

FUJIAN

The Hutong
Travel 

Bike Journey



*A Christmas cycling adventure
through tea farms & tulous*

INFORMATION PACK

20th-26th December 2020

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Introduction **Fujian**



Mistaken in early satellite photos for missile silos, Fujian's ring-shaped tulou turned out to be way more interesting. Earthen giants, crosses between castles and community centers, a tulou can house a whole Hakka clan, living, working, and raising families in the safety of their multi-storey citadels.

On this journey, you'll experience life in these incredible UNESCO-listed buildings with our local Hakka hosts, get a taste of Fujian's vibrant folk culture, and explore the history of Xiamen, the ancient seaport city once known throughout the western world as 'Amoy'.

This 120km bike ride will take us through the mountains and valleys of rural Fujian, in Southeast China, across landscapes offering something new and intriguing around every turn. Fujian is renowned for tea-cultivation, fertile farmland, and for the distinctive Hokkien culture found in overseas Chinese communities all over the world.

In December, families will be harvesting their crops in fields around villages dating from the 15th century. We'll be privileged to stay among some of the communities which have flourished here, and to learn about the ways they've preserved elements of their culture and way of life over time.

Bike Journey Map & Details

We'll cycle approximately 120km over the course of four days.

Our itineraries often vary slightly; there is always a possibility we'll make minor adjustments to provide extra opportunities for exploration and discovery.

DEPARTURE DATE

20th December, 2020
(Sunday)

RETURN DATE

26th December, 2020
(Saturday)



CYCLING DIFFICULTY

6 / 10
(see page 7 for more details)

PRICE

RMB 9,500
(does not include airfare)

LOCATIONS

Gulangyu	A	鼓浪屿
Xiamen	A	厦门
Hongkeng	B	洪坑
Fuyulou	B	福玉楼
Tianluokeng	C	田螺坑
Chuxi	D	初溪

SIGN-UP PROCESS

To express your interest and reserve your place, please email travel@thehutong.com.

Our team will: share a registration form to complete, provide updated travel information, and answer any questions you may have.

Bike Journey Itinerary



DAY 1

Xiamen 厦门

We'll begin with a scenic afternoon boat cruise to Gulangyu Island. Along the way, as you take in stunning views of Xiamen and the island itself – dotted with historic colonial buildings – you'll be briefed on the background to some of the characters and cultural elements you'll encounter on your Fujian journey. We'll explore the island – considered the wealthiest square mile on the face of the earth in the 1920s – via a guided walk and a photo challenge.

After a local ferry back to the charming Zhongshan area of Xiamen's Siming district, we'll have dinner and a jaunt through the local seafood market. We'll also make time to draw for our Secret Santa to give people ample time to come up with gift ideas.



DAY 2 // 20-25km

Xiamen 厦门

We'll ease ourselves into our saddles with a gentle urban exploration on Xiamen's Bicycle Skyway, the longest elevated bike-exclusive path in the world. The skyway snakes its way past stunning urban scenery to the seaside, from where we'll be able to see Taiwan's Kinmen Island.

We'll lunch at one of the best Minnan restaurants in Xiamen before finishing up our ride for the day in the Shapowei area. From there, the journey will continue on foot, up to Hongshan Temple and its 360 degree view of Xiamen Island. We'll wrap up our evening with dinner and drinks back in the hip Shapowei Art Zone.



DAY 3 // 15km

Xiamen - Hóngkēng
厦门 - 洪坑

In the morning, we'll hop on a bus and transfer out of the city, ascending past tea plantations and fruit farms into tulou country. In all we'll wind our way 120km inland towards idyllic Hongkeng village and its seven UNESCO-listed tulou.

After lunch, we'll get on the bikes for a leisurely 15km ride through rolling hills, tulou villages and rice fields into the back of Hongkeng village.

At Hongkeng, the Lin family will welcome us into their extraordinary home – 120 year-old Fuyulou, a 'five phoenix regal Tulou', where we'll stay for the next three nights. You'll have time to explore the village before we reconvene to dine in the family home.

After a wholesome meal our hosts will share with us a little more about their family, their lineage, and their role in the history of Yongding County, as we while away the evening sipping on a variety of Fujian teas. We'll also start to get into the Christmas spirit by building a bonfire, watching some Christmas movies, and cooking up some 'traditional' gingerbread tulou.



DAY 4 // 28-41km

Hóngkēng - Tiánluókēng

洪坑—田螺坑

We'll start each morning at Fuyulou right, with the Lin family's homemade coffee, porridge, and bread for breakfast.

Today we'll take on some country roads, venturing off the beaten tourist track. We'll ride through bamboo forests and past pine, banana, and palm trees. Eventually we'll come to Meilin, a riverside town seemingly frozen in time. After lunch at our friend Mr Wei's restaurant, those seeking more challenge can choose to take on our most challenging route yet: a steep 3km ascent to an abandoned tea plantation. We'll end the ride by winding down to Tianluokeng Village.

Back at Fuyulou, there'll be mulled wine with local characteristics, some cocktails, and maybe, just maybe, some fireside carols.



