



# Pandas, Peaks & Pagodas

Join our 11 day small group tour to Southwest China, 11-21 Oct 2026

From sacred Buddhist peaks to rainbow-coloured valleys, uncover the hidden wonders of Yunnan and Sichuan on this 11-day journey through southwest China's most spectacular and spiritual landscapes. Optional five day add-on to see some of China's most iconic sights including Xian's Terracotta Army, and the Great Wall and Forbidden City in Beijing.

## Tour Highlights

- Explore the surreal jagged limestone pillars of the Stone Forest
- Stroll the cobbled alleys of Lijiang Old Town, a living tapestry of Naxi culture
- Ride a chairlift to Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, with panoramic alpine views
- Marvel at the dramatic Tiger Leaping Gorge
- Discover the towering Leshan Grand Buddha from the water
- Meet Giant Pandas in Chengdu
- Experience travel by bullet train



## OPTIONAL 5 DAY ADD-ON

- View the spectacular Terracotta Warriors
- Walk on the iconic Great Wall
- Explore the Forbidden City and Temple of Heaven in Beijing

## Anna Murray & Laura Todd

*With more than 20 years of combined experience in the travel industry and a passion for creating unforgettable journeys, we are excited to be your Tour Escorts on this incredible tailor-made adventure through the quiet and largely unknown areas of Southwest China.*



*After our first trip with Wendy Wu Tours in 2025, we knew we needed to share the hidden gems of China with everyone! We bring a genuine love for helping people discover new cultures, flavours, and stories. Alongside our local guide, our goal is to ensure you feel supported, inspired, and well taken care of from the moment our journey begins.*

*If you are after a small, authentic group tour getting off the beaten track then this is the trip for you!*

**Tour Price from \$7,480** pp twin/double share  
(\$890 single supplement)\*



## Price includes

- Economy class return international fares & taxes from NZ (regional ports included)
- Meals and accommodation
- Sightseeing and entrance fees where stated
- Transportation and transfers
- Bullet train from Lijiang to Chengdu (second class)

## Not included

Travel insurance (compulsory), local tipping RMB485pp

**Contact Anna or Laura to book your seat today!**



Join our Facebook page!



For full details, enquiries and bookings:

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## ITINERARY

### 11-12 OCT: NEW ZEALAND TO KUNMING L, D

Fly overnight from New Zealand, transfer in China to arrive late morning in Kunming. After lunch enjoy time meandering through the formations of the UNESCO-listed Stone Forest, where towering limestone pillars stand tree-like in a fascinating illusion of woodland. Located 120km southeast of Kunming, 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. Return to Kunming and check in to the hotel. This evening sample the local delicacy, Across the Bridge Noodles.

### 13 OCT: DISCOVER DALI B, L, D

Drive to Dali, a charming town that offers a peek at the China of times-gone-by. Sandwiched between the Jade Green Mountains and serene Erhu Lake, Dali is naturally striking in its setting. Mainly a base for the Bai people, Dali has played an important role in the history of south China and was once a post on the old Burma Road. Begin your tour by exploring the fascinating old quarter and lively market to soak up the local atmosphere. Next, visit the age-old Three Pagodas, presented in a perfect triangle, they 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. Later this evening, take a stroll down Foreigners' Street, lined with market stalls selling items from the Bai people, beautiful fabrics and delicious 'small eats' snacks.

### 14 OCT: TRAVEL TO LIJIANG B, L, D

This morning, spend time at lake Erhai (weather permitting take a bike ride lakeside). Explore Xizhou Village, where you can mingle with traditionally dressed Naxi women, and browse its lively local market. After lunch visit a traditional tie dying factory.

Drive to Lijiang, set in the foothills of the magnificent Jade Dragon Snow Mountain. 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.

### 15 OCT: JADE DRAGON SNOW MOUNTAIN B, L, D

This morning, visit Baisha Old Town to view the fascinating Tao and Buddhist frescoes painted during the Ming Dynasty. 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. Visit the Mu Family Embroidery School and watch as locals make intricate pieces of embroidery with the opportunity to buy a piece yourself. After lunch head to the mountains.

