

GUIZHOU · WESTERN HUNAN · ZHANGJIAJIE

Stone, Water and Floating Peaks

*Fourteen days across two geologies —
the caves and waterfalls of Guizhou, the sandstone towers of Hunan,
and the villages that grew between them*

DURATION	ROUTE	PARTY	DATES	PACE
14 days / 13 nights	Guiyang in · Changsha out	Two couples · private	8 – 21 October 2026	Moderate, some walking

The idea behind this journey

You have already seen the China that everyone photographs — the capital, the canal towns, the Yunnan trail. This journey goes somewhere almost no Australian traveller reaches, and it is built on a single natural fact: the rock changes halfway through.

Guizhou is limestone: water disappears underground and resurfaces as waterfalls, jade-green rivers and high grasslands — and in the folds between them live Miao villages that still make paper by hand as they did a thousand years ago. Hunan is quartz sandstone: it does not dissolve, it stands — three thousand pillars at Wulingyuan, a glass walkway bolted to a cliff at Tianmen, and stilt-house river towns that light up after dark. Two kinds of stone, two kinds of beauty, two entirely different ways of living in the mountains — crossed in a single unbroken line, west to east, Guiyang to Changsha.

The journey at a glance

DAY BY DAY · FULL DETAIL ON THE PAGES THAT FOLLOW

1 · 8 Oct	Arrive Guiyang	Provincial Museum · welcome dinner	GUIYANG
2 · 9 Oct	→ Huangguoshu → Anshun	The falls, unhurried — one anchor sight	ANSHUN
3 · 10 Oct	Gaodang → Tianyinshan → Wanfeng	Stone village · grassland · timed sunset	ANSHUN
4 · 11 Oct	→ Shiqiao → Libo	Slow ridge morning · hand-papermaking	LIBO
5 · 12 Oct	Xiaoqikong → Zhenyuan	The karst essentials · evening at leisure	ZHENYUAN
6 · 13 Oct	Zhenyuan, in full	Cliff temples · city-wall view · night boat	ZHENYUAN
7 · 14 Oct	→ Fanjingshan	Cableway · Red Cloud Golden Summit	FANJINGSHAN
8 · 15 Oct	Yamugou → Fenghuang	Gorge walk · night boat	FENGHUANG
9 · 16 Oct	Fenghuang, slowly	Lanes & silversmiths · free afternoon	FENGHUANG
10 · 17 Oct	→ Furong	The waterfall town at dusk	FURONG
11 · 18 Oct	→ Zhangjiajie · Tianmen	Cableway · glass skywalk · Heaven's Gate	ZHANGJIAJIE
12 · 19 Oct	Wulingyuan, single-thread	Bailong lift · Yuanjiajie · Yangjiajie	ZHANGJIAJIE
13 · 20 Oct	Ten-Mile Gallery → rail	Pinnacle valley · Changsha night market	CHANGSHA
14 · 21 Oct	Changsha · depart	Mawangdui · Yuelu Academy	—

Every sight below carries one of three tags: **AMAZING SCENERY** worth planning the day around · **CULTURE RICH** the human story · **STOPPING BY** pleasant, and easily trimmed if you would rather rest.

DAY 1

Arrive Guiyang

THU 8 OCT

You are met at the airport and taken into the provincial capital. The afternoon stays deliberately gentle after a long flight, but not empty: an hour and a half in the Guizhou Provincial Museum gives you the frame for everything that follows — who lives in these mountains, and how they came to be so many.

- Private airport transfer and check-in
- Guided visit to the Guizhou Provincial Museum

CULTURE RICH
- Optional evening stroll to Jiaxiu Pavilion, the city's Ming-dynasty river tower

STOPPING BY
- Welcome dinner: sour-soup fish, the dish that defines the province

CULTURE RICH

EFFORT

RELAXED

WALKING

LIGHT

DAY 2

Guiyang → Huangguoshu → Anshun

FRI 9 OCT

One anchor sight, done properly. The whole day belongs to the Huangguoshu falls — the great curtain you can walk behind through the Water-Curtain Cave, and the Tianxing Bridge gardens, where the river threads a maze of natural stone arches and banyan roots. No second site is stacked on top; when you have had enough, you have had enough.

