



## China Explorer Dossier

### Immerse Yourself Tour | 15 Days | Active

Beijing – Gubei Water Town - Xian – Pingle - Chengdu – Yangtze River Cruise - Shanghai

Pairing China's classic sights with a Yangtze cruise, this itinerary brings you closer to the authentic charms of China. Revel in atmospheric ancient towns and hike along the incredible, undulating Great Wall.

#### TOUR HIGHLIGHTS:

- Hike the Great Wall
- Mingle with local people
- Bike Xian's city wall
- Visit Pandas in Dujiangyan
- Sip tea in old Pingle
- Three nights on the Yangtze



## China Explorer tour inclusions

- Return international flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated on itinerary
- 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.*

## Immerse Yourself

Designed for those who wish to be further immersed in the authentic charm of Asia; our Immerse Yourself Tours include more cultural and active experiences. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts or Local Guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience. Our Immerse Yourself tours include:

- Cycling and walking through classic sites
- Unique cultural experiences and encounters
- Off the beaten track destinations
- More evenings at leisure for independent exploration

## Active Tour

'China Explorer' is an **active** tour. Active tours require a good level of fitness, as they are physically more demanding. They may involve hiking, and some travel to remote, high altitude areas where tourist facilities are less developed.

- On the Great Wall of China, you will trek over rough, uneven and steep ground for around 4-5 hours on the Jinshanling section of the wall
- There will be long periods of walking whilst sightseeing
- You will need to be able to cycle a bicycle for approximately 1 hour in Xian

Our National Escort and 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 civilisation 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 15 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 14 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 maintaining the integrity of your trip.

- 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.
- Due to flight schedule changes, a bullet train will replace a flight from Xian to Chengdu. This will result in the itinerary now spending one night in Pingle and therefore only one night in Chengdu instead of two nights due to the timings of these flights.

### 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 Explorer 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 approximately one hour to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure. 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 across Tiananmen Square into the magnificent Forbidden City. Continue to the Summer Palace, former

holiday home of the Qing emperors, and explore the beautiful grounds. Whilst here, take a short hike up Longevity Hill for spectacular views over the palace's Kunming Lake. Today's sightseeing involves approximately five to six hours, predominately on foot. On your way back, stop for a photo at the iconic Bird's Nest Stadium, home of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The time at the Olympic Village will not include entry to any of the Olympic venues.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

*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 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.

**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.

**Olympic Village** – See the home of the most watched Olympic event in history at the Beijing Olympic Village. Most spectacular of sights here is the iconic Bird’s Nest Stadium, host to the spectacular opening and closing ceremonies in 2008.

### **DAY 3: BEIJING TO GUBEI WATER TOWN**

Arrive early for a visit to the Temple of Heaven where you can watch the locals as they start their day with dancing, Tai Chi and Mahjong. Next, visit Yandaixiejie, where you will have some free time to explore the Hutongs. Sit down for lunch with a family who call the hutongs home. This morning’s sightseeing is approximately four hours. In the afternoon, drive three hours to the Simatai section of the Great Wall where you will stay overnight at Gubei Watertown. On arrival, ascend Simatai Great Wall by cable car for spectacular sunset views.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

*Please note: You will need to pack a smaller overnight bag for your trip to Gubei Watertown. Main luggage will be left in safe storage at the hotel in Beijing and picked up on your return.*

#### **Destination Information**

**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, 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.

**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 4: THE GREAT WALL**

Rise early to transfer to the Jinshanling section of the Great Wall. Jinshanling is much less frequented by tourists than other parts of the Wall. The stark, yet magnificent surroundings allow you to put yourself in the shoes of those who walked this incredible edifice hundreds of years ago. This once-in-a-lifetime trek on the Jinshanling section of the Great Wall will last four to five hours, depending on the speed and capability of the group. You will need to be able to complete the whole trek as the route does not have any pick-up points mid-way. The walk features some extremely steep steps of different heights so it can be tricky to maintain a pace or routine. There are also many walkways where the wall has fallen away giving way to sheer drops which require extra care while walking. Underfoot, the pathway is rocky and largely unmaintained; it is strongly advised that you wear sturdy footwear with ankle support if needed. After trekking through the dramatic landscapes and rugged terrain, drive three hours back to Beijing where you will have the evening at leisure.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch*

*Please note, today’s lunch may be a packed lunch.*

#### **Destination Information**

**Jinshanling Great Wall** – Located northeast of Beijing, the Jinshanling Section of the Great Wall snakes through stunning mountain scenery and offers panoramic views over the neighbouring countryside. This Ming Dynasty section of the Great Wall offers one of the most breathtaking walks.

