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## Yushu and Litang Horse Festivals

- Join the extraordinary horse racing festivals in Yushu and Litang
- Get an inside view into the culture and tradition of Tibetan festivals
- Explore the traditional Tibetan provinces Kham and Amdo
- Travel across vast grasslands, through spectacular valleys and visit influential monasteries



## **HORSE FESTIVALS IN YUSHU AND LITANG**

This tour will lead you to the world-renowned horse festivals in Yushu and Litang and is specially designed for people, who want to explore Tibet's traditional provinces Kham and Amdo and want to gain an insight into Tibetan culture, festivals and traditions.

- Best travel date: Summer 2008
- Destinations: Xining, Gonghe, Maduo, Yushu, Serxu, Derge, Xinlong, Litang, Danba, Wolong, Chengdu
- Duration: 15 days
- Starting in: Xining
- Ending in: Chengdu
- Group size: min. 4 pax, max. 16 pax

## **QUICK INTRODUCTION**

The traditional Tibetan Horse-Racing Festival has a long history, and it is the greatest festival among annual traditional festivals of the Tibetans. The difference between horse racing festivals and other religious or folk events is that they encourage whole-family participation amidst breath-taking scenery and include distinct customs and traditions.

Many Tibetans still lead a nomadic life. This is the reason why lots of Tibetans have the tradition of gathering together every year when the flowers blossom (i.e. at the end of July or beginning of August) to see relatives and friends they seldom meet during the year: children go back to visit their parents,



lovers meet after a long time of not seeing each other, weddings are held and commodities are bartered or bought for the year ahead.

During this time, various cultural events like singing and dancing performances will be held. The traditional horse racing is a particularly special part of the festival; therefore, people refer to this festival as "The Horse Racing Festival".

Nomadic life is usually rather simple. Only during this festival, herdsman dress themselves up just like their ancestors. They put on their best clothes to show off their family wealth. Adding to the festival's atmosphere, every family or household will meet friends, drink wine together with them at dusk and participate in religious activities. Do not miss out on this opportunity to join these two fascinating horse racing festivals!

<b>DAY 1</b>	<b>XINING</b>	<b>(L/D)</b>
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Upon arrival, you will be picked up at the airport by our guide and transferred to the “Tianniange Hotel” (4\*). Xining is the capital of Qinghai Province and used to be a chief commercial hub on the caravan route to Tibet, handling especially with timber, wool and salt. The city was also the extraterritorial capital of the Koko Nor territory and remained in Gansu until 1928, when it became the capital of the newly formed Qinghai province.

<b>DAY 2</b>	<b>XINING - GONGHE</b>	<b>(B/L/D)</b>
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After breakfast we transfer from Xining to Gonghe. En route we visit the Great Monastery of Kumbum (also called Tar or Taer Monastery) and the “Riyue” Sun & Moon Mountain. We stay overnight at the “Gonghe Hotel”.

Ta'er Lamasery - located in Huangzhong County, 26 kilometers from Xining - has played an important role in Chinese Buddhist history. It was built in 1560 upon the birth place of the founder of the Gelukpa Sect (Yellow Hat) of Tibetan Buddhism, Tsongkhapa. It is generally acknowledged to be one of the six most important monasteries along with the Ganden, Sera and Drepung monasteries in the Lhasa area, the Tashilhunpo Monastery in Shigatse and the Labrang Monastery in Xiahe. The monastery is a large



complex of dozens of halls and towers on a mountainside in both Tibetan and Han architectural styles.

Riyue Mountain is part of the Qilian Mountain Range. It used to be a vital communications center between Central China and the southwest frontiers as well as the west regions and divides Qinghai into agricultural and pastoral area. To the east lies the Huangshui Valley; to the northwest is Qinghai Lake; to the southwest are rolling mountains, vast grassland and tents scattered across the countryside.

<b>DAY 3</b>	<b>GONGHE - MADUO</b>	<b>(B/L/D)</b>
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In the morning we drive from Gonghe via Huashixia to Maduo County, where the Huang He (Yellow River) originates from. We will drive through a spectacular landscape of countless tiny rivers, lakes and valleys. The trail heads up onto the Amdo grasslands on a high remote road through the vast rolling plateaus, which are the stomping grounds of the Golok nomads. The area is rich in wildlife and is also an ideal destination for bird watching with the Holy Mountain Amnye Machen (6'282 m) standing proud in the distance. We stay overnight at a simple, but clean guesthouse.

