

The American Association for the Advancement of Science
& Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society

AAAS Travels & Sigma Xi Expeditions

Betchart Expeditions Inc.
17050 Montebello Road, Cupertino, CA 95014-5435



FREE!
Angkor Wat Extension
October 19-22, 2008
(twin share plus air)

PRSR-STD
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TIME VALUE

Discover the Rich Cultures & Heritage of Yunnan! Backroads China Expedition October 3-19, 2008

With free Angkor Wat Extension October 19-22, 2008 (plus air)

COSTS & CONDITIONS

China Trip Fee: \$3,695 per person (plus air fare of \$1,295 plus tax from Los Angeles or New York to Kunming, China, with return from Bangkok).

Questions: Please call **Betchart Expeditions Inc.**, telephone (800) 252-4910 or (408) 252-4910.

Expedition Fee Includes: Land transport; airport transfers; accommodations; all meals in Yunnan; in-tour flight Zhongdian/ Kunming; tips to drivers and local guides; entrance fees; baggage handling; leadership, administration.

Expedition Fee Does Not Include: International air fare (quoted separately); visa fees; gratuities to leaders; personal items such as laundry, phone calls, alcoholic beverages, sodas, snacks; personal insurance; foreign airport departure taxes.

What to Expect: This expedition is planned for travelers who would enjoy exploring the cultural and natural heritage of the most scenic area in China, Yunnan Province. Leading the expedition will be an excellent Chinese guide. The group will travel 4 to 5 hours by bus or van on each of five days. On traveling days, we will take time for both planned and spontaneous stops to walk, photograph, and talk with local people. Walks will be at a leisurely pace suitable for cultural discovery and natural history study; binoculars are suggested. Food will include a varied Chinese menu.

Weather is pleasant, with midday temperatures in the 70s to upper 80s and some rain. Elevations will range from 3,000 feet along the Yangtze River to 9,000 feet en route to Dali. We will reach 10,000 feet in the Jade Dragon Mountains and at Zhongdian with temperatures in the 50s or 60s. Most time will be spent between 6,000-8,000 feet. This expedition will be a tremendous experience for travelers with an

appetite for adventure who would enjoy a chance to explore culturally and biologically rich environments in a remote area of China. Please be flexible concerning time schedules, hotels, food, bumpy roads, and mechanical breakdowns. With this in mind, we will have a grand adventure of discovery in areas rarely seen by western visitors. (No smoking in vehicles, during lectures, or meals, please.)

Air Fare & Airline Ticketing: Air fare quoted is based on a group fare from Los Angeles or New York to Kunming, China, with return from Bangkok on Cathay Pacific Airways. Please telephone Betchart Expeditions, (800) 252-4910 for further information. AIR FARES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Accommodations: Are in comfortable and clean Chinese hotels based on twin share. Expect a good bed, showers, Western style toilets, and carefully prepared food. One hotel is modest, but is the best available. Between hotels, some Asian toilets or bush toilets may be available (some "clean" and some not). Single accommodations are available for a supplement of \$445.

Reservations, Deposits & Payments: To reserve a place on this expedition, please mail a deposit of \$500 per person with the completed reservation form to: **Backroads China, Betchart Expeditions Inc., 17050 Montebello Road, Cupertino, CA 95014-5435.** Balance of land fee is due 60 days before departure.

Cancellations & Refunds: The initial deposit is refundable up to 60 days before departure less a handling fee of \$100 per person. There is no refund after the 60-day period unless your place is resold, then only the \$100 per person handling fee is withheld. There are no refunds for unused meals or other expedition features.

