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## Mount Genyen Trekking in Tibet

- Adventure trip to Tibetan areas of Yunnan and Sichuan in the heart of Kham with 8 days trekking off the beaten tracks
- Close encounter with local Tibetan people and pilgrims
- Trekking at high altitude (around 4'000 meters) with breathtaking views



## TREKKING TOUR AT HOLY MOUNT GENYEN IN TIBETAN YUNNAN AND SICHUAN

This tour takes you from Kunming to the north of Yunnan province. After visiting Lijiang and Shangri-La we take you deep into the heart of Tibetan Kham. This trip is especially designed for trekking enthusiasts, who are looking for an unforgettable experience and would like to gain an in-depth view of the Tibetan culture in this region. On an 8-day trekking tour off the beaten tracks, you have the chance to interact with local nomads and pilgrims and learn more about the area of holy Mt. Genyen – an important destination of pilgrimage.

From the physical point of view, this tour is rated as an intermediate trek, but with 8 days trekking at around 4'000 meters, high altitude experience is helpful.

- Best travel date: May to September
- Destinations: Kunming, Lijiang, Shangri La, Litang, Mt. Genyen
- Duration: 18 days
- Starting in: Kunming
- Ending in: Kunming
- Group size: min. 8 pax, max. 14 pax

### QUICK INTRODUCTION

The trip takes us first from Kunming - the provincial capital of Yunnan - to Lijiang. The old town of Lijiang has been inscribed on the UNESCO List of World Heritage Sites. To ensure proper acclimatization we spend two nights in this lovely town, which is home to the matrilineal Naxi minority and its mysterious Dongba shamanism.



From Lijiang we travel further north to Shangri-La, the first Tibetan town on the trip. From Shangri-La we descend to the valleys of Mekong River (at an altitude of approx. 2'350 meters) to flood our bodies with oxygen before we spend the next 10 days above 4'000 meters. Once arrived in Litang - one of the most important towns in the whole

region - we start our 8 days trek along the slopes of holy Mount Genyen. Impressive and breathtaking views await you as well as great opportunities to gain an in-depth view on the lifestyle of the local nomads and also the pilgrims who come from all over Eastern Tibet to pray at Mt. Genyen. During these eight days we will stay overnight in tents. After the trek we return to Shangri-La and from there back to Kunming.

**DAY 1      KUNMING      (D)**

Upon arrival, you will be picked up at the airport by our guide and transferred to a five star hotel, which is conveniently located in the center of Kunming. After a first short sightseeing tour of the city and a visit to one of the lively local markets, you will enjoy a welcome dinner in an excellent local restaurant.

**DAY 2      KUNMING - LIJIANG (2350 M)      (B/L/D)**

After breakfast visit the Green Lake Park and the nearby Yuan Tong Monastery, a unique Buddhist site which unites all 3 great schools of Buddhism. Around noon we transfer to Shilin Stone Forest to explore the picturesque karst formation. In the early evening we take the flight to Lijiang. After check-in at the Grand Lijiang Hotel, we will stroll through the nearby old town which is enlisted on the UNESCO List of World Heritage Sites and attracts visitors from all over the world. In the small and winding alleyways you will find many cozy restaurants, bars and countless shops selling local handicraft and antiques.

**DAY 3      LIJIANG (2350 M)      (B/L/D)**

After breakfast transfer to Yuhu, home to Austrian-American explorer Joseph Rock, who lived there from 1922 until 1949, pioneering in exploring the indigenous flora and various peoples in the Sino-Tibetan border area. From his home, we go to the Yufeng Temple and further to Baisha Village, the former capital of the Naxi Kingdom, located on the Lijiang plains, through which the Mongols led by Kublai Khan invaded the Nanzhao Kingdom and conquered the Chinese Imperial armies in the 13th century. Baisha's old Taoist/Buddhist frescoes are some of the last of their kind in China and show a gathering of immortals and deities of both religions.

**DAY 4      LIJIANG - SHANGRI LA (3300 M)      (B/L/D)**

In the morning, we make an excursion up onto Lion Hill, with its beautiful views over the tiled roofs of the old town of Lijiang and its quiet surrounding park. Before lunch, we travel on towards the Tibetan Plateau. On the way you will visit the Tiger Leaping Gorge, one of the deepest gorges in the world. During the millenniums, the Yangtze River carved a gorge into the massifs of the Haba and Jade Dragon Snow Mountains, both over 5'000m high with their glacier peaks towering over the rice terraces on the Yangtze banks. In the afternoon arrival at the plain of Gyalthang/Shangri-La, at an altitude of 3'300 meters the highest municipality of Yunnan province. Overnight at downtown four-star hotel and local Tibetan dinner.

