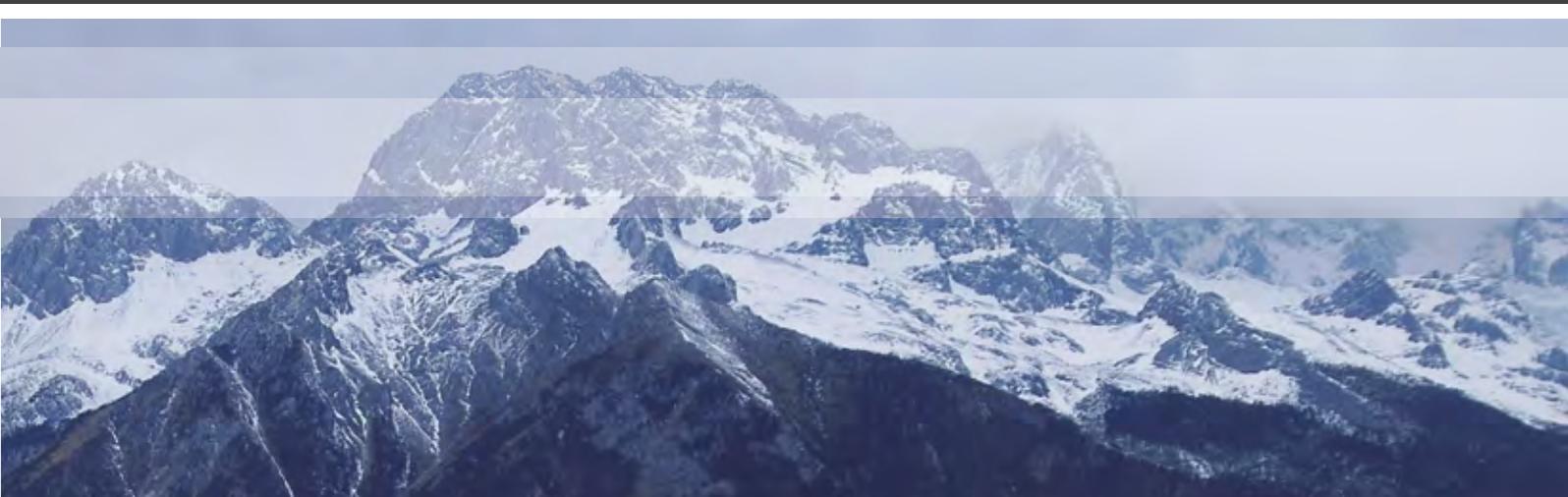


MOMENTS

on the road

Summit to Sea: Yunnan to Vietnam
(14 Days)





ON THE ROAD EXPERIENCES

BACK ROADS | HIDDEN GEMS

We love road journeys. They are by far our favourite way of traveling. We think the world of western China and the countries that border on this region – think Vietnam, Lao, Thailand, Myanmar, for example.

On the Road Experiences is all about sharing with like-minded travelers just how beautiful a road journey in these varied lands can be. Now turn the page to find out what we've come to love so much...