Discover the Rich Cultures & Heritage of Yunnan

Backroads CHINA

October 3-19, 2008

With free Angkor Wat Extension to October 22, 2008 (plus air)

Dear Members & Friends:

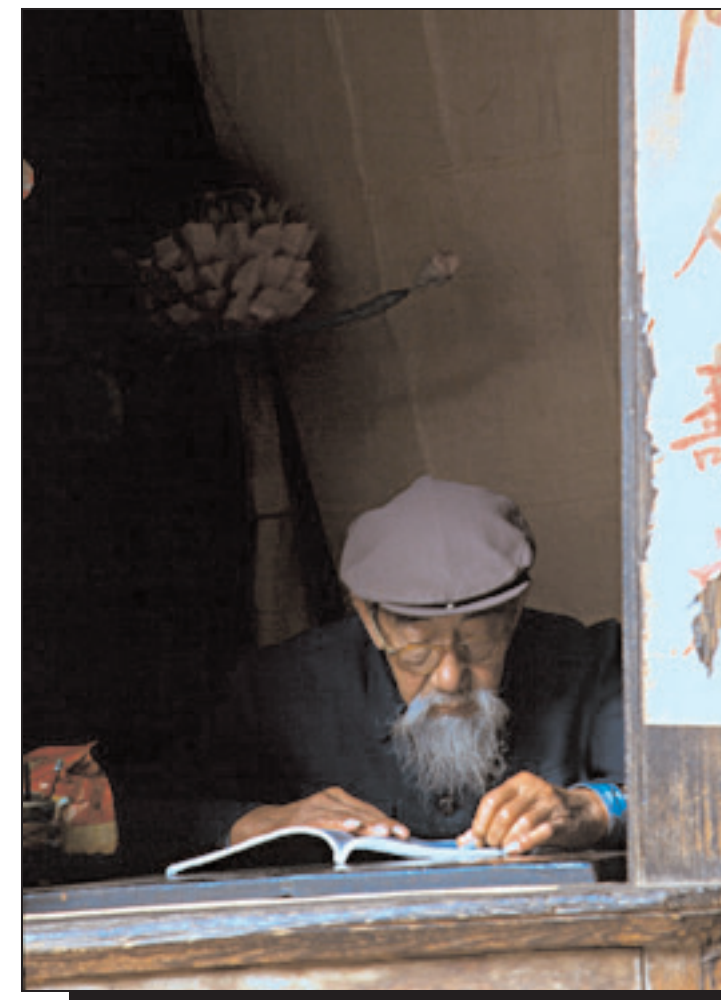
Nestled in Southwestern China, edging 18,000 ft. Himalayan peaks, is the most scenic, spectacular, and culturally rich area in China—Yunnan Province. More distinct ethnic groups live here than in any other area of the country.

A profound cultural transition is underway in Yunnan, as elsewhere in China. Traditional cultures in remote country villages are challenged by images of a vibrant, rapidly modernizing Chinese society. Yet Yunnan still possesses delightful backroads to explore and fascinating remote cultures to discover.

Leading our expedition in 2008 will be our outstanding guide, David Huang. David has been a popular leader of our expeditions to China since 1994. He looks forward to sharing his knowledge, enthusiasm, and love of Chinese culture and landscapes with you. You will meet many other intriguing personalities, from farmers and herb doctors, to shopkeepers, and monks.

From Kunming, we will travel toward the Himalayan border ranges, visiting ancient towns like Weishan, Dali, and Lijiang. Our accommodations will be comfortable, in the Chinese style. In Lijiang, we will discover the Naxi, descendants of Tibetan buddhists, who have developed a distinctive cultural tradition adapted to life in the isolated, visually stunning high valleys.

We will then travel to remote Zhongdian at the edge of the Tibetan Plateau, now known as "Shangrila." Memorable experiences await us here! Zhongdian is a spectacular



alpine region with Tibetan lamaseries and a pastoral yak herding culture.

Please join us in 2008 and share this magical land. For a special treat, join the free extension to the fantastic historic and archaeological site of Angkor Wat!

Sincerely,

Margaret
Margaret M. Betchart
President, Betchart Expeditions Inc.
for AAAS Travels & Sigma Xi Expeditions

ITINERARY

Days 1/3 – USA to Kunming, China

Expedition members depart the USA for Kunming, China, in Yunnan Province arriving on Day 3. Situated on a 6,000 foot plateau near the edge of the tropics, Kunming enjoys delightful spring-like weather and is known across China as the "Spring City." Welcome dinner. *Kunming Hotel* (3 nights).

