



China Encounters Dossier Classic Tour | 23 Days | Moderate

Beijing - Chengde - Xian - Yangtze River Cruise - Chengdu - Zhongdian - Lijiang - Dali - Kunming

Encounter all of the magnificent sights that make China a truly spectacular destination. Journey from the iconic Wall and enigmatic Warriors to the off-the-beaten track vistas of Yunnan province on this epic cross-country adventure.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS:

- Admire Chengde's architecture
- Walk on the Great Wall
- Face the Terracotta Army
- Watch Giant Pandas play
- Find Tibet in Zhongdian
- Discover Tiger Leaping Gorge



China Encounters tour inclusions

- Return international 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)

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

Classic Tour

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of China on an excellent value group tour while travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully-inclusive basis so you'll 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

'China Encounters' is a **moderate** tour. This has been defined in our brochure as passengers with a good level of fitness will 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. 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.

Altitude

This itinerary visits areas of high altitude. If you have an existing respiratory, vascular or coronary condition, we recommend checking with your doctor before undertaking this itinerary. The following parts of the itinerary have high altitude:

1. Jade Snow Dragon Mountain near Lijiang. Sightseeing is at Yunshaping (Cloud Fir Meadow) which has an altitude of approximately 3,200m. Please note that the town of Lijiang, where you will be staying overnight is not at high altitude.
2. The town of Zhongdian has an altitude of 3,200m.

AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness) occurs in some people when they travel to altitudes over 3,000m. Mild symptoms of AMS include dizziness, fatigue, nausea or loss of appetite, breathlessness or headache. These usually develop over the first 36 hours at altitude and not immediately on arrival. AMS symptoms are experienced by people of varying ages and levels of fitness, and usually the symptoms will subside after a day or so. If symptoms worsen, you should seek medical advice and descend in altitude immediately. It is recommended to drink more water, non-alcoholic and noncaffeinated drinks and avoid exertion after arriving in altitude over 3,000m.

Making sure you are well hydrated (by drinking lots of water and refraining from alcohol/caffeine) before and during the tour, as well as exercising to improve your aerobic fitness before you leave, are generally considered to be excellent ways to prevent or alleviate the severity of mild AMS. If you smoke, your doctor will probably also advise you to stop several weeks before your tour. Take this Tour Dossier with you to your appointment to explain the altitude at which you will be travelling. Information on AMS can also be found at http://www.travelvax.com.au/resource_files/Travel-Tips---Altitude-Sickness.pdf

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 23 days in duration including international flights.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only, the price includes visa fees and your arrival/ departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to reservations. Join the tour on Day 1 in Beijing and end the tour on Day 22 in Kunming. 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 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
- 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 the 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, embarkation and disembarkation at 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 24 hours prior). This can affect both the time and location where you embark and disembark your cruise ship. Your National Escort/Local Guide will explain any such changes to you as soon as they are informed by the cruise operator
- On Day 14 we have added a visit to Wenshu Temple and Jinli Street in Chengdu to enhance customers experience.

Important Information Regarding Itinerary Changes and 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.

China Encounters Itinerary

DAY 1: AUSTRALIA TO BEIJING

On arrival in Beijing Capital International Airport, you will be met in the arrival 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 to your hotel. The transfer will take approximately one hour. 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.

The rest of your day is at leisure.

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: IMPERIAL BEIJING

Walk across the lengths of Tiananmen Square and into the magnificent Forbidden City. Sightseeing here will involve around three to four hours on foot. Later, soak up the harmonious ambience of the Temple of Heaven for about one hour where you can watch, or take part, in an outdoor dance group. This evening, dine on delicious Peking duck – a favourite of the Chinese emperors before watching a thrilling Chinese acrobatic show.

The Forbidden City is closed on Mondays. If this day of touring falls on a Monday, your touring in Beijing will be switched around 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 one of the largest public squares in the world, said to hold a capacity crowd of over one million. 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.

Temple of Heaven - Set in a 267-hectare park surrounded by a long wall and with a gate at each compass point, the Temple of Heaven is absolutely unique. It is one of the most perfect examples of Ming architecture. 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.

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.

Chinese Acrobatics – Chinese acrobatics incorporates many forms of dramatic art, including acrobatics, contortionism, juggling, plate spinning and many more.

