycle's needs so it would be best to bring your own parts and tools. If you are unsure we recommend that you speak to your local bike shop about what parts to bring.

To see the bikes we use click on the link below:

[www.bikeasia.com/info/bike.html](http://www.bikeasia.com/info/bike.html)

Because we travel with a support vehicle it is not necessary to carry many things when on the bike. You may like to carry a daypack, bumbag or handlebar bag with personal belongings, camera, sunscreen etc., or you may prefer to leave a daypack in the support vehicle and carry only a camera & rain jacket (perhaps in a seat-post bag) when cycling.

### Food

Food is a very important part of any travel experience - particularly essential when cycling - and is a highlight of any Bike Asia tour. Most of the meals on this trip are included in the cost, with a few exceptions like free days. To see which meals are included, read the inclusions list or the itinerary. Vegetarians and vegans are well catered for and should you have any other dietary restrictions, you just need to inform us. Chinese breakfasts usually include one or more of the following; noodles soup, steamed buns, fried bread, fresh soy milk, fruit and green tea. Depending on location, lunch can either be relatively simple but hearty, such as vegetable fried rice or

meat/vegetable noodles or banquet style, such as steamed rice with a selection of vegetable and meat dishes. Dinner is always banquet style with plates of meat, fish, fresh vegetables, tofu and rice. We aim to give people every opportunity to sample local/ regional specialities and to enjoy the huge variety of Chinese dishes available. We also provide snack food for morning and afternoon tea with biscuits, fresh fruit, dried fruit, tea, coffee and hot chocolate. We will also provide you with filtered drinking water for the duration of the cycling. The meals are always very generous, the food is healthy, very fresh and very tasty, so don't worry, we'll make sure your appetites are satisfied and you have more than enough fuel to get up those mountains!

### **Money**

You will need to bring money on the trip to pay any for the following; some meals, drinks, activities and transport in free time, airline excess baggage, and of course shopping. There are a few methods for accessing money whilst on tour.

- ATMs are available in Guiyang, Congjiang, Guilin and Yangshuo where you can access money using your Maestro, Cirrus, Visa and Mastercard.
- Banks to exchange major foreign currencies (USD, EUR, GBP, AUD, CAD, NZD etc) and Traveller's Cheques.
- There are almost no credit card facilities.

The amount you bring is going to depend on how much you plan to spend. To give you an indication of prices:

Beer would cost CNY 5 (local), 15 (bar)

Dinner at local restaurant CNY 10 - 30

Dinner at foreign restaurant CNY 25 - 60

The Chinese currency is the Chinese Yuan (CNY), also known as Renminbi (RMB). Exchange rates at the time of writing are:

1 AUD = 6.5 CNY

1 USD = 6.6 CNY

1 EUR = 9.9 CNY

1 GBP = 11 CNY

1 CAD = 6.5 CNY

1 NZD = 4.9 CNY

There will be very relatively few opportunities to spend money whilst cycling through rural areas outside of personal items, snacks, drinks and the odd souvenir. Most of your shopping will be likely to be done in bigger centres, such as Guiyang or Guilin, or in ethnic or tourist centres such as Pingan and Yangshuo. You can chat to your tour leader about recommendations and availability of ATM's and banks at the start of the tour.

We also recommend that you bring US \$100 in emergency funds, to be used when circumstances beyond the control of Bike Asia necessitate a change in itinerary.

### **Insurance**

Obtaining your own travel insurance is required in order to participate on a Bike Asia tour. It will need to include a minimum coverage of medical expenses with emergency evacuation, personal liability and accident insurance. Your group leader will need to see a copy of your insurance at the group meeting on the first day.