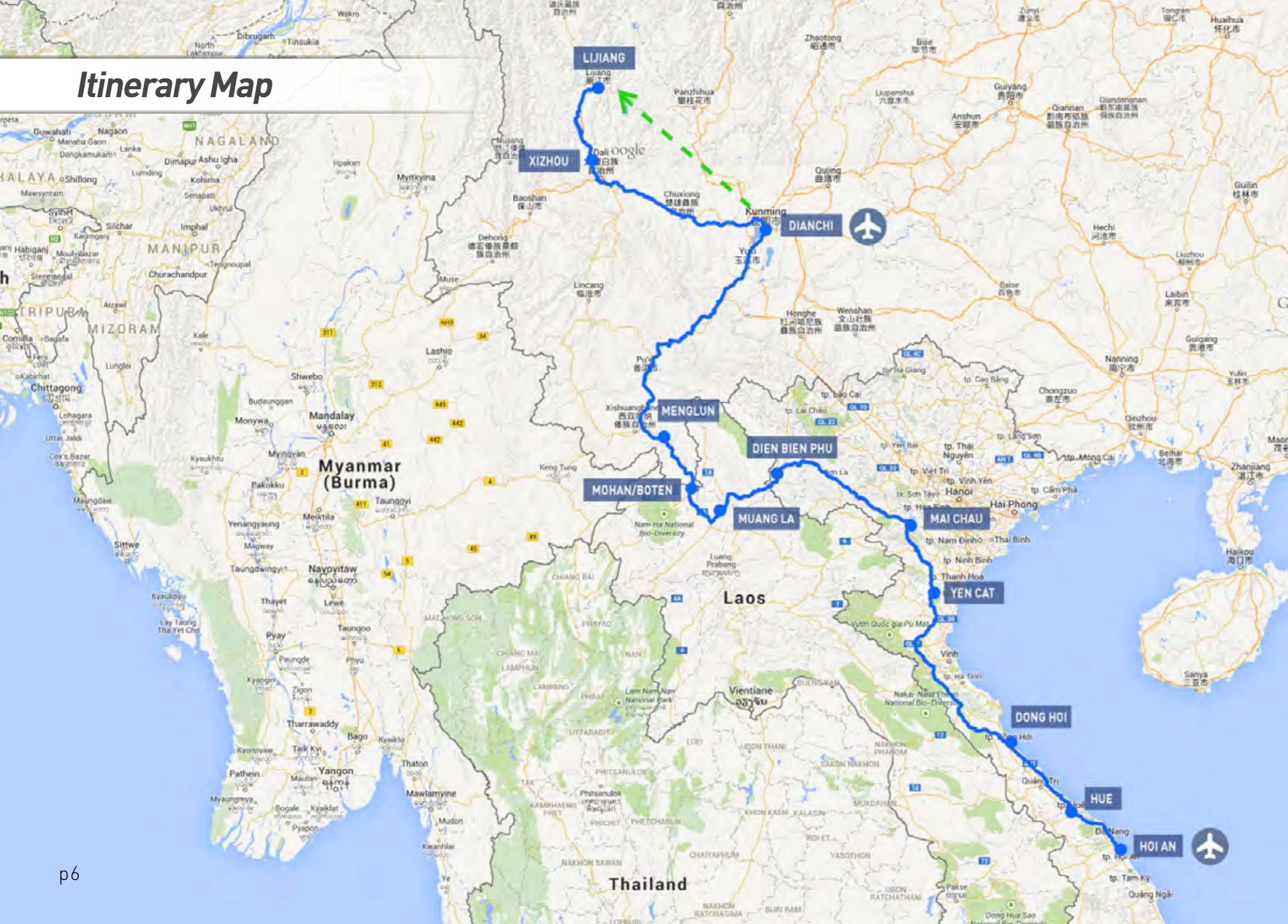


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Itinerary Map



Day-by-Day

- Day1
Arrival in Kunming –
Preparing for your journey and onto Lijiang
- Day2
In and around Lijiang –
Enjoy the many beautiful sights and activities in this UNESCO World Heritage Old Town
- Day3
Lijiang to Xizhou –
Along the Tea Horse Trail to Xizhou and the shores of Lake Erhai
- Day4
From Xizhou to Dianchi Lake –
Returning to Kunming and beyond
- Day5
Dianchi Lake to Menglun –
Into Xishuangbanna, where China and South East Asia meet
- Day6
Menglun to Muang La –
Crossing the border into northern Lao
- Day7
Muang La to Dien Bien Phu –
Through tropical forest to Vietnam
- Day8
Dien Bien Phu to Mai Chau –
Wonderful roads & vistas on the way to Mai Chau
- Day9
Mai Chau –
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- Day10
Mai Chau to Yen Cat –
On the way south...on the Ho Chi Minh Highway
- Day11
Yen Cat to Dong Hoi –
In beautiful countryside toward Central Vietnam
- Day12
Dong Hoi to Hue –
To the capital of old Vietnam
- Day13
Hue to Hoi An –
Arriving in Hoi An, a quaint old town by the ocean
- Day14
Hoi An –
Life must go on...?

Yes, it is possible...

A driving holiday in this part of the world is indeed possible. We take care of everything. All you need to do is come, drive and enjoy a rare adventure!

This beautiful itinerary is unique in the world. It will take you from one UNESCO world heritage site “the old town of Lijiang” in Yunnan to another located on the shores of the South China Sea, the old town of Hoi’an in Central Vietnam. A driving journey along this route counts among the finest in the world: along winding mountain roads, some of Asia’s best highways and Vietnam’s Ho Chi Minh national road from the edge of Tibet, where the air is fresh and invisible, to the beaches of subtropical Vietnam. All along this superb itinerary you will enjoy the best accommodation available, staying in some of Asia’s loveliest hotels and travel through an area steeped in the cultures of many different ethnic minorities and through some of the region’s most stunningly beautiful countryside.

On the Road Experiences has paved the way for you to cross borders in your own properly insured SUV, so that you can enjoy the romance of a classic overland journey – crossing the Mekong on a local car ferry, winding your way along lush country roads – without any of the logistical headaches that typically accompany such journeys...

Journey of discovery



“LIJIANG
is touristy, but
there ARE
HIDDEN GEMS to
DISCOVER...”



Jade Lake not far from Lijiang...

Jade Dragon Snow Mountain seen from the Black Dragon Pool, Lijiang...



“The lovely winding alleys of LIJIANG'S OLD TOWN are a UNESCO World Heritage site...”



“ At the RIGHT
time and in
small alleys,
LIJIANG as it
used to be...”

“ Where
DR. Joseph Rock
lived and worked
to INTRODUCE
northwest
YUNNAN to the
outside world...”

