

# Yunnan

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For the *tea* from this region, see *Yunnan tea*.

## 云南省 Yúnnán Sh ěng

Abbreviations: 滇 or 云 (Pinyin: Di ān or Yún)



云 yún - cloud

**Origin of name** 南 nán - south

"South of the Cloud Mountains"

**Administration type** Province

**Capital**

Kunming

(and largest city)

**CPC Cttee Secretary** Bai Enpei

**Governor** Xu Rongkai

**Area** 394,100 km<sup>2</sup> (8th)

<b><u>Population</u></b> (2004)	44,150,000 ( <u>12th</u> )
- <u>Density</u>	112/km <sup>2</sup> ( <u>24th</u> )
<b><u>GDP</u></b> (2004)	<u>CNY</u> 295.9 billion ( <u>19th</u> )
- per capita	<u>CNY</u> 6700 ( <u>29th</u> )
<b><u>HDI</u></b> (2005)	0.657 ( <b>medium</b> ) ( <u>29th</u> )
	<u>Han</u> - 67%
	<u>Yi</u> - 11%
	<u>Bai</u> - 3.6%
	<u>Hani</u> - 3.4%
<b><u>Major nationalities</u></b>	<u>Zhuang</u> - 2.7%
	<u>Dai</u> - 2.7%
	<u>Miao</u> - 2.5%
	<u>Hui</u> - 1.5%
<b><u>Prefecture-level</u></b>	16 divisions
<b><u>County-level</u></b>	129 divisions
<b><u>Township-level</u></b> <sup>†</sup>	1565 divisions
<b><u>ISO 3166-2</u></b>	CN-53

### Official website

<http://www.yn.gov.cn> (Simplified Chinese)

### Source for population and GDP data:

《中国统计年鉴—2005》 *China Statistical Yearbook 2005*

ISBN 7503747382

### Source for nationalities data:

《2000年人口普查中国民族人口资料》 *Tabulation on nationalities of 2000 population census of China*

ISBN 7105054255

† As at December 31, 2004

**Yunnan** (**[help](#)**·**[info](#)**) (**Simplified Chinese**: 云南; **Traditional Chinese**: 雲南; **pinyin**: Yúnnán; literally "south of the clouds") is a **province** of the **People's Republic of China**, located in the far southwestern corner of the country. The capital of the province is **[Kunming](#)**.

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## Emblem

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*Camellia reticulata*, a plant native to Yunnan Province, is the **emblem** of this province.

## History

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The *Yuanmou Man*, a *Homo erectus* fossil unearthed by railway engineers in the 1960s, has been determined to be the oldest known hominid fossil in China. By the Neolithic period, there were human settlements in the area of [Lake Dian](#). These people used stone tools and constructed simple wooden structures.

Around the [third century BC](#), the central area of Yunnan around present day Kunming was known as [Dian](#). The [Chu](#) general **Zhuang Qiao** (庄賧) entered the region from the upper [Yangtze River](#) and set himself up as "King of Dian". He and his followers brought into Yunnan an influx of Chinese influence, the start of a long history of migration and

cultural expansion.

In **221 BC**, **Qin Shi Huang** unified China and extend his authority south. Commanderies and counties were established in Yunnan. An existing road in Sichuan – the "Five Foot Way" – was extended south to around present day **Qujing** (曲靖), in eastern Yunnan. In **109 BC**, **Emperor Wu** sent General **Guo Chang** (郭昌) south to Yunnan, establishing Yizhou commandery and twenty-four subordinate counties. The commandery seat was at Dianchi county (present day **Jinning** 晋宁). Another county was called "Yunnan", probably the first use of the name. To expand the burgeoning trade with **Burma** and **India**, Emperor Wu also sent **Tang Meng** (唐蒙) to maintain and expand the Five Foot Way, renaming it "Southwest Barbarian Way" (西南夷道). By this time, agricultural technology in Yunnan had markedly improved. The local people used bronze tools, plows and kept a variety of livestock, including cattle, horses, sheep, goats, pigs and dogs. Anthropologists have determined that these people were related to the people now known as the **Tai**. They lived in tribal congregations, sometimes led by exile Chinese.

During the **Three Kingdoms**, the territory of present day Yunnan, **Yuexi** (黔西) and southern Sichuan was collectively called **Nanzhong**. The dissolution of Chinese central authority led to increased autonomy for Yunnan and more power for the local tribal structures. In **AD 225**, the famed statesman **Zhuge Liang** led three columns into Yunnan to pacify the tribes. His seven captures of **Meng Huo**, a local magnate, is much celebrated in Chinese folklore.

