



**EXPLORE!**

Sanyuesan and Sisters Rice Festivals  
17 days

China - Trip code SSR

## Sanyuesan and Sisters Rice Festivals

This trip gives us a chance to join with the ethnic tribes of the Dong and Miao as they meet on important dates in their calendar. The Dong people enjoy the Sanyuesan Festival with fireworks, dances, singing and the 'Dragon Feast', while the Sisters Rice Festival involves the girls of the local villages preparing coloured rice to offer to potential suitors. All of this takes place in the dramatic mountainous landscapes of Southern China.

### Trip highlights

- ★ **Sanyuesan Festival** - Mix with the local Dong people and join them for the 'Dragon Feast'
- ★ **Sisters Rice Festival** - Meet the Miao people as they follow the traditional ways of searching for a suitable marriage partner
- ★ **Jiabang rice terraces** - See the picturesque and ancient rice terraces dotted with hamlets and farmers' houses
- ★ **Leishan** - Meet the Shui tribe and Mr Mo who makes the Lusheng, a traditional instrument constructed of bamboo
- ★ **Liping Village** - Visit the local market and learn about the infamous Long March

#### ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

##### Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

#### TRIP PACE:

##### Moderate

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

**GROUP SIZE:****10 - 16**

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

# Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

## DAY 1 - Trip starts in Guiyang

Our trip starts in Guiyang, the capital of Guizhou Province. The city lies on the banks of the Nanming River on the central slopes of the Miaoling Mountains. Guizhou has an extremely rich mix of minority tribes including the Miao, Bouyi, Dong, Zhuang, Yao and Bai, many of whom we'll meet during our trip. The surrounding landscape of karst mountains, plunging waterfalls and terraced rice fields provide a spectacular setting for this journey into the heart of the region's tribal culture.



**Accommodation: Guiyang Karst Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 2 - Explore the markets of Guiyang and drive to Baojing

Guiyang is now very much a modern city and representative of China's booming economy. After our tour briefing this morning, we plan some easy-going sightseeing to mingle amongst its inhabitants and soak up the atmosphere of some of the more interesting spots such as the bustling Flower and Bird market. We also see Guiyang's landmark, the 20 metre high Jiaxiulou Tower which dates back to the 16th century.

In the afternoon we drive for four to five hours to Baojing, a traditional Dong village inhabited by around 450 families, and the location of the Sanyuesan Festival.



**Accommodation: Dongjiafengqing Hostel** (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 3 - Join the Dong people at the Sanyuesan Festival and the Dragon Feast

Held on the third day of the third lunar month, the Sanyuesan Festival, sometimes referred to as the Valentine's Day of Dong people, is a wonderfully colourful event celebrated with fireworks, dances, singing, and abundant feasting.

On the first morning of the festival the young people of the Dong villages head out in to the fields dressed in their best clothes. They venture in to the streams to catch fish and shrimps for a picnic while trying to attract members of the opposite sex by singing to them. If a girl is attracted to a boy she'll give him a clove of garlic or an onion and they'll sing to each other in the antiphonal, or call and response, style.

In the afternoon everyone congregates at the village square for more singing and dancing followed by the 'Dragon Feast', a meal of pork, chicken and vegetables accompanied by local rice wine.



**Accommodation: Dongjiafengqing Hostel** (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 4 - More time at the Sanyuesan Festival and drive to Zhenyuan

We spend another day in and around Baojing village where the search for a marriage partner continues and there'll be more traditional singing and dancing to enjoy. We also explore the village and we'll be welcomed in to a village house with tea, sweets and sunflower seeds to learn about the life and culture of the Dong.

In the late afternoon we drive to Zhenyuan, just over an hour away.



**Accommodation: Fucheng Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 5 - Explore Zhenyuan and cruise along the Wayung River

An ancient town of the Miao people, Zhenyuan is a pretty mixture of caves, palaces, pavilions, temples and rivers set in a marvellous natural landscape. We'll explore its streets by foot and climb around 800 steps to a vantage point behind the town for a beautiful view of the whole area, walking for a time on an old part of the Great Wall.

In the afternoon we drive to a particularly scenic part of the Wayung river for a gentle cruise of around an hour and a half. The scenery we'll pass through consists of spectacular Karst mountains with deep river gorges and lush green forests.



## Accommodation: Fucheng Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 6 - Walk along the Wuyang River, drive to Longli and visit nearby villages

A stroll along the banks of the Wuyang river this morning will bring us to the local market and the courtyards, narrow streets, ancient houses and temples of the old town, where we'll spend a couple of hours exploring and learning about the 2000 year old history of this riverside town.

After lunch we take a drive of around three hours to Longli. Built by Ming dynasty soldiers 500 years ago, the village was a garrison constructed to keep an eye on the local ethnic minorities, the Miao and the Dong. The cobbled streets lead us past ancestral halls, city gates and the former residences of important local scholars. A visit to the nearby villages will give us a sense of how the local rural population lives today.