DAY 5 // 38-45km

Hóngkēng - Chūxī

洪坑—初溪

On Christmas eve, a gentle uphill ride out of Hongkeng will gradually give way to some more testing inclines, taking on steeper country lanes and some rugged farming trails, too. We'll visit the Princess Tulou before continuing from there to Nanjiang Village, which is home to a beautiful covered bridge and many tulou, including the famous 'Scholar's Tulou', Yanxianglou. Also in the village are the ruins of Libenlou, burned down during the civil war.

We'll end the day on a few killer ascents into Chuxi, a village with several stunning tulou, and a lookout from which to take in Jiqinglou – built in 1419 and one of the most iconic tulous. We'll then head back to Fuyulou for some Christmas eve celebrations: a White Elephant-style Secret Santa, more mulled wine and another round of Christmas cocktails, this time by our Christmas tree.



DAY 6 // Rest

Hóngkēng - Xiamen

洪坑—厦门

We'll spend Christmas morning in Fuyulou, where we will have the chance to visit more of Hongkeng and its many interesting tulous and to share Christmas cheer. After that we'll begin working our way back to the coast. En route, we'll stop at some mountain tea fields, where local families still cultivate and process their own homegrown tea. In one of these fields, we will learn the art of picking, drying, rolling, and oxidizing Camellia Sinensis leaves into the distinctive Oolongs of the region. We will also become familiar with the fruits, herbs and flowers grown in the hills that can be used to accent these choice teas.

Once back in Xiamen, we'll celebrate our final night of this Christmas adventure in one of China's highest-rated hot spring resorts. There really is no better way to refresh and recharge after an exhilarating ride through Fujian's incredible countryside!



Travel Day

Depart Xiamen

Sign off on the bike ride of a lifetime, sharing your stories with new friends. Normally, we take a flight out of Xiamen, but your own travel plans will dictate where you depart and travel onwards to.

Important Information

Fitness, Attitude & Difficulty

You don't need to be a Tour-de-France caliber rider to complete our Tour-de-Fujian. It is challenging at certain points, and we recommend that you do some training before you join us; riding around your city is a good start, but try and find some time to ride up a hill or two, and change gears.

As long as you're in good shape, stay healthy, eat well and get enough sleep, you shouldn't have a problem riding every day and making it to each day's destination.

We've built the itinerary specifically to ensure everyone is fully capable of succeeding.

While our rides aren't exceptionally long, there are some serious hills – be ready and keep this in mind when training.

That said, The Hutong's Fujian Bike Journey is just that: a journey on a bicycle. It's not a race or a competition, but an opportunity to move at just the right speed through beautiful villages, say "hello" to locals, stop for an impromptu passion fruit snack stop, or sneak off into a local tea plantation for a freshly brewed cup.

It is by no means an easy journey; while some might enjoy an "All Downhill" bike trip, we at The Hutong think that the wonderfully fresh meals and expansive scenery are enjoyed best when earned after a tough uphill.





Support

We will be supported by a small bus which will carry our food, water, luggage, and equipment. The backup bus will sweep the route. So if feel like you're tired, have some sore legs, or just want an easy day, the bus will be there to pick you up. We will also have a mechanic following the group for patching flat tires or fixing any other problems that may arise.

Safety

The Hutong requires all riders to wear helmets. Your guides are trained in first aid and bicycle safety, but it is your responsibility to ensure you ride safely. For more information on safe cycling, we will provide our Bicycle Safety Guidelines before the departure date.



Meals & Snacks

The Hutong will organize three meals a day, including plenty of carbohydrates and protein to fuel you for the ride. Most breakfasts are rice noodles, accompanied by a variety of local spices and pickled vegetables. Lunches and dinners are at local homes and restaurants and are always fresh, colorful, and often spicy. In the lead up to the trip, we'll ask about any food allergies or dietary preferences, including if you can't eat spicy foods, and our Hutong guides will make every effort to accommodate you.

While we will provide some snacks, we recommend that participants bring along comfort food they know they will like (granola bars, energy gels, powerbars, or anything they know will get them through the day). We'll also provide fresh fruit as it appears along the route.



Road Conditions

While most roads are paved, there are occasional cobblestone sections and sections with gravel or potholes. The bikes available for rent will be basic 21-speed mountain bikes. While we welcome participants to bring their own mountain bikes, we strongly discourage anyone from bringing a road bike as the roads will tear your tires to shreds.

Hydration

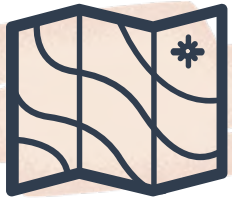
We bring plenty of clean, bottled water along for the ride, and make sure to provide lots of rehydration stops. We also include sugary drinks at meal times for a bit of an extra boost, as well as plenty of cold beer when the day's riding is done. We do not provide energy drinks or sports drinks.



