

YUNNAN PU'ER TEA ODYSSEY

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INTRODUCTION

Bordering on Laos, Burma, and Vietnam – and only a short boat ride from Thailand – Yunnan is one of the most ethnically diverse and geographically stunning areas of the world. Twenty-six of China's fifty-six ethnic minorities reside in Yunnan, and The Hutong's Yunnan Bike Journey gives riders the opportunity to experience the variety in Chinese culture while taking a challenging, yet fun, ride through remote mountain villages and verdant tea forests.

This 385km ride takes us through Xishuangbanna, the southernmost prefecture of Yunnan Province – China's most southwestern province. Renowned for its tropical climate and lush rainforests, the region is teeming with wildlife, rare plants, and historical & cultural significance. Xishuangbanna is the birthplace of tea cultivation, and is home to the Pu'er tea industry.

Each day, adventurers meet a different ethnicity and savor their unique specialties. The secluded villages bring new flavors, new recipes, new stories, and new friends. From the area's most populous minority, the Dai, to the region's most remote ethnic groups like the Jinuo or the Han, The Hutong's Bike Journey explores one of the last virgin lands where one can find undisturbed but welcoming cultures.

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WHAT A FANTASTIC TIME! TRAVELLING IN CHINA CAN BE CHALLENGING IN MANY WAYS, SO HAVING AN AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCE IS NOT ALWAYS EASY. THE YUNNAN BIKE JOURNEY IS THE ABSOLUTELY PERFECT WAY TO EXPERIENCE A NEW TRAVELLING FRONTIER, SINK INTO A CULTURE GENUINELY AND TRUTH FULLY AND HAVE A GREAT TIME THE WHOLE WAY. IF YOU WANT TO SEE CHINA, CYCLE, EAT GREAT FOOD, MEET REAL LOCALS AND LEARN WHAT IT IS TO BE IN CHINA NOWADAYS, LOOK NO FURTHER. OUTSTANDING VALUE AND THE BEST IMAGINABLE WAY TO SEE CHINA.

- CHARLIE WINN

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OVERVIEW

DURING THE COURSE OF 7 DAYS OF CYCLING, WE WILL COMPLETE 385KM (GIVE OR TAKE) OF CYCLING – GIVE OR TAKE, BECAUSE OUR ITINERARIES OFTEN VARY SLIGHTLY, GIVEN THE TENDENCY OF SERENDIPITY TO PROVIDE EXTRA OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY.

BIKING DIFFICULTY:

3.5 out of 5

PRICE:

9,900rmb; does not include airfare

DEPARTURE DATE:

Saturday, June 27

RETURN DATE:

Sunday, July 5

HOW TO BOOK:

Contact morgan@thehutong.com for booking information.



JOURNEY MAP



- 01 JINGHONG 景洪
- 02 MENGLUN 勐伦
- 03 GANLANBA 橄榄坝
- 04 MANBO 曼伯
- 05 BULANGSHAN 布朗山
- 06 MANZHAO 曼召
- 07 NANNUOSHAN 南糯山
- 08 JINGHONG 景洪

ITINERARY



DAY 0 / 0KM

TRAVEL DAY ARRIVE IN JINGHONG

Flights to Jinghong typically transfer in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan. Flights to and from Kunming are plentiful; flights to and from Jinghong are not. This might mean that there's a bit of a layover in Kunming. After a day of air travel, riders will have the chance to check into the hotel and explore Jinghong – a sleepy yet vibrant tropical town – full of markets and delicious minority food.

DAY 1 / 53KM

JINGHONG-MENGLUN 景洪 至勐伦

After a morning trip to the bike shop for outfitting and an overview of bike safety, maintenance, and route details – and a trip to the local grocery store – the group drives outside of the city where the ride begins. This first day of the bike journey is perhaps the most difficult, with nearly 30km of rolling hills (with an emphasis on uphill). After a stop at a family-run tea processing center, there's a glorious downhill section through old-growth rainforest and into a Dai village just outside of Menglun, where our dinner feast awaits us.