**DAY 5      SHANGRI LA - XIANGCHENG (2350 M)      (B/L/D)**

Today we drive further north through picturesque Tibetan villages to the "Big Snow Mountains"-Pass (4'490 m) and on to the fertile valley of Xiangcheng, border city between the provinces of Sichuan and Yunnan. Arrival in the afternoon, overnight and dinner at a simple, but clean three-star hotel.

**DAY 6 XIANGCHENG - LITANG (4020 M) (B/L/D)**

Today's route takes you along Yisho River up to the Daocheng-Litang Plateau. The area is surrounded by several high mountain passes. Because of its strange rock formations such as the „rabbit ear mountain“ it resembles a moon landscape. Arrival in Litang in the early afternoon and check-in at a simple local hotel in the center of Litang. The town is famous for being the birthplace of the 7th Dalai Lama as well as for their hot-tempered inhabitants.


**DAY 7 LITANG (4020 M) (B/D)**

On this rest day you get the opportunity to explore Litang - an important center for the rural population and nomads of the border area of Yunnan, Sichuan and the Tibetan Autonomous Region. In the late afternoon we will visit the well-known Litang Choede Monastery which was built in the 16th century under the reign of the 3rd Dalai Lama and is considered as one of the most powerful monasteries in Eastern Tibet.

**DAYS 8-14 MOUNT GENYEN TREKKING IN THE HEART OF KHAM (B/L/D)**

Surrounded by seemingly endless steppes and high mountain ridges, Mt. Genyen has been the holy mountain of the half-nomads of the Litang area and destination of Buddhist pilgrims for centuries. The trek starts in a small village situated about 4 hours drive away from Litang. The path follows a river into Shambala valley. The meadows on the way offer excellent camping opportunities, most of them with

stunning views on the glaciers and slopes of the holy mountain.



From the picturesque Nyigong monastery the hike leads south towards Xiangcheng through an untouched landscape with many rare plants and animals. En route there are several passes to be traversed, many of them over 4'700 meters high, offering breathtaking views over the mountains of southeast Tibet.

Apart from the fantastic landscape, the trek offers a great opportunity to get in touch with the Tibetan nomads and pilgrims in an area which is well known for their strong religious belief and tradition. As much of the region is above 4'000 meters, this trek is quite demanding. However, you have the option to ride a horse instead of walking.

**DAY 15      CAMP - REDA CHOPELING - DERONG (1.5 HOURS)      (B/L/D)**

From the last camp, another 1.5 hour hike takes us to the road where our driver awaits us. At the end of the valley we will visit the large Reda Choepeling monastery and have lunch in a small village near the monastery. Then we drive through the beautiful Sun Valley to Derong. Dinner and overnight in the quite comfortable Sun Valley Hotel (2\*).

**DAY 16      DERONG - SHANGRI LA (3300 M)      (B/L)**

After a good night's sleep, a 4-hour drive takes us back to Shangri-La. The rest of the day is at your own disposal.

**DAY 17      SHANGRI LA (3300 M)      (B/D)**

The last day in Yunnan is dedicated to relaxing and recovering. It's a great opportunity to ponder on the experiences. You will have a farewell dinner in a selected restaurant with either Western or Tibetan food.

**DAY 18      SHANGRI LA - KUNMING      (B)**

Transfer to the airport and flight to Kunming for your connecting flight.

[Contact us](#) per mail for a tailor-made itinerary.

Our other trekking tours in China:

[17-days Northern Yunnan and Eastern Tibet](#)

[9-days Silk Road Sightseeing and Trekking Tour to the Base Camp of Mount Bogda in Xinjiang](#)

[8-days Horse Riding and Trekking Tour Xinjiang](#)

## **RATES**

**RATE PER PERSON IN TWIN: EUR 3120**

**CHF 4980**

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: ON REQUEST**

### **INCLUDED:**

- experienced Austrian tour leader
- local trekking guide, English/Chinese-speaking
- flights Kunming - Lijiang and Shangri La - Kunming in economy class
- accommodation in selected hotels (3-5\*) in double rooms as mentioned in the itinerary
- outside the cities accommodation in basic, but clean guest houses in double rooms or in tents
- full board except on free afternoons/evenings; including soft drinks during meals
- all transfers as mentioned in the itinerary in comfortable coach respectively jeep
- all air and train tickets as well as airport taxes in China
- camping equipment on the trekking trip
- cook and cooking equipment for camping days
- horse guide and pack-animals (mules, horses or yaks) for baggage and equipment (max. 15 kg personal baggage per participant!)