DAYS 3: BEIJING - CHENGDE

This morning visit the Summer Palace and the Jade Museum before traveling by coach to Chengde, the former summer getaway of the Manchu (Qing) emperors. This journey usually takes around four to five hours.

Destination Information

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 Feng Shui 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.

Jade Museum – Learn about one of China's most symbolic and important materials: jade, at this comprehensive factory. Learn how to spot real jade, watch artisans at work carving this precious stone, and even buy a piece to take home yourself.

Chengde – Located north of Beijing, Chengde long played an important role in the Manchu emperor's history, firstly, as a hunting ground and then as a summer retreat. Chengde is home to some beautiful architecture, inspired by many different sources around China - the Fleeing the

Summer Retreat architecture, for example, is said to resemble that of the Forbidden City in Beijing.

DAY 4: CHENGDE

Visit the stunning Imperial Mountain Villas, then the Tibetan-inspired Puning Temple, and the more modest but equally beautiful Puyou Temple. You will spend approximately five to six hours sightseeing today.

Destination Information

Imperial Mountain Villas – The Imperial Mountain Villas are set in a huge park and are surrounded by a 10km long wall. The Manchu emperors encouraged it to be built in recreation of the Tibetan palaces in Lhasa, due to the Manchu's spiritual connection to Tibetan Buddhism.

Puning Temple – Built as a memorial to the victory of Emperor Qianlong over Mongol tribes in western China, the Puning Temple is modelled on a Tibetan Buddhist monastery and is home to inscriptions by the Qianlong Emperor in four languages: Chinese, Manchu, Mongol and Tibetan.

Puyou Temple – Built in 1760, the Puyou Temple was built as a place to study Buddhist scripture.

DAY 5: CHENGDE TO BEIJING

Today, drive back to Beijing via the Magnificent Great Wall of China. You will rise by cable car and walk around 10 minutes onto the Simatai section of the wall for breathtaking views. Once your group has been given an introduction to the Great Wall's unique history you will have approximately two hours free time to explore at your own pace.

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.

DAY 6: BEIJING TO XIAN

This morning board a bullet train to Xian. Your train seat will be in a second-class soft seat and the journey takes four to five hours. In Xian, visit the lovely Little Wild Goose Pagoda and in the evening, dine on scrumptious Shui Jiao dumplings before a performance of Tang Dynasty dancing.

Destination Information

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 fare, Xian is a must-see destination.

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.

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 7: XIAN

Spend the morning viewing the enigmatic ranks of the life-sized Terracotta Warriors. The Museum of the Terracotta Warriors and Horses is located approximately a one hour drive outside of Xian. From the bus park to the museum entrance there 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 about two and a half hours to explore. Visit the Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition centre to see smaller models of the warriors being made. Stroll on the beautifully preserved 14th century city walls that enclose Xian's old town. The local guide will give you time to explore the ancient city walls 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.

Later, wander through the atmospheric alleys of the Muslim Quarter.

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 walls – 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 spot and layout gives visitors a bird's eye view over this fantastic city. Follow the locals' example and hire a bike to get an ever more spectacular experience.

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, a trove of silks and fabrics, and delightful oriental knick-knacks.

DAY 8: XIAN – WUHAN – YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE

You will first take a morning train from Xian to Wuhan which takes approximately four hours. On arrival, transfer a further six hours through the countryside to the docks near Yichang which is located downstream from the Three Gorges Dam. Here you will board the Cruise ship which will take you on an amazing journey up China's Yangtze River on a four night cruise.

Please note the Yangtze River cruise section of your itinerary will not be confirmed by the cruise operators until after you commence your tour as it is subject to local river conditions and water levels. Your local guide will do their utmost to keep you informed of any changes but cannot guarantee against delays or – in rare cases – cancellations of sections of your itinerary. Shore excursions are subject to change depending on local conditions. A detailed itinerary will be handed out on the vessel each day.

Further note: If you do not wish to take part in a shore excursion but you still wish to disembark the cruise ship, there is a mandatory port tax which must be paid by each customer. The port tax amount is approx. USD20-USD30 dollars per person however this amount can vary and for security reasons, it is not always possible to disembark at all ports of call.

Please be aware that there are a number of steps involved in embarking and disembarking your Yangtze River Cruise Ship, particularly during low tide. If you think this may be an issue, please inform us in advance.

