



China: Yosemite Sister Parks Hiking

12 Days



The Adventure Company | EST. 1969

MT•SOBEK™
MOUNTAIN TRAVEL SOBEK

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS
AS THE PIONEER OF ADVENTURE TRAVEL

➤ China: Yosemite Sister Parks Hiking

China's vast, unique landscape holds two incredible national parks that are sister parks to Yosemite - an international collaboration to help preserve parks that face similar challenges. Join expert MT Sobek guides and park rangers on this 12-day adventure through these magical destinations. Ascend sacred Huangshan, traverse its summit, witness a spectacular sunrise (or two), and visit historic villages. Across the country in Jiuzhaigou National Park, explore colored lakes, picturesque travertine landscapes, and Tibetan villages, and access Zharu Valley - seen by only a few lucky visitors per year. All this natural beauty plus time to meet giant pandas in Chengdu!

Details

Arrive: Hangzhou, China

Depart: Chengdu, China

Duration: 12 Days

Group Size: 6-15 Guests

Minimum Age: 15 Years Old

Activity Level:



Testimonials

"A prominent reason we have chosen MT Sobek as our favorite adventure travel company has been the excellent travel guides."

Carol & Burt D.

"We have traveled throughout the world, but never experienced a level of service and attention to detail as we did with MT Sobek."

Dennis G.

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Why Take This Trip With Us?

REASON #01

An MT Sobek Leader Summit contest winner, this trip was designed by top MT Sobek Yosemite experts Ian Elman and Pete Devine, and goes deep

REASON #02

This trip combines heart pumping treks with in-depth cultural exploration and experiences; spending time with park managers and learning the natural history

REASON #03

This MT Sobek exclusive is one of the best ways to see, first-hand, how national parks foster global collaboration to help protect precious landscapes.

What to Expect



ACTIVITIES

Strenuous hikes up to 8 hours a day on rugged trails and steep staircases, plus cultural touring. Includes visiting a panda conservation center.



LODGING

Enjoy the comfort of well-appointed hotel accommodations all set in scenic locations as well as 1 night of tent camping.



CLIMATE

Daytime temperatures in Jiuzhaigou and Huangshan will range from 50°F to mid-60°F. Summit and nighttime temperatures could be low 30°F.

Meet Our Guides

Our expert guides and trip leaders are truly the key to our trips' success. Many are locals who live in-country year-round; others have made it their second home—all are passionate, enthusiastic and endlessly knowledgeable. Meet two of the guides that might be on your trip.

Pete grew up in New England and has been working in Yosemite for 35 years. He has directed education programs for the nonprofits Yosemite Institute (now NatureBridge) and Yosemite Conservancy. He has hiked, skied and cycled throughout the park in every season, and is a celebrated expert on Yosemite's history and natural history. Pete serves on the park's International Affairs Working Group and as official liaison to Yosemite's two sister national parks in China. One of Pete's favorite things about the Yosemite-China connection is the people who are called to come experience both natural wonders for themselves.

Pete Devine

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Itinerary

DAY 1

ARRIVE IN HANGZHOU

Welcome to China! Upon arrival in Hangzhou, meet an MT Sobek representative at the airport and transfer to the hotel. The rest of the day is free to adjust to the new time zone. Depending on your arrival time, you might opt to walk along famous West Lake, a centuries-old attraction and favorite imperial retreat. The lake and its environs have all the elements of a traditional Chinese garden but on a grand scale. In the evening, meet the group and trip leader for an orientation and welcome dinner at a local restaurant.

Meals: D

DAY 2

JOURNEY TO MOUNT HUANGSHAN

Rise early to drive to Mount Huangshan (Yellow Mountain). UNESCO listed in 1990, Huangshan, with its 72 peaks, is China's most famous mountain for scenic beauty. Meet the official Yosemite liaison, then ascend this magnificent range on the Eastern Stairs, like Yosemite's Mist Trail but even better engineered, with four times more stairs. En route, spot Eyebrow Peak, reach the Immortal Pointing the Way, and pass bubbling streams and pretty forests. From the top, it's an easy walk to the hotel. If you prefer, ride the effortless cable car to the top.

Activity: 3 hours/4.5 miles hiking with 2,500' elevation gain or cable car with 20-minute/.5-mile walk with elevation loss

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 3

EXPLORE THE SUMMIT AREA OF HUANGSHAN

Weather permitting, begin the day with a spectacular sunrise spilling light over a sea of clouds. Enjoy breakfast, then set off on an all-day hike exploring the Xihai Canyon, a scarcely visited area featuring astonishing, dramatic — but safe — trails. Hike to the bottom, enjoy lunch and a rest, and then take a gently paced 5-hour walk through breathtaking scenery back to the hotel. (There's a cable-railway if you want a lift up.) If you prefer not to hike, there are easier, beautifully scenic walks available at the summit.

Activity: 8 hours/10 miles hiking with 1,100' elevation gain/loss

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 4

TRAVERSE HUANGSHAN SUMMIT

After another magical sunrise, take a popular trail to the top of the Western Stairs — and one of the most photographed trees in Asia. Start the challenging summit crossing with a gentle ascent to Guangming Ding (6,100'), the park's second-highest peak, then down, up, down, up to your lunch spot. (Hardier hikers ascend

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via the steepest stone stairs of the park's tallest summit.) After lunch, join the crowds at the famous Yingke Song (Welcoming Guests Pine). This afternoon, relax at the hotel or climb to Celestial Capital Peak's dizzying summit.