Accommodation

The first two nights of this trip will be spent in a standard hotel, and the last night will be spent in one of the most highly-rated hot spring resorts in all of China. All the other nights, we will be staying in Fuyulou, a 120 year-old 'five phoenix regal Tulou'. The rooms in Fuyulou are a bit rustic, but the setting is stunning and unique, and we will have the opportunity to celebrate Christmas together with our hosts, the Lin Clan.





Guides

Each Fujian Bicycle Journey comes fully-equipped with two English-speaking guides who are familiar with the terrain and extremely knowledgeable about the area's culture, industry, and history. We also work very closely with amazing local guides who know and love the area; they help to provide all kinds of wonderful experiences.



Weather

The weather in Fujian should be crisp and a bit chilly in December, with daytime highs in the teens (Celsius), and nighttime lows in the single digits. December is dry season in Fujian. However, we may encounter rainfall at some point. In short: you will need rain gear and warm clothes, but you should be able to ride in a short-sleeve shirt and shorts once the sun comes out during the day.

Flights

The Hutong will recommend flights, and can help purchase tickets upon request, though we find it's often easiest for participants to book on their own. If we do help you purchase your ticket, we will not mark up flights. Please let us know your preference. If you have to cancel your flight or change your schedule, the terms and fees of the final booking will ultimately be the responsibility of the traveler.



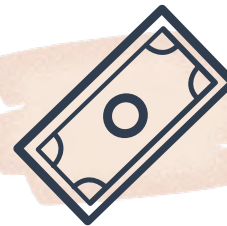
Arrival & Departure

This trip will begin and end in Xiamen. If you are flying on the group flights, our Hutong guide will help you check-in at the airport in Beijing.



Health

We recommend that you visit a medical doctor or consult with the CDC and ask about the following vaccinations: typhoid, polio, tetanus and hepatitis A. Cases of malaria in this area are almost non-existent, though the CDC still lists it as an area where infection is possible. Please consult with your travel doctor or other medical professional as to whether or not anti-malarials are necessary. In the past, there have been cases of dengue fever, in which case The Hutong takes precaution to provide mosquito nets, as well as mosquito repellent at all possible occasions.



Money & Extra Expenses

ATMs are plentiful in Xiamen, but hard to find in the smaller villages and towns. In most places you won't need money, except for snacks or drinks. There will be several stops along the way for local keepsakes, in which case you may wish to have a little bit of money; no more than a few hundred RMB should be sufficient, unless you'd like to stock your tea collection. Of course, you can always pay with Wechat or Alipay, too.

Introducing the Lin Clan

The multi-generational members of the Lin Clan, our hosts in Hongkeng village will help us experience the rich heritage of the Hakka people firsthand. The Hakka were the builders of the first tulou in Fujian, more than eight centuries ago. As they share tales of their ancestors, we'll get a deeper sense of how rural Fujian has not only been rocked by, but also resisted, some of the extraordinary changes affecting China since three brothers built their home, *Fuyulou*, using profits from the tobacco industry, as the turbulent decline of the Qing dynasty played out. In their stories, we'll discover the influence of breakneck modernisation upon a community anchored by traditions, contributing to the magic of this mesmerising place.

Serendipity

Hutong trip leaders travel regularly to destinations to develop relationships with local contacts to provide the most authentic cultural experiences possible. As such, trip itineraries are subject to change, pending the discovery of an even better activity or destination. Itineraries may also be subject to change due to weather, traffic, or government policies.

Christmas

We will be celebrating Christmas Eve with our hosts in Fuyulou, the Lin Clan. For our Christmas eve celebrations we will host a White Elephant-style Secret Santa paired with mulled wine and homemade Christmas cocktails by the Fujian Christmas tree.



I'm tempted to keep this trip a well kept secret ... but that would not be fair to all the people who, like me, like to go on special trips. It would not be fair, either, to the wonderful Hutong team that does a stunning job to make this an unforgettable journey.

Chang Wai Yuen

Fujian Bike Journey Participant





The Hutong **A Bit About Us**

The Hutong creates unforgettable travel experiences throughout China for students from international schools and for people of all ages from around the world. Since 2009, we have been running educational, and adult travel, programs to off-the-beaten-track destinations across China. From the rainforests of southern Yunnan to the grasslands of the Mongolian steppe, all of our programs are meticulously researched and planned to optimize cultural exchange and to offer fun, innovative, and immersive experiences.

As well as being a licensed travel operator across Greater China, The Hutong is at heart a transformative education company. We partner with leading schools to build programs that incorporate learning objectives and life skills, all the while maintaining absolute professionalism and an impeccable safety record. From our team of international educators to our travel specialists, each and every Hutonger shares a passion for providing exceptional learning experiences.

Hutong programs engage with global issues and leave participants with broadened horizons, a renewed sense of their strengths and abilities, and incredible memories. No matter where we go, we aim to make a positive impact on the communities we visit and on the groups we lead.



Contact Information

thehutong.com
travel@thehutong.com

The Hutong Courtyard

1 Jiudaowan Zhongxiang
Beixinqiao, Dongcheng District
Beijing, China

中国北京东城区北新桥九道湾中巷1号

Social Media

Facebook / Instagram / Wechat:
thehutong