



Ancient Empires of China & Japan

Classic Tour | 20 Days | Physical Level 1

Beijing - Xian - Guilin - Yangshuo – Shanghai –
Osaka – Hiroshima – Kyoto – Tokyo

The ultimate tour for those wishing to combine the very best of two ancient nations. Join us on an incredible journey from Beijing to Tokyo by road, boat, rail and air on this epic three-week tour!

- Walk on the Great Wall of China
- Face the spectacular Terracotta Warriors
- Take a cruise down the tranquil Li River
- Reflect in Hiroshima
- Explore Japan's history in Kyoto
- Admire breath-taking Mount Fuji



Ancient Empires of China & Japan tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is more than 10 passengers) and Local Guides in China
- Visa fees for Australian passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

Classic Tours:

See the classic sights in the company of expert guides so you can really understand the history and culture of the destination. On our classic tours we take care of everything, leaving you to sit back and enjoy the experience to the full. The tours are fully inclusive with all meals and a comprehensive touring programme.

Physical Level 1:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights.

‘Ancient Empires of China & Japan’ is rated as a **physical level 1** tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it’s more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You’ll be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time, often involving steps or uneven ground.
- On the Great Wall of China in Beijing some of the walking will be at an incline.
- You will be required to get on and off the boats on Li River in Guilin and on Tokyo Bay without assistance.

Of course, our National Escort 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 Profiles: China & Japan

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.

Japan is a fascinating country situated in northeast Asia. It is comprised of more than 4,000 islands - the main four being Hokkaido, Honshu, Kyushu and Shikoku. The Japanese name for Japan is ‘Nippon’ or ‘Nihon’ meaning ‘sun origin’ and is often translated as ‘Land of the Rising Sun’. It is a country of contrasts; engaging a combination of futuristic cities, ancient culture and diverse scenery. Japan is famous for its relatively short Cherry Blossom season.

Joining Your Tour

The tour is 20 days in duration including international flights. Please note that due to flight schedules passengers may depart/arrive on day 2.

Travelers booked on 'Land Only', the price includes 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 19 in Tokyo. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

Itinerary Changes

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

Itinerary – Ancient Empires of China & Japan

Days 1: Beijing

Fly to Beijing, the capital of China. On arrival on day two you will be met at the airport 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 1 hour to your hotel for your 3-night stay.



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

Rise early this morning to avoid the crowds and drive approximately 2 hours northwest of the city to the Juyongguan Pass to take a walk on the Great Wall of China, appreciating the wall itself and the dramatic scenery. Your visit involves walking from the bus to the first section. Once your group has been given an introduction to the Great Wall’s unique history, you will have free time to explore at your own pace. Later, visit the Jade Factory before strolling through the exquisite Summer Palace. In the evening, enjoy a traditional Peking Duck dinner.



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. Understand how to tell if jade is real or fake and watch artisans at work, carving this emerald stone into works of art.

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

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

Day 3: Beijing

Soak up the harmonious ambience of the Temple of Heaven for about 1 hour where you can watch locals practise Tai Chi, dance or play cards. Next, enjoy a leisurely stroll in the warren-like hutongs where you will meet a local family before walking through Tiananmen Square and into the magnificent Forbidden City. Sightseeing will involve approximately 3-4 hours on foot.

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

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.

Hutongs – The Mongol rulers of Beijing established this style of housing in the 13th century as tenancy for the growing population of the city. Hutongs were designed to reflect the Chinese system of Feng Shui with 4 hutongs joining together to make a courtyard in the middle, known as Siheyuan. In more recent times, the hutong suburbs were in jeopardy of disappearing, but a fierce debate between developers and those who fought to protect the architecture and the hutong way of life diminished the threat.

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.

Day 4: Beijing - Xian

Transfer to the train station and take the bullet train for around 6 hours to the ancient city of Xian. In the evening, enjoy a delicious feast of traditional Shui Jiao dumplings and a lively 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 fares, Xian is a must-see destination.

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

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 1-hour drive outside of Xian. From the bus park to the museum entrance 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 2 and a half hours to explore. After this, visit the Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Workshop to see smaller models of the warriors being made. Later, 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.