You may be offered cabin upgrades locally and payable direct to the cruise company, which may include some of the amenity package services. The amenity package benefits start on the second day of the cruise.

Destination Information

Yangtze River – One of the world's great and legendary waterways, this 6,300km river has its origins high up in the snow-covered mountain of Tanggula in the south western Qinghai Tibet Plateau and runs into the ocean in Shanghai. It is estimated that the banks of this river are home to almost a third of China's population.

DAY 9: YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE

Visit the Three Gorges Dam, the largest hydroelectric dam in the world. Disembark the ship and drive approximately 20 minutes, passing through the surrounding areas (the coach is not permitted to stop for photos). You will stop at the viewing area above the ship locks to truly appreciate the scale of this hydroelectric project. There is a small museum and a lookout. The sightseeing will involve around one hour on foot. You will then continue upstream on your ship.

Destination Information

Three Gorges Dam - Commenced in 1994 and completed in 2009, the Three Gorges Dam is the largest water conservancy project ever undertaken. The Dam is located near Sandouping, which is in the middle of the Xiling Gorge, the longest of the Three Gorges. The Three Gorges Dam is 2,335m long, 185m high, 18m wide on the top and 130m wide at the bottom. The dam has raised the river to a level of 175m above sea level, creating a 600km long reservoir. The building of this huge dam was for the purpose of flood control, electricity, navigation, and irrigation.

DAY 10: YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE

Prepare for breath-taking vistas as the ship passes through Wu and Qutang gorges. Switching to smaller vessels, take a relaxing trip on the Shennong Stream or the Goddess Stream (which one you visit is dependent on local conditions) cruising through the beautiful and narrow gorges. Many protected species make the stunning peaks their home, including monkeys, mountain goats, deer and wild boar.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Goddess Stream – Goddess Stream, also known as 'Shennü Xi' in Chinese, flows from the southern bank of the Yangtze opposite Goddess Peak.

Shennong Stream – This crystal-clear stream flows from north to south through stunning deep gorges, finally merging with the Yangtze to the east of the mouth of Wu Gorge.

DAY 11: YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE

Visit the Shibaozhai Temple, an 18th century architectural marvel. This small temple was built at the top of a nine-storey pavilion clinging to the sheer south bank near Qutang Gorge. Disembark from the ship to the dock close to the pavilion's entrance. Sightseeing here involves climbing the nine storeys inside the building and you will be off ship for two hours.

Depending on local conditions of the river and the cruise programme, you may visit Jade Emperor Scenic Area near Fengdu or the Shibaozhai Temple.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Shibaozhai Temple – Shibaozhai Temple is a nine-storey temple, named after the hill on which it stands. Dating back to the 18th century, it was built during the Xianfeng Emperor's reign and is an example of Buddhist architecture. The temple is said to have been constructed without the use of nails.

Day 12: YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE – CHENGDU

Disembark from your Yangtze River cruise vessel in Chongqing and visit the porcelain district of Ciqikou. Later, drive four to five hours to Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province, and check in to your hotel.

Destination Information

Chongqing – A city perched on the steep hills overlooking the confluence of the Jialing and the Yangtze Rivers, Chongqing is the chief industrial centre of south west China, producing approximately one fifth of Sichuan's industrial output. Chongqing has been reshaped by the Three Gorges Dam Project, which now allows larger sea-going vessels to sail all the way upriver to China's most famous waterfront mountain city.

Ciqikou – Known colloquially as 'Little Chongqing' and the 'Porcelain Port', Ciqikou dates back to the Ming Dynasty and has maintained its original appearance. Lined with shops selling delicious snacks, Ming-style trinkets and Chinese curios, Ciqikou is a fun way to spend a morning and is a must see in Chongqing.

Chengdu - China's symbolic western capital and the residence of the country's most lovable black and white bear, Chengdu has an abundance to offer. With a fast-paced economy that is dragging China's west into the 21st century, it is no wonder that Chengdu's appeal is growing year on year. As the gateway into Sichuan Province's large collection of sights, as well as Chengdu being its own trove

of historical and cultural treasures, Chengdu is a must-visit on any trip to China.

DAY 13: EXPLORE CHENGDU

Today we will visit China's most famous resident, the Giant Panda. Visit the Panda Conservation Centre where you can learn about China's celebrated bear. See these lovable creatures in surroundings that mirror their natural habitat. 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 one and a half hours of walking. There are electric carts offered by private vendors that can be organised at your expense. Later, you will visit Matchmaker's Corner in People's Park where parents search for worthy suitors for their children.

