

Discover the Hidden Treasures & Natural Beauty of Southern China

Sun 29 Dec 2019 to Fri 10 Jan 2020 (13 days)

Guangzhou and Yunnan

with Chief Instructor Brett Wagland & Fontane Ip
Tai Chi Academy (since 1982)



Join us on a fascinating trip to some of the **less well-known and yet spectacular parts of China**. Experience ancient towns, amazing natural beauty, mouth-watering cuisine and friendly guides. Also, you will have the opportunity to learn health arts, such as Qigong (energy work), meditation and Hun Yuan Tai Chi. The mild weather of the south at this time of the year (around 15 to 20 degrees Celsius) makes it an excellent time to visit this part of China.

China is a land of immense natural beauty and architecture that are both inspiring and mind blowing. The culture is one of the oldest on the planet and has been moulded by three great philosophical systems : Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism. From Taoism, the influence of yin yang and the 5 elements is in everything, from food to architecture, medicine and martial arts. Confucianism plays an important role in understanding relationships and the importance of respect. Buddhism teaches compassion and wisdom, enabling one to liberate oneself from suffering. On this tour, you will see how these three philosophies still play a role in modern Chinese culture.

We begin our amazing journey in **Guangzhou**, a world trade centre and the capital of Guangdong province with a history over 2,200 years. We will visit some of the famous sights and enjoy delicious tastes of Cantonese cuisine. The temperature at this time of year in the south is mild and perfect for travel. The city is known for its colourful flowers everywhere in December and January while northern China is frozen.

On the way to Foshan (Buddha Mountain), we will first explore **Lingxi Village, the home town of the famous kung fu master and Chinese medical practitioner, Wong Fei Hung**. There have been many movies (close to 100) made about this legendary martial artist and his style of Hung Gar and Crane Tiger Boxing. He defended the weak and was a dedicated physician, known for his generosity and compassion. He is considered a great hero of the people in this area, so visiting his home town will be interesting. We will be treated to a lion dance performance.



Lingxi Village is now part of the Xi Qiao town. The spectacular **Xi Qiao Mountain** which is an ancient extinct volcano, estimated to be 40 to 50 million years old, has to be on our itinerary. The eruption of lava and its subsequent cooling created 72 peaks, 36 caves, lakes, springs and waterfalls giving rise to an enchanting environment. The area is dotted with temples, pavilions and memorial archways which add to the already beautiful natural phenomena. At the Daixan Peak, we will visit the Culture Garden and see **the impressive giant statue (61.9 metres high) of Kwan Yin Goddess of Mercy sitting on a lotus seat**. Inside the lotus seat is a magnificent 5-story hall full of interesting artefacts. From this height, the panoramic views of Foshan are magnificent to behold.

Foshan is regarded as the home of Cantonese style of kung fu (martial arts), lion dance and Chinese opera. One cannot go to Foshan without visiting the museum in memory of the famous kung fu master and Chinese medical practitioner, Wong Fei Hung. Also nearby is the Wing Chun kung fu master Ip Man (Bruce Lee's teacher) Memorial Hall with exquisite wood carvings and artworks.

One cannot leave Foshan without stopping at the **Ancient Nangfeng (South Wind) Kiln Museum**. Foshan is known for pottery and has a long history of porcelain production. This kiln, which is still in operation, looks like a dragon winding its way along the hill slope. It is the oldest kiln in China, built in the period of 1506 to 1521 during the Ming Dynasty and is considered a living cultural relic. Surrounding this kiln are interesting shops with ceramic artists at work.

Back in Guangzhou, we head towards **Yong Qing Fang, a cultural street**. Guess who used to live there. Bruce Lee! His former residence now houses a memorial bronze statue of Bruce Lee himself with posters, holographs and records of martial arts practices. This gives you an insight into the beginning of a legend.



At one end of Yong Qing Fang, there is a building (20,000 square metres) resembling a palace. This **Cantonese Opera Museum** won the most prestigious award for Chinese Architectural Engineering in 2016. We will see its collection of colourful costumes, face masks and elaborate hair pieces decorated with cloisonne jewellery. Also on display is a lesser-known but interesting long sleeve bamboo undergarment which was not made out of soft fabric, but more like a knitted matt. Performers wore them to prevent perspiration from soiling the costumes. A 1907 map of Guangzhou can also be seen there.

