Discovering Our Planet Together



The Wild Side of China: A Nature Odyssey

Meet Pandas Up Close & Search for Rare Wildlife on Remote Nature Reserves

Table of Contents

Trip Overview 3

Itinerary 4

Accommodations 10

What Makes Nat Hab Different? 12

Dates, Pricing & Info 15

Extensions 19



Trip Details:

Days
12 Days / Mar–Apr, Oct–Nov

Price
From $13995

The Wild Side of China: A Nature Odyssey

Meet Pandas Up Close & Search for Rare Wildlife on Remote Nature Reserves

Deep in the Minshan Mountains of Sichuan province, clear rivers course through deep gorges, and lush forests shelter some of the world's most endangered wildlife. This is the last wild habitat of the giant panda, which subsists on the bamboo protected within a network of remote nature reserves. Supported by WWF, these little-visited wilderness enclaves also harbor rare moon bears, golden snub-nosed monkeys, shaggy takin, Chinese goral, blue sheep and exquisite birds, including the golden pheasant. Enjoy multiple close-up visits with giant pandas at three different research and breeding bases, and search for endearing red pandas in Labahe Nature Reserve. Discover a side of China few travelers experience on our unique itinerary, carefully crafted to reveal Chinese nature at its most entrancing.

Trip Highlights

Visit Three Panda Research & Breeding Bases

Watch and photograph giant pandas at close range on extended visits to three world-renowned panda research centers—each offering a unique setting and experience

Exclusive Permits to Access a Remote Wild Panda Reserve

Explore a virtually unvisited national wildlife sanctuary where highly elusive wild pandas live and breed freely—we don't expect to see them, but other rare species are on view

Close Encounters with Golden Snub-Nosed Monkeys

Get close-up photos of endangered golden snub-nosed monkeys, charming blue-faced primates found only in a small area of temperate forest in central China



The Wild Side of China: A Nature Odyssey Itinerary

Meet Pandas Up Close & Search for Rare Wildlife on Remote Nature Reserves

Itinerary at a Glance

Day 1	Chengdu
Day 2	Chengdu / Minshan Mountains
Day 3	Golden Monkey Nature Reserve / Qing Xi / Wild Panda Nature Reserve
Day 4	Wild Panda Nature Reserve
Day 5	Dujiangyan
Day 6	Dujiangyan Panda Base / Dujiangyan Panda Valley
Day 7	Gengda Wolong Panda Base / Rilong
Day 8	Rilong / Siguniangshan National Park
Day 9	Labahe Nature Reserve
Day 10	Labahe
Day 11	Labahe Nature Reserve / Chengdu
Day 12	Chengdu



Day 1

Chengdu

Arrive in Chengdu and gather for the journey ahead

- Meet your Expedition Leader over a traditional Sichuan lunch in Chengdu, a UNESCO City of Gastronomy
- Explore Bamboo Park with your Expedition Leader as locals practice tai chi and play mahjong

Arrive in Chengdu, the vibrant capital of Sichuan province. Over a group lunch, get to know your Expedition Leader and our local Chinese naturalist guide, and enjoy an ntroduction to the renowned cuisine of Sichuan that will be a highlight of our travels together—Chengdu has received global recognition from UNESCO as a City of Gastronomy. Chengdu is also famed as the home to the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding. Founded in 4th century BC, Chengdu is unique as the only major Chinese settlement that has maintained its name throughout the imperial, republican and communist eras for more than 2,000 years. Today, Chengdu is an important center for higher education and a top global center for scientific research. Learn more about the city as we discover highlights with our Expedition Leader this afternoon, including a walk through serene Bamboo Park on the Jin River, a leafy enclave where locals enjoy strolling, playing mahjong and practicing tai chi. After time to relax at our luxury hotel in the heart of the city, gather for a welcome dinner and an orientation to all the nature adventures that lie ahead.

