2017 Guangxi trip

We sincerely invite you to join our trip to Guangxi, China! This is a trip of international friendship and culture, an introduction of Chinese minority ethnic peoples and breathtaking sights.

Providing your family with an experience they will remember forever! Developing close personal bonds with local families and an understanding of a 5000 year old civilization. That is our goal.

Family members will be immersed in Chinese language, traditional food and local culture. All the while forming relationships regardless of differences. Parents are encouraged to join in this family oriented educational vacation! Small groups will be paired with local families from one of twelve minority ethnic groups in Guangxi. Our stops will include well known tourist sights of Guilin, Sanjiang and impressive Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

We provide a two week expense paid adventure throughout Guangxi. Our American families will need to purchase the round trip international airfare from their home city to Nanning, Guangxi, China. The program starts from August 5th through 18th. For more information, please contact email katherinelaughrey@gmail.com.

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Guangxi Museum of Nationalities (GXMN)

Guangxi Museum of Nationalities (GXMN), the third regional level museum, is a special museum of the ethnic culture with the largest exhibition area and fairly complete facilities in Guangxi. The construction project of GXMN was launched in 2003 and the site of the museum is at the bank of the beautiful Yong River and within the Qingxiushan scenic spot in Nanning city. The functional orientation of GXMN was set to be a professional ethnic cultural museum, centering on the collection, research, protection, exhibition and education publicity of the physical evidence, cultural and artistic relics, classics, intangible cultural heritage and research results of the 12 native nationalities’ multiply survival and assimilation development.

Immersed in the exhibition, you will enjoy the Beiliu bronze drum of the West Han Dynasty, which was considered as the king of Chinese bronze drum, appreciate the 12 aboriginal minorities’ customs, festivals, clothing, and architecture, experience the precious historical relics, such as bronze ware, pottery ware, porcelain ware, bamboo and wooden articles, jade ware, glass utensil, and lacquer ware, and share the cultural achievements Guangxi ethnic minorities have made with their hardworking, intelligence and solidarity.

The Qingxiu Mountain, Nanning

The Qingxiu Mountain, also called the Green Mountain, is a national AAAA level scenic spot honored as the the 'green lung' of Nanning. With majestic hills and peaks, green trees and beautiful scenes, it was among the eight famous scenes in Nanning. Composed of 18
mountains and hills like the Qingshan Hill and Phoenix Hill, the Qingxiu Mountain Scenic Spot has an area of 4.07sq.km, 14667sq.m of it being water and 25000sq.m being green area, and its peak has an altitude of 289 meters. In the area, ridges and peaks are rising and falling, mountains and hills are green, spring is clear and rocks are wonderful, it is famous for mountains not high but beautiful, waters not deep but clear.

As a key spot for development and exploration in Nanning, Qingxiu Mountain has been under construction. Besides some old relics like the Dong Spring, Carving on the Jieqing cliff and Shixiang Shrine still keep preserving and repairing, new spots like the Tropical Rain Forest Park, the Palm Park and the Thai Park are built. The last one is designed by architects from Thailand, as a spot built in the project of cultural communication between Nanning city and Khon Kaen city in Thailand. Since the garden is of Thailand style, visitors can experience for themselves the exotic favor here. Also, the newly built gate is unique and magnificent, which attributes a lot to the scenic spot.

Danzhou Ancient Town

Danzhou Ancient Town (Chinese: 丹洲古镇) is about 55 kilometers to the south of Sanjiang County of Liuzhou City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. It is a small island with beautiful landscapes, historical relics and ancient residential houses. Built in Ming Dynasty with a history of more than 400 years, Danzhou is surrounded by Rongjiang waters. The fresh air and peaceful environment here make it a perfect secluded resort from the bustling world. The lush lawn, bamboo grove, ancient banyan, riverbank and unpolluted waters can easily ease the tensions; historical and cultural relics that can be seen everywhere unintentionally promote the spirits; and simple local people and blooming flowers in their courtyard make visitors just feel being at home.
The original ancient city wall was built in Ming Dynasty in a length of 879 meters, consisting of four gates, East Gate, South Gate, West Gate and North Gate, on each of which stands a gate pavilion. Just as other general city walls, the City Wall in Danzhou plays an ordinary defense role for battles; in addition, it had prevented the heavy flood which was once recorded in 1902. Today, only the North Gate and the East Gate can be seen in the town. The North Gate is well-preserved and some historical events can be learned from the stone tablets, while it is a regret that the East Gate was removed in 1950s and only the arch door is left there to welcome guests from home and abroad.

