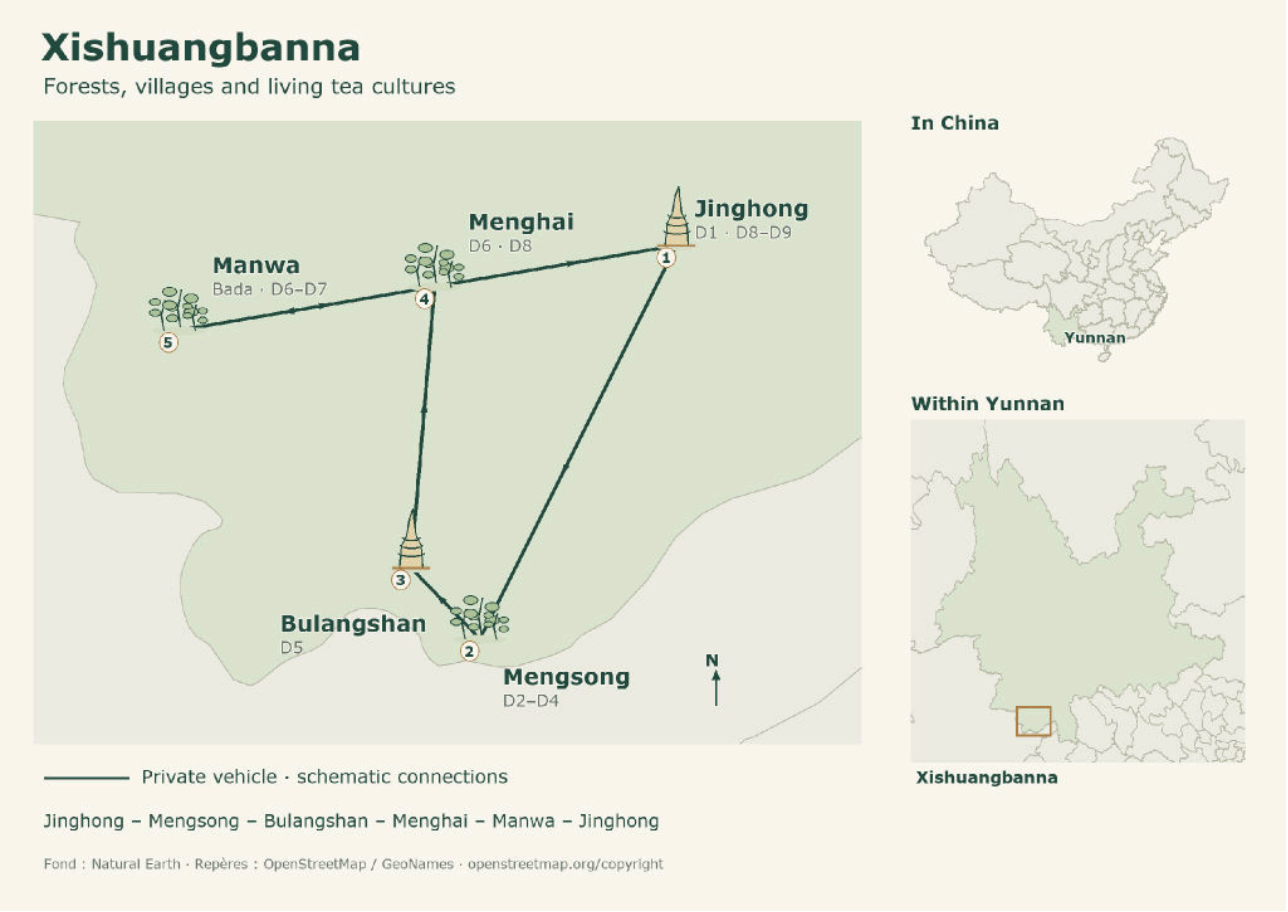
Forests and Living Tea Cultures of Xishuangbanna

9 days / 8 nights · Jinghong – Mengsong – Bulangshan – Menghai – Manwa – Jinghong

From the banks of the Lancang to mountain villages, this nine-day journey combines tropical forest, walking, craft traditions and everyday life. Pu'er tea connects the encounters without filling every moment: forest walks, bamboo and rattan weaving, shared kitchens and two nights in Manwa bring variety to the route. Three nights in Mengsong leave time to learn from Akha hosts, while visits to Bulang villages reveal other ways of living with tea.