In the fourth century, northern China was largely overrun by peoples from **Central Asia**. In the 320s, the Cuan (爨) clan migrated into Yunnan. **Cuan Chen** (爨琛) named himself king and held authority from **Lake Dian** (then called Kunchuan [昆川]). Henceforth the Cuan clan ruled Yunnan for over four hundred years. In 738, the kingdom of **Nanzhao** was established in Yunnan by **Piluoge** (皮罗阁), who was confirmed by the imperial court of the **Tang Dynasty** as **king** of Yunnan. Ruling from Dali, the thirteen kings of Nanzhao ruled over more than two centuries and played a part in the dynamic relationship between China and Tibet. In 937, **Duan Siping** (段思平) overthrew the Nanzhao and established the **Kingdom of Dali**. The kingdom was conquered by the **Mongol** and

Chinese armies of [Kublai Khan](#).

In 1894, [George Ernest Morrison](#), an [Australian](#) correspondent for *The Times*, travelled from [Beijing](#) to British-occupied [Burma](#) via Yunnan. His book, *An Australian in China*, details his experiences.

From 1916 to 1917, [Roy Chapman Andrews](#) and [Yvette Borup Andrews](#) led the Asiatic Zoological Expedition of the [American Museum of Natural History](#) through much of western and southern Yunnan, as well as other provinces of China. The book, *Camps and Trails in China*, records their experiences.

## Geography

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See also: [Maotianshan shales](#)



Snowy mountains in [Diqing](#), north-west Yunnan.



[Erhai lake \(洱海湖\)](#), [Dali](#), Yunnan.

Yunnan is the most southwestern province in China, with the Tropic of Cancer running through its southern part. The province has an area of 394,000 square km, 4.1% of the nation's total. The province borders Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and Guizhou

Province in the east, Sichuan Province in the north, and Tibet Autonomous Region in the northwest. It shares a border of 4,060 [km](#) with Myanmar in the west, Laos in the south, and Vietnam in the southeast.

## Borders

Bordering provinces are [Tibet](#), [Sichuan](#), [Guizhou](#) and [Guangxi](#). Bordering [countries](#) are [Vietnam](#) (the main border crossing by road and rail is at Hekou-Lao Cai, the only land border crossing open to non-Chinese/non-Vietnamese), [Laos](#) (at [Boten](#)) and [Myanmar](#) (with the main border crossing at [Ruili](#), the only land border open to non-Chinese/non-Burmese).

## Elevation

The highest point in the north is the Kawagebo Peak in Deqin County on the Diqing Plateau, which is about 6,740 [meters](#) high; and the lowest is in the Honghe River Valley in Hekou County, with an elevation of 76.4 meters.

## Rivers

The province is drained by six major [river](#) systems:

- [Yangtze](#), here known as the Jinsha Jiang (River of Golden Sands), drains the province's north.
- [Pearl River](#), with its source near Qujing, collects the waters from the east.
- the [Mekong](#) (Lancang), which flows from Tibet into the [South China Sea](#) forming the boundaries between [Laos](#) and [Myanmar](#), between Laos and [Thailand](#), through [Cambodia](#) and [Vietnam](#)
- the [Red River](#) (Yuan) has its source in the mountains south of [Dali](#) and enters the South China Sea through [Hanoi](#), Vietnam

- Salween, which flows into the Gulf of Martaban and the Andaman Sea through Myanmar
- the Irrawaddy has a few small tributaries in Yunnan's far west, such as the Dulongjiang, and rivers in the prefecture of Dehong.

## Administrative divisions

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## Natural resources

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Rice cultivation in Yunnan.

Yunnan abounds in natural resources. It is known as the kingdom of plants, animals and home of non-ferrous metals and medicinal herbs.

The province not only has more plant species of tropical, subtropical, temperate, and frozen zones than any other province in the country, but also has many ancient, derivative plants, as well as species introduced from foreign countries. Among the 30,000 species of plants in China, 18,000 can be found in Yunnan.

More than 150 kinds of minerals have been discovered in the province. The potential value of the proven deposits in Yunnan is 3 trillion yuan, 40 % of which come from fuel minerals, 7.3 % from metallic minerals, and 52.7 % from nonmetallic minerals.

Yunnan has proved deposits of 86 kinds of minerals in 2,700 places. Some 13% of the



proved deposits of minerals are the largest of their kind in China, and two-thirds of the deposits are among the largest of their kind in the Yangtze River valley and in south China. Yunnan ranks first in the country in deposits of zinc, lead, tin, cadmium, indium, thallium, and crocidolite.