### **DAY 5: BEIJING TO XIAN**

Today, fly two hours to Xian. On arrival, explore the Muslim Quarter, Xian’s Islamic centre, where there are a myriad of small food stalls selling ample mouth-watering dishes. Have a traditional Xian dinner this evening and enjoy an evening at leisure possibly soaking up the atmosphere at lively Defu Lane.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

#### **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 fares, Xian is a must-see destination.

**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 6: XIAN**

Today, view the formidable ranks of terracotta soldiers and horses, lined up in ranks to protect the first emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang. The Museum of the Terracotta Warriors and Horses is located around 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 are no electric carts 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, towards the summer months, can be hot outside. Sightseeing here involves approximately two and a half hours on foot. Next, visit the Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition centre to see smaller models of the warriors being made before returning to the city to cycle on the 14th century city walls, one of the best preserved urban fortifications in the country. You will need to be able to cycle for around one hour. Enjoy an evening at leisure.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch*

#### **Destination Information**

**Terracotta Warriors** – One of the most significant archaeological discoveries of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 take a bike to get an ever more spectacular experience.

#### **DAY 7: XIAN TO CHENGDU**

This morning, take a four-hour bullet train to Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province. On arrival, drive two hours to the ancient town of Pingle, dating back to the Han Dynasty. Take time to walk through its maze of teahouse-lined streets before walking through Jinji’s dense bamboo forest, and taking a walk across the magnificent Jinji Suspended Rope Bridge for vistas of the bamboo forest. Stay overnight in Pingle

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

#### **Destination Information**

**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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

**Pingle Ancient Town** – Regarded as one of the best ancient towns in Sichuan Province, Pingle Ancient Town dates back to the Han Dynasty and was a stopping point on legendary Silk Road.

#### **DAY 8: CHENGDU**

This morning drive via the forested Sichuanese countryside of Dujiangyan and visit the Dujiangyan Panda Base, which offers refuge to Giant Pandas with the aim to reintroduce them into the wild. The centre offers one of the most authentic, spacious and natural settings in the country. Later, explore the slopes of Mt Qingcheng, one of China’s most sacred Taoist Mountains. Ascend by cable car to the higher slopes, and take a walk around Yuecheng Lake. Continue back to Chengdu for an overnight stay.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

#### **Destination Information**

**Dujiangyan** – Located 72km northwest of Chengdu and less than a one hour drive to Mt. Qingcheng, Dujiangyan is well renowned for its irrigation system that provides most of the water supply to Chengdu and neighbouring towns.

**China Conservation and Research Center Dujiangyan Panda Base** - Equipped with the latest technology and research materials to gain a further understanding in how we can protect the panda and 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.

**Mt. Qingcheng** – Located 65km west of Chengdu, Mt Qingcheng is an important sacred Taoist mountain. It is home to a trove of temples, beautiful trails lined with sweet-scented fruit and spectacular views over the Sichuan countryside.

#### **DAY 9: CHENDGU – YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE**

Take the bullet train for two hours to Chongqing, one of the most important cities on the Yangtze River, where you will visit the porcelain district of Ciqikou. After dinner, board your Yangtze River Cruise ship, home for the next three nights.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Dinner*

*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.*

*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**

**Chongqing** – Due to its unparalleled location, Chongqing serves as the economic centre of the upstream Yangtze River Basin. The significant history, opulent culture and distinctive spice cuisine of the area make Chongqing one of the most vibrant cities in the country.

**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.

**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 southwestern 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 10: YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE**

Today, 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. You will be off the 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.*

#### **Destination Information**

**Shibaozhai** - is a nine-storey temple, named after the hill on which it stands. Dating back to the 18th century, the Shibaozhai temple 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 11: 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 Goddess Stream cruising through the beautiful and narrow gorges for approximately 15km. Many protected species make the stunning peaks their home, including monkeys, mountain goats, deer and wild boar.

Depending on local conditions, you may travel along the Shennong Stream instead of the Goddess Stream.