- Huangguoshu main falls and the Water-Curtain Cave, at an unhurried pace

AMAZING SCENERY
- Tianxing Bridge karst gardens (Doupotang optional, energy permitting)

AMAZING SCENERY
- Early evening at leisure in Anshun

EFFORT

MODERATE

DRIVE

~1.5 HRS

WALKING

5–6 KM, STEPPED

DAY 3

Gaodang → Tianyinshan → the Wanfeng sunset platform

SAT 10 OCT

A day built entirely around light, and paced backwards from a 6:46pm sunset. A ten o'clock start; a short stop at Gaodang, a Bouyei village of dry-stone houses folded into a karst hollow; then the middle of the day on the Tianyinshan grassland — a high karst meadow almost nobody outside China has heard of, which is precisely the point. By five we leave the ridge: thirty minutes' drive and a forty-minute walk up put you on the Wanfeng platform above a sea of stone peaks in good time for the golden half-hour.

- Gaodang Bouyei stone village — a short photographic stop

STOPPING BY
- Tianyinshan grassland: walking and photography through the middle of the day

AMAZING SCENERY
- The Wanfeng sunset platform, timed for the golden half-hour before the 6:46pm sunset

AMAZING SCENERY

EFFORT

MODERATE

DRIVE

~2 HRS IN STAGES

WALKING

40-MIN ASCENT + LIGHT

DAY 4

Tianyinshan → Shiqiao → Libo

SUN 11 OCT

No alarm this morning — the start is deliberately gentle after yesterday's long evening. The day's one activity: at Shiqiao the villagers still make paper from mulberry bark by a method little changed since the Tang dynasty, and you will make a sheet yourself while lunch is cooked. The rest is honest driving, east into Libo county, whose forested karst is inscribed by UNESCO as part of the South China Karst.

- A deliberately unhurried morning
- Shiqiao village: hand-made paper, a national intangible-heritage craft, with a workshop

CULTURE RICH
- Arrival in Libo by evening; dinner locally

EFFORT

MODERATE

DRIVE

~5 HRS IN STAGES

DAY 5

Xiaoqikong → Zhenyuan

MON 12 OCT

A morning in Xiaoqikong, the loveliest corner of the Libo karst — about three hours on level paths among jade-green water, cascades and pools, with park shuttles between the sights and the exact route settled on the day. In the afternoon you drive north, and the evening in Zhenyuan is entirely your own — the town does its best work after dark, and tomorrow belongs to it in full.

- Xiaoqikong: about three hours on level paths, routed on the day

AMAZING SCENERY
- Overland north through the Qiannan hills
- Evening at leisure on the Zhenyuan waterfront

EFFORT MODERATE

DRIVE ~4 HRS

DAY 6

Zhenyuan, in full

TUE 13 OCT

A whole day for a town most itineraries drive through. Zhenyuan was governed as two cities facing each other across the Wuyang River — a civil prefecture on one bank, a military garrison on the other — and once you see it from the old wall on Shiping Hill, the whole town reorganises itself in front of you. The Qinglong Dong temples are built flat against the cliff on timber brackets; the lanes and wharfs of the merchant quarter reward aimlessness. After dinner, a boat on the river as the lanterns come on.

- Qinglong Dong cliff temple complex

CULTURE RICH
- The Ming wall on Shiping Hill, for the two-cities-one-river view

CULTURE RICH
- The old lanes and wharfs, at whatever pace the afternoon suggests

STOPPING BY
- Night boat on the Wuyang River

AMAZING SCENERY

EFFORT RELAXED

WALKING 4-5 KM, SOME STEPS

DAY 7

Zhenyuan → Fanjingshan

WED 14 OCT

A UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the strangest mountains in China: a green dome of ancient forest from which a bare rock finger rises, split in two, with a small temple balanced on each half. A cableway does the hard work; from the top station a cliff-edge walkway and a stair carry you up to the Red Cloud Golden Summit. The forest below is old enough to hold species found nowhere else on earth.

