

Ancient Tea Mountains in Xishuangbanna, 9 days

Jinghong – Mengsong – Bulangshan – Hekai – Menghai – Manla – Man'nuo - Jinghong



Tour Introduction

To understand Puerh tea, one must go beyond the cup and into the mountains, to meet the people who cultivate it and keep its traditions alive. This nine-day journey follows the roots of tea itself, along the Ancient Tea-Horse Road, into the landscapes and communities where tea is both a livelihood and a way of life.

In Xishuangbanna—one of Yunnan's most diverse and captivating regions—history and ecology intertwine. Here, rainforest trails open to ancient tea gardens, villages echo with the songs of the Dai, Akha, Lahu and Bulang peoples, and meals are alive with the flavors of the forest and river.

Our route winds through legendary tea mountains—Mengsong, Laoman'e, Hekai, and Man'nuo—before returning to Jinghong. Along the way, we share workshops and kitchens with tea makers, walk storied plantations and family gardens, sit with monks to taste sweet and bitter brews, and witness how tea shapes not only landscapes, but the rhythms of daily life.

We have the joy of curating immersive workshops that bring ethnic minorities' heritage to life for explorers—through crafts, performance, and hands-on traditions.

"Apu", your English-speaking guide, expert Yunnan tea "sommelier"



Day 1: arrival in Jinghong. 15 minutes transfer Altitude: 550m.

Meet your English-speaking guide and tea maker at Gasa International Airport, then transfer to your riverside hotel in the heart of Jinghong. Walk along the Lancang (upper Mekong) River and join an exclusive tasting of teas from Yibang's old mountains (about 5 different types of very high quality tea : white tea, black tea, raw pu'er (new vintage and old vintage) and ripe pu'er. Watch ethnic Dai Performance 19:00-21:00. In the evening, share a Dai-style barbecue at a favorite local food street, and, if energy allows, wander into the vibrant Starlight Night Market.

Overnight at Taiyue Hotel.



Day 2: Into the Mengsong Mountains. 3 hours drive Altitude: 1650m.

Wake gently and visit Xishuangbanna Ethnic Minorities Museum. After a countryside lunch in Dongfeng, visit the historic Theravada temples of Menglong Town before winding through rubber groves and rainforest roads into the old tea mountains of Mengsong. Dine in a traditional Akha stilt house with our host Alan and watch the essential "kill-green" pan-roasting step of tea making.

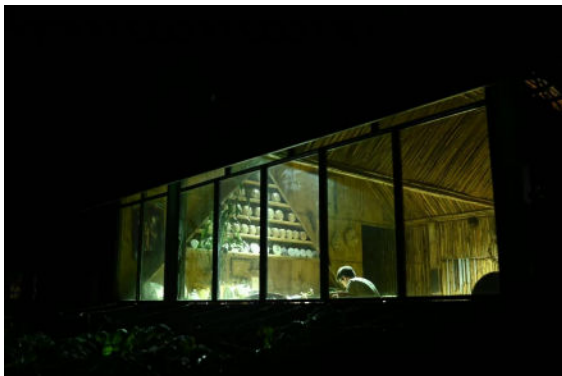
Overnight at the Songda Lodge



Day 3: Making tea by hand. 1 hours hike Altitude: 1650m.

Spend the day learning the craft of rough tea. Guided by Alan, pluck tender leaves beneath the rainforest canopy, pause for a wild picnic of fresh tea-leaf dishes (at your charge), and return by motor tricycle with the morning harvest. In the workshop, join the process from withering to sun-drying, and after dinner, practice pan-frying, rolling, and packaging with your host family.

Overnight at the Songda Lodge



Day 4: Forest Knowledge & Evening Celebration. 3 hours hike. Altitude: 1650m.

Birdwatch and hike forest trails with Atu, a former hunter turned conservationist, and learn about nine species of rattan vital to local life and once reserved for Dai royalty. Collect spring water in bamboo tubes for brewing tea. After lunch, compare your handmade tea with local versions in a guided tasting. In the evening, help prepare a communal dinner by the fire, listen to traditional flute music, and celebrate with your host family at a countryside KTV (at your expense, about RMB400).

Overnight at the Songda Lodge



Day 5: Weaving Traditions & Menghai. 2 hours drive Altitude: 1200m.

Wake naturally and enjoy a final Akha-style brunch with your hosts. Spend the morning learning bamboo and rattan weaving from a master artisan, shaping your own piece to carry home. After heartfelt farewells, travel west to Bulangshan. With our Bulang host, Sanmei, visit the centuries-old Laoman'e Temple, speak with monks about the role of tea in their practice, and taste Laoman'e's signature teas—both sweet and bitter, like the balance of life itself.