Some recommended insurance companies are;

World Nomads;

[www.worldnomads.com](http://www.worldnomads.com)

Covermore;

<http://www.covermore.com>

### Joining point instructions

You will need to arrive at the starting point hotel in time for the group meeting, which will be held at 6pm on the evening of day 1. A taxi from Guiyang Airport will take approx 30 minutes and cost around 70 CNY. All taxis should use the meter. As you exit the airport, follow the signs to the taxi rank. You should avoid any taxi touts who approach you. Print out this trip dossier so that you have the address in Chinese and a map to show the driver. Very few drivers will understand the name and address in English! The hotel is located in the centre of the city, next to the river, with twin-share rooms, private bathrooms, hot water and television and 24 hour reception. The hotel address is:

**Hotel Add: Rong He Hotel**  
8 Yanan Dong Road, Guiyang,  
Guizhou 550001 PR China  
**Hotel Tel: +86 (0)851 5620 888**  
**Hotel Fax: +86 (0)851 5612 333**

### 荣和酒店

地址: 州省 贵阳市 延安东路 8 号 邮编 550001  
电话: +86 (0)851 5620 888  
传真: +86 (0)851 5612 333



### Fitness

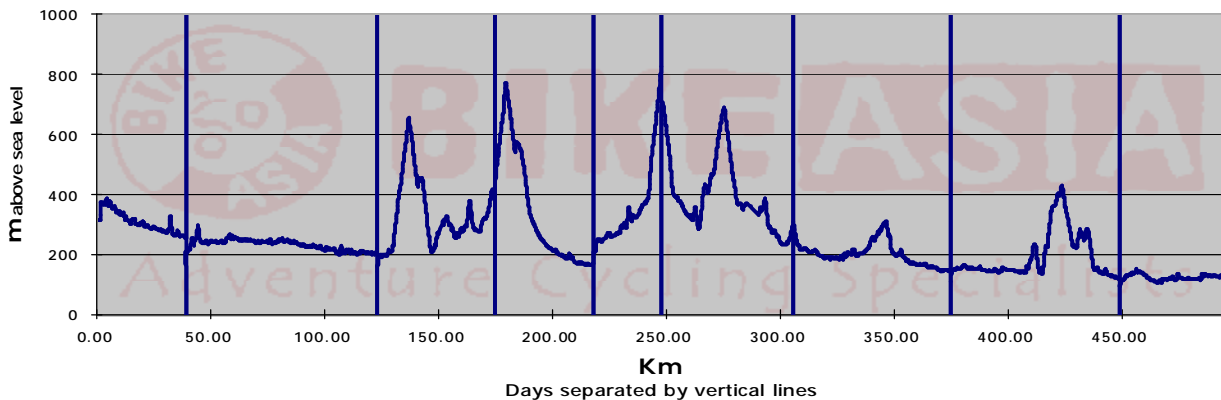
You will need to have a reasonably good level of fitness to participate comfortably in this trip. There are ten cycling days in total, with two days cycling over 80km, one of them is over 100km. It is a great idea to do at least some cycling in the month leading up to your tour. This is up to you but we highly recommend some training as it will alleviate saddle soreness and leg fatigue, and you may enjoy the tour more if you find the cycling easier. A more detailed training program will be sent to you in the Trip Information Booklet after booking the trip.

### Cycling conditions

The cycling terrain on this tour is roughly 70% on sealed roads, 20% on dirt roads and 10% off-road on small tracks and trails. This trip varies between hilly to flat terrain with nine notable climbs, the longest of which is 13km. The cycling altitude varies between 130m and 825m. Traffic is mostly very light but there are one or two short busier sections. In China the cycling is very relaxed but you do need to be alert for surprises such as vehicles, potholes, animals, people....everything really!