Yunnan has sufficient rainfall and many rivers and lakes. The annual water flow originating in the province is 200 cubic kilometers, three times that of the Yellow River. The rivers flowing into the province from outside add 160 cubic kilometers, which means there are more than ten thousand cubic meters of water for each person in the province. This is four times the average in the country. The rich water resources offer abundant hydro-energy.

Yunnan is attractive with its rich tourism resources, including beautiful landscape, colorful ethnic customs, and a pleasant climate.

## Demographics

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### **Total population**

43.33 million (2002)

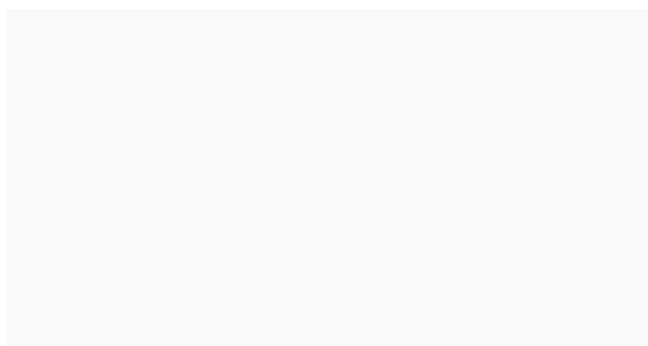
### **Population growth rate**

10.6

### **Average life expectancy**

65.1 years (male), 67.7 years (female) (1995)

## Ethnicity





**Sumtselin Gompa** Monastery in Zhongdian.

Yunnan is noted for a very high level of ethnic diversity. It has the highest number of ethnic groups among all provinces and autonomous regions in China. Among the country's fifty-six recognised ethnic groups, twenty-five are found in Yunnan. Some 38% of the province's population are members of minorities, including the Yi, Bai, Hani, Tai's, Dai, Miao, Lisu, Hui, Lahu, Va, Nakhi, Yao, Tibetan, Jingpo, Blang, Pumi, Nu, Achang, Jinuo, Mongolian, Derung, Manchu, Shui, and Buyei. Several other groups are represented, but they live neither in compact settlements nor do they reach the required threshold of five thousand to be awarded the official status of being present in the province. Some groups, such as the Mosuo, who are officially recognised as part of the Naxi, have in the past claimed official status as a national minority, and are now recognised with the status of Mosuo people.

Ethnic groups are widely distributed in the province. Some twenty-five minorities live in compact communities, each of which has a population of more than five thousand. Ten ethnic minorities living in border areas and river valleys include the Hui, Manchu (the Manchu, remnants of the Qing administration, do not live in compact settlements and are in all respects indistinguishable from the Han), Bai, Naxi, Mongolian, Zhuang, Dai, Achang, Buyei and Shui, with a combined population of 4.5 million; those in low mountainous areas are the Hani, Yao, Lahu, Va, Jingpo, Blang and Jino, with a combined population of 5 million; and those in high mountainous areas are Miao, Lisu, Tibetan, Pumi and Drung, with a total population of four million.

An oft-repeated proverb tells the story of three brothers who were born speaking different languages: Tibetan, Naxi, and Bai. Each settled in different areas of Yunnan

and Tibet, respectively, the high area, the middle area, and the low area.

## Languages

Most dialects of the [Chinese language](#) spoken in Yunnan belong to the [southwestern](#) subdivision of the [Mandarin](#) group, and are therefore very similar to the dialects of neighbouring [Sichuan](#) and [Guizhou](#) provinces. Notable features found in many Yunnan dialects include the partial or complete loss of distinction between finals /n/ and / /, as well as the lack of /y/. In addition to the local dialects, most people also speak Standard Chinese (*[Putonghua](#)*, commonly called "Mandarin"), which is used in the media, by the government, and as the language of instruction in education.

Yunnan's ethnic diversity is reflected in its linguistic diversity. Languages spoken in Yunnan include [Tibeto-Burman languages](#) such as [Bai](#), [Yi](#), [Tibetan](#), [Hani](#), [Jingpo](#), [Lisu](#), [Lahu](#), [Naxi](#); [Tai languages](#) like [Zhuang](#), [Bouyei](#), [Dong](#), [Shui](#), [Tai Lü](#) and [Tai Nüa](#) or [northern lao dialect](#); as well as [Hmong-Mien languages](#).

The Naxi, in particular, use the [Dongba script](#), which is the only [ideographic](#) writing system in use in the world today. The Dongba script was mainly used to provide the Dongba priests with instructions on how to carry out their rituals: today the Dongba script features more as a tourist attraction. The most famous western Dongba scholar was [Joseph Rock](#).

