

YANGTZE RIVER PANORAMA, 28 DAYS

This document was designed to be read in conjunction with our other pre-departure information provided after you have made a booking with Wendy Wu Tours. It aims to provide a straightforward description of the physical activities involved in sightseeing or travelling during the tour. All passengers should read this dossier to confirm their ability to complete the tour. This is not your final Itinerary and therefore does not mention all the sites visited.

Tour Grade – Medium paced tour

This is defined in our brochure as the following: “These tours are not strenuous but do include several days where periods of walking and climbing of steps will be necessary. These tours are not recommended for those who are not able to walk for prolonged periods without assistance. These tours are generally longer in length and could involve long days of driving”.

Anyone with a good level of fitness should be able to complete this itinerary. Of course our local guides always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance, but they cannot be expected to cater for passengers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. The more difficult aspects of this itinerary involve the sightseeing along the Yangtze River and at areas of high altitude. Please refer to Your Travel Guide's TRANSPORT and TRAVEL HEALTH sections for further information.

Altitude

This itinerary visits the following areas of high altitude:

1. Jade Snow Dragon Mountain near Lijiang. Sightseeing is at an altitude of 4,500m [14,760feet]. Please note that the town of Lijiang, where you will be staying overnight is not at high altitude.
2. Napa Hai Lake outside Zhongdian. Sightseeing is at an altitude of 3,300m [10,826feet]. The town of Zhongdian also has an altitude of 3,200m.

If you have an existing respiratory, vascular or coronary condition, we recommend checking with your Doctor before undertaking this itinerary.

Group size - In most cases the group will operate with a minimum of 10 passengers.

China Tipping

As with most countries, tipping is a way of life in China. For our passengers' convenience we ask for a compulsory amount to be paid at the beginning of our group tours to cover tipping for guides, drivers, restaurant staff etc. Approximate tipping amounts can be found in our brochure and/or website. Exact tipping amounts will be stated in your final documentation, approximately 3 weeks before departure.

Rail Journeys - This tour has 3 overnight train journeys. Train journeys are in first class soft sleeper compartments where each cabin consists of 4 berths.

Itinerary changes

1. Yangtze River. Please note that all sections of the itinerary for the Yangtze River Cruise are especially subject to change. The movement of each vessel along the Yangtze is regulated by the Government's Yangtze River Authority (YRA). The river's rapid flow, the narrowness of her gorges and the recent increase in numbers of passengers means that the timetables are under some pressure. The YRA allocates times for access to mooring points, dis/embarkation docks and passage through the gorges. This means that the captain of each cruise ship is unable to confirm a final itinerary until shortly before departure (usually 24hrs prior). This can affect both the time and location where you dis/embark your cruise ship. Your National Escort or Local Guide will explain any such changes to you as soon as they are informed by the cruise operator.

2. Order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

3. The Hall of Supreme Harmony within the Forbidden City complex in Beijing

has recently undergone comprehensive restoration work.

4. If time permits during your Beijing touring you will be taken through the Beijing Olympic precinct to view and photograph such sites as the Beijing Olympic Stadium (the Bird's Nest) and the Aquatic Centre (water cube). This would normally occur on the day you visit the Great Wall.

Meals

Sichuan cuisine (or Szechwan as it is still known in the West) is distinguished by its use of ginger, chilli and the “Sichuan peppercorn” called fagara. Each meal will usually have some mild dishes for those who don't enjoy eating hot or spicy food, but please bear in mind that the majority of local specialty dishes will be hot. If your group finds there are not any mild dishes served, please inform your National Escort/Local Guide so that they may resolve the problem for the next meal.

ITINERARY

NB: Times and distances listed in this section are approximations only.

Day 1-2: Australia/Beijing

You will be met at Beijing airport in the arrivals hall by your Local Guide and/or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer (1 hr drive) to your hotel. This evening, when the whole group has arrived, a tour introduction will be held in the hotel. There will not be food or drinks served at this meeting; it is simply an opportunity for your group to meet and learn more about travelling in China.

Day 3: Beijing

We have an early rise this morning to drive 1 ½ hrs (50 km) northwest of the city to the Juyongguan Pass section of the Great Wall. The aim of this is to

avoid the crowds of tourists who will arrive later in the morning, and the heat of the day. Visiting the Wall involves walking from the bus to the first section. After your group has been given an introduction to the Great Wall's unique history you will have free time to explore the rest at your own pace. This afternoon, visit the Temple of Heaven – at least 2 hrs on foot here.

Day 4: Beijing/Chengde

Transfer to the station and catch the morning train to Chengde. This journey usually takes 5 hrs, arriving around midday. The Imperial Mountain Villas are vast (twice the size of the Summer Palace in Beijing) and sightseeing here involves 2 to 3 hrs on foot.