Destination information

Terracotta Warriors – One of the most significant archaeological discoveries of the 20th century, this unearthed terracotta army comprises 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 Workshop – See smaller versions of the enigmatic Terracotta Warriors being created at the Workshop and even purchase your own portable soldier.

Ancient City Walls – Dating back to the Ming Dynasty in the 14th century, Xian ancient city wall is one of the best-preserved urban fortifications in China. The wall's ideal spot gives visitors a bird's eye view over the city.

Day 6: Xian - Guilin

Visit the Little Wild Goose before transferring to the airport and flying approximately 2 hours to Guilin.



Destination Information

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.

Guilin – Guilin is one of China's most stunning and panoramic cities and was founded during the reign of the first Chinese empire, the Qin Dynasty. It is renowned for the unique beauty of the mountains that fringe it. Guilin developed as a trading town due to the building of the Ling Canal which links the important Pearl and Yangtze River systems.

Day 7: Guilin - Yangshuo

Take a relaxed 4-hour cruise along the Li River to the charming town of Yangshuo, where you will spend 1 night. Around every river bend is a view to take your breath away as jagged peaks loom over rural scenes of lush greenery, grazing buffalos and local fishermen. These are small cruise boats usually holding approximately 100 passengers; with an enclosed dining area on the lower deck and an open viewing area on the upper deck. Usually, the boats depart at 9am from the dock located a 1-hour drive from your hotel. However, when the river level is low they depart from further downstream which would mean a longer drive and an earlier check-out from your hotel. Disembarking from the cruise, your Local Guide will walk with you to your hotel, approximately a 30-minute walk from the river. There are electric carts offered by private vendors which can be organised at your own cost. In Yangshuo, enjoy some time strolling along West Street and visit the local markets.



Destination Information

Li River – Pass tranquil farming and fishing scenes and picturesque villages as you cruise down the Li River. The main attraction is the stunning limestone karsts that tower above the river creating a magical landscape of mountains and water. The unique and natural beauty of this region has for centuries been an inspiration to Chinese artists and poets alike.

Yangshuo – Yangshuo is home to some of the best scenery in the world. This quaint town is renowned for its breath-taking vistas and peaceful country life. Surrounded by stark karst peaks and attractively located on the Li River, Yangshuo, alongside Guilin, prides itself in being the most sought-after beauty spots in China.

Day 8: Yangshuo – Guilin

Drive back to Guilin. En route, see the colourful stalagmites and stalactites of Reed Flute Cave and visit the South China Pearl Factory.



Destination Information

Reed Flute Cave – Named so because of the clumps of slender reed once commonly found at the entrance to the caves which was also used to make flutes, the Reed Flute Caves houses a grotto of multi-coloured stalactites and stalagmites.

South China Pearl Factory – Gain a fascinating insight into the pearling industry of southern China at the South China Pearl Factory, where you also have the chance to purchase some of these elegant silver jewels.

Day 9: Guilin - Shanghai

This morning, stroll around picturesque Ronghu Lake and admire the Sun and Moon Pagodas – two towering examples of traditional Chinese-Buddhist architecture. Later, fly just over 2 hours to the exuberant city of Shanghai for a 2-night stay.



Destination Information

Ronghu Lake – One of two lakes originating from the Tang Dynasty when they made up part of the city moat. As Guilin Expanded in all directions, the moat became a lake within the city area.

Sun and Moon Pagodas – Known as the Gold and Silver Pagodas because of their colours at night, the sun and moon pagodas sit on top of the Chinese Fir Lake but are connected underwater by a glass tunnel.

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 10: Shanghai

Today’s explorations include the peaceful Yu Garden and a quick visit to the old town. Admire the magnificent colonial architecture with a stroll along the Bund and visiting the Silk Factory. Sightseeing today involves a full day of touring around the centre of the city including 3-4 hours on foot. In the evening, view the city from the Huangpu River on a panoramic cruise.



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 Factory – The Silk Factory 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.

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

Day 11: Shanghai - Osaka

It's time to say goodbye to China and hello to Japan! Transfer to the airport and fly just over 2 hours to the vibrant city of Osaka. On arrival you will be met by your English-speaking Japanese guide and transfer to your hotel.



Destination Information

Osaka – Osaka is Japan's third largest city. What Osaka lacks in sightseeing locations, it makes up for with its flamboyance, fun loving people and amazing food.

