

Songtsam Trip “Yunnan & Lhasa” 6N/7D



“In Tibetan culture legend has it that in another time and space there is a kingdom called Shambala. It is a quiet and peaceful kingdom because everybody there knows the source of happiness.”

Mr Pema Dorjee
Founder & Chairman of Songstam

The Three Parallel Rivers area of Yunnan encompasses a majestic land hemmed in by the mighty Yangtze, the free-flowing Mekong, and the wild Salween. Many of the twenty-five different ethnic minorities currently living in Yunnan can be found in this area, which features snow-capped peaks more than 6,000m high, glaciated gorges, and terraced rice fields. The peaceful people that inhabit the region have not only preserved this area for generations, but have also nurtured this “Shangri-La”.

Songtsam have built a series of hotels and lodges in five carefully selected locales, which enable guests to experience the different cultures and landscapes inherent in these regions. By combining stays at the different Songtsam properties our circuit tour takes you into the heart of the Three Parallel Rivers area and lets you explore this magical land.

Hotel Introduction

Songtsam Lodge Lijiang (2,400m)

Our retreat is located at a nearby small Naxi-ethnic village named Ciman, where the traditional way of living still thrives. Surrounded by pinewoods and a pear garden, Songtsam Linka Lijiang offers spectacular views of the old town, Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, and Lashi Lake. The hotel's design is grand in appearance and has an interior layout in the style of a Naxi courtyard that is decorated with exquisite Hui-style stone sculptures.



Songtsam Linka Shangri-La (3,300m)

Hidden in the city's peaceful and green valleys between Tibetan villages and Himalayan barley fields, our hotel is located a short distance away from the Songzanlin Monastery. Tibetan-style rooms, dining facilities, spa, and other modern amenities are housed in lovingly hand-built stone structures spread over 21 acres of hillside surrounded by snow-capped mountains.



Songtsam Linka Lhasa (3,700m)

Built on the edge of an old park our retreat offers spectacular views of the nearby Potala Palace located only 5 kilometers away. From the hotel's slaked lime coloured walls to the indigo carved windows and fish-fin shaped facade, all of these architectural details pay great respect to traditional artisans, Tibetan culture, and ancient wisdom. Rooms exhibit a unique combination of modern and traditional Tibetan aesthetics that are elegantly decorated with wooden floors, wall tapestries, and handcrafted copperware. Each room is also fully equipped with oxygen concentrators to relieve AMS and ensure good rest.



Trip Schedule

Program starts from Lijiang and ends in Lhasa. All information in this itinerary is accurate to the best of our knowledge but please note that changes to our trips can and do occur.

Day	Activities
Day 1	Over night stay at Songtsam Lodge Lijiang
Arrival	Pick up from Lijiang Sanyi International Airport. Transfer to Songtam Lodge Lijiang. (40 mins drive)
19:00	Welcome dinner at the lodge.
Day 2	Over night stay at Songtsam Lodge Lijiang
09:00	After breakfast, visit the Dayan Ancient Town, walk along the ancient street and reach at the Zhongyi Market, experience the local life of the Naxi Minority.
12:00	Return to the lodge and have lunch.
15:00	In the afternoon, visit the Wenfeng Temple, one of 'The Five Famous Temples of Lijiang'. It is the only temple in northwest Yunnan where monks can stay for over three years to engage in intense meditation. After visiting the main temple we take a stone path or drive to the mediation cave located in the mountain above. Once we reach the top of the mountain, you can overlook the Lijiang dam to the east, the Beacon Hill, and the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain to the north resulting in a spectacular panoramic view.
19:00	Dinner at the lodge.
Day 3	Over night stay at Songtsam Linka Shangri-La
09:00	After breakfast, drive to Tiger Leaping Gorge to do a day hike. Tiger Leaping Gorge is a scenic canyon on the Jinsha River, a primary tributary of the upper Yangtze River. It is one of the top 10 famous hiking trails in the world. In particular, we choose the most beautiful and less difficult route from Chama Guesthouse to Zhongtu Inn. However, the route can be extended according to your physical strength and preference.
12:00	Have lunch at the local restaurant.
16:00	In the afternoon, depart for Shangri-La
19:00	Have dinner at the hotel.

