

TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY ADVENTURE
PRE-TRIP DOSSIER 2010

YUNNAN



GRASSHOPPER
ADVENTURES

PHOTOGRAPHY
by Ewen Bell

Photo adventures designed by photographers, for photographers. Advance your photographic skills while travelling through China's Yunnan province on a 14 day adventure. We have designed an incredible adventure into the remote and charming ethnic regions, open to beginners and advanced photographers alike.

ITINERARY

14 days across Yunnan by private van accompanied by professional photographer Ewen Bell - All meals, accommodation and local transports are included.

Days 1-2 | Kunming

We meet in Kunming on the evening of day one and have a typical Yunnan feast. The next day is free to explore the city and it's attractions, and the evening of day 2 we board the overnight train to Dali.

Days 3-4 | Dali

We have all of day 3 to explore Dali and it's old town and markets. On day 4 we have a local guide to help us explore the surrounding villages and countryside, including the market at Xizhou, Bai villages and Ming Architecture.

Days 5-7 | Shaxi

We drive to the Shaxi valley and have three nights to explore the very quiet region and make a study of the Bai and Yi people. If time permits we can travel further into the rural areas to visit Karen people too.

Day 8-9 | Lijiang

We have two days based in Lijiang, but aim to spend most of our time away from the busy town centres and instead visit Naxi villages with the help of a local guide. This is also where you can make an optional visit to the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain.



Day 10 | Tiger Leaping Gorge

This tour is not intended to be a trekking adventure, so a modest walk is scheduled to climb 2 hours up the hill and stay in a quiet Naxi guesthouse. The owners are lovely and the views are surreal. The next day we walk back down the hill and visit the Tiger Leaping Gorge.

Days 11-13 | Zhongdian

This town is now known by its new name of "Shangri La". Here we touch on the Tibetan culture, a town high in the hills and surrounded by vast mountains, meadows and Tibetan influences. We have time to photograph the monastery and visit a remote farming towns, with an optional horseback tour.

Day 14 | Departure

We will be on the early morning flight out of Zhongdian to Kunming, ready to catch our international connections to fly home.



THIS ADVENTURE

A unique journey through a diverse landscape of cultures. Our goal is to provide an inspirational opportunity to practise photography in Yunnan, one of China's most charming regions. We help you to get the right sunset, to access the most idyllic wilderness, to meet diverse ethnic groups and to make sure you have the time to explore your craft in the process. You won't be worried about travel, meals or accommodation - it's taken care of for you.

Secondly we present a series of photographic themes which introduce key concepts and techniques which will help you improve your photography. Each session will discuss a topic and outline associated techniques. A set of technical notes are provided to accompany these sessions. Your travel itinerary has been developed in conjunction with the session themes, so you can immediately practise the skills you learn.

We will also encourage people to share their work during the trip. Review is very important and can greatly assist the development of your own personal style. Throughout the trip you will be free to consult with your photographic guide as well. You are not confined to the sessions to talk about your work and ideas! This will be a 14 day photographic immersion with like minded people, a tour designed by photographers for photographers.

WHO TRAVELS WITH US

Our photographic journeys appeal to both the young and old, the experienced and novice. Most tours are made up of people aged 25-65, and occasionally older or younger still. It doesn't matter what your skills and interest in photography are, you will enjoy sharing a creative and immersive experience with like minded people. You can read feedback from our past travellers by visiting www.ewenbell.com



TAKE BETTER PHOTOS

The photographic themes designed into this trip are aimed at people with a fundamental knowledge of their camera, but who want to learn more. A basic knowledge of aperture, focal length, depth of field and exposure is useful, but not essential. We will even help you learn the technical use of your camera, if that's what you need. For more experienced photographers the itinerary alone will be an inspiration for your artistic output, plus the chance to share stories with an award winning travel journalist.

People of many different skill levels and ambition will be gathered for the journey, so expect to be in the company of diversity. This tour will appeal to anyone who wants to immerse themselves in the process of cultivating skills and exploring cultures. You will have a chance to discuss techniques and principles, then immediately go out and practise. This will not give you a qualification, but hopefully will give you confidence and direction to take better photos





ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT

We recommend the use of Digital SLR cameras for this journey, but you are not restricted from using any type of camera you may have, including conventional film SLRs and compact cameras. Digital SLR cameras offer excellent manual controls and give us the ability to review our work at the end of each day - a valuable part of this experience. A minimum of 4Gig of memory cards should accompany your camera, plus an additional 20Gig or greater of external storage (hard drive or laptop).

