Chengdu Pandas & Sichuan

Chengdu - Leshan - Emeishan - 5 days / 4 nights

Sample itinerary - Subject to availability

Travel style: small group

Overview

Pandas, tea houses and Sichuan cooking.

The journey

Five days built around Chengdu's giant pandas and the Sichuan that surrounds them - teahouse lanes, a levitating monastery mountain and the cooking that made the city a first-name name in food. A short trip with one clear reason to travel.

Highlights

- Panda base before the crowds
- Tea houses
- A hands-on Sichuan cooking session

Day by day



Day 1 - Arrive Chengdu

Met at the airport and driven to a central hotel near the teahouse lanes and the metro - no car needed again until the Leshan day. The first evening runs at Chengdu's own pace: snack-street griddles, hot-pot steam on the pavements (mild broths standard), and side alleys that stay loud late. Rest is legitimate; the pandas start early.

Meals: - - Hotel: Chengdu, city centre

Day 2 - Pandas at first light, tea in the afternoon

Into the panda base at opening, when the animals feed and the light is soft: the enclosures, the nursery windows and the red-panda woodland. Visits are real-name reserved, and keeper-style experiences run only as conservation-education sessions confirmed with the foundation beforehand, as noted. The afternoon is the trip's centrepiece - a park teahouse: covered-bowl tea, bamboo chairs, mahjong tiles, and nothing on the clock.

(keeper-style sessions are education-programme only and confirmed with the foundation before booking)

Meals: B, L - Hotel: Chengdu

Day 3 - Market to wok

A morning in a working wet market with the cooking-class chef - greens, dried chillies, fermentation jars and the bargaining that moves it all - then a hands-on Sichuan session: noodle work, mapo tofu at source, heat scaled to the group with spice always on the side. Lunch is what you cook. The afternoon is free around the old lanes, with the guide's teahouse list as backup.

Meals: B, L - Hotel: Chengdu

Day 4 - Leshan and back

A full-day return to the Leshan Giant Buddha, carved into the cliff where three rivers meet: descend the stairways beside the statue when the queues allow, with the route decided on the day. Lunch in Leshan and back to Chengdu by early evening. For groups wanting more, Emeishan can be added as an extension - transport and altitude arrangements subject to confirmation, as noted. (Emeishan extension: transport and altitude arrangements subject to confirmation)

Meals: B, L - Hotel: Chengdu

Day 5 - Depart

Transfer to Chengdu's airport for the international flight. With an afternoon departure there is time for one last teahouse hour or a final bowl of dan-dan noodles near the hotel; with a morning flight, the guide sets the departure backwards from check-in the night before. The China coordination team remains reachable until boarding, and Chengdu's direct links keep the homeward leg simple.

Meals: B - Hotel: -

What makes this journey different

- Panda base at opening time, when the animals are active and the light is soft.
- Honest tiers: visits are real-name reserved; keeper-style experiences are education-programme only and confirmed with the foundation before any promise is made.
- A teahouse afternoon treated as the itinerary's centrepiece, not a gap-filler.
- Sichuan cooking class with a market walk, scaled to the group's spice comfort.

Where you stay

A central Chengdu hotel near the teahouse lanes and metro; no overnight baggage moves in five days.

Food & local life

Sichuan hot pot (mild broths available), mapo tofu at source, dan-dan noodles, and the tea-and-snack ritual locals actually spend their afternoons on.

Included

+ Accommodation in the agreed grade, with breakfast
+ Private guide and private vehicle on touring days
+ All internal transport between cities as stated - high-speed rail, internal flights and transfers
+ Entrance fees for the sites named in the itinerary
+ Meals as stated (B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner)
+ Drinking water in the vehicle, and a 24-hour emergency contact while the group is in China

Not included

- International flights to and from China
- Chinese visa or visa-application costs
- Travel insurance, including medical and cancellation cover
- Meals not marked in the itinerary, drinks and personal spending
- Anything listed under subject to confirmation until it is confirmed

To be confirmed with suppliers

- panda base tickets and keeper programme availability
- cooking class session days and capacity
- Emeishan transport and altitude arrangements

Customisation

Every framework can be re-built around your client's dates, party size, hotel grade, pace and interests - or combined with scheduled small group departures where budget matters. Send us the brief and we will quote in writing.