Day 2

Chengdu / Minshan Mountains

Journey into the Minshan Mountains

- Stroll Chengdu's Jinli Ancient Street and the Tibetan Quarter amid Ming-era architecture and bustling markets
- Travel into the Minshan Mountains, a stronghold for giant pandas and red pandas
- Pause for panoramic views as 18,000-foot peaks rise above the surrounding landscape

As we prepare to leave Chengdu, we stop to stroll down Jinli Ancient Street and visit the adjacent Tibetan Quarter. The historic pedestrian street is known for its traditional Ming and Qing Dynasty-style architecture, Tibetan merchants, food stalls, Sichuan snack vendors, handicraft and art shops, teahouses, bars and folk performances. We'll have lunch in the area, then leave the bustle of the city behind us as we depart on a scenic drive north into the Minshan Mountains. This range in northern Sichuan stretches 250 miles from north to south with its highest peaks rising above 18,000 feet. It's a wild enclave of lush, densely forested slopes and deep river gorges that shelters an abundance of rare and endangered Chinese wildlife. We stop along the way at impressive viewpoints as we journey deep into the mountains, eventually arriving at our hotel where we unwind and anticipate our first wildlife encounters tomorrow.

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Day 3

Golden Monkey Nature Reserve / Qing Xi / Wild Panda Nature Reserve

Encounter rare Chinese wildlife & a secluded mountain village

- Hike to a habituated troop of golden snub-nosed monkeys for exceptional close-up encounters
- Wander Qing Xi, a 300-year-old Muslim village lined with historic wooden homes
- Visit a little-known giant panda reserve rarely visited by outsiders

Rise early this morning to visit a secluded nature reserve that's home to a large, lively band of golden snub-nosed monkeys. The sanctuary, which covers nearly 40,000 acres, lies near a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve in the Minshan Mountains. Encompassing large tracts of virgin forest, pristine lakes, rivers and waterfalls, it is home to 46 different rare animal species, of which the golden monkeys are arguably the most charming. To reach them, we walk uphill on a forested trail for about 30 minutes, depending on where the monkeys are located today, with rest stops en route. We expect excellent sightings, as the monkeys are habituated to humans and unfazed by our presence. They live in highly social groups, and their animated interactions at close range delight us. With blue faces, a small, upturned nose, and covered with a mantle of long, shaggy reddish-gold fur, they are hardy creatures, tolerating winter snow and colder temperatures better than any non-human primate. They inhabit high mountainous forests at elevations up to 10,000 feet, descending to lower altitudes in winter.

After our morning with the monkeys, we head into an even more remote sector of these misty mountains, stopping en route in the Muslim village of Qing Xi. We have time to wander its narrow lanes, capturing scenes of street life amid 300-year-old wooden buildings that date to the Qing dynasty. It's a peaceful setting, with a stream coursing through the center of the village. Just beyond the small town lies a secret slice of Chinese wilderness, a chain of nature reserves little known to outsiders and visited by a mere handful of Westerners. Our destination is a national wildlife sanctuary that harbors a vital population of wild giant pandas. We don't choose to name it, as it is virtually undiscovered by tourists, and we are likely to be the only visitors there. As we follow a rushing river up a narrow valley to reach the reserve, keep an eye out for nocturnal wildlife starting to emerge as dusk descends. Eventually, we reach our hotel, tucked away in the forest along the river, in a setting where our nearest neighbors are mostly wild animals that thrive in these remote protected environs.

Day 4

Wild Panda Nature Reserve

Search for wildlife with exclusive access to remote panda habitat

- Travel into remote giant panda habitat using Nat Hab's special access permits
- Look for takin, macaques, musk deer, serow and other mountain wildlife
- Watch for golden pheasants amid bamboo forests, waterfalls and limestone peaks

