



## Ancient China

### Classic Tour | 18 Days | Moderate

Beijing - Datong - Wutaishan - Taiyuan - Pingyao - Xian - Luoyang - Zhengzhou - Shanghai

China is one of the world's oldest and most monumental civilisations, on this journey you will encounter millennia-old culture and religion at some of China's most intriguing sites.

#### Tour Highlights:

- **Beijing** – The Great Wall, Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square
- **Datong** – One of China's historically rich cities and gateway to the Yungang Caves and Hanging Monastery
- **Wutaishan** – Meaning 'Five Terrace Mountains', this monastic village is home to the Bodhisattva of Wisdom
- **Taiyuan** – Provincial capital surrounded by mountains on the north, west and east sides
- **Pingyao** – UNESCO World Heritage listed town that showcases 'ancient China'
- **Xian** – The archaeological marvel of the Terracotta Warriors and Horses



- **Luoyang** – One of China's true ancient capitals with 13 dynasties once ruling from within its walls. Gateway to the magnificent Longmen Grottoes
- **Shanghai** – Exploration of China's most cosmopolitan city

## Ancient China Tour Inclusions

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English-speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers)
- Visa fees for Australian passport holders

*Personal expenditures e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary are at your own expense.*

## Classic Tours

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of China on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully inclusive basis so you will travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escort/Local Guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

## Moderate Tour

'Ancient China' is a **moderate** tour. This has been defined in our brochure, as passengers with a good level of fitness should be able to complete this itinerary. These programmes are not strenuous but do include several days where long periods of sightseeing on foot, climbing of stairs and in/out of boats will be necessary. These tours are generally longer in duration and could involve long days of driving or overnight train journeys. Some programmes may also include easy hiking or a home stay.

Our National Escort/Local Guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

## Country Profile: China

China's civilization is the oldest in the world and has a history dating back over 5,000 years. With 56 ethnic groups, 22 provinces and eight major dialects, China has a rich and varied culture and way of life. It is home to a wealth of tourist sights and cultural relics which entice our guests to return again and again to this exciting destination.

## Joining Your Tour

The tour is 18 days in duration including international flights. Travellers booked on 'Land Only' arrangements should make their own way to the starting point. Join the tour on Day 1 in Beijing and end the tour on Day 17 in Shanghai. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

## Itinerary Changes

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

- From November to March the Tang Dynasty music and dance performance is not available on all evenings. If it is not operating on the evening your group is due to attend, a suitable alternative will be arranged by your National Escort/Local Guide.
- The Forbidden City is closed on Mondays, due to maintenance. If it is not open on the day, our group is due to visit, Beijing touring will be rearranged by your National Escort/Local Guide accordingly.

The following itinerary changes have been made to the 2017 itinerary to improve the flow and pace of sightseeing:

- Removed Shuanglin Temple in Pingyao on Day 8
- Removed Shaanxi Museum in Xian on Day 11 and replaced with Xian Museum and the Little Wild Goose Pagoda

### Important Information Regarding Flight Delays

Due to unforeseen circumstances, flights can be delayed, and therefore connecting flights may be missed. If you find yourself in this situation, please contact our China office on **+86 21 5888 5681 or +86 159 0929 1082** (outside China) or **21 5888 5681 or 159 0929 1082** (within China) to urgently advise your arrival details have changed. Please ensure you have your trip number, tour name (both included in your final documentation) and new arrival details (flight number and arrival time) handy to pass on to our local office in China. This will ensure your National Escort/Local Guide can be informed of your most up to date information and ensure someone is at the airport to meet you on arrival.

If we are not advised of late changes and missed connections, Wendy Wu Tours cannot guarantee someone will be able to meet you upon arrival in China as our local office will have no way of knowing which flight you will be arriving on. Wendy Wu Tours will not be responsible for providing reimbursement of transportation costs from the airport to your hotel in the event that our local office was not advised of changes to arrival time.

