



"The Grande Dame" of Women's  
Adventure Travel Since 1982

2007 ~ Celebrating 25 Years!

#### **DATES**

April 7 – 24, 2008

#### **COST**

\$6,295 all-inclusive with international and all  
internal airfare from Los Angeles to China and  
Tibet (\$800 deposit)

\* Prices are subject to change based on 2008 exchange  
rates of the US Dollar vs. the Chinese Yuan

#### **RATING**

Moderate

#### **ACTIVITIES**

Architecture, Archeology, Cultural Exploration,  
Cultural Performances, Local Family Visits, Natural  
History, Photography, Sightseeing, Train Trip,  
Walking

#### **MAIN ATTRACTIONS**

- Explore Yunnan's UNESCO World Heritage town of Lijiang, China's "Shangri-La," and well-known for its fascinating culture and ancient Naxi people.
- Travel to Tiger Leaping Gorge on the Yangtze River to view one of the deepest and most spectacular gorges in the world.
- Participate in regional gourmet dinners and cultural performances, and stay in wonderful hotels.
- Spend 7 days in Tibet, known for its exceptional culture, fascinating people, exotic architecture, and breathtaking landscapes.
- Travel from Xining, China to Lhasa, Tibet on the newly-opened Qinghai-Tibet railway. An engineering feat that rises to 16,600 feet, it was built through some of the most difficult terrain on earth.
- Visit the Giant Panda Breeding Center in Chengdu.

AdventureWomen is the oldest  
adventure travel company for  
active women over 30.

## **THE EDGE OF THE WORLD – AN EPIC JOURNEY FROM YUNNAN TO TIBET Plus a Visit with Giant Pandas**

On this epic journey we'll travel from the province of Yunnan, home to the ancient city of Lijiang and China's most picturesque, stunning scenery and ethnic peoples, through an ever-changing panorama along the Tibetan Plateau, China's frontier with Tibet.

For centuries Lijiang served as the capital for the mountain kingdom of the Naxi, an indigenous people whose origin is a mystery, whose language and way of life are unique, and whose rulers are women (!). Untouched for centuries by any civilization, East or West, Asian or Caucasian, Lijiang was the equivalent on Earth of the Western Paradise evoked in Buddhist scriptures. Its face lies in a veil of snowy peaks beyond the gates to the Middle Kingdom. The 300,000 Naxi people today live in the borderlands of Tibet and Sichuan to the north. Tiger Leaping Gorge, Black Dragon Pool, Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, Tibetan monasteries, the only hieroglyphic language still in use: was it indeed the "Shangri-La" of James Hilton's book *Lost Horizon*?

Before crossing into Tibet, we'll pay a visit to Chengdu, gateway to Tibet and the home of China's Giant Panda Breeding Center. We'll then fly to Tibet to explore outstanding monasteries and the Tibetan Buddhist capital at the "top of the world" for seven days. A vast, mysterious land of high plateaus and massive mountain peaks, Tibet has long intrigued the West. Long in isolation and with little communication with the outside world, today Tibet exists as an autonomous region within China. Travel is often difficult, but nonetheless, with its mountain scenery, Buddhist culture, and long history, the mountain kingdom offers an unforgettable experience.

Combine Lijiang, Chengdu, and Tibet with an overnight on the new and culturally controversial Qinghai-Tibet Railway and a few days in Beijing, and it's an awesome and epic journey.

### WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THIS TRIP

- Round-trip, non-stop international flights on Air China from Los Angeles to Beijing, China.
- All domestic flights within mainland China and Tibet:
  - Beijing to Lijiang
  - Lijiang to Chengdu
  - Chengdu to Lhasa, Tibet
  - Xining to Beijing
- 14 nights in double-occupancy rooms in 4- and 5-star hotels or the best available hotels of the area.
- 27 hour overnight train trip on the newly-opened Qinghai-Tibet railway from Lhasa, Tibet to Xining, China.
- 3 meals daily, including American (or Chinese) breakfasts in hotels, with lunches and dinners in local restaurants, and special gourmet dinners as listed in the itinerary.
- All ground transportation and motor coach transfers in private, air conditioned motor coaches.
- All baggage handling throughout the trip.
- China Visa and Tibet Travel Permit.
- Special evening cultural performances and sightseeing as listed in the itinerary.
- All admission for programs, museums, and special events as listed in the itinerary.
- Fully escorted with Chinese national guide, local English-speaking guides in each city, and one AdventureWomen Trip Associate.

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### NOT INCLUDED

- Add-on airfare from your hometown city to Los Angeles.
- Alcoholic beverages and items of a personal nature such as excess baggage, travel insurance, passport, laundry, telephone, and anything not mentioned above as included.
- International airline departure taxes, Chinese government fees, any additional fuel surcharges, and airport fees.
- Gratuities for Chinese national guide, local guides, and drivers. We recommend \$8/person/day for national guide; \$4/person/day for local guides; \$3/person/day for drivers; and 50 cents for hotel baggage handlers.

### HOW TO REGISTER

**First**, call (800-804-8686) or email (advwomen@aol.com) the AdventureWomen office to determine space availability. We will hold a space for you for 5 days while you are completing the application process, and making personal and travel arrangements.

**Next**, complete and sign the **Trip Application** form included in all of our brochures. We can also fax or mail one to you, or you can fill out the Trip Application form on our web site by clicking the "Register for a Trip" icon. Include with the application the **required deposit** that can be made by credit card (Visa or MasterCard), personal check, money order, or cashier's check. You can also register over the phone with a credit card. Once we have received your deposit and your trip application, we will mail you a package of information verifying your registration.