### **NOT INCLUDED:**

- international flights to and from Kunming
- expenses of personal nature such as laundry, tips, etc.
- alcoholic drinks
- optional ascent on horseback with local horse guide (surcharge 25 Euro per day)
- optional excursions not mentioned in the itinerary
- expenses for medical care
- insurances (travel insurance, travel cancellation insurance)
- repatriation flights in case of emergencies

**INSURANCE IS RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARTICIPANT! HIDDENCHINA.NET GMBH RECOMMENDS PURCHASING TRAVEL CANCELLATION INSURANCE.**

## **SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**

For this tour you have to be in good condition. You need adequate travel gear and some preparation according to the local customs and special characteristics. For this tour, there are some special requirements:

Once arrived in China we will take care of a slow and adequate acclimatization and provide you with professional advice, but there always is some risk involved that due to the high altitude of some passages, some people might suffer from discomfort like headache, sleeplessness and other symptoms of altitude sickness. Please inform yourself about possible risks and preventive measures before the start of the trip.

Furthermore, this tour requires you to be in good condition suitable for trekking. You should have a secure step and no acrophobia. For the case that an ascent is too demanding, there is the opportunity of horseback-riding with a local personal horse-guide (as horses are rather small of size, therefore the weight limit for the rider is 90 kg).

As this tour leads into regions with very restricted infrastructure, accommodation facilities and meals can be very basic! As compensation, the traveler gets a unique insight into daily life of the local communities.

For the case of health problems, please bring a personal stock of medicines for your private use, as we are not allowed by Chinese law to provide any medication. Please also be aware that personal travel insurance for the entire trip is also necessary.

Please be informed that we cannot take any responsibility for incidences occurring due to act of nature beyond control, alpine risks or high altitude as long as they are not caused grossly negligent by our staff. Furthermore we reserve the right to make changes in the itinerary without prior notice.

**IMPORTANT NOTE**

Traveling in China, especially off the beaten tracks and in rural areas, can be adventurous and carries also a certain amount of surprises and risks. HiddenChina.net ensures that in every situation we and our guides are trying to get out a maximum of comfort for our clients. All our guides are carefully chosen and selected by their abilities and experience. Nevertheless, there might be surprises. We hereby express that a voyage in China needs patience, adaptation and tolerance. In addition due to lack of infrastructure, in rural areas in China there is often a lack of western sanitary standards. Clients of hiddenChina.net accept - upon signing a contract - to be aware of these circumstances, and accept changes which may occur in order to keep security and comfort of the clients according to the circumstances to a maximum during the trip.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR CHINA TRAVELERS**

Traveling in China is always an adventure. Quality of service can range from “top” in selected 5\* Hotels in the big cities to “very poor”. While traveling in China, even with an organized tour, the clients have to be ready for unexpected changes (e.g. due to natural disasters such as landslides or flooding) or other surprises. In hotels by example, it can happen that you will get phone calls in the middle of the night, offering you a special massage service. The following chapters will tell you more about what you should consider when traveling in China.

**FACE**

You may have heard it before and for the experienced China traveler it's a “must know”: In China, everything is about “giving and losing face”. Chinese people are very proud of their culture, food and traditions. Respect this fact and try not to bring a Chinese into an embarrassing situation, as he or she might lose his face in front of coworkers, friends, family members or even the authorities. Try to be polite, smile and - especially to English speaking Chinese - always praise their language skills. Chinese can be considered as reactive people. If you treat Chinese people in an arrogant and harsh way, you will be treated the same way. When you feel cheated, try to solve the situation in a gentle and charming way. You will achieve your goal much faster. Also try to react calmly in stress situations and stay friendly. For every problem in China there is a solution. It's up to you how effective you will get to this solution. Being angry and aggressive is contra productive in the most cases.

**SECURITY**

Especially large cities in China are extremely safe. Chinese people have to fear severe punishment when being caught by the authorities in illegal matters when foreigners are involved. However, be aware that pick pocketing happens everywhere, so keep an eye on your belongings and never leave your luggage unattended. When going out at night, China's large cities are much safer than practically all European cities. A single woman has nothing to fear when walking in a dark alley even at 4 o'clock in the morning.

