



Ultimate China

Classic Tour | 27 Days | Physical Level 3

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

This really is the ultimate tour for those who want to experience China in depth! From modern cities and ancient history to rural villages and spectacular landscapes, this is the tour for those wanting to see all of China's highlights in just one visit.

- Discover the imperial treasures of Beijing
- Walk on the Great Wall
- See the spectacular Terracotta Warriors
- Visit the Stone Forest
- Explore Dali & Zhongdian
- Cruise the mighty Yangtze River
- Experience mystical Lhasa



Ultimate China Tour Inclusions:

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

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

Classic Tours:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of China on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully-inclusive basis so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

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.

'Ultimate China' 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.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time
- On the Great Wall of China in Beijing some of the walking will be at an incline
- On the Li River in Guilin, on Erhai Lake in Dali and on the Yangtze River Cruise, as well as on any shore excursions, you will be required to get on and off the boats without assistance
- You will be at a higher altitude in Jade Dragon Snow Mountain and in Zhongdian. All passengers should rest and stay well hydrated to acclimatise to the higher altitude.
- Whilst in Lhasa, you will be at an altitude of 3,700m which may cause some customers to experience Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) symptoms. AMS occurs in some people when they travel to altitudes over 3,000m [9,840 feet]. 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.

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.

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 27 days in duration including international flights. Please note due to flight schedules 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 26 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.

Itinerary – Ultimate China

Days 1: Arrive Beijing

Fly to Beijing. On arrival you will be met at the airport by your local guide and/or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, transfer approximately 1 hour to your hotel for your 3-night stay.



Destination Information

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

Day 2: Beijing

Walk across the lengths of Tiananmen Square and into the magnificent Forbidden City. Sightseeing here will involve around 3-4 hours on foot. Later, soak up the harmonious ambience of the Temple of Heaven for about 1 hour where you can watch as the locals play mah-jong, cards or dance. This evening, dine on delicious Peking duck – a favourite of the Chinese emperors.

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



Destination Information

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

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

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

Day 3: Beijing

Rise early this morning and drive approximately 2 hours northwest of the city to the Juyongguan Pass. Here you can take a walk on the Great Wall of China, appreciating the wall itself and the dramatic scenery. Your visit here involves walking from the bus to the first section. After your group has been given an introduction to the Great Wall's unique history you will have free time to explore at your own pace. Later, visit the Jade Factory then spend the afternoon in the idyllic gardens of the Summer Palace.



Destination Information

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

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

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

Day 4: Beijing – Xian

This morning you will be transferred to the train station to, take the bullet train to Xian. Your train will be in a second-class soft seater and take around 6 hours. In Xian, dine on scrumptious Shui Jiao dumplings followed by a performance of Tang Dynasty dancing.



Destination Information

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

Tang Dynasty Dancing Show – Xian, previously known as Chang'an, was an important cultural and historical centre in not only China but in the known world. The Tang Dynasty dancing show is an exciting exponent of this prosperous society and keeps alive the splendour of this period.

Day 5: Xian

Spend the morning viewing the enigmatic ranks of the life-sized Terracotta Warriors. The Museum of the Terracotta Warriors and Horses is located 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 is no electric cart available for the return from the museum exit to the bus park. Within the museum area the warriors can be seen in three different 'pits', which are active archaeological digs. The site is large and will take about 2 and a half hours to explore. Visit the Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Workshop to see smaller models of the warriors being made. Stroll on the beautifully preserved 14th century city walls that enclose Xian's old town. The local guide will give you time to explore the ancient city walls at your own pace. There are options here to hire a bicycle or an electric cart to drive along the length of the wall. These are offered by private vendors and can be organised at your own expense.



Destination Information

Terracotta Warriors – One of the most significant archaeological discoveries of the 20th century, this unearthed terracotta army 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 workshop; even purchase your own portable soldier or two!

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

Day 6: Xian - Guilin

Visit the Little Wild Pagoda before transferring to the airport and flying 2 hours to the scenic city of Guilin. On arrival, take a tour of the South China Pearl Factory where you will have the opportunity to buy these precious stones.



Destination Information

Little Wild Goose Pagoda – Dating back to the Tang Dynasty, the Little Wild Goose Pagoda is one of two prominent pagodas in Xian. A former centre for translating Buddhist scriptures from India, the Little Wild Goose Pagoda was said to have survived one of the strongest earthquakes in world history.

