

8-day Peonies Tour with Shaolin Temple and Yuntai Mountain

Tour Code: LCT-BDKL-8D-01

Duration: 8 Days

Attractions:

Overview: This tour will take you to visit the great cities of Henan Province. Arrive in the capital city of Zhengzhou and drive to Kaifeng to explore the once great capital of Northern Song Dynasty. Then, pass by the Gongyi and further understand the Song Dynasty by visiting the Northern Song Tombs. Next, you will go to the Eastern Capital Luoyang city and deeply immerse yourself in the Peonies world, meanwhile admire the heritage site Longmen Grottoes. Following that will be the increasingly popular Yuntai Mountain, where you will get close to the nature and relax. At last, you will go back to Zhengzhou and discover the charm of this new capital before taking your leave.

Highlights:

1. Experience the life of Northern Song era person in the Qingming Riverside Landscape Garden
2. Admire one of the few centuries-old grand mansions still exist in China- Kang's Mansion
3. Appreciate the Shaolin culture and Zen Music nearby Shaolin Temple;
4. Revere at the world heritage Longmen Grottoes;
5. Learn about the Peony gene banks and immerse yourself in the sea of peony flowers;
6. Explore the scenic Yuntai Mountain and its famous Red Stone Gorge;

Day 1: Arrival in Zhengzhou and drive to Kaifeng;

Welcome to Zhengzhou city! Your local driver will be waiting for you upon your arrival, and transfer you directly to Kaifeng. You are free to enjoy the rest of the day and a evening stroll at a local night market is highly recommended.

Day 2: Qingming Riverside Landscape Garden, Kaifeng Cultural Showroom, Justice Bao

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Memorial Temple

09:00: Meet your local Kaifeng expert and begin to explore the Kaifeng city.

09:30- 11:00: Your first sight will be the ***Qingming Riverside Landscape Garden***. On the way to the park, you will pass a locally-famous street - ***Songduyu Street***. It's a Song-era style street that hosts many old-fashioned stores selling Kaifeng specialties, traditional artifacts, Chinese paintings and calligraphy works. All the salesmen wear Song Dynasty costume to serve guests. You will visit the street on coach. After a few minutes drive, you will get to the ***Qingming Riverside Landscape Garden***. It's a theme park based in the Kaifeng city in Song Dynasty. It's basically a living replica of the famous painting Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival produced by Zhang Zeduan. Inside the park, you will feel like you went back a thousand years ago with shops, antique pavilions and corridors, and a clear lake under an exquisitely carved bridge with recreational boats floating leisurely.

11:20-12:30: Next, you will head for the ***Kaifeng Cultural Showroom***. The first thing you see in the showroom will be a big relief with four Chinese characters “汴梁大观(Bian Liang Da Guan)” inscribed. The relief shows all the iconic buildings in Kaifeng like the Iron Tower, Dragon Pavilion, and others. The whole showroom is divided into two sections, the Preface Hall and the Western Hall. In the Preface Hall, you will find a variety of calligraphy and painting masterpieces and tons of ancient books telling the history of this old city. In the Western Hall, you will discover all the travel spots both developed, and on the development. Going upstairs, you will learn more of the Kaifeng city chronically, more importantly, you will see how prosperous it was in Song Dynasty. If you are willing to climb more stairs, you will enter the experience area where you can DIY the wood-engraving New Year paintings, learn about the Kaifeng embroidery, root carving, and royal tea performance.

13:00 - 14:00: Enjoy an authentic Henan - flavored lunch at a local restaurant.

14:20-16:30: Lastly, you will head for the ***Justice Bao Memorial Temple***. Located on Xiangyang Road, Justice Bao Memorial Temple is a special place built to memorize an upstanding and honest governor Bao Zheng in Northern Song Dynasty. He was one of the most revered public officials in Chinese history. It's said that he always put righteousness above family loyalty and even executed his nephew convicted of murdering. This memorial temple is the largest one that has preserved the

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entire record of this great man.

17:00: Back to the hotel.

Day 3: Drive to Gongyi, Kang Mansion, Poet Du Fu's Hometown, Northern Song Dynasty Mausoleums, drive to Dengfeng city

08:00: Your local guide and driver will meet you at your Kaifeng hotel and drive you to Gongyi city.

09:30 - 11:00: Your first sight in Gongyi will be the Kang Mansion, aka Kangbaiwan (millionaire Kang)'s Mansion. It's the mansion built by the "Central China Philanthropist" Kang Yingkui and his families in Ming and Qing Dynasties. The mansion has a history of 400 years and housed 12 generations of Kang families, spanning the Ming, Qing and the Republic of China. There are 33 courtyard, 53 buildings, over 1300 rooms and 73 cave houses. Visiting such a grand mansion will enable you to learn about the typical feudal fortress.