Day 1 – Arrival in Jinghong

Meet your English-speaking guide and tea maker at Gasa International Airport, then transfer to your riverside hotel in the heart of Jinghong (around 15 minutes). Walk along the Lancang (upper Mekong) and join an exclusive tasting of teas from Yibang's old mountains. In the evening, share a Dai-style barbecue at a favourite local food street, and, if energy allows, wander into the vibrant Starlight Night Market. Alternatively, watch the New Dai Show, a carefully choreographed performance on the culture of ethnic minorities in Xishuangbanna. Overnight in Hidden Holiday Inn, Jinghong.



Day 2 – Into the Mengsong Mountains

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 Songda Lodge, Mengsong.



Day 3 – Making Tea by Hand

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, 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. Second overnight at Songda Lodge.











Day 4 – Forest Knowledge & Evening Celebration

Birdwatching 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 wild vegetables for dinner. 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, with the option of joining your hosts at a countryside KTV, paid locally. Final overnight at Songda Lodge.





Day 5 – Weaving Traditions & Bulangshan

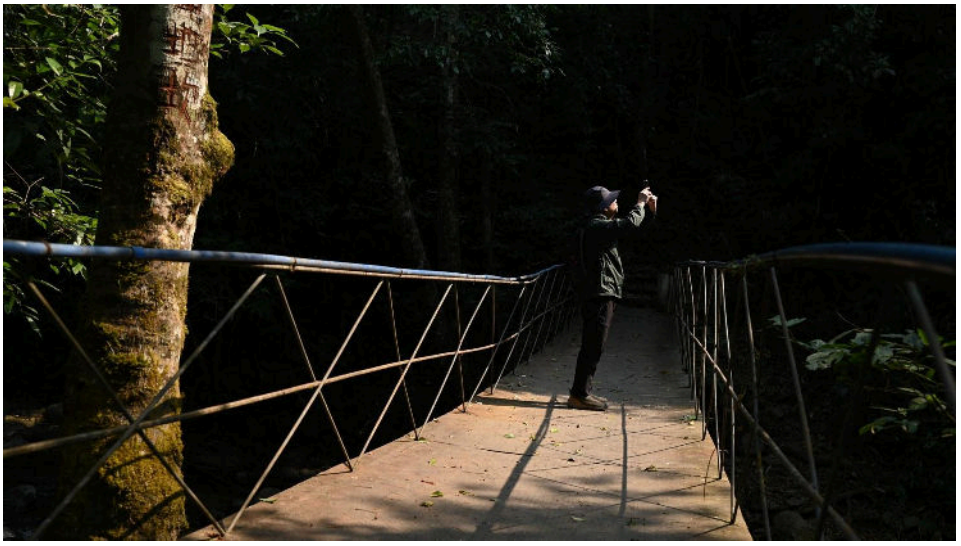
Wake naturally and enjoy a final Akha-style brunch with your hosts. Spend the morning learning bamboo and rattan weaving from a master artisan, shaping your own piece to carry home. After heartfelt farewells, travel west to Bulangshan. With our Bulang host, Sanmei, visit the centuries-old Laoman'e Temple, 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 in Dayi Estate in Bulangshan.

Day 6 – Bada tea mountains and Manwa village

Take a short walk to some of the expansive modern tea gardens. After lunch in Menghai, travel to Manwa, where a family-run workshop lies between tea fields and paddies. Stop at aged White Elephant Monastery, sacred banyan forest and an old well, the drinking water for passers-by for generations. Back at the workshop, owner Yan shares stories about his life and work. Dine among the tea gardens while listening to stories from his years of mountain travels. Overnight at Manwa lodge.