**NOTE:** We will only hold your space for 5 days without a trip application and deposit payment!

### PASSPORT, VISA, HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Citizens of the United States must possess a valid passport and China visa. Citizens of other countries should inquire about requirements for entry. If you do not have a passport, please **APPLY NOW!** Make sure that your passport is valid for a minimum of 6 months beyond your travel dates. When you have your passport photographs taken, you should get 3-4 extra photos: you will need one (1) passport-size photo when you apply for your China visa, and you should always carry 2-3 EXTRA photos, just in case an emergency arises (i.e. in case your passport/visa is stolen).

We (AdventureWomen and our outfitter) will be obtaining your visas for China. At a future date we will send visa forms to everyone who is registered for the trip. You will send the forms and your passport back to AdventureWomen and we will procure your visas.

No special vaccinations are required for travel to China. However, please consult your personal physician, local health department, travel clinic, or immunization center about any vaccinations you may need to update, or others that may be personally recommended for you based on your age, health, and past vaccination history. Hepatitis A and B are present in China, as in the rest of the world, so you should talk to your Doctor about this.

### HEALTH INSURANCE

You must have your own health insurance and not have any physical problems or conditions that would be adversely affected by being at a high altitude in Lijiang (7,800 feet) and Tibet (12,000 feet in Lhasa) and the rigors of international travel. You must be in very good physical condition to participate in this trip.

### LIABILITY FORM AND FINAL PAYMENT

Part of what AdventureWomen hopes to foster is the taking of more self-responsibility for our own lives, health, and safety. Please read the **LIABILITY FORM** carefully, sign it, and return it with your final payment by January 9, 2008.

### CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS

Notification of cancellations must be received in writing. Full payment is due 90 days prior to departure date, and 50% of the registration deposit is non-refundable.

For cancellations received 60-89 days prior to the trip departure date: 50% of the total trip cost is non-refundable. For cancellations received 1-59 days prior to the trip departure date: 100% of the total trip cost is non-refundable.

You are highly encouraged to purchase trip cancellation insurance to cover emergency situations. Information will be sent to you in your registration packet.

### SWITCHING TRIPS

Before your final balance due date, you may change your deposit to another trip within the same calendar year by paying a **\$75 fee to switch**. You may not switch your deposit to a trip in another calendar year.

### NO SMOKING POLICY

Beginning in 1995, our trips became smoke free. Please note that there will be no smoking by any participants on

## OUR EXCITING ITINERARY FOR “THE EDGE OF THE WORLD – AN EPIC JOURNEY FROM FROM YUNNAN TO TIBET”

### Days 1 – 2, Monday – Tuesday, April 7 – 8, 2008

#### **Los Angeles/Beijing**

Meet at the Los Angeles International Airport late evening on April 7th for our flight to Beijing. We depart Los Angeles on Air China non-stop flight CA984 at 1:40 a.m. on April 8, and arrive in Beijing early morning on April 9. Meals enroute

### Day 3, Wednesday, April 9 **Arrival in Beijing**

This morning we arrive in Beijing, the capital of China, at 5:20 a.m. After being greeted at Beijing’s International Airport by our English-speaking Chinese national and local guides, we are taken to our hotel, the **5-star Kun Lun Hotel**.

Beijing, whose name means “Northern Capital,” is the 800-year-old ancient capital of China. It is the beating heart of the Middle Kingdom, the city of cultural exuberance, and the living epitome of China’s past, future, and everything in between. With a staggering 13 million residents, Beijing lies just south of the rim of the Central Asian steppes and is separated from the Gobi Desert by a green chain of mountains, over which the Great Wall runs. Built in the 15th century by the Ming Dynasty’s Emperor Yongle, today’s Beijing lies on the site of countless human civilizations, which date back over half a million years.

You may choose to have the remainder of the day at leisure. Or, you may join our national guide to explore the splendor of this legendary city by visiting historic Tiananmen Square. Mao’s creation, this vast desert of pavement, is the site of Chairman Mao Zedong’s Mausoleum.

Depending on our time and your energy level, we might make our way through the Gate of Heavenly Peace and venture into the Forbidden City, where 24 emperors ruled China for over 500 years. The site of the palaces of the Ming and Qing dynasties from 1421 to 1924, this is a bewildering complex that encompasses over 9,000 rooms, but it defines the very word imperial. The vast pageant of halls, white marble terraces, and deep red walls is now used to display many exhibitions ranging from court costumes to the imperial collection of clocks and rare paintings. The entire complex covers 183 acres, and it was designed to awe the visitor while reinforcing the majesty of the “Son of Heaven,” as every Chinese emperor was known.

Lunch and Dinner

Overnight at the **Kun Lun Hotel**, Beijing.

This 5-star very comfortable and convenient hotel is close to Tiananmen Square and only 12 miles from the airport.

### Day 4, Thursday, April 10 **Fly to Yunnan, and the UNESCO World Heritage City of Lijiang**

This afternoon we fly from Beijing to Lijiang, located in the southwestern province of Yunnan in the foothills of the Himalaya (depart Beijing at 2:40 pm and arrive Lijiang at 6:10 pm). An area of awesome geography (7,800 foot elevation) and diverse ethnic cultures, the province of Yunnan is overlooked to the north by the “roof of the world,” Tibet. The jungles of Myanmar (Burma) encroach from the west, while Laos and Vietnam spill over from the south. Accounts by early travelers all agreed that this was China’s “Shangri-La.”

(ITINERARY—continued on page 4)

### TRAVEL AND AIR ARRANGEMENTS TO CHINA

You will be working directly with AdventureWomen and our China operator for your round-trip air to China. We will be flying round trip from Los Angeles to Beijing on Air China (an affiliate of United Airlines).

You will need to make your own arrangements to arrive in Los Angeles by the evening of April 7th in order to connect with our Air China flight that departs early morning (1:40 AM) on April 8th. Please make sure that you are at the Los Angeles Airport a minimum of 4 hours prior to flight time (i.e., by 9:30 PM on April 7th).

