

# China

15 days Guilin to Yangshuo

Rice terraces - back road exploration - Yangshuo - Guilin - stunning limestone karst mountains - ethnic minorities

Cycling alongside the terraced hillsides of Guizhou Province and amongst the karst limestone peaks of Guangxi Province you will experience a landscape that has been inspiring painters and poets for centuries, and still awes people today with its almost surreal beauty. We travel through areas known for their variety of ethnic minorities and we visit traditional villages where we get up close and personal with people in their everyday lives. A mixture of cruising well-made but quiet riverside roads, hill climbs and off-road sections, this cycle adventure is rural China at its absolute best!

## Itinerary

### Day 1 | Guilin

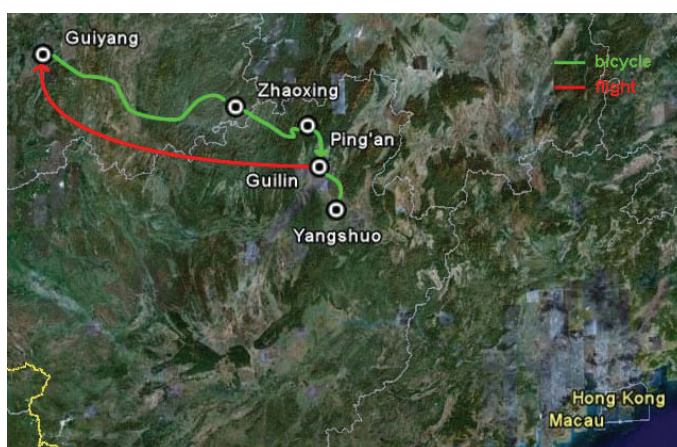
Welcome to China! Today people will be arriving from different destinations and at different times so there are no activities planned. There will be a group meeting in the evening once everyone has arrived, where we can go over all the formalities of the trip. After the group meeting we will head out for dinner together. (D)

### Day 2 | Guiyang

Today you will have free time to explore Guilin before we head to the airport in the late afternoon. Guilin has long been famous for its scenery, and though the best scenery is outside the city, it is still an interesting and pleasant place to soak up the feel of big-city China. Originally the provincial capital (now moved to Nanning), Guilin retains its 14th-century city walls and the Prince's Mansion, built during the Ming dynasty. Within the city wall is Solitary Beauty Hill, 152m karst peak with views over much of the modern city centre. From our hotel, there is plenty to see on foot. The old city is just a few minutes walk, as is Guilin's pedestrian precinct, where shops and food stalls abound. Alternatively a walk along the riverside promenade leads to Elephant Trunk Hill and to Shan Lake and its two pagodas. In the late afternoon we will transfer to the airport and fly to Guiyang. (B,D)

### Day 3 | Cycle to Rongjiang | 40km

After breakfast we'll head south from Guiyang by bus, passing through Leishan, and into the Dong and Miao minorities' autonomous region of South-Eastern Guizhou. At Pingyong we meet the bikes, already set up ready to go. Today we have an easy 40km ride to get us familiar with the bikes and the cycling conditions. The cycling is on a sealed road which gently undulates down the valley into Rongjiang. The traffic is very light, and we are unlikely to see more than a few buses and cars while we're cycling. Along the valley we pass Dong villages which, unlike in other parts of China, are built almost entirely from wood. After a wash and freshen up at the hotel, we'll head out for a hot-pot dinner in one of Rongjiang's many local-style restaurants. (B,L,D)



### Day 4 | Cycle to Congjiang | 84km

This morning we visit the Rongjiang markets, just a minute's walk from our hotel. Every week, traders from all the surrounding villages converge on Rongjiang to sell wares ranging from hand-made brooms and sickle blades to unrecognisable fruits and spices to live yellow ducklings squeaking in a basket. This is a fascinating experience where we meet people of numerous different minorities, dressed in traditional clothes. There will be time for exploring the markets before getting on the bikes. The 84km ride to Congjiang cruises along the valley of the Dulu River, and we will see local Miao minority people working in the fields and boats on the river as we pass by. (B,L,D)