Day 5: Chengde/Beijing

We spend approx 1 ½ hrs at the Puning Temple. Afterwards we visit Putuo Zongcheng Temple which resembles a small Potala Palace. We spend 2 hrs on foot in the main halls of worship. Board the afternoon train to return to Beijing, arriving in the early evening.

Day 6: Beijing

Sightseeing in central Beijing involves 3 to 4 hrs on foot during the morning to see Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City. Visiting Mao's Mausoleum is subject to the length of the queue, as so many domestic tourists visit every day. After lunch, drive 40 mins to the Summer Palace in the north of the city. The palace is set over an extensive park and man-made lake complex and there is 2 to 3 hrs on foot involved at this site. Transfer to Beijing Railway Station. The overnight train departs in the evening and takes approx 12 hrs (over 1,200 km).

Day 7: Xian

You will arrive at Xian station very early this morning and transfer to your hotel, where you can have breakfast and freshen up. Sightseeing at the Little Wild Goose Pagoda involves 1 to 2 hrs on foot.

[NB: Check-out time in China is midday so your group's rooms are unlikely to be available. This morning you will commence sightseeing and return to hotel later to rest and freshen up.]

Day 8: Xian

The Museum of the Terracotta Warriors is located more than 1 hrs drive outside of Xian. From the bus park to the

Museum entrance is a 15 min walk. There are electric carts offered by private vendors which can be organised at your own cost. There is no electric cart available for the return from Museum exit to the bus park. Within the Museum area the warriors can be seen in 3 different "pits", which are active archaeological digs. The site is large and, towards the summer months, can be hot outside. Sightseeing here involves 2½ hrs walking. To visit the City Walls this afternoon you will need to walk up the stairs onto the wall, then the Local Guide will give you time to explore at your own pace. There are options here to hire a bicycle or an electric cart to drive along the length of the walls. These are offered by private vendors and can be organised at your own cost.

Day 9: Xian/Wuhan

This morning visit the Shaanxi Museum, and Muslim Quarter; which involves approximately 2 hrs on foot. Take care of your valuables while in the Muslim Quarter's alley market stalls. Transfer to Xian Station in the late afternoon. The overnight train departs in the evening and takes approx 17 hrs.

Day 10: Wuhan/Yangtze

You will arrive at Wuhan station very early this morning and transfer to a local hotel before some leisurely sightseeing within the city of Wuhan. Then transfer (4 to 5 hrs drive) from train stop to the docks, located downstream from the Three Gorges Dam. Board the ship and check-in to your cabin for the next 4 nights.

[NB: the Yangtze section of your itinerary, from Day 10 to 14 will not be confirmed until after you commence your tour. Your Local Guide will do his/her utmost to keep you informed of all changes but cannot guarantee against delays or – in rare cases – cancellations of sections of your itinerary. Please refer to Your Travel Guide for further information.]

Here is a rough guideline to the cruise schedule:

Day 11: Yangtze River Cruise

Shore excursion to the site of Three Gorges Dam (4 hrs off ship): Disembark ship and drive (approx 20 mins) to the Three Gorges Dam. Coach will drive through the construction areas (they are NOT allowed to stop for photos) and drop you off at viewing area

above the locks. There is a small museum and lookout.

Cruise through the Xiling Gorge.

2nd night on board with Captain's Welcome Dinner.

Day 12: Yangtze River Cruise

Cruise through the Wu Gorge.

Today, you will visit either the Lesser Three Gorges OR Shennong Stream.

Shore excursion at Lesser Three Gorges (2-3 hrs off ship):

Transfer between the ship and small ferry at Wushan, then travel up the Daning River to see the remains of an ancient plank walkway and suspended coffin and enjoy the undisturbed natural scenery.

Shore excursion at the Shennong Stream (3 hrs off ship):

Transfer between the ship and small ferry, to travel further up the Shennong tributary approx 20 mins. Then transfer from the ferry onto the small peapod rowboats, to experience the tradition of the 'boatmen' or 'trackers'.
3rd night on board.

Day 13: Yangtze River Cruise

Cruise through the Qutang Gorge.

Today, you will visit either Shibaozhai Temple on the south bank, OR Fengdu on the north bank.

Shore excursion to Shibaozhai Temple (2 hrs off ship):

This small temple was built at the top of a 9 storey pavilion clinging to the sheer south bank near Qutang Gorge. Disembark from ship to dock close to the pavilion's entrance. Sightseeing here involves climbing the 9 storeys inside the building.