- Fanjingshan by cableway, then the cliffside walkway and the summit stair

AMAZING SCENERY
- The mountain's temples, and the view over an unbroken canopy

CULTURE RICH
- Numbers are capped daily and tickets are booked in your names well in advance

EFFORT DEMANDING

DRIVE ~2.5 HRS

WALKING STAIRS, 3-4 HRS ON THE MOUNTAIN

DAY 8

Yamugou → Fenghuang

THU 15 OCT

The morning is gentle by design — Yamugou, a cool ravine of pools, ferns and waterfalls at the foot of Fanjingshan, walked on a level path. By afternoon you cross into western Hunan, and the evening belongs to the water — a boat along the Tuo River beneath the stilt houses of Fenghuang.

- Yamugou gorge walk on a level riverside path

AMAZING SCENERY
- Overland into Xiangxi, the Miao country of western Hunan
- Fenghuang after dark, by boat

AMAZING SCENERY

EFFORT RELAXED

DRIVE ~3 HRS

DAY 9

Fenghuang, slowly

FRI 16 OCT

Most visitors give Fenghuang three hours; you have a day, and the difference is the whole point. The morning for the town as it wakes — stilt houses over the shallows, stone jumping-stones across the river, lanes of silversmiths and indigo dyers. The Southern Great Wall and the writer Shen Congwen's riverside home are there if you want them; an afternoon with no schedule at all is equally the plan. Your guide will be exactly as present, or as invisible, as you wish.

- The old town on foot, before the day-trippers arrive

CULTURE RICH
- Optional: the Southern Great Wall, or Shen Congwen's former home

CULTURE RICH
- A deliberately unscheduled afternoon — cafes, photography, or nothing at all

EFFORT

RELAXED

WALKING

AT YOUR OWN PACE

DAY 10

Fenghuang → Furong

SAT 17 OCT

A late-morning departure north to Furong, a town built directly on top of a waterfall — the old lanes end at a terrace where the whole cascade drops away beneath you. The afternoon for the lanes and the terraces; at dusk the falls are lit from behind, and the town above them slowly empties of day visitors until it is almost yours.

- Unhurried transfer through the Wuling foothills
- Furong's lanes and waterfall terraces through the afternoon

CULTURE RICH
- The falls at dusk and after dark

AMAZING SCENERY

EFFORT

RELAXED

DRIVE

~2 HRS

DAY 11

Furong → Zhangjiajie · Tianmen Mountain

SUN 18 OCT

You transfer in the morning and spend the afternoon on Tianmen — reached by one of the world's longest cable-car rides, straight up out of the city. On the mountain: a glass walkway pinned to a vertical cliff, a road of ninety-nine hairpin bends below you, and the great natural arch of the Heaven's Gate, reached by 999 steps or by escalator through the mountain.

- Tianmen Mountain cableway

AMAZING SCENERY
- The cliffside glass skywalk and the west-line walkways

AMAZING SCENERY
- Heaven's Gate arch — the stair, or the interior escalators

AMAZING SCENERY

EFFORT

DEMANDING

DRIVE

~2.5 HRS

WALKING

4–5 KM, CLIFF PATHS

DAY 12

Wulingyuan, single-thread

MON 19 OCT

A full day inside the national park that gave the world its idea of what a Chinese mountain looks like — run as one clean line rather than a checklist. The Bailong lift takes you 326 metres up the outside of a cliff in under two minutes; Yuanjiajie holds the pillar the film *Avatar* made famous; Yangjiajie, a little further on, is just as extraordinary and noticeably quieter. The Golden Whip Stream exists in a short version if legs and light allow — and is cheerfully skipped if they don't.

