



## China & Tibet Discovery Dossier Classic Tour | 16 Days | Moderate

Beijing - Xian - Lhasa - Chengdu - Yangtze River - Shanghai

Journey to the roof of the world to uncover the mysteries of Tibet in the incredible city of Lhasa. Enjoy the very best cultural, historical and natural treasures that China has to offer – from the Great Wall to the Yangtze River.

### Tour Highlights:

- Walk on the Great Wall
- Face the Terracotta Army
- Wander the Barkhor
- Explore Potala Palace
- Watch Giant Pandas play
- Three nights on the Yangtze



## China & Tibet Discovery 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 & Tibet Discovery' is a **moderate** tour. This has been defined in our brochure as anyone with a good level of fitness should be able to complete this itinerary. These programmes are not strenuous but do include several days where long periods of sightseeing on foot, climbing of stairs and in/out of boats will be necessary. These tours are generally longer in duration and could involve long days of driving. 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:

**The highest point of altitude reached on this tour is in the Tibetan city of Lhasa (approximately 3,700m)**

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](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 16 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 15 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.

### Changes:

- Due to flight schedule changes, the visit to Jinli Street visit on day 9 may not be possible if your flight is delayed
- 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.

## 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 & Tibet Discovery Itinerary

### **DAY 1: AUSTRALIA TO BEIJING**

Fly to Beijing, the capital of China, for a three night stay. On arrival in Beijing Capital International Airport on day one, you will be met in the arrivals hall by your Local Guide and/or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer to your hotel. The transfer will take approximately one hour and 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: IMPERIAL BEIJING**

Walk through Tiananmen Square and into the magnificent Forbidden City; sightseeing here will involve approximately three to four hours on foot. Soak up the harmonious ambience of the Temple of Heaven for about an hour where you can watch, or take part in, an outdoor dance class. Tonight, eat a traditional Peking duck dinner and enjoy a thrilling Chinese acrobatics show.

*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.

**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.

### **DAY 3: BEIJING – THE GREAT WALL**

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

#### **Destination Information**

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

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

**Summer Palace** – The former holiday retreat of the Qing emperors, the Summer Palace is a stunning example of Chinese garden style. The Summer Palace incorporates the 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.

#### **DAY 4: BEIJING TO XIAN**

This morning you will be transferred approximately one hour to Beijing airport for your two hour flight to Xian. Wander through the Muslim Quarter and then later this evening enjoy a delicious feast of traditional Shui Jiao dumplings and a performance of Tang Dynasty dancing.

*Please be mindful of your valuables in the Muslim Quarter.*

#### **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.

**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 5: XIAN – TERRACOTTA WARRIORS**

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. After this, visit the Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition centre to see smaller models of the warriors being made.

Later, stroll on the beautifully preserved 14<sup>th</sup> 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).

#### **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.

#### **DAY 6: XIAN TO LHASA**

Fly three hours to Lhasa, the capital of spiritual Tibet. The afternoon is at leisure to help acclimatise to the altitude.

*Lhasa Altitude – 3700m*

#### **Destination Information**

**Lhasa** – Historically and spiritually a centre for Buddhism, Lhasa is home to many culturally significant sights, including the Potala Palace, Jokhang Temple and the Norbulingka Summer Palace. Set on the Tibetan Plateau, Lhasa is one of the highest cities in the world, reaching heights of 3,700m.

#### **DAY 7: LHASA**

Wander around the Barkhor to see traditionally dressed locals, stalls of religious trinkets and prostrating pilgrims. Inside the Jokhang Temple, the sacred centre of Tibetan Buddhism, the devotion is palpable as queues of people worship in the flickering light of yak butter candles. There

will also be a visit to the Sera Monastery, a renowned seat of Buddhist learning. Sightseeing at the Jokhang Temple and Sera Monastery will involve climbing many steps and walking over uneven surfaces in dim light.

### **Destination Information**

**Barkhor** - Encircling the Jokhang Temple, the Barkhor is a cluster of narrow streets that acts as a circuit of pilgrimage for Buddhists around the Jokhang. There are many stalls here where you can peruse for Tibetan trinkets, religious relics and exquisite jewellery.

**Jokhang Temple** – Considered the most important and sacred temple in Tibet, the Jokhang Temple is located amongst Barkhor and dates back to the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The architecture is a simple blend of Indian, Chinese and Nepalese designs and is a mix of stunning colours both inside and out.

**Sera Monastery** – The Sera Monastery is one of the ‘Great Three’ monasteries in Tibet located 5km outside of Lhasa. Although its monk population is rather small, there is still a bustle of activity, especially in the morning and late afternoon, when you can see debates on religious theory.

### **DAY 8: LHASA**

This morning visit the iconic palace of Potala, the largest monastery in the world. Sitting atop Red Mountain, the Potala Palace is painted in a traditional Tibetan blend of deep red and stark white. At the Potala Palace there are over 1000 steps. A small torch can be helpful to make your surroundings clearer. Next, visit Norbulingka, Lhasa’s answer to Beijing’s Summer Palace. Visit a Tibetan arts and crafts shop and enjoy a traditional Tibetan dinner this evening, accompanied by a dance performance.