If you need to make flight arrangements to Los Angeles, please call our Travel Consultant, Ciretta Green at Montana Travel, in Bozeman, Montana, at the following telephone numbers:

1-800-247-3538  
Email: [ciretta@mttravel.com](mailto:ciretta@mttravel.com)  
FAX 1-406-586-1959  
CANADIAN RESIDENTS,  
please call 406-587-1188

**NOTE:** The recent trend in travel is for travelers to finalize their plans much closer to departure time than was customary in the past. While we try to be as flexible as possible booking last minute registrants, we must often relinquish hotel space and air reservations 6 to 12 weeks prior to departure! Please keep this in mind when making your travel plans.

“To get an idea of what AdventureWomen is all about, picture...Thelma & Louise picking up Jane Goodall, phoning the ladies from Fried Green Tomatoes and heading off into the wilderness... no male escorts needed, thank you.” - *Web Magazine “Editor’s Choice” for BEST TRAVEL web site.*

The splendid little town of Lijiang, quite possibly the best preserved old town in China, is home to the ancient Naxi people, a minority matriarchal culture thought to have originated in Tibet. Their Dongba religion is an amalgam of Tibetan Buddhism, Islam, and Taoism, and was created more than a thousand years ago. The written language consists of more than 1,300 pictographs, and it is the only hieroglyphic language still in use. Also known for their distinctive music, great efforts are being made to preserve such timeless and important arts.

Lijiang is the only Chinese city on UNESCO’s World Heritage list, and it is generally referred to as the “Old Town of Lijiang.” It is, without a doubt, one of the last places in the country where a visitor can experience an historic and traditional urban Chinese culture. The old town is characterized by a network of narrow canals and waterways, charming pedestrian cobblestone streets, old houses with stone foundations, plastered whitewashed brick walls, bright red wooden doors, shutters and balconies, and sloping tiled roofs. The traditional architecture is engaging and very satisfying in its harmony: half-timbered and earthen houses with wooden gates, cozy central courtyards, and eaves carved with fish and symbols for good luck. It is remarkable at night, when the roofs are festooned with lights and sparkle against the evening sky.

While in Lijiang we will stay 4 nights at the 4-star **Grand Lijiang Hotel**, superbly located at the entrance of the old town, with grand views of the Jade Dragon Snow mountain range.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

#### **Day 5, Friday, April 11 *Explore in and Around the Old Town (Dayan) of Lijiang***

Today is spent exploring the beguiling Old Town of Lijiang and its environs. We begin with a morning visit to Wangulou Pavilion, where we climb to the top for a bird’s-eye-view of Lijiang’s tile-roofed, double-decked houses. The pavilion is an example of wooden Dougong architecture (with sets of brackets on top of the columns supporting the beams within the roof eaves). A set that is cushioned with trapezoidal blocks is called Dou, and one that consists of tiers of outstretching arms is called gong. Thirty-three meters high, the tower has five stories and five tiers of eaves. The top story has 13 angles, representing the 13 peaks of the Jade Dragon Snow Mountains. Painted inside the tower are 2,300 auspicious patterns, representing the harmony and unity of the 23 ethnic groups living in Lijiang. The colorful murals in the tower are redolent of the traditional Dongba culture of the Naxi people.

This afternoon we’ll visit the Black Dragon Pool and the Naxi Cultural Museum. Located at the foot of Xiangshan (Elephant) Hill to the north of Lijiang City is a park that is built around “Black Dragon Pool” (also called Yuquan Lake). One of Lijiang’s picture-perfect places, Black Dragon Pool offers breathtaking views of ponds, pavilions, bridges, and the 18,000 foot Jade Dragon Snow Mountains in the background. The crystal-clear water in the lake comes from underground springs. Amid the green trees in the park are many Naxi-style structures built in the Ming and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, such as the Deyue Tower and Yiwen Pavilion. Of these, the most attractive is probably the Wufeng Tower. Numerous streams that come from Black Dragon Pool crisscross Lijiang, dividing it into several sections which are linked by many plain wooden bridges and buildings across these streams, making it a “city upon the water.”

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At Black Dragon Pool's northwest entrance is a new museum that should not be missed! It holds a remarkable collection of Naxi relics and cultural displays, including displays of Naxi dress, their wooden homes, pictographic booklets, and their rituals (over 80 that are still practiced in nearby villages).

Naxi rituals have been recorded by the Dongbas in a series of small booklets, many of which are collected and in this museum. One remarkable characteristic of Naxi culture is the powerful role of women, who rule the society (and do much of the work). A sort of "walk-in" marriage is still practiced by many Naxi people today, in which young women choose their partners periodically and invite them into their homes. Partners can change, according to a woman's desire; the children remain with the mother in her home; former husbands return to live with their mothers when a relationship is over. A beautiful memoir and very interesting book to read about this culture is called *Leaving Mother Lake*, by Yang Erche Namu and Christine Mathieu (2003, Little Brown and Co). "A fascinating portrait of a young girl who grows up in a matriarchal society in a remote region of China and becomes a star. *Leaving Mother Lake* will take readers on an incredible journey to a part of the world most of us never knew existed."

Our last visit of the day is a short drive and walk up to the small Yufeng Monastery, a great center of learning in ancient times. Here live members of the Red Hat Tibetan Buddhist sect. Set among hills on the southwest side of Jade Dragon Mountain, Yufengsi is noted for one of its huge camellia trees, thought to be 500 years old and known as the Camellia Tree of Ten Thousand Blossoms. During the Cultural Revolution, a monk saved the tree by sneaking onto the abandoned monastery grounds at night to water it.

After dinner we will attend a colorful concert of ancient Naxi Dongba music.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight at the Grand Lijiang Hotel, Lijiang

### **Day 6, Saturday, April 12 Full Day Excursion to Tiger Leaping Gorge**

Many people come to Lijiang just to visit Tiger Leaping Gorge! This morning we travel north, driving through Naxi farmlands and villages and enjoying the extremely picturesque backdrop of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain. The scenery is magnificent, as we pass through the Lijiang valley where tobacco, apples, rice, corn, beans, sorghum, and wheat are grown.