<b>DAY 4</b>	<b>MADUO - YUSHU</b>	<b>(B/L/D)</b>
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After breakfast we drive from Maduo to Yushu via Xiewu and Tongtian River. Visit local Tibetan families, taste fresh milk, cheese and Yak butter tea, enjoy the nomad customs and appreciate the scenery. We will stay overnight at the “Yushu Hotel”. The population of Yushu County is 76,000, of which around 90% is Tibetan. Other nationalities include Han, Hui, Salar and Tu. Yushu County combines farming and animal husbandry, with the latter as main industry.

**DAY 5      YUSHU HORSE FESTIVAL      (B/L/D)**

Today you will join the Jyekundo (Yushu) Horse Festival - a huge event, attended by nomads and townspeople from a 2-300 mile radius. Much of the festival's prominence stems from the importance of nearby Yushu town, which has been a major way-point on the caravan trails between Lhasa and Xining for centuries, and the festival is still as much about trade as it is about dancing or riding skills, mask dances and many more activities.



We will stay overnight at the "Yushu Hotel".

**DAY 6      YUSHU      (B/L/D)**

Watch the riders show off their skills, get in close touch with the visiting nomads, enjoy traditional dancing and singing performances and simply join the merry crowd today!

We will stay overnight at the "Yushu Hotel".

**DAY 7      YUSHU - SERXU      (B/L/D)**

Today we leave Yushu and transfer to Serxu (Sershul) to visit the Serxu Monastery: the fascinating site of the second-largest Maitreya (Byams-pa) Buddha of the Future statue in Tibet.

We stay overnight at a basic, but clean guesthouse.

**DAY 8      SERXU - DERGE      (B/L/D)**

We transfer from Serxu to Derge via Manigange, Chaola Mountain and Derge Grand Canyon. You will have a great view on the Xinluhai Lake as well as on the mountains and their glaciers. We will also visit the Dzogchen Monastery on the way.



After its founding in 1685, Dzogchen Monastery grew from a small monastery into a major institution within the Nyingma tradition. Quite soon after its founding, Dzogchen became involved in continuing and preserving the Buddhist teachings in Tibet. In the early 18th century, the monastery encouraged the King of Derge to establish a treasury and printing press for the preservation of the Tibetan Buddhist teachings. Over time Dzogchen became a regional center for religious and philosophical education and instruction.

Overnight at the "Chaola Mountain Hotel".



**DAY 9      DERGE - XINLONG      (B/L/D)**

Derge (Dege), one of the major towns in Kham area, is famous for the Derge Printing House (Parkhang) to print Buddhist scriptures. It used to be the capital of Derge Kingdom which once ruled the whole northern Kham area.



Today we visit the Derge Printing House, where artisans are carving woodblocks in silence. We also stop by a traditional Tibetan hospital and then continue our journey from Derge to Xinlong via Baiyu.

You stay overnight at the “Bruman Resort”.

**DAY 10      XINLONG - LITANG      (B/L/D)**


We leave Xinlong in direction of Litang and drive through the Yajiang Valley and across the Litang Grassland. Litang is a county in the southwest of the Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. It is located at an altitude of 4014 meters. Several famous Buddhist figures were born here, including the 7th Dalai Lama and the 5th Jamyang Xeba of Labrang.

Nomads graze yaks, goats, sheep and horses on Litang’s high plateau grasslands, as they have done for generations. Litang is also host to a major horse racing festival, attracting thousands of Tibetans from all over the plateau, Qinghai, Sichuan and Tibet.

You stay overnight at the “Genie Hotel”.

**DAY 11      LITANG HORSE RACE FESTIVAL      (B/L/D)**

The Litang Horse Race Festival is one of the biggest events celebrated on China’s Tibetan grasslands, and Tibetans from near and far arrive as early as possible to get a good spot to set up their tents. The women are all in their most beautiful clothes with magnificent jewelry. The festival is also a good time for trade and various Tibetan-style articles are exchanged here amongst the visitors. The opening ceremony of the Horse Race Festival will be held today: listen to the traditional songs, watch dancing performances, visit the nomads’ tents and enjoy their unmatched hospitality.

You stay overnight at the “Genie Hotel”.

**DAY 12      LITANG      (B/L/D)**

The most exciting event is the horse race. The riders will take their beautifully adorned horses to participate in the races and show off their excellent horse riding skills, such as shooting at targets while galloping, etc.



The event will be held in two stages: after the preliminary contest you can start to bet on a rider participating in the finals. If your rider wins, he will meet you after the race and according to the Tibetan tradition he will let you sit next to him on his horse.

You stay overnight at the “Genie Hotel”.