11:30 - 12:30: Afterwards, you will head for Du Fu's Hometown. As we all know that Du Fu is one of the greatest poets in Tang Dynasty, his poems have profound influence on future generations. This is where Du Fu was born and grew up as a teenager. The sight is composed of Poem Exhibition and Poet Exhibition. In the Poem Exhibition area, you will appreciate Du Fu's poems and in Poet Exhibition area, you will know how Du Fu became a poet.

12:30-13:30: Explore the local food culture and have lunch.

14:00-17:00: After lunch, you will leave for the Northern Song Dynasty Mausoleums. Belonging to one of the largest imperial mausoleum complexes and the best-preserved ground site, the Northern Song Dynasty Mausoleum is the site hosting the tombs for Song Dynasty (960-1127) emperors, empresses, royal members, generals and ministers. There are about 300 tombs discovered in the site covering almost all the emperors in Northern Song Dynasty except the Emperor Hui and Emperor Qin, who was captured by Jin Army and died outside the Song-era soil. Thousands years of the stone carvings in site offer us a great chance to memorize the great Northern Song Dynasty.

18:00: You will leave for Kaifeng and enjoy a free evening at the night market of Kaifeng on your own.

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Day 4: Shaolin Temple, Pagoda Forest, Shaolin Zen Music Grand Ceremony

09:00: Your guide and driver will meet you at the Kaifeng Hotel lobby and take you to the Shaolin Temple.

9:30-12:00: Visit the world-famous **Shaolin Temple**. Located in the region of Song Mountain, Dengfeng City, Henan Province, Shaolin Temple is reputed to be “The Number One Temple under Heaven”. Included on UNESCO's World Cultural and Heritage List in 2010, it is the cradle of Chinese Zen Buddhism and Shaolin Martial Arts such as the Shaolin Cudgel.

12:00 - 13:00: Enjoy an authentic Henan - flavored lunch at a local restaurant.

13:00- 16:00: Continue your visit at the Shaolin temple and enjoy a Kungfu show performed by a group of real monks. Afterwards, you will proceed to the **Pagoda Forest**. Situated at the foot of Wuru Hill, west side of Shaolin temple, Pagoda Forest is a tomb complex for prestigious monks. As the biggest of its own kind in China, the Pagoda Forest has over 500 pagodas, of which 232 tombs are preserved. Each pagoda differs in size and structure depending on the building era, social opinions about Buddhist, and the achievement of the occupant. Most of the pagodas were constructed by masons but there are some chiseled from stones. The pagodas are inscribed with exquisite patterns, reliefs and characters telling the story of the pagoda host. Some of the pagodas are accompanied by the tablets on which the pagoda host's life story is engraved, his achievements, when and how the pagodas were made. This Pagoda Forest is not only a great place to study ancient Chinese masonry architecture, Chinese calligraphy and carving technique, but also a valuable place for the Chinese Buddhism and Shaolin Culture.

16:30: Your guide and driver will escort you back to the hotel for rest, when you will also enjoy dinner on your own.

19:00: Your driver will pick you up from the hotel and take you to enjoy the grand Shaolin Zen Music Grand Ceremony. The show is performed in Daixian Valley, about 7km from the Shaolin Temple. The brooks, forests, and stone bridges in the valley play a role in this show. You will sit on a cattail hassock while enjoying all kinds of Zen Music like Water Music, Wood Music, Wind Music, Light Music, and Stone Music, each giving a completely different mood.

21:40: You will get back to the hotel for rest.

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Day 5: Drive to Luoyang, Longmen Grottoes, National Peony Garden, Lijing Gate

09:00: Your local tour expert will meet you at your Kaifeng hotel lobby and take you to Luoyang today.

10:00 - 13:00: Visit the world-famous Longmen Grottoes. Set on the banks of the Yi River, 12 km south of Luoyang City, the Longmen Grottoes are ranked the first of the Four Great Grottoes in China, together with the Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang, Yungang Grottoes in Datong and Mount Maiji Grottoes in Tianshui. It was also listed into the World Cultural Heritages and Relics by UNESCO in 2000 for its broad collections and profound cultural influence on the world. Dotted between Xiangshan Mountain and the Longmen Mountain, with the Yi River flowing below, the Longmen Grottoes are harmonious with the surrounding mountains, forests and rivers creating a serene and peaceful atmosphere.

13:00-14:00: Look for the local favorites in Luoyang, like lamb soup, spicy soup, Bu Fan soup , Tang Mian Jiao, noodles in green-bean milk, etc.

