

(MDD-005) Kunming-Jinghong-Dali-Lijiang-Shangri-La-Kunming (9 Days) (TGM-002)



It is interesting that the minorities' food materials and cooking recipes are always closely related to various natural environments: Bais, inhabited by Erhai Lake, prepare their well reputed fish cooked in clay pot with fresh and pollution-free carps from the lake, Dais, living in hot and humid area, usually dish up their BBQ food cooked with local spiceries and tropical fruits on banana leaves despite plates and salvers, Tibetans, originated from high plateau, no matter whether reside in high land or not now, still take fortifying yak meat and butter tea that can help to guard against the bitter cold as their most favorite foods.

Besides, there are bridge-crossing rice noodle with a lovely story, mushroom hot pot made using local mountain mushrooms and herbs, the three course tea brewed with different materials and by different techniques and is endowed with a philosophy of life: "bear bitterness first, enjoy sweetness second, and recollect the flavor last", etc. A really exciting journey composed of memorable sightseeing and cheerful cuisines tasting is very well arranged and prepared for you!

Day 1/Arrive Kunming

Arrive Kunming, meet your guide at the airport. City tour to Flowers and Birds Market. (D)
Dinner: Yunnan specialties inclusive of cross bridge rice noodle and steam pot chicken.

Cross bridge rice noodle is rice noodles and sliced meat, squid, ham and vegetables with boiling chicken soup under a layer of oil. The legend behind involves a young man studying hard on an island a short way away from his wife and village for the imperial exam which was the only chance for the commons in ancient China to start the official career. Everyday his wife would bring him food. But because of the distance (she had to cross a bridge), the food would get cold. The wife figured out occasionally that by covering the broth with oil, she could keep the food hot. And this food became the young man's most favorite one and helped him to achieve an excellent score finally.



Steam pot chicken: The cooking techniques of the dish rely on a ceramic pot - a squat, round, lidded vessel with an internal spout, or chimney that allows steam to enter and circulate but not to escape. Chicken soup cooked in such a pot makes a superior stock entirely from steam and natural juices. The dish, called steam pot chicken, tops the list of Yunnan specialties. The dish includes medicinal ingredients, such as ginseng, herbs and dried Himalayan caterpillars, to enhance flavor and promote health.

Day 2/Kunming-Stone Forest-Kunming-Jinghong

A whole day tour to the Stone Forest with a stop at a Yi minority's village.

Evening flight (50 min) to Jinghong, Xishuangbanna. Transfer to hotel. (B,L,D)

Lunch: Yiliang roasted duck and local cheese.

Yiliang roasted duck is crisp in skin and tender in meat. Similar to Beijing duck, it is served with green onions, pepper and salt, and duck sauce. However, unlike in Beijing where duck is skinned and wrapped in pancake, Yiliang duck is eaten as a whole. The secret behind the taste and fragrance of Yiliang roasted duck is that it is roasted over pine leaves. A Taiwanese travel host was said to have eaten ten Yiliang ducks at one go!

Day 3/Jinghong

Situated on the borders of Myanmar and Laos, Xishuangbanna is characterized by tropical scenery and unique ethnic cultures.

Drive to Tropical Botanical Garden in Menglun which plays an important role in research of medicinal plants, taxonomy, economic plants and biochemistry and proudly holds 3,000 species of plants. Stop at Folks Culture Village on the way. (B,L,D)

Dinner: served with BBQ cooked with local spiceries, sticky rice cooked in bamboo tube or pineapple, and tropical fruit juice in Dais' Bamboo house.

Dai people love sticky rice. A favorite dish is bamboo rice, made by putting clean rice into a bamboo tube, adding water and soaking for 7 or 8 hours. Finally the mouth of the tube is covered with a banana leaf and the whole thing roasted for about 12 minutes. The resulting soft, delicate rice emits a delicious bamboo fragrance.

Pine apple rice gives a different flavor. The pineapple is hollowed out, stuffed with a mixture of rice, peanuts, pineapple pulp and sugar, and steamed. It is considered both as staple food and dessert.

Day 4/Jinghong-Dali

Half day tour to the Wild Elephant Valley. Fly to Dali in the afternoon. Dali old town exploration. (B,L,D)

Dinner: Dali specialties with fish cooked in clay pot and milk fan.

Bais, inhabited by Erhai Lake, prepare their well reputed fish cooked in clay pot with fresh and pollution-free carps from the lake. This local clay pot used for thick soups and stews

allegedly imparts a fragrance - something like black pepper - to whatever's cooked in it. Clay pot dishes are all over central and northern Yunnan, a true local delight.

Milk fan, or milk cheese is made by mixing yogurt with fresh milk. After being aired for a few hours and deeply fried until it puffs up into special appearance, it can be served hot, dusted with sugar. Owing to the fact that there is vast pasture around Dali which is safe from pollution, milk produced here is second to none, which makes the dish famous for its richness in nutrition.

Day 5/Dali-Lijiang

Overland drive 200 km, or 3 hours to Lijiang. Visit Lijiang Old Town. (B,L,D)

Stop at Xizhou for *three course tea*.

Three course tea is brewed with different materials and by different techniques and is endowed with a philosophy of life: "bear bitterness first, enjoy sweetness second, and recollect the flavor last".

The first course is called "Bitter Tea". Green tea is roasted in a pottery pot until it turns into yellow, with a smell of burning scent. Boiled water is then poured into the pot, making the tea tasted a little bit bitter, but with a faint scent. The second course is called "Sweet Tea" as the host will add brown sugar, a special fan-shaped dairy product and honey in the tea soup. The third course is called "Aftertaste Tea". Materials include popcorn, ginger, xanthoxylus fructus and walnut kernel. One will find flavors of sweet, sour, bitter, and pungent in the tea which reminds the taster of bitter comes first, sweet comes second.

Day 6/Lijiang

Proceed to Yak Meadow of the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain. Then steeped in the show "Impression Lijiang". Visit Baisha Frescos and Former Residence of Joseph Rock. (B,L,D)

Dinner: Naxis' Sandianshui.

Naxis' Sandieshui: Naxi tribe's Three Course Feast inclusive of 18 kinds of local snacks and specialties was originally for distinguished guests only. The feast is divided into sweet dishes (candied fruits, local pudding, etc), cold dishes (dried bean curd, ham, bean-starch noodles, etc.), and hot dishes (mainly steamed ones). It is reputed as Naxi group's Manhanquanxi (Man-Han style Banquet, a massive dinner consisting of Man and Han people's foods served to Emperor in the Qing Dynasty).

Day 7/Lijiang-Shangri-La

Drive 200 KM northern to Shangri-la. Stop at the Yangzi's near-180-degree turn and the Tiger Leaping Gorge. Upon arrival, drive to the ancient town of Shangri-la with rest of the day at leisure for your own exploration. (B,L,D)

Day 8/Shangri-La

Visit Geden Songzanglin Monastery, Pudacuo National Park and a Tibetan family. (B,L,D)

Dinner: Tibetan hot pot and butter tea.

Tibetans, originated from high plateau, no matter whether reside in high land or not now, still take fortifying yak meat and butter tea that can help to guard against the bitter cold as their most favorite foods. The hot pot, cooked in Nixi black earthenware, is made using local mountain mushrooms, herbs and Shangri-la preserved pork.

Day 9/Shangri-La-Kunming-

Transfer to airport for morning flight to Kunming. Rest of the day is at leisure before transfer to airport for the departure flight. (B,L)

Attention: During the National Day Golden Week, the hotel fare in Yunnan will rise.