## Ancient China Itinerary

### DAY 1: AUSTRALIA TO BEIJING

Fly to Beijing, the capital of China, for a four night stay. On arrival in Beijing Capital International Airport, you will be met in the arrival hall by your National Escort/or Local Guide from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer approximately one hour to your hotel. A tour introduction will be held in the hotel either this evening or the next. Food and drinks will not be served at this meeting, it is simply an opportunity for your group to meet and learn more about travelling in China.

#### Destination Information

**Beijing** - Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China. With its unequalled wealth of history, Beijing served as the centre for the many different empires and cultures that ruled China and has been the heart of politics and society throughout its long history. The ancient monuments, the stories of days gone by as well as the dynamic and modern city Beijing has become today, make it a destination not to be missed.

### DAY 2: BEIJING

Walk through Tiananmen Square and into the magnificent Forbidden City; sightseeing here will involve approximately three to four hours on foot. Later enjoy a 40 minute rickshaw ride through the warren-like hutongs where you will meet a local family. Tonight, eat a traditional Peking Duck dinner and watch an exquisite Peking Opera performance.

*Please note: The Forbidden City is closed on Mondays. If this day of touring falls on a Monday, your touring in Beijing will be switched round so that the Forbidden City is visited on an alternative day.*

#### Destination Information

**Tiananmen Square** - Built under the guidance of Chairman Mao Zedong, Tiananmen Square is said to hold a capacity crowd of over one million and is one of the largest public squares in the world. It houses not only the Monument to the People's Heroes, it is also the final resting place of Chairman Mao himself in the Mausoleum of Mao Zedong.

**Forbidden City** - The sacred centre of the Chinese empire for 500 years and home to the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Forbidden City is a vast complex of over 900 buildings and covers an area of 180 acres. Since 1987, the Forbidden City has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site and its palatial

architectural style has been an influence on many imperial buildings throughout Asia.

**Hutongs** - The Mongol rulers of Beijing established this style of housing in the 13th century as tenancy for the growing population of the city. Hutongs were designed to reflect the Chinese system of Feng Shui with four hutongs joining together to make a courtyard in the middle, known as Siheyuan. In more recent times, the hutong suburbs were in jeopardy of disappearing, but a fierce debate between developers and those who fought to protect the architecture and the hutong way of life diminished the threat.

**Peking Duck** - A favourite of the Emperor's court and the upper class elite during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Peking duck quickly spread throughout Chinese society to become a national favourite and a symbol of China.

**Peking Opera** - Dating back to the 18th century, Peking Opera is a form of traditional Chinese theatre popular during the Qing Dynasty. Works of opera usually tell the stories of Chinese history and folklore.

#### DAY 3: BEIJING

You will rise early this morning, to avoid the crowds and drive approximately two hours northwest of the city to the Juyongguan Pass to take a walk on the Great Wall of China, appreciating the wall itself and the dramatic scenery. Your visit involves walking from the bus to the first section; once your group has been given an introduction to the Great Wall's unique history you will have free time to explore at your own pace. Later, visit the jade factory and this afternoon stroll through the Summer Palace.

#### **Destination Information**

**Great Wall of China** - Originally built under the first Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang, The Great Wall of China is the country's most iconic sight. Snaking through the northern countryside from the Gobi Desert in the west into the Bohai Sea in the east, the Great Wall of China is the longest wall in the world and was used as a fortification against northern nomadic tribes. The current structure dates back to the Ming Dynasty - over 700 years old.

**Jade Factory** - Learn about one of China's most symbolic and important materials jade, at this comprehensive factory. Understand how to tell if jade is real or fake and watch artisans at work, carving this emerald stone into works of art.

**Summer Palace** - The former holiday retreat of the Qing emperors, the Summer Palace is a stunning example of Chinese garden style. The Summer Palace incorporates the Fengshui notion of 'Mountain' and 'Water', seen here with tranquil Kunming Lake and magnificent Longevity Hill. A favourite resort of the Empress Dowager Cixi, the Summer Palace is home to a stunning Marble Boat and the Long Corridor, one of the longest outdoor passageways in the world.