### Day 5 | Cycle to Zhaoxing | 55km

After a delicious breakfast of Guizhou's "hand-chopped rice noodles", steamed buns, local bread and fruit, we will make an early start to Gaozhen, where we will see the first of this region's classic Dong minority architecture. Dong villages often feature impressive drum towers and "wind-and-rain" covered bridges. These sometimes huge structures are traditionally built entirely of wood without using a single nail. The morning's ride will take us high up into the mountains on a dirt backroad where there are spectacular views of the countless rice terraces shrouded in mist below. A roadside lunch on the other side of the mountains at Guandong will see us through the afternoon's ride past orange groves into Zhaoxing on sealed country roads. After 56km total we can relax at the lovely wooden Lulu Guesthouse tonight, perhaps

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with some home-made rice wine to help us celebrate, as we have a rest day following. (B,L,D)

### Day 6 | Zhaoxing

Today is a chance to rest the legs or explore the Zhaoxing valley on the first rest day of the tour. Zhaoxing is a unique Dong village, being of a conurbation of 5 tiny hamlets, each with its own traditional drum tower and wind-and-rain Bridge, and small streams flowing amongst the streets. This entirely wooden village is surrounded on all sides by hillsides covered in rice terraces, a fantastic place for a walk. Here we can also learn a little about the Dong minority's culture. Originally having no written language, history and legends were recorded in song, and the Dong are famous for their chorus singing and their unique wooden pipes.

### Day 7 | Cycle to Chengyang | 43km

Starting early, we head over the first (7km) pass and then down a paved road that winds through picturesque rice terraces. We continue cycling to our lunch break before jumping on our bus to the small village of Chengyang. This Dong village is famous for having the region's best example of a "Wind and Rain" bridge. Our guesthouse has views overlooking this impressive structure, waterwheels and rice fields. This is a great place to soak up the rural ambience and relax for the evening.

At this time heavy road-works prevent us from cycling the road all the way through to Chengyang. We will include more cycling on this day as road conditions improve. We expect the construction work to be finished within 12 months, but in the meantime we have decided not to cycle this section of the road, because the temporary road surface is unsealed, and therefore susceptible to mud and clouds of dust from passing vehicles. (B,L,D)

### Day 8 | Cycle to Ping'An | 58km

After an early morning breakfast and a 25 km ride a special treat awaits us as we enjoy our mid-morning break of hot breaksticks, soy milk and fruit onboard a boat up the first 20km of the Xun River. At Shayi we disembark and continue our journey to Longsheng.

*The road between Shayi and Longsheng is, at the time of writing, undergoing major repairs. To avoid this unpleasant section we use the support vehicle to transport cyclists and bikes to the end of the roadworks near Longsheng. Even in the support vehicle this will take 3 hours and be a bumpy journey. We hope that passengers understand the need for us to do this until the road construction is completed.*

We have 33km of paved road from Longsheng to the spectacular village of PingAn. This traditional Zhuang minority village is perched high up on the mountainside in the middle of the Longji Rice Terraces – thousands of rice paddies cut into the mountain by the local people over hundreds of years. The last 6km of our cycling will take us from the valley floor climbing up dozens of hairpins to PingAn. This is a truly rewarding cycle to one of the highlight locations of the tour! (B,L,D)

### Day 9 | Ping'An

Today we have another rest day to take in the extraordinary mountain views from the Zhuang minority traditionally-built Liqing Guesthouse, nestled on the mountainside in PingAn. During the day we can take a walk to one of the view points over the rice terraces, or simply sit back with a beer and enjoy the view and the atmosphere on the terrace of this very special guesthouse. The owners, Keyin and Lily, always make us feel at home and may offer us a sample of their special sweet rice wine. Those exploring the walking trails will soon discover that this area is also inhabited by people of the Yao minority, whose dress is quite distinctive and whose women often grow their hair so long it can touch the ground when untied!