Destination Information

Panda Conservation Centre - With over 80 pandas holding residence, the Chengdu Panda Research Base is equipped with the latest technology and research materials to gain a further understanding in how we can protect the panda and maintain, if not increase, its numbers. The park is set up to resemble the mountain and forest regions in north Sichuan, the original home of the Giant Panda, with extensive bamboo trees and large green spaces. Red Pandas, the Giant Panda's lovable cousin, and flamboyant peacocks too roam the park, making for an interesting mix.

People's Park - A pleasant respite from urban Chengdu. Here you can see beautiful golden koi, locals dancing and practicing tai chi, and most interesting of all, Matchmaker's Corner, where parents search for suitable boyfriends or girlfriends for their children.

DAY 14: CHENGDU TO ZHONGDIAN

Today visit the Wenshu Temple and explore Jinli Street in Chengdu. Take a late evening flight to the monastery town of Zhongdian, also known as Shangri-La. Your flight is approximately one and a half hours.

Please note Zhongdian is at an altitude of 3,200M. All passengers should rest and stay well hydrated to acclimatise to the higher altitude.

Destination Information

Jinli Street – Recorded back as far as the 2nd century BC, Jinli Street houses traditional-style buildings and delicious snacks. Famous for its baldachin manufacturing, Jinli Street is a great place to stop for a traditional Chinese tea in one of the many teahouses.

Zhongdian – Seen as the joining point between Yunnan and Tibet, Zhongdian is a beautiful Tibetan town home to rugged scenery and remote temples. Known in Tibetan as Gyalthang, the town is said to be the location of the author James Hilton’s fictional land of Shangri-La.

DAY 15: ZHONGDIAN

Today you will visit the Songzanlin Monastery, one of the most significant centres of Tibetan Buddhism outside of Tibet. There are steep steps to climb at the monastery. Continue on to a Tibetan village where you will pay a visit to a local family and learn how to make Tibetan Butter Tea. Later, visit Zhongdian’s Old Town where you will see authentic Tibetan dwellings, prayer halls and pagodas. End your day with a trip to the Dafo Temple.

Destination Information

Songzanlin Monastery – This 17th century monastery is the largest of its kind in Yunnan. The Songzanlin Monastery is sometimes referred to as the ‘Little Potala Palace’ due to its resemblance to its bigger counterpart in Lhasa. The Monastery is coated in beautiful golden roofs and is a fusion of Tibetan and Han Chinese architecture.

Tibetan village – Gain an insight into how the local people live, maybe taste some local snacks and see traditional Tibetan architecture.

Zhongdian Old Town – Though unfortunately two thirds of the town was burnt down in January 2014, the remaining section has managed to maintain its original quaint charm which makes Zhongdian so alluring. See the perfect blend of Tibetan and Han cultures, architecture and people in this charming little town.

DAY 16: ZHONGDIAN TO LIJIANG

Drive approximately two hours (depending on the number of photo stops) to the northern bank of the Tiger Leaping Gorge, said to be the deepest gorge in the world. You will stop for a 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 expense. Lunch today will be a simple meal as the choice of restaurants in this area is limited. Continue on another two hours to Lijiang, a quaint and traditional Yunnan town where you will wander through the atmospheric Old Quarter.

Destination Information

Tiger Leaping Gorge – Tiger Leaping Gorge is believed to be one of the deepest and most dramatic gorges in the world,

measuring at 16km. Hiking along Tiger Leaping Gorge has become incredibly popular, as those who do can view its roaring stream, cascading waterfalls and magnificent scale – great for those who crave an adventure.

Lijiang – A beautiful tapestry of cobbled streets, rickety wooden buildings and sultry streams, Lijiang is a vision of idyllic wonder; a great place to just take a stroll and soak up the atmosphere.

DAY 17: LIJIANG

A magnificent mountain massif, the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain incorporates several peaks, the tallest of which is 5,500m. Visiting Jade Dragon Snow Mountain is very popular with travellers in the area, so to avoid the large crowds of people queuing at the same time, the local Government’s tourist authority allocates times to each group. The bus will drive to the base of the mountain where you can then take a 10-minute chairlift to explore one of the beautiful high meadows and enjoy the amazing vistas. From the chairlift there is a wooden pathway to the meadow; this walking route takes approximately 20 minutes. Descend by chairlift to re-board the bus. You may reach a maximum altitude of 3250m during your time on Jade Dragon Snow Mountain.