What better way to enjoy **New Year's Eve** than a **buffet dinner on a river boat cruising the Pearl River**. The incredible modern architecture of Guangzhou is lit up in a symphony of blazing neon lights, a very memorable experience. In fact, your camera will be in continuous use on this trip.

On New Year's Day, we will visit famous sights such as the beautiful **Yue Xiu Park** with its 7 hills, 3 man-made lakes and the impressive Stone Sculpture of 5 Rams. We will also explore the Chen Family temple which is now a folk arts museum and the **Sun Yat Sen Memorial Hall** with an octagonal, ancient palace style main building. Some unique trees with rare formations are major attractions there.



After spending time in the far south of China, we now head west towards the fabulous, natural environment of **Yunnan province**. **Kunming**, known as the City of Eternal Spring due to its ideal climate for plants and flowers, is the capital of Yunnan and deemed to be the most liveable city in China. It is a city of many beautiful parks and exotic flowers. In earlier times, it was the gateway to the Silk Road trade route linking China with Myanmar, India and the Mediterranean.

We will explore the famous **Stone Forest**, a UNESCO world heritage site, which covers an area of more than three hundred square kilometres and is estimated to be 270 million years old. These intricate limestone formations rising up out of the ground are a fascinating display of an illusory forest, including trees, animal and human figures. It is a sight to behold! You cannot help but be in awe of this magnificent landscape!

Of course, we will sample the **Yiliang roast duck** for lunch, a famous Yunnan dish with its origin dating back 600 years. Some people say this is even better than Peking duck. Pine twigs are added into clay ovens which roast the ducks glazed with honey. This gives the ducks a delightful fragrance.



As we travel further south through gorgeous countryside and amazing old towns, we arrive at **Mile**, a town famous for being home to diverse ethnic groups and hot springs. What better way to finish the day by **relaxing in a hot spring**

The next day, we visit **Chengzi**, an ancient village with a history of over 300 years. The local people here belong to the Yi ethnic group. The village was unknown to the general public until recently when it was featured in a documentary. The soil palm houses are the most prominent feature of the village which is on a hill. On each terrace level, the houses were built closely together and the roofs of the houses connected to each other to form one platform. Along the slope, the roof of one house is the balcony of the neighbour one house up the hill. The roof is used to dry grains and gourds during harvest time. In this place, the neighbours live in harmony and no one bothers to lock their doors.



Our next destination is the **Douyishu Village of Yuanyang**, a UNESCO world heritage site of amazing rice terraces which have been carved out of the mountain slopes. Most of the locals are from the Hani ethnic group who have been cultivating the terraced rice paddies for the last 1,300 years. Some smaller plots are for growing vegetables and soybeans. Some plots further from the village are reserved for the red and purple varieties of rice. As the sun rises, we see the most colourful splendour of natural beauty you could imagine. Throughout the day, reflecting the sky, the colours of the water filled terraces change from pastel and soft to bright and brilliant. As we explore the nearby hills, we capture different perspectives and shades of this magnificent landscape. This place is a photographer's paradise. You will be amazed at the extent and precision of the engineering here, considering that they have only ever used simple hand tools.

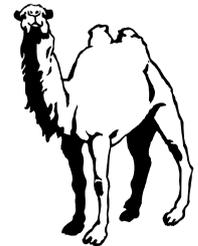
After that, we travel to the **Azheke Village**, one of the most distinctive Hani minority villages. Azheke means a place with plenty of bamboo. Along the way, we'll see its unusual mushroom shaped houses and interesting sights such as water buffalo, black pigs, ducks and water-powered grain mills, giving you a sense of being back in time and a glimpse of how people used to live.



The best vantage point to watch the sea of clouds and the sunset is from the **Bada Rice Terraces**. In order to arrive at this lookout, you will have a choice of taking our tour bus or

taking a hike of about two hours with one of our guides. When you reach the top, you will have an excellent view of the 950 hectares of rice terraces rising from 800 metres to 2,000 metres above the surrounding valley. Your breath will be taken away when you see the magic of dusk as the colours change from rosy pink, to red, to dark red, to golden hue and to white, lighting up the 3,700 terraces as if it is a ladder to heaven. What a day! Let's go back to our accommodation and reminisce about these wonderful sights and experiences. Everyone will travel back to the hotel from the lookout in our bus.

The next day, we visit the **Laomeng Sunday Market** and see the daily life of the locals. Six different tribal groups from the surrounding mountains meet here to get their supplies. Many will wear their Sunday best, dressed up in their colourful, traditional costumes with interesting headgears.



