ULTIMATE CHINA

DETAILED ITINERARY

Nov 06/26



China - 5,000 years of history. That alone is enough to draw most people to the Middle Kingdom. Our Ultimate China journey travels through eastern and southwestern China, revealing the country's major cultural and natural treasures while taking you far beyond the classic highlights.

Beginning in Beijing, explore iconic landmarks including Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven, and the magnificent Mutianyu section of the Great Wall, with a cable-car ride offering spectacular views. Experience Beijing's traditional Hutongs by rickshaw before we travel by first-class train to Xi'an, home of the remarkable Terracotta Warriors, Bronze Chariots, Ancient City Wall, and lively Muslim Streets.

Continue to Lijiang and discover its enchanting Dayan Ancient City, Black Dragon Pool, Dongba Museum, Yufeng Temple, and traditional Naxi villages. Journey through Tiger Leaping Gorge and into the spectacular Himalayan landscapes o Shangri-La, town of Dukezong. We continue to Tacheng and Deqin, including encounters with

FACTS & HIGHLIGHTS

• 28 land days • Maximum 16 travelers • Start in Beijing, finish in Hong Kong • All meals included • Includes 4 internal flights and 3 train journeys • Walk on the The Great Wall • Explore the Forbidden City • Cosmopolitan city of Shanghai • See the Terra Cotta Warriors • Cruise the Yangtze Rivers Three Gorges and visit the dam • Travel by boat on the Li River, Guilin • Visit the UNESCO Panda Breeding Sanctuary • Search for the rare, high-altitude golden monkey • Explore Lijiang - a UNESCO World Heritage Site • Visit a traditional Naxi village • View Hong Kong from Victoria Peak

DEPARTURE DATES & PRICE

Sep 01 - Sep 28, 2028 - $10995 USD

Activity Level: 3

Comfort Level: 5 days over 9,000 feet. Some windy roads and long drive

ACCOMMODATIONS

Comfortable, well-located accommodations with private bathrooms throughout. Includes 3 nights on a Yangtze River cruise ship.



Yunnan's rare Golden Snub-nosed monkeys, Mingyong Glacier, and the Great Bend of the Jinsha River before leaving the Tibetan plateau, flying to Chengdu and it's Giant Panda Sanctuary.

The journey continues through Chongqing, Zhangjiajie, and Shanghai, Dazu Caves, a Yangtze River cruise and Three Gorges Dam, Zhangjiajie National Forest Park, and Shanghai's gardens, Bund, Jewish heritage, and water towns. Finally, enjoy Guilin's Li River and Yangshuo countryside before traveling by first-class fast train to the vibrant metropolis of Hong Kong, bringing this extensive and remarkable Chinese adventure to a memorable close.





DAY 1 ARRIVE IN BEIJING

We are met on arrival at Beijing airport and transferred to our hotel. Tonight we have an orientation and welcome dinner.

Overnight in Beijing.

DAY 2 TIANANMEN SQUARE, FORBIDDEN CITY, HUTONGS, SUMMER PALACE

We begin with a walk through Tiananmen Square en route to our morning visit to the Forbidden City,





known as the Imperial Museum and a UNESCO Site. In its 500-year history only 24 Emperors and their attendants could ever have known about its 800 buildings and 9000 chambers.

In the afternoon, we explore one of the few remaining hutongs (old alleys) on foot and by rickshaw, followed an exploration to the Summer Palace (UNESCO) gardens with its poetic and evocative names such as 'Ordinate Clouds' and the 'Jade Wave'. Stroll under the covered gallery winding its way along the north shore of Kunming Lake.

Overnight in Beijing.

DAY 3 THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA, MING TOMBS

Today we visit the Great Wall, (Mutianyu Great Wall) a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Every tower and turret stands just as it did when the Mongols overran the country 700 years ago. Our next visit is to the famed Ming Tombs where we walk along the sacred path to the vast imperial burial ground and see the 3rd Emperor's Tomb.

Overnight in Beijing.

DAY 4 TEMPLE OF HEAVEN, TRAIN TO XI'AN, BELL TOWER AT NIGHT

This morning we begin by visiting the Temple of Heaven (UNESCO) which the emperor visited twice a year to pray for good harvests. If we leave a little bit early, we can join a small group who practice Tai Chi every morning just outside of the temple park. You can simply watch or participate as the locals will likely enjoy it as much as you!

In the afternoon, we take a fast train to Xi'an. Situated on the crossroads between China and Central Asia, Xi'an was once one of the wealthiest and most sophisticated cities in the world.