Activity: 8 hours/7 miles hiking with 800' elevation gain/loss or a more challenging option

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 5

VISIT HONGCUN VILLAGE, RETURN TO HANGZHOU

Rise early to have the famous tree all to yourself before catching the first cable cars down the mountain. Transfer to Hongcun Village, another UNESCO World Heritage Site, highlighting typical southern Anhui architecture — and one of China's most photogenic and well-preserved historic villages. Built along the banks of Nan Lake, walking down the streets is like being in a watery living museum filled with richly decorated porticos and swooping rooflines. Lunch in the oldest house in the village, then transfer back to Hangzhou and enjoy some downtime near West Lake.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 6

FLY TO SICHUAN

Transfer to the airport for your flight to remote Jiuzhaigou (connecting through Chengdu) in northern Sichuan province. Take a deep breath — the airport is at over 11,000 feet. Drive on the edge of the Tibetan Plateau through gorgeous Min Mountains landscapes and the famed Nine Turns to Zhangzha, the gateway town for Jiuzhaigou National Park. Stretch your legs while exploring this Tibetan/Qiang village. Your hotel is near a rushing stream by the park entrance.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 7

REVEL IN JIUZHAIGOU NATIONAL PARK

Enjoy today exploring picturesque Jiuzhaigou National Park. The region suffered a 2017 earthquake but Jiuzhaigou is open and stunning — prepare to be awestruck. Your first stop, Mirror Lake, lies at the mouth of Ri Tse Valley. Its flat surface reflects every single object — and explains a local saying: "Birds fly in water while fish swim in the sky." Farther down the valley is Pearl Shoal Waterfall and, just beyond, the enchanting Five Colored Pond, whose water is multihued by leaves and wood beneath its surface, and trees and mountains above.

Activity: Up to 7 hours hiking with 4,000' elevation gain

Meals: B, L, D

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DAY 8

TAKE A RANGER-GUIDED TOUR OF ZHARU VALLEY

Join park staff on an ecotour of Zharu Valley, a newly opened, limited-access area within Jiuzhaigou. Zharu Valley is ideal for hiking, camping, and observing flora and fauna — and touring it with rangers is a unique experience. Begin with a tour of a Tibetan home in Rexi Village, then walk up-valley to the ruins of Guo Da, an abandoned traditional Tibetan village made of wood and clay. After lunch, continue up-canyon past a Bonpo Buddhist temple surrounded by tens of thousands of prayer flags, then on to camp at Dere.

Activity: 5-6 hours/6 miles hiking with 1,000' elevation gain

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 9

PASS A QUIET LAST DAY IN JIUZHAIGOU

This leisurely morning, go bird watching or walk up-canyon to the big meadow of Ranwalongong. Either way, slow down and soak up the stillness and peace in this virtually unvisited — only 200 guests per year — part of Jiuzhaigou. After lunch, depart camp and leave the isolation of Zharu Valley. Bus down to your hotel again and enjoy the free afternoon to take a shower, roam and shop in the interesting Tibetan/Qiang gateway town of Zhangzha, spend more time with park visitor center exhibits, or just rest and relax.

Activity: 2 hours/1-2 miles hiking with negligible elevation gain/loss

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 10

EXPLORE UNESCO WONDERS

Bus over a 13,123-foot pass and drop into the watershed that holds Huanglong National Park, with its world-famous travertine landscape. This mountain valley is noted for its two-mile sequence of yellow calcareous deposits. Its unique karst landscape — unlike anything in Yosemite — is accentuated by colored ponds and lakes, and travertine waterfalls and caves. After lunch, hike a steady uphill to the source of the calcareous flow and visit the Huanglong Temple before walking or taking the cable car back down. Bus over the pass and overnight in a Tibetan/Qiang village.

Activity: 3 hours/5 miles hiking with 1,500' elevation gain/loss

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 11

MEET CHENGDU'S PANDAS

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Fly to Chengdu and transfer to the countryside of Dujiangyan, where you meet with the irresistible residents of the Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda. This new panda base, in the Stone Bridge Village, includes in its panda community a bear that used to live in the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. Be sure you saved some storage space on your camera to capture these rare and photogenic creatures! Return to Chengdu in the afternoon and a farewell dinner with the group at a local Sichuan restaurant.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 12

DEPART CHENGDU

In the morning, transfer to the airport for your flight home to the US via Hong Kong, Beijing, Seoul, Shanghai, or Tokyo. If you'd rather explore more of China, including the Xian and Beijing areas, ask MT Sobek about our extension packages.

Meals: B

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Dates

May 14 - 25, 2023

Sep 10 - 21, 2023

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Inclusions & Exclusions

PRICE INCLUDES

- Expertise and services of our experienced adventure guides
- All accommodations as noted in the itinerary
- All breakfasts, almost all lunches and dinners as noted in the itinerary
- Snacks and water between meals
- Additional regional guides and experts on many trips
- Comprehensive Trip Planner with detailed pre-trip information
- Private guided tours at historic sites, museums, wineries and other select attractions as noted in the itinerary
- Special events and other select attractions as mentioned in the itinerary
- All gratuities at hotels and restaurants
- Equipment and experienced guides for activities as described in the itinerary
- Park and other entry fees (unless otherwise noted)
- Fares for trains, ferries and other modes of travel as listed in the itinerary
- Select transfers as mentioned in the itinerary
- Baggage transfers and portorage

PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE

- International airfare, airport taxes, and excess baggage fees
- Alcoholic beverages (MT Sobek provides wine at select events)
- Gratuities for MT Sobek guides and guide-drivers
- Travel Protection Program
- Personal expenses

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► The World of MT Sobek

At Mountain Travel Sobek, we believe life is an adventure and adventure is life.

As the originators, innovators and leaders in adventure travel for more than five decades, we passionately create, craft and share indelible, transformative journeys to the world's most memorable places. Our more than 200 unique and once-in-a-lifetime trips are designed to inspire and exhilarate, enliven and excite--opening eyes and minds through profoundly personal connections with nature and culture.

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Awards



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