



## China Explorer

Go Beyond Tour | 15 Days | Physical Level 3

Beijing – Gubei Water Town - Xian – Pingle - Chengdu

Yangtze River Cruise – Shanghai

Trek on the Great Wall and explore atmospheric ancient towns before meeting the Giant Pandas and cruising down the Yangtze; this itinerary takes in all the classic sites, bringing you closer to the authentic charm of China.

- Hike the Great Wall of China
- Cycle the Ancient city walls of Xian
- Get up close to the Giant Pandas
- Relax with a cruise on the Yangtze River
- Discover vibrant Shanghai



#### A China Explorer Tour Inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated on your itinerary
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) and Local Guides
- 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, meals not stated in the itinerary, insurance of any kind, customary tipping and early check in or late check out. These are all payable locally.*

#### Go Beyond Tours:

Venture off the beaten track to explore fascinating destinations away from the tourist trail. You will discover the local culture in depth and see sights rarely witnessed by other travellers. These tours take you away from the comforts of home but will reward you with the experiences of a lifetime. These tours include:

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

#### Physical Level 3:

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.

'China Explorer' is rated as a **physical level 3** tour. A good level of fitness is required as you need to be comfortable walking for 2-3 hours and covering longer distances. Walking or other activities such as cycling will be at a gentle pace and will involve straightforward terrain.

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

Of course, our National Escort and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. If you require any more information about the pace of the tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

### Country Profile: China

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

### Joining Your Tour

The tour is 15 days in duration including international flights. Depending on flight times some passengers may arrive/depart on day 2.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only', the price includes visa fees and your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to reservations. Join the tour on Day 1 in Beijing and end the tour on Day 14 in Shanghai. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

### Itinerary Changes

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

- The Forbidden City is closed on Mondays, due to maintenance. If it is not open on the day our group is due to visit, Beijing touring will be rearranged by your National Escort/Local Guide accordingly.
- Yangtze River. Please note that all sections of the itinerary for the Yangtze River Cruise are especially subject to change. The movement of each vessel along the Yangtze is regulated by the Government's Yangtze River Authority (YRA). The river's rapid flow, the narrowness of the gorges and the recent increase in numbers of passengers means that the timetables are under some pressure. The YRA allocates times for access to mooring points, embarkation and disembarkation at docks and passage through the gorges. This means that the captain of each cruise ship is unable to confirm a final itinerary until shortly before departure (usually 24 hours prior). This can affect both the time and location where you embark and disembark your cruise ship. Your National Escort/Local Guide will explain any such changes to you as soon as they are informed by the cruise operator.

## Itinerary – China Explorer

### Day 1: Beijing

On arrival in Beijing Capital International Airport, you will be met in the arrival hall by your local guide and/or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer approximately 1 hour to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure. A tour introduction will be held in the hotel either this evening or the next. Food and drinks will not be served at this meeting, it is simply an opportunity for your group to meet and learn more about travelling in China.



#### Destination Information

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

### Day 2: Beijing

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Walk across Tiananmen Square into the magnificent Forbidden City. Continue to the Summer Palace, former holiday home of the Qing emperors, and explore the beautiful grounds. Whilst here, take a short hike up Longevity Hill for spectacular views over the palace’s Kunming Lake. Today’s sightseeing involves approximately 5-6 hours, predominately on foot. On your way back, stop for a photo at the iconic Bird’s Nest Stadium, home of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The time at the Olympic Village will not include entry to any of the Olympic venues.



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

#### Destination Information

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

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

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

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

### Day 3: Beijing – Gubei Water Town

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Arrive early for a visit to the Temple of Heaven where you can watch the locals as they start their day with dancing, Tai Chi and Mahjong. Next, visit Yandaixiejie, where you will have some free time to explore the Hutongs. Sit down for lunch with a family who call the hutongs home. This morning’s sightseeing is approximately 4 hours. In the afternoon, drive 3 hours to the Simatai section of the Great Wall where you will stay overnight at Gubei Watertown. On arrival, ascend Simatai Great Wall by cable car for spectacular sunset views.