Our focus today is an isolated 100,000-acre national reserve with a densely forested ecosystem that is among the most diverse and intact in Asia. This wildlife sanctuary, rated Grade I by WWF as a global biodiversity hotspot, holds healthy populations of some of the world's most endangered and vulnerable aninals, including at least 60 giant pandas. Among its 430 mammal species, the reserve harbors more than 1,200 takin—a large, shaggy relative of wild sheep and goats—as well as more than 2,400 different kinds of plants. Look for wildlife on morning and evening excursions, stopping to drink in stunning vistas of waterfalls, boulder-strewn gorges and mist-shrouded limestone peaks. This is prime panda habitat, and while sightings of this famously elusive mammal are extremely rare, our exclusive permits allow us into distant areas of the reserve where they live and breed freely, affording us the best possible chance to spot signs of them in the wild. Even though we are highly unlikely to spy them in the heavy bamboo understory, just knowing we are in their midst is exhilarating. Search for other species within the reserve's verdant recesses, too, including Tibetan and rhesus macaques, golden and Sichuan takin, musk deer, muntjac, serow, wild boar and blue sheep. More rarely, we may see endangered moon bears and red pandas. Birding is superb, with more than 150 species in the reserve—the elegant golden pheasant is a prize. We can often spot all of these from the remote roads and trails we explore, although dense vegetation and weather can affect our sightings.

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Day 5

Dujiangyan

Take a scenic drive from the Tibetan Plateau to Sichuan

- Travel from the Tibetan Plateau through mountain villages, Buddhist temples and dramatic alpine scenery
- Browse a traditional Sichuan market overflowing with seasonal produce and local specialties
- See Nanqiao Bridge glow above the 2,500-year-old Dujiangyan Irrigation System

A spectacular drive is in store as we make the full-day journey south from the edge of the Tibetan Plateau to Dujiangyan. Winding through this mountainous region, we pause periodically along our route to admire dramatic landscapes, rural villages and Buddhist temples. Along the way, we pass through the town of Mianyang, known as Fujun in ancient times, with a 2,200-year history that spans the Qin and Han dynasties. We also stop at a local market for a taste of rural life, showcasing the bounty of fruit and vegetables harvested in the Sichuan Basin. Enjoy a traditional dinner this evening, then rest up from the day's journey at our elegant new resort hotel in Dujiangyan. Either tonight or tomorrow night, we'll take a night walk to view Nanqiao Bridge, built in traditional Chinese architectural style and spectacularly lit up after dark. The bridge crosses a canal that slices through the center of the city, part of an ancient irrigation system of dams and canals still in use 2,500 years later.

Day 6

Dujiangyan Panda Base / Dujiangyan Panda Valley

Witness giant panda conservation in action

- Go behind the scenes at Dujiangyan Panda Base, with a chance to assist panda keepers
- Visit Panda Valley, where giant pandas prepare for life back in the wild
- Look for playful red pandas alongside their famous black-and-white cousins

Close-up encounters with China's beloved giant pandas are in store today as we visit two panda conservation facilities in Dujiangyan. Dujiangyan Panda Base, which opened in 2013 with the arrival of 10 pandas, focuses on rescue, disease control and prevention, and rehabilitation of injured and ill wild pandas. It has expanded its mission, and its numbers, to encompass care for senior and disabled pandas as well as healthy pandas that are part of the preventive research program. A highlight of our time is a special opportunity to volunteer in their care (though it is not guaranteed and depends on the status of the pandas at the time of our visit). Conditions permitting, we'll have the chance to interact with pandas at close range as we help their keepers care for them, including tasks such as preparing their food and cleaning enclosures.

This afternoon, we visit Dujiangyan Panda Valley, a new facility that is both a panda research and breeding base and a center for conservation education. This quiet setting, landscaped with flowers, provides a natural environs where pandas are gradually habituated and returned to the wild. Reintroduction training experts from around the world gather here for collaborative research. We may see pandas in transitional concrete-block "dens" that are learning to live on their own in the surroundings that mirror their wild habitat. We often see many red pandas here as well.