Naxi minority lady in Yuhu, near Lijiang

“ A small section of the ANCIENT TEA HORSE TRAIL...”





“ Beautiful BACK
ROADS...the best
places for a coffee
or tea stop!”

On the way to Shaxi...



“ Take a lake shore
DRIVE and enjoy the
BEAUTIFUL sunset
reflections...”

Lake Erhai, Xizhou, near Dali



“VIEW from
your hotel
TERRACE...”

A photograph of a person walking away from the camera down a dirt path in a rubber tree plantation. The trees are tall and slender, with their trunks forming a natural archway over the path. The ground is covered with fallen leaves and some low-lying vegetation. The lighting is soft, suggesting a late afternoon or early morning setting. In the upper right corner, there is a semi-transparent grey box containing a quote in white text.

“XISHUANGBANNA
is a
FERTILE land...”



“XISHUANGBANNA,
where TEA
thrives...”

“XISHUANGBANNA,
the home of
Yunnan’s
DAI MINORITY...”



Dai minority village in Xishuangbanna





“XISHUANGBANNA,
home as well to
MANY smaller
MINORITIES...”

Aini minority lady in Xishuangbanna

“Golden-robed MONKS
in XISHUANGBANNA
are a commonplace...”

A young monk in Xishuangbanna

“Over TEN THOUSAND plant species are found here in this GARDEN...”

“Explore
MINORITY
villages along the
road sides...”



Laos, on the way to Muang La

“VIEW
from the
road side...”

“ A GEM
of a hotel in
the MIDDLE of
NOWHERE...”



A wide-angle landscape photograph showing a river flowing through a valley. The river is in the foreground, with a rocky bank on the right. The background features rolling hills and mountains, some of which are shrouded in mist. A prominent reddish-brown rocky cliffside is visible on the right. The sky is a pale, hazy blue.

“Muang La is perched
beside a **GLISTENING RIVER**
in the **REMOTE HILLS** of
northern Laos...”



“Your
COMPANION
on the road...”

“ One of many
MINORITIES in
Northern Vietnam...”



Northern Vietnam, on the way South...



“ MARKET DAYS
are always a great
OPPORTUNITY to see
local life...”

One of many minorities in Northern Vietnam

An aerial photograph of a lush green valley. In the foreground, there are terraced rice fields with a winding irrigation channel. A small town with colorful buildings is situated in the middle ground. The valley is surrounded by steep, forested mountains under a clear sky.

“Mai Chau
LIES in a
beautiful VALLEY...”



“Sol Bungalows,
a HIDDEN GEM
in the middle of
PADDY FIELDS...”

A person wearing a traditional conical hat and dark clothing is working in a vibrant green paddy field. The field is in the foreground, and the background is a dense, lush forest covering a mountain range under a slightly hazy sky. The overall scene is rural and scenic.

“ PADDY FIELDS
and the canonical
Vietnamese
STRAW HATS
everywhere...”

“ LOVELY
ENCOUNTERS in the
paddy fields...”





“ ENJOY
an evening with
the LOCALS
and RICE WINE...”

A White Thai Village dinner



“ Roads, mountains,
transport,
people...”



“ Roads, mountains,
transport,
people...”



“ Roads, mountains,
transport,
people...”

“ Right by
the OCEAN...”



“ Ocean, BOATS
and our CARS...”



“As LIVELY
a place as you can
IMAGINE...”

Fish Market in Dong Hoi



“Where the KING
used to give
AUDIENCES...”



“ A boundary of **KINGDOMS**
and **CLIMATE**, often fought
over, sometimes tragic but
never losing it's **ABILITY** to
INSPIRE AWE...”



“ Another
UNESCO World
Heritage site...”

As last in Hoi An

“FINISHING off
by the SEA...”



Day-by-day



Day 1 Arriving in Kunming and preparing for your journey

You will need to arrive in Kunming, the capital of China's Yunnan province, before 2:30pm. After arrival, we will take you to China Driving Licensing office. Don't worry, there are no medical tests, except for a simple eye test (which is easily passed), and then, within a few minutes, you will receive your temporary Chinese driving license.

Following dinner in Kunming, you will return to the airport for your 1-hour flight to Lijiang.

A short transfer will take you from Lijiang airport to your hotel, which lies just near of the old town of Lijiang. Then you will surely look forward to a good night's rest.

Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: NA

Duration: NA

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 2470m

Overnight: 2470m

Hotel

InterContinental Lijiang (*****)

Day 2 In and around Lijiang

Lijiang is home to the Naxi minority – introduced to the West by Austrian-American botanist, Joseph Rock, who lived in the valley between 1922 and 1949. He spent much of his time in the region studying the Naxi, whose culture he feared would be extinguished by the encroaching Han Chinese culture. Luckily for us, many aspects of Naxi culture are still visible in Lijiang – elderly ladies walk the streets proudly wearing their traditional costumes – but Lijiang's beauty and atmosphere are spoiled after dark by the noise and neon of the 'bar street'.