### Day 10 | Cycle to Hudian Gu | 58km

What goes up must come down, they say, and that is certainly true this morning, as we ride the twisting road back down the mountainside. We spend the day on quiet sealed roads undulating through pine and bamboo forests, often passing villages tucked away in the hills. We are now close to Guilin, and delicious Guilin-style rice noodles are on the menu for lunch at the roadside. In the afternoon we emerge onto a wide valley, but our destination for the night lies up a narrow gorge known as Butterfly Valley, where our hotel is located in a surprisingly picturesque setting. We will have a little free time for people to enjoy the walking paths in the valley. (B,L,D)

### Day 11 | Cycle to Guilin | 63km

After breakfast at the hotel it's back on the bikes for a day of opposites. A morning of completely flat cycling on the best surface of the tour makes way for an afternoon of dirt road and rough off-road, as we take the most rural backroad towards Guilin. We may get some speed up on the well-made highway, but we wouldn't want to race through the later part of the day as this is classic rural China in the city's backyard. We pass rice fields, fruit trees, and vegetable plots, as well as two reservoirs and farmyards full of chickens. Finally the karst peaks of Guilin's skyline appear in front of us and we roll into town to our hotel and a banquet of Sichuan style dishes. (B,L,D)

### Day 12 | Cycle to Xingping | 74km

From Guilin we head out of the city, and alongside the bamboo-lined Li River. At Caoping we stop for lunch and take in what the Chinese often refer to as "the finest scenery under heaven" – Karst Mountains overhanging the river. After lunch we climb up into the mountains for an even more breathtaking view of this incredible landscape, finally arriving in beautiful Xingping in time to eat, shower and watch the sun set. (B,L,D)

### Day 13 | Cycle to Yangshuo | 58km

Our final day of cycling is a great one as head up through the most beautiful part of the Li River by ferry. This section is famous for its beautiful karst mountains and is a fantastic start to the day. We ride away from the river and emerge in Baisha town in time for lunch before taking our time riding down the

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lush and serene Dragon River valley, amongst paddy fields, overlooked on both sides by majestic karst mountains. We emerge in legendary Yangshuo, for good reasons popular with travellers from all over the world, where we have two nights to celebrate the end of our cycling adventure! (B,L,D)

### Day 14 | Yangshuo

Today we have free time to rest and relax in laid-back Yangshuo. Those who are interested can take a half-day

cooking course in local Chinese dishes, learn Tai Chi, go rock climbing or swimming in the river, or shopping in the town. (D)

### Day 15 | Departure day

This is departure day and you are free to leave at any time.

## Tour Details

### Style

Fully supported bicycle tour.

### Inclusions

10 nights in comfortable hotels, 4 nights in a basic hotels, flight from Guilin to Guiyang on day 2, all buses, support vehicle while cycling, boat on day 8, bike, bike tools and spare parts, Bike Asia tour leader, local cycling guide, driver.

### Group Size

Minimum 3, maximum 12.

### Food

Included meals: 10 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 12 dinners, plus water and snack food on cycling days. You should consider bring some of your favourite energy snacks and electrolyte powder for the cycling days.

### Accommodation

There is a mix of accommodation styles on this trip. 12 nights are in good standard hotels/guesthouses; twin share, private bathrooms, hot water, television, air-conditioning etc; 2 nights are in more basic style accommodation – possibly without private bathrooms, i.e. shared washing and toilet facilities, sometimes Chinese style toilets. We are staying in these places because, travelling by bike we get to travel through some of the smaller, rural areas, and this means of course that we are limited in our choice of accommodation – sometimes we are staying in the ONLY guesthouse. Whilst not having all the facilities that you may be accustomed to at home, we can safely say that these small, family-run places make up for that in location, views, atmosphere and friendly service. Hygiene is very important to us and our passengers so we only use accommodation with a good level of cleanliness. All the sleeping arrangements are for twin share and if you are a single traveller you will be paired up with someone of the same sex. This ensures that whether you are travelling solo or with friends, everyone is paying the same rate. We choose hotels (where possible) which are comfortable, clean, centrally located places and which are adequate in every way.