Day 12: Osaka

This morning, visit the famous Osaka Castle before taking a 20-minute cruise along the Yodogawa River. Next, stroll around the Dotonbori district, a restaurant mecca, where you can sample delicious local delicacies for lunch. Spend the rest of the afternoon at leisure before dinner in the evening.



Destination Information

Osaka Castle – Osaka Castle is one of Japan's most famous castles known for sweeping views of the city from its hilltop perch. Construction began in 1583 by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who intended the castle to become the centre of a new, unified Japan under his rule.

Dotonbori District – Historically a theatre district and still a popular entertainment area today, the Dotonbori district offer an eccentric and electric atmosphere.

Day 13: Osaka - Okayama – Kurashiki - Hiroshima

Transfer to Osaka Station and take the speedy bullet train for 50 minutes to Okayama. Visit Korakuen Garden, one of the 'Three Great Gardens of Japan' before continuing around 1 hour to Kurashiki to explore the beautifully preserved Bikan Historical Quarter. Later, transfer around 2 hours to Hiroshima.



Destination Information

Okayama – Okayama, an old castle town of the Ikeda daimyo family, is the capital city of its namesake prefecture. The prefecture is known for its delicious fruit and is often called the land of sunshine.

Korakuen Garden – Along with Kanazawa's Kenrokuen and Mito's Kairakuen, Korakuen is one of the 'Three Great Gardens of Japan'. Korakuen was built in 1687 and opened to the public in 1884. It is a spacious garden with typical Japanese landscape garden features, including a large pond, streams and walking paths. Quite unique for a Japanese garden, however, are Korakuen's spacious lawns.

Bikan Historical Quarter – During the Edo Period (1603-1867), Kurashiki was an important point along the distribution route of Japan's most important commodity, rice. A central section of the city's former canal system has been preserved in the Bikan Historical Quarter. Along the canal, there are many of the original storehouses, which have been converted into cafes, boutiques, souvenir shops and museums.

Hiroshima – An atomic bomb was dropped over Hiroshima on 6th August 1945, and the city's name became famous worldwide for this unenviable distinction. The destructive power of the bomb obliterated nearly everything within a 2km radius. The city has been rebuilt and has risen phoenix-like from the ashes and destroyed sites of historical heritage were reconstructed.

Day 14: Hiroshima

Take a short ferry ride to Miyajima Island, where sightseeing will be at a leisurely pace on foot. Visit Itsukushima Shrine and explore the traditional market town at leisure. Return by ferry and coach to Hiroshima and, after lunch, visit the famous Peace Memorial Park and Museum. Please be aware that the museum may be confronting and upsetting for some group members and it is at your discretion if you wish to visit or enjoy time at leisure exploring the Peace Memorial Park. Later, visit the observation deck of Orizuru Tower and enjoy great views of the city.



Please note: Renovation works on Miyajima's famous floating torii gate are scheduled to start in June 2019. During the renovation works, the torii gate will be covered up by scaffolding. It is not known yet exactly how long the renovations will take, but they are expected to last 1-2 years.

While the torii gate will be covered, you can still see the Itsukushima shrine itself as well as enjoying free time on Miyajima Island to explore the local streets or make the walk up to Daisho-in Temple.

Destination Information

Miyajima – Miyajima is a small island outside of Hiroshima. While officially named Itsukushima, the island is more commonly referred to as Miyajima, meaning 'Shrine Island'. This is because the island is well-known for its main attraction, Itsukushima Shrine, a giant torii gate, which at high tide seems to float on the water.

Peace Memorial Park and Museum – The Peace Memorial Park and Museum is one of the most prominent features of the city. The trees, lawns and walking paths are in stark contrast to the surrounding downtown area. Before the bomb, this area was the political and commercial heart of the city and is why it was chosen as the target. The museum focuses on the events of August 6th and the ensuing outcome for the residents.

Orizuru Tower - The 50-metre-tall Orizuru Tower is located beside the A-Bomb Dome and is one of the few tall buildings around the Peace Memorial Park. It offers a great view of the surroundings, including the less commonly seen view of the A-Bomb Dome from above.