In the afternoon, we will explore the **Hani Village of Qingkou** which is surrounded by lush forests. It is regarded as a model village in balancing agricultural development with the ecosystem. The village has its own museum which shows the Hani history and culture. Then, off we go to the Shengcun Village. From there, we go on a scenic hike, 3 km, about 45 minutes one way, not accessible by bus. If you prefer not to go on the hiking trip, the tour bus will take you back to the hotel for a rest before dinner.

Time to move on to our next destination in Yunnan, this time it is the ancient town of **Jianshui**. When we arrive, we will explore the famous **Swallow Cave** where thousands of swallows flock to breed and nest between spring and summer each year. This cave, surrounded by dense forests, is the largest and most magnificent karstic cave in Asia. The entrance to the cave is a huge 50 metres high and a 30 metres wide. In the cave, there is a tourist walkway. On this path, you see the upper part of the cave filled with stunning rock formations, stone pillars and stalactites hanging from the ceiling. Illuminated with coloured lighting, the cave becomes a wondrous fairyland. The Lujiang River runs through the lower part of the cave. It is said to have a history of about 3 million years. When leaving the cave, you will spot three different openings of the sky.

Our accommodation is in the ancient town, Jianshui which has a history of about 1,200 years. **The whole town is a virtual museum.** The town still retains the style of the Ming Dynasty with its ancient buildings and historic landmarks such as the Confucius Temple (built in 1285), the Zhu Family Garden with amazing architecture and beautiful courtyards, and the Shuanlong (Double Dragon) Bridge with 17 arches and 3 pavilions with precious artwork. You will also visit the Chaoyang Tower with hanging plaques of huge handwritings, an old clock from the Ming Dynasty and copper bells. Visiting the Pottery Street is a must since Jianshui is famous for its purple pottery. Walking down the Tuanshan Village, a well preserved mountain village, will take you back in time with its architecture, exquisite gilded colourful wood carving, calligraphy and scroll painting. There is so much to see and do in this picturesque part of the world!



We will have the opportunity to see how tofu (bean curd) is made. This is not just any old bean curd. In fact, it is the most famous in China and it's called, wait for it, stinky bean

curd. I have had this type of tofu on Wudang Mountain in a Taoist Temple there and it was delicious. The ever-replenishing fresh water from the Ximen Daban historic well of Jianshui is the key in the making of this local delicacy. It makes the bean curd soft and tasty. It is very different from the stinky tofu served in other parts of China. We will stroll along the streets and see the old wells. The water from the West Well is good for drinking and the Dongjing Well is good for brewing tea because the water is sweeter.

Back in Kunming before we return to Guangzhou, we will visit the idyllic **Green Lake Park**, one of the most beautiful parks in Kunming. It is famous for its bamboo, willow and tropical trees. There are 4 small lakes linked by bridges in traditional style. You are aware by now that this part of China is a botanical wonderland, so enjoy its natural beauty. Each year, 4.1 billion stems of cut flowers are sent out from Yunnan to different parts of China and to the world. Roses, lilies and carnations make up 2 billion stems.



Before we farewell Yunnan, we will visit the **Yuantong Temple**, one of the oldest Buddhist temples in Kunming city. It is quite different from other Buddhist temple structures. It is famous for its uncommon entrance into the temple ground, its symmetrical layout, its distinguished octagonal pavilion and other unusual features. The Yuantong Hall is surrounded by water and fish. Most uncommonly, all 3 schools of Buddhism are represented in this temple : Yuantong Hall for Mahayana (seeking enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings), Copper Temple for Theravada (each being has to make his own way to enlightenment) and the side hall in the east for Tibetan Buddhism. People feel very peaceful strolling around this temple ground.

Once we arrive back in Guangzhou, there will be time for last minute shopping on the **Ninth Road and Beijing Road, known as the shoppers' paradise**. There is always something new and interesting to see even if you don't intend to do much shopping. China is full of history.



If you have a friend or a family member who would like to join us, they will be most welcome as most of the training is done in the morning before any of the sightseeing. **On previous trips, there have been family members of our students and interested individuals, who although not Tai Chi practitioners, joined us on our travels. They all thoroughly enjoyed the tour.** Some were happy to spend a leisurely morning exploring the parks which are amazing or just having a long breakfast. In China, there is always something to see and do, right at your doorstep. Also, if they wish, they are more than welcome to join in the morning training sessions and/or the evening meditation.