### Altitude profile

## The Trail of the Dragon - Altitude Profile



### Health

In order to make the most of your holiday, the healthier you are the more you will enjoy it! For a list of vaccinations, we recommend that you seek advice at a travel clinic at least two months prior to departure. If you have any existing medical conditions, take medications, suffer from allergies or even have any concerns at all these should be indicated on the booking form. We treat this information with utmost respect and privacy and only wish to use this information to ensure your personal safety and enjoyment on the tour. Our group leader will have, as a minimum requirement, Senior Level First Aid Training. It is our policy to provide further training opportunities for our leaders to upgrade to, and maintain, Remote Wilderness Emergency Training for Outdoor Professionals certification whilst they are in employment with us. Leaders will travel with a first-aid kit, however, it is also recommended that individual travellers have a basic first aid kit with any personal medical requirements. We do not encourage our group leaders to administer any kind of drugs including pain relief tablets, antibiotics, etc unless absolutely necessary so be sure to pack a supply of your favourite pain-killers or others. Pharmacy products vary in different countries and you may not be able to buy products that are widely available at home. As a precaution also include the following: plasters, dressings, bandage, calamine lotion (a must for soothing sunburn), oral re-hydration treatment (in case of bouts of diarrhoea), insect repellent, insect sting relief, antiseptic cream, antiseptic wipes, antibiotics and pain relief tablets.

For more information on travel health, you can click on the links below:

Australia;

<http://www.tmvc.com.au/>

United States

<http://www.cdc.gov/page.do>

United Kingdom

<http://www.travelhealth.co.uk/>

Lonely Planet

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/health/>

## Visas

Travellers of all nationalities will need to obtain a Chinese visa, either through a travel agent or direct with a Chinese embassy or consulate. For the latest information, see your travel agent.

## Luggage/Packing list (guide only)

We strongly advise against using a hard shell suitcase for this trip. China is not suitcase or wheelie-bag friendly. A *soft backpack* would be the most suitable, and the easiest to transfer in/out of the trucks in the morning and evening, up and down staircases and in and out of airports. Keep in mind when you are packing that often our local crew are lifting our bags in and out of our vehicle, that most of the hotels we use do not have lifts, and that the luggage allowance on the domestic flight is 20kg. Therefore please try to pack as lightly as possible. Please check our climate charts to assess your clothing requirements, or contact us if you are unsure.

| Personal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Travel                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Cycling                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Long trousers</li><li>• Shorts</li><li>• Shirts</li><li>• Warm jacket</li><li>• Thermals</li><li>• Woollen socks</li><li>• Jumper</li><li>• Hat</li><li>• Sandals/light shoes</li><li>• Swimming costume</li><li>• Rain coat</li><li>• Toiletries</li><li>• Tampons (hard to get in China)</li><li>• Small towel</li><li>• Sunscreen</li><li>• First aid kit</li><li>• Mosquito Repellent</li><li>• Camera and film</li><li>• Contact solution</li><li>• Gloves/scarf</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Passport with 6 months validity and spare pages</li><li>• China Visa</li><li>• Passport photo</li><li>• Travel insurance details</li><li>• Flight tickets</li><li>• Money - travellers cheques / cash / credit card</li><li>• Guide/phrase book</li><li>• Money pouch</li><li>• Sleep sheet</li><li>• Medication (eg. cold tablets, headache tablets, sleeping tablets)</li><li>• Main/day pack</li><li>• Alarm clock</li><li>• Plastic bags</li><li>• Pocket knife</li><li>• Torch</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Optional daypack, bumbag or handlebar bag.</li><li>• Helmet</li><li>• Cycling gloves</li><li>• Sunglasses</li><li>• Water bottle/bladder</li><li>• 2 x Padded bike shorts with something to put on over the top when off the bike</li><li>• Your own seat, pedals, cleats (optional)</li><li>• Light wind-proof jacket for cycling</li><li>• Cycle shoes (with cleat attachment if you use them)</li><li>• Optional gel seat cover and or handlebar extensions</li></ul> |

## Tipping

Tipping is not part of the general culture and you won't be expected to tip in restaurants, bars, hotels or taxis, etc. There are some establishments, such as international hotels/ resorts etc, to where the custom has been imported, and with the growing number of tourists coming to China it is slowly becoming more expected, but not demanded, in the tourism industry. By and large though, you won't see the practice

in general daily life in China. In fact, most people will act as if you are odd or confused if you try to give them a tip or will chase you down the street with your change!