The accommodations in Danzhou Ancient Town are all comfortable family hotels. These family hotels are in different styles with respective features; they are remade from the spare rooms of the host and decorated in a comfortable way where guests just feel at home.

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**Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County**

Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County is famous for its large number of well-preserved wooden drum towers and "wind and rain" bridges. There are 108 "wind and rain" bridges and 159 drum towers in the county, among them Chengyang Wind and Rain Bridge and Mapang Drum Tower are the most famous. Both are popular destinations in Sanjiang.

Sanjiang has been named "home of one hundred festivals". Some traditional festivals are handed down from generation to generation. Examples are buffalo fighting festival on January 15th of the lunar calendar, firecracker festival on March 3rd of the lunar calendar, rice harvest festival and many others. Sanjiang has the largest group of Dong minority people in Guangxi, with smaller numbers of eight other minorities: Zhuang,
Miao, Yao, Manchu, Hui, Maonan, Gelao and Yi. Each of these groups has its own unique customs, ethnic culture and history. Dong people often wear indigo colored clothing with elaborate decorations around the collars and hems, accessorized with bright beads and headdresses. The women usually wear their hair in a coil. Each of the 13 villages can be distinguished by its own unique colors and styles of dress. There is a saying: "Dong people can't live without sour", meaning Dong people like "sour" (pickled) foods. Pickled fish, duck, pork and vegetables are favorites, and are often eaten throughout the day. When entertaining family, friends and visitors, the host will always serve some "sour" dishes. Home brewed sweet wines are also well known and served on special occasions.
Drum tower
Drum tower of Sanjiang is the first tower of Dong ethnic. It is a wooden structure as the symbol of Sanjiang County. The shape of Sanjiang Drum Tower is looked like a pagoda. The magnificent and elaborate structure with gray color represents Dong minority’s profound culture, both in architectural field and intelligence. The drum tower of Sanjiang is reputed as the No.1 drum tower of the world. Drum tower of the soul of Dong ethnic villages. The drum tower is a wooden structure without any iron nails. The floors of this kind of architecture are from a few ones to dozens of ones variously. The floor number is always an odd number because of the cultural factor. Dong’s drum towers can be the tetrahedral one, the hexahedral one and the octal one. the average height of this kind of tower is around 10 meters, the highest one can be nearly 100 meters. The Sanjiang Drum Tower, as a project of Sanjiang 50 years founding anniversary, had been finished in 2002 Oct. it is a site integrating culture, appreciation and tourism into one.

Chengyang Wind and Rain Bridge
Chengyang Wind and Rain Bridge, also called Yongji Bridge or Panlong Bridge, spans the Linxi River of Sanjiang County. Built in 1916, it is 64.4 meters (73.43 yards) long, 3.4 metres (3.72 yards) wide and 10.6 meters (34.78 feet) high. Constructed with wood and stones, its surface is paved with wooden boards and both sides are inlaid with railings. On the bridge
itself, there are five tower-like kiosks with 'horns' and eaves which resemble the flapping wings of birds. To one's surprise, the builders of this bridge did not use any nails or rivets. Instead, talented Dong people dove-tailed many pieces of wood. Though several decades old, it is still very sturdy. In a word, it is grand and looks like a brilliant rainbow crossing over the river. Walking out onto the bridge, you can sit on the bench and appreciate the picturesque scenery. Looking far ahead, you will be intoxicated with what you see: the Linxi River meandering from the horizon; tea trees growing on the hills; local peasants working hard in the fields; and waterwheels turning, sending water cascading down the river. Many visitors like to spend time here enjoying the perfect pastoral life and to experience the customs of the Dong people. There are eight famous stockade villages here that offer a peek into the Dong's life and customs. They are Ma'an, Pingzhai, Yanzhai, Chengyang-Dazhai, Pingpu, Pingtan, Jichang and Guandong. Accommodation: Near the bridge, there are several hostels. If you want to have a spectacular view of the charming scenery, you may want to stay in the Drum Tower Folk Hostel built on the hill. Food: You will have a chance to taste the local snacks, such as rice noodles and the fish with sour taste.