## Accommodation: Longli Old Town Hotel (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 7 - Stroll through Liping's old streets and market and drive to Zhaoxing

The town of Liping is an hour's drive away and offers us a chance to see the old streets, local food market and a historic site of the Long March of Red Army of 1935. Later we head for Zhaoxing, a traditional village of the Dong consisting of old wooden buildings, little covered bridges and ancient drum towers. Highly impressive pagoda-like structures, the Dong drum towers are intricately carved and designed to represent the four seasons and 12 months of the year. Originally used to call the villagers to a gathering to hear the punishment that the council of elders would dispense to wrong-doers, they now serve as a social centre for the old men of the village who meet to play cards, drink tea, smoke and chat. If we are lucky we may get to watch a Dong drama near the Drum Tower, where the local people sometimes gather to act out the stories and myths from their history.



## Accommodation: Vip Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 8 - Experience the unique culture of the Basha Miao. Drive to Jiabang Terraces

An hour and a half drive this morning will bring us to the village of Basha. The Miao people of Basha are unique and follow very ancient traditions, possibly dating as far back as the Qing Dynasty some 2,200 years ago. They worship trees, especially maples, as gods, and the bun hairstyles they wear represent the trees while their purple clothes represent the bark. A tree is planted when a baby is born in the village and is often cut down to make a coffin when the person eventually dies. Their culture reveres the warrior and the hunter and they are the only people in China who are legally allowed to own guns, which they make themselves. We'll wander around the village to learn about the Basha Miao before attending a traditional dance performed by the villagers.

Leaving Basha mid-afternoon, we drive through impressive mountain scenery for around 3 hours to Jiabang, home to spectacular rice terraces.



**Accommodation: Tianzhiyuan Hotel** (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 9 - Walk through the Jiabang rice terraces

The Jiabang terraces are rumoured to be over a thousand years old and sprawl across the hillsides of lush green valleys dotted with Miao houses and small hamlets. A walk through the terraces will enable us to see how they are farmed by hand and with oxen, still using traditional methods that have been passed down from generation to generation over hundreds of years.

In the afternoon we visit a Miao village in the terraces, a chance to experience how the people of the region live and make their living from the terraces.



**Accommodation: Tianzhiyuan Hotel** (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 10 - Drive to Rongjiang, visiting Zhuang village of Yinping and Chejiang's Banyan trees

This morning we'll visit another area of the terraces for some easy walks before leaving for Rongjiang, a drive of three to four hours. Along the way we will meet the Zhuang people at Yinping village. Known as 'people of the soil' for their agricultural knowhow, the Zhuang worship nature, believing that everything has its own spirit. They also revere their ancestors, whose names are written on strips of red paper on an altar in their houses.

A short drive brings us to Chejiang Dong village which is distinctive for its huge Banyan trees that line the river bank. The village consists of traditional wooden houses and we'll be invited inside to get an insight in to the daily life and learn more about how the Dong people live and maintain their age old traditions.



**Accommodation: Dongxiangmi Grand Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 11 - Drive to Leishan meeting the Shui people along the way

Today we have a drive of around six hours to Leishan. On the way we'll stop at a couple of villages of the fascinating Shui people. The name Shui means 'water' and this reflects the fact that they were originally a coastal people who migrated to the mountains. They have their own writing which is over 2,000 years old, worship their ancestors and operate on a clan based system whereby an elder will deal with any disputes between the people of their clan.



**Accommodation: Leishan Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 12 - Visit Miao villages, walk through Leishan and meet Mr Mo, a famous Lusheng maker

A short drive from Leishan, Nande is a charming Miao village with large wooden houses clinging to the hillside and cobbled stone streets. Many of its inhabitants still wear traditional dress. We take a walk through the village and venture off in to the nearby countryside to visit the nearby Shuidain and Peika villages giving us an insight in to the rural communities of the area. In Peika we'll meet Mr Mo, a famous local Lusheng Maker. The Lusheng is a traditional musical instrument made of bamboo pipes and Mr Mo's skills have been passed down through his family for generations.

In the afternoon we take a walk through Leishan exploring the old lanes that connect the small squares, making our way to the local market at the heart of the town.



**Accommodation: Leishan Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 13 - Visit Kaili en route to Taijiang for the Sisters Rice Festival

About an hour's drive from Leishan is the town of Kaili, which is an interesting mix of old and new China. We'll be there for the Sunday market where villagers from the surrounding countryside come to sell their wares and we'll have the opportunity to try the local delicacies of sour fish soup and pickled fish.

Taijing, the location of the sisters Rice Festival, is a further hour and half by road and we will arrive in time to see the beginning of the celebrations. According to Miao folklore, a young couple fell in love but their relationship was frowned upon by their parents and the tribal leaders. They continued to meet in secret and each time they met the girl would give her lover a bowl of glutinous rice, now known as Sisters Rice. The festival is celebrated annually in honour of their love. Although the festivities don't officially start until tomorrow, there will be some dances performed in the streets this evening as the villagers make their final preparations.



