

The Search for Shangri-La 3N/4D



“In Tibetan culture legend has it that in another time and space there is a kingdom called Shambala. It is a quiet and peaceful kingdom because everybody there knows the source of happiness.”

Mr Pema Dorjee

Founder & Chairman of Songtsam

The Three Parallel Rivers area of Yunnan encompasses a majestic land hemmed in by the mighty Yangtze, the free-flowing Mekong, and the wild Salween. Many of the twenty-five different ethnic minorities currently living in Yunnan can be found in this area, which features snow-capped peaks more than 6,000m high, glaciated gorges, and terraced rice fields. The peaceful people that inhabit the region have not only preserved this area for generations, but have also nurtured this “Shangri-La”.

Shangri-La is a county-level city at an elevation of 3,200 metres in northwest Yunnan province, China. It has been long viewed as a paradise on earth with its incredible landscapes, diverse cultures, and deep spirituality. Located in a wide valley, Shangri-La is surrounded by mountain ranges on all four sides. It is the capital of the Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, and the gateway to the ancient Tibetan kingdom. The region is characterised by snow-capped mountain peaks, pristine forests and lakes, as well as traditional Tibetan villages with white-walled and richly decorated buildings. There are many beautiful hiking routes to explore the mountains, lakes, and idyllic villages and pastures.

Trip Highlights

Understand the Rich Culture Through Experiential Activities

Our Songtsam circuit offers breathtaking landscapes and wonderfully diverse cultures. All activities are designed so that guests can experience true authentic living heritage, which includes:

- Important Tibetan monastery visits such as Songzanlin Monastery.
- Learning traditional arts such as Thangka Painting and Tibetan incense making.
- Local Tibetan family visits to experience daily life and try local cuisine.



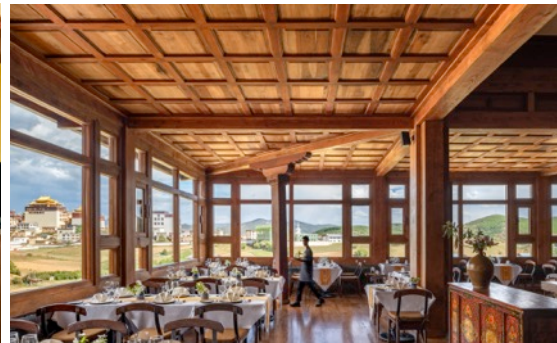
Go Off the Beaten Path in Comfort

Throughout the journey guests will be staying in Tibetan style boutique hotels and lodges. All Songtsam properties feature an exquisite level of amenities, handpicked antique furniture and art collections, and a level of service that one wouldn't expect for such remote places.

Songtsam Linka Shangri-La (3,300m)

Hidden in the city's peaceful and green valleys between Tibetan villages and Himalayan barley fields, our hotel is located a short distance away from the Songzanlin Monastery. Tibetan-style rooms, dining facilities, spa, and

other modern amenities are housed in lovingly hand-built stone structures spread over 21 acres of hillside surrounded by snow-capped mountains.



Songtsam Lodge Shangri-La (3,300m)

Songtsam's first lodge opened its doors in 2001 and underwent a renovation in 2019. Tucked away from the hustle and bustle of downtown Shangri-La the lodge is located in Kna Village, only a 2-minute walk to the Songzanlin Monastery. The lodge is a beautiful four-storey stone building housed in a traditional Tibetan dwelling within a self-sufficient farming village, where founder Pema Dorjee spent his childhood. Rooms excel in creating a true feeling of home, all of which are decorated in a Tibetan style

and balanced with modern comforts.



Trip Schedule

Program starts and ends in Shangri-La. All information in this itinerary is accurate to the best of our knowledge but please note that changes to our trips can and do occur

Day	Overnight Location	Activities
Day 1	Songtsam Linka/Lodge Shangri-La (3,300m) Deluxe Room D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pick up from Diqing Shangri-La Airport. - Enjoy a local specialty Yak meat hot pot for dinner at the hotel.
Day 2	Songtsam Linka/Lodge Shangri-La (3,300m) Deluxe Room B, L, D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After breakfast, visit Songzanlin Monastery to learn about Tibetan Buddhist beliefs and culture. - Return to the hotel and enjoy an outside BBQ lunch overlooking the monastery. - In the afternoon, take part in a Thangka painting workshop to learn and understand the craftsmanship and techniques needed to make the delicate and intricate Tibetan Buddhist art. - Dinner at the hotel.
Day 3	Songtsam Linka/Lodge Shangri-La (3,300m) Deluxe Room B, L, D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After breakfast, learn how to make traditional handmade Tibetan incense developed by a Living Buddha. - Have lunch at the hotel. - In the afternoon, visit Napa Lake and take in sights of traditional Tibetan villages and meadows. - Afterwards, head to Dukezong Old Town. - In the evening, visit a local Tibetan family home, sample butter tea, try local delicacies, and enjoy a farewell hotpot dinner together.
Day 4	Departure B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After breakfast, transfer to Diqing Shangri-La Airport. - If able to arrange a flight in the afternoon/evening, you can follow the kora like local Tibetans and walk around Lamuyangcuo Lake.