**Elephant Trunk Hill**

Elephant Trunk Hill (Xiangbishan) is the landmark of Guilin. Located in Elephant Hill Scenic Area (Xiangshan Park) at the confluence of Taohua River and Li River, it has been a famous tourism destination since the Tang Dynasty (618 – 907). The hill looks like a giant elephant drinking water from the river. There are not only many
spectacular natural scenes around the hill, but also some ancient constructions, such as Puxian Pagoda, Yunfeng Temple, and Sarira Dagoba. Water Moon Cave is a semicircular cave between the elephant’s legs and trunk. At night, the cave and its reflection together form a bright moon on the river. Although Guilin is studded with hills and caves, it is still unbelievable to see such a cave through which a river can flow. The cave is not very large, but there are more than 50 inscriptions on the wall, with the earliest one dating from the Song Dynasty (960 – 1279). There is another cave on the hillside. Because of its special location, it is taken as the eyes of Elephant Hill.

**Solitary Beauty (Duxiu) Peak**

Solitary Beauty (Duxiu) Peak abruptly rises, steeps and precipitous, in JingJiang Princely Mansion in Guilin and has long been called "a pillar holding up the Southern Sky". Lying at the south-east foot of the peak, Du Shu Cave (Study Cave), a place for the litterateur of South and Song Dynasty Yan yanyan to do the reading, is the oldest famous relic in Guilin of a well-known figure. Yan wrote, "Amid Guilin rises the Solitary Beauty Peak, so towering that no peak is like it". From then on, the hill has been known as the Solitary Beauty Peak (Duxiu Peak). 396 stone steps leads from the west foot of the hill up to the top of Solitary Beauty Peak, where you can get a panoramic view of the whole city and all the mountains surrounding it. In periods of dawn and sunset, the peak seems to be wearing a purple gown with a golden girdle. So it has another name for it: Purple Golden Peak. There are three interesting sites at the foot of Solitary Beauty Hill called Study Rock, Peace Rock and Crescent Pond separately. Among them, Study Rock always attracts many students of Guangxi Normal University to come here
to further they study Many inscriptions from the Qing Dynasty can be found in the east side of the hill, such as Southern Sky-supporting Pillar and Purple Gown and Golden Belt.

Solitary Beauty Peak is located in Suijingtang village Baiyashi town, the peak is 150 meters high. "Dong’an County Annals" of Qing emperor Guangxu reign: "In the north of city there is Solitary Beauty Peak, graceful, natural and solitary, five hundreds Zhang high." Because it is craggy, tall and graceful, tower among buildings so it named Solitary Beauty Peak. Peak is cylindrical, such as the inversion of spinning top. There is only a path leading to the top of the mountain. In the Ming dynasty Tianqi Period (1621 ~ 1627), there was a Buddhist nunnery under the foot of peak, and tens of nuns in it.

**Li River**

Li River, situated in Guilin City of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, is a bright pearl on the list of China’s tourist attractions and it is the highlight of sightseeing tour in Guilin. The 83-km-long waterway from Guilin to Yangshuo is the masterpiece of Li River, decorated with rolling hills, steep cliffs, fantastic caves, leisurely boats and lined bamboos which is just like enjoying a melodious symphony. Hanyu vividly described the enchanting beauty of the Lijiang River in his poem: The River looks like a blue silk ribbon, and the mountains resemble emerald hairpins". The poetic and picturesque Li River originates in Mountain Cat at Xing’an County in the northeast of Guilin. It winds
and meanders its way for 170 kilometers, passing through Guilin, Yangshuo to the outlet of Gongchen River in Pingle County. Li River, according to its different scenes, may be divided into three sections: Guilin to Ox Gorge, Ox Gorge to Water-Dropping Village, and Water-Dropping Village to Yangshuo.