## **HEALTH**

It is also recommended to visit your house doctor before you go on a China trip and make all the necessary vaccinations. Your doctor will inform you what you will need. For travelers going to south China, it is also recommended to carry a supply of Malaria remedies. As the avian influenza is getting more and more a serious issue in Asia and a pandemic outbreak will happen sooner or later, the traveler should also consider buying a box of "Tamiflu" before the trip begins.

When traveling in China and especially when eating a lot of local food, a supply of remedies for stomach problems is highly recommended. We will always take care of taking you to clean restaurants with high quality standards. However, your body will have to deal with a wide range of unknown food, spices and other ingredients in China and also with different bacteria and viruses than in Europe's clean environment. When being on a 3 week China trip, you have to reckon with stomach problems at least once. To cure them it is recommended to take pharmaceuticals, which are rich in salt and minerals and give you back the elements you will lose during a diarrhea. From our longtime China experience, one of the best remedies is to eat well-boiled Chinese mushrooms and bananas as well as to drink tomato juice. On many of our private trips, this helped much better than the Western medication like e.g. Imodium. Always take toilet paper with you, as you won't find any in public toilets! Travelers going to high altitude areas such as Tibet are also recommended to take a supply of Diamox in case of altitude sickness. Please get advice from your doctor.

## **CLIMATE**

China has several different climatic zones. From high-altitude to sub-tropic and desert climate, there is everything. Depending on your date of arrival in China, you might be traveling in the rainy season. E.g. in southern China, this time mostly starts late May / early June and lasts until August. This year, in the provinces of Guangxi and Guizhou heavy flooding took the life of several hundred local people. However, we will adapt the trip according to your travel time and avoid the areas with heavy rain.

## **LUGGAGE**

Most airlines allow you to check-in 20 kg of luggage (economy class). It is not allowed to take nutrition products (cheese, meat) as well as pornographic material. Please ensure that your "Swiss army knife" and other "dangerous products" are checked in with your luggage and not in the hand luggage.

China offers you a wide range of shopping possibilities. So if you plan to go for extensive shopping, take a minimum of luggage to China. However, whenever you forgot something, don't worry, more or less everything you need in daily life, can be bought much cheaper in China (see chapter below). Be aware that many customs authorities like the ones in Paris and Milan can fine you heavily when finding out that you try to import faked products from China such as Yves St Laurent bags, Gucci items or Prada clothes.

## **SHOPPING**

Except for imported luxury goods and high-end electrical equipment such as beamers or imported laptops, more or less everything is cheaper in China than in Western Europe. Especially clothes can be bought at a very low price. Many shopping areas offer faked products (sometimes in extremely good quality). However, in many places where no prices are indicated you have to bargain about the price (see chapter below). Please note that when buying a faked product, especially at the airport in Paris, you can get into trouble. The fight against faked products is now at a point, that authorities can or will take away your purchase and will heavily fine you. For the golf lovers, there is a wide range of possibilities to buy whole golf sets at a ridiculously low price. Have your suits tailor-made, buy ties, silk products, pearls etc. at a very low price. For most Europeans, DVD's are of special interest. For a DVD you pay between 8 and 10 RMB (about 1 EURO) and most of the movies are available even before they are shown in European cinemas. The advantage is that DVD's take away only little space and weight. But be aware that in many cases you are buying illegally copied and distributed products.

Credit cards are only accepted in major stores, 3\* hotels and upwards and western restaurants. Money can be withdrawn at ATM's at the Bank of China. Please note that these are hard to find in remote areas. Money can be changed at major branches of the Bank of China or in western hotels. Please note that you need to show your passport for changing money.

## **BARGAINING**

As mentioned in the "shopping" chapter, in many places you have to bargain for your price. Western tourists are mostly looked at as "big dollar signs" and accordingly the price will be set 400 – 500% above the price the vendor is ready to sell his or her merchandise. The first rule is to go below the first offered price. So when the vendor asks for 100 RMB, you can set your offer to 20-25 RMB. Then it depends on your bargaining skills at what price you will get it. A simple trick is, when it seems too expensive for you, to walk away from the vendor. If he or she doesn't follow you, you know that your bid was too low. Please also note, always stay friendly and smile when bargaining. Once you agreed for a price, you have to buy the product. Otherwise you and the vendor will lose face.