For those who would like a short walk to the Bell Tower which is spectacular when lit up at night, this is only a 10 minute walk along one of Xian's main streets.

Overnight in Xi'an.

DAY 5 XI'AN - TERRACOTTA WARRIORS, ANCIENT CITY WALL

A memorable day starts with a visit to the Terracotta Warriors (UNESCO). We discover the famous clay army of soldiers and part of the tomb of Qin Shi Huang Di, the first emperor of China.
In the afternoon we will drive back to city and enjoy a stroll on the top of Ancient City Wall, followed by the Great Mosque (built in the 8th century) located in the Muslim district with it's unique and unusual architecture.
This evening, we enjoy a dumpling banquet with the spectacular Empress of the Tang Dynasty Show, a colorful celebration of China's golden age. Featuring elaborate costumes, traditional music and graceful dance performances, this captivating production brings to life the splendour and elegance of the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD), one of China's most prosperous and culturally rich periods.
Overnight in Xi'an.

DAY 6 XI'AN SIGHTS - FLY TO LIJIANG (UNESCO)

This morning we visit the Wild Goose Pagoda, home to over 600 sets of Buddhist scriptures.

We complete our stay in Xi'an with a visit to the History Museum, one of the largest in Asia, to see various artifacts unearthed at sites in the area.


Great Wall

This afternoon we fly to Lijiang, a beautiful city in the mountains of Yunnan Province. Upon arrival, we begin our exploration of Lijiang's Ancient City, the historic heart of Lijiang and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

We wander through the atmospheric maze of cobbled lanes, stone bridges and traditional wooden houses, with lively courtyards, small shops and waterways flowing through the old town. The ancient city offers a fascinating glimpse into the rich cultural heritage of the Naxi people and the trading history of this remarkable region.

Overnight in Lijiang.

(Altitude: 7,900 ft/2,400 m)

DAY 7 LIJIANG - TIGER LEAPING GORGE, 1000 YEAR OLD NAXI VILLAGE

Our first stop is Tiger Leaping Gorge. Legend has it that a tiger, pursued by a hunter, leapt to freedom using a rock at the bottom of the gorge. It is here that the mighty Yangtze is squeezed between two massive walls of rock, creating a roaring spectacle of water.

In the afternoon, we see the first bend of the Yangtze and visit Stone Drum Village, which, at over 1,000 years old, is the oldest Naxi village in the region. We see the 700-year-old Stone Drum and admire the architecture.

Overnight in Lijiang.

(Altitude: 7,900 ft/2,400 m)

DAY 8 LIJIANG - YUFENG TEMPLE, TRADITIONAL VILLAGE OF SHUHE

Lijiang is a major centre of the Naxi people, a minority who live in a matrilineal society, where many of the old customs survive to this day. They have inhabited this region for well over a thousand years and have their own written language that uses a unique system of pictographs.

Today we visit Yufeng Temple and the village of Yuhu, where Dr. Joseph Rock, one of the first foreign botanists, lived with local people for over 12 years. A visit to his old house will tell us more about Lijiang.

Next, a short drive takes us to Shuhe, a picturesque traditional Naxi village. We have lunch and enjoy a walk through the old town. This evening we attend a Naxi cultural performance.

Overnight in Lijiang.

(Altitude: 7,900 ft/2,400 m)

DAY 9 LIJIANG - BLACK DRAGON POOL, TO SHANGRI-LA

The old town of Lijiang has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, due to its historic architecture and layout. Here, you find serpentine walkways, footbridges and small canals that make for wonderful exploration. From here we head back to Black Dragon Park to enjoy the tranquil surroundings (gardens, pagodas and pools.)

In the afternoon, we enjoy the beautiful scenery as we make our way north to Shangri-La (formerly Zhongdian), through Northern Yunnan's rugged landscape on the Tibetan Plateau.

Overnight in Shangri-La

(Altitude: 9,840 ft/3,000 m)

