



# BIKE ASIA

Adventure Cycling Specialists

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**Tiger Leaping Gorgeous**  
**Yunnan Province: South-West China**

Day	Description	Location	Meals	Km cycling
1	Arrival day.	Zhongdian	D	
2	Morning day ride around Napa Lake.	Zhongdian	BLD	37
3	Cycle from Zhongdian to White Water Terrace	White Water Terrace	BLD	106
4	Cycle from White Water Terrace to Tiger Leaping Gorge	TLG	BLD	67
5	Rest day. Optional hike down to Yangze River.	TLG		
6	Cycle from Tiger Leaping Gorge to Shigu (the first bend in the Yangze River)	Shigu	BLD	74
7	Cycle from Shigu to Lijiang	Lijiang	BLD	50
8	Rest day in Lijiang.	Lijiang		
9	Transfer/Cycle from Lijiang to Shaxi	Shaxi	BLD	93
10	Rest day. Optional hike to Buddhist Grottoes.	Shaxi	BD	
11	Cycle from Shaxi to Er Yuan.	Er Yuan	BLD	63
12	Cycle from Er Yuan to Dali.	Dali	BLD	53
13	Free day.	Dali	B	
14	Travel by express bus to Kunming.	Kunming	B	
15	Departure day.		B	
	<b>Total distance</b>			<b>543kms</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.

Yunnan is one of China's most ethnically fascinating and scenically stunning provinces. Home to over one third of China's minority groups and over half of all China's plant and animal species it is easy to understand why Yunnan leaves our travellers raving about it! Cycling the back roads you will experience the extraordinary natural wonder of Tiger Leaping Gorge, the deepest gorge in the world, with its towering walls and dramatic beauty. You will meander along the majestic Yangtze River and kick back in the laid-back, cobblestone towns of Dali and Lijiang where you can try your hand at haggling in the local markets. This area is in the foothills of the Himalayas where snow-capped peaks, dramatic ravines and pine forest meet rural villages and rice fields. A balance of steep climbs, dizzying descents and smooth flat roads makes this trip suitable for anybody. Yunnan is cycling at its best!

## **Day 1: Zhongdian (Shangri La) – 3200m**

Welcome to Zhongdian! Also known as Gyalthang to Tibetans (recently renamed Shangri La), Zhongdian was a major hub on the Tea Horse trading route between China and Tibet. For those arriving early, the town still retains its Tibetan feel and you will have time to explore the Old Quarter with its old world charm or head out to Ganden Sumtseling Monastery (SongZaLin Si), South West China's most important monastery. This is arrival day and you'll be met by your Bike Asia leader in the evening to go over the trip ahead. We will meet at 6PM in the evening for the group meeting to go over the formalities of the trip before heading out to dinner to sample some of the local cuisine.

\*Note – As Zhongdian is at an elevation of 3200m all the activities on daytwo below are optional. It is not uncommon for people to feel the effects of altitude sickness (see Altitude Sickness below) on arrival at this elevation so we have allowed time in Zhongdian to acclimatize and rest for those that need to. You may wish to book some extra accommodation in Zhongdian with us if acclimatisation is a concern for you. There is a lot to do in Zhongdian which is an interesting Tibetan town with numerous hikes, monasteries and an old town to explore.

## **Day 2: Zhongdian day ride**

In the morning we'll set up our bikes and head out to the Napa Wetlands with its abundant birdlife for an acclimatization ride. This is a great ride in itself but also a good chance to get used to your bike and the altitude! The town still retains its Tibetan feel and you will have time to explore the Old Quarter with its old world charm or head out to Ganden Sumtseling Monastery (SongZaLin Si), South West China's most important monastery. In the evening we'll indulge in a traditional Tibetan feast.