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

#### Destination Information

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

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

## Day 4: The Great Wall

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Rise early to transfer to the Jinshanling section of the Great Wall. Jinshanling is much less frequented by tourists than other parts of the Wall. The stark, yet magnificent surroundings allow you to put yourself in the shoes of those who walked this incredible edifice hundreds of years ago. This once-in-a-lifetime trek on the Jinshanling section of the Great Wall will last 4-5 hours, depending on the speed and capability of the group. You will need to be able to complete the whole trek as the route does not have any pick-up points mid-way. The walk features some extremely steep steps of different heights so it can be tricky to maintain a pace or routine. There are also many walkways where the wall has fallen away giving way to sheer drops which require extra care whilst walking. Underfoot, the pathway is rocky and largely unmaintained; it is strongly advised that you wear sturdy footwear with ankle support if needed. After trekking through the dramatic landscapes and rugged terrain, drive 3 hours back to Beijing where you will have the evening at leisure.



*Please note, today's lunch may be a packed lunch*

### Destination Information

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

## Day 5: Beijing - Xian

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today, fly 2 hours to Xian. On arrival, explore the Muslim Quarter, Xian's Islamic centre, where there are a myriad of small food stalls selling ample mouth-watering dishes. Have a traditional Xian dinner this evening and enjoy an evening at leisure, possibly soaking up the atmosphere at lively Defu Lane.



### Destination Information

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

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

**Day 6: Xian**

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Today, view the formidable ranks of terracotta soldiers and horses, lined up in ranks to protect the first emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang. The Museum of the Terracotta Warriors and Horses is located around a 1-hour drive outside of Xian. From the bus park to the museum entrance there is a 15-minute walk. There are electric carts offered by private vendors which can be organised at your own cost. There are no electric carts available for the return from the museum exit to the bus park. Within the museum area the warriors can be seen in three different 'pits', which are active archaeological digs. The site is large and, towards the summer months, can be hot outside. Sightseeing here involves approximately 2 and a half hours on foot. Visit the Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Workshop to see smaller models of the warriors being made before returning to the city to cycle on the 14th century city walls, one of the best preserved urban fortifications in the country. You will need to be able to cycle for around 1 hour. Enjoy an evening at leisure.



Sightseeing here involves approximately 2 and a half hours on foot. Visit the Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Workshop to see smaller models of the warriors being made before returning to the city to cycle on the 14th century city walls, one of the best preserved urban fortifications in the country. You will need to be able to cycle for around 1 hour. Enjoy an evening at leisure.

Please note: If you wish to undertake a bike ride on the Ancient City Wall, we strongly recommend wearing a helmet

**Destination Information**

**Terracotta Warriors** – One of the most significant archaeological discoveries of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this unearthed terracotta army holds 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 captivating Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Workshop; 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 for an even better experience.

**Day 7: Xian – Pingle**

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

This morning, take the bullet train for around 4 hours to Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province. On arrival, drive 2 hours to the ancient town of Pingle, dating back to the Han Dynasty. Take time to walk through its maze of teahouse-lined streets before walking through Jinji's dense bamboo forest, and taking a walk across the magnificent Jinji Suspended Rope Bridge for vistas of the bamboo forest. Stay overnight in Pingle.



*In Pingle, you will stay at a basic guesthouse with no facilities for making meals, however, your guide will be happy to give you recommendations of the best places to eat.*

**Destination Information**

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

**Day 8: Pingle - Chengdu**

Meals included: Lunch, Dinner

Drive 1-2 hours to the forested Sichuanese countryside north of Chengdu. Here, Dujiangyan Panda Centre offers refuge to Giant Pandas with the aim to reintroduce them into the wild. The centre offers one of the most authentic, spacious and natural settings in the country. Later, explore the slopes of Mt Qingcheng, one of China's most sacred Taoist Mountains. Ascend by cable car to the higher slopes and take a walk around Yuecheng Lake. Drive to Chengdu for an overnight stay.

**Destination Information**

**Dujiangyan** – Located 72km northwest of Chengdu and less than a 1-hour drive to Mt. Qingcheng, Dujiangyan is well renowned for its irrigation system that provides most of the water supply to Chengdu and neighbouring towns.

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

**Day 9: Chengdu – Yangtze River Cruise**

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Drive around 4-5 hours to Chongqing, one of the most important cities on the Yangtze River, where you will visit the porcelain district of Ciqikou. After dinner, board your Yangtze River Cruise ship, home for the next three nights.