DAY 2 / 43KM

MENGLUN-GANLANBA 勐伦至橄榄坝

The morning of the second day takes us past beautiful tropical lowlands, and involves a stop in a pineapple plantation where we get the chance to sample some of the local produce. After lunch and an afternoon ride, we finish at a 5 star resort to rest after two intense days. That night we hit the local streets for some irresistible local street vendor appetizers, followed by a Dai feast characterized by a subtle combination of both sour and spicy fresh salads and marinated meats. The hosts for this night's dinner are also famous in the area for their corn-distilled firewater.

DAY 3 / 85KM

GANLANBA-MANBO 橄榄坝至曼伯

This is the longest day of riding, but also one of the most rewarding. We start the day in the lowlands, riding through mixed agricultural farms, Dai temples and local markets. We have lunch with a local Dai family, and learn more about rubber - which almost all families in the area cultivate - and its effect on the area. After a short rest, we make the (uphill) ascent into Manbo, a pristine Bulang minority village, and our home for the evening.



DAY 4/27KM

MANBO-BULANGSHAN 曼伯至布朗山

Beginning with breakfast with our host families and a short walk to the village temple, we will then bike our way up into primetime tea elevation. In the afternoon we check into our guest homes, rest, and take a wildlife nature trek through the forest bordering Burma. The night of feasting then begins! With a colorful banquet, riders sample from a plethora of locally sourced fresh specialties.



DAY 5/70KM

BULANGSHAN-MANZHAO 布朗山至曼召

After a stunning (and downhill) morning ride through old growth rainforest on rustic cobblestone roads, the group stops to eat lunch with a local family in Jiliang village. The afternoon gives riders a ride of rolling hills on towards to Manzhao, where we try our hand at traditional papermaking and handicrafts. The afternoon will also include a cooking lesson on local Manzhao specialties. While the menu is always seasonal, past dishes have included various salsas, pineapple rice, and local barbeque recipes. Evening accommodations are with friendly families in Manzhao.



DAY 6/50KM

MANZHAO-NANNUOSHAN 曼召至南糯山

The morning bike ride is flat as a pancake, and will take our adventurers to the Menghai Yunshan Tea Factory, where we learn the ins and outs of Pu'er tea processing and packaging, along with a little bit of history. The ride continues on into the afternoon to nearby Nannuoshan, where we pick and process our own tea with the help of local experts. This evening's home stay is with a different hill tribe – the Hani minority. Dinner is a musical and cultural experience at The Hani Cultural Center, along with a sampling of local foods, music, and dance. Here we will enjoy, among other dishes, marinated pork meat and sticky rice stuffed into bamboo sections and sealed with needle grass, then slowly roasted on coals. Accommodations are in comfortable village homes.



DAY 7/55KM

NANNUOSHAN- JINGHONG 南糯山至景洪

The final day finishes with an easy, mostly downhill, ride into Xishuangbanna's capital. A swimming pool and cold beers await us at the hotel. Plenty of time in the afternoon is left for souvenir shopping, and we have a chance to say goodbye over a farewell dinner at a top-secret restaurant.

DAY 8/0KM

TRAVEL DAY LEAVE JINGHONG

Sign off on a bike ride of a lifetime, sharing the stories with new friends. Flights depart out of Jinghong for Kunming, or anywhere else your travel plans may take you.

FITNESS, ATTITUDE, & DIFFICULTY (READ THIS!)



You do not need to be a Tour-De-France caliber rider to complete this ride. However, it is a physically challenging ride, and it is recommended that you train before you join us. Riding around Beijing is a good start, but try and find some time to ride up a hill or two, and change gears. As long as you are in good shape, stay healthy, eat well and get enough sleep, you should have no problem riding every day and making it to each day's destination. We have built the itinerary specifically to ensure everyone is fully capable of succeeding.

Parts of our ride will take us to elevations beyond 5,000 feet (over 1,000 meters). This isn't terribly high, but it means there are some serious hills - be ready and keep this in mind when training. Jinghong, our starting and ending point, is at approximately 600 meters; the highest point on the trip is approximately 1,600 meters, which should give you an idea of the hills involved. All in all, it's a fun ride, but fitness will be an asset.

The Hutong's Yunnan Bike Journey is just that – a journey on a bicycle. It's not a race or a competition, but an opportunity to move at just the right speed through beautiful villages, say "hello" to locals, stop for an impromptu pineapple snack stop, or sneak off into the rainforest for a look at ancient tea trees. It is by no means an easy journey – while some might enjoy an "All Downhill" bike trip, we at The Hutong think that the wonderfully fresh meals and expansive scenery are enjoyed best when earned with a tough uphill.