Day 7

Gengda Wolong Panda Base / Rilong

Travel from panda country to the Tibetan highlands

- Visit Wolong Panda Center, where giant pandas are bred and prepared for release into the wild
- Travel into the Four Sisters Mountains, often called the "Chinese Alps"
- Experience the unique culture of the Jiarong Tibetans in the high-altitude village of Rilong

Today we visit Gengda Wolong Panda Center in the Wolong Nature Reserve, a base that integrates scientific research, captive breeding and reintroduction of pandas into the wild. More than 30 pandas reside at the center, which includes a 680-acre bamboo forest. Get close-up photos of giant pandas in this natural habitat that features a striking mountain backdrop. Then continue to Rilong, a Tibetan village famous as a base camp for climbing 20,505-foot Mount Siguniang. Translating to Four Sisters Mountain, this imposing massif encompasses four separate peaks and is often referred to as the "Chinese Alps." In Rilong, we are immersed in Tibetan culture, with traditional architecture on display and yak butter tea for sale by local vendors. This high-altitude village, 10,000 feet above sea level, is the center of the Jiarong Tibetan culture, found only in this region of Sichuan province. The rural Jiarong people are known for their intricately embroidered costumes and agricultural lifestyle.

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Day 8

Rilong / Siguniangshan National Park

Experience China's alpine wilderness

- Explore Shuangqiao Valley beneath the soaring, snow-capped Four Sisters Mountains
- Wander among alpine lakes, waterfalls and colorful rock formations at 10,000 feet
- Watch for endangered red pandas in the high-altitude forests of Siguniangshan National Park

Early risers may catch the sunrise behind the peaks in Rilong, a vista renowned for its singular beauty. We spend the day exploring the dramatic scenery of nearby Siguniangshan National Park. Entering the 25-mile-long Shuangqiao Valley, snow-capped peaks rise in every direction, with Four Sisters Mountain towering above. The valley floor is 10,000 feet above sea level, and the highest mountains nearly double that. Explore the colorful geological features and mirror-like lakes of this subalpine terrain, following boardwalk trails that weave among occasional pagodas and prayer flags. This high-altitude forest is also native habitat for the endangered red panda. Deeper into the valley, we reach the Ginsenguo flatland, with a viewing deck overlooking highland swamps and snowy peaks, and Jiujia Lake, which is actually a group of four seasonal lakes and nine perennial ones—the legendary bathing pools for the “four sisters.” After a full day of exploration in the park, we travel back down the valley to spend a second night in Rilong.

Day 9

Labahe Nature Reserve

Discover wild red panda country

- Journey through the Hengduan Mountains, stopping for sweeping vistas and mountain birdlife
- Search one of China's best wild habitats for the elusive red panda
- Look for water deer emerging at dusk near your secluded forest hotel

Depart this morning for Labahe Nature Reserve located southwest of Chengdu in the Hengduan Mountains, stopping en route for magnificent mountain vistas, birding opportunities and lunch. Once we reach our destination and check in to our hotel, it’s time to start exploring the reserve. Labahe is one of China’s top spots for seeing the elusive and endearing red panda, and while sightings are never guaranteed, we often spot them in these alpine forests. As the day draws to a close, we may see water deer coming down to a salt lick just outside our hotel.

Day 10

Labahe

Track wildlife through Labahe's forests

- Spend a full day searching one of China's best wild habitats for elusive red pandas
- Look for golden takin, leopard cats, Tibetan macaques and giant flying squirrels
- Explore the reserve by private vehicle, stopping at panoramic mountain viewpoints

A full day is dedicated to searching for wildlife, especially red pandas, in the Labahe reserve. Although giant pandas also live here, we are much less likely to see them. Comprised of mixed forests and pockets of dense bamboo, the reserve’s diverse vegetation and altitude create ideal habitat for the red panda, which is adapted to environments above 7,000 feet. A wide variety of other mammals and birds thrives here, too, and we look for Tibetan macaque, Chinese leopard cat, hog badger, serow, sambar deer, golden takin, and red and white giant flying squirrels. Notable birds include the golden-breasted fulvetta, Lady Amherst’s pheasant, crimson-breasted woodpecker and three-toed parrotbill. In our private vehicle, we have the freedom to explore different parts of the reserve, including opportunities for striking landscape photography from higher mountain locations.