Trip Expectations

Trip difficulty: This journey is considered easy to moderate. Each person can respond to a change in altitude differently. After plenty of rest,

symptoms usually subside. For more information, please consult your doctor.

Road conditions and transportation: Depending on the size of your group, we travel in well-maintained cars. All vehicles are driven by experienced Songtsam staff. We will prepare water and snacks for the road trips. We will make stops at beautiful villages and scenic spots on the way and will prepare water and snacks for the road trips.

Weather: Temperature varies greatly from morning to evening at this area. Wearing layers of clothes is advisable to allow for changes in temperature.

Meals: During your journey you will get to try Tibetan cuisine, which includes a good amount of barley flour-based items, such as dumplings and noodles, as well as red meat, such as yak, beef and pork.

Emergency evacuation and procedures: We suggest all travellers purchase an International SOS (an AEA company) Service Plan, which provides emergency evacuation to the nearest medical facility of international standards.

Trip escorts: Our well-trained local guides are specialists on Tibet and the local region and will travel with you throughout the trip. All originating from different villages and areas, all Songtsam guides have stories to share about their hometowns, which provides deeper travel experiences for all guests to understand the local culture and geography.

The Songtsam Story



Some memories never fade. It seems like only yesterday that Songtsam founder and Chairman Mr Baima Duoji was on his way back to Shangri-La with ambitious plans to shoot a documentary of his childhood home. While it had been many years since he had last set foot in his native land, fond memories came pouring back. He remembered the excitement of climbing local mountains as a young boy, the intimate solitude of his town's temples, and the people who helped define him as a person.

Finally, he was home. The rush of emotions made him wonder: How could he give back? What more could he do? Soon it all became clear. He thought about the region's rich culture and how he could create a way for travellers to come and experience a new way of life. A place that was more than the usual hotel and gift shops, a place where guests could immerse themselves in living history. So Baima turned his family's small guesthouse into the first Songtsam lodge.

Inspired by the rich Tibetan culture, he worked with local artisans and members of the community to help produce and run Songtsam Lodge Shangri-La. Eleven properties and nineteen years later, Baima's vision continues to grow, and so does the Songtsam experience.

About the Area



The great China tectonic plate runs into the Tibetan Plateau in northern Yunnan, forging high mountain ranges with soaring snow-packed peaks. Three major rivers, the Yangtze (Jinshajiang), Mekong (Lancangjiang) and Salween (Nujiang) run through deep gorges with wild, untamed scenery. This charming destination is diverse in nature and culture due to its unique geography, indeed, one can experience all four seasons in just one day. Due to the vast range in altitude, travellers can quickly move from cold snowy mountains to warm flower-filled valleys.

Northwest Yunnan is the richest area in China in terms of biodiversity, boasting unique flora and fauna, and is possibly the most biologically diverse temperate region on earth. This is the original location of the world's gardens: in spring and summer, the surrounding hills are blanketed with rhododendrons and camellias. The Victorians collected and brought these to the Western world. The temperate forests and lowlands contain over 3,000 species of orchids and more than 200 of the world's 400 species of rhododendron. In summer time, strikingly blue irises are in blossom along the mountain paths.



Bird watching and cycling bring travellers in close proximity to all kinds of migrant birds at their winter heaven around Napa Lake, including the black-necked crane - the holy bird for Tibetans. High in the forests between the Mekong and Yangtze River lives the rare Yunnan Black snub-nosed monkey (*Rhinopithecus biteti*), one of the world's most endangered primates - fewer than 2,000 are now found in the wild. These monkeys live at the highest altitude (3,000-4,500m) of any animal primate.



Historically, people were separated by the soaring mountains and deep gorges in this area, facilitating the development of the most distinctive ethnic cultures. Kham Tibetans in Diqing are characterized by their big white wooden houses and colourful customs, which differ from Tibetans in other areas of Tibet. In this area along the Lancang River, although the shining golden roofs of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries sparkle in the light, Tibetans here follow Catholic teachings and practice their ceremonies at small Catholic churches surrounded by vineyards. Travelling from the highlands to the banks of the rivers, styles of housing and costume change. The Lisu people, another ethnic group, dwell close to the water in the mountain valleys.



The Tea Horse Road, an ancient trade route linking tea-producing areas with Tibet, connects the mountains and deep gorges as well as different ethnic groups. For hundreds of years, horse caravans travelled along this route carrying tea to Tibet and India, and bringing other commodities back home. This route has formed a corridor rich in culture, as different groups interact with each other in their daily lives. Today, one can travel around this area journeying along different parts of this ancient trail.