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

South China Pearl Factory – Get an insight into the pearling industry of southern China at the South China Pearl Factory, where you also have the opportunity to purchase some of these elegant silver jewels.

Day 7: Guilin - Yangshuo

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 30-minute walk from the river. There are electric carts offered by private vendors which can be organised at your own cost. In Yangshuo, visit the local markets.



Destination information

Li River Cruise – Joining the twin beauty spots of Guilin and Yangshuo, the Li River offers a leisurely tour through some of the area's most stunning and dramatic scenery. Pass karst mountain landscapes and unhurried cormorant fishermen as you chug along on your river cruise ship.

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 spot in China.

Day 8: Yangshuo

Begin the day with a relaxing and invigorating session of Tai Chi, taking a class with a master to learn this ancient martial art. Next, explore Yangshuo's countryside, which is surrounded by landscapes of jewel-green paddy fields and dramatic limestone karsts, and stop on the banks of the Li river for a photo opportunity with a genuine cormorant fisherman. The rest of the afternoon is at leisure. There are many activities to take part in, including cycling, rafting and walking (arranged locally and at extra cost).



Cormorant Fishing – A traditional fishing method used for centuries in both China and Japan, skilled fishermen have trained their cormorants to catch fish for them by diving into the water and returning with their prize.

Day 9: Yangshuo - Kunming

Drive 1 hour back to Guilin and visit the Reed Flute Caves 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 quite cool inside. Afterwards, fly around 1 and a half hours to Kunming, capital of Yunnan Province.



Destination Information

Reed Flute Caves – 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.

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 10: Kunming

Drive 1 and a half hours to the Stone Forest and spend the morning exploring the unusual limestone rock formations of the Kunming Stone Forest. This involves around 2 and a half hours walking along cobblestone paths to view the maze of rock pinnacles, lake and ponds. After lunch, return to Kunming and in the evening, dine on the local delicacy Across the Bridge noodles.



Destination Information

Kunming 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. See if you can find the following formations for yourself – Everlasting Fungus, Baby Buffalo, Moon Grazing Rhino, Sword Pond and Baby Elephant.

Across the Bridge noodles – Across the Bridge noodles is a type of rice noodle soup from Yunnan Province served in a broth style. It is usually accompanied by meat, bean curd and vegetables.

Day 11: Kunming - Dali

After breakfast and check out you will be transferred to the train station to Board the bullet train and journey around 2 hours to the pretty city of Dali. In Dali, visit the symmetrical Three Pagodas.



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.

Day 12: Dali

Head over to Xizhou Village to explore the local wares at the market and the iconic Yan Family house before exploring Dali's quaint old quarter. Sightseeing around the Dali Ancient Quarter and surrounding countryside is relaxed, involving around 3 hours on foot. Later, take a cruise on tranquil Erhai Lake - you will be required to get on and off the boat here without assistance.



Destination Information

Xizhou Village – The Xizhou Village was once a military stronghold and flourished during the Ming Dynasty. Surrounded by rice paddies and shadowed by Cangshan Mountain, Xizhou is not only famous historically, but is a great place to shop and browse for Bai minority people wares and delicious fares.

Yen Family House – Previously owned by a famous local merchant, Yen Family House is now a museum of a traditional Bai ethnic house well-known for its wood carvings, stone sculptures and clay statues.

Erhai Lake – The centrepiece of Dali, Erhai Lake is a beautiful oasis of striking blue waters, temple islands and cormorant fishermen. Erhai literally means 'ear sea' and is named so due to the ear shape of the lake. A cruise on the lake is the best way to fully appreciate the natural beauty of the area.

Day 13: Dali - Lijiang

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, one of China's best-preserved old towns.



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, increased 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 14: Lijiang

A magnificent mountain massif, the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain incorporates several peaks, the tallest of which is 5,500m. Visiting Jade Dragon Snow Mountain is very popular with travellers to this area, so to avoid the large crowds of people queuing at the same time, the local Government's tourist authority allocates times to each group. The bus will drive to the base of the mountain where you will take a 10-minute chairlift and explore one of the beautiful high meadows and enjoy the amazing vistas. From the chairlift, there is a wooden pathway to the meadow; this walking route takes approximately 20 minutes. Descend by chairlift to re-board the bus. You may reach a maximum altitude of 3250M during your time on Jade Dragon Snow Mountain. On the way back to Lijiang, visit Baisha Old Town to view the fascinating murals, painted during the early Ming Dynasty. There are ruthless souvenir sellers near the bus park so be firm to avoid any hassle.