## **LANGUAGE AND BEHAVIOR**

Even in big cities like Beijing and Shanghai, it is most unlikely that you find English speaking taxi drivers or personnel in the shops. Therefore it is recommended to take a phrase book with you, where you can show what you need. Chinese people are mostly friendly and curious towards foreigners. However, Chinese are also very proud of their country and culture and some behavior will be strange for travelers who come to China for the first time. In many places (even sometimes in public buses) people smoke a lot and for the non-smoker, China can be a terrible place. You also often see Chinese people spitting accompanied by strange noises. The best way to get around it is to ignore it and live with it. For the smoker on the other hand China is a paradise, as it is more or less everywhere allowed to smoke and cigarettes are extremely cheap, although some foreign brands might be faked. Please also note that you might be invited to test your drinking skills. The easiest way to avoid it without losing face is to tell your hosts that due to liver problems you're not allowed to drink.

## **TIPPING**

Although China is - especially away from the big cities - a very poor country, tipping only exists in the 5\* surroundings of the big cities. In restaurants or taxis and hotels (except 5\* hotels) tipping is a no-no. However, tour guides and drivers of organized tours should be tipped. Most guides and drivers are roughly paid with 10 Euro per day and rely on additional income. With Chinese tour groups (which often go shopping) the guides always get a commission in the shops, where they make most of their salary. As European groups usually do not visit as many shops as Chinese tourists, guides and drivers have to rely on tips.

Generally a tip of RMB 30 per person and day is reasonable. When you are in a tour group it is recommended that the group collects the tips and hands it to the guides and drivers in an envelope. It is also very helpful to take some souvenirs with you, like for example watches or picture postcards from your home country.

## **SMALL TALK AND CONVERSATION**

Small talk in China is a bit different than in Europe, but there are also topics which should be avoided and topics which are perfect for small talk.

One of the most common greetings in China is “Ni chi fan le ma?” which literally means “Have you eaten yet?” This emphasizes the importance of eating in China, and it is much more a social event than in the West, therefore food is always a welcomed topic.

In some cases you also might be confronted with rather private questions such as about your marital status and about family. The Chinese are very family oriented, so don't feel embarrassed when people ask you rather private questions, it's just small talk. Sometimes, especially in business surroundings, people also might ask you about your salary, which is quite normal in China. Here you can escape (if you don't want to tell the truth) by telling some fictional figure, or when telling the truth and your counterpart's eyebrows rise, you explain how expensive the life in Europe is.

Topics which should be avoided at all costs are all political related such as the Cultural Revolution, critics against the system or chairman Mao, the Tibet and Taiwan question, human rights or how to treat animals. If you want to have answers to these questions you might do it through your guide. Do not overload your guide with too many hard questions in the beginning though. Tactically it is wise to hide these questions in some compliments and be as subtle as possible (see also the chapter about “face”). Please note that young Chinese (below 30) are more open to discuss critical topics than people above 30.

Please also note that Chinese people tend to touch you, which is not a sign of homosexuality but just a sign of sympathy. In such a situation, when you feel uncomfortable, don't react in a rude or harsh way; just try to escape the contact by elegant means. Mostly a hearty fit of coughing does the trick (SARS is still in Chinese people's mind).

## **TRAFFIC AND TAXI**

The public transport system in China is basically quite convenient. Every major city has an airport; there are many train routes (even though there is mostly only one train per day between two destinations) and public buses. Public buses are very cheap although the comfort is sometimes a bit poor.

In the cities, the most convenient public transport is the taxi. You can, compared to Europe, basically take a taxi anytime and everywhere at a very low price. Be careful that on major tourist sites there are also drivers trying to make extra money. When a taxi has no taximeter (make sure that the driver in taxis with a taximeter always puts it on), negotiate the rate before you get into the vehicle. However, some drivers will still try to make you pay an extra fee at the end. Just tell him that you pay the negotiated price, nothing more, and nothing less. Please also note that most drivers don't speak English. So take a bilingual map, a taxi card or a guidebook with you. Tell the reception in the hotel to write down the addresses for you so you can show it to the driver. Please note that highway fares have to be paid by the customer and not the driver (for example, in Beijing the fee for the airport expressway is 10 Yuan for passenger cars). This fee will be added to the amount shown on the taximeter.

## **USEFUL THINGS TO TAKE ON A CHINA TRIP**

Several Swiss army knives, a compass, pharmaceuticals (see health chapter), a first-aid kit, tape, watches (not too expensive), money clip, camera (films can be bought and developed on spot for a very reasonable price), deodorant (rarely available in China), sunglasses, altimeter (for Tibet and Himalaya tours), GPS, safety belt for money, literature, guidebooks, credit-/bank card and a lot of patience.

For ladies: tampons are rarely available in China.