- Bailong glass lift and Yuanjiajie, including the Hallelujah pillar and the natural bridge

AMAZING SCENERY
- Yangjiajie for the same landscape with fewer people

AMAZING SCENERY
- Golden Whip Stream, short version only — optional

STOPPING BY
- Early entry to stay ahead of the day's crowds

EFFORT

DEMANDING

WALKING

5–7 KM, MOSTLY FLAT

DAY 13

The Ten-Mile Gallery, then the train east

TUE 20 OCT

A relaxed final morning in the park: the Ten-Mile Gallery, a narrow valley of named rock figures ridden on a small open tram or walked at your own pace. After lunch, high-speed rail carries you east to Changsha in around two and a half hours — and the evening is given over to one of China's great street-food cities.

- Shili Hualang (Ten-Mile Gallery) by tram or on foot

STOPPING BY
- High-speed rail, Zhangjiajie to Changsha
- Evening in Changsha's night-market streets with your guide

CULTURE RICH

EFFORT

RELAXED

RAIL ~2.5 HRS

DAY 14

Changsha · Departure

WED 21 OCT

The Hunan Museum holds the Mawangdui tombs — lacquer, silk manuscripts, a painted funeral banner, and the remarkably preserved body of a noblewoman who died around 163 BC. After a fortnight in the mountains it lands very differently than it would have on day one. Yuelu Academy, founded in 976 and still part of the university, closes the journey among old trees and running water.

- Hunan Museum: Mawangdui, unhurried and fully interpreted

CULTURE RICH
- Yuelu Academy and a walk on Yuelu Mountain

CULTURE RICH
- Farewell lunch, then private transfer for your departure

EFFORT

RELAXED

WALKING 4 KM

DEPART CHANGSHA (CSX)

From here to departure

STEP 1

Talked through

The route, pacing and dates — settled together on our video call, with the shape of the journey agreed before anything else was chosen.

STEP 2

This document

The confirmed hotels and dining, day by day, together with your firm land-only quote for the four of you.

STEP 3

Lock it in

When you are happy with everything, a deposit of 10% of the total price secures your trip — and we set everything in motion, every booking and ticket made in your names.

Inclusions

- Private vehicle with professional driver, for the touring and transfers specified in the confirmed itinerary
- English-speaking guiding throughout — with you every day, from arrival to departure
- 13 nights' accommodation as described
- All breakfasts and selected dinners — most planned to the specific restaurant
- All entrance fees, cableways, park transport and permits
- Shiqiao hand-papermaking workshop and village arrangements
- First-class high-speed rail, Zhangjiajie to Changsha
- Airport transfers on arrival and departure
- Pre-departure session (payments, connectivity, apps) — see the final page
- Jade Days Journey Brief, sent before you travel
- Australian-based team WhatsApp support throughout
- Not included:* international flights, visa, travel insurance, personal spending