Tiger Leaping Gorge is said to be the deepest river-gorge on the surface of the planet, an almost unimaginably deep declivity formed where the Yangtze River drops from the Tibetan Plateau and forces its way between two 18,000-foot peaks, the Dragon Snow Mountain and the Jade Snow Mountain. Miocene uplifting forced them up, the river cut them down. The combination of 5 million years' worth of thrusting and slicing has produced something stupendous indeed.

We'll stop to visit the village of Stone Drum, or Shigu, at the First Great Bend in the Yangtze River. Here we'll see the marble plaque shaped like a drum that commemorates a 16th century Naxi victory over a Tibetan Army.

After the river's first bend, it turns north before bending again into what is one of the world's most spectacular gorges: the Tiger Leaping Gorge, locally known as Hutiao Xia. Located about 40 miles, but two and a half hours by bus, north of Lijiang, it's a narrow gorge between Haba Peak (about 15,000 feet) and the steep backside of Jade Dragon Mountain (18,000 feet). A hiking trail through the gorge runs along the base of Haba Peak providing spectacular views of 7,000 foot cliffs yielding to the jagged pinnacles of Jade Dragon Mountain that rise another mile above them. Overall, it's about 13,000 feet from the river to the top of Jade Dragon. The Gorge is only about ten miles in length if you were swimming, but by foot it's a rigorous twenty-plus mile hike. Don't worry, we won't be doing this!

Interesting insights and tidbits about Tiger Leaping Gorge:

- Tiger Leaping Gorge is 10 miles long with many white water rapids.
- This rocky gorge is flanked by mountains on both sides that sharply rise 3,000 meters (10,000 feet) above the river.
- The canyon's narrowest point is just 100 feet wide. It has riverside observation platforms for up-close viewing. There, the river water sounds like a roaring angry monster. Visitors witness an incredibly loud, churning, foaming river relentlessly pounding giant boulders in its path. Tiger Leaping Gorge is an unforgettable display of powerfully intense raw nature.
- The water that flows through the Tiger Leaping Gorge is the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, near the beginning of its long journey to sea. (Note: The river is named Jinsha River in this part of China).
- The Chinese name of Tiger Leaping Gorge is Hutiao (pronounced who-tee'yhow).

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- Tiger Leaping Gorge got its name because, legend tells us, a tiger escaped a hunter by jumping over the river at its narrowest point.

Return to Lijiang and dinner in the Old Town.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight at the Grand Lijiang Hotel, Lijiang

**Day 7, Sunday, April 13 Free Day to Explore Lijiang**

Today is free to wander in the old town of Lijiang, an ideal place to relax at this point in our journey. Explore the colorful markets and stop for a snack along one of the wonderful restaurants on a picturesque canal. Or, just walk slowly through the cobblestone streets of the Old Town, along the crystal clear canals that are lined with weeping willows and decorative arched bridges linking one alley to the next. You can also rent a bicycle in Lijiang and pedal out on unpaved roads to visit sites outside the city. The choice is yours!

Tonight after dinner we will attend a Bon Fire Dance performance, and might even get to dance with the locals!

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight at the Grand Lijiang Hotel, Lijiang

**Day 8, Monday, April 14 From Baisha Village and the Ganhaizi Grassland to Chengdu**

Today we drive a short distance to Baisha Village, the old capital of the Naxi peoples, where we hope to meet Dr. Ho, the famous local herbalist. An enthusiastic Taoist physician, he operates his Clinic of Chinese Herbs here, and some people swear by his potions! The area is also home to the former residence of Dr. Joseph Rock, who prepared the first dictionary of Naxi language during the decades he lived in Lijiang.

We'll have lunch today with a local family. In the afternoon, we'll visit the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, which at its highest point rises to 18,355 feet. En route, we'll stop by Ganhaizi Grassland and Baishuihe River. If it is a clear day, we can get spectacular views by taking a chairlift/cable car from Ganhaizi Grassland up the Yulong Snow Mountain. It can get pretty cold up there, so be sure you are dressed for the weather!

Late this evening and after dinner, we fly to Chengdu

for our encounter with China's endangered giant pandas! (depart Lijiang at 10:30 pm and arrive Chengdu at 11:30 pm).

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

For 2 nights we'll stay at the 5-star **Jing Jiang Hotel, Chengdu**

The Jing Jiang Hotel is situated in the heart of Chengdu, capital city of Sichuan, and overlooks the beautiful Jing Jiang River.

**Day 9, Tuesday, April 15 Chengdu and the Giant Panda Breeding Center**

Chengdu is known for its traditional arts and crafts, for its distinctively spiciness Sichuan cuisine, and most of all, as the home of China's endangered giant panda. It is also an intriguing gateway to Tibet.

The capital of Sichuan, and with a population of over 11 million, Chengdu is the most important city in Southwest China. Despite its size, however, it has retained a somewhat laid-back atmosphere and has managed to preserve how one might imagine China to have once been sometime in the past. It has colorful old streets lined by scores of small restaurants. One could eat one's way through the region's countless specialties by visiting the snack bars or teahouses, which often have free performances of Sichuan opera or other instrumental pieces to entertain guests as they sip their jasmine tea.

Outside the city, the Giant Panda Breeding Research Base is a good place to observe the extremely endangered and elusive animals in a semi-natural environment. The research facility was established in 1990 and opened to the public in 1995. There are more than a dozen pandas living here, and the facility has excellent exhibits and a museum.

There are perhaps just 1,000 or so giant pandas still living in the wilds of China, in two or three dozen groups that are centered in northern Sichuan, Gansu, and Shaanxi provinces. Related to both raccoons and bears, the panda lives mainly on arrow bamboo, but is also a meat eater.