We also recommend that you carry a wide angle lens for general use and occasional landscape opportunities. Tripods are not used by the instructing photographer and are not required for this tour.

A good quality day pack will be an essential part of the packing list. Crumpler and Lowe make excellent packs that are designed for camera equipment. Ideally your pack should be comfortable, spacious, and practical. The traditional type of 'over-the-shoulder' camera bag is not very suitable for travel photography, a day-pack is better.

Finally, full travel insurance and coverage for your 'additional items' is absolutely necessary. Standard travel insurance is generally inadequate to cover the value of your equipment unless you stipulate your equipment when buying insurance. It costs very little, so don't be caught short. Please check very carefully that you are fully covered and have completed all necessary details to qualify for suitable coverage.



RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

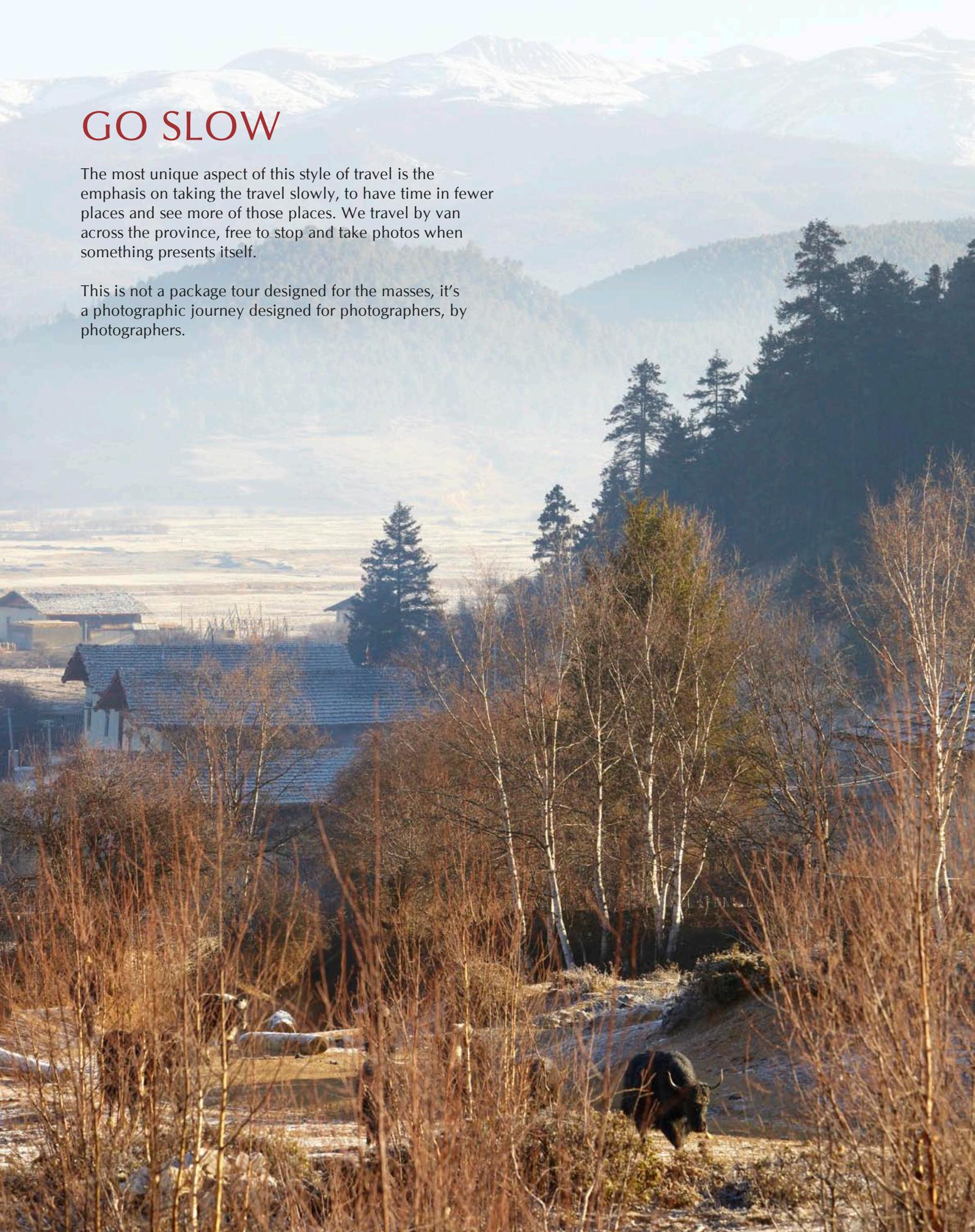
At all times during our journey we need to be mindful of how our presence can impact on the cultures we wish to observe. Travel photography carries an even greater burden to ensure that you respect cultural beliefs and personal privacy. We never take photos of people without their express consent; instead we will learn techniques to enable you to gain more intimate connections.