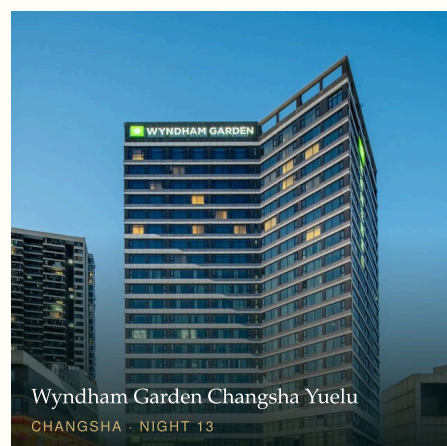
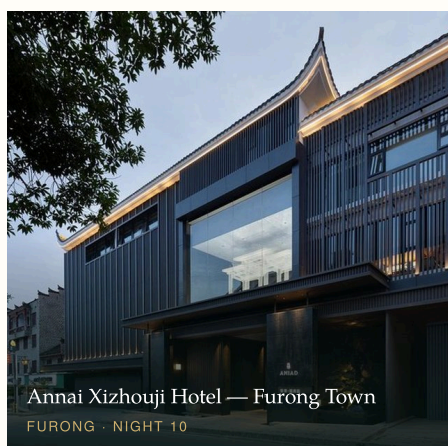
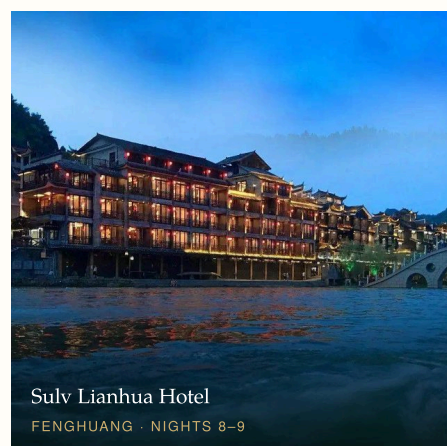
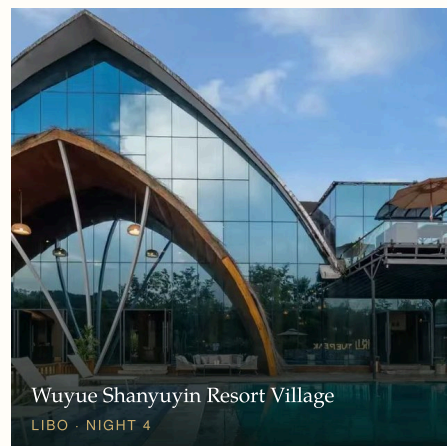
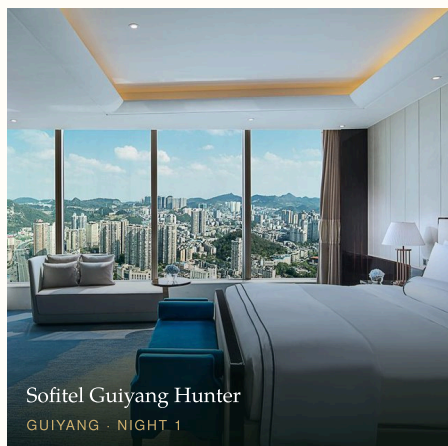
Good to know

- Weather.** Mid-October runs roughly 15–24°C in Guizhou with occasional light rain; Hunan is milder and drier. Layers and a light waterproof.
- Fitness.** Each day is graded Relaxed, Moderate or Demanding at the foot of its entry. Nothing technical, and a shorter option exists on every walking day.
- Altitude.** Not a factor — the route stays between roughly 300 and 1,400 metres.
- Dates.** The proposed window begins after China's National Day holiday (1–7 October), when domestic crowds fall away sharply.
- Dining.** Most dinners are planned to the specific restaurant and written into your final itinerary.

Where you will actually be staying

NINE SELECTED PROPERTIES · IN JOURNEY ORDER

Two rooms throughout — one double and one twin. These are the intended properties at the time of quotation; room categories and bed configurations are confirmed in writing with your final documents.

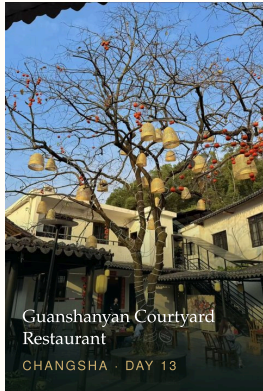


* Accommodation remains subject to availability until confirmed in writing — see section 11 of the booking conditions. Your overnight bases never move for weather.

What the journey will taste like

LOCAL CUISINE & CULTURE EXPERIENCES

Five dining experiences chosen for their setting, regional character and the way each one introduces the food culture around it.



DAY 1 · GUIYANG · WELCOME DINNER

Yinshi Private Kitchen

Authentic Guizhou home-style cooking in a quiet, refined setting. The menu introduces the province's hallmark sour, spicy and fermented flavours in an approachable way — a gentle first meal after the long journey.

DAY 4 · LIBO · INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

Xiaojiang Intangible Heritage Restaurant

A dining experience shaped by Guizhou's intangible culinary heritage, with fermentation at its centre. It offers a direct window into the techniques and flavours that have defined mountain food culture for generations.