## Literacy

By the end of 1998, among the province's population, 419,800 had received college education or above, 2.11 million, senior middle school education, 8.3 million, junior middle school education, 18.25 million, primary school education, and 8.25 million aged 15 or above, illiterate or semi-literate.

## Economy

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Local traders in [Lijiang](#).

Yunnan is one of China's relatively undeveloped provinces with more poverty-stricken counties than the other provinces. In 1994, about 7 million people lived below the poverty line of less than an annual average income of 300 yuan per capita. They were distributed in the province's 73 counties mainly and financially supported by the central government. With an input of 3.15 billion yuan in 2002, the absolutely poor rural population in the province has been reduced from 4.05 million in 2000 to 2.86 million. The poverty alleviation plan includes five large projects aimed at improving infrastructure facilities. They involve soil improvement, water conservation, electric power, roads, and "green belt" building. Upon the completion of the projects, the province will solve the problem of shortages of grain, water, electric power and roads and improve ecological conditions.

Yunnan's four pillar industries include tobacco, biology, mining, and tourism. Yunnan has trade contacts with more than seventy countries and regions in the world. Yunnan will also establish the Muse border trade zone (located in [Ruili](#)) along its border with Myanmar [\[1\]](#). Yunnan mainly exports tobacco, machinery and electrical equipment, chemical and agricultural products, and non-ferrous metals. In 2002, its total two-way trade (imports and exports) reached US\$2.23 billion. In 2002, the province signed [foreign direct investment](#) contracts involving US\$333 million, of which US\$112 million were actually utilized during the year. Yunnan's unemployment rate in 2002 was 4%.

Yunnan's nominal GDP in [2004](#) was 295.9 billion yuan (US\$36.71 billion), an annual growth rate of 8.1%. Its per capita GDP was 5,630 yuan (US\$680). The share of GDP of

Yunnan's primary, secondary, and tertiary industries were 21.1%, 42.8%, and 36.1% respectively.

## Education

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### Universities and Colleges

- [Kunming University of Science and Technology](#)
- [Yunnan University](#)
- [Yunnan University of Finance and Economics](#)
- [Yunnan Agricultural University](#)

## Transportation

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One of [Jinghong](#)'s many palm-lined streets.

## Railways

Yunnan was first connected by railway not to the rest of China, but to the port of Haiphong by a French engineered narrow gauge railway completed in 1910. It took another fifty years for the province to be connected by rail to the rest of China with the completion of the Chengdu-Kunming line. Later a line connecting Kunming to Guiyang followed. Two further lines have been added recently: a southern line connecting to Nanning and a north-eastern line connecting to Sichuan.

An extension now also links Kunming to Dali, with the stretch to Lijiang nearing completion. Plans are underway on extending the old line to Vietnam, while a new and very ambitious plan to link Dali to Ruili has been announced in 2006.

## Highways

Road construction in Yunnan continues unabated: over the last years the province has added more new roads than any other province. Today expressways link Kunming through Dali to Baoshan, Kunming to Mojiang (on the way to Jinghong), Kunming to Qujing, Kunming to Shilin (Stone Forest). The official plan is to connect all major towns and neighbouring capitals with expressways by 2010, and to complete a high-speed road network by 2020.

All county towns are now accessible by paved, all-weather roads from Kunming, all townships have a road connection (the last to be connected was Yangla, in the far north, but Dulongjiang remains cut off for about six months every year), and about half of all villages have road access.

Second-level national highways stretch 958 km, third-level highways, 7,571 km and fourth-level highways, 52,248 km. The province has formed a network of communication lines radiating from Kunming to Sichuan and Guizhou provinces and Guangxi and Tibet autonomous regions, and further on to Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand.

## Waterways

Generally, rivers are obstacles to transport in Yunnan. Only very small parts of Yunnan's river systems are navigable.

In 1995, the province put an investment of 171 million yuan to add another 807 km of navigation lines. It built two wharfs with an annual handling capacity of 300,000 to 400,000 tons each and four wharfs with an annual handling capacity of 100,000 tons each. The annual volume of goods transported was two million tons and that of

passengers transported, two million.