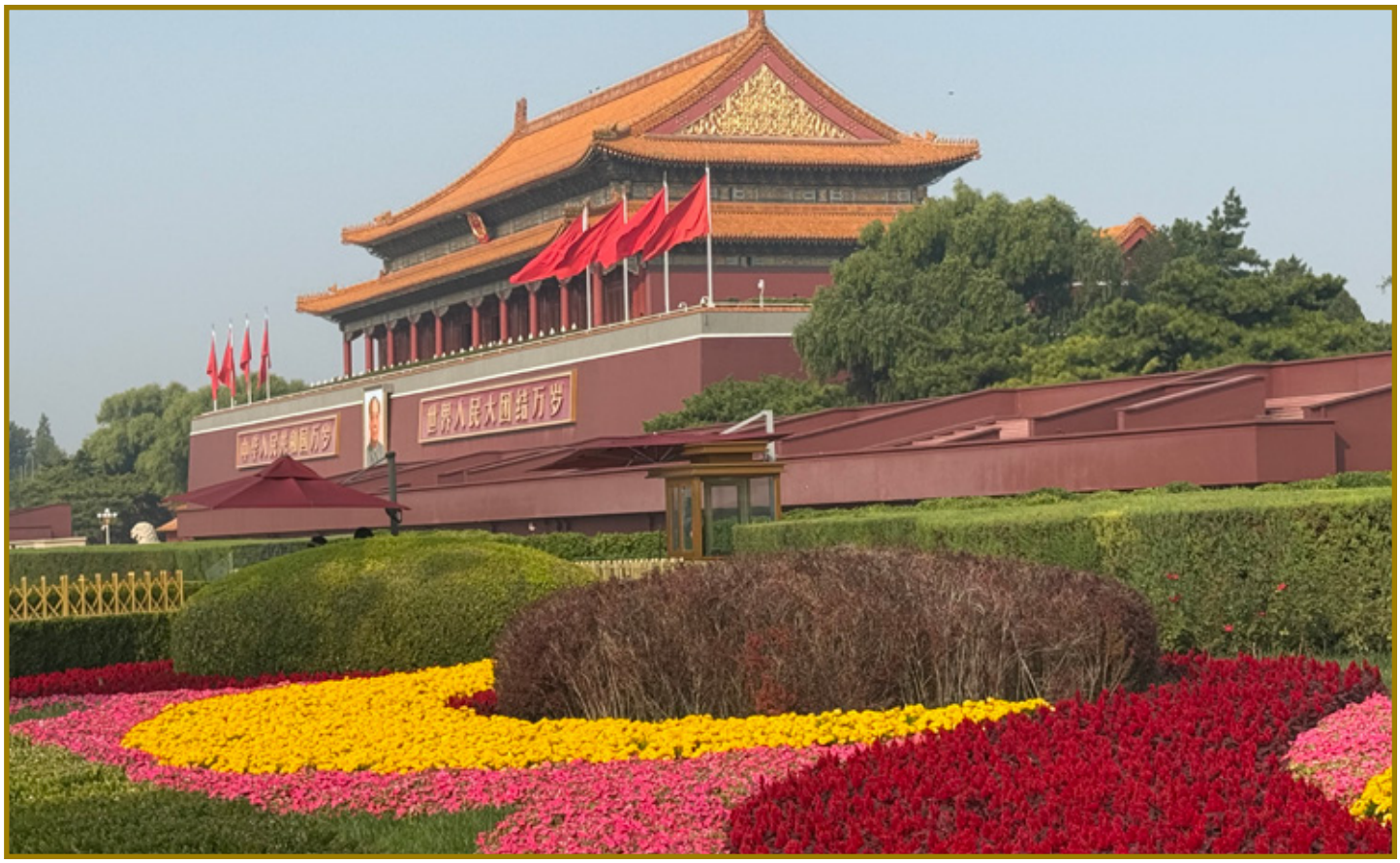
DAY 10 SHANGRI-LA'S TEMPLE AND MARKET

Today we visit Shangri-La's Ganden Sumtseling Temple, where we can learn about Tibetan Buddhism.





Dazu – Buddhist cave.


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Later, we visit the local market and a local family, where we can sample some barley wine and yak butter tea.

Please note: Today we will slow things down so that everyone can acclimatize to the altitude. We will have already spent three days at 2,400 m in Lijiang and driven (as opposed to flying) up to the Tibetan Plateau.

Overnight in Shangri-La

(Altitude: 9,840 ft/3,000 m)

DAY 11 TO TACHENG NATURE RESERVE

Enjoy a relaxing morning before departing Shangri-La for our 150 km drive to Tacheng Nature Reserve to search for one of the rarest primates on Earth, the golden monkey, also known as the Yunnan snub-nosed monkey.

Upon arrival, we will have lunch at our resort. The afternoon will be relaxing, with time to enjoy afternoon tea on your balcony while admiring the beautiful views, or visit the nearby village.

Overnight in Tacheng.

(Altitude: 11,200 ft/3,400 m)

DAY 12 RARE GOLDEN MONKEYS, TO DEQEN VIA THE BAIMANG PASS

We leave early in the morning, as this is the best time to view these rare monkeys. It is believed that there are fewer than 2,000 in the wild today. Tacheng Nature Reserve is perhaps the best place to see them in their natural high-elevation habitat. They are endemic to China and are recognized as the monkeys that inhabit the highest elevations, having been recorded as high as 4,700 metres. Only 17 groups have survived in northwest Yunnan. Group sizes are typically 20 to 60 monkeys.