Day 15: Hiroshima - Kyoto

This morning, transfer to Hiroshima Station and catch a bullet train to Kyoto, a journey of 1 hour 40 minutes. Capital for a thousand years, this enchanting city is the epitome of traditional Japan. After lunch, visit Ryoanji Temple, with its famous Zen garden, and Kinkakuji Temple, known as the 'Golden Pavilion' due to its golden exterior. Continue to your hotel to check in.



Destination Information

Kyoto – Kyoto was the ancient capital of Japan for approximately 1,000 years until 1867 when it was moved to Tokyo. Many national treasures can be found in Kyoto and in nearby Nara, including old shrines and temples, screen paintings, beautiful gardens, and statues of Buddha.

Ryoanji Temple – Ryoanji Temple is a Zen temple renowned for its garden, which features a dry, sand landscape with large rocks and smooth pebbles.

Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion) – Kinkakuji Temple is a Buddhist temple and is an excellent example of Japanese garden design. The structure is a brilliant golden hue colour and is very minimalistic.

Day 16: Kyoto

This morning, visit the mesmerising Fushimi Inari Shrine, which stretches from the bottom to the top of Mount Inari (233 metres high). You will walk up part of the mountain; there are some steep steps and the incline allows a steady-paced walk. Next, head to Nishiki Market, also known as ‘Kyoto’s Kitchen’ with its lively open-air market specialising in all things food! Also visit a restored wooden Japanese townhouse to experience the rituals of a tea ceremony and try your hand at the traditional art of origami.



Destination Information

Fushimi Inari Shrine (Taisha) – An important Shinto shrine in southern Kyoto, Fushimi Inari is most famous for its thousands of vermilion torii gates which form a network of tunnels around the main shrine buildings. The shrine itself is dedicated to Inari, the Shinto god of rice. There are many fox statues in the grounds of the shrine as foxes are thought to be Inari’s messengers.

Nishiki Market - A narrow, five block long shopping street lined by more than 100 shops and restaurants, this lively retail market specialises in all things food related, like fresh seafood, produce, knives and cookware. It’s a great place to find seasonal foods and Kyoto specialties, like sweets, dried seafood and sushi.

Day 17: Kyoto – Hakone - Tokyo

This morning, transfer to Kyoto station and take the super-fast bullet train to the Hakone area, a journey of around 2 hours. In Hakone, board a coach to explore this beautiful area. Take a boat cruise on Lake Ashi before soaring high on the Komagatake Ropeway for gorgeous Fuji views (weather dependent). Later, continue by coach for around 2 hours to Tokyo, Japan’s capital.



Destination Information

Hakone – Situated next to picturesque Lake Ashi, Hakone is a pleasant town, popular with weary Tokyoites looking for a break from the city and a great overnight stop after visiting Mount Fuji.

Lake Ashi – Formed after Mount Hakone’s last eruption 3000 years ago, Lake Ashi is the symbol of Hakone and on a clear day offers spectacular views of Mount Fuji in the distance.

Tokyo – One of the world’s most cutting-edge capital cities, Tokyo is a city of contrasts, famous for its neon-lit landscape, towering skyscrapers, peaceful shrines and lovely gardens. Although long the political and cultural centre of Japan, Tokyo became the official capital when the Meiji Emperor moved it there in 1867.

Day 18: Tokyo

Tokyo is the ultimate 24-hour city, but look behind its frantic, high-tech frontage and you'll find plenty of tranquil backstreets and old temples to explore. Head to the 2nd observatory of the Tokyo Skytree for panoramic views over the city before taking a wander through the district of Asakusa, stopping at Sensoji Temple. Drive past Tokyo's Imperial Palace East Garden and visit Meiji Jingu Shrine. You will be on your feet for 4-5 hours during your touring in Tokyo. Enjoy your evening meal whilst leisurely cruising along Tokyo Bay. You will need to get on and off your boat this evening for your cruise on Tokyo Bay without assistance.



Destination Information

Tokyo Skytree – The tallest structure in Japan and the tallest tower in the world, Tokyo Skytree is predominantly a television and radio broadcast tower and is earthquake resistant.

Sensoji Temple – Sensoji Temple is an ancient Buddhist Temple and the oldest in Tokyo. The temple was originally founded in the 7th century. The temple adorns an image of the Buddhist Goddess Kannon, who was said to have been rescued by two fishermen from the Sumida River in Tokyo.