*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.*

*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 per person; however, this amount can vary and for security reasons, it is not always possible to disembark at all ports of call.*

*You may be offered cabin upgrades locally which may include some of the amenity package services. Please note that the amenity package benefits start on the second day of the cruise*

**Destination Information**

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



### Destination Information

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

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

### Day 10: Yangtze River Cruise

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today, visit the Jade Emperor Scenic Area, which has the largest image of the Jade Emperor in the world. Disembark from the ship to the dock and take a short bus transfer to the area. Sightseeing here involves climbing some steps. You will be off the ship for around 3 hours.

*Depending on river conditions, you may visit the Shibaozhai Temple instead of the Jade Emperor Scenic Area near Fengdu.*



### Destination Information

**Jade Emperor Scenic Area** – The Jade Emperor Scenic Area features a 100-foot-tall statue depicting the Jade Emperor, an important deity in Chinese Taoism, as well as more than 200 additional Taoist and Buddhist sculptures.

### Day 11: Yangtze River Cruise

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Prepare for breathtaking 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. Many protected species make the stunning peaks their home, including monkeys, mountain goats, deer and wild boar.

*Depending on river 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.

**Day 12: Yangtze River Cruise**

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Visit the Three Gorges Dam, the largest hydroelectric dam in the world. Disembark the ship and drive approximately 20 minutes through the surrounding areas (the coach is not permitted to stop for photos) to the viewing area above the ship locks where you can truly appreciate the scale of this hydroelectric project. There is also a small museum and a lookout point here. The sightseeing will involve around 1 hour on foot. Later, transfer to Yichang board your 2 hour flight to Shanghai.



*Flights in this region are subject to change and can often be*

*changed last minute, we aim to ensure passengers are transferred direct to Shanghai. However, it may be necessary transfer 6 hours by road to Wuhan and fly from there 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 13: Shanghai**

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

This morning, take an exciting breakfast tour around some of Shanghai’s most exciting districts, tasting local delicacies, including pancakes and fried bread sticks. Afterwards, wander the pleasant Yu Gardens and the bustling Old Town before visiting the informative Silk Factory. Take a stroll on the colonial Bund and enjoy a farewell Shanghainese meal this evening, as well as a cruise down the Huangpu River to see the neon lights of Pudong.

**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.

### Destination Information

**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.

**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 which brought this product across Asia and Europe.

### Days 14-15: Depart Shanghai

Meals included: Breakfast

After breakfast and check out 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. Depending on flight times you will return to Australia today or the following day.

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



## Tour 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. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

For the latest information on visa procedures, processing times and requirements, please kindly refer to our website <https://www.wendywutours.com.au/help-and-advice/passports-and-visas/>

Please note the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate, Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa.

Wendy Wu Tours does not accept responsibility for lost or undelivered items.

All information with regards to visas will be updated regularly on our website as we find visas process' are changing on regular basis.

### 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.

Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

### 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. Often, you'll find that the local Chinese style is very different from what you're used to at home. 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. 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.

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.

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. We recommend that when it comes to Chinese food, you stay open minded, try to be adventurous and always have a go with the chopsticks!

## 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 double bed requests can be made at time of booking but can't be guaranteed.

## Transport

**Coaches:** Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. 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.

**Planes:** Internal flights are based on economy class with reputable airlines. Pre-seat flight allocation is unavailable.

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

**Trains:** On this tour, you will take a high-speed train journey. You will travel in second-class soft seats with air conditioning. For train journeys 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).

## 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 the west.

## Chinese Public Holidays

If you are travelling within the below Chinese Public Holidays please note that celebrations last for several days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open but may be crowded. Chinese New Year is on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2022. Golden Week. Golden Week public holidays fall annually between 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> May and 1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> October.

## Souvenirs

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs; so in each city, we will visit a workshop or factory 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 and local guides. 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. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

## Tipping Policy

Local tipping is customary in Asia. However, this can often lead to awkwardness in knowing when it is appropriate to tip and how much, as well as ensuring you have a suitable amount of change available at the time. For your convenience, with years of experiences in providing the best customer service, Wendy Wu Tours operates a kitty system on our Group Tours so your National Escort will look after this aspect of your trip for you. It also ensures that the amounts paid are reasonable for you but still fair for the local people. The amount is stated on each Group Tour page will be advised again on your final documentation. Tipping is 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.

## Packing list and Climate

Please refer to our website or brochure for detailed temperature charts.

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 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 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 \$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 defense 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. Hindu and 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 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 followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

**Last updated: October 2020**