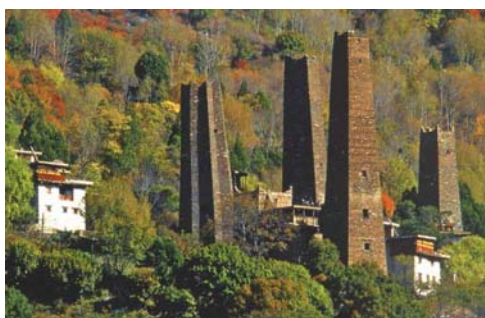
<b>DAY 13</b>	<b>LITANG - DANBA</b>	<b>(B/L/D)</b>
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Today we transfer from Litang to Danba via Tagong and Bamei and drive through the beautiful Yak Canyon. Danba County (Rongzhag) in the Garze Tibet Autonomous Prefecture is famous for its watchtowers. Visit the Tibetan village Jiaju and the watchtowers at Suopo and Zhonglu.

You stay overnight at the “Ancient Tower Hotel”.

<b>DAY 14</b>	<b>DANBA - WOLONG - CHENGDU</b>	<b>(B/L/D)</b>
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On the last day of your journey we drive from Danba to Chengdu via Four Sisters Mountain (Mt. Siguniang) - also often referred to as “Oriental Alps”. Legend has it that a long time ago, an evil spirit by the name of Maerduola often inflicted harm on the local people. One brave man called Alangbayi fought Maerduola but died in the process. Alangbayi had four daughters, and the youngest and most



beautiful of them swore revenge on the evil spirit and finally defeated it several times. This daughter also had a long-term friend from the same village, who she once fought the evil spirit with. After their victory they started to fall in love.

However, Maerduola never let go of his evil plans and tricked the Water Goddess into flooding the region. All four sisters sought revenge and peace for the community, but the three older sisters were afraid that the youngest sister could not defeat the evil spirit on her own anymore, so they attacked Maerduola together with their men. Unfortunately they were defeated but managed to transform into three mountains imprisoning Maerduola beneath them. However, the evil spirit's power was even greater than they had expected and the youngest daughter saw that her sisters could not constrain Maerduola much longer, so she turned into a big mountain with great glaciers too, sitting on the spirit's chest and imprisoning him for good.

As the youngest sister's lover heard of the news, he was heart-broken and turned into a big white cloud covering the mountain's top to express his eternal love.

We will also pass Balang Mountain and visit the Wolong Giant Panda Natural Reserve. We will stay overnight at the “Tibet Hotel” (4 \*).

<b>DAY 15</b>	<b>CHENGDU</b>	<b>(B)</b>
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Transfer to the airport for your flight home. End of trip.

Our other classic tours in China:

[18 days Highlights Tour](#)

[12 days Yunnan Discovery Tour](#)

[15 days Train and Bus Trip](#)

[15 days Tibet Highlights and Saga Dawa Festival](#)

#### **RATES BASED ON 12 PAX GROUP**

For this tour we offer different cars at different rates.

Prices are in Euro (€) and per person based on min. 12 participants.

Please [contact us](#) per mail for prices for smaller group sizes.

<b>RATE PER PERSON IN TWIN, CAR: 22-SEATER TOUR BUS:</b>	<b>EURO 990</b>
<b>RATE PER PERSON IN TWIN, CAR: MITSUBISHI JEEP:</b>	<b>EURO 1150 (MAX. 4 PEOPLE/CAR)</b>
<b>RATE PER PERSON IN TWIN, CAR: TOYOTA JEEP:</b>	<b>EURO 1250 (MAX. 4 PEOPLE/CAR)</b>
<b>SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:</b>	<b>ON REQUEST</b>

#### **INCLUDED SERVICES:**

- experienced tour guide for all days, English/Chinese-speaking
- accommodation in selected hotels in double rooms as mentioned in the itinerary
- full board except on free afternoons/evenings (described as B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner)
- steel-made oxygen bottles, medicine bag, first aid bag
- entrance fees to sightseeing spots mentioned in the itinerary including and local security management fees at Yushu and Litang Horse Race Festivals
- all transfers mentioned in the itinerary

#### **NOT INCLUDED:**

- international flights
- personal expenses such as laundry, tips etc.
- transports not mentioned in the itinerary
- drinks and all meals 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 RECOMMENDS THAT YOU PURCHASE TRAVEL CANCELLATION INSURANCE!**

## **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Traveling in China, especially off the beaten tracks and in rural areas, can be adventurous and also carries a certain amount of surprises and risks. Hiddenchina.net ensures that in every situation we and our guides arrange for a maximum of comfort for our clients. All Hiddenchina.net guides are carefully chosen and selected for their real-world abilities and experience; this allows us to manage the unexpected that is encountered along our tours. We hereby state that a voyage in China requires a degree of patience, adaptation and tolerance. Additionally, due to lack of infrastructure in the rural areas there is often a lack of western sanitary standards. Clients of Hiddenchina.net accept – upon contract signing - that they are aware of these circumstances in China, and accept that in order to keep the client(s) security and comfort at a maximum during the trip, incidental changes may occur.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR CHINA TRAVELERS**