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Day 11

Labahe Nature Reserve / Chengdu

Return to Chengdu and toast the adventure

- Enjoy a final relaxed morning in the forests of Labahe Nature Reserve
- Drive back through mountain scenery to the outskirts of Chengdu
- Gather for a farewell dinner with your Expedition Leader and local guide

Enjoy a last relaxed morning in Labahe Nature Reserve before departing on the scenic drive back to the outskirts of Chengdu, where our hotel is conveniently located at Tianfu Airport for homeward departures tomorrow. This evening, join your Expedition Leader, local guide and traveling companions to celebrate our adventures at a farewell dinner.

Day 12

Chengdu

Depart Chengdu after your China wildlife adventure

- Enjoy a final breakfast at your hotel near the airport before homeward flights

Our China nature odyssey comes to a close today. After breakfast at our hotel, a transfer is included to the nearby airport terminal to meet departing flights.

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The Wild Side of China: A Nature Odyssey Accommodations

Meet Pandas Up Close & Search for Rare Wildlife on Remote Nature Reserves



Shangri-La Chengdu

This gleaming luxury high-rise enjoys views over the Jinjiang River and glittering Chengdu skyline; spacious rooms and the serene Chi Spa offer quiet spaces to retreat from the urban bustle.



Wild Panda Reserve Hotel

The sole lodging within this remote national nature reserve offers modern accommodations in chalets along a river, and a large dining room for family-style meals.



Courtyard by Marriott Jiuzhaigou

Modern comfort meets natural beauty at this stylish hotel near Jiuzhaigou National Park, with serene guest rooms, regional dining and airy spaces designed for relaxation and ease.



Tianfu Source Hotel

With its prime location in Balan Square and close proximity to scenic and natural areas near Dujiangyan, this contemporary hotel is an ideal base for exploration.



Jiarong Tibetan Qingcheng Hotel

Offering a rare glimpse into authentic Tibetan culture and rural mountain life, this simple, cozy and charming local hotel provides a comfortable stay with big views.



Labahe Lanshuijing Hotel

This modern mountain chalet is situated inside the Labahe Nature Reserve, where the river and broadleaf forest meet, and wildlife abounds.



JoyHub Air Hotel

Enjoy exceptional convenience and deluxe view rooms at this sleek new luxury hotel offering first-class airport accommodations for international departures into and out of Chengdu.

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/asia-adventure-travel/wild-china-panda-tour/accommodations.

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We Show You the Natural Side of China Most Visitors Never See

The Wild Side of China: A Nature Odyssey

Google “China tours” and you’ll find plenty that will take you to Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City and the Great Wall. Yet virtually no one offers nature adventures, and no one else takes you to the remote, rarely visited wildlife reserves that we do. Nat Hab holds special permits that grant us access into a nature sanctuary that few Westerners—and very few local tourists—ever see. When you visit China with us, leave behind crowds, traffic and polluted city air for wild mountain terrain.

1 **See Giant Pandas Up Close on Visits to Three Different Sites**

Compare China itineraries—we don't think you'll find another that offers this in-depth panda immersion, with unhurried visits to three different panda research bases: Dujiangyan Panda Base, which focuses on rescuing injured and ill wild pandas and disease control; Dujiangyan Panda Valley, a new facility that is both a panda research and breeding base and a center for conservation education; and Gengda Wolong Panda Center, which integrates scientific research, captive breeding and reintroduction of pandas into the wild.

2 **Exclusive Access to Search for Pandas & Other Rare Wildlife**

This is a genuine Nat Hab privilege: We have secured special permits to visit remote sectors of a totally untouristed nature reserve deep within the Minshan Mountains, a global biodiversity hotspot that's home to some of the world’s most endangered wildlife. We'll search for giant pandas and moon bears that inhabit the park, though we won't expect to see them, as both are highly elusive. We have better chances to find other rare Chinese animals like takin, goral, serow and golden pheasant, within a completely natural habitat that few tourists have ever laid eyes on—and only a handful of Westerners (mostly other Nat Hab travelers). The terrain is steep and heavily forested, and animals are often sheltered, camouflaged or seen at a distance—but just being in their midst in such a quiet, wild place is a moving experience.