We continue along winding mountain roads. The scenery is breathtaking, with grand vistas of mountains, prayer flags and stupas. We cross over Baimang Pass (14,009 ft/4,270 m) and encounter locals who reside in this remote area. We arrive in Deqen, where we spend the next two nights.

Overnight in Deqen.

(Altitude: 11,640 ft/3,550 m)





DAY 13 MINGYONG GLACIER, FEILAI TEMPLE

Today we have a scenic drive to Mingyong Glacier. We will take a shuttle bus to the halfway point of the walk. There are 1,300 gentle steps to the top, where we are rewarded with views of the 1.2-million-year-old glacier and a small Buddhist temple. We will have lunch and visit Feilai Temple.

(There is an option to go only partway and return if the walk is too difficult, or remain in the village and explore the visitor center before meeting up with the group for lunch.)

Overnight in Deqen.

(Altitude: 11,640 ft/3,550 m)

DAY 14 DRIVE TO SHANGRI-LA - FLY TO CHENGDU

This morning we depart Deqen and slowly descend back to Shangri-La, enjoying our last views of the Tibetan Plateau as we head to the airport. Our afternoon flight takes us to Chengdu, where we will have dinner.

Overnight in Chengdu.

DAY 15 UNESCO PANDA SANCTUARY; CHENGDU CITY TOUR

On the outskirts of Chengdu, we visit the famous UNESCO Panda Breeding Sanctuary. We spend the morning watching the bamboo-eating giant pandas, as well as the brilliantly colored lesser pandas.





Hymalayan mountains







In the afternoon, we visit the Jinsha Prehistoric Museum, followed by a visit to the 600-year-old Wenshu Temple.

Finally, we experience a more leisurely side of Chengdu with tea at People's Park. We join the locals as they gather in the park's traditional teahouses, where drinking tea is an important part of everyday life.

We can sample the legendary local Sichuan hotpot (spicy and non-spicy options) for dinner.

Overnight in Chengdu.

DAY 16 TRAIN TO CHONGQING; CHONGQING SITES

Travel by first-class train to Chongqing, enjoying the changing scenery as we leave Chengdu and make our way toward this fascinating city on the Yangtze River.

Upon arrival, begin our exploration of Chongqing with a tour of the city's most scenic viewpoints. Built across steep hills and valleys, Chongqing is a city of dramatic contrasts, where modern skyscrapers rise alongside traditional neighborhoods and the winding Yangtze and Jialing Rivers meet. We take in panoramic views across the city and experience the remarkable landscape and energy that make Chongqing so distinctive.

Overnight in Chongqing.

DAY 17 TO DAZU; BUDDHIST CAVES, YANGZTE RIVER CRUISE

We drive to Dazu, one of China's most remarkable Buddhist sites featuring more than 60,000 statues dating from the Tang and Song Dynasties. Enroute we stop at a local farmer's home. In Dazu we visit the Buddhist Caves in the northern hills of Beishan and Baodingshan (UNESCO), which display numerous sculptures. Set upon the beautiful terraced fields, they are perfect examples of a great artistic and religious period at its peak.