Along the river, the rolling peaks, steep cliffs, green hills and clear water constitute a fascinating hundred-mile pictures gallery. The crystal clear Li River is located amid precipitous peaks hung with waterfalls. Among poems singing the praise of its beauty are these tow lines: "He who travels in Guilin hills finds himself in a fairyland", and "He who sails along the Li River finds himself boating in a sweet dream." The most beautiful scenes of Guilin scenery are found along the Li River. The hills beyond hills with their reflections in the crystal water are like fairy land, the green bamboo greets you all the way along the river in the breeze; the water buffaloes eating grass casually; the ducks swimming along the river; the fisherman fishing or catnapping on the bamboo rafts with his cormorants resting peacefully next to him, it's God dotted landscape. "Serenity" is a word poet tried to describe, "story-book-mountains" is kids say about the hills. Chinese traditional paintings are what Chinese artists have being trying to depict the scenery for thousands of years. But the natural beauty of the Li River is indeed beyond any descriptions, you have to be there to see with your own eyes and to feel with your own heart. The Li River is famous for its beauty of four unique: green hills, clear water, fantastic caves and charming rocks. Along the river, there are deep pools, dangerous shoals, murmuring springs, and roaring waterfalls.
**Yulong River**

In Chinese the word "Yulong" means "meeting a dragon". Local legend has it that a dragon from the East Sea strolled along the river and, being deeply impressed by the landscape, he decided to stay there forever. From then on, the villagers saw the dragon several times, and hence named the River Yulong.

Known as little Li River, Yulong is about 43km (26 miles). The scenic part is stretching from Yulong Bridge in Baisha Town, to Gongnong Bridge near the Big Banyan Tree. The meandering river is lined by green bamboo and rolling hills. Local people use bamboo rafts as daily transportation up and down the river between their houses, markets, and rice paddies. Sitting on the reclining chair on the raft, you can enjoy an all-around view of the river and hills.

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**Reed Flute Cave**

Reed Flute Cave is a famous scenic spot, mainly offering a magic fairyland of stalactites, stalagmites, stone columns, curtains and flowers in fantastic shapes and colors while appreciating landscape and rural scenery. The Reed Flute Cave offers a majestic fairyland of karst caves with landscape and rural scenery. It is a magic fairyland of stalactites, stalagmites, stone pillars, stone curtains, birds. plants and animals in fantastic shapes and colors, all glistening in colorful lights.

Different points along the cave bear names like Virgin Forest, Crystal Palace, Flower and Fruit Mountain, and naturally there are myths behind the formation of various rock-forms, but the vistas could just as easily have come from a distant planet. Come back to Earth with a stroll around the pavilions of nearby Ludi Park.

The feature of Reed Flute Cave is that more drip water constituted more stalactites, stalagmites, stone pillars and become developed more stuffing in the cave. Visitors go
into the cave, hovering between cracks in the forest of stelae, with colored lights shining, like place oneself in fairyland. The scenery of Reed Flute Cave is not only delicate but beautiful. Full cave of stalactites, stalagmites, stone pillars, and so on, like ivory carvings, as if boxwood carving, extremely beautiful, which known as "Art Palace of Nature". People visit the Reed Flute Cave is able to enjoy many beautiful types of scenery.