3 **Get Close to Golden Snub-Nosed Monkeys**

Visit a golden monkey nature reserve where we're sure to have close-up encounters with a habituated family group of these entertaining primates. It's a rare opportunity to see and photograph this endangered species that is endemic to a very limited part of central and southwest China.

4 **Our Small Groups Go Places Larger Groups Can't**

Because we limit this trip to approximately 12 guests, we’re able to take you where larger bus tours cannot go, including a remote national park where we have exclusive permits to search for wild pandas (though they are exceptionally elusive and rarely seen).

5 **Travel with Two Guides for Exceptional Expertise**

Our China trips benefit from the leadership of two guides: a native English-speaking Nat Hab Expedition Leader accompanied by a warm and hospitable Chinese naturalist guide who is highly trained in natural history and interpretation, not to mention being our cultural and linguistic "go-between." It's an optimal combination of interpretive guiding, cultural knowledge and personalized attention.

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6 **Experience Traditional Tibetan Culture**

Our travels include an overland traverse along the edge of the vast Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, where small villages, prayer flags and chortens dot the landscape. Learn more about the deeply traditional Tibetan Buddhist culture, which offers a dramatic counterpoint to the urban setting of Chengdu.

7 **Savor Outstanding Sichuan Cuisine**

While nature may be your primary interest, food lovers will be thrilled by the culinary delights this trip offers. Sichuan is famed for its piquant cuisine, and we get to sample a wide selection of restaurants and dishes, with items carefully chosen by our local guide to appeal to Western palates. Since food is typically served family-style at a large round table, multiple tastes and dietary preferences can be catered for at every meal (though be sure to make special needs known to us ahead of time). And you won't be eating only in hotels or touristy restaurants: we choose locations popular with local people, for a truly authentic Chinese dining experience that Western visitors will also enjoy.

8 **A Rare Opportunity to Volunteer with Panda Care When Conditions Permit**

At Dujiangyan Panda Base, we may have an optional opportunity to help with aspects of the pandas' care. This could involve preparing their food or other tasks that place us directly into the daily activities of the pandas' caregivers at this research base. *Please note that this volunteer opportunity is intermittent and depends on the pandas' situation at the time, and it will not always be available.*

9 **Our Accommodations Offer the Best in Location and Comfort**

From a 5-star luxury hotel in Chengdu to a quiet mountain inn where other travelers are few, our comfortable lodgings place you in close proximity to famous Chinese landmarks and remote and wild natural settings. Each offers a regional experience of China with plenty of amenities.

10 **Travel with Expert Expedition Leaders**

Our Nat Hab Expedition Leaders are outstanding North American naturalist guides who are passionate about China and its wildlife. In addition, you'll travel with a Chinese tour guide who is a nature expert, ensuring an optimal balance of scientific knowledge, authentic cultural insight and attentive personal service. Furthermore, our Expedition Leaders have the benefit of additional training and resources from WWF's renowned scientists and researchers. **See Expedition Leader bios** and traveler comments regarding the quality of our leaders.

11 **Our Quality-Value Guarantee Ensures Your Outstanding China Tour**

With Natural Habitat Adventures, you receive our exclusive guarantee that clearly states that we will meet the high expectations we set forth in our promotional materials. To our knowledge, this is the most ambitious guarantee made by any adventure travel company. **Read our important promise.**

12 **Feel Good About Your Carbon-Neutral Journey**

We care deeply about our planet, as we know you do. When you travel with us, the carbon emissions from your trip are 100% offset—including your round-trip flights from home. Natural Habitat Adventures has been the world's first carbon-neutral travel company since 2007.

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13

Natural Habitat Adventures Is WWF's Travel Partner

Because of our commitment to environmentally friendly travel, as well as the exceptional quality of our small-group nature adventures, World Wildlife Fund, the world's leading environmental conservation organization, has named Natural Habitat Adventures its worldwide travel partner—a designation that makes us exceedingly proud!