DAY 5 · ZHENYUAN · RIVERSIDE DINNER

Mulaoren's Field

Dinner beside the river, with Zhenyuan's water, old-town rooftops and surrounding village scenery in view. A Miao song-and-dance performance accompanies the meal.

DAY 8 · FENGHUANG · FIRST TASTE OF HUNAN

Nabian Nacheng — Huilonglou Restaurant

Your first full introduction to classic Xiang cuisine. Hunan cooking is characteristically hot and aromatic; please tell us in advance if you would prefer the chilli level prepared more gently.

DAY 13 · CHANGSHA · FINAL EVENING

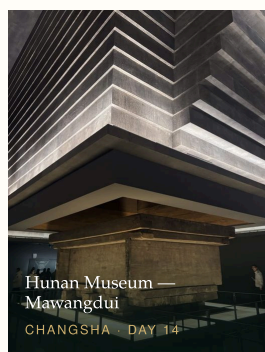
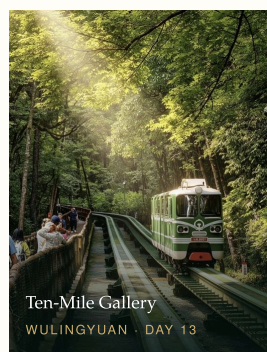
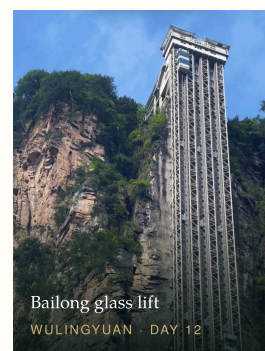
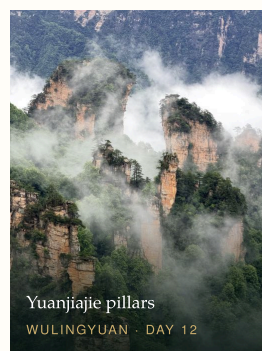
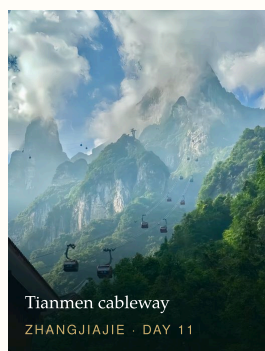
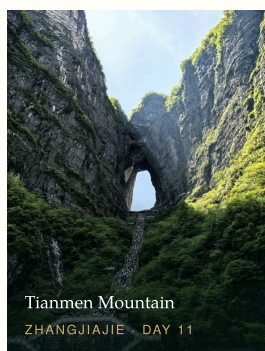
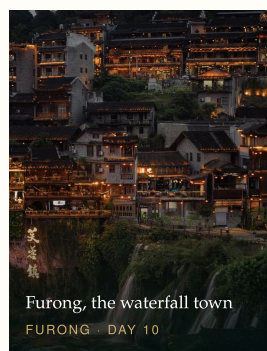
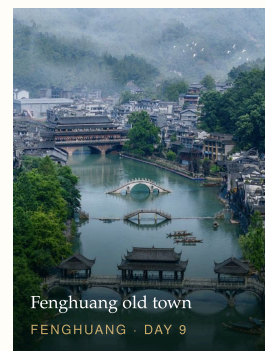
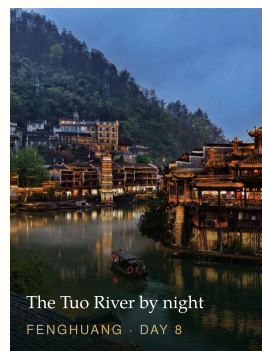
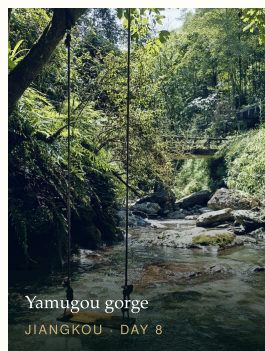
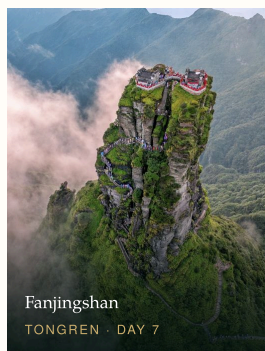
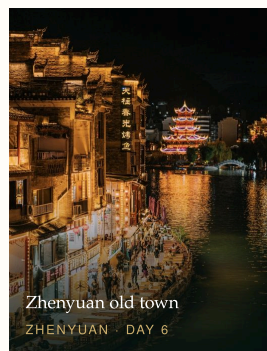
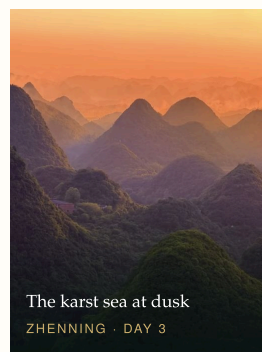
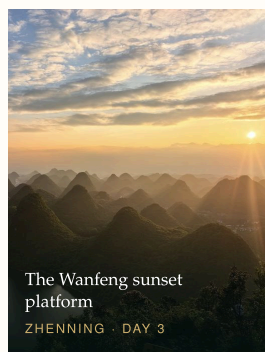
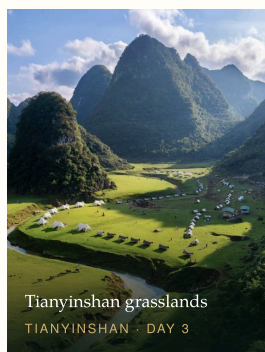
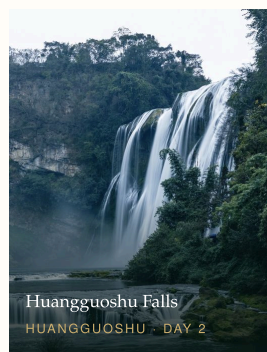
Guanshanyan Courtyard Restaurant — Yuelu Mountain