14:40-16:00: After lunch, you will visit the National Peony Garden. As the only national-level of peony gene bank, the National Peony Garden is responsible for the collection and preservation of the peony germplasm resources, and the development and promotion of new peonies. There are altogether 1,362 kinds of peony genes preserved here, making it possible for you enjoy the blooming flowers no matter what season you visit. There are also other gardens like cherry garden, peach garden, wintersweet garden and pine garden, artificial lakes, artificial waterfalls, corridors and pavilions to make the whole garden much more enjoyable.

16:20-17:30: Your last stop will be the Lijing Gate. Built in Sui Dynasty, Lijing Gate used to be the West Gate of Luoyang City. Luoyang people used to say that Lijing Gate is the No.1 Gate in middle China and also one of the eight must-see sights in Luoyang. There is also a local saying that you have only been to Luoyang if you visited the Lijing Gate. Standing on the Lijing Gate, the old streets unfold in front of you. Today's Lijing Gate is a lot like other old streets in China. It's inundated with all kinds of characteristic restaurants, gift shops, and stalls. You may stop by to taste the delicious local soup, or the pleasantly presented Peony Flower Pastry.

18:00: Get back to your Luoyang hotel.

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Day 6: Drive Jiaozuo, Yuntai Mountain

7:00: Your local tour expert will meet you at your Luoyang hotel lobby and take you to admire the picturesque Yuntai Mountain.

10:00-16:00: You will have a full day at the Yuntai Mountain to enjoy its beauty. Yuntai Mountain or Yuntaishan Geopark is a UNESCO-listed sight in Xiuwu county of Jiaozuo City, and the only national forest park in Henan province. It's becoming more and more popular with domestic tourists and attracts millions of visitors with its masterfully chiseled edges, thickly carpeted skins and glorious waterfalls everywhere. There are 11 small sights inside the park, among which Red Stone Canyon, Tanpu Canyon, Zhuyu Peak are absolutely the musts for you.

The Red Stone Canyon, aka Wenpanyu Canyon is one of a few Danxia landform scenic spots in northern China with ripple marks and steep cliffs of red rocks towering on both sides. It gathered lakes, pools, streams, and waterfalls. This place remains 25 degrees in temperature all year round, making it an ideal holiday resort . There is a deep valley where you can walk between the closely standing cliffs that formed 1.4 billion years ago after a violent movement of earth crust. The 2-km road is in Z shape, meaning that whenever you're down, you will have to climb up again in some time. Please be prepared. Along the way, you will discover dozens of stunning waterfalls and natural pools, very picturesque.

The next highlight is the Tanpu Gorge, one of the water sources of Zifang River. The whole gorge is 2km in length spanning from south to north. On its eastern side, you will find the steep cliffs towering into the sky with bed rock exposed in the air. On its western side, a range of peaks competing for attention. In the meandering groove, there is a singing brook named Xiaolong Xi, whose bed was made of differently-shaped and variably-colored layers of stones steps, creating a spring every three steps, a waterfall every five steps and a pool every ten steps.

Lastly, you will visit the Cornel Peak. As the highest point of Yuntai Mountain, the Cornel Peak offers a breathtaking 360-degrees view of the whole scenic area, even the Taihang Mountain in the north and the ribbon-like Yellow River in the south.

16:30: Your guide will leave you to have some free time in the Yuntai mountain to explore on your own.

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Day 7: Yellow River Scenic Area, Erqi Mall Memorial, Dehua Pedestrian Street

08:00: Your guide and driver will pick you up at your Yuntai Mountain hotel and take you to explore the Zhengzhou city.

10:00 - 12:30: You will visit the Yellow River Scenic Area. Located about 20km northwest of Zhengzhou city, the scenic area is adjacent to the mighty Yellow River in the north and Yue Mountain in the south. It's where the Loess plateau ends influencing and the perched Yellow River begins. There are five scenic spots, namely the Five Dragons Peak, the Camel Mountain Range, the Yueshan Temple, the Stone Figures of Yandi and Huangdi, and the Ancient City of Liu Bang and Xiang Yu.

12:30 - 13:30: Have lunch at a nice local restaurant.

14:30 - 15:30: In the afternoon, you will head for the Zhengzhou Erqi Memorial that was built in memory of the great strike in 1923. On Feb.1 1923, the workers of Jing-han Railway wanted to establish a general union, the plan was greatly thwarted and disrupted by the feudal warlords. The workers decided to go on strike on Feb.4, which lasted 3 days until Feb. 7 when the warlord Wu Peifu and Xiao Yaonan sent troops to suppress them violently. The suppression didn't scare the striking workers. Instead, they became more courageous to fight against the warlords, resulting in 40 people being killed and over 300 people injured by the warlords. The worker revolution continued in different forms until in 1925 the Jinghan Railway General Union was finally established on Feb.7. This memorial tower was built in 1951 to memorize the incident and railway workers.