Jade Dragon Snow Mountain comprises several peaks, the tallest of which soars 5,500 metres, and is considered a Holy Mountain amongst the Naxi ethnic group and other ethnic minorities in Lijiang. Take a cable car to explore one of the beautiful high meadows and enjoy the amazing vistas.

*Daytime altitude: 3,200m at Jade Dragon Snow Mountain Overnight altitude: 2,300m*

### 16 OCT: LIJIANG - TIGER LEAPING GORGE B, L, D

Journey to the 3,000-metre-deep Tiger Leaping Gorge. With its backdrop of snowcapped mountains, it is one of China's most extraordinary sights with spectacular and breathtaking views. The Gorge is believed to be one of the deepest and most dramatic gorges in the world, measuring at 16km. While hiking along the gorge you can view its roaring stream, cascading waterfalls and magnificent scale - great for those who crave an adventure.

Return to Lijiang and visit the 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. Visitors can enjoy beautiful panoramas of the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain.

Explore the old quarter; the quintessential Chinese 'old town' and wander the jumble of cobbled streets, traditional wooden buildings, and rustic stone bridges.

### 17 OCT: LIJIANG - CHENGDU B, L, D

After breakfast have some free time to explore the old town before being transferred to our bullet train to Chengdu. This evening enjoy a traditional Hot Pot Dinner in Chengdu.

### 18 OCT: CHENGDU - LESHAN B, L, D

Drive 2.5 hours south of Chengdu to Leshan, where you will see the world's largest stone-carved Buddhist monument - the Leshan Grand Buddha. Take a short boat ride in front of the statue to grasp the size of this structure. You will spend around 1 hour at Leshan and will need to get on and off the boat. The Leshan Buddha was built in the 9th century under the direction of Haitong, a monk who felt the presence of Buddha would help calm the waters below so that shipping vessels could make their journey safely. Amazingly, once the structure was completed, the waters below did calm, some say due to the Buddha's presence, others to the large amount of rock removed in order to carve the Buddha, which resulted in a current change in the waters. After lunch return to Chengdu. This afternoon visit Sichuan Cuisine Museum and taking part in a cooking class. Enjoy the dishes you make for dinner.

### 19 OCT: CHENGDU B, L, D

Today you will see China's most famous resident, the Giant Panda. Visit the Panda Conservation Centre where you can learn about China's celebrated bear and see these lovable creatures in surroundings that mirror their natural habitat. It is not guaranteed that you will see the feeding of the younger pandas, as this only happens at the start and end of each day. Sightseeing involves approximately 1.5 hours on foot and there are electric carts offered by private vendors that can be organised at your own cost.

Later, spend 1-2 hours sightseeing around People's Park, visiting a teahouse and the famous Matchmaker's Corner where parents look for suitable suitors for their children. Enjoy a traditional Sichuanese meal for your farewell dinner.

### 20-21 OCT: DEPART CHENGDU B

Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred from your hotel to Chengdu airport, according to the departure time of your international flight.

*Late check-out is not included. Additional nights before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.*

## OPTIONAL 5 DAY ADD-ON: WARRIORS & THE WALL +\$1,700 per person (single supplement \$500)

### 20 OCT: CHENGDU - XIAN B, L, D

This morning travel by bullet train for the 3.5 hour journey to Xian, a city that has long played a pivotal role in China's extensive history and has been a thriving hub for cultural exchange, economic trade as well as national politics for centuries. Home to some of China's most ancient sights, diverse architecture and delicious fares, Xian is a must-see destination

In the afternoon stroll on one of China's best-preserved 14th century city wall that encloses Xian's old town, where your local guide will give you time to explore at your own pace. The wall's ideal spot and layout gives visitors a bird's eye view over this fantastic city. Follow the locals' example and hire a bike to get an ever more spectacular experience.

This evening, dine on delicious Shui Jiao dumplings and watch a performance of Tang Dynasty dancing.

