Yunnan is regarded as the most beautiful province in China, and is home to some of China’s most impressive natural scenery. Bordering with Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar (Burma) and Tibet, Yunnan offers an unmatched diversity of landscapes, climates and people.

Yunnan is rich in natural resources and cultural heritage. For those interested in landscape photography, Yunnan offers snow-capped peaks, deep gorges, lush jungles, crystalline alpine lakes, peaceful highland meadows and three of Asia’s biggest rivers, the Mekong, Yangtze and Salween. Travel photography is also very much about people and culture and Yunnan is home to 26 ethnic minority groups, the most of any province in China.

The Yunnan tour is the first of a series of tours to China and one which will offer outstanding photographic opportunities. This will be a tour not to be missed.

Highlights

- Spectacular rock formations of Stone Forest.
- Amazing rice terraces of Yuanyang.
- Bustling city of Kunming.
- Less visited site of Yuannou Earth Forest.
- Natural beauty of Luguhu Lake.
- Ancient town of Lijiang.
- Deep river canyon of Leaping Tiger Gorge and the first bend of the Yangtze River.
- Limestone terraces of Baishuitai.
- Spectacular snow-capped mountains.
- The Tibetan town of Zhongdian in Shangri-la.

Details

- Duration: 17 days total, 16 in Yunnan China.
- Departure date: 24th October 2013.
- Because of the special nature of this tour, the number of participants will be limited to 12 people.
- Price:
  - AUSTRALIA - AU$5899 per person twin share with return international airfare from Sydney/Melbourne as of January 2013.
  - INTERNATIONAL - US$4899 per person twin share without international airfare as of January 2013.
- We will make every effort to match up single travellers who wish to travel at twin share rates. For anyone requiring a single room, there will be an additional charge of AU$710 for travellers departing Australia, or US$710 for international travellers.

Included

Return international airfare with China Southern Airlines from Sydney/Melbourne to Kunming for passengers departing Australia only, domestic flight from Zhongdian to Kunming, airport taxes/fuel surcharge for passengers departing Australia only, an experienced Australian photographic tour leader, local English speaking tour guide, arrival/departure transfers, in country ground transport by private air-conditioned vehicle with driver, meals as specified in itinerary (B/L/D), purified drinking water, clean twin share accommodation (3-4 star or best available in isolated areas) and admission fees.

Not included

International airfare for International travellers not departing from Australia, airport taxes/fuel surcharge for international passengers not departing Australia, visa, personal travel insurance (requirement of joining tour), meals not indicated in program, additional beverages such as soft drinks and alcohol, activities during free time, items of personal nature, tips and gratuities (AU$6 per day), excess baggage fee.
Tour Itinerary

Day 1: SYDNEY – GUANGZHOU
Tonight we will fly with China Southern Airlines flight from Sydney to Guangzhou. Our flight departs Sydney at 11:15pm.

Day 2: GUANGZHOU – KUNMING – STONE FOREST (B,L,D)
Our flight from Sydney will arrive in Guangzhou at 5am. After going through the formalities, we take a short flight to Kunming where we will be met and transferred to Stone forest, one of the most important natural attractions in Yunnan Province. The remainder of the day we will enjoy and photograph the amazing landscape where the tall rocks seem to emanate from the ground in the manner of stalagmites, with many looking like petrified trees thereby creating the illusion of a forest made of stone.

Day 3: STONE FOREST – JIANSHUI COUNTY (B,L,D)
After the morning shoot in the Stone Forest, we will travel to Jianshui, stopping to photograph Chinese villages and people going about their day-to-day activities along the way. Late afternoon we will explore the town of Jianshui. Jianshui is regarded by many as the most beautiful city in South Yunnan, retaining a village atmosphere with old streets and traditional houses.

Day 4: JIANSHUI – YUANYANG (B,L,D)
This morning we will travel to Yuanyang where we will photograph the Hani Rice Terraces and Hani minority Villages. Yuanyang was once crowned as one of China’s most attractive scenic places with an expanse of rice terraces up to 2000m in elevation. Although few general tourists visit Hani rice terraces, many photographers have because of the thrilling beauty of the landscape.

Day 5: YUANYANG (B,L,D)
This morning we will rise early to photograph the rice terraces of Yuanyang. During the day, we will explore the town and local villages, before enjoying an afternoon shoot at the terraces.

Day 6: YUANYANG - KUNMING (B,L,D)
We will arise early and enjoy another morning shoot in Yuanyang. We then commence our journey back to Kunming via Jianshui, stopping as we travel to photography villages and people going about their day-to-day activities. We will explore Kunming, the capital and largest city in Yunnan in the late afternoon.