15:30 - 16:30: In the last, you will have a leisure time at Dehua Pedestrian Street where you can find a lot of places for shopping and entertainment.

17:00: Get back to your Zhengzhou hotel.

Day 8: Drive to Zhengzhou and depart.

Your Zhengzhou driver will pick you up 4 hours before your flight and take you to airport. We will bid you farewell.

What's Important:

What's included:

Air-conditioned vehicles with experienced drivers.

Licensed Chinese- English bilingual speaking tour guides.

Entrance fee for sights mentioned

Show tickets for Zen Music Performance.

Bottled water.

What's not included:

Meals

Personal expenses or private entertainment items in sights.

Tips or gratuities for guide and driver if we did a good job (recommended)

Accommodation

What to take: smile and an enthusiastic attitude.

Good to know:

1. As our customer, your time is very valuable to us. We will never take you to any factories or shops for shopping.
2. For lunch, we will take you to a nice local restaurant, where you can enjoy the local food at a fair price. Please inform us about your food preferences in case you have any allergies.
3. A regular day tour will last 8-9 hours. If you want a tour with a duration exceeding the working period of our tour guide and driver, we need to charge you for your extra hours at the standard rate of 100 RMB per hour.
4. The tour we provide you is based on days, not the hours. A regular day tour will last 8-9 hours. In case you only need our service for between 6 hours to 8 hours in one day, we will consider it a day tour.
5. Please be aware that your itinerary can be changed at anytime. Whenever you want to adjust it,

we will help you with that.

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6. What we provide are high-quality private tours, you will only be with your families or friends.

There are no other people joining your tour.

7. Wheelchairs are available, please advise prior to your trip in case you need any.

FAQ:

1. How do we get to the Longmen Grottoes?

Re: You will take electric car to the Longmen Grottoes to save energy for the afternoon trip.

2. Can we watch the Shaolin Kungfu Performance?

Re: Sure, the Kungfu Show is performed every hour of every day. You will see an actual monk performing for you.

3. How many Shaolin Temples are there in China?

Re: As far as we know, there are two famous Shaolin Temples in China. The most famous one is the one in Dengfeng city, while the other one is located in Putian, Fujian province. Due to their location, people call the one in Dengfeng city the Northern Shaolin Temple, and the other one Southern Shaolin Temple. Those two temples may seem similar, but the northern temple is actually much more popular and famous than southern one. It's said that the southern temple is subordinate to the northern temple.

4. My child is very interested in Kungfu, can you arrange a master to teach him a little?

Re: There are two kinds of Kungfu classes in Luoyang. One is commercially run outside the temple by a private group. The other is inside the Temple taught by a real monk who will give you a tour afterwards. Please let us know which kind you prefer.

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5. What kind of Zen Music Show tickets will you get for us?

Re: There are five kinds of tickets for Zen Music Show. For Zone A seat, it's \$46 USD. For Zone B seat, it's \$41 USD. For Zone C seat, it's \$31 USD. For VIP seat, it's \$77 USD. For presidential seat, it's \$154 USD.

6. What kind of car will I have?

Re: It depends on your group size. For a group size of 1-2 people, you will be offered a sedan car. For a group size of 3-4 people, you will enjoy a 7-seater van. A 14-17-seater van will be in service if there are 5-8 of you. When your tour group size is larger, a 33-seater coach or bigger will be offered.

7. Can the tour guide accompany us to have dinner and help us order?

Re: The working time for the tour guide and driver is 8-9 hours. If you have finished your tour early, our tour guide can certainly help you until you get to dinner. Otherwise, you will need to pay extra for their overtime work.

8. Do you offer children-friendly tours?

Re: Yes, that's one place we shine. Based on your children's ages and interests, we can customize the itinerary. From a more general perspective, we can provide car booster seats for babies under 2. Meals will be recommended catering to children. The tour will be relaxing and educational.

9. Do you provide tour guides that speak languages other than English?

Re: Sure, we can provide the most commonly-used language speaking tour guides, like English, French, Spanish, German, Russian, Japanese, Italian, etc. Please inform us of your language preference beforehand.

10. How do I tip my guide?

Re: You may know that we don't tip people in China. Indeed, tipping is not a compulsory thing here,
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but our tour guide and driver would expect you to. They would see it as recognition of their hard work and a good job. There is no specific amount that you need to tip. It depends on you.