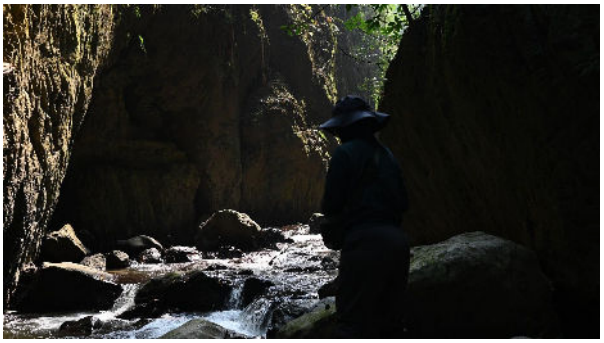


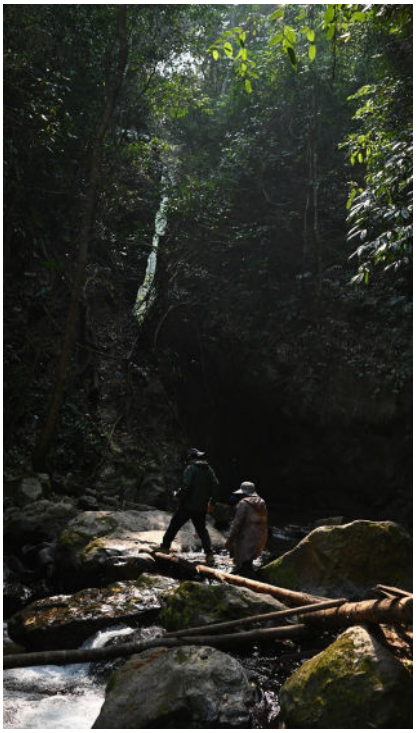
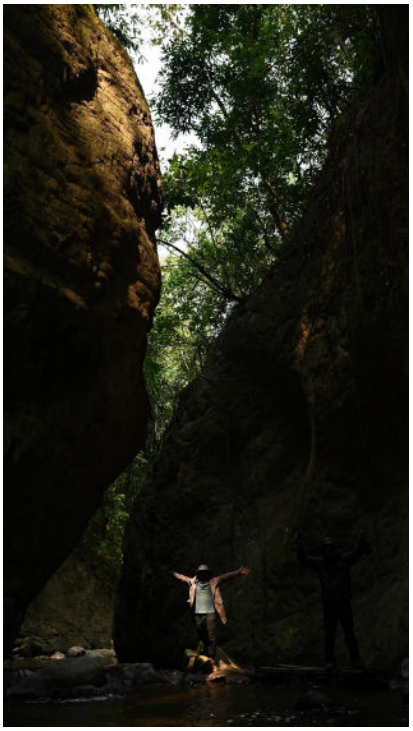
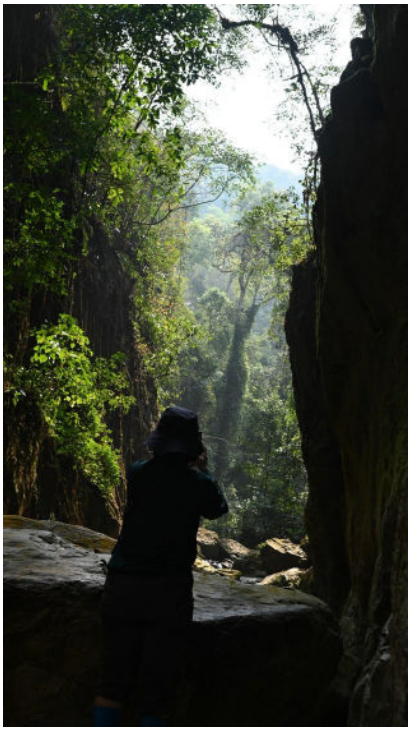
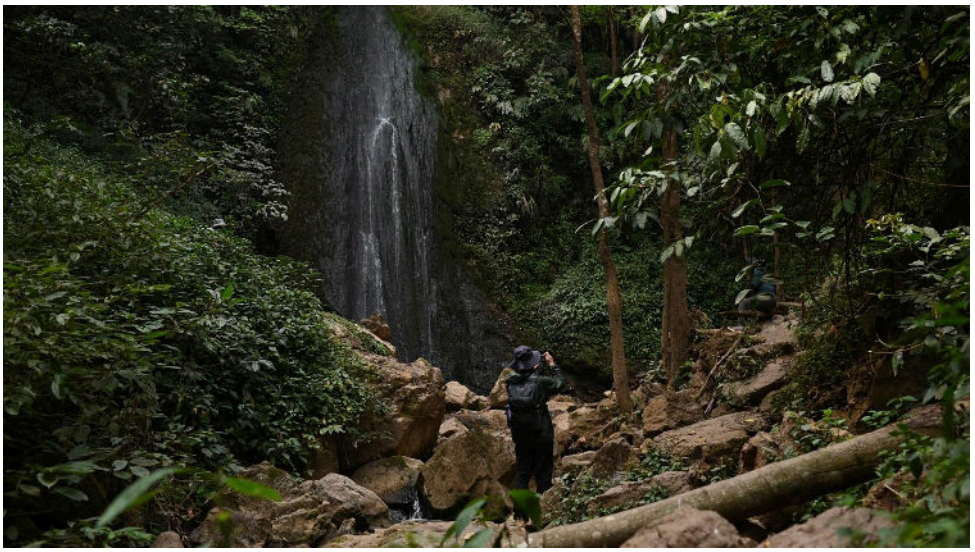
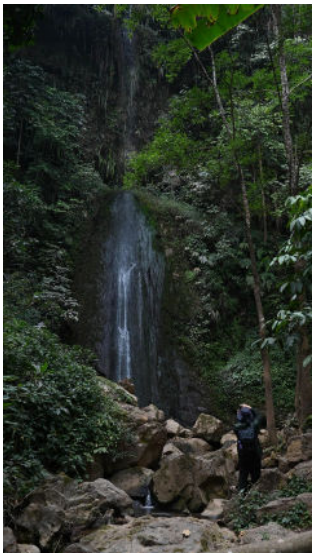


