



China: The Big One

Go Beyond Tour | 28 Days | Physical Level 2

Beijing - Xian - Guilin - Yangshuo - Kunming - Dali – Lijiang - Chengdu -
Yangtze River Cruise - Shanghai

This complete Chinese adventure offers you time to absorb the atmosphere of China's bustling cities and quirky ancient towns at your own pace, visiting all the major sights and some lesser known treasures.

- Walk on the Great Wall of China
- Cycle the Ancient city walls of Xian
- Explore the fascinating Stone forest
- Unearth the quaint town of Lijiang
- Get up close to the Giant Pandas
- Relax with a cruise on Yangtze River
- Discover vibrant Shanghai



China: The Big One 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
- Sightseeing and entrance fees except for optional excursions (costs provided at the end of this document)
- 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:

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

Physical Level 2:

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: The Big One' is rated as a **physical level 2** 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 are also some more active optional excursions. By making the more physically demanding features optional, these tours are exactly what they say on the tin; flexible. Some of the optional excursions, such as hiking in the Longji Rice Terraces, will require a higher level of fitness to take part in. Please refer to the Travel Information section at the end for a list of optional activities.

- On the Great Wall of China, you may be walking on steep ground
- In Beijing, Xian and Shanghai there will be long periods of walking whilst sightseeing
- You will be required to get on and off varying sizes of boats without assistance during the tour
- You will need to be able to cycle a bicycle for approximately 1 hour in Xian
- You will be at higher altitude at Jade Dragon Snow Mountain
- From Beijing to Xian, you will travel by overnight train

Of course, our National Escorts 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.

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 part of the itinerary have high altitude:

- Jade Dragon Snow Mountain near Lijiang. Sightseeing is at Yunshaping (Cloud Fir Meadow) which has an altitude of approximately 3,240m. Please note that the town of Lijiang, where you will be staying overnight is not at high altitude.

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. If you have an existing respiratory, vascular or coronary condition, we recommend checking with your doctor before undertaking this tour. Take this Tour Dossier with you to your appointment to explain the altitude at which you will be travelling. Information on AMS can also be found at http://www.travelvax.com.au/resource_files/Travel-Tips---Altitude-Sickness.pdf

Country Profile: China

China's 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 28 days in duration including international flights. Depending on flight schedules 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 27 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 for days 6 and 7 have been reversed to allow better pacing in Xian.

Itinerary – China: The Big One

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

Walk across Tiananmen Square into the magnificent Forbidden City and the Jingshan Park. Next, visit Yandaixiejie where you will have some free time to explore the Hutongs and then enjoy a local lunch. Sightseeing will be approximately 4 hours. Later, enjoy some free time in the traditional Houhai area. There will be an optional Kung Fu Show this evening.

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.

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.

Day 3: The Great Wall

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Rise early this morning and transfer 2 hours to the Huanghuacheng section of the Great Wall of China, one of the most picturesque sections. You will need to get on and off a boat, taking you across a lake to where you will begin your walk on the wall. First, you will be given a brief history of the area before having a couple of hours free to walk on the fortified wall. On your return to Beijing, visit the Jade Factory. This evening, stroll around Wangfujing, a lively area in central Beijing renowned for its small food stalls.



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 Jade into works of art.

Day 4: Beijing

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Wander around the beautiful grounds of the Summer Palace, former holiday home to the Qing emperors. Whilst here, climb magnificent Longevity Hill for spectacular views over the palace's Kunming Lake. Make a photo stop this afternoon at the iconic Bird's Nest Stadium, home of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Time at the Olympic Village will not include entry to any of the Olympic venues.



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 5: Beijing - Xian

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Start your day at the Temple of Heaven where you can watch the locals take part in dancing, Tai Chi and Mahjong games. This evening, board your overnight train to Xian.

The overnight train takes approximately 12 hours (over 1,300km). The cabins are first class soft sleeper compartments, where each cabin consists of 4 shared berths. Wear comfortable clothes on board to sleep in on the train, and you may wish to take some snacks with you.



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.

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.

Day 6: Xian

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Arrive in Xian and transfer to your hotel for breakfast. After, take a gentle cycle ride around the nine miles of the Xian Ancient City Wall. Visit the lovely Little Wild Goose Pagoda before seeing the 130,000 fine cultural relics on display in the Xian Museum. This evening, there will be an optional Tang Dynasty Dancing Show & Dumpling Dinner (at your own expense).



Please note: If the hotel rooms are available in the morning, you will be able to check in and refresh before starting the touring in Xian. However, if the rooms are not available, you will begin the touring straight after breakfast and then check in to the hotel after lunch.

