

(From left) An alley inside the Nakeli village; a street of Kunming, a city which grew treasuring its centrury old trees; ethnic hosts of Ganlanba village; Starlight Night Market in Jinghong City.

## Yunnan province of China

## A melting pot of traditions, cultures and natural beauty

The wetland park is home to 102 species of birds and 118 types of water plants including some rare species.

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One has to visit China to discover its incredible diversity and breathtaking

The country, known for its incredible economic progress in the last decades, has always been a much sought-after destination for travellers since ancient times.

And even after the frenzied infrastructure drive across the country, it has found a way to preserve the essence of its ancient traditions and culture to coexist with its modern marvels.

That's what I found when I visited China for the second time last June. For a week, I had the chance to take a glance at Yunnan Province's rich culture and stunning landscapes.

As I came out of the aircraft after touching down at Kunming Changshui International Airport in the evening, a gentle breeze kissed my face, offering respite from the scorching heat of Dhaka.

During the whole trip, the temperature was moderate, adding to the overall comforting experience.

Situated in southwestern China, Yunnan Province shares borders with the Tibet Autonomous Region to the ceramics, ancient books and more.

The museum's grand architecture, inspired by the stone forest of Yunnan, served as a gateway to a bygone era. Awe-inspiring relics, including enormous dinosaur skulls and other fossils, in a dark room with light and sound effects will surely amaze any visitor.

some dating back more than two thousand years, help to understand the social and spiritual development of those periods. Artefacts from Bronze Age show the rich history of this region.

Later that day, I discovered the enchanting Xinghai Peninsula Wetland Park. This natural oasis, nestled alongside the serene Dianchi Lake, was a breath of fresh air. Strolling along the vibrant wooden walkways, adorned with colourful flowers and grass, I felt at peace.

A walk through the park's lush swamp forest would make you feel you are inside a deep, untouched forest, but completely safe.

As the sun began its descent, a through gentle reminder echoed through the park urging visitors to leave the the agricultural premises. It was time for the birds to advancements

of folk art, handicrafts, bronze, the market receives fresh-cut flowers dense foliage, allowing glimpses of established here. To compensate from neighbouring provinces and countries. Flowers from here are exported to 46 countries and regions.

In peak season, as I am told, the daily trading may touch 20 million

University where a department is dedicated to Bangla studies. Talking The descriptions of the artefacts, to some Chinese students of the department there in my mother tongue was one of the sweetest memories of the tour. When they sang a Bengali song -- 'Ami Banglay Gan Gai, Ami Banglar Gan Gai/ Ami Amar Ami k Chirodin Ei Banglay Khuje Pai' -- it was hard for me not to be emotional.

On the fourth day, I had my first high-speed train experience as we proceed to Pu'er City on the China-Laos Railway.

Pu'er is known as 'the palace' of the 'kingdom' of Yunnan -- a province renowned for its rich flora and fauna. The city is full of wetlands, hill areas and forests.

While travelling Yunnan by bus and train,

majestic Asian elephants roaming freely. Witnessing these magnificent creatures in their natural habitat was both humbling and awe-inspiring. I learned of the dedicated efforts to protect and conserve these On the same day, I visited Yunnan endangered animals, ensuring a harmonious coexistence between humans and wildlife.

Located in the South of Mengyang Natural Reserve, 115 kilometres from Pu'er City in Xishuangbanna, the Wild Elephant Valley was my next destination. As the name suggests,

locals for the crops damaged by elephants, and prevent humanelephant conflicts, the government has also introduced "elephant insurance".

Thanks to the efforts, the elephant population in Xishuangbanna has now increased to 300. In the 1980s, there were only 150 of these animals.

After visiting the valley, I enjoyed the evening in the Ganlanba, a village with a unique ethnic culture.

At night, I visited the famous Starlight Night Market in Jinghong



The gateway of Nakeli village



The gate of Yunnan University



**Inside the Dayi Tea factory** 

northwest, Sichuan Province to the north, Guizhou Province to the east, and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region to the southeast. It also shares borders with Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar, extending its reach to the south and west. This unique

geographical location transforms Yunnan into a melting pot of diverse and awe-inspiring natural beauty.

return to their nests.

The wetland park is home to 102 species of birds and 118 types of water plants including some rare medicinal On the third day, I visited the

Kunming Dounan Flower Market which is adjacent to the east bank of Netherlands' Aalsmeer.

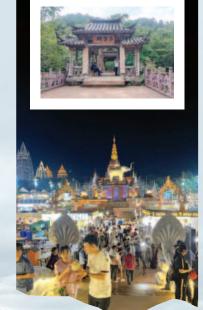
fascinated me. I could see modern farmlands spanning miles after miles on both sides of my travelled path. I was told that an advanced irrigation

system covered the whole region. Our net destination was Nakeli village, a key stop on the ancient Tea Horse Road. This is now a popular

this area has the City on the Lancang-Mekong river largest population known for its local cuisines and of wild Asian handicrafts. Walking through the elephants in China. market for three hours, I had to It's also home to rare conclude that one needed days, if not Indian bison and tigers. weeks to explore that place. On the fifth day, I visited

On day six, I visited the Dayi Tea factory in Menghai County, famous for ripe pu-erh tea. This tea is a fermented tea that aids in digestion and is loaded with polyphenols, which cleanse toxins and free radicals.

On the same day, I proceeded to Kunming City by flight. The next day, I departed for Dhaka.



the valley. A safe wooden walkway

guided me through the dense foliage,

allowing glimpses of majestic Asian

efforts by the authorities to ensure

a harmonious coexistence between

elephant breeding centre was

In 2008, China's first Asian

What moved me the most was the

elephants roaming freely.

humans and wildlife?

Tips for travellers

Some basic preparations can make your travel in China smooth, more enjoyable and save some bucks.

I will advise you to set up a WeChat account before the travel. It will help you in filling up a mandatory health checkup form digitally. It will also make your life easy in China as it is widely used there for almost every activity: calling a taxi, buying products, and