We neither encourage nor discourage tipping for our leaders, guides or local crew and it's **not** compulsory on our tours. We view it as your personal choice. We do realise that some people feel a tip is the most appropriate, or comfortable, means for them to say thank you, or to reward good service, and that's fine. Others are uncomfortable with the practice, and that's fine too. One of the reasons we feel that our trips run so well and are so much fun is the effort and energy put in by our leaders and local crew - their mix of professionalism, enthusiasm and sense of fun are infectious – if you'd like to tip them we ask that you only do so because you really want to and are happy with the service they have provided. A general guide would be tip around 30USD to each staff member but ask your leader if you need any help.

### **Safety**

Our cycling tour leader has the authority to change or cancel all or part of this trip if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. This decision would not be taken lightly, and where possible it would be made in consultation with our local crew, local operator and Bike Asia management. Your leader will be present on all included activities, staying at all the same hotels, guesthouses and of course cycling with you. During free time, should you choose to participate in any optional activities that are not part of our itinerary, please note that we cannot give any representations or guarantees about the safety of the activity, the standard of the operators running them or the equipment that they use.

In the group meeting on day 1, your tour leader will run a session on cycling safety. Whilst some travellers will have had years of touring experience, others might be on their first cycling trip. We need to cater for a range of abilities and experience and it is in everyone's interest to learn about the particulars of cycling in this region from someone who has already done it. It goes without saying that by running and participating in a cycling trip, both parties accept an inherent level of risk. However, we take the safety of our passengers very seriously and we ask that you cycle in a safe and responsible manner and that you look out for the well-being of your fellow travellers. Cycling helmets must be worn by all cyclists at all times whilst cycling.

Most national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest information before departure. The links for some major travel advisories and updates are listed below;

Australia;

<http://www.smartraveller.gov.au>

Britain;

<http://www.fco.gov.uk>

Canada;

[http://www.voyage.gc.ca/consular\\_home-en.asp](http://www.voyage.gc.ca/consular_home-en.asp)

New Zealand;

<http://www.mfat.govt.nz/travel/>

United States;

<http://travel.state.gov>

We recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling in the cities, for the safe keeping of your passport, money, credit cards and traveller's cheques. Utilise the hotel's safety boxes or safe where these are available.

### **Communication**

In Guiyang, Pingan, Guilin and Yangshuo you will be able to access email, phone, fax and post offices. Outside these cities there will be fewer chances to email and the main communication will be phone. You should leave you family or friends the Bike Asia contact details. Our office staff will be able to get in touch with us in an emergency.

### **Group Leader**

Our leaders are passionate about Asia and cycling...phew! They love what they do and take their job seriously. They will make every effort to ensure you have a safe, enjoyable trip with as much fun as possible. They bring many qualities and skills to this role: understanding of group cycling, safety, management and leadership, mechanical skills, local knowledge, interesting experiences and also managing and liasing with our local crew. In working for us, they have made a commitment to learning as much about the culture, language and customs of China as possible, and they are happy to share any of this knowledge with you. However, please keep in mind that they may not be able to provide immediate answers to every question and, as part of their role, may be away from the group to fix bikes or arrange meals as needed.

### **Rules**

We don't have many, but the ones we do have are important. We always abide by the laws of the country that we are travelling through. This means you are not to use any illegal drugs or use prostitutes. Any passenger who does so will be asked to leave the tour immediately.

### **Feedback**

After you have completed the trip, we want to know what you thought about it. This is important to us, as it is through your feedback that we monitor our trips and make improvements for the future. Log on to our website and click on the feedback link. It will take you a minimum of 3 minutes, or should you feel like writing in more detail, then a little longer. If you fill in the feedback form, we'll give you an automatic 5% discount on any of our trips in any other region.

### **Photos**

We are always looking for good photos of the regions which we travel through. If you have some that you would like to send us, we would love to have a look.

### **Newsletter**

Our quarterly email newsletter has information on events happening in Asia, travel stories, cycling stuff, last-minute deals on our trips, travel tips and more. If you would like to subscribe just go to our homepage and enter your email address. Your email address will be kept confidential.