This will be an unforgettable journey to a stunningly beautiful part of China. Hope you can **join us for a wonderful holiday of relaxation and enjoyment!**

View photos of the places that we'll visit on our website, www.taichiacademy.com.au – click on China Trip. You'll be amazed!

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(1) Sun 29 Dec 2019	Fly China Southern (CZ 326) from Sydney 11.25am to Guangzhou 5.45pm. (Guangzhou is 3 hours behind Canberra during daylight saving period.) Dinner and overnight stay in Guangzhou. 
(2) Mon 30 Dec Breakfast, lunch and dinner included (B L D) 	Guangzhou to Foshan by coach - 1.5 hour. Visit the home town (Lingxi Village) of the famous kung fu master and Chinese medical practitioner, Wong Fei Hung. Explore Xiqiao Mountain (spectacular waterfalls, transparent lakes, unusual caves, steep cliffs and a giant Kwan Yin Goddess of Mercy statue). Outdoor Qigong and Tai Chi in the afternoon (optional). Overnight stay in Foshan.
(3) Tues 31 Dec B L D  Overnight stay in Guangzhou.	Morning outdoor Qigong and Tai Chi (optional). Visit the Memorial Halls of famous kung fu masters: Wong Fei Hung and Ip Man (Wing Chun style), and the Ancient Nangfeng (South Wind) Kiln Museum which has a long history of porcelain production. Foshan to Guangzhou by coach - 1.5 hour. Stroll along the cultural street, Yongqing Fang and drop into the former residence of Bruce Lee and the Cantonese Opera Museum. Enjoy the Pearl River Cruise with buffet dinner.
(4) Wed 1 Jan 2020 B L D Overnight stay in Kunming.	Morning outdoor Qigong and Tai Chi (optional). Sightseeing : Yue Xiu Park with 7 hills, 3 man-made lakes & the Stone Sculpture of 5 Rams (one of the city's emblems), the Chen Family Temple (folk arts museum) and Sun Yat Sen Memorial Hall. Fly China Southern (CZ 3449) from Guangzhou 2.55pm to Kunming 5.35pm.
(5) Thurs 2 Jan B L D Overnight: Mile	Morning outdoor Qigong and Tai Chi (optional). Kunming to Stone Forest by coach - 1.5 hour. Sightseeing : Stone Forest tour. Enjoy Yiliang Roast Duck for lunch. Stone Forest to Mile by coach - 1.5 hour. Relax in a hot spring in the evening.
(6) Fri 3 Jan B L D	Morning outdoor Qigong and Tai Chi (optional). Explore the ancient Chengzi Village (Yi ethnic group). Mile to Yuanyang by coach - 4 hours. Meditation in the evening (optional). Overnight stay in Yuanyang. 
(7) Sat 4 Jan B L D  Overnight stay in Yuanyang.	Greet the day with the spectacular sunrise from the Duoyishu Terraces. Visit the Akezhe Village, one of the most distinctive Hani minority villages. Outdoor Qigong and Tai Chi (optional). Return to hotel for a siesta. Watch the breathtaking sunset from the Bada Rice Terraces. You have a choice of taking our tour bus or taking a hike (about 2 hours) with one of our guides. Everyone will travel back to the hotel from the lookout in our bus. Meditation in the evening (optional).
(8) Sun 5 Jan B L D Overnight stay in Yuanyang.	Stroll around the Laomeng Sunday market. Outdoor Qigong and Tai Chi (optional). Return to hotel for a siesta. Visit the Hani Village of Qingkou. Scenic hike (3km, about 45 mins one way) from the Shengcun Village to the Laoyingzui Terraces. If you prefer not to go on the hiking trip, the tour bus will take you back to the hotel. Meditation in the evening (optional).
(9) Mon 6 Jan B L D Overnight: Jianshui	Morning outdoor Qigong and Tai Chi (optional). Yuanyang to Jianshui by coach - 3 hours. Sightseeing: Swallow Cave, Jianshui Ancient Town, Chaoyang Tower, Pottery Street & Zhu Family Garden. Meditation in the evening (optional).
(10) Tues 7 Jan B L D 	Morning outdoor Qigong and Tai Chi (optional). Watch how tofu (bean curd) is made. Sightseeing : Shuanlong (Double Dragon) Bridge with 17 arches and 3 pavilions with precious artwork. Visit the Tuanshan Village, a rare surviving example of a traditional walled Yunnan village. Jianshui to Kunming by coach - 3.5 hours. Enjoy special Yunnan local cuisine and dance show. Overnight stay in Kunming. 
(11) Wed 8 Jan B L D 	Morning outdoor Qigong and Tai Chi (optional). Enjoy the Green Lake Park, one of the most beautiful parks in Kunming. Visit the Yuantong Temple, one of the oldest Buddhist temples in Kunming city with unusual features. Fly China Southern (CZ 3416) from Kunming 2.50pm to Guangzhou 5.10pm. Stroll along the Ninth Road in the evening. Overnight stay in Guangzhou
(12) Thurs 9 Jan B L 	Morning outdoor Qigong and Tai Chi (optional). After lunch, explore the Beijing Road, known as the shopper's paradise. Part of the original lane and other historical remains, dating back 1,000 years, have been preserved and can still be seen. Fly China Southern (CZ 601) from Guangzhou 6.05pm to Sydney Fri 10 Jan 6.45am.