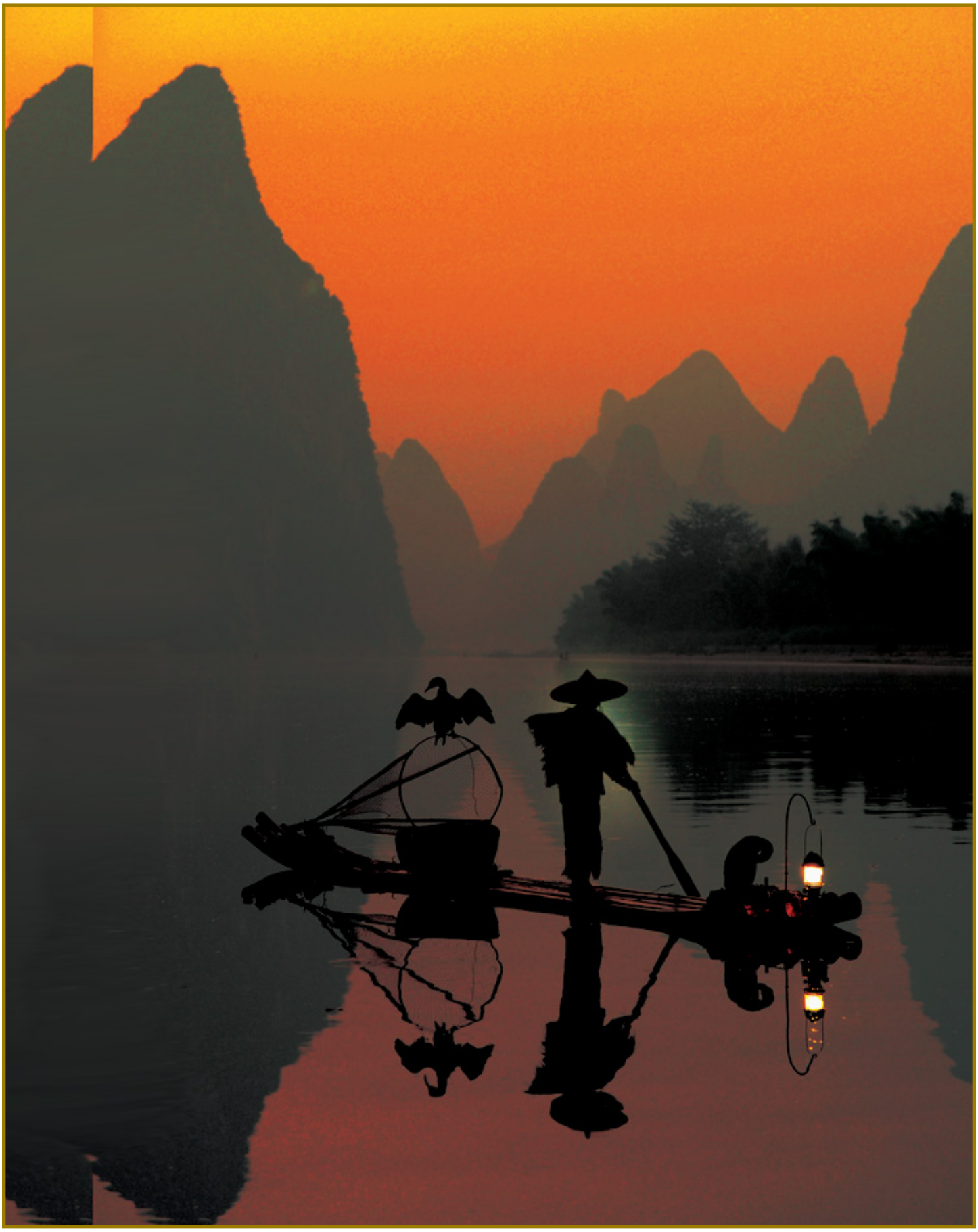
After dinner we board our Yangtze river cruise boat, our home for the next few nights.

Accommodation and meals onboard the boat.

DAY 18 YANGZTE RIVER CRUISE

The Yangtze is the third largest river in the world. The lands along its banks are among the most







opulous and productive in China. Today we stop at Fengdu (or Shibaoshan), where the river banks' heights are fabled to be the abode of spirits and therefore named "The City of Ghosts" (or Shibao Fortress).

Accommodation and meals onboard the boat.

DAY 19 YANGZTE RIVER CRUISE

We cross Qutang Gorge, the first and narrowest of the Three Gorges which is lined with dramatic vertical cliffs on either side. We board a small boat to sail up the Daning River or Shennong Stream for a look at the vertical limestone cliffs and the "hanging coffins" of the ancient Tujia people.

Later in the afternoon back on our river boat, we cross the Wu Gorge, considered to be the most enchanting and bewitching of the Three Gorges.

Accommodation and meals on board the boat.

DAY 20 YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE - YICHANG THREE GORGES DAM TOUR; TO ZHANGJIAJIE

After passing through the longest and last of the Three Gorges, Xiling Gorge, we pass through the Gezhouba Dam and disembark from our river cruise in Yichang. A tour of the immense Three Gorges Dam is a fitting end to our Yangtze voyage.

(Please note: Due to the ongoing process of damming the Yangtze, the cruise itinerary is subject to change.)

After our morning tour of the Three Gorges Dam, we transfer to Yichang for lunch before driving to Zhangjiajie.

Overnight in Zhangjiajie.

DAY 21 BREATHTAKING MOUNTAIN SCENERY OF ZHANGJAIJIE (UNESCO)

Today, we explore the spectacular landscapes of Zhangjiajie, renowned for its towering sandstone pillars, lush forests and breathtaking mountain scenery. We visit Zhangjiajie National Forest Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where thousands of dramatic rock formations rise above deep valleys, often shrouded in mist. We enjoy scenic viewpoints offering magnificent panoramas of this extraordinary landscape, including the famous peaks that inspired the floating mountains in the film Avatar. This remarkable natural wonder is one of China's most unforgettable sights.