A courtyard restaurant at the foot of Yuelu Mountain, combining local food with a relaxed rural-garden atmosphere. It offers a final, unhurried taste of Hunan's everyday traditions and closes the journey on a warm, distinctly local note.

* Included meals cover the menu or dining arrangement specified for each sitting — see section 8 of the booking conditions.

What you will actually be looking at

Photographs from along the route, in the order you will meet them — captioned with the place and the day each falls on.



What Jade Days does that a booking site cannot

Two things in particular. Both exist because China is easy to travel once someone has done the setting-up for you — and disorienting when nobody has.

01 SERVICE Your pre-departure session

Before you fly, we set your phones up for China in a live working session — by video, or in person in Sydney.

- Alipay & WeChat Pay installed, passport-verified and linked to your Australian cards
- The ¥200 rule — when a payment is fee-free, and when to hand over the card instead
- A travel eSIM (or roaming) chosen and installed for each handset — Google, WhatsApp and Gmail keep working
- The hotel wi-fi trap, explained before it catches you; home SIMs kept live for bank SMS codes
- Amap and WeChat installed — the two local apps worth having on the ground

THE WRITTEN VERSIONS, KEPT CURRENT ON OUR SITE

Mobile payments in China · jadedays.com.au/china-payments-guide.html

Staying connected in China · jadedays.com.au/china-internet-guide.html

02 SERVICE Australian-team WhatsApp support

Your guide beside you on the ground; our team behind them in Sydney.

- Your English-speaking guide is the first call — dining, pharmacies, tickets, re-timing a day
- Anything beyond the ground: one WhatsApp message reaches our Australian team
- Airlines, insurers, banks, changed plans — handled from Sydney while your day carries on
- No call centre, no queue — the team that designed this journey is the team that answers
- Routine support 8:00am–8:00pm Sydney time; urgent in-trip assistance outside these hours for genuine travel emergencies

"If your guide cannot resolve it locally, our Sydney team will help you work through the next step."

Frank Liu

JADE DAYS · SYDNEY · PRIVATE JOURNEYS FROM AUSTRALIA