This evening we'll attend a performance by the Sichuan Opera. This local opera tradition has been alive in Chengdu for several centuries. The colorful performances feature dancing and acrobatics in addition to singing.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight Jing Jiang Hotel

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**ABOUT ADVENTURE  
TRAVEL TODAY  
Please Read Carefully!**

At AdventureWomen, we would like to ensure that all participants understand that our excursions are *adventure travel vacations*, and not “tours.” We define “adventure travel” as travel in which one *actively participates*, as opposed to a “tour,” in which one is more or less a passive observer. AdventureWomen designs and organizes vacations all over the world for women who want to experience an *active, out of the ordinary vacation, and meet new friends*. Most of all, we want our trips to be fun!

In this spirit, the successful adventure traveler should be a *good-natured realist* and have a sense of humor! *Adventure vacations, by nature, require that participants be self-sufficient, flexible, and able to accept situations as they exist, and not just as they would have preferred or expected them to exist.* The constraints of scheduled group traveling also necessitate that each of us be understanding of and sensitive to others. *Being on time is important, and contributes to the congeniality, success and well being of both individuals and the group!*

**Day 10, Wednesday, April 16 *Fly to Tibet and Explore Tsedang***

This morning we fly to Lhasa, Tibet (depart Chengdu at 8 a.m. and arrive in Lhasa at 9:50 a.m.) Continuing on to Tsedang, we'll spend the rest of the day with a visit to Yumbu Lagang, which is the oldest-known dwelling in Tibet, and home to the legendary Yarlong kings. The Yarlong king, believed to have descended from the sky around 130 B.C., ruled Tibet before Songtsen Gampo (608 to 650 AD).

Yumbu Lagang looks as if it literally grew out of the peak of a hill. The citadel had already been changed into a chapel in early times. The Cultural Revolution reduced it to a ruin, but the structures were rebuilt in 1982.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight at Tsedang Guest House (best local 2-star hotel)

**Day 11, Thursday, April 17 *Tibet's Oldest Monastery***

From Tsedang we cross the Yarlung Aangbo on a ferry, and we are carried to the monastery by tractor or lorry. It is said that the Samye Monastery, Tibet's first monastery, was founded by the Indian teacher Padmasambava, around AD 770. He is considered to be the founder of Tibetan Buddhism, who is said to have succeeded in winning over the demon gods of the Bon religion. Many of the demon gods in Tibetan monasteries refer back to such Bon gods. The site has been built on a mandala foundation and reflects the cosmic view of Tibetan religion. The main temple stands in the center and symbolizes the mythical Buddhist peak of Mount Meru. Four smaller chapels were erected on the four cardinal points of the compass.

We continue on to Shigatse, Tibet's second largest city with a population of some 40,000 people. The Tashi Lumpo Monastery is the traditional seat of the Panchen Lama, the most important incarnation for Tibetan Buddhists, after the Dalai Lama. This impressive religious center contains a giant statue of Buddha in the Temple of Maitreya as well as an ornate tomb, which is the final resting-place of the fourth Panchen Lama. Its huge size ensures it is almost a town in itself. One of Tibet's most active monasteries, it is currently being restored to its former beauty.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight at the Shigatse Hotel (best local 3-star hotel) for 2 nights

**Day 12, Friday, April 18 *Discover Tashihunpo Monastery***

Tashihunpo Monastery, meaning the “Heap of Glory,” is located at the foot of Drolmari (Tara's Mountain), Shigatse. It was originally founded by the First Dalai Lama in 1447, and expanded by the Fourth and successive Panchen Lamas. Covering an area of nearly 74.1 acres, Tashihunpo is one of the ‘Six Big Monasteries of Gelugpa’. Since the Fourth Panchen Lama took charge in the monastery, it has been the seat of Panchen Lama for hundreds of years.

A wall in front of the monastery was also built by the First Dalai Lama in 1468. It displays the thangka of Buddha on the 14th, 15th, and 16th of May, Tibetan Lunar Calendar. Vivid images of Buddha are surely the must-see for visitors. What's more, the Maitreya Chapel inside will also amaze visitors because it contains a huge statue of a sitting Maitreya Buddha. It is 86 feet high and adorned with gold, copper, pearl, amber, and many other gems. Visitors can climb up to the higher floors to appreciate the Buddha more clearly.

The stupa-tombs of the Fourth and Tenth Panchen Lama and other abbots of Tashihunpo are also situated in the chapels. The Panchen Palace, which is the residence of Panchen Lamas, is still closed to visitors. The Chanting Yard was the place where Panchen Lamas did sermons and now lamas debate here every afternoon. The walls

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around were painted with thousands of images of Buddha in different poses. Rare sutras, thangkas, and other culture relics are also well-preserved in Tashihunpo Monastery.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight Shigatse Hotel

### **Day 13, Saturday, April 19 Spectacular Drive to Lhasa**

We spend much of today on a breathtaking drive back to Lhasa. The route winds along the banks of the Yarlung Zangbo River, over the 15,748 foot pass of Kampa La.

Lhasa (11,800 feet), the “Forbidden City” and the majestic and holy capital of Tibet, is known for its ethereal beauty and spirituality. It guards the flickering flame of Tibetan Buddhism that Chinese rule has failed to extinguish. The beguiling portals of Lhasa’s temples access the mysterious realms of Tibetan Buddhism. Today it is home to six million Tibetan Buddhists.

We’ll spend the next two days devouring the wonders of this city, before we take the new Qinghai-Tibet Railway from Lhasa back to mainland China.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight at the 4-star **Lhasa Hotel** (best local 4-star hotel)

The Lhasa Hotel is conveniently located in the center of the holy city of Lhasa, 3600 meters above sea level. It is next door to Norbulingka, the Summer Palace of the Dalai Lama, and just a ten minute drive from the magnificent Potala Palace.