#### DAY 4: BEIJING

Soak up the harmonious ambience of the Temple of Heaven where you can watch, or take part in, an outdoor dance class. Later, search for Chinese antiques and knick-knacks at Panjiayuan Market.

#### **Destination Information**

**Temple of Heaven** - The Temple of Heaven is one of the most perfect examples of Ming architecture set in amongst a 267 hectare park with four gates set at each point of a compass. The Temple of Heaven was created as a place of worship for the Emperors, who would ask for prosperity, longevity and good harvest for the people. Walking through the park we will see the many groups of local people that gather here every day to sing folk songs, practice Tai Chi and sword dancing, play chess or just come to sit and chat.

**Panjiayuan Market** - Selling many items including furniture, sculptures and Mao era items, Panjiayuan Market is the perfect shopping area for Chinese memorabilia, knick-knacks and antiques.

#### DAY 5: BEIJING TO DATONG

Today, travel to the train station in Beijing for your six and half hour train to Datong, the former western capital of the Jin Dynasty. On arrival transfer to your hotel for check in.

#### **Destination Information**

**Datong** - Located in Shanxi Province, Datong was formerly known as Pingcheng and is located near the Great Wall Pass which separates Shanxi from Inner Mongolia. Datong's most famous sight are the Yungang Grottoes, home to thousands of intricately carved Buddhist statues.

#### DAY 6: DATONG TO WUTAISHAN

This morning drive 40 minutes to visit the Yungang Grottoes, filled with intricate Buddhist imagery. Touring the caves involves walking for 1km, you will spend approximately two hours here. Afterwards drive one hour and 45 minutes to see the jaw-dropping Hanging Temple which seemingly floats up the face of Jinxia Gorge where

you will spend about an hour. Continue driving four hours to Wutaishan to check in to your hotel.

#### **Destination Information**

**Yungang Grottoes** - Prime examples of rock-cut architecture, the Yungang Grottoes is an ancient Chinese Buddhist temple grottoes, home to over 50,000 Buddhist statues.

**Hanging Temple** - Built over 1,500 years ago, the Hanging Temple is not only stunning for its unique location in the side of Jinxia Gorge, it is also one of the only existing temples to combine Buddhism, Taoism and Confucian symbols.

**Wutaishan** - Wutaishan is one of China's four sacred Buddhist Mountains and received UNESCO status in 2009. Wutaishan literally translates as Five Plateau Peak and its most northern Peak, also known as Beitai, is the highest point in northern China.

#### **DAY 7: WUTAISHAN TO TAIYUAN**

Spend the day exploring Wutaishan's alpine valleys and important monasteries, including the Bodhisattva Temple and Xiantong Temple. This afternoon drive four and half hours to Taiyuan, home to the Twin Pagoda Temple. If time permits, there will be easy sightseeing at the Ming Dynasty Twin Pagoda Temple.

#### **Destination Information**

**Taiyuan** - Taiyuan is the capital of Shanxi Province and its largest city. The city has had a long and important history, especially during the 20th century.

**Twin Pagoda Temple** - The Twin Pagoda Temple is home to two Pagodas which date back to the Ming Dynasty and are the tallest set of twin pagodas in China.

#### **DAY 8: TAIYUAN TO PINGYAO**

This morning we will spend around one to two hours at the Jin Ci Temple in Taiyuan. Afterwards, drive two hours to the small ancient town of Pingyao where you will transfer to an electric cart to take you to your hotel.

#### **Destination Information**

**Jin Ci Temple** - The Jin Ci Temple is situated at the foot of Mount Xuanweng and was built in memory of Jiyu, the Founding Father of the Jin State.

**Pingyao** - A UNESCO World Heritage listed town, Pingyao is renowned for its ancient city wall, which was built in the

11th century and still stands encircling the town. With a 2,000 year history, Pingyao has retained its layout from the Ming and Qing dynasties; the houses, streets, storefronts and temples have all been preserved in their historical appearance.