Shore excursion to Fengdu "Ghost City" (2 hrs off ship):

The town of Fengdu was relocated across to the south bank for the Three Gorges Dam Project. The Fengdu "Ghost City" Temple lies on the steep hill above the demolished town. Disembark via a pontoon and walkway. There is a chairlift (at your own cost) which takes you up to the base of the temple complex. *4th night on board with Captain's Farewell Dinner.*

Day 14: Chongqing/Chengdu

Check out of cabins/ship early this morning and disembark from ship in Chongqing. Drive 4 to 5 hrs to Chengdu, arriving in the early afternoon and check-in to the hotel.

Day 15: Chengdu

The Panda Reserve is located only 10km from the city centre. It is not guaranteed that you will be able to see the feeding of the younger pandas, as this only happens at the start and end of each day. Sightseeing here involves at least 1 ½ hr walking. There are electric carts offered by private vendors and can be organised at your cost. Afterwards we will travel to see the picturesque views of caves and temples dotting Mt Qingcheng. This will involve walking 15 mins uphill, catching a cable car, and walking a further 20 mins up steps to the Taoist Temple. The group will descend the same path to the bus, so anyone not able to reach the peak can make their own way down.

Day 16: Chengdu/Kunming

After an early lunch, transfer to the station. Your overnight train to Kunming departs in the early afternoon. This journey usually takes 18 hrs.

Day 17: Kunming

You will arrive at Kunming station after 7am and transfer to your hotel, where you can have breakfast and freshen up. Leisurely sightseeing at the Bird and Flower Market; take care of your valuables while in the market area.

[NB: Check-out time in China is midday so your group's rooms are unlikely to be available. This morning you will commence sightseeing and return to hotel later to rest and freshen up.]

Day 18: Kunming

Drive 1 ½ hrs (120 km) to Stone Forest. Sightseeing here involves up to 3½ hrs on foot to view the maze of rock pinnacles, lake and ponds. After lunch, we drive back to Kunming.

Day 19: Kunming/Lijiang

Transfer to airport for very early morning flight to Lijiang (flight duration 50mins). Transfer (20mins drive) to Lijiang Old Quarter and explore the maze of canals and cobbled alleys. This involves at least 2 hrs on foot. Ground may be uneven. Continue to the hotel and check-in.

[NB: Check out time in China is midday so your group's rooms are unlikely to be available. This morning you will commence sightseeing and

return to hotel later to rest and freshen up.]

Day 20: Lijiang

Visiting the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain is very popular with travellers to this area so, to prevent large crowds of people queuing at the same time, the local government's tourist authority allocates times to each group. This section of the itinerary is subject to change at late notice.

Your Local Guide will keep you informed of any changes as he/she is made aware of them. The bus will drive to the base of the mountain; there is a 10 min ride on a chairlift from the base to Yunshaping (Cloud Fir Meadow) at an altitude over 4,000m. From the chairlift there is a wooden pathway to the meadow; this walking route takes approx 1hr. Descend by chairlift to reboard the bus. Sightseeing at Baisha Village is leisurely. There are ruthless souvenir sellers near the bus park though; be firm to avoid any hassle.

Day 21: Lijiang/ Tiger Leaping Gorge/ Zhongdian

Drive 75km (approx 2 hrs drive depending on number of photo stops) to the northern bank of the Tiger Leaping Gorge and stop for short while at the steps above the famous Tiger Leaping Rock. You can choose to walk down the steps to the water, or have some free time while other group members do this. There are usually sedan chairs offered by local vendors, which can be organised at your own cost. Lunch today will be a simple meal as the choice of restaurants in this area is limited. Continue driving 100km (approx 2½ hrs) to Zhongdian. Once in Zhongdian, you are advised to rest to acclimatise.

Day 22: Zhongdian

Drive 2hrs each way to Baishui Terrace. There are some uneven and slippery surfaces at Baishui Terrace, so you must be able to walk unaided here.

Day 23: Zhongdian

Visiting the Songshanlin Monastery involves climbing the central stairs as the main academic halls and pagodas are at the summit. It is recommended to take these slowly. Both Napa Hai Lake and Songshanlin Lamasery are within 15 mins drive of town.

Day 24: Zhongdian/Dali

Drive approx 7 hrs to Dali, with some sightseeing and lunch along the way. In the Dali Old Quarter, explore the maze of canals and cobbled streets. This involves at least 2 hrs on foot. Ground may be uneven. Transfer to the hotel and check-in.

Day 25: Dali

Sightseeing around Dali and surrounding countryside is relaxed, involving approx 3 hrs on foot. This involves a cruise on Erhai Lake.

Day 26: Dali/Kunming

You will have morning at leisure before checking out of hotel before midday. Transfer (45mins by road) to airport for the afternoon flight to Kunming (flight duration 1 ½ hrs). Transfer to the hotel and check in.

Day 27: Kunming

You will be transferred from the hotel to the airport, according to the departure time of your flight. Any time before your flight is at leisure.

Day 28: Australia

Arrive home.

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