## **Day 3: White Water Terrace – Cycling 106kms**

We cannot pretend this is an easy day, but the spectacular scenery makes up for the hard work and there are some extraordinary long and fast downhills on smooth paved roads with hardly a car in sight, you might see the odd motorbike but that's about it. There are no restaurants along this stretch of road so we will organise a picnic lunch with plenty of tasty foods to keep you fuelled up for the big climbs. This ride is varied and spectacular as we wind our way up through valleys and across mountain sides completely covered with wild camellias, rhododendrons, azaleas and osmanthus trees and bushes... it is an amazing sight when blooming in season. We should arrive in the afternoon with just enough time to visit the spiritual heart of the Naxi Minority people; the 'White Water Terrace' rock formation that sits above the town of Sanba. It was created over millions of years by underground aquifers of running water saturated with calcium carbonate depositing minerals as the water meets the atmosphere's oxygen. They have the shape of the local rice terraces but made of calcified minerals with pools of clean water flowing over the surface.

## **Day 4: Tiger Leaping Gorge – Cycling 67kms**

In the morning we have a few more smaller climbs and coasting sections as we watch the sun rise up from behind the mountain range and into our valley. Hold on tight though at the top for another massive descent winding down towards the small town of Haba where we will have lunch. The owner of the restaurant here is one of the nicest and most energetic women we know ... and her cooking is great too! After lunch we'll get back on the bikes for seven kilometre climb followed by another downhill – this one is 25km! We enter Tiger Leaping Gorge and cycle to our lodgings for the night. Riding in the gorge is a highlight for many people on this trip with its overhangs, steep walls and waterfalls. We cycle halfway through the gorge to our guesthouse at Walnut Grove; the guesthouse with possibly the most spectacular view in all of China.

*Travelling in the gorge does pose some risks. There are often landslides in summer, and while we only schedule our trips outside of the landslide "season", their occurrence is outside our control. For this reason we cannot guarantee your safety on this part of the trip. You will need to consider this before signing up. In the event of a landslide we may have to alter the itinerary which means that we cannot guarantee a continuous ride through the gorge but will have to detour around it. This may take several hours or up to a whole day. We are always in communication with local contacts with regard to local conditions and are committed to keeping you informed but will always reserve the right to alter the itinerary where we see fit in order to ensure the safest possible experience.*

#### **Day 5: Tiger Leaping Gorge - Free day**

There is no place more fitting to spend a day of rest and relaxation than immersed in the beauty of Tiger Leaping Gorge. For the energetic there are plenty of hiking opportunities; walk the plunging forest tracks to the gorge itself or venture off on the high trail to plunge yourself into a gushing waterfall. Otherwise sit back, relax and soak in the truly awe inspiring views of this remarkable natural wonder.

#### **Day 6: Shigu – Cycling 75kms**

We meander our way out of the gorge and along the Yangtze River passing mud brick villages on quaint tree-lined, tar-sealed roads. This area is home to many minority groups including Dai, Yi and Naxi people. We get up close and personal with rural China as we see people going about their daily lives. We stay overnight in the tiny historical town of Shigu, known for its location on the 'first bend in the Yangtze River'. Though popular with local Chinese, prepare to be the centre of attention as it's likely we will be the only foreigners there! A wander about this small town will take you back into the past as many old courtyard houses, cobblestone streets and temples remain as they have been for ages.

#### **Day 7: Lijiang – Cycling 50km**

After a bowl of tasty homemade local rice noodle soup and bread we cycle uphill alongside the Yangtze River then continue up as we aim for the ancient town of Lijiang. There's a big climb today before we plunge down into an open valley overlooked by jagged snow capped mountain peaks of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain that towers above the town at 5598 metres. On the way we detour on back-roads around the beautiful Lashi Lake which will bring us in contact with local rural life as we meander through several Naxi and Yi minority villages. We stop for lunch at Zhi Yun temple, a small monastery that has been renovated after having been destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. We should arrive in time for lunch and that will mean a free afternoon for you to wander and explore the back streets and alleys of the old town.

#### **Day 8: Lijiang – Rest day**

Today is a free day to relax and explore the old town with its network of cobblestone lanes filled with shops selling snacks and handicrafts, or simply sit back with a book to people watch. There are optional rides to monasteries and historical sites in the area, as well as a cable car up onto Jade Dragon Snow Mountain itself. Ask your leader for more info on these.