SUPPORT

We will be supported by a small bus that will carry our food, water, luggage, and equipment. The back up bus will sweep the route. So if feel like you're tired, have some sore legs, or just want an easy day, the bus will be there to pick you up. We will also have a mechanic following the group for patching flat tires or fixing any other problems that may arise.



MEALS & SNACKS

The Hutong will organize three meals a day, including plenty of carbs and protein to fuel you up for the ride. Most breakfasts are rice noodles, accompanied by a variety of local spices and pickled veggies. Lunches and Dinners are at local homes and restaurants, and are invariably fresh, colorful, and often spicy. Please let your Hutong guides know if you have any food allergies, or cannot eat spicy foods. We will make every effort to accommodate you.

While we will provide some snacks, we recommend that participants bring along comfort food they know they will like (granola bars, energy gels, powerbars, or anything they know will get them through the day). We'll also provide fresh fruit as it appears along the route.

SAFETY

The Hutong requires helmets for all riders on all of its cycling trips. Your guides are trained in first aid and bicycle safety, but it is your responsibility to ensure that you ride safely. For more information on safe bicycle riding, please refer to our Bicycle Safety Guidelines.



DRINKS

We bring plenty of clean, bottled water along for the ride, and make sure to provide lots of rehydration stops. We also include sugary drinks at meal times for a bit of an extra boost, as well as plenty of cold beer along the way. We do not provide energy drinks or sports drinks.



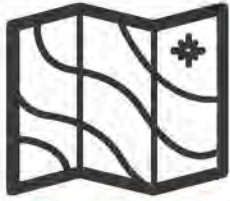
ROAD CONDITIONS

While most roads are paved, there are occasional cobblestone sections and sections with gravel or potholes. The bikes available for rent will be basic 21-speed Chinese Mountain bikes. While we welcome participants to bring their own mountain bikes, we strongly discourage anyone from bringing a road bike, as the roads will tear your tires to shreds.



ACCOMODATIONS

The first and last nights of this ride, as well as the third night, will be spent in hotels (with swimming pools!) Other than these three nights, this is not a luxury vacation. Riders will be staying in local guesthouses / hotels along the route, as well as home stays. Outside of Jinghong, accommodations are very basic. There is hot water at each place of accommodation, but generally no wifi (and sometimes no cellular service).



GUIDES

Each Yunnan Bicycle Journey comes fully equipped with two English-speaking guides who are familiar with the terrain and extremely knowledgeable about the area's culture, industry, and history. We also work very closely with two local guides who know and love the area, and also help to provide all kinds of wonderful experiences.



WEATHER

Xishuangbanna is tropical and hot, hence why we are calling this trip the Summer Sizzler: the highs will be in the mid 30s, and the lows will be in the high 20s (Celsius). We will also undoubtedly encounter rainfall during the ride. While the rain will cool you off, it can also come down heavily. In short: you will need rain gear, plenty fluids to keep hydrated, and you should be comfortable in hot weather.

FLIGHTS

The Hutong will organize a group flight departing from Beijing to Jinghong on Day 0, and from Jinghong to Beijing on Day 8. We work with a reputable travel agent to secure the lowest possible prices, and do not mark up flights. Please let us know if you're interested in joining the group flight; if you'd like to arrange your own flights to or from Jinghong, or add on any extra destinations, you can consult us for travel tips (but the flights are yours to organize!).



ARRIVING & DEPARTING

This trip will begin and end in Jinghong. If you are flying on the group flight, The Hutong's guide will help you check in and arrange luggage at the airport in Beijing.



HEALTH

We recommend that you visit a travel medical doctor or consult with the CDC and ask about the following vaccinations: typhoid, polio, tetanus and hepatitis A. Cases of Malaria in this area are almost non-existent, though the CDC still lists it as an area where infection is possible. Please consult with your travel doctor or other medical professional as to whether or not anti-malarials are necessary. In the past, there have been cases of Dengue fever, in which case The Hutong takes precaution to provide mosquito nets, as well as mosquito repellent at all possible occasions.