Overnight in Zhangjiajie.

DAY 22 FLY TO SHANGHAI, ZHUJIAJIAO WATER TOWN

Today, we transfer to the airport for our flight to Shanghai, China's largest city and a vibrant metropolis where ancient traditions meet modern innovation. Upon arrival, we transfer to Zhujiajiao Water Town (Venice of Shanghai) to appreciate its old buildings, bridges, waterways, renovated shops and local lifestyle.

Overnight in Shanghai.

DAY 23 SHANGHAI SIGHTS

Today, we explore the fascinating sights of Shanghai, a vibrant city where traditional Chinese culture blends seamlessly with modern sophistication. We discover the city's rich history and architectural heritage, from the charming streets of the Old Town to the famous Bund waterfront, lined with grand colonial-era buildings. We also enjoy views of Shanghai's spectacular skyline, with its futuristic

skyscrapers rising above the Huangpu River. Along the way, we experience the bustling markets, colorful neighborhoods and lively atmosphere that make Shanghai one of China's most exciting cities.

Overnight in Shanghai.

DAY 24 FLY TO GUILIN

A mid-morning flight will take us to Guilin, a place deemed by Chinese visitors for centuries to be the most beautiful on Earth. This afternoon we take a chairlift to Yaoshan Hill to admire the beautiful views over the surrounding karst peaks. Our last stop is at an organic tea plantation.

Overnight in Guilin.

DAY 25 GUILIN; LI RIVER CRUISE, YANGSHUO

Today we take a cruise on the Li River through amazing landscapes of limestone peaks to the village of Yangshuo. Yangshuo has all the charming qualities of Guilin, but on a much smaller scale. This afternoon, you are free to explore or take a walk up Moon Hill for breathtaking views of the area.

Overnight in Yangshuo.

vDAY 26 FAST TRAIN TO HONG KONG

This morning we drive back to Guilin and take the fast train (about 3 hours) to Hong Kong. Upon arrival, we check in to our hotel and enjoy dinner later in the evening.

Overnight in Hong Kong.

DAY 27 HONG KONG - VICTORIA PEAK

We begin with a visit to the city's premier visitor attraction, Victoria Peak: situated high above Hong Kong Island on the "back of the dragon," the peak gives us magnificent harbor and city views.

We continue on to explore the colorful Stanley's Market and enjoy delicious dim sum for lunch.

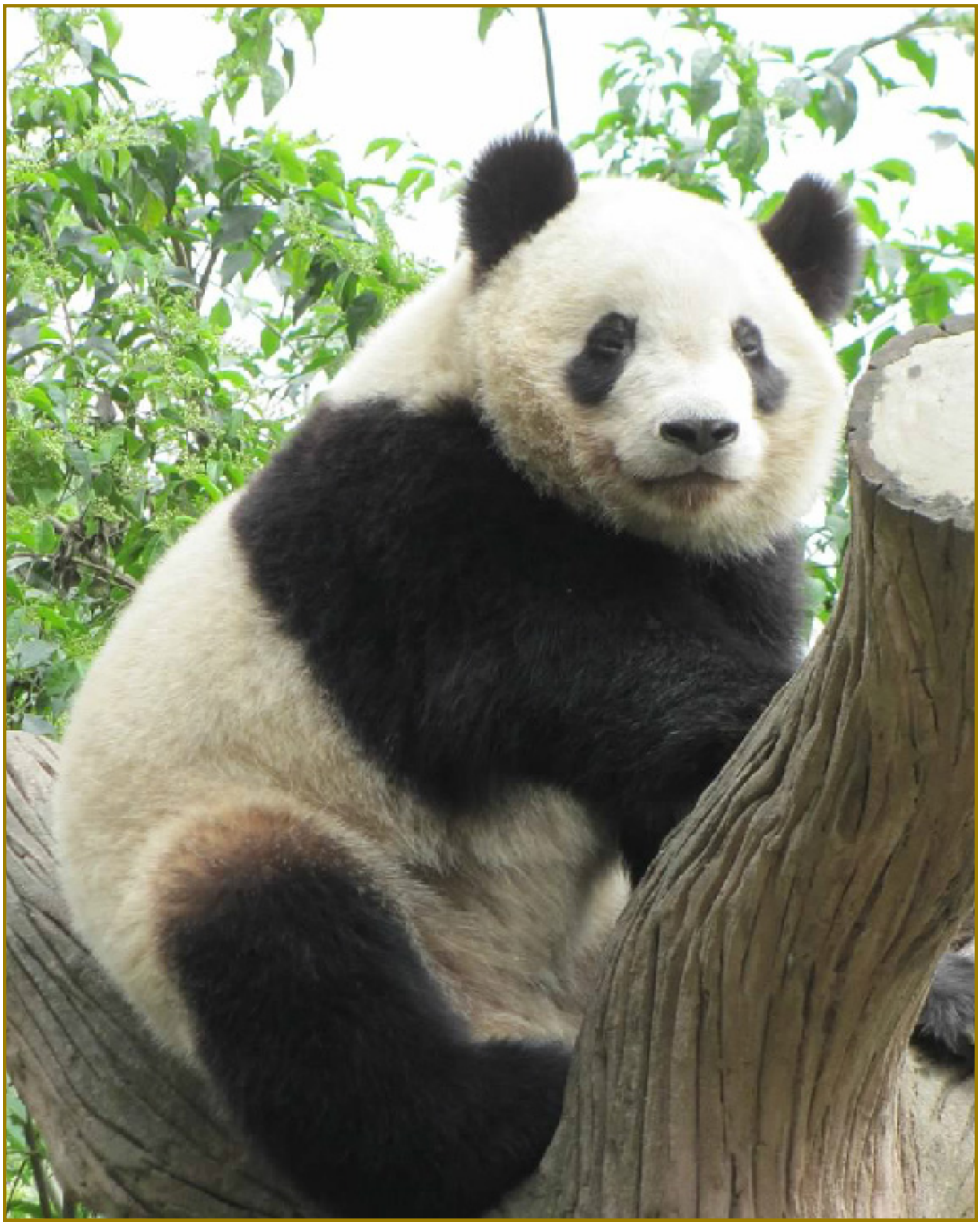
Afternoon at leisure until our farewell dinner.