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Dates & Pricing Summary:

Price
From $13995

Group Size
Limited to 12 Travelers

The Wild Side of China: A Nature Odyssey Dates, Pricing & Info

Meet Pandas Up Close & Search for Rare Wildlife on Remote Nature Reserves

2027 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Mar 23 - Apr 5, 2027	**$16995**	Photo Expedition
Mar 27 - Apr 7, 2027	**$14395**	Wildflower Season · Natural Habitat Explorers Pricing Available
Apr 5 - Apr 16, 2027	**$14395**	Wildflower Season
Apr 8 - Apr 21, 2027	**$16995**	Photo Expedition
Apr 12 - Apr 23, 2027	**$14395**	Wildflower Season
Apr 21 - May 2, 2027	**$14395**	Wildflower Season
Oct 9 - Oct 20, 2027	**$14395**	Fall Foliage Season
Oct 10 - Oct 23, 2027	**$16995**	Photo Expedition
Oct 12 - Oct 25, 2027	**$16995**	Photo Expedition
Oct 22 - Nov 2, 2027	**$14395**	Fall Foliage Season
Oct 26 - Nov 6, 2027	**$13995**	Fall Foliage Season
Oct 28 - Nov 10, 2027	**$16495**	Photo Expedition

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Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Nov 4 - Nov 15, 2027	**$14395**	Fall Foliage Season
Nov 8 - Nov 19, 2027	**$13995**	

2028 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Mar 21 - Apr 3, 2028	**$16995**	Photo Expedition
Mar 24 - Apr 4, 2028	**$14495**	Wildflower Season
Mar 26 - Apr 6, 2028	**$14495**	Wildflower Season
Mar 27 - Apr 9, 2028	**$17495**	Photo Expedition
Apr 5 - Apr 16, 2028	**$14495**	Wildflower Season
Apr 7 - Apr 18, 2028	**$14495**	Wildflower Season
Apr 9 - Apr 20, 2028	**$14495**	Wildflower Season
Apr 11 - Apr 24, 2028	**$17495**	Photo Expedition
Apr 18 - Apr 29, 2028	**$14495**	Wildflower Season
Oct 9 - Oct 20, 2028	**$14495**	Fall Foliage Season
Oct 11 - Oct 22, 2028	**$14495**	Fall Foliage Season
Oct 13 - Oct 24, 2028	**$14495**	Fall Foliage Season
Oct 14 - Oct 27, 2028	**$17495**	Photo Expedition
Oct 22 - Nov 2, 2028	**$14495**	Fall Foliage Season
Oct 24 - Nov 4, 2028	**$14495**	Fall Foliage Season
Oct 26 - Nov 8, 2028	**$16995**	Photo Expedition
Oct 29 - Nov 9, 2028	**$14495**	Fall Foliage Season
Nov 4 - Nov 17, 2028	**$16995**	Photo Expedition
Nov 7 - Nov 18, 2028	**$14495**	Fall Foliage Season

See https://www.nathab.com/asia-adventure-travel/wild-china-panda-tour/dates-fees for the latest pricing details.

Included

Trip price includes: Accommodations, services of Nat Hab's professional Expedition Leader(s) and local guides, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on final day, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, still camera fees, airport transfers on Day 1 and final day, all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees.

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Not Included

Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, passport and visa fees, optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, etc.), required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

Important Information About This Trip

Among many travelers, China tends to be known more for its history and culture than its nature. But we focus on the natural treasures most visitors miss, including an in-depth experience with the pandas of Sichuan province and a remote, rarely visited wildlife reserve where wild giant pandas live and breed, as well as a host of other rare animals and birds. Our staff who helped create the itinerary commented: “This itinerary trades time spent in polluted air, traffic, crowds and airports for beautiful, pristine mountain country. But we don’t always have 5-star restaurants or services, and English-speaking locals and hotel staff do not exist in many areas. Parts of the trip are more rustic, but the nature rewards are so worth it!”