Fortunately the very touristy section of Lijiang is confined to just a few streets and it is easy to lose the crowds down quiet back streets. Enjoy a stroll around Lijiang's old town – a UNESCO World Heritage Site – and shop for souvenirs, or visit the nearby Jade Dragon Snow Mountain and take the cable

car up – but beware of altitude sickness at the top (5,600 metres)! Alternatively, there are many wonderful hiking and horse-riding trails to nearby villages and in the countryside surrounding Lijiang. We will be happy to make suggestions and arrangements for you and our staff can accompany you should you wish.

Today's breakfast and dinner is included in the journey price, lunch and activities are entirely up to you.

Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Depends on your chosen activity

Elevation

Highest Daytime: Depends on your chosen activity

Overnight: 2470m

Hotel

Intercontinental Lijiang, Lijiang (*****)



Day 3 Along the tea horse trail to Xizhou and the shores of Lake Erhai

Short Itinerary

For those joining the shorter itinerary, today you will arrive in Kunming and process your temporary driving licenses, before driving south to the new Intercontinental Dianchi Lake hotel.

Full Itinerary

Today you will be taking to the roads of China.

In the morning, you will drive from Lijiang to Shaxi, formerly a stop on the Tea Horse Road – an ancient trade route that carried Yunnan's fragrant tea into the arid highlands of Tibet. Shaxi is a small town, but its centre is very well preserved and a delight to explore. You will be driving on small country lanes, that will begin to give you a first glimpse of China's countryside.

After eating lunch in a former coaching inn in the old town of Shaxi, you will then set out,

along even more winding and narrow roads, to cross the Cang Shan (Cang Mountain) to Xizhou your overnight stop for the day; the mountain pass you will drive will top out at 3,100m. On a good day, the views from the top are beautiful. Tonight you will stay in the Linden Centre, a lovingly converted Bai-minority mansion. Sit and enjoy the view of the nearby Cangshan Mountains and Lake Erhai from the Linden Centre's roof terrace.



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 195 km

Duration: 6-7 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 3100m

Overnight: 1600m

Hotel

Linden Centre, Xizhou (****)

Day 4 Returning to Kunming and beyond

Short Itinerary

Spend the day around Dianchi Lake, or venture further afield to Yunnan's famous 'Stone Forest' area of karst scenery – we will show you the beauty of this region away from the crowds... In the evening, you will join those on the full itinerary, ready for your journey into South-East Asia together...

Full Itinerary

Today you will drive along excellent highways back towards Kunming and on to a wonderful country hotel on the other side of the city. First however, spend the morning in Xizhou – either linger over a home-cooked breakfast or stretch your legs on a gentle walking tour of Xizhou. Setting out mid-morning, you will drive to the town of Chuxiong, where we will stop for lunch, before continuing along excellent roads in the afternoon to the superb Intercontinental Hotel, located on the shores of Dianchi Lake, 20 kilometres south of Kunming itself.



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 360 km

Duration: 4-5 hours
(Depending on traffic toward Kunming)

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 2100m

Overnight: 1800m

Hotel

InterContinental Dian Chi Lake (*****)