Later, visit Baisha Old Town to view the fascinating murals, painted during the early Ming Dynasty, and the Mu Family Embroidery School. Sightseeing at Baisha Old Town is leisurely. There are ruthless souvenir sellers near the bus park so be firm to avoid any hassle.

Please note this section of the itinerary is subject to change at late notice. Your local guide will keep you informed of any changes as they are made aware of them.

Destination Information

Jade Dragon Snow Mountain – Jade Dragon Snow Mountain is known for its mysterious ambience and snow-covered peaks and is considered the Holy Mountain amongst the Naxi ethnic group and other ethnic minorities in Lijiang. Popular for hiking, mountaineering, botanising and skiing, Jade Dragon Snow Mountain attracts thousands of visitors every year who enjoy exploring its lofty peaks.

Baisha Old Town and Frescoes – Once the capital of the Naxi minority group, the Baisha Old Town is home to typical Naxi architecture and a great place to see the Naxi people going about their daily lives. The Baisha Frescoes date back to the early Ming Dynasty and are made up of 44 pieces. Most of the paintings depict religious stories from Taoism and Buddhism.

Mu Family Embroidery School – Watch as locals make intricate pieces of embroidery and take advantage to buy a piece yourself.

DAY 18: LIJIANG – DALI

Visit the Black Dragon Pool where you can enjoy spectacular vistas of the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain. Drive four hours to Dali and on arrival explore the lively Foreigner's Street.

Destination Information

Black Dragon Pool - Constructed in 1737 during the reign of the Qing Dynasty, the Black Dragon Pool is a popular pond in Lijiang which offers stunning vistas and walking opportunities. From this area, visitors can enjoy beautiful panoramas of the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, the tallest mountain in the area. It is said that there is a black dragon living within the pond's waters, hence the name.

Dali - Sandwiched between the Jade Green Mountains and serene Erhai Lake, Dali is naturally striking in its setting. Mainly a base for the Bai people, Dali has played an important role in the history of south China and was once a post on the old Burma Road.

Foreigners Street - Popular with the foreign backpack community, Dali's Foreigners Street is lined with market stalls selling items from the Bai people, beautiful fabrics and delicious 'small eats' snacks.

DAY 19: DALI

Explore Dali's quaint old quarter and head over to Xizhou Village to explore the local wares at the market and the iconic Yen Family house. Sightseeing around the Dali Ancient Quarter and surrounding countryside is relaxed, involving approximately three hours on foot. Later, take a cruise on tranquil Erhai Lake - you will be required to get on and off the boat here without assistance. Lastly, visit the Golden Flower Tie Dye shop.

Destination Information

Xizhou Village – The Xizhou Village was once a military stronghold and flourished during the Ming Dynasty. Surrounded by rice paddies and shadowed by Cangshan Mountain, Xizhou is not only famous historically, but is a great place to shop and browse for Bai minority people wares and delicious fares.

Yen Family House – Previously owned by a famous local merchant, Yen Family House is now a museum of a traditional Bai ethnic house well-known for its wood carvings, stone sculptures and clay statues.

Erhai Lake – The centrepiece of Dali, Erhai Lake is a beautiful oasis of striking blue waters, temple islands and

cormorant fishermen. Erhai literally means 'ear sea' and is named so due to the ear shape of the lake. A cruise on the lake is the best way to fully appreciate the natural beauty of the area.

DAY 20: DALI TO KUNMING

This morning, enjoy light sightseeing at the ancient Three Pagodas, and later transfer approximately five to six hours to Kunming where you will dine this evening on the delicious local delicacy, Across the Bridge Noodles.

Destination Information

Three Pagodas – Presented in a perfect triangle, the Three Pagodas date back to the 9th century and were built under the Nanzhao State. Made of brick and white mud, the Pagodas are known for their resilience, having survived many natural disasters, including earthquakes.

Kunming - Nicknamed China's 'Spring City' due to its temperate weather, Kunming is the capital of Yunnan Province. Kunming has long played an important city for trade due to its significant location on the borders of Southeast Asia.