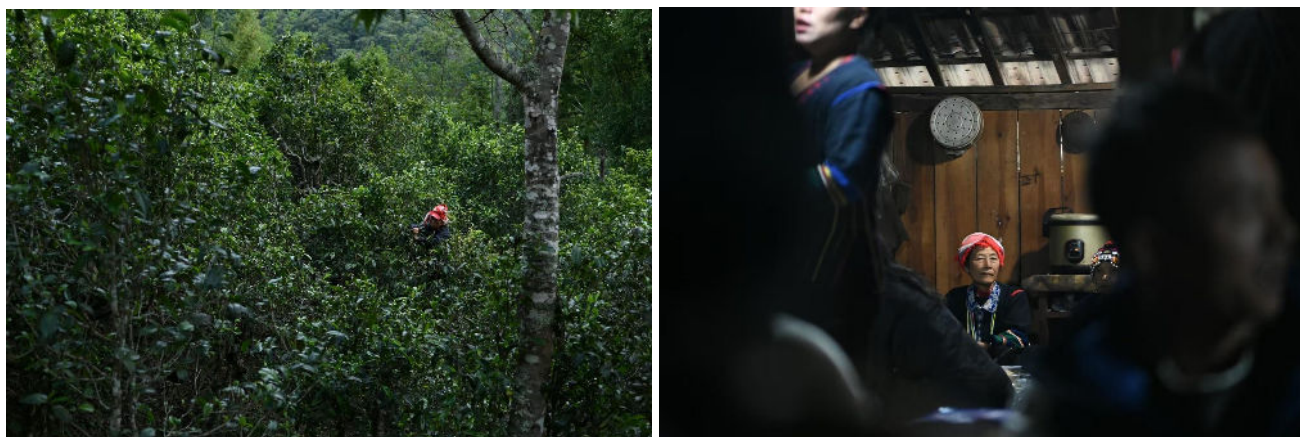
Overnight at Yueting Hot Spring B&B



Day 6: Hekai Old Tea Mountains & Manla Village. 1 hour drive Altitude: 1400m.

Take a short drive to Laoman'e, then continue to Hekai, home to some of the world's most expansive old tea gardens and explore the Hekai Tea Museum. After lunch in Hekai, travel to Manla, where a family-run workshop lies between tea fields and paddies. Walk to the neighboring Dai village to experience roasting tea leaves over an open hearth and brewing in clay pots. Back at the workshop, owner Lin shares the mysteries of long-term Puerh ageing in his storage. Dine among the tea gardens while listening to stories from his years of mountain travels.

Overnight at the Manla tea workshop



Day 7: Dayi Factory & Man'nuo Village. 2 hours drive Altitude: 1200m.

In the morning, step inside the renowned Dayi Tea Factory—whose raw and ripe Puerh cakes set the standard for quality across China. Join technicians for a behind-the-scenes look at the automation and craft inside their historic buildings, then continue the conversation over lunch. By afternoon, reach Man'nuo, where ancient tea trees grow entwined with massive rocks. Share some of Menghai's most aromatic teas with our Bulang host family, followed by dinner. **Overnight at homestay in the village**



Day 8: Return to Jinghong & comparative tea tasting. 3 hours drive Altitude: 550m.

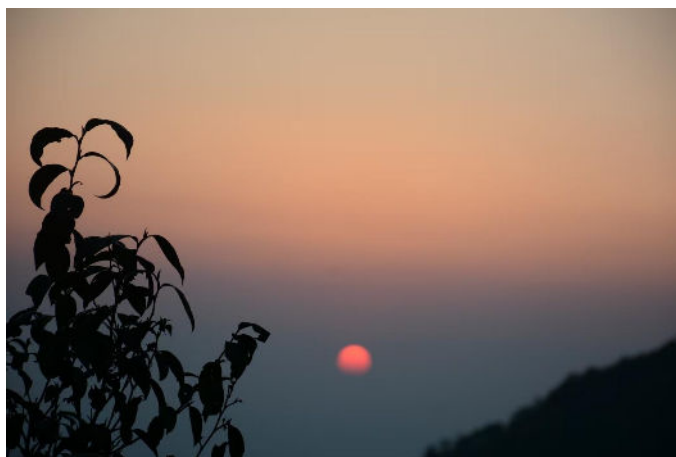


Spend the morning among Man'nuo's rocky tea gardens, deepening your connection with its unique terroir. On the way back, keep watch for wild elephants in the Meng'a reserve, you might see one if you're lucky. In Jinghong, take part in a comparative tasting of small-leaf and broad-leaf teas, raw (sheng) and ripe (shu) Puerh—an exploration of contrasts. In the evening, gather for a farewell dinner at Meimei Café.