GO SLOW

The most unique aspect of this style of travel is the emphasis on taking the travel slowly, to have time in fewer places and see more of those places. We travel by van across the province, free to stop and take photos when something presents itself.

This is not a package tour designed for the masses, it's a photographic journey designed for photographers, by photographers.





YOUR GUIDE

Ewen Bell is a travel junkie and recognises the unique charms that China and Yunnan have to offer the photographer. Travel photography is his calling but Ewen has also been practising commercial photography since 1990 with experience in wildlife, travel, commercial and portraiture. Ewen's work is published in many travel brochures each year and appears in regular travel publications including the Escape Weekend editions across Australia, Melbourne's Herald Sun and national magazines including Vacations & Travel and Holidays for Couples.

Ewen was also chosen by the ASTW as their 2007 Australian Travel Photographer of the Year, and in 2008 won the award for Best Australian Image.

Ewen has spent many years travelling in China and has a thorough appreciation for the cultural and historical context for any journey. He is genuinely passionate about the country and makes several trips to China every year. Since 2006 ewen has led on average three photo tours per year, choosing to run a small number of trips so that he retains a keen passion for the experience.

WHY SHOOT DIGITAL

For the purpose of this journey a digital camera is the most suitable equipment to carry. We will save the debate about film vs digital for the journey, there will be plenty of time to discuss opinions! Our trip is a chance to develop new skills and the immediate feedback offered by digital cameras is invaluable. The quality, manual control and practicality of modern Digital SLRs make them perfect for travel photography.

Your instructor will also be carrying a laptop computer for the journey, so there will be ample opportunity to review your photographs and study your image in detail.





ETHNIC MINORITIES

There's more to China than just Kingdoms, Palaces and Mao ZeDong's cultural revolution. It's a country that contains within it many nations, many peoples and a surprising array of ethnic cultures that are far removed from the China we recognise in the West. On this tour we get a glimpse at some of these ethnic groups such as Kampa Tibetans, Naxi, Bai, Lisu and Yi. We have even designed the tour to make sure we visit some rural markets where people from remote ethnic groups come to town for their weekly groceries.



PRE-TRIP ESSENTIALS



Additional Accommodation

Should you require extra accommodation in Kunming we can offer you competitive rates at our hotel. Room costs will be advised upon request and may vary according to season and proximity to date of travel.

Money

The official currency of China is Renminbi or Yuan which should be used for all transactions. China has a modern banking systems with ATMs and money changers in most larger or tourist towns. In China it is possible to use Visa/Mastercard and Cirrus/Maestro cards, however, we do advise that you carry some cash currency from home as a backup. Travellers Cheques are not always as easy to change by comparison. Most international currencies can be exchanged in larger cities so it is not necessary to bring only US Dollars - AUD, EUR, CAD, NZD are all accepted at banks in major centres.

Costs

We recommend that you carry approximately \$400 in local or US currency in order to cover your shopping and souvenir expenses. All meals are included with travel days and most travel sundries will be included. Drinks and alcohol are not included, and you will have the opportunity to dine without the group on occasions if you prefer.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of participating in a Grasshopper Adventure that you hold travel insurance for the duration of the trip. Insurance must include comprehensive medical and emergency evacuation. Your travel insurance details will be checked by your group leader on arrival at the starting point hotel.

Packing

You will be required to carry your own luggage when checking into or out of hotels and bags will need to be loaded on and off trains and up and down stairs at stations. For this reason we recommend that you pack as lightly as possible in a backpack or small wheelie bag - please keep maximum weight to around 15kg. This trip covers higher altitude areas where temperatures can plummet at night. Please remember to bring warm clothes for cold nights and chilly mornings.

Important

All information in this Profile is researched with care and provided in good faith. The information subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Grasshopper Adventures.



HOW TO BOOK



Simply visit the website for Grasshopper Adventures and fill out the online booking form to reserve a place. Once they have received payment of the deposit your place on the trip is confirmed. You can make payment with your credit card or direct bank transfer...

www.grasshopperadventures.com

You can also find out more about this trip, the photographer Ewen Bell or other photo tours by emailing Ewen at ewen@ewenbell.com or go online to his website...

www.ewenbell.com