### Arriving in China

You will need to arrive at the starting point hotel in time for the group meeting, which will be held at 6pm on the evening of day 1. A taxi from Guilin's Liangjiang International Airport will take approx 30 minutes and cost around 70 CNY. All taxis should use the meter. As you exit the airport, follow the signs

to the taxi rank. You should avoid any taxi touts who approach you. Print out this trip dossier so that you have the address in Chinese and a map to show the driver. Very few drivers will understand the name and address in English! The hotel is located in the centre of the city, next to the river, with twin-share rooms, private bathrooms, hot water and television and 24 hour reception. The hotel address is:

No.16 Ronghu North Road, Guilin, Guangxi, PR China. Tel: +86 (0) 773 2823811.

桂林榕湖饭店：榕湖北路16号  
电话：0773 2823811

### Additional Accommodation

If you would like us to organise some extra nights accommodation either before or after the trip at our start or finish point hotel, just let us know when you book the trip. On this tour we offer additional accommodation before or after the tour in Guilin and in Yangshuo, which is only one hour from Guilin by bus/taxi.

### Transport

All transport listed is included in the trip price. This trip starts in Guilin and finishes in Yangshuo, which is 1 and 20 minutes from Guilin Airport. Guilin is an international airport with connecting flights from:

- Hong Kong (HKG) - China Southern Airlines, Dragon Air, CS Air
- Bangkok (BKK) - Bangkok Airways
- Beijing (PEK) - Air China, China Southern, China Eastern
- Shanghai (SHA & PVG) - Air China, China Southern, China Eastern
- Guangzhou (CAN) - Air China, China Southern, China Eastern

We can help organise your flights or train tickets to or from a connecting airport in China should you find that a simpler way to get here from your home country, or if you intend to continue your travels in China.

**Transfers:** Individual arrival airport-hotel transfers can be organised through us for 20 USD. Please indicate that you would like a transfer when you make your booking.

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## Cycling Details

### Cycling Days and Distance

9 days - 540km

### Difficulty

Moderate/Difficult - this trip involves some riding up long mountain roads, some dirt road riding and longer days over 80km. Riders should be of reasonable cycling fitness.

### Cycling Conditions

The cycling terrain on this tour is roughly 70% on sealed roads, 20% on dirt roads and 10% off-road on small tracks and trails. This trip varies between hilly to flat terrain with eight notable climbs, but none of more than 9km at one time. The cycling altitude varies between 130m and 825m. Traffic is mostly very light but there are one or two short busier sections. In China you need to be constantly alert for vehicles, potholes, animals, people... everything really!

You will need to have a reasonably good level of fitness to participate comfortably in this trip. There are nine cycling days in total, with two days cycling over 80km. Altitudes vary between 130m and 825m. It is a great idea to do at least some cycling in the month leading up to your tour. This is up to you but we highly recommend some training as it will alleviate saddle soreness and leg fatigue, and you may enjoy the tour more if you find the cycling easier.

### Bikes

Bikes are included in the trip cost. Our mountain bikes are UCC 24 speed Shimano Alivio. We keep them well-maintained and we travel with all necessary tools and spare parts. Your Bike Asia leader (or Bike Asia mechanic) will fix any bike problems.

Hard tail (front suspension)

Shimano Alivio 21 speed gears

Shimano Alivio v-brakes

Off road tyres

One bottle cage

Ergonomic seat

Sizes 15", 17", 19" or 21".

Please specify your bike size when booking. You may wish to bring your own pedals, cleats, saddle or handlebar extensions, as we can easily fit them to our bikes. You are of course welcome to bring your own bike. Keep in mind though, that while we offer maintenance and spares for the bikes we provide, we can't guarantee that we can cater to your particular bicycle's needs so it would be best to bring your own parts and tools. If you are unsure we recommend that you speak to your local bike shop about what parts to bring.

### Helmets

For safe cycling we highly recommend wearing a helmet whilst cycling on our trips. We do have some helmets for use, however, for best fit you should bring your own.

### Transporting your bike

Most international airlines consider bicycles as part of your regular luggage weight allowance, so you will need to pack light. The best way to transport a bicycle is to package it in a bike box. Most bicycle stores are happy to give away boxes for free. You will need to remove the front wheel (and sometimes the rear wheel), handle bars, pedals and seat post. Tape any loose parts to the bike frame and pack a few extras in the box such as your helmet. You can keep your box until the end of the trip to pack it for the trip home.