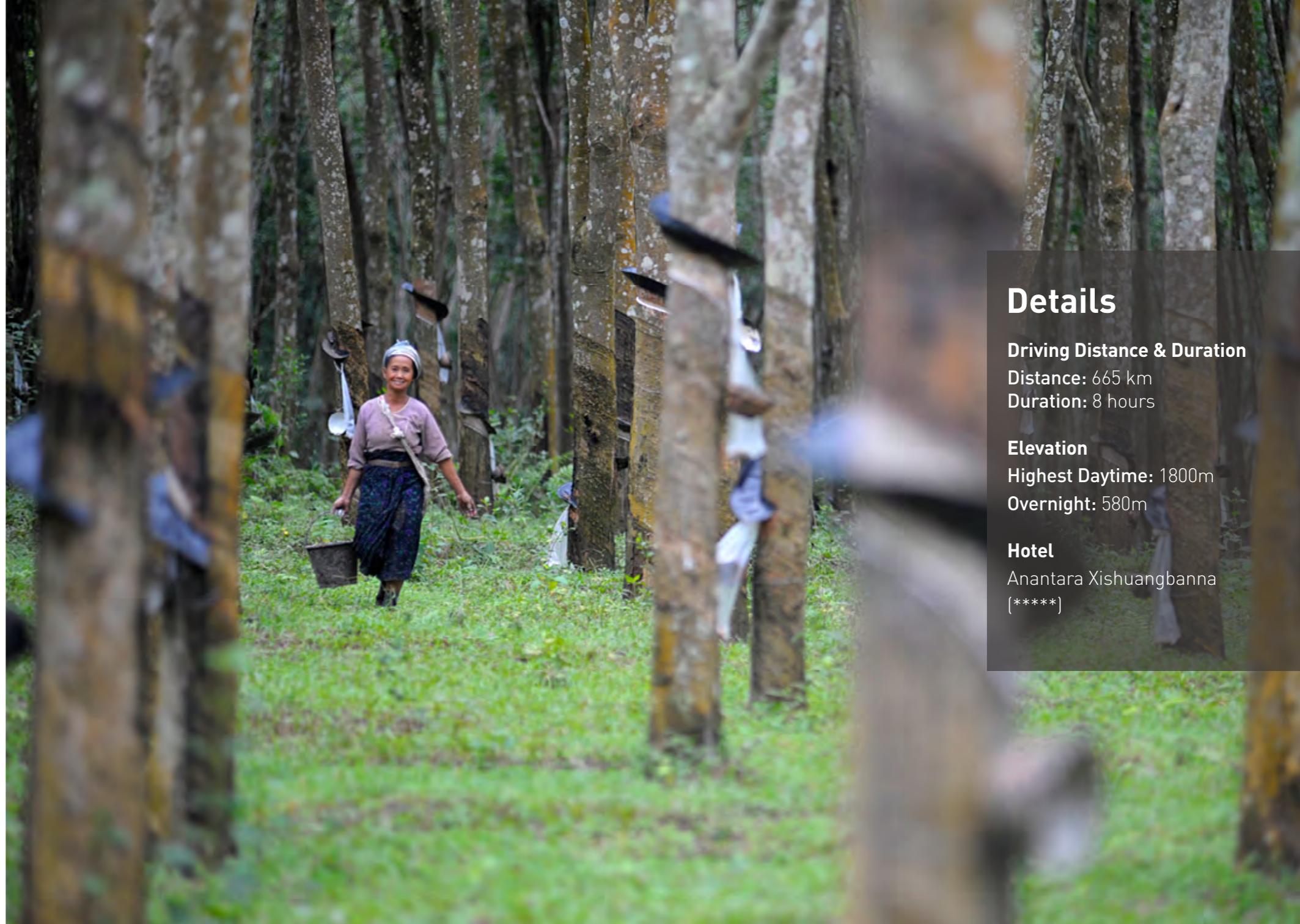
Day 5 Into Xishuangbanna, where China and South-East Asia meet

In the morning you will drive from the Intercontinental onto the Kunming – Jinghong highway. In the beginning, you will likely experience morning Kunming rush hour, but after an hour or so the traffic will become thinner, the air cleaner again and the highway better. In fact, the highway from Kunming to Jinghong is one of the nicest highways we've ever driven on.

The number of tunnels and bridges – including one of the tallest in the world – and the engineering that's gone into it is impressive. After approximately four hours of driving (and gradually losing altitude from Kunming's 1,800m), you will have lunch in a small town called Mojiang. Don't expect anything fancy, but it will have to do for the day...it's really the best en route this morning.

In the afternoon, you will continue driving on the Kunming – Jinghong highway for approximately 3.5 hours. The air and vegetation will become more and more subtropical. The last part of today's drive will be on excellent national road to the Anantara Hotel in Menglun, which lies right next to the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden. After this long day, you can enjoy the facilities of this beautiful hotel.

We propose dinner for you at a local restaurant that offers Dai minority cuisine dishes that are a fascinating blend between Thai and Chinese. But if you've had enough Asian dishes, the hotel offers good international fare as well.



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 665 km

Duration: 8 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 1800m

Overnight: 580m

Hotel

Anantara Xishuangbanna

(****)

Day 6 Crossing the border into northern Lao

In the morning you will depart for the China-Lao border, which you will reach after about an hour and a half.

We have prepared all the border formalities well in advance to make the border crossing as smooth as

possible, but it will nonetheless take a bit of time: here in South-East Asia, crossing borders is still an event where in much of Europe or America it has become a non-event. Crossing borders is not only an event, it is a romantic one... where nostalgia blends with adventure to deliver a powerful emotional mix.

Once in Laos, it's a 4 hour drive through subtropical forests

and along villages to the heart of northern Laos and a hidden gem in the middle of nowhere called Muang La Resort in Oudomxay Province, in the far north of Laos. Within the fertile rainforest, the region is home to over 500 villages where traditional life still prevails, albeit in varying forms; there are 23 ethnic minorities who live in Oudomxay and each

have their own language and customs.

Equi-distant from China and Vietnam, the resort is situated on the edge of a small traditional village with around 100 inhabitants. Surrounded by rain-forest, on the banks of a river and with only 5 wooden villas and 10 bedrooms, built following traditional architecture, the

notion of a retreat assumes its full meaning.

Before dinner, why not enjoy the swimming pool? The pool lies on a small island in the middle of a river facing the resort, connected only via a bamboo bridge. Or try one of the bar's delicious drinks, for example one that is an icy mint cocktail? Very refreshing!