#### **DAY 9: PINGYAO TO XIAN**

Take a walk round the cobbled streets for spectacular views of the city walls of Pingyao, dating back to the Zhou Dynasty. Next visit the Rishengchang Financial House Museum. There will also be some time to visit the Yamen, a former government building from the Qing Dynasty. Sightseeing will involve around four hours on foot including a stop for lunch. Later take a three hour bullet train to Xian, the former ancient capital.

#### **Destination Information**

**Pingyao Ancient City Wall** - One of the best preserved fortifications in China, the Pingyao Ancient City Wall encloses the old town of Pingyao.

**Rishengchang Financial House** - The Rishengchang Financial House is the home of China's first draft bank, dating back to the 17th century.

**Xian** - Xian has long played a pivotal role in China's extensive history and has been a thriving hub for cultural exchange, economic trade as well as national politics for centuries. Home to some of China's most ancient sights, diverse architecture and delicious fares, Xian is a must see destination.

#### **DAY 10: XIAN**

Spend the morning viewing the enigmatic ranks of the life-sized Terracotta Warriors. The Museum of the Terracotta Warriors and Horses is located more than one hour drive outside of Xian. From the bus park to the museum entrance it is a 15 minute 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 the museum exit to the bus park. Within the museum area the warriors can be seen in three different 'pits', which are active archaeological digs. The site is large and will take approximately two and a half hours to explore. After this visit the Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition centre to see smaller models of the warriors being made. Later stroll on the beautifully preserved 14th century city wall that enclose Xian's old town. The Local Guide will give you time to explore the ancient city wall at your own pace. There are options here to hire a bicycle or an electric cart to drive along the length of the wall, these are offered by private vendors and can be organised at your own expense. This

evening enjoy a delicious feast of Shui Jiao dumplings and a performance of Tang Dynasty dancing.

*From November to March, the Tang Dynasty music and dance performance is not available on all evenings. If it is not operating on the evening your group is due to attend, a suitable alternative will be arranged by your National Escort/Local Guide.*

#### **Destination Information**

**Terracotta Warriors** - One of the most significant archaeological discoveries of the 20th century, this unearthed terracotta army is comprised of over 7,000 soldiers, horses and chariots. The army was built in life-sized form by thousands of workers and designed by Emperor Qin Shi Huang to defend himself in the afterlife.

**Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Centre** - See smaller versions of the enigmatic Terracotta Warriors being created at the captivating Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Centre; even purchase your own portable soldier.

**Ancient City Wall** - Dating back to the Ming Dynasty in the 14th century, the Xian ancient city wall is one of the best preserved urban fortifications in China. The wall's ideal location and layout gives visitors a bird's eye view over this fantastic city. Follow the locals' example and take a bike to get an ever more spectacular experience.

**Tang Dynasty Dancing Show** - Xian, previously known as Chang'an, was an important cultural and historical centre in not only China but in the known-world. The Tang Dynasty dancing show is an exciting exponent of this prosperous society and keeps alive the splendour of this period.

#### **DAY 11: XIAN**

Admire the thousands of fascinating relics at the Xian Museum, followed by a visit to the Little Wild Goose Pagoda and a short, traditional calligraphy demonstration. Sightseeing will be approximately two and half hours on foot. There will also be time to explore the atmospheric alleys of the Muslim Quarter.

*The Little Wild Goose Pagoda is closed on Tuesday due to maintenance. If this day of touring falls on a Tuesday, your touring in Xian will be re-arranged so that the Little Wild Goose Pagoda is visited on an alternative day.*

#### **Destination Information**

**Xian Museum** - Opened in 2007 this museum holds thousands of cultural relics that represent the history of Xian.

**Little Wild Goose Pagoda** - Dating back to the Tang Dynasty, the Little Wild Goose Pagoda is one of two prominent pagodas in Xian. A former centre for translating Buddhist scriptures from India, the Little Wild Goose Pagoda was said to have survived one of the strongest earthquakes in world history.

**Muslim Quarter** - The Muslim Quarter is the hub of Xian's Islamic community and is home to many stalls selling a myriad of snack foods and delightful oriental knick-knacks.