#### **Day 9: Shaxi – Cycling 93kms**

There is a sense of timelessness as we cycle through villages whose cultural traditions and simple life-styles have remained relatively unchanged for centuries. Often we'll come across a local market bustling with activity and blocking off the road. This is a great chance to mingle with locals of differing ethnicities, all sporting their own particular traditional clothing, bargaining for and selling local produce and the necessities of life. We will start the day with a vehicle transfer out of Lijiang, along the road that we cycled in. After a big downhill we'll ride through the town of Jianchuan before heading off to Shaxi. One last big uphill and a bumpy downhill

before a long flat cobblestone run into Shaxi, a historic town that was once a hub on the Tea Horse route.

#### **Day 10: Shaxi - Free day**

This is a free day for you to wander around Shaxi town and see the old architecture – untouched by modernity and new construction (a rarity in China today!). This is the perfect place to get yourself lost in the narrow, cobblestone alleyways of the town, get a close look at intricately carved wooden entrances and hopefully catch glimpses of the well-fenced and attractive courtyards of many of the homes in Shaxi. Highly recommended is a visit and hike through the “Shibaoshan Shiku” Stone Treasure Buddhist Grottoes. These are old Buddhist shrines carved into the mountain rock, some still carrying the last of fading pigments. These are a legacy of the trade route which, although it was designed to carry tea, also spread Buddhism throughout the region. Your leader will help to organize this.

**Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner**

#### **Day 11: Er Yuan – Cycling 63kms**

We hit the road with a big, steep climb on cobbles before we hit dirt to the top, all the way cycling through a heavily wooded forest of pine trees. We've been warned by locals to keep a close eye out for ghosts in this area! The view is spectacular, overlooking the valley all the way to Jianchuan. The road down is endless hairpins on a rutted road. Rough stuff, but it's a good way to work up an appetite for lunch. The afternoon ride is a nice flat run through endless rice fields which change with the seasons. We cycle down through a ravine into Er Yuan, the location of our hotel for the night and their relaxing hot springs ...so bring your bathers!

**Breakfast, lunch and Dinner**

#### **Day 12: Dali – 53kms**

Today we share our cycling with bell-laden horses and carts as we continue travelling on the Old Tibet Road to Dali. We follow a circuitous route that takes us to Er Hai Lake. We skirt the shores of this huge inland sea, passing through fishing villages and farming communities. This is a spectacular finale as we head up the hill toward the ancient walled capital, Dali. The Cang Shan Mountains rise behind Dali as we cycle our last few kilometres to our finishing point! We'll feast and celebrate the completion of our ride with a beer or two!

**Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner**

#### **Day 13: Free Day - Dali**

Dali is home to over 1.5 million Bai minority people whose culture, crafts and warm hospitality create its renowned laid-back atmosphere. You are spoilt for choice with things to do and see. You can visit the colourful Shaping Markets, see the preserved architecture of Xizhou village, hike up to Zhonghe Si temple or just do a good day's shopping! The day is yours to do with as you like!

#### **Day 14: Kunming**

We take a bus back to Kunming, arriving in the afternoon. Our last night together means dinner and celebrations!

**Breakfast**

#### **Day 15: Kunming- departure day**

This is departure day so you are free to leave at any time of the day.

**Breakfast**

#### **Inclusions**

- 14 nights accommodation (11 nights hotel/guesthouse, 3 nights basic guesthouse)
- All transport en route (whilst cycling) including the bus from Dali to Kunming
- Good Quality Mountain Bike

- Bike tools and spare parts
- Meals: Breakfasts (12), Lunch (8), Dinner (10)
- All water and snack food whilst cycling
- Local cycling guide and driver
- Bike Asia tour leader
- 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. Different trips will require varying degrees of physical ability. Each trip dossier has specific details on terrain, cycling conditions, distances covered each day and an altitude profile. All of our trips are 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.

### **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 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 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 China there is poverty which you may see. 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 and may be able to do more good with donations that you make. Your Tour Leader will be able to provide more information about this.

