

Annual tea trip

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THE JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME II

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Here are the last three accounts of the trip. We hope that you feel as if you were there and also see how transformative Global Tea Hut gatherings are, which will inspire you to join us on future travels (and, of course, to host your own Global Tea Hut gatherings). The connections made on this trip were the real lasting change, and we are all here because we heart Tea, Nature and one another!

I had just found a place to sit down and accommodate myself to the slightly uncomfortable forest ground, and I was starting to settle down in order to wait for the first bowl. Suddenly, all the forest began to breathe rhythmically, and at the same time started singing an ancient song without music. It was so loud and intense that I could not do anything but pay attention to it. I felt the trees' anxiety—their excitement due to our presence there. All the forest was talking about us: "Welcome!" they said. "Meet the Guardian Tree."

By the first bowl, I realized that in that special and unique moment of the trip, Tea was not the protagonist of our journey any more. It was just another simple part of the Universe, a channel that brings us together—tea trees, the rest of the forest, the water, the soil underneath, our past ancestors and all of the Nature. All together, in only one soul.

By the time the second and third bowls were filled, we had already become part of their community and the forest's excitement had died

down, giving rise to individual life and expression. The wind sounded different through each tree, birds started to sing one to each other, the strange noisy insects began to communicate from one side of the forest to the other. Each one of us left behind the rhythmically-induced respiration and began to breathe under their own emotions, body and place in the world. Tea, human and the forest were then different, but forever changed by the unity we'd felt in that moment.

-Nuria

This trip was a dream come true for me. I have wanted to make a pilgrimage to be with old tea trees for some time now. Making the journey with my Global Tea Hut family made the experience much deeper than it would have been otherwise, and much more fun as well!

The main offerings I received during this journey are deeper connections to Tea and to Nature—

two of my greatest passions. I was beyond grateful and infused with joy and peace to be sitting on the Earth drinking tea amongst the wise, ancient tea trees and the younger family of trees as well, each bowl bringing me more into myself, Nature and Tea.

There was such a diversity of plant life where the tea trees grow—so much aliveness. Through being with the old ones and my fellow tea sisters and brothers, I feel tea as medicine in a much stronger way now. I'll carry all of this with me and share it with others.

Another of the many amazing things that happened on this trip was that we all had the opportunity to actually make tea! So awesome! I had never thought I would do this. I hope that you all enjoy the red tea of the month from Auntie Ai's and if we have the opportunity to drink tea together sometime, I would love to share some of the sheng puerh from the cake we had a hand in making from start to finish. Much love to you all!

-Kristen



This was the best trip of my entire life, and I've traveled a lot. I left for what I thought was an educational trip about tea, but what I got was a complete life transformation in just two weeks. The way my mind usually works is that there is always something missing—not enough or lacking from a situation. It goes along these lines: “This is a good party, but... something is not perfect, something is missing. This is a good gathering, but... something is missing.” However, on this two-week journey with the Global Tea Hut community, *nothing was missing*. In fact, it was perfect in all aspects and exceeded my expectations completely. Here are my highlights:

Firstly, Wu De. This was the first time I'd met him in person, and in the videos he usually looks very serious and concentrated. But in reality he is such an open, smiling, shining and fun person to be with! I fell in love instantaneously and tried to be around him whenever he talked so I could absorb as much as possible from his deep wisdom and light-heartedness. Yes, these two qualities reside in him simultaneously, and it feels so refreshing to just stand in his deep and light presence at the same time.

Secondly, people. My tea familia. *Sangha*. Wow! They blew my mind and heart away. I never considered myself as a group person, and belonging to a tribe or a group was never easy. But here, on this journey, I had a very deep feeling all the time that finally I had met my tribe. I am at home. I found my people. And it wasn't always easy: imagine twenty-five introverts on a very intensive journey as a group! But it was beautiful, every single second of it! Each and every person in our group taught me so much about myself and my life, and life in general, too. I had so many insights and transformations from observing my tea sisters and brothers and from interacting with them. Profound healing happened. And the most amazing thing was that it happened

through people just being themselves, not doing anything specific or on purpose. Just by being themselves and by being present, and having tea together, everyone had a such a powerful effect on me. Everyone touched my heart and broke the barriers and shields created over many years of painful experiences not lived through properly. I couldn't believe I was so lucky and privileged to be in Yunnan drinking tea with all these beautiful souls from all over the world connecting to each other on all levels. Thinking about it now still makes my heart expand beyond imagination. I fell in love with everyone on this trip, and this love opened my heart.

Thirdly, of course, was Tea. Drinking tea together several times a day, meeting ancient tea trees, making tea with our own hands and connecting to life in this way as simply amazing. Going to the jungle and meeting ancient tea trees was mind blowing. They were so alive, so wise, so beautiful—living beings that share their love and wisdom with us. And meditating underneath those trees with tea from the same forests had a profound effect on me. What I felt there was almost like an alchemy happening—during our tea session in the jungle, I could feel the spirit of Tea coming into me and connecting me with Nature. Since that session, I can still feel this connection in me all the time, regardless of whether I am in a big, noisy concrete city or the beautiful English countryside. On a physical level, it almost feels like I am a tree or like there is a tree growing inside my heart—like tea is in my blood, running through my veins. And I can feel that this had a strong effect on how I serve tea in London, as well—with more presence, a more open heart, more connectedness with the Leaf and everyone who comes to share bowls of tea with me.

So, in all, this journey was so much more than the educational tea trip I thought it was going to be. It was educational and I learned a

lot, don't get me wrong, but it was also experiential, and I experienced so much more than I thought possible. It was also therapeutic and healing—a returning home and connecting to old/new family. It was so much more than words can describe, and so much of this trip will be forever in my heart.

-Lera