The Big Banyan Tree

The Big Banyan Tree is located on the west bank of Jinbao River approximately 7.5km south of Yangshuo. It is said to have a history of nearly 1,400 years and has survived centuries of wind and rain. The Big Banyan Tree is now 17 meters high, 7.1 meters around the main trunk, and spans an area of 1000 square meters. As a major tourist attraction, the enormous Banyan is famous for its age and towering beauty.
Big Banyan Tree has survived from wind and rain over centuries since the Sui Dynasty (581-618), one of the main scenic attractions of Yangshuo Guilin. Although its stem is very old and its roots twist, its branches and leaves stretch out so lushly that the sunshine hardly penetrates its shadow. Sitting in its shadow on even the hottest day of the summer, you barely break out in a sweat. It is under this tree that the Liu Sanjie declared her admiration to her lover The A Niu. So this tree is one symbol of love as well, attracting many lovers come here to make wishes. As the old people told, for the couple, who make wishes here will get their dreams come ture, and for the single, who takes a photo with this tree will find his sweetheart soon.
Big Banyan Tree is one of the shooting places of movie Sanjie Liu—where Sanjie Liu threw embroidered ball. Of every Chinese and foreign tourists going to Yangshuo will go to visit Big Banyan Tree.
Yangshuo West Street

West Street is the oldest street in Yangshuo with a history of more than 1,400 years. It now becomes a place that mixes the eastern and western culture harmoniously. West Street in Yangshuo has developed into the most prosperous area in Yangshuo. The signboards of all the stores and restaurants on this street have foreign names written on them, and foreigners are seen here and there. At night, the restaurants in Foreigners' Street are crowded with diners. Decorated with tree bark, palm leaves and colorful lights, these restaurants all boast their own masterpieces. Quite a lot of tourists who want to stay in Yangshuo for some time stay here and get a job working in a restaurant as a cook. Because Yangshuo West Street is the symbol of this county, someone said, if has not been to West Street, he/she is regarded as having not been to Yangshuo. It is also a well-know brand. The reputation of the street is not superior to the Wall Street in New Yor, the Downing Street in London, the avenue des champs-elysees in Paris, and the Chang'an Street in Beijing. With its unique charm, West Street attracts tens of thousands tourists from home and abroad.

West Street building is distinctive, match well of Chinese and western elements. Part of the building in the West Street retained the style of primitive simplicity and elegant of north Guangxi buildings during the Ming and Qing dynasties, like Chinese style tile,
Impression Sanjie Liu Show

You may have watched plays in the theater and have been used to the stage, lights, and sound equipment in an enclosed space. Would you like to try an alternative way of enjoying a performance, in a natural environment? If so, please come to Yangshuo to witness a performance of 'Impression Sanjie Liu'. We are sure that it will satisfy you greatly.

The performance was premiered on March 20th, 2004 at the Sanjie Liu Sing Fair, one mile from West Street (Xi Jie). This is the world largest natural theater which utilizes the waters of the Li River as its stage, with twelve mist shrouded hills and the heavens as its backdrop. Mist, rain, moonlight, the hills and their inverted reflections in the river all become the ever-changing natural background. Its auditorium is housed on the
natural islands of the river with the audience standing on the designed terraces, surrounded by green plants. The sound equipment here cannot be seen because it is in harmony with the natural environment.

The valleys, the hills, the cool breeze and the gurgling streams are all elements contributing to the three-dimensional sound effect. Day by day, different weather offers different sceneries with the four seasons refreshing the performance as well, so you will have unique experience every time you watch it. This is really a new concept opera using nature as an integral part of its performers; hence its name - 'Human's Masterpiece Cooperated with the God'.

**Butterfly Cave**

Butterfly Scenic Zone, is on the outskirts of the city. The whole construction covers an area of more than 36,000 square meters and has taken a year to complete.

It's all about butterflies---the butterfly cave, butterfly waterfall, butterfly bridge and butterfly lake are the highlights of this scenic zone. A king-size butterfly specimen welcomes visitors at the entrance of the stalactite cave. Inside the cave, the stalactites in various butterfly forms remind people of an unbelievable fairyland. After crossing the butterfly bridge and walking along the tranquil stone-tablet forest, tourists will have a bird-eye view of the surrounding area. Living up to its name is a butterfly garden. It's the largest of its kind in China, and is home to more than 200 species.
The Longji Rice Terraces

The Rice Terraces in Longji village show a picture of great momentum and imposing beauty, being reputed as having no match in the world. Longji Rice Terraces are reached from Guilin by mountain roads amid spectacular scenery. With a history of more than 700 years, the area is still being used for growing premium quality rice by Yao and Zhuang villagers. The rice terraces are built into the hillsides and look like great steps cut into the slopes as they wind around the mountainsides. This ingenious construction makes best use of the scarce arable land and water resources in the mountainous area. The Rice Terraces are much prettier after the rain, as the morning fog is clearing or while rice is being harvested. If you like to paint or photograph dramatic, beautiful landscapes, this would be a superb destination in which to practice your art; or come here anyway just to look, gaze in awe, and take it all in; it's a Guilin must-see!