Day 4 – Dian Chi Lake

Today, we'll visit the West Hills, a dramatic limestone escarpment along the western edge of Dian Chi Lake near Kunming. With wonderful views and expanses of forest, the cliffs of the West Hills are cut with grottoes holding Buddhist images carved during the past 1200 years of Chinese history. We will climb carved stone steps to grottoes in the lower half of the complex or ride a chairlift. In the afternoon, we'll visit the Nationalities Museum to see exhibits on the cultures of Yunnan's more than 20 ethnic minority groups.

Day 5 – Kunming—Botanical Garden & Stone Forest

This morning we will depart for the Yunnan Botanical Garden. Yunnan has a mountainous, subtropical climate with a profusion of plant species. The Botanical Garden offers an excellent overview of Yunnan's rich tropical and subtropical plant heritage. In the afternoon, we will visit the enchanting Stone



CHINA



Forest. The stone formations are amazing and you can often see beautiful local women in their native dress.

Day 6 – In the Footsteps of Marco Polo along the old Burma Road

Today we will embark on our overland journey in the footsteps of Marco Polo along the Burma Road. Rich in history as a trade route followed by Marco Polo, the Burma Road served for centuries as a connection between India and China. This "Southern Silk Road" was the gateway for spices, foods, ideas, and people for centuries. The road is now a modern divided highway which follows the old Burma Road. En route, we will visit Laochang Qing Village and the Lufeng fossil site where several large dinosaur skeletons are being excavated. Chuxiong is a prehistoric center for the surrounding Yi Minority Autonomous Prefecture. Enjoy a fascinating evening mingling with the crowds on an after-dinner stroll. *Xiongbao Hotel* (1 night).

Day 7 – Chuxiong to Weishan

We will depart Chuxiong for Weishan this morning, a tranquil agricultural town with traditional architecture and cottage industries. En route, we will pass Midu, a stopover for the American Flying Tigers during World War Two. From Midu, we will continue through the mountains to Weishan, a scenic town near the ancestral homeland of the indigenous Bai minority people. Here we will explore older neighborhoods where families of Han Chinese, Bai, and Hui people have been living for generations. We will leisurely explore the historic parts of town. In the evening, enjoy a cultural performance at the beautifully restored, old wooden house of the Liu family who were influential aristocrats prior to the Communist Revolution. *Weishan Hotel* (1 night).



Day 8 – Weishan to Dali
 Depart Weishan this morning for Dali, passing through a fertile valley enclosed by mountains. En route, we will visit Dacang, a farming town with a large Hui Muslim population. The Hui are Chinese who converted to Islam centuries ago, unlike the Muslim groups in northwest China who are racially distinct from the Chinese. We will continue to Dali, cross a mountain pass, and stop briefly in Diaocao, a village populated by the Yi, one of Yunnan's most prevalent upland minority groups. The Yi in this area retain their ethnic identity—women wear distinctive dress and the architecture and agricultural methods differ from other ethnic groups.



After lunch, we will arrive at the ancient walled town of Dali, once the head of the Nanzhao and Dali Kingdoms that controlled much of the territory that today comprises Southwest China. Dali has recently become a major attraction for domestic Chinese tourists. This has led to changes, but to our Western eye, renders it no less interesting or exotic. Enjoy a performance of traditional Bai music tonight by a local troupe of musicians. *Landscape Hotel (2 nights).*

Day 9 – The Walled Town of Dali
 The ancient walled town of Dali is dramatically situated on alluvial plains between the Cangshan Mountains and the long, deep Er Hai Lake. For centuries, visitors to this remote corner of China have praised its mountain-irrigated rice fields, lake-fed fish, and local marble quarried from the foot of the mountains. We will depart for the west shore of Erhai Lake and embark on a boat trip which offers spectacular views of the Cangshan mountains. Our boat trip ends at a lakeside village whose temple is dedicated to local animistic deities. We will enjoy a picnic lunch at Gantong Monastery, at the foot of the high mountains. After lunch, you may walk down a scenic path or take a cable car to the upper reaches of the valley. There will be time in the afternoon to explore the intriguing streets of Dali's ancient walled city.