### **Day 14, Sunday, April 20 Lhasa’s Museums and Monasteries**

This morning we’ll pay a visit to the Tibet Museum and the Norbulingka, the summer palace of Dalai Lama.

This afternoon we’ll journey to the Jokhang Temple, the principal and holiest Buddhist temple in Lhasa, as well as in all of Tibet. It is the focus of devotion for hundreds of Tibetans, both near and far, who circle it to gain spiritual merit. It was first constructed 1,300 years ago as a shrine for a Buddha statue that the Chinese princess Wen Cheng brought to Lhasa as a wedding gift from the Chinese emperor. The temple is divided into inner and outer sanctums. A prayer wheel-lined pilgrim route surrounds the inner Jokhang, and the outer Jokhang wraps around the holy inner core. On its outer periphery is the Barkhor Market, the middle pilgrim circuit, a holy place of cir-

cumambulation, around which pilgrims circle in a clockwise direction. It is also a focus for market stalls and a crush of hawkers and traders from other parts of Tibet. The whole melts into a fusion of activity and color!

Later in the day we will visit with a Tibetan family.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight at the Lhasa Hotel

### **Day 15, Monday, April 21 The Potala Palace, Lhasa**

Today we explore one of the world’s architectural wonders – the Potala Palace (the word Potala is pronounced p’oh-t’ah-l’ah). This immense palace (now a museum) is thirteen stories high with over 1,000 rooms including the Dalai Lama’s residence, tombs, and numerous prayer halls.

Perched upon Marpo Ri hill, 426 feet above the Lhasa valley, the Potala Palace rises a further 558 feet and is the greatest monumental structure in all of Tibet. Early legends concerning the rocky hill tell of a sacred cave, considered to be the dwelling place of the Bodhisattva Chenrezi (Avalokiteshvara), that was used as a meditation retreat by Emperor Songtsen Gampo in the 7th century AD. In 637 Songtsen Gampo built a palace on the hill. This structure stood until the 17th century, when it was incorporated into the foundations of the greater buildings still standing today.

Construction of the present palace began in 1645 during the reign of the fifth Dalai Lama and by 1648 the Potrang Karpo, or White Palace, was completed. The Potrang Marpo, or Red Palace, was added between 1690 and 1694; its construction required the labors of more than 7,000 workers and 1,500 artists and craftsman. In 1922 the 13th Dalai Lama renovated many chapels and assembly halls in the White Palace and added two stories to the Red Palace. The Potala Palace was only slightly damaged during the Tibetan uprising against the invading Chinese in 1959. Unlike most other Tibetan religious structures, it was not sacked by the Red Guards during the 1960s and 1970s, apparently through the personal intervention of Chou En Lai. As a result, all the chapels and their artifacts are very well preserved.

From as early as the 11th century the palace was called Potala. This name probably derives from Mt. Potala, the mythological mountain abode of the Bodhisattva Chenrezi (a.k.a. Avalokiteshvara or Kuan Yin – the Buddha of Compassion.) in southern India.

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The Emperor Songtsen Gampo was regarded as an incarnation of Chenrezi. Given that he founded the Potala, it seems likely that the hilltop palace of Lhasa took on the name of the Indian sacred mountain.

The Potala Palace is an immense structure, its interior space being in excess of 155,000 square yards. Fulfilling numerous functions, the Potala was first and foremost the residence of the Dalai Lama and his large staff. In addition, it was the seat of Tibetan government, where all ceremonies of state were held; it housed a school for religious training of monks and administrators; and it was one of Tibet's major pilgrimage destinations because of the tombs of past Dalai Lamas.

Within the White Palace are two small chapels, the Phakpa Lhakhang and the Chogyal Drubphuk. Dating from the 7th century, these chapels are the oldest surviving structures on the hill and also the most sacred. The Potala's most venerated statue, the Arya Lokeshvara, is housed inside the Phakpa Lhakhang, and it draws thousands of Tibetan pilgrims each day.

To sum up some interesting facts about the Potala Palace:

- The 1,000-room Potala Palace is really two palaces: A red one at the top and a white one below it.
- The Red Palace is used for religious purposes. It has chapels, shrines, and prayer halls. It also contains sacred scriptures, outstanding murals, and the gold covered stupa tombs of eight Dalai Lamas.
- The White Palace was used for secular functions. Its facilities included bureaucratic offices, monk dormitories, a seminary, and the Dalai Lama's living quarters.
- The building's air is today filled with the same sounds (chanting) and scents (incense and yak-butter burning lamps) that visitors encountered centuries ago.

Later this afternoon we travel to the Sera Monastery, 3 miles north of Lhasa and considered one of 3 great monasteries near Lhasa that is home to the Yellow Hat sect of Buddhist monks. Here we'll have a chance to observe and listen to Tibetan monks chanting prayers.

This evening we'll take part in a special Tibetan din-

ner and dance performance.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner  
Overnight at the Lhasa Hotel

### **Day 16, Tuesday, April 22 Qinghai-Tibet Railway**

This morning we leave Lhasa at 9:32 a.m. on the new Qinghai-Tibet Railway. The best scenery—the frozen tundra and non-habitable zone—will be viewed during the first 12 hours of our trip. The Qinghai-Tibet railway travels 1,220 miles between Lhasa, Tibet and Xining (capital of Qinghai Province), China. The completion of the Tibet railway is being hailed in China as one of the world's great engineering marvels. The longest high-altitude railway in the world, it will ease access to the remote region of Tibet. This \$3.3 billion line had its first run on July 1, 2006. The train is sealed like an airplane and oxygen masks are given out at high altitude.

Tibet's extraordinary isolation has kept it poor. Education levels and life expectancy fall well behind the rest of China. But that isolation has also helped to preserve Tibet's unique culture and way of life.

The arrival of the railway will bring tremendous change. China's rulers say it will open up Tibet, bringing greater prosperity for its entire people. Detractors say the opening of the railway is the death knell of an independent Tibetan culture.