Imperial Palace Plaza – Imperial Palace Plaza is the main residence of the Emperor of Japan. Built on the original site of Edo Castle, the Plaza is made up of a palace, museum and large park.

Meiji Jingu Shrine – Meiji Shrine is a Shinto shrine dedicated to the Emperor Meiji and his wife Empress Shoken. The shrine is located in an evergreen forest within in the busy city and consists of 120,000 trees which were donated by people from all over Japan when the shrine was established.

Day 19-20: Depart Tokyo

This morning is free at leisure before transferring to the airport for your overnight flight home.

Please note: Only breakfast is included today. Late check-out is not included in our Ancient Empires of China & Japan tour. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day in Tokyo, please contact our reservations department who can confirm the additional price and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.



Transfers: In the event that your flight departs outside of the majority group departure time, you will be transferred to the airport by a shared coach (not with other Wendy Wu Tours passengers). If you are on a shared coach transfer, you may have to walk for a few minutes to get to the coach.

Please inform our Reservations Team of any allergies and/or special dietary requirements at time of booking.

Ancient Empires of China & Japan 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 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 visa is not required for Australian passport holders for entry into Japan for stays up to 90 days.

Insurance

We strongly encourage all customer be adequately covered by insurance for the duration of their travel arrangements. We advise 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 & Japan

We welcome people on our tours with a wide variety of tastes and as such try to present an array of food to suit everyone in the group. Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes, their individual flavours as well as the different ways they are prepared and cooked throughout China and Japan. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive group tours from dinner on the day of the groups' arrival until breakfast on the groups' day of departure.

Chinese cuisine is one of the most influential, diverse and flavoursome culinary styles in the world with a legacy stretching back thousands of years. Often, you'll find that the local Chinese style is very different from what you're used to at home. Dishes served in restaurants on our group tours are varied. Some will be vegetable-based with meat mixed in, and a few will be meat-based. Traditionally, Chinese people cook with a lot of vegetables because meat used to be hard to come by. Dishes often come pre-seasoned with soy sauce or other sauces. Our restaurants are well aware of the western palate – there are plenty of non-spiced options. Most meals are served with plain rice on the side which is intended as an accompaniment to your meal. Unlike the western world, Chinese people do not normally pre-heat their plates and food can be presented at a variety of temperatures, which is a typical Chinese way of doing things.

When eating meals on group tours in China, you will be seated around a circular table with other tour members. Dishes will be served in the traditional 'family style' on a lazy susan; meaning that various dishes will be laid out on a spinning turntable in the centre of the table-top. These dishes are intended to be shared amongst the group – there is always more than enough to feed everybody. 'Family style' means that there is a pair of serving chopsticks for each dish which are used specifically to serve the food (please ask your server if you require a fork).



or spoon) and everybody will help themselves to all the dishes on the lazy susan. You will have an individual bowl, chopsticks and cup for your own use. Please be courteous and consider your fellow diners; if your favourite dish is on the other side of the table, it will make its way round to you soon! We find our customers really enjoy this sociable style of eating.

Japanese cuisine is delicious, colourful and healthy. Meals are usually served with a bowl of rice and a bowl of miso soup and consist usually of fish, pickled vegetables and meat. Japan's other main staple is noodles, most famous being Udon and Soba. Food is an important element of Japanese culture. It is a time for families and friends to come together and much of family life revolves around the dinner table. Most food is eaten with chopsticks so best get practicing as cutlery is not always available at restaurants.

In Japan, breakfast will mostly be buffet style but may be a set-menu. Lunches are mostly pre-set options as is custom in many local restaurants. Dinner is usually buffet-style, featuring a wide selection of high-quality Japanese and Western dishes, but may occasionally be a set-menu. We usually find this style of dining suits the wide and varied tastes of our customers on tour. These are also pre-booked in advance prior to your arrival by your guides. This will provide greater flexibility and allow you to sample a broad range of local cuisines and dishes. All beverages will be at your own expense and are readily available.