Day 10 – Dali to Jianchuan along the old Tibet Road
 This morning we will depart for Jianchuan (Sword River), a town that once served as a hub for trade between China and Tibet, and formed the northern



outpost of the ancient Nanzhao Kingdom. En route, we will stop at the Bai Minority village of Chengzhou where a family manufactures tie-dyed cloth unique to this part of Yunnan. We will then visit sites in the mountains west of Jianchuan, including Shizhongshan (Stone Bell Mountain), where Buddhist-themed frescoes were carved into cliff-side alcoves during the Song Dynasty about a millenia ago. At that time, this area attracted Buddhist scholars from many parts of Asia. The nearby village of Shaxi, was until recently a station along China's "tea-horse" trade route with Tibet. *Jiali or Jianchuan Hotel (1 night).*

Day 11 – Jianchuan to Lijiang
 Morning visit to Jianchuan's tranquil Confucian Temple, then traverse high basins en route to the city of Lijiang, set stop a plateau between two sharp bends of the Jinsha (Upper Yangtze) River. Have lunch at a local farmer's home near the shore of Lashi Lake, then visit Ziyun (Purple Cloud) Monastery, which shows influence of Tibetan Buddhism as well as the local Naxi religion. We will explore near the lakeshore, passing through traditional villages. Lashi Lake is an important reserve for seasonal migratory birds and a source of livelihood for several Naxi villages. Stay in Lijiang near the entrance to the architecturally distinctive old town. Enjoy an evening of traditional Naxi music. Some of the songs we will hear were composed and played on similar instruments during

OPTIONAL ANGKOR WAT EXTENSION
 October 19-22, 2008

On this optional trip extension, you will depart Kunming on October 19 for Siem Reap, Cambodia, and then enjoy two full days to explore the fantastic archaeological sites of Angkor Thom and Angkor Wat. Fly to Bangkok on October 22 for your return flight to the USA.

Angkor Wat Extension is free for China trip participants based on twin share plus air fare of \$295 Kunming/Siem Reap, and air fare of \$195 Siem Reap/Bangkok. Single supplement is \$250.

Photographs courtesy of John Perry and Chris Carpenter

the Tang Dynasty, more than a thousand years ago. *Sanhe Hotel (2 nights).*

Day 12 – Lijiang & Jade Dragon Mountains
 The Naxi, descendants of Tibetan Buddhists, have developed a distinctive cultural tradition, centered on life in the isolated, visually stunning, Lijiang Valley. Distinctive mythology, and a curious pictographic script distinguish the Naxi from all of Yunnan's other ethnic minority groups. Seventy years ago, American botanist and ethnographer Joseph Rock made Lijiang his adopted homeland and described the area in a series of books and popular articles. Naxi women in traditional dress sell produce and homemade goods in the outdoor market. Family shops open onto the canal-lined alleys, and private gardens add color to the streets.

During our visit to Lijiang ("beautiful valley"), we will also explore the Jade Dragon Mountain Range. This gives access to glacial valleys and alpine pastures where ponies and yak graze surrounded by ancient forests of fir and oak. Naxi and, higher up, the wild Xiaoliangshan ("Small Cool Mountain") Yi people live traditional lives of farming and animal husbandry. From time to time we will glimpse the Upper Yangtze River flowing as a silver ribbon thousands of feet below, while glaciers or fog-bound crags tower above.