**Accommodation: Sihaitong Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 14 - Meet the Miao people at the Sisters Rice Festival

Today we attend the official opening ceremony of the Sisters Rice Festival. We will witness traditional dances performed on a stage in Sisters Square and watch a huge parade along the main streets with thousands of dancers from the surrounding Miao villages. There is a large market set up so that the people attending the festival can buy food and handicrafts.

It's a particularly important event for the young people of the area who come in search of a marriage partner. Beautifully dressed in traditional attire, they chat to get an indication of each other's feelings. A few days before, the girls will have walked in to the nearby mountains to collect wild flowers and berries. They use these to dye the glutinous Sisters Rice which is prepared with a symbol: a pair of chopsticks indicates acceptance for a marriage proposal, while a single stick means a refusal. Garlic shoots or pepper mean 'please look elsewhere' while pine needles remind a suitor that a girl's affections can sometimes be won with gifts of satin or silk.

In the evening there will be a dragon dance performance to a rhythmic drum beat and a bonfire as the festival reaches an atmospheric close to the first day.



**Accommodation: Sihaitong Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 15 - Morning at the Sisters Rice Festival, drive to Laotun village

There'll be more dancing for us to enjoy this morning in Xiumei square, as people from different villages meet to demonstrate their skills accompanied by Lusheng music.

In the afternoon we take a short drive to Laotun village where we'll see how the people of a small village celebrate the festival in their own way, before heading for Shidong Miao village on the banks of the Qingshuihe River.



**Accommodation: Hangtai Hotel** (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 16 - See more festivities at Shidong and drive to Guiyang

We'll walk through the streets of Shidong village this morning and join the locals for our final experience of the festivities. At the village square we witness how the girls dress up in their complicated costumes and elaborate silver jewellery. The Miao of this area have large silver head dresses, so the girls are helped by their mothers to set them in place and make sure everything is looking just right. We stay around to watch the dancing in the square before leaving for Guiyang, arriving in the evening after a drive of around four hours.



**Accommodation: Guiyang Karst Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 17 - Trip ends in Guiyang

Our trip ends this morning in Guiyang.



Meals Provided: Breakfast





## Why book this trip

This region of China is known for its colourful tribal communities and the festivals they enjoy. On this trip we get to get to experience two of the most interesting with the Sisters Rice Festival of the Miao and the Sanyuesan Festival of the Dong. We'll also be visiting small villages, local markets and travelling through stunning landscapes, as we travel through a part of the country that is well off the beaten path.

## What's included?



### Included meals

Breakfast: 16



### Transport

Bus



### Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader  
Driver(s)  
Local Guide(s)



### Accommodation

10 nights standard hotel  
6 nights simple hotel

## Trip information

### Country information

### China

#### Climate

China has primarily a temperate climate, with a wide spectrum of extremes due to its huge area. Summer months are hot and rainy though in the south the climate is tropical and we can experience rain at any time of the year, often falling in sharp tropical rain-storms which are heavy but short lived. Winter is colder and drier, temperatures in Beijing can be as low as -12c.

#### Time difference to GMT

+8

#### Plugs

3 Pin Flat

#### Religion

Mainly Buddhist

#### Language

Mandarin

### Budgeting and packing

### Clothing

It is best to pack lots of layers for this tour, as although day time can be warm, temperatures can fall to below zero at night. It can be wet at this time of year so a light waterproof is useful.

## Footwear

Comfortable footwear is recommended.

## Luggage

20kg

## Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

## Tipping

### Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

### Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow £35 for tipping. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

## Country Information

### China

#### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

##### Lunch price

£5

##### Dinner price

£6.00 - 10.00

##### Beer price

£2

##### Water price

£1.5

#### Foreign Exchange

##### Local currency

Renminbi/Yuan

##### Recommended Currency For Exchange

Either EUR, USD or GBP.

##### Where To Exchange

In all towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival. When changing money ask for a receipt so you can change Yuan back into your own currency when leaving China.

##### ATM Availability

All major towns.

##### Credit Card Acceptance

Most major restaurants and stores.

##### Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques can be changed in Hong Kong and at the Bank of China in all major cities but only during bank opening hours. Please note this is very time consuming and is not recommended.

## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Bus

## Essential Information

### FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

#### Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

### Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

### Visa and Passport Information

China: A visa is required by all nationalities. A single entry visa should be arranged in advance of travelling.

In order to apply for your Chinese visa you will need to submit supporting documents from our local supplier confirming your itinerary and travel arrangements, which we will obtain on your behalf. So that we can provide this for you, and to ensure all local arrangements are in place, we require a copy of your passport no later than 8 weeks before you are due to start your trip. Once we have your passport copy we shall process and pass on the documents you require 6-8 weeks before your trip, please be mindful of this when applying for your visa. If you require the supporting documents earlier than this, please contact Explore so we can arrange this.

Passengers wishing to extend their stay in China should be aware that current visa regulations only allow foreigners to stay in the country for up to 30 days. Please consider this when planning your trip.

You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

### Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

### Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

#### Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

## Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

## Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

### Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## China

### Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, infectious hepatitis, typhoid, tetanus and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Travellers may wish to take immunisation against Japanese Encephalitis. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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