The cooking is fabulous and offers a menu with a mix of Lao and Thai flavours, but with distinct and different overtones. After dinner, continue with another drink and relax to the sound of crickets in the gardens – the perfect way to ease into the relaxed rhythms of South-East Asia...



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 240 km

Duration: 5-6 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 600m

Overnight: 400m

Hotel

Muang La Resort, Oudomxay
[****]

Day 7 Through tropical forest to Vietnam

Today you will continue your journey through Northern Lao toward Vietnam. After around 3 hours of driving on back roads through the rain forest, you will arrive at the Lao/Vietnam border. Again we have prepared all the border formalities for you and crossing the border into Vietnam should be quite straight forward.

Once in Vietnam, the landscape continues to be hilly and the roads rather winding, but largely very well paved. It is just a short drive from the border to Dien Bien Phu, your destination for the night. Once you arrive you can visit and explore Dien Bien Phu's historic sites as it is the site of the Vietnamese victory over the French in 1954. It is home to a range of wartime attractions along with a fascinating food market, which you will also have time to explore in the evening.

Dien Bien Phu offers not many choices for accommodation. We have chosen the best hotel available for you, but please note that the Muang Thanh Hotel is one of the two basic hotels along this itinerary.



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 180 km

Duration: 4-5 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 400m

Hotel

Muang Thanh Hotel, Dien Bien Phu (***)

Day 8 Wonderful roads & vistas on the way to Mai Chau

Today you will be driving through some of the most enjoyable country roads of northern Vietnam, because this area is hardly ever visited by tourists and because the roads are free of traffic. This remoteness also means that you will see and can come in contact with "hill tribes" – whose lives have changed very little, seemingly for centuries. You will encounter some people who are not encountered anywhere else and others which strike a close resemblance with minorities in China. Regardless of your interest in the details of these ethnic groups, one can't help but be moved by how friendly they are.

After our lunch in Son La the route to Mai Chau winds its way through further the northern hills of Vietnam. As you climb, you will drive through some

tiny, quaint villages...always good for a photo stop!

By early afternoon you will arrive in Mai Chau, which is home to the Sol Bungalows, a gem of an inn surrounded by lush rice paddies, emerald mountains and bamboo trees. This lodge offers nicely appointed rooms and a wonderful swimming pool overlooking the paddy fields. Sol Bungalow will be your home for the next two nights. Dinner will be at Sol Bungalows.



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 350 km

Duration: 6-7 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 600m

Overnight: 220m

Hotel

Sol Bungalow, Mai Chau (*****)

Day 9 In and around Mai Chau

You've been on the road for quite some time. Today is a day of leisure. How would you like to fill it? It can be as simple as settling in with a good book by the lodge's pool in the morning and enjoying a lazy brunch. Or you can fill it with any number activities that range from short villages walks to full-day treks, exploring the valley in which Mai Chau is located by bike or kajak (combined with a river-side picnic), from visiting the Mo Luong Cave to involving yourself hands-on in the making of handicraft if you want to acquire a taste of the techniques

of weaving as practiced by the White Tai minority, which migrated here from Yunnan's Xishuang Banna area many centuries ago. If you are interested in a cooking class to learn some of Vietnam's famous dishes, you can do so as well. We will guide you toward whatever will make this day away from driving the most enjoyable for you.

Speaking of dinner, tonight we have a bit of surprise in store for you...a dinner in a remote village of Thai people. What's on the menu we'll keep to us for now!

Today's breakfast and dinner are included; lunch and the activities you choose will be up to you.



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Depends on your chosen activity

Elevation

Highest Daytime: Depends on your chosen activity

Overnight: 220m

Hotel

Sol Bungalow, Mai Chau
(****)



Day 10 On the way to South... Ho Chi Minh Highway

Today you can make a leisurely start into your day since we will only have to depart late in the morning.

The road from Mai Chau heads east in the direction of Hanoi before it heads south. Before long you will get to one of Vietnam's most pleasant roads, the Ho Chi Minh Highway, which is in fact not a real highway – it is not divided and has only one lane in each direction – but it is wide, very smooth and more or less traffic free. The Ho Chi Minh Highway runs from Vietnam's very north all the way to the south and the route roughly coincides with the Ho Chi Minh Trail during the Vietnam War. On your journey south you will drive along some of the most picturesque sections of this highway. Not only is the surrounding landscape very pretty in many places, you also get to see many forms of

transport and vehicles laden with impossible freights.

In the late afternoon, you will arrive in Yen Cat, a small town in Nghe An province. You will stay in Dai Lam Hotel which is nothing but a stop-over on the way south. The hotel is basic, but it is the best – really! – that we could find along this part of Ho Chi Minh Highway.

Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 180 km

Duration: 5 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 800m

Overnight: 120m

Hotel

Dai Lam Hotel, Yen Cat (***)



Day 11 In beautiful country- side toward Central Vietnam

Today's drive south into central Vietnam will take you back onto the Ho Chi Minh highway, which runs inland and to the west of national road 1a. Route 1a, while running along the ocean and thus would seem to be preferable, is choke- full with unpleasant traffic and hence to be very much avoided.