Longsheng Longji Rice Terraces was original built in Yuan Dynasty and completed in the early Qing Dynasty with a history of over 650 years. The ancestors who first cultivate the rice terrace would never think about that their wisdom and hard work could build such a beautiful and amazing scenic area. For such a long time, the strong will for living, the wisdom and power of human is fully presenting on this land. The terraces like ribbons and chains full of the mountains. The mountains looks just like giant snails or a huge fan. Some like mirror with different shapes. On this wide land, footpath wriggles between terraces. Folk songs linger in between mountains. It is hard to imagine that 800 years ago how the first batch of Zhuang and Yao people faced to the deep mountains and forests, and how they rely on original slash-and-burn agriculture and cultivate the first field.

It is said that a strict master told a famer that he must cultivate 206 pieces of field, if not he could not have a rest. The farmer worked for a whole day and found there was just 206 pieces of field. He did not know what to do. He took the straw rain cape and planed to go back home. He was so surprised that the last piece of field was just under his cape.
Longsheng Ailing Hot Spring

Longsheng Ailing Hot Spring reputed to be "a heaven of peace and happiness" and "paradise on earth". It is the centerpiece of the national park. Welling out from rock cracks halfway up the mountain, the hot spring water is colorless, tasteless, pure and clear, 54-58 degrees centigrade, and contains of many trace elements, such as lithium, strontium, iron, manganese, zinc and copper. The water is good for drinking and bathing. Its curative powers are effective for nerves, skin diseases, rheumatism, and arthritis.

Since Longsheng Hot Spring is situated in a deep and tranquil valley and surrounded by mountains of dense vegetation, it is warm in winter and cool in summer. Longsheng Hot Spring Resort is established with the approval of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and become the provincial tourism resort. It is located in the downtown of Guilin 137 km around the mountains place. Forest cover in the broadness amounts to 5
square kilometers, and it is the ancient Cambrian geology. From Baiyaling cliff ridge to the swan boundary fault zone is dozens of kilometers long which forms the main channel of hot springs. Hot spring gushed out from the depths of the 1200 meters underground strata, the water temperature between 45 °C - 58 °. The spring water contains lithium, strontium, iron, zinc, copper and so on more than ten kinds of beneficial trace elements in human body.

Huangluo Yao Village

Huangluo Yao Village is located on the Longji Scenic Area. It is one of the thirteen Yao ethnic villages in Longji. The ethnic group that living here are all the red Yao ethnic people. A custom of red Yao ethnic is that all females should keep a long hair. Among the 60 families, the longest hair can reach to 1.9 meters, while others also have more than 1-meter-long hair. So Huangluo Yao Village is reputed as the first long hair village in the world. Single girls' hair can not be seen by others. They usually cover a blue scarf on the head so that people could not see it. The man who is the first one to see her hair will be his husband. And he only can see her beautiful hair on the wedding day. If you see the girl's hair carelessly, you have to stay there for 3 years as a son-in-law of the girl's family.

Huangluo Yao Village Long Hair Custom.

In red Yao woman's mind, long hair has very important significance. Long hair, has a meaning of "long and prosper", a symbol of long life and wealth and a symbol of prosperity and good fortune. Red Yao women extremely value to the their hair, and
they have custom of keeping hairs, dressing up hairs and have secret method of hair care which has passed from generation to generation.

From the age of 12 they began to keep hair, and when it grows to a certain length they will cut their hair and collect it. Red Yao women not only have long hair and their hair is pitch-black and beautiful and it is hard to see white hair. This is owing to their secret method that they use wooden comb to comb hair carefully, and their shampoo is made from rice washing water and mountain herbs.