Please note: if you have any dietary requirements, you must inform us before your tour starts and please be aware that restaurants may not always be able to accommodate these. Gluten-free food may not be as readily available as in Australia. Your National Escort will do their utmost to cater for any special requests such as gluten free or vegetarian meals, however, people on restricted diets should expect complications. Although most Asian countries are now quite developed, only quite recently have they started to widely accept Western guests. Western food requirements are quite far removed from Asian food requirements, and even medical reasons can be quite difficult to explain. While our ground partners will do everything they can to cater for a wide range of dietary requirements on tour, we ask kindly for your patience and understanding that they cannot always be delivered to the standard you will be used to at home. It is recommended that passengers with food intolerances bring snacks or additional food items with them, especially when travelling further from major cities as not all dietary requests will be met due to the limited foods available.

Please read your travel guide which you will receive with your final documents for more information about eating in China and Japan. We recommend that when it comes to Chinese and Japanese food, you stay open minded, try to be adventurous and always have a go with the chopsticks!

On some days where lots of sights are covered, dinner times may be early, and your tour group may head directly to the restaurant after sightseeing without stopping at your hotel to freshen up.

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and China and Japan. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone.

Please note that in Japan hotel rooms and bathrooms are renowned for being small. Standard single rooms are usually smaller than a standard double or twin room, contain one small double bed (or one single bed), and are designed for one person to use. In China, 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.

Porterage

Please be aware that porterage is not included in Japan. You will therefore need to be able to handle your own luggage within the hotel and when using transportation like trains and coaches.

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. Roads in China have generally 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 1-2 kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only. There may be sections of road where the surface is comparatively bumpy, but our drivers will do their utmost to lessen the impact. Roads in Japan are extremely well maintained and are comparatively smooth compared with the rest of Asia.

Air: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines. Internal flights during your tour are arranged locally, so you will not be given a ticket until your guide helps you check in.

Bullet trains: On this tour, you will take several high-speed train journeys. Second-class soft seats with air conditioning is used in China. For train journeys in China you must ensure that you pack liquids, aerosols and gels/lotions in your hand luggage as per recent regulations. The National Escort will inform you of specific details prior to boarding. 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).

In Japan, second class reserved seats are booked for our groups on bullet trains; there will be toilet facilities on board. Due to the limited space on bullet trains, a separate luggage transfer service will be arranged for all suitcases. In some cases, you will need to pack a separate overnight bag to carry on the train as your suitcase will not arrive until the following day after a bullet train journey. Your guide will indicate when you will need to prepare for this throughout your tour.

Development in China and Japan

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 the west.

Japan is a developed country and as such matches the west in modernity and technological advances. Japan is an extremely safe country and takes great responsibility in maintaining high safety standards.

Cultural Difference

Japanese society and culture are built on intricate social etiquette and customs. As foreigners, we are not expected to be knowledgeable about all etiquette, but it will make your time in Japan more enjoyable if you are respectful of local customs. Some examples of scenarios you may encounter include removing your shoes and hats when entering a temple or house (some restaurants as well). You may be supplied with slippers at some places, but please come prepared with plenty of spare socks, and shoes that are easy to take off for the fairly regular occasions when they must be removed. Your National Escort will advise you of some of these other customs at the beginning of your tour.

Public Holidays

If you are travelling within the below 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.

China: Chinese New Year is 25th January 2020 and 12 February 2021. Golden Week public holidays fall annually between 1st – 3rd May and 1st – 7th October.

Japan: Showa Day is on 29th April, Constitution Memorial Day is on 3rd May and Emperor's Birthday is on 23rd December every year.

Souvenirs

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions 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. 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 a National Escort. There will usually be no more than 28 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.

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 in RMB and will be collected by your National Escort on arrival and distributed throughout the tour on your behalf. 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.

Although tipping in Japan is not customary, if you feel you have received an excellent service, please feel free to tip your guide at your discretion.

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 five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated

Exchanging Cash

It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling to cities outside of Tokyo. US Dollars and Australian Dollars can be exchanged at Narita Airport and in some hotels, provided the Australian currency is new and undamaged. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be very 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 \$250AUD 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.

Climbing Steps

Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defence against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Buddhist

temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.



People with knee or hip injuries, who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

Vaccinations & 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 an email with your confirmation invoice, along with a link to our website where you can find your visa information (if applicable) and other important information. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure

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