Destination Information

Ancient city walls – Dating back to the Ming Dynasty in the 14th century, the Xian ancient city wall is one of the best preserved urban fortifications in China. The wall's ideal spot and layout gives visitors a bird's eye view over this fantastic city. Follow the locals' example and take a bike to get an ever more spectacular experience.

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.

Day 7: Xian

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Transfer 1 hour to view the formidable ranks of terracotta warriors and horses, lined up in ranks to protect the first emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang. 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. Next, visit the Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Workshop to see smaller models of the warriors being made, before returning to explore the atmospheric alleys of the Muslim Quarter. This evening, there will be an optional Tang Ever-Bright City Night Tour.

**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 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.

Day 8: Xian – Guilin

Meals included: Breakfast

Fly 2 hours to Guilin, one of China's most beautiful spots. This afternoon, you will take a stroll around two of Guilin's most beautiful lakes, Ronghu and Shanhu, before heading to Zhengyang Pedestrian Street where there are many dining options for your perusal. There is an optional visit to the Sun and Moon Pagodas today.



Destination Information

Guilin – Guilin is one of China’s most stunning and panoramic cities and was founded during the reign of the Qin Dynasty. It is renowned for the unique karst mountain beauty that encloses the city. Guilin developed as a trading town due to the building of the Ling Canal which links the important Pearl and Yangtze River systems.

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.

Day 9: Guilin

Meals included: Breakfast

Today there is an option to take a full day tour of the stunning Longji Rice Terraces at Ping An or explore the beautiful scenery of Guilin independently.

Please note: The optional tour to Longji involves approximately 4 hours of trekking, depending on the capability of the group. The ground here is uneven and the trek will include steep climbs.



Day 10: Guilin – Yangshuo

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Take a relaxed 4-hour cruise along the Li River to the charming village of Yangshuo where you will spend 2 nights. 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. As it is so popular, there are generally many boats at the docks – please be reassured that the cruise itself will be scenic and relaxing as the boats cruise past unspoilt countryside. 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 15-minute walk from the river. There are electric carts offered by private vendors which can be organised at your own cost. Take a walk in the idyllic countryside this afternoon. There will also be an option to walk up Moon Hill for spectacular views of Yangshuo.



Please note, climbing Moon Hill involves a significant number of steep steps.

Destination Information

Li River Cruise – 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 breathtaking 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 11: Yangshuo

Meals included: Breakfast

This morning, take part in a traditional Tai Chi class to learn the skills behind this ancient and spiritual exercise. The rest of the day is at leisure. Explore independently or take part in optional morning countryside cycling trip and/or an afternoon bamboo rafting trip (at your own expense).

Day 12: Yangshuo - Kunming

Meals included: Breakfast

Return to Guilin by road, visiting the Reed Flute Caves en route, to admire the stunning colours of the stalagmites and stalactites. You will take a short walk through the caves, sometimes along damp paths and stairs. It usually takes about 1 hour to complete the route and it is very cool inside. Visit the South China Pearl Factory before taking your 1 ½ hour flight to Kunming.



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 have the opportunity to purchase some of these elegant silver jewels.

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

Day 13: Kunming

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Spend the morning exploring the unusual limestone rock formations of the Kunming Stone Forest. Visit Green Lake Park before an evening at leisure in the Wenhua Alley district. Today, there will be an optional Yunnan Impression Show (at your own expense).



Destination Information

Stone Forest – Located 120km south east of Kunming, the Stone Forest consists of thousands of narrow, fantastically shaped pillars of rock, scattered over an area of more than 80 hectares. The park is designed so that you can follow a walkway through the formations of water pools and grey pinnacles, the tallest of which is over 30m high.

Day 14: Kunming – Dali

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Drive approximately 4 hours to Dali, a great destination to get a peek of a China of times gone by. View the Three Pagodas and wander around Dali's charming Old Town before heading to lively Foreigners' Street.



Destination Information

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

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

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

Day 15: Dali

Meals included: Breakfast

Enjoy a day at leisure in peaceful Dali. There will be an optional visit to Weibaoshan, one of the fourteen sacred Taoist mountains, for meditation with a Taoist Master (at your own expense).



Day 16: Dali – Lijiang

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Drive 2 hours to Shaxi, a former ancient market town on the famous Tea and Horse Route and enjoy some easy sightseeing around the old town. Continue a further 2 hours to the quaint town of Lijiang. Spend the evening in the historic old town.