Ho Chi Minh Highway, on the other hand, is largely traffic free and meanders through rice fields and hilly limestone terrain that is a pleasure to drive through. What's more, its unhurried pace prompts one to stop and take photographs many a time or all manner of life and transport on the road.

Today you can also see witnesses to the strong French influence in this region: these witnesses are large, magnificently constructed and seemingly completely out-of-

place catholic churches. Some are so grand you can't imagine how they've ever made it here; even more surprising is how radiant and immaculately maintained they are...as if they were the pope's winter residences!

By late-afternoon you will arrive at Sun Spa Resort in Dong Hoi. Its four-star section is comfortable, but not outstanding. Instead, you will check into one of the new five star villas which are delightful and will ensure a good night's rest all the better to be ready for the following day's early morning excursion to Dong Hoi's lively fish market.

For dinner we have arranged a seafood BBQ for you which rather befits your arrival by the seaside. (Of course, if you do not like seafood, there are other choices!)



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 406 km

Duration: 7-8 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 500m

Overnight: 13m

Hotel

Sun Spa Resort, Dong Hoi
[*****]

Day 12 To the Capital of old Vietnam

Today, we recommend you begin the day with a visit to Dong Hoi's fish market early in the morning when it is liveliest. The smells, the sheer volume of fish and people, the variety of seafood, the busy-ness, you will love it ... if you love fish markets! (If not, today's a great day to sleep in a bit ...)

By mid-morning, you will depart for the short drive, for the last time on Ho Chi Minh Highway, down south toward Hue. Around half- way to Hue, you will come to the River Ben Hai, which runs west-to-east from the border with lao into the South China Sea. It marks the 17th Parallel of Vietnam War infamy. It is a good time to stop and contemplate for a while the sufferings of the Vietnamese during this dark period of modern history.

After only around three hours – ok, it may take four if you take lots of photos – you will arrive in Hue, the old capital of Vietnam.

UNESCO as a cultural treasure worthy of protection, the tombs of the Hue Kings and the city's stunning imperial citadel retain the majesty and elegance of the Imperial Dynasty. The renown of the former Imperial Capital is born of much more than history and scenic beauty. Famed for the quality of its cuisine, artisanal handicrafts, education system and unique local aesthetic, Hue is known throughout Asia as a cultural treasure and a charming destination.

You are invited for a private lunch at a very special place in Hue, serving delectable

Hue cuisine. From there, it will be only a few minutes' drive to La Residence, a gem of a hotel in the heart of Hue, where you will stay for the night. In the afternoon you may want to enjoy the pool or head out to Dong Ba market where you can buy many iconic Vietnamese products, including the beautiful whitish straw hats worn by many women who have to do work out in the open.

You will eat dinner at a charming restaurant.



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 170 km

Duration: 3 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 100m

Overnight: 15m

Hotel

La Residence, Hue (*****)

Day 13 Arriving in Hoi An... quaint old town by the ocean...

In the morning, before departing from Hue, we suggest a visit to the Citadel which is, despite the damage it has suffered during the Vietnam war, still very impressive, not least because it speaks of a glorious past.

The drive to Hoi An takes around four hours. Since it runs along National Route 1A it will feel considerably busier than before. A little more than half-way to Hoi An, you will get off Route 1A to drive across the Hai Van Pass which has gained fame because it was featured by Top Gear I a list of the world's finest roads. More importantly, Hai Van pass leads across a mountain range that juts out perpendicular. This range has been a natural dividing line (along the 18th parallel) between kingdoms (Hindu in the South and Buddhists in the north once upon a time) and climate zones

(wet, humid and fertile in the South, dryer and colder in the north).

While the Hai Van pass road isn't long, it is extraordinarily beautiful and traffic free since all heavy trucks (except for those carrying oil) nowadays take a tunnel under the mountain pass.

After descending back down from the Hai Van pass to the coast, it is a relatively short drive along the ocean, skirting down town Da Nang, Central Vietnam's largest city, to Hoi An. In 1999 Hoi An was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO as a well-preserved example of a Southeast Asian trading port of the 15th to 19th centuries, with buildings that display a unique blend of local and foreign influences. Hoi An is the perfect spot for last-minute shopping, whether for yourself



or for souvenirs.

(Please note that lunch today and the afternoon is free for you to arrange yourself; of course, we'll be more than happy to give you recommendations!)

Your last dinner together with the other travelers will be special...and then, when you tuck yourself in at night at the Victoria Hotel, you will hear the

ocean's waves breaking over the beach just beneath your room – a chance to recollect and dream about your drive from the edge of Tibet to the South China Sea.