#### **Destination Information**

**Goddess Stream** - Goddess Stream, also known as ‘Shennü Xi’ in Chinese, flows from the southern bank of the Yangtze opposite Goddess Peak. Once just a stream, the Three Gorges Dam raised the water level to 70-100m in depth, depending on the season.

**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.

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### **DAY 12: YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE**

Visit the Three Gorges Dam, the largest hydroelectric dam in the world. Disembark the ship and drive approximately 20 minutes through the surrounding areas (the coach is not permitted to stop for photos) to the viewing area above the ship locks where you can truly appreciate the scale of this hydroelectric project. There is also a small museum and a lookout point here. Disembark your cruise ship in Yichang, transfer by coach to Wuhan Airport (approximately six to seven hours drive) and board your two hour flight to Shanghai.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch*

### **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.

**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 13: SHANGHAI**

This morning, take an exciting breakfast tour around some of Shanghai's most exciting districts, tasting local delicacies, including pancakes and fried bread sticks. Afterwards,

wander the pleasant Yu Gardens and the bustling Old Town before visiting the informative Silk Museum. Take a stroll on the colonial Bund and enjoy a farewell Shanghainese meal this evening, as well as a cruise down the Huangpu River to see the neon lights of Pudong.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

### **Destination Information**

**Old Town and Yu Gardens** -The Old Town (Yuan Bazaar) 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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**Shanghainese Cuisine** – Influenced by neighbouring provinces and known for its sweeter taste, Shanghai cuisine is a plethora of delicious treats. Dishes are usually seasoned with vinegars and rice wines and a popular cooking method is to braise the food.

## **DAYS 14-15: SHANGHAI TO AUSTRALIA**

*Meals Included: Breakfast*

This morning is at your leisure before you are transferred to Shanghai airport to board your flight to Australia, arriving home the same or following day.

## **CHINA EXPLORER 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. Meals as stated on itinerary (excluding drinks) are included in our 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.

## 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.

**Day Trains:** On this tour, you will take a bullet train journey between Xian and Chengdu and Chengdu to Chongqing. 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).*

**Cruise ships:** On this tour you will take a 3-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.

## 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 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 18 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) or US Dollars (on selected tours) 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](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 and any flammable liquids in hand luggage will 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\$350 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](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 four weeks prior to departure.

**Updated: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

## Travelling on an Active Paced Tour

We hope you are looking forward to what we are sure will be a trip of a lifetime. Before you embark on this adventure, we ask you to consider the points listed below that relate to our active paced tours. This will ensure you understand what is involved with an active paced tour and therefore help you decide if your chosen tour is right for you.

This is to ensure that your tour runs as smoothly as possible for you and your fellow tour members.

Please consider the following aspects of active paced tours prior to confirming your arrangements;

- While we believe that age is no barrier, please give special consideration to the fact that medical assistance and public infrastructure can be limited in these areas.
- There will be long periods of physical activity, including walking, climbing of stairs, in/out of boats. Tour participants who will travel with a cane/walking stick may come across difficulties. It is our experience that using a cane/walking stick in these areas where there are rough and uneven surfaces, stairs to climb and high altitudes, becomes difficult.
- Only limited meal options will be available. People with special dietary requirements should expect difficulties on these tours. Please understand that depending on the trip you are taking, you may be given very little or no meat.
- Your tour may include basic accommodation facilities including home stays, guest houses, truck stops and tented accommodation. This may mean, no or limited hot water, and no private bathroom facilities.
- There will be long periods of driving on often unsealed, rural and bumpy roads in vehicles ranging from tour coaches to local jeeps and canter vehicles.
- Altitude affects people in many different ways and a certain level of fitness is required in order to limit the effects. Please discuss how to manage altitude sickness with a health care professional.
- Overnight trains only have basic bedding in four berth compartments with limited or no ladder facilities to climb to the top bunk. You may be sharing with other tour members or locals.
- Some tours may have sightseeing en route to the next destination. Therefore participation is required or you will need to remain with the coach until the rest of the group has finished touring.

National Escorts/ Local Guides will endeavor to provide rest stops in your itinerary where possible. Please be advised that some days may have a more physical programme than others.

If you are comfortable with the above mentioned aspects of travelling on an active paced tour, we look forward to welcoming you on what is sure to be a unique and memorable experience.

However, if you have any hesitations please contact your valued travel agent or our reservations department to discuss the tour further or explore alternative options.