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

**Group size**  
Minimum 3  
Maximum 12

### Accommodation

There is a mix of accommodation styles on this trip. 11 nights are in standard hotels/guesthouses - twin share, private bathrooms, hot water, television, air-conditioning etc. 3 nights are in more basic style accommodation – possibly without private bathrooms, i.e. shared washing and toilet facilities, sometimes Chinese style squat toilets, some have dormitory sleeping arrangements. 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 and services 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 so 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) that are comfortable, centrally located places 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.

City	Hotel	Price - Single Room	Price – Twin room
Zhongdian	TBA	\$40	\$50
Kunming	Camellia Hotel	\$35	\$45

### Single Supplement

For those who would prefer a room to themselves for the duration of the trip, costs are below:

Single Supplement Price	USD \$395
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### Travel to the start point

This trip starts in Zhongdian (Shangri-La) (Airport Code DIG). There are flights into Zhongdian from Kunming, Chengdu, Shenzhen and Guangzhou. To check flight details, time and cost look at the following website;

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

### Travel from the finish point

This trip finishes in Kunming (Airport Code KMG). It is an international airport (equipped for customs and immigration) which means that you can fly directly from Kunming to cities such as Bangkok, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Seoul. There are also many flights from other major cities/airports in China. Examples are Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen 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.

Kunming is an international airport with connecting flights to:

- Hong Kong (HKG) – *Dragon Air and Hong Kong Express Airlines*
- Bangkok (BKK) – *Thai Airways and China Eastern Airlines*
- Kuala Lumpur (LCCT) – *Malaysian Airlines*
- Seoul – *Korean Air and China Eastern Airlines*
- Singapore – *Silk Air and China Eastern Airlines*
- Rangoon – *Air China*
- Vientiane – *Lao Air and China Eastern Airlines*

As well as many flights to other major cities in China;

- 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*
- Taipei – *Uni Air and China Eastern Airlines*

We can help organise your flights or train tickets to or from a connecting airport in China should you find that a simpler way to get here from your home country, or if you intend to continue your travels in China.

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

### Transport

All transport listed is included in the trip price: all support vehicles (one or two depending on the group size) and the bus from Dali to Kunming at the end of the cycling component. You will need to pay for any transport taken during free time.

### Bikes

Bikes are included in the trip cost. Our mountain bikes are entry-level standard UCC's. We keep them well-maintained and we travel with all necessary tools and spare parts. Your Bike Asia leader (or Bike Asia mechanic) will fix any bike problems.

- | Hard tail (front suspension) with Gila Pro Forks
- | Shimano Acera 24 speed gears
- | Hydraulic disc brakes
- | Off road 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 needs so it is best to bring your own. 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 go to: [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 seatpost 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 for the following; some meals, drinks, activities in the free time, departure tax and of course shopping. We suggest you utilise a variety of methods for accessing money. There are;

- ATMs are available in Kunming, Lijiang and Dali where you can access money using your Maestro, Cirrus, Visa and MasterCard.
- Venues to exchange all forms of foreign currency (USD, EUR, GBP, AUD, CAD, NZD etc) and Traveller's Cheques.
- Limited 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 4 (local), 15 (bar)

Dinner at local restaurant CNY 10 - 20

Dinner at foreign restaurant CNY 25 - 40

The Chinese currency is the Chinese Yuan (CNY). Exchange rates at the time of writing are;

1 AUD = 6.56 CNY

1 USD = 6.56 CNY

1 EUR = 8.88 CNY

1 GBP = 10.49 CNY

1 CAD = 6.64 CNY

1 NZD = 4.98 CNY

As there will be very few opportunities to spend money whilst cycling, most of your shopping will need to be done in Kunming, Lijiang and Dali.