Traveling in vastness of China is always an adventure. Quality of service can range from the international standards of 5-star hotels in the big cities, to “very poor” in remote villages. While traveling in China, even with an organized tour, clients have to be ready for the unexpected (e.g. due to natural disasters such as landslides, flooding, and weather) or other surprises. In hotels for 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 be aware of 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 a 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 and you will achieve your goal much faster. Also try to react calmly in stress situations and stay friendly. Be reassured that for every problem in China there is a solution, it is up to you how effective you will get to this solution. Being angry and aggressive is counterproductive, in most cases.

## **SECURITY**

Large cities in China are extremely safe! Chinese people have to fear severe punishment when being caught by the authorities in illegal matters especially 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, you will find that China's large cities are much safer than practically all European and North American cities. A single woman has nothing to fear when walking even at 4 o'clock in the morning.



## HEALTH

It is also recommended to visit your house doctor or general practitioner before you go on a China trip and take the necessary vaccinations. Your doctor will inform you what you will need; you may also want to consult your country's national health authority. For travelers going to south China, it is also recommended to carry a supply of malaria remedies. The avian influenza is a serious issue in Asia and has been the focus of the World Health Organization (WHO) for several years. As a traveler should also consider taking appropriate medicines under the advice of their physician and buy some common incidental remedies (e.g. Tamiflu, appropriate cold medicines) before the trip begins.

We at Hiddenchina.net will always take particular care to introduce you to clean restaurants with high quality standards. However, when traveling in China and especially when eating a lot of local food, carrying a supply of remedies for stomach problems is highly recommended. Your body will have to deal with a wide range of new foods, spices and other ingredients in China and also adjust to different bacteria (micro flora) than found in Europe's and North America's clean environments. When going on a China trip of a few weeks, you may have to reckon with stomach problems at least once. It is recommended that you take appropriate pharmaceuticals which are rich in salt and minerals and give you back the elements you may lose during a bout of diarrhea or intestinal discomfort. 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, e.g. Imodium, Pepto-Bismol. Always carry convenient packets of tissues and toilet paper with you, as you will not 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. In all instances of traveling to China, we recommend getting specific, up-to-date advice from your doctor on appropriate vaccinations and medications.

## CLIMATE

China has several different climatic zones. From high altitude, to sub-tropic, and desert, China has every environment. Depending on your date of arrival in China, you might be traveling in the rainy season. In southern China this season usually begins late May or early June and lasts into August. This is a serious problem in China and this year alone in the provinces of Guangxi and Guizhou heavy flooding took the life of several hundred local people. However, we will adapt your tour according to the season and avoid the areas with heavy rain, or other such weather related problems.

## LUGGAGE

Most airlines allow you to check baggage of 20 kg (economy class); please refer to your airline for specific allowances. The Chinese Border Control does not allow certain food products such as cheeses, meats, pornographic, or political material. Please ensure that your "Swiss army knife" and other "dangerous products" are checked with your luggage and not in your hand luggage/carry-on luggage.

China offers you a wide range of shopping possibilities. If you plan to go for extensive shopping, take a minimum of belongings. However, do not worry if you forget something, almost everything you need for daily life, can be bought much cheaper in China (see chapter below). Please be aware that many customs authorities, like the ones in Paris and Milan, can fine you heavily if they discover fake, brand name products from China in your luggage. Copied brand name products such as Yves St Laurent, Gucci, Prada, etc. are openly available in most major cities.

## **SHOPPING**

Except for imported luxury goods more or less everything is cheaper in China than in Europe and North America; clothes especially can be bought at very low prices. Many shopping areas offer fake/copy products (sometimes of extremely good quality), however, prices are not always indicated and you will have to bargain about the price (see chapter below). Please note that when buying a fake/copy product, you can get into trouble in Customs especially at major airports such as Paris, London, or Milan. The campaign against fake/copy products is now at a point which authorities can or will take away your purchase and possibly fine you heavily. For golf lovers, there is a wide range of possibilities to buy high-quality whole golf sets at a ridiculously low price. Similarly, you can have your suits tailor-made, buy ties, silk products, pearls, etc. all at very low prices. For most Europeans and North Americans, DVD's are of special interest. For a DVD in China you pay between ¥8-10 (about 1 EURO) and ironically most of the movies are available here even before they are shown in European and American cinemas. The advantage of DVD's is that they take only a little space and weight in your luggage, but be aware that in most cases you are buying illegally copied and distributed products.