For an analogy about what is happening in Tibet, it is similar in many ways to what happened to Native American tribes in the 19th century.

As the railroads opened the west of the United States, they brought with them a huge influx of new population. The native peoples were pushed to the margins, dumped on reservations, their traditional way of life left in ruins.

As the trainloads of migrants begin to roll in to Lhasa station, does Tibet face a similar future? Only time will tell.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight in soft bed sleepers, Qinghai-Tibet Railway

### **Day 17, Wednesday, April 23 Transfer to Beijing and Overnight**

This morning we arrive in Xining, China at 12:19 p.m. If time permits, we'll have a city tour of Xining

before we transfer to the airport for our flight to Beijing (depart Xining at 8:15 p.m. and arrive Beijing at 10:30 p.m.). Transfer to our hotel.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight at the Kun Lun Hotel, Beijing

**Day 18, Thursday, April 24 Beijing to Los Angeles**

Today is a free day in Beijing, before our transfer to the airport for a 10 p.m. flight to Los Angeles (CA98 departs at 10 p.m. and arrives in Los Angeles at 5:15 p.m. on the same day).

Breakfast and Lunch

\*All above flight schedules, based on Air China 2007 published timetable, may change without notice.

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**CURRENCY**

China's currency is called the Renminbi (RMB), meaning the people's money. In the street, RMB's are called Yuan or Kuai. China is mainly a cash society. Your best bet is to arrive in China with traveler's checks, mostly in U.S. \$100 denominations, which can be easily cashed in hotels and at many branches of the official Bank of China. Traveler's checks also have a more favorable exchange rate than cash. Stick to the major companies such as American Express, Citibank, and Thomas Cook traveler's checks.

Cash (RMB) rather than credit cards is essential in remote areas and you should ensure that you carry sufficient RMB and travelers' checks to cover your requirements.

Your passport is always required for currency exchanges. 1 US dollar equals 7.612 RMB (as of July 10, 2007). Denominations range from RMB 1 to RMB 100. It is always best to have RMB's in smaller denominations (i.e. RMB 10).

ATM's that accept foreign cards are rare, so do not rely on them as a way to obtain cash in Mainland China.

Major credit cards (Visa, MC, and AmEx) are accepted in large hotels, big department stores, Friendship stores, and in the larger cities. They are gaining more acceptance. However, this applies only in major cities and they are not always accepted in remote areas. Credit cards are not always accepted for the purchase of rail and air tickets.

There is no limit on the amount of foreign currency and foreign exchange bills that can be brought into China by tourists, but it must be declared to the customs. Keep your currency exchange receipts because you will need to show them when you change RMB back to your own currency at the end of visit to China. Unused RMB can be taken out of the country, but each tourist is permitted to take with them less than 6000 RMB.

**IN TIBET:** The official currency is also the RMB (Renminbi) or Yuan. American dollars are accepted in Lhasa, but as you venture into other Tibetan towns, they will prefer the Yuan. Traveler's checks and credit cards are rarely accepted here.

**FOOD AND WATER**

Unboiled water is NOT safe to drink anywhere in China, and never drink tap water even for brushing your teeth. Stick with bottled and sealed water and drinks. Ice must be avoided.

The food on this adventure will vary greatly, as we will be immersed in so many ethnic influences throughout the trip! From typical Chinese food to Tibetan, and from American to European. A wonderful and diverse adventure in eating awaits us!

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**WHAT TO BRING**

April is a beautiful time to travel in Yunnan and Tibet. Temperatures are spring-like. Yunnan's weather is mild, but in the mountains it can get cold. Due to the higher altitude in Tibet, be prepared for colder evenings but moderate days.

Keep in mind, however, that temperatures will vary in each part of the country, from cool/cold nights in the high altitudes of Tibet, to the 70s and 80s during the day. Yunnan has a very mild climate during the day (70s and 80s), but it can be chilly in the evenings and very cold at higher altitudes in the mountains.

**Please Note:** For all domestic flights in China, you are allowed one checked suitcase that cannot weigh more than 44 pounds, with an additional carry-on bag. So that should be your guide for luggage weights and amount of luggage you can bring. On our way back to the U.S., two checked suitcases are allowed, so you might consider doing your shopping at the end of the trip.

**LUGGAGE, CLOTHING AND TRAVEL ACCESSORIES**

Three words of packing advice: LIGHT, LIGHT, LIGHT! It is best to condense your luggage into one manageable suitcase with wheels and one daypack

WHAT TO BRING—(continued on page 11)

or back pack (carry-on size). Also, a spare, very light duffel bag or day pack rolled or folded into your wheeled suitcase is useful to transport souvenir items home.

We suggest you use your day pack as your carry-on bag during your flights. In it you should have all valuables and essentials: medications in their original containers, passports and all important documents, cameras and film, a day's change of clothing, lightweight sleepwear, and toiletries.

Put luggage ID tags on the outside AND inside your baggage. If your bag is lost and the outside ID tag and baggage stickers are dislodged, the airlines may open the bag to search for an ID inside your bag. (We will send you 3 tags for the outside of your bags.)

NOTE: We strongly suggest that you check your main suitcase to Los Angeles, pick it up, and then re-check it in at the Air China counter in Los Angeles. It is better to actually SEE IT get checked in, rather than check it in at your gateway city and "hope" that it makes the transfer to our international flight.

### PRE-DEPARTURE TASKS

- Obtain or renew passport (make sure that your passport is good for travel 6 months beyond our intended departure from China).
- Obtain necessary visa(s). Forms will be sent to you at the appropriate time, and you will send your passport and visa forms to us.
- Evaluate and obtain trip cancellation, baggage, and medical insurance.
- Consult with a physician for up-to-date immunizations and prescription medicine recommendations.