A Note About Wildlife Viewing in China

Our itinerary is carefully designed to capitalize on the very best opportunities to see rare Chinese wildlife, maximizing your chances for sightings; however, **it's important to note that there is a fundamental difference between the wildlife experience in China and what you would experience on a typical African safari**, for instance. Terrain here is heavily forested, and while wildlife abounds in natural areas, animals are not always easy to see or photograph. Many are expertly camouflaged or hidden within the vegetation, making them challenging to spot. To date, we have never seen a giant panda in the wild, as they are exceptionally elusive. But rangers have seen them, and we have seen signs of them, including chewed bamboo and scat. Guests should not come to China *expecting* to see wild pandas, but it is exhilarating nonetheless to know we are in their midst. Weather can also affect wildlife sightings, and when it is inclement, animals may be more likely to take cover in the deep forest. Our seasoned Expedition Leaders and local guides are experts at locating wildlife—and we encourage our guests to understand that the privilege of stepping into a wild, untouched world inside China is a reward in itself.

We do have multiple opportunities to see giant pandas up close, though—a highlight of our trip. These encounters occur not in the wild, but at China's panda research bases where the pandas live within a constructed setting that contains or mimics elements of their natural habitat. While the environment is more zoo-like, it provides a rare chance for hours of observing many pandas at close range, a privilege very few people get to enjoy. It's a moving opportunity not available anywhere else but Sichuan.

A Note About Our Accommodations

While we strive to stay at the best possible accommodations during our adventure, you will find that the standards of comfort and service vary greatly among locations. While in Chengdu we will stay at the 5-star Shangri-La Hotel, which offers luxurious rooms and facilities, and Western standards of excellent service. We will also stay in an upscale, Chinese-style hotel in Dujiangyan. In the more remote areas of the country, we will stay at the most modern and comfortable accommodations available. It is important to note, however, that local standards are often much more rustic and lax than what we might expect in the U.S. Although some may be quite quirky and noticeably lacking in amenities and service, their excellent locations afford us unique access to the more remote and wilder parts of the country.

We try our best to secure non-smoking rooms at all accommodations. However, you may sometimes find that your non-smoking room still has a cigarette smell. It’s not that the room was designated as a smoking room, but that Chinese guests may actually smoke in the room anyway. It is also possible that smells may waft from nearby smoking rooms or smoking floors of the hotel.

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Please let your Expedition Leader know immediately upon check in to each accommodation if there are any concerns that he or she can address to make your stay more comfortable.

A Note About Meals

Breakfasts will be taken at our hotels and will generally offer both local and Western options, with some exceptions in the more remote locations. During our stay at these accommodations, our guide team will bring some Western provisions along so that we may have a few breakfast options other than local cuisine.

For lunches and dinners, it is important to keep in mind that we are traveling well off the beaten tourist path and as such, only Chinese fare will be available in the remote locations that we visit. In these areas, we strive to dine in places that highlight authentic, local cuisine. Meals are delicious and plentiful and are often served in traditional Chinese family-style—several different dishes will be brought to the center of the table, and travelers will serve themselves from these shared dishes. We will do our very best to choose dishes that offer as much variety as possible, but meal options in these areas can be limited and somewhat repetitive.

Mandatory Insurance

Since the areas we travel to on this trip are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require medical evacuation insurance for our guests' safety. If you decline the medical evacuation insurance coverage offered by Natural Habitat, we request that you send us documentation of the independent coverage you have selected. We will add the cost of a medical evacuation policy to your tour invoice until you provide our office with proof of coverage including your insurance company's name, contact number and your individual policy number. Thank you for understanding that our policy exists exclusively in the interest of our guests' safety.

Getting There & Getting Home

The trip both begins and ends in Chengdu. Because this is a long international journey, we recommend that you arrive the night before Day 1 to rest from your travels and begin the trip refreshed. For guests who come in early, recommended hotels will be included in your pre-departure materials.

If you plan to arrive on Day 1, you must arrive in Chengdu by 9 am in order to participate in activities beginning at 11:30 am. You may depart Chengdu at any time on the final day, and TFU is recommended for both arrival and departure.

Our Natural Habitat Adventures Travel Desk can best assist with your travel reservations, as our staff is familiar with the specific requirements of this program and can help arrange the most efficient itinerary. Please call us at 800-543-8917. While we offer the best available rates to us on airfare and additional nights' accommodations, you may occasionally find special web rates or lower fares online.

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