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 trip. 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 popular insurance companies are:

World Nomads:

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

Covermore:

<http://www.covermore.com>

## **Joining point instructions**

TBA

## **Fitness**

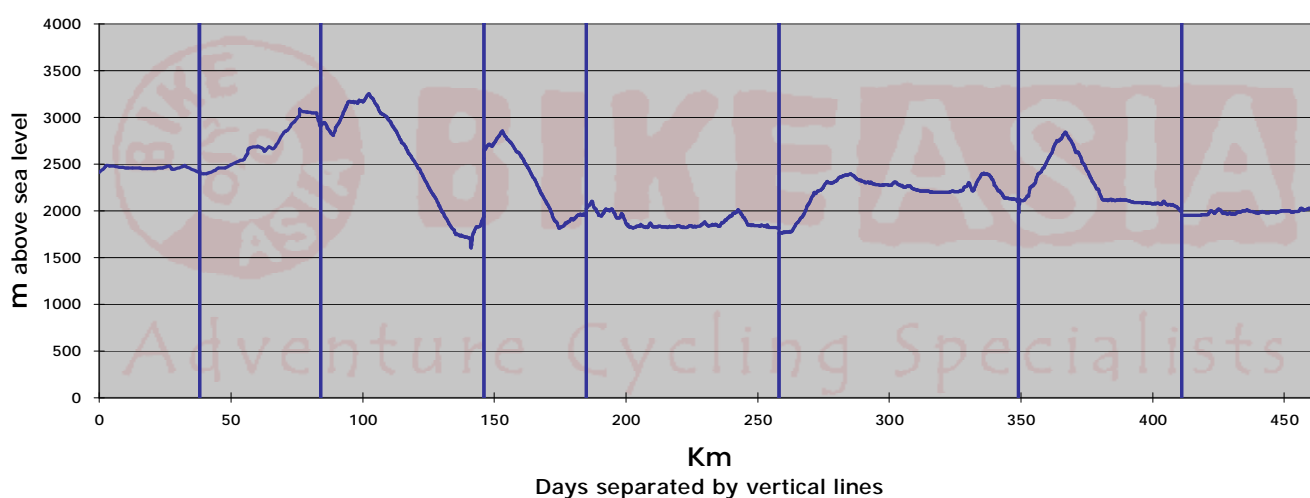
You will need to have a reasonably good level of fitness to participate in this trip. There are eight cycling days in total, with most days cycling over 60km and one day over 90km, some on unsealed roads. This trip involves a lot of long mountain climbing. **The cycling is done at an altitude between 1600 – 3300 metres above sea level.** 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.

## **Cycling conditions**

The terrain is a mix of sealed surfaces, unsealed surfaces and off-road (75% sealed, 15% unsealed and 10% off road). Traffic is mostly quiet but with some busy sections. In China you need to be constantly alert for vehicles, potholes, animals, people... everything really! Much of the terrain is hilly with climbs on most days.

## Altitude Profile

### Yunnan BCY 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/>

United Kingdom

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

Lonely Planet

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

**Altitude:** We recommend that for this trip you print out this document on Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) and read it carefully before arriving in Kathmandu. Should any passenger suffer from any serious symptoms of AMS and they are not improving with time (i.e. not acclimatising), then we may have to ask that passenger to leave the trip and return to a lower altitude. This decision would not be taken lightly but would obviously be in the interests of the passenger and his/her health & safety.

### 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 a suitcase or wheelie-bag friendly country. 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 the luggage truck, so 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	Bicycle
<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>• Sunglasses</li><li>• Light 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 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 (i.e.; cold tablets, headache tablets, sleeping tablets)</li><li>• Day pack: big enough for over-night essentials</li><li>• Alarm clock</li><li>• Plastic bags</li><li>• Pocket knife</li><li>• Torch</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Something to carry your personal belongings in while cycling, eg. daypack, bum bag, handlebar bag.</li><li>• Helmet</li><li>• Cycling gloves</li><li>• Water bottle/bladder</li><li>• Sunglasses</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 handle bar extensions &amp; gel seat cover</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, the cycling leader will run a session on 'cycling safety'. Whilst some travellers will have years of touring experience, for others, this might be their first cycling trip ever. 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 Kunming, Lijiang and Dali you will be able to access email, phone, fax and post offices. Outside these cities there will be little chance to email and the main communication will be phone. You should leave your 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 liaising 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 trip 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 we travel through. If you have some that you would like to send us, we would love to have a look.

### **Newsletter**

Our 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.