Day 13 – Lijiang to Zhongdian ("Shangrila")
 Depart for the town of Zhongdian, which Chinese authorities have recently renamed Xianngelila ("Shangrila") and local Tibetan people call Gyaltang. The road from Lijiang descends to the upper Yangtze River near its first "Great Bend," passes Tiger Leaping Gorge, then climbs a tributary valley through dense conifer forest until the plateau landscape opens up at an elevation of 11,000 feet. At Tiger Leaping Gorge, the torrent of the upper Yangtze, is displaced by faulting from its ancient course, and disappears into a narrow defile between two mountain ranges. The mountains are 10,000 feet higher than the upper Yangtze River, making this one of the deepest gorges in the world. We will then ascend to the alpine grasslands of Zhongdian. *Holy Palace Hotel (3 nights).*

Day 14 – Zhongdian ("Shangrila")
 This morning we will visit Songzanlin Lamasary, the largest Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Yunnan. This complex, with its multi-pillared assembly hall and numerous chapels, is painted in shades of ochre



and terra cotta, according to the Tibetan scheme. Situated on a promontory, it offers beautiful views of the surrounding peaks, covered in snow much of the year. Red-billed Choughs are high elevation birds seen around the temple. We will also walk through recently refurbished older neighborhoods, then depart for Napa Hai, a seasonal lake and grassland that provides important habitat for migratory birds. Shelducks visit in summer and a few Black-necked Cranes are here in spring. We will visit a Tibetan village, with distinctive earthen and timber houses. In a local home we may sample tsempha (roasted barley flour) and Tibetan yak-butter tea.

Day 15 – Nixi & Shanghe
 Today we will explore a spectacular river gorge area, the "land of corrugations." Our visit will include two mountain villages, Nixi and Shanghe. Nixi is on a high pass where soils are well suited to producing a distinctive black pottery. Shanghe is situated deep in the valley of the upper Yangtze where Tibetan families grow barley on narrowly terraced plots. The vistas today are unforgettable!

Days 16/17 – Zhongdian to Kunming & Home
 Morning flight Zhongdian to Kunming. Transfer to the *Kunming Hotel*. Afternoon on Day 16 at leisure for personal interests or shopping. Farewell dinner. We will depart on Day 17 for the USA, or for Siem Reap to begin the Angkor Wat Extension.

RESPONSIBILITY

Betchart Expeditions Inc., the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society, act only as agents for the passenger with respect to transportation and hotels, and exercise every care possible. However, we can assume no liability for injury, damage, delay, loss, accident or irregularity in connection with the services of any airplane, ship, motorcoach, or any other conveyance used in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. We cannot accept any responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, acts of God, or other causes beyond our control. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. We reserve the right to substitute another leader of similar expertise or reserve the right to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case the entire payment will be refunded with no further obligation on our part. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour. No refund will be made for the unused portion of any tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The price of the program is based on current tariffs and rates, and is subject to change. Any tariff, exchange rate, or fuel increases will be passed on to participants. Baggage is carried at the owner's risk entirely. It is understood that the air ticket when issued shall constitute the sole contract between the passenger and the airline concerned. The airlines concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their plane or conveyance.

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 Map by April Milne.
 Illustration by Narca Moore-Craig CST# 2036304-40



RESERVATIONS #1050

Yes! I/we want to join the **Backroads China Expedition, October 3-19, 2008**, offered by **AAAS Travels and Sigma Xi Expeditions**. Please reserve _____ space(s). As a deposit, I/we enclose a check for \$_____ (\$500 per person) payable to Betchart Expeditions Inc. Trust Account. _____ Please book me/us on the **Angkor Wat Extension, October 19-22, 2008**.

Name(s) _____ Age _____
 _____ Age _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone: Home (____) _____
 Work (____) _____
 Email Address _____
 Membership: AAAS ACS Sigma Xi Planetary Society
 Accommodations Preference:
 ___ Twin ___ Single ___ Twin Share with a friend or
 ___ Twin Share assign a roommate
 ___ Nonsmoker ___ Smoker
 Signature _____ Date _____
 Signature _____ Date _____

**Please Mail To: Backroads China Expedition
 Betchart Expeditions Inc., 17050 Montebello Road,
 Cupertino, CA 95014-5345**