#### **DAY 12: XIAN TO LOUYANG**

This morning transfer to the railway station for your two hour bullet train to Luoyang. On arrival check into your hotel and then visit the Longmen Grottoes which date back to the 5th century. Sightseeing here involves around two hours on foot.

#### **Destination Information**

**Luoyang** - A city in Henan Province, Luoyang is situated on the north bank of the Luo River and interchanged as the ancient capital city with Xian. It is also known as the 'City of Peonies', as the Peony Festival is held in Wangcheng Park every April in celebration of the blossoming flower.

**Longmen Grottoes** - The Longmen Grottoes are regarded as one of the three most famous treasure houses of stone inscriptions in China, along with Yungang and Magao caves. The Grottoes date back to 493AD, when Emperor Xiaowen moved the capital of Luoyang, and house numerous historical material concerning art, music, religion, calligraphy, medicine, costumes and architecture.

#### **DAY 13: LUOYANG TO ZHENGZHOU**

Travel two hours to the famous Shaolin Temple, best known for its association with martial arts and watch a Kung Fu demonstration by the famous Shaolin Monks. Walk through the Pagoda Forest, a collection of 228 pagodas from the Tang and Qing dynasties. You will spend approximately three hours here before continuing for a three hour drive to Zhengzhou. On arrival, spend time at a paper cutting shop witnessing this traditional intricate art form. Overnight in Zhengzhou.

#### **Destination Information**

**Shaolin Temple** - The Shaolin Temple is the place of origin for Chinese Zen Buddhism and Chinese martial arts. Here, watch a Kung Fu Demonstration by the famous Shaolin Monks.



**Pagoda Forest** - Located at the foot of Shaoshi Mountain, the Pagoda Forest is made up of 228 stone pagodas, dating back to the Tang Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty.

**Zhengzhou** – A modern city that was once the ancient capital of the Shang Dynasty from 1600 to 1046BC. This period saw numerous cultural and historical advances in the region including the martial art of Kung Fu and porcelain and bronze production

#### **DAY 14: ZHENGZHOU TO SHANGHAI**

This morning visit the Yellow River Museum to learn about China's second river and the 'Birthplace of Chinese Civilisation'. Then drive one hour to the Yellow River lookout where the bus will park a 20 minute walk away from the lookout. You will spend approximately one hour here. Later fly one and half hours to Shanghai.

#### **Destination Information**

**Yellow River** - As the third longest river in Asia the Yellow River originates in the Bayan Har Mountains in Qinghai province and flows through nine provinces. Its basin was once home to the most prosperous region in Chinese early history, however, frequent flooding has since given it the nickname China's Sorrow.

**Shanghai** - Once known as the 'Paris of the East', Shanghai is now one of Asia's most influential cities. Prior to communist arrival in 1949, Shanghai was a city with European-style mansions and was the most important trading port in Asia. Today it presents a blend of cultures; the modern and the traditional, along with the European and oriental. Modern skyscrapers intermingle with 1920s 'shikumen' buildings. This combination is what attracts millions of visitors each year.

#### **DAY 15: SHANGHAI**

Today's explorations include the peaceful Yu Garden and the atmospheric alleys of the old town. Admire the magnificent colonial architecture along the Huangpu River with a stroll along the Bund and this evening watch a Chinese acrobatic show. Sightseeing today involves a full day of touring around the centre of the city with three to four hours on foot.

#### **Destination Information**

**Old Town and Yu Gardens** - The old town of Shanghai, where cobbled streets are lined with traditional shops selling herbal medicines, handicrafts, Chinese tea and a variety of tantalising snacks, is the original centre of

Shanghai and for decades was the seat of Chinese authority in Shanghai. The Yu Gardens is seen as one of the most perfect examples of Chinese garden style. Built by the Ming-era governor, Pan Yunduan, as a retirement gift for his father, the Yu Gardens is home to exquisite jade rock, goldfish-filled ponds and stunning, tranquil pavilions.

**The Bund** - Recognised as Shanghai's former 'Wall Street', the Bund is home to an impressive collection of buildings from the early trade houses of the 1850s to the glamorous Art Deco modernism of the 1920s. Originally the home of the foreign population of Shanghai, the Bund's architecture has inherited much western influence and is a stark contrast to the Pudong skyline, sitting across the Huangpu River.