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Included in the Cost: economy international airfare from Sydney return, accommodation, meals as specified in the itinerary, admission (sightseeing places, parks and show), Tai Chi, Qigong and meditation sessions, coach, English speaking guide, economy domestic (China) airfare and airport taxes.

Accommodation (3-star#, 4-star*, 5-star^):

- **Guangzhou** – Hotel Canton or similar*
- **Kunming** – Wenhui Hotel or similar*
- **Yuanyang** – Aichuan Blue Terrace Hotel or similar#
- **Foshan** – Xiqiaoshan Hotel or similar*
- **Mile** – Huquan Hotel or similar^
- **Jianshui** – Sichenyuan Minority Inn or similar#

Travel to Southern China during the Christmas and New Year period is **Peak Season**.

Cost of the China trip will be

- AUD\$5,410 per person based on **twin share**
- AUD\$5,990 per person based on **single room**

The cost estimate is based on 10 people. A minimum of 10 people is required in order for the tour to proceed. Less than 10 people may incur a higher cost.



Please pay a **deposit of \$500– now** and the **balance by Monday 21 October 2019**.

Southern China Airlines will not hold any seats for group travel without a deposit. Hence, an early deposit is necessary to secure seats at a good price (as estimated by the travel agent in his costings).

Please note that the entire cost is non-refundable. Appropriate travel insurance is strongly recommended.

>> **Please contact Fontane first** when you are ready to **pay the deposit**. <<

Methods of payment: ● cash

- personal cheque payable to Southlands Travel & Cruise – please pay your instructor or mail cheque to Tai Chi Academy, PO Box 70, Woden ACT 2606
- credit card – a credit card fee applies: 1.2% extra for Mastercard, visa or Amex

Note: The organiser reserves the right to change the travel dates and/or the itinerary if deemed necessary.

Excluded from the Cost – please allow for the following expenses:

- Taxes for the international airfare, approx. \$190- : Australia Departure Tax, Airport Taxes, Security Taxes, fuel surcharge and China Departure Tax. All the taxes are subject to exchange rate and introduction of new taxes.
- Tipping for the national and local tour guides : AUD \$120- per person.
- Canberra to Sydney airline tickets return. Please feel free to use your frequent flyer points to book your own tickets or arrange other means of transport. However, **the travel agent advises** that we should wait for the international tickets to be issued first before booking the domestic tickets.

Please allow at least 3 hours before the flight departure time for baggage check in at the Sydney International Airport.

If you need Southlands Travel & Cruise to book your domestic airline tickets, please contact Fontane on 6296 1357 or email support@taichiacademy.com.au.

- Visa application fee for single entry, \$109.50 (subject to change), your passport & 1 passport size photo. Chinese Visa Application Centre, Suite 201, Level 2, Canberra House, 40 Marcus Clarke St, Canberra City – Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm. Phone 6279 7800. <http://au.china-embassy.org/eng/ls/bg> – click on Visa Application Form
- Appropriate travel insurance is strongly recommended.
- Travel vaccinations – seek advice from your doctor or the Travel Doctor-TMVC Canberra.
- Please be aware that many countries such as China require travellers to have at least 6 months remaining validity and at least 2 blank visa pages on their passports. Phone Australian Passport Information Service on 131 232 or visit www.passports.gov.au.