### Support Vehicle

For the cycling days we will have the backup support of a small bus that will carry our luggage, snacks, water, and anybody not cycling. You can use the support vehicle whenever you feel like no longer cycling.

## Travel Details

### Visas

Travellers of all nationalities will need to obtain a Chinese visa, either through a travel agent or direct with a Chinese embassy or consulate. For the latest information, see your travel agent.

### Travel Insurance

It is a condition of participating in a Grasshopper Adventure that you hold travel insurance for the duration of the trip. Insurance must include comprehensive medical and emergency evacuation. Your travel insurance details will be checked by your group leader on arrival at the starting point hotel.

If you are looking for an insurer we can recommend World Nomads. [Click to see more details.](#)

### Costs

We recommend that you allow approximately US\$10 for food and general living costs per day. Shopping money should be considered extra to this amount. It is customary to tip the guides and drivers in China. You should allow approximately

US\$30 for tips. Note: this is a guide only, feel free to tip more or less (or nothing) depending on your satisfaction.

### Electricity

China works on a 220 volt system and generally uses an Australian style 3 pin plug. Sometimes you will also find two flat or round pin plugs which are standard in South East Asia. You can easily buy an adapter for much cheaper than home in country.

Plugs look like this: / \  
|

### Climate

China has a tropical climate with generally warm to hot days and warm nights, however, in the north it can get quite cold during the cool season. The coolest months are November to January - during this time you should expect very cold mornings down to 5 degrees Celsius. During the wet season (May-Oct) it does rain most days but the rain generally falls in the late afternoon or night - after we have finished our cycling. The wet season is actually a fantastic time to visit China as the rain brings the fields and country to life. Endless green rice fields are a feature of this time of year.

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### Packing

While we do have a support vehicle to carry your luggage during the cycling days, you will be required to carry your own luggage at times. Luggage will need to be loaded on and off buses and up and down stairs at hotels. For this reason we recommend that you pack as lightly as possible in a backpack. You should consider bringing the following items:

#### Personal

Backpack  
Long trousers  
Shorts  
Shirts  
Warm jacket  
Thermals  
Woolen socks  
Jumper  
Hat  
Sandals/Light Shoes  
Swimming Costume  
Sunglasses  
Light Rain Coat  
Toiletries  
Tampons (hard to get in China)  
Small Towel  
Sunscreen  
First Aid Kit  
Mosquito Repellent  
Camera and Film/Memory  
Alarm Clock  
Gloves/Scarf

#### Travel

Passport with 6 months validity and spare pages  
Passport photo  
Travel insurance details  
Flight tickets  
Money - cash/credit cards/travellers cheques  
Phrase book

#### Bicycle

Something to carry your personal belongings in while cycling, eg. day pack, bum Bag, handlebar bag  
Helmet  
Cycling gloves  
Bicycle water bottle  
Bike shorts with something to put on over the top while off the bike

Please note if traveling to China in December/January it can get quite cold at night and in the early morning. You should bring a wind breaker and cold weather clothing.

### Money

The official currency of China is the Chinese Yuan (CNY), also known as Renminbi (RMB), which should be used for all transactions. China has a modern banking systems with ATMs and money changers in all major centres. When coming to China it is possible to use Visa/Mastercard or Cirrus/Maestro cards to access cash with an ATM but facilities will be lacking on this tour for such transactions. You should carry travelers cheques as a backup. Most international currencies can be exchanged so it is not necessary to bring only US dollars - AUD, EUR, CAD, NZD are all accepted at banks in major centres

There will be very few opportunities to spend money whilst cycling so most of your shopping will need to be done in Guilin, Ping An and Yangshuo.