Destination Information

Shaxi – Shaxi became an important trading point on the famous Tea and Horse Route during the Tang Dynasty. The Tea and Horse Route like the Silk Route, increase trade between China and the rest of Asia, as it passed through Tibet and Burma.

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

Day 17: Lijiang

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

A magnificent mountain, the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain comprise several peaks, the tallest of which is 5,500m. Today, you will explore one of the beautiful high meadows and enjoy the amazing vistas. To avoid the large crowds of people queuing at the same time, the local government's tourist authority allocates a time to each group. The bus will drive to the base of the mountain, from where you will take a 10-minute chairlift to Yunshaping (Cloud Fir Meadow) at an altitude of approximately 3,200m. From the chairlift, there is a wooden pathway to the meadow, which takes approximately 1 hour to walk. Descend by chairlift and re-board the bus. Later, visit Baisha Old Town to view the fascinating Baisha Frescoes, painted during the early Ming Dynasty, and visit the Mu Family Embroidery School. Sightseeing at Baisha Old Town is leisurely. There are ruthless souvenir sellers near the bus park so be firm to avoid any hassle.



Please note, this section of the itinerary is subject to change at late notice. Your local guide will keep you informed of any changes as they are made aware of them. Jade Dragon Snow Mountain is at an altitude of 3,200M. All passengers should stay well hydrated to acclimatise to the higher altitude.

Destination Information

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

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

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

Day 18: Lijiang

Meals included: Breakfast

Today, there is an option to visit the impressive Tiger Leaping Gorge and take a mini-trek. Alternatively, you can spend the day at leisure in Lijiang (at your own expense).



Destination Information

Tiger Leaping Gorge – Tiger Leaping Gorge is believed to be one of the deepest and most dramatic gorges in the world, measuring at 16km. Hiking along Tiger Leaping Gorge has become incredibly popular, as those who do can view its roaring stream, cascading waterfalls and magnificent scale – great for those who crave an adventure.

Day 19: Lijiang – Chengdu

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Fly 1 ½ hours to Chengdu, capital of fascinating Sichuan Province. Take a stroll around People's Park and visit a teahouse for a cup of delicious Chinese tea (tea at your own expense), as well as Matchmaker's Corner, where parents search for suitable suitors for their children. This evening, stroll round Wide and Narrow Alleys.



Destination Information

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

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

Day 20: Chengdu

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

See 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. There is an optional Sichuan Hot Pot meal this evening with a Face Changing Show (at your own expense).



Destination Information

Panda Conservation Centre – 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.

Day 21: Chengdu – Yangtze River Cruise

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

After breakfast and checkout take the bullet train for 2 ½ hours to Chongqing, one of the most important cities on the Yangtze River, where you will visit the porcelain district of Ciqikou. Tonight, board your Yangtze River Cruise ship for a 3-night stay.

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

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 mountains 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 22: 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 23: 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 24: Yangtze River Cruise - Shanghai

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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 a small museum and a lookout point here. The sightseeing will involve around 1 hour on foot. Later, transfer to Yichang and board your flight to Shanghai (2 hours in duration).



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 25: Shanghai

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

This morning, take a 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. This evening, take 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.

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.

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.

Day 26: Shanghai

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Today is free to explore the vibrant city of Shanghai independently or you can take an optional day trip to the laid-back water town of Zhujiajiao (at your own expense). There will be no other sightseeing or activities arranged in Shanghai, however, your National Escort will be happy to recommend things for you to do (at your own expense) such as heading up the Jinmao Tower, exploring the impressive Shanghai Museum or taking a ride on the futuristic Maglev Train. This evening, watch a performance of the ERA acrobatic show and enjoy a farewell dinner of Shanghainese cuisine.



Destination Information

Zhujiajiao – A sleepy water town, Zhujiajiao is built on an old canal system once used to transport goods all over imperial China. The town’s alleyways exude old-world charm, whilst the waterways are lined with ancient buildings and crossed by stone bridges.

ERA Show – One of Shanghai’s most famous shows, the “ERA – Intersection of Time” is a multi-million-dollar acrobatics extravaganza that redefines Chinese acrobatics. It is a meditation on time and a love story told through a spectacular sequence of acrobatic performances guaranteed to leave you enthralled and amazed.

Days 27-28: 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 12th February 2021 and on the 1st of February 2022. Golden Week. Golden Week public holidays fall annually between 1st – 3rd May and 1st – 7th 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

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 AU\$250 per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available. In your Final Documentation an Optional Excursion Sheet will be included outlining the activities available in each city and local cost associated. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

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

Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.smartraveller.gov.au as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

After Your Booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice 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