Overnight at Taiyue Hotel

Day 9: departure from Jinghong

Enjoy unhurried free time for riverside walks or souvenir browsing before your transfer to the airport or train station. Carry with you not just tea, but the voices of mountains, forests, and the people who make them come alive. End of our services, we wish you a pleasant return home, beautiful memories in mind!



Our selection of hotels for your tour in Yunnan:

Jinghong: Taiyue Hotel

Recently opened in 2025, the hotel is well situated next to the night market. Each room is decorated in a different style. The hotel's balcony overlooks the Lancang River, where the morning mist sometimes merges with the steam rising from your cup of coffee.



Alternative (premium) : Jinghong: Yourantai Resort 4* (charming hotel)

The only real charming address in the Xishuangbanna region, Yourantai is located on the heights of Jinghong city, overlooking the Mekong River, and is made up of a set of 4 beautiful private villas scattered through a pleasant tropical garden. Your hosts are a couple from Taiwan and Switzerland. Beautiful host table in the evening.



Mengsong : Songda Lodge(宋达旅社)

Well located lodge run by a local Ahka family in the center of the village, a few steps away are the rice noodle shop, local markets serves fresh fruits and tea gardens with comfortable trails.



Menghai: Yueting Hot Spring B&B

The rooms are equipped with private hot springs and offer beautiful views from the balconies. The interior design is refined, and the welcome is both attentive and genuine.



Alternative in Menghai : Hekai : Ancient Tea Garden Tea Lodge, inside Hekai Zhuang Yuan (贺开庄园)

Hekai Tea Mountain is currently the largest contiguous area of well-protected ancient tea gardens with high density found in the world. It is home to the unique ethnic Lahu. It comprises the Pu'er Tea Museum, Pu'er Tea Archive, Origin Tea Cellar, Ethnic Folklore Museum, Hekai Ancient Tree Tea Raw Tea Trading Center, and Ancient Tea Tree Primary Processing and Refinement Experience Center.





Our double location in China and France ensures you control of your trip from A to Z, without intermediary and therefore at the best possible cost! We offer you the strong field knowledge and responsiveness of our local agency, as well as the guarantees and ease of payment offered by our French agency, allowing you to travel in peace!

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Our agency in China

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Website: www.China-Roads.fr & www.Yunnan-Roads.fr & www.Tibet-Roads.fr

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VOYAGEOS, Marseille FRANCE (by appointment only)

Phone: +33(0) 7-77-45-18-50 / weekdays of 9-17h.

Associative engagement

€2 per traveler donated to 2 charities:

- Colors of China: Sponsorship for the schooling of girls in northern Guangxi
- Children of the Mekong: Schooling of children in Upper Yunnan

+ **planting a tree per traveler** with the Yves Rocher Foundation "Plantons pour la Planète"

"Homemade" tours - authentic traveler feedbacks

Our circuits, and more generally all the content we create and publish, are the result of extensive research and experience of more than 15 years. But they are regularly - not to say constantly - copied. Don't be surprised, but just recognize the copy of the original!

We do not post fake traveler reviews as this has unfortunately become common on the Internet. All comments on the forums and our sites are guaranteed authentic! Several testimonials from alumni of our travelers here: [Travel comments from China](http://Travel-comments-from-China)

RATE - based on 2-4-6-8 travelers in 1-2-3-4 rooms - Inclusions and Exclusions:

Ancient Tea Mountains in Xishuangbanna, 9 days 8 nights

- RMB13100 (approx. € 2,838) per person, based on 2 travelers
- RMB8600 (approx. € 1,075) per person, based on 4 travelers
- RMB7400 (approx. € 925) per person, based on 6 travelers
- RMB6800 (approx. € 850) per person, based on 8 travelers

Applied exchange rate : €1 = ~RMB8

- Deposit on reservation of 50% of travel expenses, by transfer or credit card
- Balance 3 weeks before departure, again by bank transfer or credit card

This rate includes:

- Accommodation in the mentioned hotels with breakfast
- All transfers by private vehicle as mentioned in the program
- Entrance fees and activity costs as per the program
- Tea tasting expert English-speaking guide from Day 1 to Day 8
- 24/7 assistance from our agency in Kunming, insurance and guarantees from our French agency

This rate does not include:

- Personal expenses and activities not explicitly mentioned in the program
- Meals and drinks (unless otherwise stated)
- Tips for drivers and guides
- Personal travel insurance and Chinese visa fees
- International and domestic flights (we can include them in the final quotation if desired)

Program subject to slight change due to schedule changes or cancelation of airlines, availability of guides and hotels or bad weather.



In China : Yunnan Roads, 219 Chuncheng Road, Kunming, Yunnan, China

In France : Voyages, 19 rue Chateaubriand 22100 Dinan