### CLOTHING

Clothing should be loose fitting, comfortable, lightweight, quick drying, and able to breathe. You should dress conservatively and not wear short shorts, backless dresses, and halter tops.

- Underwear. Synthetics are easier to wash and dry.
- Sleepwear.
- Shirts: Long-sleeve, synthetic or cotton shirts because they are featherweight, durable, wrinkle-resistant, and dry quickly. Those with multiple, closed (velcro or zipper) pockets are excellent.
- Short-sleeve synthetic or cotton T-Shirts. Those with multiple, closed (velcro or zipper) pockets are excellent.
- Sweater/Jacket: Medium-weight sweater or jacket made of synthetic fabric (fleece).
- Vest: A lightweight, multi-pocket, photo journalist-type vest is excellent for day use (use it to store film, cameras, binoculars, etc.).
- Pants & Skirts: Full-length pants, preferably of quick-drying synthetic fabric with many zippered pockets. Convertible pants that convert from long pants to shorts save room and are very convenient for use during a long day. A casual skirt or dress for some of our evening dinners and special performances.
- Hiking shorts, preferably of a synthetic fabric and not short-shorts.
- Bathing Suit (just in case).
- A wide-brimmed hat, preferably with a chin strap to keep it from blowing off.
- Gore-Tex rain/wind poncho or a small umbrella.
- 3-4 cotton bandannas (for uses too numerous to mention here!)
- Sturdy, properly fitting footwear can make your trip much more comfortable and enjoyable. Good ankle support and good traction are critical. Lightweight hiking boots are excellent, OR very comfortable, lightweight walking shoes are another option.
- Athletic socks (synthetic for easy washing and drying) that are suitable for your hiking boots/walking shoes.

### PERSONAL ITEMS

- Passport.
- 4 spare passport photos, in case of lost passport/visa.
- Small travel alarm clock.
- Extra batteries for cameras, alarm clock, etc.
- Small flashlight with extra batteries and bulb.
- Sunglasses, case (90% - 100% ultraviolet and some infrared protection).
- Earplugs, for train travel, snoring roommates, etc.
- Contact lenses, cleaner, saline solution, extra eyeglasses with safety band.

WHAT TO BRING—(continued on page 12)

WHAT TO BRING—(continued from page 11)

- Traveler's checks, credit cards.
- Address book, writing paper, or journal, pen/pencil. Plus stick-on labels with names and addresses of friends for your obligatory postcards!
- Day pack, which also serves as an airline carry-on bag.
- Extra, lightweight duffel bag, empty, and packed inside your suitcase.
- Plastic water bottle. Nalgene gray plastic is recommended as there is no plastic taste in the heat.
- Camera, gear, lots of film/memory cards/batteries; lead bag or containers to protect film in airport x-ray machines. You should not put your film in your checked luggage, because x-rays are much stronger for checked luggage than carry-on luggage. You will want to bring twice as much film/memory cards/batteries as you think you might need (although Kodak and Fuji films are available in China).
- Locks for your suitcase and duffel bag, for suitcases left in rooms.
- Ziploc-type bags for packing shampoo or other liquids, or wet, dirty shoes and clothes.
- Washcloth.
- Personal toiletries in small leak-proof bottles, packed in zip lock bags.
- Biodegradable bar soap which can double as laundry soap.
- Tampons or sanitary napkin supply, which are not always widely available.
- Thread, needles, safety pins for minor repairs.
- Wash and dries, or other antiseptic wipes or liquid, for hand washing and emergency toilet paper.
- A money belt, fanny pack, or waist pack to carry your money, passport, credit cards, etc.
- Electrical converter and adapter plug if you want to recharge camera batteries. China operates at 220 Volts.
- Swiss Army knife or equivalent, for peeling fruits, opening bottles, etc. Make sure you pack it in your checked suitcase, and not your carry-on bag.

**PERSONAL FIRST AID KIT** (bring in small amounts and small containers)

- Cloth, not plastic, Band-aids; about 10 individually wrapped alcohol pads; and a small tube of Neosporin or other antibiotic cream.
- Aspirin/ibuprofen/cold-symptom relief tablets, antihistamine, cough drops.
- Altitude sickness medication: Consult with your physician about whether you might benefit from such medications as Diamox.
- Adequate quantity of sweat-resistant sun screen with at least an SPF 15 rating or higher, and lip balm with sunscreen.
- Tweezers, Ace bandage.
- Systemic antibiotic (prescription), and all prescription medicines in their original bottles.
- Acidophilus enzyme (available in capsules in health-food stores). This often helps your digestive system get in shape for "new" flora.
- Immodium, Lomotil, or similar anti-diarrhea medicine.
- Pepto-Bismol tablets and/or liquid in leak-proof bottle.
- Laxative tablets.
- Visine or similar eye drops.
- Please leave all valuable jewelry at home!!!

**OPTIONAL**

- Small, lightweight binoculars.
- Pictures of your house, pets, and family.
- Reading material.

**LAST MINUTE REMINDERS**

- Make photocopies of your airline tickets and the first two pages of your passport and put them in different locations (suitcase, carry-on bag, etc.)
- Record numbers of travelers checks and store separate from the checks.
- Bring your 4 additional passport size photos to use in emergencies.
- Your valuables should be insured for the duration of the trip, better yet, leave them at home (don't wear expensive gold and diamond jewelry)!
- Remove local credit cards, driver's license, personal items from wallet or purse.
- Make sure passport, tickets, and visas are valid and in the correct name.
- Check with airline to reconfirm reservations and departure time (most airlines want to hear directly from the client for confirmations).

*Thank you for choosing to travel with AdventureWomen!  
If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call, write or email us.*

AdventureWomen, Inc.  
300 Running Horse Trail  
Bozeman, MT 59715  
800-804-8686 or 406-587-3883 (outside the U.S.)  
Email: [advwomen@aol.com](mailto:advwomen@aol.com)