Overnight in Hong Kong.

DAY 28 DEPART HONG KONG

We bid farewell to the far east and transfer to the airport for our flight home





QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. HOW BIG ARE THE GROUPS?

Each group is limited to 16 participants. Small groups are an important ingredient in adventure travel. They allow for more interaction and more personalized service throughout the itinerary.

2. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

All accommodations throughout; all meals, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); bottled drinking water throughout the trip; all internal transportation; airport transfers on day 1 and departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); all day trips and entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary; tips for hotels (porterage) bus driver, restaurants and spot guides; services of a trip leader.

3. WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

International flights, tips to ElderTreks tour leader, alcoholic drinks, visas and travel insurance.

4. ARE THESE "EDUCATIONAL" TOURS?

Yes, in the broadest sense of the word, "educational". We visit churches and historical sites and have talks and discussions on many aspects of history, culture and nature. We believe that it is equally educational to meet local people on a non-commercial basis, visit their homes and even try to learn a few words in the native language. Sometimes the most "educational" moments are spent walking through an old quarter of a city.

5. HOW DO WE TRAVEL DURING THE TOUR?

All land transportation and internal flights are included in the land price of the trip. We use minivans for road travel and have several internal flights. We also travel by boat on the Yangtze and Li Rivers; and by train (and high speed train.)

6. WHAT ARE OUR ACCOMMODATIONS LIKE?

Comfortable, well-located accommodations with private bathrooms throughout. Includes 3 nights on a Yangtze River cruise ship.

7. WHAT ABOUT THE WEATHER?

The weather in the region can change quickly and you can experience wide variation in one day. Due to the elevations and seasons, it is difficult to predict the weather, but we have planned our tours to run during the spring and fall seasons, avoiding the rainy season (Jun – Aug). Daytime temperatures can be as high as 95˚F (35˚C), but night time temperatures can drop below 70˚F (20˚C).

8. WHEN IS PAYMENT DUE?

A non-refundable deposit of $500 USD (plus insurance if you require it) is due at time of booking and will reserve your place on the tour. Payment of the full land cost is due 120 days before departure. Cancellation charges are applicable and are outlined in the "Terms and Conditions" section of our brochure.

9. IS MEDICAL INSURANCE REQUIRED?

Insurance coverage is not included in the cost of your trip. Please note that medical insurance is not required for this adventure but is recommended. ElderTreks offers comprehensive travel insurance and we are happy to provide you with a quote if you call our office. If you are purchasing insurance elsewhere, please ensure you provide the details to ElderTreks as soon as possible.
Please note those travelers with pre-existing medical conditions must take out travel insurance at the time of deposit

10. WHAT SHOULD I TAKE ON THE TOUR?

There is a detailed "What to Take" list in our Trip Kit, which we will send to you after you have booked the trip.