### 21 OCT: XIAN B, L, D

Spend the morning viewing the enigmatic ranks of the life-sized Terracotta Warriors, one of the most significant archaeological discoveries of the 20th century. The unearthed terracotta army holds over 7,000 soldiers, horses and chariots and was built in life-sized form by thousands of workers and designed by Emperor Qin Shi Huang to defend himself in the afterlife. The Museum of the Terracotta Warriors and Horses is located approximately a 1-hour drive outside of Xian. From the bus park to the museum entrance there is a 15-minute walk. There are electric carts offered by private vendors which

can be organised at your own cost. There is no electric cart available for the return from the museum exit to the bus park.

Within the museum area the warriors can be seen in three different 'pits', which are active archaeological digs. The site is large and will take about 2.5 hours to explore. After this, visit the Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Workshop to see smaller models of the warriors being made, which are available for purchase.

After lunch, board your bullet train to Beijing, China's capital. On arrival, you will have dinner at or close to your hotel.

### 22 OCT: BEIJING B, L, D

Rise early this morning and drive around 2 hours northwest of the city to the Mutianyu pass. Here you can take a walk on the Great Wall of China, appreciating the wall itself and the dramatic scenery. Originally built under the first Emperor of China for use as a fortification against northern nomadic tribes, the wall snakes through the northern countryside from the Gobi Desert in the west into the Bohai Sea in the east. The current structure dates back to the Ming Dynasty - over 700 years old.

After walking from the coach to the first section, your group will receive an introduction to the Great Wall's unique history and a briefing on the different walking routes available, depending on your level of fitness.

You will then have approximately 2.5-hours free time to explore at your own pace. Please note that there are many steps at the wall and certain sections are steeper than others. Later, visit a jade factory, and in the afternoon, wander around the beautiful grounds of the Summer Palace, the former holiday retreat of the Qing emperors. The Summer Palace is a stunning example of Chinese garden style, incorporating the Fengshui notion of 'Mountain' and 'Water', seen here with tranquil Kunming Lake and magnificent Longevity Hill. A favourite resort of the Empress Dowager Cixi, the Summer Palace is home to a stunning Marble Boat and the Long Corridor, one of the longest outdoor passageways in the world.

In the evening, enjoy a traditional dinner of Peking Duck.

### 23 OCT: BEIJING B, L, D

Soak up the harmonious ambience of the Temple of Heaven, an orderly oasis in a bustling urban landscape. The Temple of Heaven is one of the most perfect examples of Ming architecture, created as a place of worship for the Emperors, who would ask for prosperity, longevity and good harvest for the people.

Next, head into Beijing's symbolic heart, Tiananmen Square. Built under the guidance of Chairman Mao Zedong, Tiananmen Square is one of the largest public squares in the world, said to hold a capacity crowd of over one million. It houses not only the Monument to the People's Heroes, it is also the final resting place of Chairman Mao himself in the Mausoleum of Mao Zedong.

Enter the magnificent Forbidden City - a complex full of imperial treasures. The sacred centre of the Chinese empire for 500 years and home to the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the Forbidden City is a vast complex of over 900 buildings and covers an area of 180 acres. Since 1987, the Forbidden City has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site and its palatial architectural style has been an influence on many imperial buildings.

A Chinese acrobatic show rounds off the day.

Today includes a full day of sightseeing, predominately on foot.

*Please note: The Forbidden City is closed on Mondays. If this day of touring falls on a Monday, your touring in Beijing will be switched round so that the Forbidden City is visited on an alternative day. To preserve the Forbidden City, the number of entry tickets per day has been significantly reduced.*

*Whilst every effort will be made to obtain the tickets, should this not be possible, then you will instead visit the Forbidden City from the outside and visit the nearby Prince Kung's Palace Museum.*

### 24 OCT: DEPART BEIJING B

Depart in the early hours and arrive in Auckland the same day.

*Late check-out is included on the 23rd of October. Options available to leave on the day of the 24th. Please contact our Reservations team to book.*