## Airports

The province has twenty domestic air routes from [Kunming](#) to [Beijing](#), [Shanghai](#), [Guangzhou](#), [Chengdu](#), [Haikou](#), [Chongqing](#), [Shenyang](#), [Harbin](#), [Wuhan](#), [Xi'an](#), [Lanzhou](#), [Hangzhou](#), [Xiamen](#), [Nanning](#), [Shenzhen](#), [Guiyang](#), [Changsha](#), [Guilin](#), [Lhasa](#) and [Hong Kong](#); eight provincial air routes from [Kunming](#) to [Jinghong](#), [Mangshi](#), [Lijiang](#), [Dali](#), [Zhongdian](#) (Shangri-la), [Zhaotong](#), [Baoshan](#) and [Simao](#); and nine international air routes from [Kunming](#) to [Bangkok](#), [Chiang Mai](#), [Yangon](#), [Singapore](#), [Seoul](#), [Hanoi](#), [Ho Chi Minh City](#), [Kuala Lumpur](#) and [Vientiane](#).

The Wujiaba Airport in [Kunming](#) is a national first-class airport and the other airports are second-class terminals. A new airport for Kunming, build east of the city, at Dabanqiao began construction in 2006, but is not expected to be completed until 2015.

## Culture

*See also: [Yunnan cuisine](#) and [Music of Yunnan](#)*



Hand-painted Chinese New Year's poetry pasted on the sides of doors leading to people's homes, Old Town, [Lijiang](#).

One of Yunnan's famous products is [Pu-erh tea](#), named after the old tea trading town of [Pu-erh](#), as well as the Yunnan [Golden Needle tea](#).

# Tourism

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Tourist centres in Yunnan include:

- [Dali](#), the historic center of the [Nanzhao](#) and [Dali](#) kingdoms.
- [Jinghong](#), the center and prefectural capital of the [Xishuangbanna Dai](#) minority autonomous prefecture.
- [Lijiang](#), a [Naxi](#) minority city. It has been a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) since 1997.
- [Shangri-La County](#) (formerly Zhongdian), an ethnic [Tibetan](#) township and county set high in Yunnan's north-western mountains.
- [The Stone Forest](#), a series of [karst](#) outcrops east of [Kunming](#).
- [Yuanyang](#), a [Hani](#) minority settlement with vast rice-terraces.

## Sporting teams

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Professional sporting teams in Yunnan include:

- [Chinese Basketball Association](#)
  - [Yunnan Bulls](#)

## External links

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[Wikimedia Commons](#) has media related to:

[Yunnan](#)

- [Yunnan Provincial Government](#)



- [YunnanExplorer](#) A travel/historical information site with an interactive map of Yunnan
- [Large map of Yunnan](#)
- Yunnan TV Station website <http://www.yntv.cn/english/>
- [Traveller web site with a lot of photos & tips](#)
- [iGuide](#), a travel site with information about cities, towns, attractions, history and culture.
- [Yunnan Travel Guide and Photo Gallery](#)
- [InvestYunnan.org is the foreign investors' guide to the Yunnan Province of China.](#)  
Forwarded by the Economic Cooperation Office of the People's Government of Yunnan Province
- [English-language expat website with info and news from around Yunnan](#)

[hide]

### **Province-level divisions administered by the People's Republic of China (PRC)**

#### **Provinces**

[Anhui](#) · [Fujian](#) · [Gansu](#) · [Guangdong](#) ·

[Guizhou](#) · [Hainan](#) · [Hebei](#) ·

[Heilongjiang](#) · [Henan](#) · [Hubei](#) · [Hunan](#) ·

[Jiangsu](#) · [Jiangxi](#) · [Jilin](#) · [Liaoning](#) ·

[Qinghai](#) · [Shaanxi](#) · [Shandong](#) ·

[Shanxi](#) · [Sichuan](#) · [Taiwan](#)<sup>1</sup> · **Yunnan** ·

[Zhejiang](#)



**Autonomous regions**

[Guangxi](#) · [Inner Mongolia](#) · [Ningxia](#) ·

[Tibet \(Xizang\)](#) · [Xinjiang](#)

**Municipalities**

[Beijing](#) · [Chongqing](#) · [Shanghai](#) ·

[Tianjin](#)

**Special administrative regions** [Hong Kong](#) · [Macau](#)

<sup>1</sup> Claimed by the PRC, but currently ruled by the [Republic of China \("Taiwan"\)](#). See also [Political status of Taiwan](#).

**Prefecture-level divisions of Yunnan**

**Prefecture-level cities:** [Baoshan](#) | [Kunming](#) | [Lijiang](#) | [Lincang](#)

[Qujing](#) | [Simao](#) | [Yuxi](#) | [Zhaotong](#)

**Autonomous prefectures:** [Chuxiong](#) | [Dali](#) | [Dehong](#) | [Dêqên](#)

[Honghe](#) | [Nujiang](#) | [Wenshan](#) | [Xishuangbanna](#)

**List of Yunnan County-level divisions**

Categories: [Yunnan](#) | [Provinces of the People's Republic of China](#)

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