Day 4	Over night stay at Songtsam Linka Shangri-La
09:00	After breakfast, visit the Songzanlin Monastery, the largest Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Yunnan province and sometimes referred to as the “ Little Potala Palace” . Located just a few-minutes walk from the lodge, it is also the most important monastery in southwest China.
12:00	Enjoy an outside BBQ lunch overlooking the meadow and monastery.
14:00	In the afternoon, visit the Shangri-La Linka Experiencing Center to appreciate Thangka paintings. Learn about the development process of Thangka, then follow the teacher’s guidance to draw your own Thangka. The thangka is a Tibetan Buddhist painting using ground mineral pigment on cotton or silk appliqué, usually depicting a Buddhist deity, scene, or mandala. Traditionally thangka paintings were not only valued for their aesthetic beauty, but also primarily used as aids in meditational practices.
19:00	Have dinner at the hotel.
Day 5	Over night stay at Songtsam Linka Lhasa
9:00	After breakfast, visit the Napa Lake, which is both an ideal field for herdsmen and a paradise for many species of birds.
11:00	Aftwards, drive to the Shangri-La airport and take the flight to Lhasa. (MU 5774 12:40-14:50 Shangri-La/ Lhasa)
15:00	Arrive at Lhasa and check into Songtsam Linka Lhasa.
16:00	Relax in the afternoon, have afternoon tea.
18:00	Have dinner at the hotel.
Day 6	Over night stay at Songtsam Linka Lhasa
09:00	After breakfast,visit Potala Palace, the iconic heart of Tibetan Buddhism and the highest palace in the world.
12:30	Have lunch at the hotel.
15:00	In the afternoon, visit the Jokhang Temple, the spiritual center of Tibet and the holiest destination for all Tibetan pilgrims.
17:00	Afterwards go to Barkhor Street to experience the most vibrant bazaar in Lhasa.
19:00	Have farewell dinner at the hotel.
Day 7	
Departure	After breakfast, transfer to Lhasa Gonggar Airport.



Send your trip request to loyaltyprogram@globalhighlights.com to secure your US\$100/person for this trip!

Trip Costs

Price unit: USD xxxx per person

Date	Low Season	Shoulder Season	Peak Season	Holidays
Private Tour (2 PAX)	3659	4019	4309	4469
Private Tour (8 PAX))	2799	3069	3219	3399

***Low season:** 19 Feb - 31 Mar, 1 Nov - 30 Nov, 2024

Shoulder season: 3 Jan - 5 Feb, 1 Apr - 26 Apr, 6 May - 30 Jun, 24 Aug - 27 Sep, 8 Oct

- 31 Oct, 1 Dec -22 Dec, 2024

Peak season: 1 Jan - 2 Jan, 1 Jul - 23 Aug, 2024, 23 Dec - 31 Dec, 2024

Holidays: 6 Feb - 18 Feb, 27 Apr - 5 May, 28 Sep - 7

Oct, 2024 Land Costs INCLUDE:

- All land transfers on best-in-class local transportation indicated in the itinerary.
- All admission fees and activities indicated in the itinerary.
- All accommodation based on double occupancy.
- All meals starting from dinner on the first day to breakfast on the last day.
- Drinking water and snacks throughout the trip.
- Standard drinking water and snacks throughout the trip.
- Complimentary minibar in guest rooms.
- Service of local guides.

Land Costs DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- Medical, travel insurance or evacuation insurance plans.
- Domestic or international airfare to Lijiang and from Shangri-La.
- Domestic airfare from Shangri-La to Lhasa.
- Personal telecommunication.
- Excursions and activities not included in itinerary.



Send your trip request to loyaltyprogram@globalhighlights.com
to secure your US\$100/person for this trip!

Cancellation Policy:

Low Season/Shoulder Season:

1. Full payment has to be done to confirm the booking.
2. 15 days or more prior to trip departure, free cancellation applies, the payment service charge (based on the payment platform) will be deducted.
3. 8-14 days prior to trip departure, 20% of the full payment will be deducted as the temporary economic compensation.
4. 0-7 days prior to trip departure, 30% of the full payment will be deducted as the temporary economic compensation.

Peak Season/Holidays:

1. Full payment has to be done to confirm the booking.
2. 30 days prior to trip departure, 50% of the full payment will be deducted as the temporary economic compensation.
3. 0-29 days prior to trip departure, the full payment will be deducted as the temporary economic compensation.

Trip Expectations

Trip difficulty: This journey is considered moderate when touring and moderate when hiking. Our itinerary includes full days of activities, which start early in the morning and end in the evening. Each person can respond to a change in altitude differently. In the event of altitude sickness, we would move to a lower altitude. After plenty of rest, symptoms usually subside. For more information, please consult your doctor.