Day 7: KUNMING – YUANMOU EARTH FOREST (B,L,D)
This morning we depart for Yuanmou Earth Forest. On arrival we will visit and photograph the Earth Forest, making the most of the late afternoon light. Yuanmou Earth Forest is a less visited tourist destination offering spectacular natural scenery formed by water and winter erosion over two million years and providing formations in a variety and scale found nowhere else in the world.

Day 8: YUANMOU EARTH FOREST – DALI (B,L,D)
We will rise early to do another shoot at Yuanmou Earth Forest, before commencing our way to Dali. In the afternoon/evening we will explore and photograph the city of Dali and some of its interesting architecture.

Day 9: DALI – LIJIANG (B,L,D)
In the morning, we will explore the streets of Dali before departing for Lijiang. On arrival in Lijiang we check into the hotel inside the ancient city. Lijiang includes the best preserved ancient town in China, which was listed in the World Cultural Heritages by UNESCO in 1997. You are then free to explore the ancient city.

Day 10: LIJIANG (B,L,D)
In the morning we will visit and photograph Black Dragon Pool and Jade Dragon Snow Mountain. Black Dragon Pool is a famous pond located at the foot of Elephant Hill and with Jade Dragon Snow Mountain in the background. In the afternoon, we return to Lijiang to visit Dayan Town, a town with history of over 800 years. It is an enchanting place of winding cobblestone streets lined with wooden houses and interlaced with a network of scenic canals crossed by stone bridges. Around every corner is another charming and photogenic vista, and strolling the maze-like streets of the town are the chief delight of visiting Lijiang. We end our day with an enjoyable minority performance.

Day 11: LIJIANG – LEAPING TIGER GORGE (B,L,D)
In the morning we will commence our journey to Shiguozhen (Stone Drum Town) where we will explore and photograph the town and local market. After lunch we continue to Leaping Tiger Gorge. Leaping Tiger Gorge is a contender for the world's deepest river canyon.

Day 12: LEAPING TIGER GORGE – ZHONGDIAN (B,L,D)
This morning we commence our long day of travel to Zhongdian. The day will include many stops to photograph the beautiful landscape as we drive along the mountainous road. Around lunch time we will stop at Baishuitai (White Water Terraces) which in Naxi means ‘growing flower’. At 140 metres in length and 160 metres in width, White Water Terraces is one of the biggest limestone terraces in China and is covered by a layer of white deposits of calcium carbonate crystallized in the spring water.
Day 13: ZHONGDIAN (B,L,D)
This morning, we will go to Shuoduhai (Shudu) Lake, a calm lake surrounded by high mountains, primeval forests, grazing pastures and forest flowers. The lake is 3705 metres above sea level and is known for its clear water and peaceful environment. Afterwards, we return to Zhongdian to visit Songzanlin Lamasery, the largest Buddhist Temple in Yunnan Province, covering an area of 30 hectares and housing some 700 Monks and Lamas.

Day 14: ZHONGDIAN - MEILI SNOW MOUNTAINS (B,L,D)
Today we have a long beautiful drive to Deqen. There will be many stops along the way to photograph the beautiful scenery. One arrival, we travel another hour to our hotel, offering us spectacular views of the Meili Snow Mountains, rising up to 6,740m above sea level.

Day 15: MEILI SNOW MOUNTAINS (B,L,D)
Today we will have plenty of time to explore the local area in search of prime locations to shoot the spectacular Meili Snow Mountains.

Day 16: MEILI SNOW MOUNTAINS - ZHONGDIAN (B,L,D)
We arise early to commence our journey back to Zhongdian. Again stops will be provided along the way, but our aim will be to arrive in Zhongdian early enough to explore the ancient town. Zhongdian, also known as Shangri-La is the capital of Diqing Tibetan autonomous region and includes an interesting section of traditional Tibetan buildings as well as Tibetan culture.

Day 17: ZHONGDIAN – KUNMING – GUANGZHOU – SYDNEY (B,L)
The morning is free to explore and photograph Zhongdian before our return to Australia. Our flight departs Zhongdian for Kunming after lunch where will await our connecting flight to Guangzhou and then Australia.

Conditions

- Surcharge may apply if the minimum tour size of ten (10) is not met.
- Pricing and itinerary subject to change without prior notice.
- Any unused services are non-refundable.
- Deposit required to secure booking and cancellation penalty will apply.
- All participants are required to take out comprehensive travel insurance as a condition of the tour. The travel insurance should cover you for medical costs associated with hospitalisation, emergency travel and repatriation back to Australia. Proof of adequate insurance is required as a condition of the tour. If you arrive without a policy, you will be required to purchase one prior to departing Sydney.
- It is also advisable to make relevant arrangements for your insurance to cover your luggage and camera equipment.

If you are interested in joining me on this fantastic photographic tour or require additional information, please contact:

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