Day 7 – Stream walk and village life around Manwa

Wade down a shallow pebbly stream in the deep narrow canyon with plenty of verdant bush and waterfalls. Share some of Menghai's most aromatic teas with our Bulang host family during picnic. Walk to the neighboring Bulang village to experience roasting tea leaves over an open hearth and brewing in clay pots. Overnight at Manwa lodge.





Day 8 – Dayi Tea Factory and return to Jinghong

Spend the morning inside the renowned Dayi Tea Factory—known for its raw and ripe Puerh cakes. Join technicians for a behind-the-scenes look at the automation and craft inside their historic buildings. 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 Café or barbecue place. Overnight in Jinghong.

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. No overnight stay is included on this final day.

The eight overnight stays

Jinghong — one night at Hidden Holiday Inn on arrival, followed by one night in Jinghong on return. The first property is in the city centre, beside the Lancang River. The hotel for the final night will be specified in the personalised proposal.

Mengsong — three nights at Songda Lodge, a family-run Akha guesthouse in the village. Staying in one place leaves time to explore the tea gardens and learn from local hosts without moving accommodation each evening.

Dayi Estate — one night after exploring Bulangshan.

Manwa Lodge — two nights in Manwa. The stay revolves around the family workshop, tea gardens and paddies, with a day devoted to the valley and neighbouring villages.

The rhythm of the journey

The itinerary follows local community rhythms and natural conditions. Walks and the order of visits may change with the weather, trail conditions and local access requirements. The Manwa walk includes wading through a shallow stream and is adapted to the conditions on the day. Tea tastings and practical workshops form part of the encounters with local hosts.

Prices per person with two sharing a room

2 travellers: €1,638 per person

4 travellers: €1,075 per person

6 travellers: €925 per person

Deposit on booking: 50% of the travel costs, by bank transfer or credit card.

Balance three weeks before departure, by bank transfer or credit card.

This price includes:

- ✔ Eight nights in the accommodation listed in the programme, with breakfast
- ✔ All private transfers in the programme, including arrival and departure transfers
- ✔ Listed entrance fees and activities, excluding those explicitly offered as optional
- ✔ English-speaking tea specialist guide from Day 1 to Day 8
- ✔ 24/7 assistance from our Kunming team and the guarantees of our French agency

This price does not include:

- Personal expenses and activities not listed in the programme
- Meals other than breakfast and drinks, unless otherwise stated
- Tips for drivers and guides
- Personal travel insurance and any visa costs
- International and domestic flights, and train tickets to or from Jinghong

Programme proposed by Antoine Herblot on 9 November 2026,

subject to slight change due to schedule changes or cancelation of airlines,

availability of guides and hotels or bad weather.



In China: Yunnan roads, 1326 South Ring Road, Kunming, Yunnan, China

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