*Please note: during the months of October-April, the Tibetan Dance Performance will only run if there are 20 or more people booked to watch the show that evening.*

### **Destination Information**

**Potala Palace** – The former winter residence of the Dalai Lama, the Potala Palace has long been a symbol of Tibetan Buddhism, and struggles between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government. Abandoned by the Buddhist spiritual leader in 1950, the Potala Palace now acts as a museum of old treasures and intricate shrines.

**Norbulingka** – Norbulingka served as the summer residence of the Dalai Lama from the 1780s to 1959. Set over an extensive park, Norbulingka is home to several chapels and palaces, as well as beautiful flower arrangements.

### **DAY 9: LHASA TO CHENGDU**

Fly two hours Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province, where, after a leisurely tour of Jinli Street, there will be a delicious Sichuan meal to savour.

*Please note: flights from Lhasa to Chengdu are subject to delay and as such, the visit to Jinli Street is occasionally affected.*

### **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. A fast-paced economy which 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.

**Jinli Street** – Recorded back as far as the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

### **DAY 10: CHENGDU – YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE**

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 involves approximately one and a half hours on foot and there are electric carts offered by private vendors that can be organised at your own cost. Visit the Shu Brocade and Embroidery Museum before travelling four to five hours by coach to Chongqing, where you will board your Yangtze River 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.*

### **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.

**Shu Brocade and Embroidery Museum** - Brocade production has been an integral piece of Chinese history for over 2,000 years. At this museum, enjoy the opportunity to learn further how these richly decorative fabrics are created and take the opportunity to purchase a piece yourself.

**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 11: YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE**

Today visit the Shibaozhai Temple, an 18<sup>th</sup> 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 you may visit the Fengdu Relocation Village instead of the Shibaozhai Temple.*

### **Destination Information**

**Shibaozhai** - A nine-storey temple, named after the hill on which it stands. Dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> 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.

**Fengdu** - Also known as Ghost City, is home to a complex of shrines, temples and monasteries dedicated to the Chinese belief of the afterlife.

### **DAY 12: 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 70100m 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.

### **DAY 13: 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). Get dropped off at the viewing area above the ship locks so you can truly appreciate the scale of this hydroelectric project. There is a small museum and a lookout and the sightseeing will involve around 1hr on foot. 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.

### **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 14: SHANGHAI**

Shanghai is China's great metropolis, where east and west collide on streets lined with futuristic skyscrapers and 10<sup>th</sup> century temples. Today's explorations start with the peaceful Yu Gardens and the atmospheric alleys of the old town. Admire the magnificent colonial architecture with a stroll along the historical Bund before visiting the Silk Museum. Sightseeing today involves three to four hours on foot. This evening, view the city from the Huangpu River on a panoramic cruise before sampling some traditional Shanghai cuisine.

#### **Destination Information**

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

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

**Silk Museum** – The Silk Museum is an educational journey through the production of silk, one of China's most famous and luxurious materials. Learn about the use of silkworms and silk moths in its production; the manufacturing process; as well as silk's journey along the Silk Road which brought this product across Asia and Europe.

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

**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 15-16: SHANGHAI TO AUSTRALIA**

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

## **CHINA AND TIBET DISCOVERY 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.

A Tibet permit is included in the cost of your tour. We require a clear colour copy of your passport bio page and a copy of your valid Chinese visa. If this visa has been processed by our office we will make the necessary copy required. Tibet Permits are processed in China and are collected once you are travelling on your China group tour by your National Escort.



## 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.

**In Sichuan Province**, the cuisine (known as Szechwan 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.

**In Tibetan areas**, produce is limited. Barley, wheat, yak meat and milk are produced locally and anything else must be trucked in from other parts of China. Local dishes include simple vegetable noodle soups (thugpa) or dumplings called momo. Simple, new restaurants are becoming more common but mostly in the larger towns.

There will be limited western dishes for breakfast. Typical breakfast dishes may include cold vegetable/pickle dishes, bean curd noodles, soups, congee (rice porridge), steamed buns with pork or sweet red bean paste and green tea. You may also be served fruit, a fried egg, or toast – although the bread tends to be very sweet and unlike the bread we have in Australia. Black tea, fresh milk and coffee is not often available but can usually be requested. Please note that long driving distances or local conditions 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 the time of booking but cannot be guaranteed.

## Dogs in Tibet

Once raised as guard dogs by nomadic Tibetans, these animals can be a nuisance in the streets of cities and small towns nowadays. They are treated quite differently to how we would treat our domestic pets and tend to fight on the streets, especially at night. It is advisable to keep your distance from any dogs and bring some earplugs so you're not disturbed during the night.

## 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 three-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 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 China. 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](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\$270 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: 20<sup>th</sup> October 2017**