Across the Bridge Noodles - A type of rice noodle soup from Yunnan Province served in a broth style. Usually accompanied by meat, bean curd and vegetables, this is a truly therapeutic dish.

DAY 21: KUNMING

Drive one and a half hours to the Stone Forest and spend the morning exploring the unusual limestone rock formations of the Kunming Stone Forest. Sightseeing here involves up to two and a half hours walking along cobblestone paths to view the maze of rock pinnacles, lake and ponds. After lunch, you will drive back to Kunming for an afternoon at leisure.

Destination Information

Kunming Stone Forest - Located 120km south east of Kunming, the Stone Forest consists of thousands of narrow, fantastically shaped pillars of rock, scattered over an area of more than 80 hectares. The park is designed so that you can follow a walkway through the formations of water pools and grey pinnacles, the tallest of which is over 30m high. See if you can find the following formations for yourself – Everlasting Fungus, Baby Buffalo, Moon Grazing Rhino, Sword Pond and Baby Elephant.

DAYS 22-23: KUNMING TO AUSTRALIA

Any time before your flight is at leisure. Transfer to the airport according to your flight departure time and return to Australia, arriving the same of following day

CHINA ENCOUNTERS 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 six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

Visa application forms and all relevant documentation are due in our office 60 days prior to departure; if received after this date urgent visa processing fees will apply. Passports will be returned with your final documentation four weeks prior to your group tour's scheduled departure. If you require your passport to be returned earlier, a \$15AUD 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 Classic group tours from the groups' arrival until the groups' day of departure.

Sichuan cuisine (or Szechwan as it is still known in the west) is distinguished by its use of ginger, chili 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. Please note that long driving distances or flight times, for example, may delay/alter your mealtime.

Your itinerary has been carefully crafted to introduce you to a range of local dishes and we hope that you enjoy the culinary adventure ahead. When dining in China, although some restaurants have adopted a western approach to dining, expect some restaurants to follow the traditional communal style of eating. Typically, this will mean each diner has their own small bowl and may serve themselves from a variety of shared dishes. At some local restaurants, appetizers and main courses might be served when they are ready instead of following a particular order.

Determining when it's appropriate to use chopsticks, forks or spoons can be challenging for some travellers, even other Asians, as each country has different customs. In China, dishes are normally placed in the centre and people serve food for themselves with their own chopsticks and bowl. In parts of China, forks and spoons are used for most dishes and chopsticks are typically provided to eat noodles. Usually chopsticks or other utensils are provided to scoop the food into your bowl to prevent your own chopsticks from touching the food that remains on the table. Dining in China is fairly casual with not too many rules. Leaving food on the plate is not considered rude.

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 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 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. Please note double bed requests can be made at time of booking but cannot be guaranteed.

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.

Air: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines. Pre-flight seat allocation is not available on international and internal flight sectors.

Cruise ships: On this tour you will take a four night cruise up the Yangtze River. Your cabin on your Yangtze River cruise ship will have a private bathroom and balcony. Please note that the cruise ship and all shore excursions arranged by the cruise are on a shared basis.

Day Trains: On this tour, you will take a bullet train journey from Beijing to Xian and Xian to Wuhan. You will travel in second-class soft seat's 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 Holiday

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 16th 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 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

Local tipping is customary in Asia. However, this can often lead to awkwardness in knowing when it is appropriate to tip and how much, as well as ensuring you have a suitable amount of change available at the time. For your convenience, with years of experiences in providing the best customer service, Wendy Wu Tours operates a kitty system on our Group Tours so your National Escort will look after this aspect of your trip for you.

It also ensures that the amounts paid are reasonable for you but still fair for the local people. The amount is stated on each Group Tour page will be advised again on your final documentation. Tipping is paid in RMB (Chinese Yuan) and will be collected by your National Escort on arrival and distributed throughout the tour on your behalf.

If you are taking a tour that includes a Yangtze River cruise, the total amount listed on the tour pages is collected in two parts: 1) RMB amount, paid to your National Escort on arrival, as above, and 2) A separate service levy in RMB to be paid upon boarding the cruise vessel.

Any additional tipping on any of our tours is welcomed at your discretion. Further guidance for tipping contributions will be outlined in your final documentation.

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

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 and any flammable liquids 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\$250 per person, per week should be sufficient; however for those that can't 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

Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with 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 four weeks prior to departure.

Updated: 13th March 2018