**Chinese Acrobatics** - Chinese Acrobatics incorporates many forms of dramatic art, including acrobatics, contortionism, juggling, plate spinning and much more

#### **DAYS 16: SHANGHAI**

Wander for a couple of hours through Xintiandi area to admire the 1920s architectural styling. Visit the ancient treasures of the Shanghai Museum and the People's Square before visiting the Silk Museum. This evening view the city from the Huangpu River on a scenic cruise. Taste the delicious, traditional Shanghai cuisine for dinner.

#### **Destination Information**

**Xintiandi** - An affluent area, Xintiandi is a newly redeveloped district in the centre of Shanghai home to boutique shopping and luxurious dining. The buildings here are designed and redeveloped from traditional style of Shanghai housing from the early 20th century, called Shikumen.

**Shanghai Museum** - One of the most esteemed and acclaimed museums in China, the Shanghai Museum is a comprehensive collection of the Middle Kingdom's millennia old history. Sprawled over five floors, one could spend half, if not a full day exploring. The shape of the museum was designed to resemble a Chinese vessel, known as a Ding.

**People's Square** - Home to the Shanghai Museum, People's Square is an ideal centre for people to meet, do tai chi and take part in dance classes.

**Silk Museum** – The Silk Museum is an educational journey through the production of silk, one of China's most famous and luxurious materials. Learn about the use of silkworms and silk moths in its production; the manufacturing process;

as well as silk's journey along the Silk Road which brought this product across Asia and Europe.

**Huangpu River** - The Huangpu River flows through the centre of Shanghai and separates the city into Pudong, meaning 'east of the Huangpu' and Puxi, 'west of the Huangpu'. Cruising down the river, you will see the contrast of the historical Bund architecture on one side of the river with the modern Pudong skyline on the other side. At night, the banks of the Huangpu light up, turning Shanghai into a neon wonder.

#### **DAY 17: DEPART SHANGHAI**

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

*Late check-out is not included in our China group tours. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day in China, please contact our reservations department who can confirm additional pricing and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.*

*Due to flight schedules, Perth and Brisbane passengers may arrive home on Day 17.*

#### **DAY 18: ARRIVE AUSTRALIA**

Arrive home today.

## **ANCIENT CHINA TRAVEL INFORMATION**

### **Visas**

Entry visas are required by all visitors to China and Wendy Wu Tours' Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. We will supply you with all paperwork and submit the visa application on your behalf. Visas for China are valid for 90 days from the date of issue and allow you to stay in the country for up to 30 days. Please be advised that your passport must have at least 6 months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

Visa application forms and all relevant documentation are due in our office 75 days prior to departure; if received after this date urgent visa processing fees will apply. Passports will be returned with your final documentation 2-3 weeks prior to your group tour's scheduled departure. If you require your passport to be returned earlier, a \$15 courier fee will apply.

Please note that if you intend to arrive more than 24 hours before your tour commences or intend to stay in China after your tour has ended and you are NOT staying in a hotel you will need to register with the local police station. If you are staying in a hotel, registration is done on your behalf as part of the check-in process.

### **Insurance**

We strongly encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the originals.

### **Eating in China**

Chinese cuisine is one of the most influential, diverse and flavoursome culinary styles in the world with a legacy stretching back thousands of years. Chinese dishes incorporate many spices and seasoning to create an explosion of flavours. Though Chinese cuisine can vary greatly from Chinese food we get in Australia, it is important to keep an open mind and be adventurous. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive Ancient China group tours from the groups' arrival until the group's day of departure.



## Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the Australia and China. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs. Please note double bed requests can be made at time of booking but cannot be guaranteed.

Please note that the Chinese government has strict environmental regulations in regards to the use of air conditioning and heating during certain times of the year. Hotels are only permitted to turn air conditioning on in the summer months from mid-May to mid-October and heating is permitted to turn on from mid-November to mid-March.