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 160 km

Duration: 3-4 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 486m

Overnight: 15m

Hotel

Victoria Hotel, Hoi An (*****)



Day 14 Life must go on...

As always happens on our journeys, you, too, will likely feel that this journey has been far too short. Is this really the end? If you do have a few more days, why not stay on in Hoi An for a few more days to enjoy the superb Central Vietnamese cuisine, wandering through Hoi An's lovely streets or just enjoying the beach.

When you're ready to leave, we will take you to Da Nang airport (or the train station) and hope that you will return soon to join another journey.



Choice of Cars

We include in the package price an SUV we procure from Avis or Hertz or another reputable car rental company. Most of the SUVs are Toyotas, but on occasion Mitsubishi's or other brands may also make an appearance. For some itineraries, we are able to offer you an option to upgrade your car to the new models from Audi.

We wish the car rental markets of China would be more developed and we could give you more choice, but this is not so: since we want to provide well-maintained and well-insured cars, the choice is rather limited.

But SUVs are in fact the right choice for driving journeys in this part of the world because they are spacious enough to accommodate a lot of luggage, photography equipment, and

good-and-bad-weather gear. Also, they reinforce the feeling of adventure, exploration and discovery...which is, in the end, the mood of journeys in this region, no matter how comfortable or even luxurious the night's hotel may be.

What's more, they offer sufficient clearance when required and thus add a sense of safety and all-round ability. (4-wheel drive capability is hardly needed in China these days since all roads are either very well-paved or, with good gravel, offer solid support.)

And so SUVs from reputable brands are our car of choice!

**“ ANY car,
as long as
it is an SUV”**



Adventures and Discoveries in Local Cuisines

While this itinerary is not one of our 'Foodie'-themed journeys, we do believe that each one of our journeys should introduce you not only to hidden gems of cultural and scenic beauty, but that sampling local cuisines is also a must.

Wherever you travel with us, we will order, with very few exceptions, dishes fresh and on location with an emphasis on local produce. It is not uncommon for our guides to venture into the kitchen to pick this, that or the other vegetable and to ask the cook to prepare them in the finest possible way. (On occasion we do pre-order a meal: this will normally be the case only for special occasions!)

Wine and beer is always included in our meals for you to enjoy. (When we travel into high-altitude, we suggest moderation!)

Finally, if you have special dietary requirements are particularly interested in the culinary aspect of one of our journeys, please let us know.

For private journeys, we can, of course, tailor the meal experience to your taste (and budget).



What's Included / Best Months to Go...

Generally speaking, our journey packages and prices are all-inclusive. Once you've paid and you arrive at the starting point, you really won't have to take out your wallet again.

- **Cars** – a modern SUV is provided for all driving days, expertly maintained and serviced by Avis, Hertz, or other reputable car rental companies, and covered by the best insurance available, and hire car return from Hoi An to Kunming is also included
- **International Journey Host, Guide and Support Vehicle** – you will be accompanied by a registered Chinese tour guide, an On the Road in China host and a fully equipped lead car with a local support driver
- **Routes** – we provide an extensively researched and carefully designed itinerary and “state-of-the-art” satellite navigation system with a pre-programmed route for the journey. You will also receive a detailed pre-departure pack and route book for the journey
- **Driving License** – You will require an International Driving Permit for Lao and Vietnam. You will also need a temporary Chinese driving license for which all arrangements and fees are included.
- **Fuel & Tolls** – we provide petrol for the car throughout the journey and pay all tolls



- **Airport Transfers** – all airport transfers are included
- **Permits and logistics** – all arrangements for the crossing of the China-Lao and Lao-Vietnam borders for travellers and cars
- **Hotels** – the best available or five-star accommodation is included in each overnight stop

- **Meals** – breakfast (a choice of Western and Local is provided), and lunch and dinner are included on all driving days, as are drinks. Meals on non-driving days as specified above. Prepare for a culinary adventure!
- **Goodies** – you will enjoy an On the Road Home-Away-from-Home Kit containing wet towels, anti-bacterial gel and basic toiletries, and a daily picnic basket containing fresh fruit, fruit juice, water, and a mixture of sweets and nibbles

- **Other Essentials** – we provide each car with walky-talkies
- **Travel Insurance** – including 24-hour medical assistance, evacuation and repatriation emergency service
- **Tips & Entrance Fees** – basic tips and entrance fees for jointly attended activities are included
- **Activities, Meals, Transport** during ‘free times’ as indicated in this Journey Dossier
- **Top-up Collision Damage Waiver** insurance

What's Not Included

The only items not included in our prices are flights to Kunming and back from Hoi An, your China, Lao and Vietnam visas, and personal purchases (e.g., gifts, souvenirs).



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“ A picture is worth a thousand words. True, but when it comes to a road journey, moving images are priceless. Please visit : <http://www.ontheroadexperiences.com/en/video-gallery> ”





ON THE ROAD EXPERIENCES

BACK ROADS | HIDDEN GEMS

“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