Road conditions and transportation: Depending on the size of the group, we travel in well maintained SUVs or vans. Experienced Songtsam drivers drive all vehicles. Some sections of the road follow winding mountain paths and are bumpy especially when some parts are under construction. We will make stops at beautiful villages and scenic spots on the way and will prepare water and snacks for the road trips.

Weather: During this trip you will experience diverse temperatures. The temperature can change from 20 degrees centigrade to 5 degrees centigrade within one day. Wearing layers of clothes is advisable to allow for changes in temperature.

Meals: During your journey you will get to try Tibetan cuisine, which includes a good amount of barley flour-based items, such as dumplings and noodles, as well as red meat, such as yak, beef and pork. At Lijiang and Shangri-La Linkas, and Tacheng, Cizhong, Meili, and Benzilan lodges, we provide set menus, which combine Tibetan and Chinese cuisine.

Emergency evacuation and procedures: We suggest all travellers purchase an International SOS (an AEA company) Service Plan, which provides emergency evacuation to the nearest medical facility of international standards.

Trip escorts: Our well-trained local guides are specialists on Tibet and the local region and will travel with you throughout the trip. All originating from different villages and areas, all Songtsam guides have stories to share about their hometowns, which provides deeper travel experiences for all guests to understand the local culture and geography.

The Songtsam Story



Some memories never fade. It seems like only yesterday that Songtsam founder and Chairman Mr Pema Dorjee was on his way back to Shangri-La with ambitious plans to shoot a documentary of his childhood home. While it had been many years since he had last set foot in his native land, fond memories came pouring back. He remembered the excitement of climbing local mountains as a young boy, the intimate solitude of his town's temples, and the people who helped define him as a person.

Finally, he was home. The rush of emotions made him wonder: How could he give back? What more could he do? Soon it all became clear. He thought about the region's rich culture and how he could create a way for travellers to come and experience a new way of life. A place that was more than the usual hotel and gift shops, a place where guests could immerse themselves in living history. So Pema turned his family's small guesthouse into the first Songtsam lodge.

Inspired by the rich Tibetan culture, he worked with local artisans and members of the community to help produce and run Songtsam Lodge Shangri-La. Eleven properties and eighteen years later, Pema's vision continues to grow, and so does the Songtsam experience.

About the Area



The great China tectonic plate runs into the Tibetan Plateau in northern Yunnan, forging high mountain ranges with soaring snow-packed peaks. Three major rivers, the Yangtze (Jinshajiang), Mekong (Lancangjiang) and Salween (Nujiang) run through deep gorges with wild, untamed scenery. This charming destination is diverse in nature and culture due to its unique geography, indeed, one can experience all four seasons in just one day. Due to the vast range in altitude, travellers can quickly move from cold snowy mountains to warm flower-filled valleys.

Northwest Yunnan is the richest area in China in terms of biodiversity, boasting unique flora and fauna, and is possibly the most biologically diverse temperate region on earth. This is the original location of the world's gardens: in spring and summer, the surrounding hills are blanketed with rhododendrons and camellias. The Victorians collected and brought these to the Western world. The temperate forests and lowlands contain over 3,000 species of orchids and more than 200 of the world's 400 species of rhododendron. In summer time, strikingly blue irises are in blossom along the mountain paths.



Bird watching and cycling bring travellers in close proximity to all kinds of migrant birds at their winter heaven around Napa Lake, including the black-necked crane – the holy bird for Tibetans. High in the forests between the Mekong and Yangtze River lives the rare Yunnan Black snub-nosed monkey (*Rhinopithecus biteti*), one of the world's most endangered primates - fewer than 2,000 are now found in the wild. These monkeys live at the highest altitude (3,000-4,500m) of any animal primate.



Historically, people were separated by the soaring mountains and deep gorges in this area, facilitating the development of the most distinctive ethnic cultures. Kham Tibetans in Diqing are characterized by their big white wooden houses and colourful customs, which differ from Tibetans in other areas of Tibet. In this area along the Lancang River, although the shining golden roofs of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries sparkle in the light, Tibetans here follow Catholic teachings and practice their ceremonies at small Catholic churches surrounded by vineyards. Travelling from the highlands to the banks of the rivers, styles of housing and costume change. The Lisu people, another ethnic group, dwell close to the water in the mountain valleys.



The Tea Horse Road, an ancient trade route linking tea-producing areas with Tibet, connects the mountains and deep gorges as well as different ethnic groups. For hundreds of years, horse caravans travelled along this route carrying tea to Tibet and India, and bringing other commodities back home. This route has formed a corridor rich in culture, as different groups interact with each other in their daily lives. Today, one can travel around this area journeying along different parts of this ancient trail.