MONEY AND EXTRA EXPENSES

The Chinese currency is the Ren Min Bi (The People's Currency), or the yuan. ATMs are plentiful in Xiamen, but hard to find in the smaller villages and towns. In most places you won't need money, except for snacks or drinks. There will be several stops along the way for local keepsakes, in which case you may wish to have a little bit of money; no more than a few hundred rmb should be sufficient, unless you'd like to stock your tea collection (in which case, you can spend as much as you like). Of course, you can always pay with Wechat or Alipay, too.



CULTURAL TIDBITS

China is a country home to 56 unique ethnic minorities. Yunnan is one of the most culturally diverse province, with 26 of the nation's 56 ethnicities. 13 of these ethnicities call Yunnan home.

Tea was first cultivated in Yunnan, before India or anywhere else in China. Many of Xishuangbanna's ethnicities still consume teas in ways we might find strange – scrambled into eggs, mixed into salads, or cooked into soups.

Though Xishuangbanna is now officially Chinese, it was once ruled as a part of the Thai Kingdom. The tribal leaders in this area paid tribute to Burmese Kings, Thai Royalty, or the Chinese Emperor – as opportunity saw fit.

SERENDIPITY

Hutong trip leaders travel regularly to destinations to develop relationships with local contacts to provide the most authentic cultural experiences possible. As such, trip itineraries are subject to change, pending the discovery of an even better activity or destination. Itineraries may also be subject to change due to weather, traffic, or government policies.

PACKING LIST

THIS IS NOT INTENDED TO BE AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST.
PLEASE USE YOUR OWN JUDGMENT WHEN PACKING. KEEP PACKING TO A MINIMUM

- YOUR OWN HELMET!
- BIKE SHORTS OR PANTS. (These are not required but you – and your behind – may find the extra padding helpful during the longer days)
- SYNTHETIC T-SHIRT OR BIKING SHIRTS. (Synthetic shirts will wick sweat faster allowing you to stay cool when it is warm out. They will also dry faster allowing you to stay dry in the rain)
- LIGHTWEIGHT FLEECE OR VEST.
- WATERPROOF AND BREATHABLE JACKET. (in case we are caught riding in the rain you will want something to keep you dry while allowing you to vent body heat.)
- RIDING GLOVES
- HAT OR CAP
- ATHLETIC SHOES If cycling in clipless shoes for exploring the towns.
- A CAMELBACK TYPE HYDRATION PACK, OR OTHER LARGE WATER BOTTLE THAT CAN FIT IN A CYCLING CAGE
- SMALL PERSONAL FIRST AID KIT
- POWERBARS, GOO, OR OTHER ENERGY SNACKS
- POWDERED DRINK MIX
- SUNSCREEN & SWIMSUIT
- CAMERA
- FLASHLIGHT OR HEAD TORCH
- GPS (OPTIONAL BUT A GOOD IDEA)
- CASUAL CLOTHES – While most of our time will be spent on bike it is a good idea to have some casual but non-athletic clothes for our time in Jinghong and the villages
- TOOTHBRUSH & TOOTHPASTE
- SOAP / BODY WASH
- SHAMPOO / CONDITIONER
- ANY OTHER PERSONAL NEED ITEMS
- A DAY PACK (For your camera, snacks, and anything else you would like to carry on your person)
- FLIP FLOPS
- A TOWEL
- INSECT SPRAY (mosquito spray)
- CREAM (VASELINE) FOR CHAFING
- EAR PLUGS (there are roosters abound in many of the villages we will be staying in)
- SLEEP MASKS (optional, this being an area of China that is still mainly agricultural, some of our hosts rise quite early to bring in the harvest – earlier than some prefer to get up)
- SLEEP BAG (optional home stay families provide mattresses, pillows and sheets, but at times participants prefer their own personal sleeping bag)



The Hutong

Sharing Culture, Sharing Knowledge

The Hutong is Beijing's cultural exchange center for foreigners, expatriates and locals nestled in the heart of old Beijing in a renovated courtyard home. Aside from our core business in the Chinese capital, we design unforgettable travel experiences around China. The Hutong actively engages with other ethical businesses and organizations that contribute to long-term sustainable development in the regions where we travel.

PARTNERSHIP WITH





The Hutong
Sharing Culture, Sharing Knowledge



TEA JOURNEYS