## Transport

**Coaches:** Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Main and inner city roads in China have a reputation for being very congested. For this reason, it may not always be possible to return to your hotel after sightseeing to freshen up before going to the restaurant for dinner. Roads in China have generally been improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the sections below are approximations only.

Please note that seatbelts are not compulsory by law in China and therefore the Chinese people largely choose not to wear them. For this reason some vehicles may not be fitted with seatbelts or they may be hidden underneath protective seat covers. It is recommended that where seatbelts are available customers must use them and remain seated at all times while the vehicle is moving. If you have any concerns, please notify your National Escort/Local Guides.

**Planes:** Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

**Day Trains:** On this tour, you will take three bullet train journeys. You will travel in second-class soft seat class with air conditioning. *On high speed trains, the train companies have implemented a policy which does not allow passengers to carry inflammable liquids including aerosols, styling gel, compressed air or insecticides; any explosives, magnetised material, knives, scissors or sharp items (medication is fine). Bag checks are conducted randomly and any of these items may be confiscated before boarding the train (in hand luggage or main luggage)*

## Development in China

Though parts of China match the west in modernity and technological advances, it is important to remember that China is still a developing country and as such, many aspects of tourism in China do not have the solid infrastructure and safety standards as seen here in Australia. It is important that our guests travel to China with an open mind and a sense of humour. All of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort/Local Guide.

## Chinese Public Holidays

If you are travelling within the below Chinese Public Holidays please note that celebrations last for several days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open, but may be crowded. Chinese New Year is on 28th January 2017 and 16<sup>th</sup> February 2018. Golden Week public holidays fall annually between 1-3 May and 1-7 October.

## Souvenirs

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs; so in each city, we will visit a museum or exhibition, which demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone so we aim to take you to places which hold local interest; for example, in Shanghai you will be able to see how silk is created all the way from the silk worm to beautiful garments; and in Xian we will take you to a workshop which creates replicas of the Terracotta Warriors, from tiny little warriors to seven foot behemoths! We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

## Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by both a National Escort/Local Guides. There will usually be no more than 29 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with Local Guides only.

## Tipping Policy

Tipping while on holiday is a firm and expected element in the tourism industry and China is no exception. To remove the uncertainty and stress of not knowing how much is appropriate to tip or to whom, Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy for our group tours where a nominated tipping amount is paid upon commencement of the programme by each tour member. This amount is stated in all group pricing, however it is not collected in your final payment received by Wendy Wu Tours.

This nominated tipping amount is to be given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour, who will then distribute it amongst your main service providers – guides, drivers and attendants – on your behalf during the tour. Any other tipping, such as tips for bathroom attendants or hotel porters that are taking luggage to your room, is at your discretion based on satisfaction of services received, as are gratuities for additional requested special services.

The tipping amount is determined based on the total number of passengers travelling in the group. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the National Escort. The final tipping amount will be outlined in your final documentation, which is distributed 2 weeks prior to your tours departure.

## Packing List and Climate

You will find a complete packing list and a helpful climate chart in the 'Suggested Packing List', which will be included in the pre-departure information link sent within your deposit documentation. Seasonal weather patterns can be quite unpredictable. Up to the minute information on worldwide weather can be found on [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com).

## Luggage

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each; a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5kgs. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that Chinese authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

## Exchanging Cash

It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling to cities outside of Beijing and Shanghai. US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout China and other currencies such as Australian Dollars can generally be exchanged in hotels and airports provided notes are new and undamaged. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Your National Escort will remind you to do this before departure.

## Personal Expenses & Optional Tours

**Personal Expense** - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of AUD\$270 per week should be sufficient; however, for those that cannot resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

**Optional Tours** - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available. In your Final Documentation an Optional Excursion Sheet will be included outlining the activities available in each city and local cost associated. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

## Vaccinations and Your Health

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful [www.travelvax.com.au](http://www.travelvax.com.au).

## Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au) as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

## After your booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice with deposit documentation via email. This includes important information and links to access the visa application form and instructions sheet online (if applicable). Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

**Updated: 03 May 2017**