11. WHAT MEALS ARE INCLUDED?

All meals during the itinerary are included, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day. We eat a variety of local foods prepared in a wide range of settings. In many cases, we simply order a number of dishes and share, allowing you to sample new foods and decide what you enjoy best.

12. CAN YOU ARRANGE MY FLIGHTS?

We would be happy to take care of your air arrangements. ElderTreks offers personalized flight itineraries — not group flights. Stop over en route, come in a few days early, or extend your stay. Call us for a customized itinerary.

13. WHAT IF I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any further questions about the trip, please do not hesitate to contact our office for additional information. A Trip Kit containing further details on the destination will be sent to you once you have booked the trip.

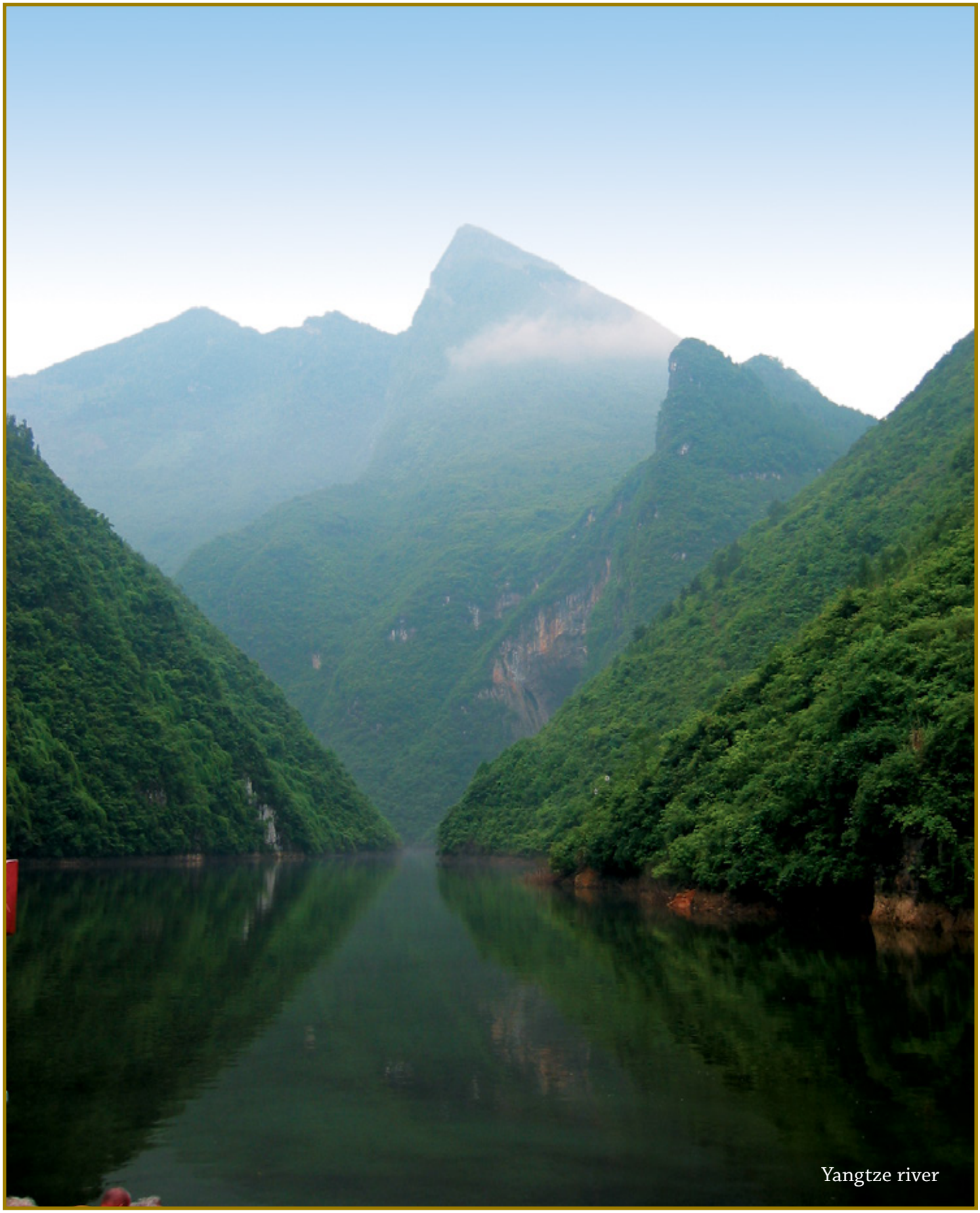












Yangtze river