Credit cards in China are only accepted in major stores, 3-star hotels and upwards, and western restaurants. Cash can be withdrawn conveniently at ATM's at the Bank of China. Please note that these are hard to find in remote areas. Money can be changed most reliably at major branches of the Bank of China or in western hotels; you will 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 viewed as "big dollar signs" and accordingly the first price given by many shop keepers will be set 400–500% above the final price they will sell his or her merchandise. So when the vendor asks for ¥100, you can set your offer to ¥20-25. Then it depends on your bargaining skills as to what price you will finally pay. A simple trick is, when an item seems too expensive for you, walk away from the vendor. If he or she doesn't follow you, you know that your bid was too low. Please also keep in mind that staying friendly and smiling when bargaining is the best approach. Once you have agreed for a price, you have to buy the product, otherwise you and the vendor will lose face. Note: the Chinese Yuan (¥), is also called RMB within China.

## **LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOR**

Even in big cities like Beijing and Shanghai, it is most unlikely that you find English-speaking taxi drivers or shop assistants. We recommended that you take a phrase book with you, so that you can show what you need to express. Chinese people are mostly friendly and curious towards foreigners

and they are also very proud of their country and culture. However, some of their 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 difficult place. You also often see Chinese people spitting accompanied by rather obvious throat-clearing noises. The best way to get around these differences in social graces is to ignore them and accept it as part of the culture; for even in China they also say “Ru Xiang Sui Su!”, when in Rome, do as the Romans do. On the other hand for the smoker, China is a paradise, as it is more or less acceptable everywhere to smoke and cigarettes are extremely cheap. Social drinking in China is also noteworthy as you might be invited to test your skills. Even modest social contact can include unexpected rounds of drinks, as the Chinese find this is an opportunity to be more indulgent than most European or North Americans. The easiest way to avoid unwanted drinking without losing face is to tell your hosts that due to “health” 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 5-star surroundings of the big cities. In restaurants, taxis, and smaller inns and hotels tipping is a “no-no” (except in 5-star hotels). However, the other exception is for tour guides and drivers of organized tours, these individuals should be tipped. Most guides and drivers are roughly paid 10 Euro per day and rely on the additional tip income. This is acceptable because with Chinese tour groups (which often go shopping) the guides and drivers usually get a commission from the shops. European tour groups usually do not visit as many shops as Chinese tourists, for European tour groups then the 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 inexpensive souvenirs with you from your home country, for example watches or picture postcards.

### **SMALL TALK AND CONVERSATION**

Small talk in China is a bit different than in Europe and North America, but similarly there are 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, job, and about family. The Chinese are very family oriented, so don’t feel embarrassed when people ask you rather private questions, it is 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 an awkward direct question (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 can explain how expensive life in Europe is.

Topics which should be avoided at all costs are all political-related discussions such as the Cultural Revolution, criticism of the system or Chairman Mao, the “Tibet” and “Taiwan” questions, human rights, and the treatment of 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. For the sake of social tact, it is wise to hide these questions in compliments and be as subtle as possible (see also the chapter about “Face”). Please note that young Chinese (below 30) are much more open to discuss critical and inflammatory topics than people above 30.

Please also note that Chinese people may tend to physically touch you, which should not be taken as 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 polite means –to feign a hearty fit of coughing does the trick (SARS is still in Chinese people's mind).

### **TRAFFIC, TAXI AND SUBWAY**

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. Subways are the most convenient way to get around town as you will not get stuck in traffic jams. In Beijing, tickets for lines 1 and 2 cost 2 Yuan (RMB) for however far you are going. All signs and announcements in the subway system are in Chinese and English.

In the cities, taxis are quite convenient as well. You can, compared to Europe, basically take a taxi anytime and everywhere at a very low price. Be wary of taxis found at major tourist sites as there are also unofficial drivers trying to make extra money. We at HiddenChina.net recommend that you always take a licensed taxi, however, if you take a taxi that has no meter (make sure that the driver in taxis with a taximeter always puts it on), be sure to negotiate the rate before you get into the vehicle. Even in taking this precaution, some drivers will still try to make you pay an extra fee at the end of your ride. 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 it is a good habit to take a bilingual map, a taxi card, or a guidebook with you. A convenient method is to tell the reception staff in the hotel to write down the addresses for you so you can show it to the driver. Please note that highway toll fees/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 (RMB) 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 (rolls of film can be bought and developed on the 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. Ladies please note: tampons and similar hygiene products are rarely available in China outside of the major cities.