For current exchange rates visit:  
[www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com)

### Health

In order to make the most of your holiday, the healthier you are the more you will enjoy it! For a list of vaccinations we recommend that you seek advice at a travel clinic at least two months prior to departure. Our group leader will have Senior's Level first aid training and will travel with a first-aid kit, however it is also recommended that individual travellers have

a basic first aid kit with any personal medical requirements. Our group leader is not authorised, for legal reasons, to administer any kind of drugs including pain relief tablets, antibiotics etc. so be sure to pack a supply of your favourite pain-killers. Pharmacy products vary in different countries and you may not be able to buy products that are widely available at home. Include the following: plasters, dressings, bandage, calamine lotion (a must for soothing sunburn), oral re-hydration treatment (in case of bouts of diarrhoea), insect repellent, insect sting relief, antiseptic cream and antiseptic wipes.

For more information on travel health, you can click on the links below:

[Australia](#) - [United States](#) - [United Kingdom](#)

### Safety

Our cycling tour leader has the authority to change or cancel all or part of this trip if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. This decision would not be taken lightly, and where possible it would be made in consultation with our local crew, local operator and Bike Asia management. Your leader will be present on all included activities, staying at all the same hotels, guesthouses and of course cycling with you. During free time, should you choose to participate in any optional activities that are not part of our itinerary, please note that we cannot give any representations or guarantees about the safety of the activity, the standard of the operators running them or the equipment that they use.

In the group meeting on day 1, your tour leader will run a session on cycling safety. Whilst some travellers will have had years of touring experience, for others this might be their first cycling trip. We need to cater for a range of abilities and experience and it is in everyone's interest to learn about the particulars of cycling in this region from someone who has already done it. It goes without saying that by running and participating in a cycling trip, both parties accept an inherent level of risk. However, we take the safety of our passengers very seriously and we ask that you cycle in a safe and responsible manner and that you look out for the well-being of your fellow travellers. Cycling helmets must be worn by all cyclists at all times whilst cycling.

Most national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest information before departure. The links for some major travel advisories and updates are listed below  
[Australia](#) - [United Kingdom](#) - [Canada](#) - [New Zealand](#) - [United States](#)

We recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling in the cities, for the safe keeping of your passport, money, credit cards and traveller's cheques. Utilise the hotel's safety boxes or safe where these are available.

### Communication

In Guilin and Yangshuo you will be able to access email, phone, fax and post offices. Outside these cities there will be fewer chances to email and the main communication will be phone. You should leave you family or friends the Bike Asia contact details. Our office staff will be able to get in touch with us in an emergency.

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## Positive Impact

An integral part of traveling is to have a positive impact on the country that you are visiting. On this trip there are a number of things you can do to have a positive impact on the communities that we visit.

### Dress

Parts of China are still quite conservative. In rural areas (which make up most of this tour), and temples, overly revealing clothing is considered offensive. You should make an effort to dress more conservatively in these situations. Walking around a village in bike shorts is not appropriate so if you wish to cycle in just bike shorts you should have something with you, on the bike, to put on over the top (long loose shorts or a skirt/sarong). When visiting temples shorts are acceptable providing they cover the knee. Singlet tops are not acceptable in temples.

### Poverty

In this part of China there is poverty which you are likely to see, since we cycle through some fairly remote rural areas. If you choose to give something to a beggar you must bear in mind the value of money in the country you are visiting. There are organizations which are working to alleviate this poverty in China and they may be able to do more good with your donations. Your Tour Leader will be able to provide more information about this.

### Phrase Book

A highly memorable part of your travels will be the local people you meet. In the tourist areas some people will speak some English but away from these areas you should learn a few words of Chinese. We will teach you some of the basics but if you want to really interact we recommend bringing a phrase book.

### Donations

Often when coming on trips overseas people like to bring items such as sweets, pens and books for children or old clothing for families. While this is a fantastic idea, if distributed in the wrong way it can actually create more problems. Giving away anything to local people can create an expectation that visiting foreigners equals free give-aways. In some communities in Asia this has created whole villages where the only interaction is the locals asking for things. If you would like to donate anything to the communities that we visit we suggest that you give the items to us and we will then pass them on to development organizations, schools or whole communities. In this way items are distributed to those really in need by those working in the communities.

### Support Organizations

In China there are a number of organizations which we hope you can support in one way or another. Your Tour Leader will provide more information on these as you travel.

These notes last updated: 22 April 2008

### Important

All information in these tour notes is researched with care and provided in good faith. The information is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Grasshopper Adventures.