Please note that 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.

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, botanising 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.

Day 15: Lijiang - Zhongdian

Drive around 2 hours (depending on number of photo stops) out of Lijiang to the Tiger Leaping Gorge, one of China's most dramatic sights. The bus will drop you off at the southern end of a walkway which follows the gorge as far as the upper rapids. It is a newly constructed, even walkway. There are sedan chairs offered by local vendors, which can be organised at your own cost. The whole area is spectacular, so prepare for breathtaking views. Lunch today will be a simple meal as the choice of restaurants in this area is limited. Continue around 2 hours to the monastery town of Zhongdian, also known as Shangri-La. This afternoon is at leisure to acclimatise to the altitude.



Please note, Zhongdian is at an altitude of 3,200M. All passengers should rest and stay well hydrated to acclimatise to the higher altitude.

Destination Information

Tiger Leaping Gorge – Tiger Leaping Gorge 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.

Zhongdian – Seen as the joining point between Yunnan and Tibet, Zhongdian is a beautiful Tibetan town home to rugged scenery and remote temples. Known in Tibetan as Gyalthang, the town is said to be the location of the author James Hilton's fictional land of Shangri-La.

Day 16: Zhongdian

Begin the day with a visit to a Tibetan village where you will pay a visit to a local family and learn how to make Tibetan Butter Tea. Next, visit Songzanlin Monastery, one of the most significant centres of Tibetan Buddhism outside of Tibet. There are steep steps to climb at the monastery. End the day with a tour of Zhongdian's Old Town, where you will see authentic Tibetan dwellings, prayer halls and pagodas, and a visit to Dafo Temple.



Destination Information

Tibetan village – Gain an insight into how the local people live and see the traditional Tibetan architecture.

Dafo Temple – Dafo Temple is a Buddhist temple with over a 1600-year long history.

Songzanlin Monastery – This 17th century monastery is the largest of its kind in Yunnan. The Songzanlin Monastery is sometimes referred to as the 'Little Potala Palace' due to its resemblance to its bigger counterpart in Lhasa. The Monastery is coated in beautiful golden roofs and is a fusion of Tibetan and Han Chinese architecture.

Zhongdian Old Town – Though unfortunately two thirds of the town was burnt down in January 2014, the remaining section has managed to maintain its original quaint charm which makes Zhongdian so alluring. See the perfect blend of Tibetan and Han cultures, architecture and people in this charming little town.

Day 17: Zhongdian – Lhasa

Fly 2 hours to Lhasa, the capital of spiritual Tibet. The afternoon is at leisure to help acclimatise to the altitude.



Destination Information

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

Day 18: Lhasa

Wander around the Barkhor to see traditionally dressed locals, stalls of religious trinkets and prostrating pilgrims. Inside the Jokhang Temple, the sacred centre of Tibetan Buddhism, the devotion is palpable as queues of people worship in the flickering light of yak butter candles. There will also be a visit to the Sera Monastery, a renowned seat of Buddhist learning, and a local Tibetan arts and crafts shop. Sightseeing at the Jokhang Temple and Sera Monastery will involve climbing many steps and walking over uneven surfaces in dim light.



Destination Information

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

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

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

Day 19: Lhasa

This morning, visit the iconic palace of Potala, the largest monastery in the world. Sitting atop Red Mountain, the Potala Palace is painted in a traditional Tibetan blend of deep red and stark white. At the Potala Palace there are over 1000 steps. A small torch can be helpful to make your surroundings clearer. Next, visit Norbulingka, Lhasa's answer to Beijing's Summer Palace.



Destination Information

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

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

Day 20: Lhasa - Chengdu

Fly 2 hours Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province. Take a stroll through People's Park to see the famous Matchmaker's Corner, where parents search for suitable suitors for their children. Tonight, enjoy a traditional Sichuanese meal.



Destination Information

Chengdu – China's symbolic western capital and the residence of the country's most lovable black and white bear, Chengdu has an abundance to offer. A fast-paced economy which is dragging China's west into the 21st century, it is no wonder that Chengdu's appeal is growing year on year.

People's Park & Matchmakers' Corner - 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 21: Chengdu –Yangtze River Cruise

Today you will visit China's most famous resident, the Giant Panda, at the Panda Conservation Centre. See these lovable creatures in surroundings that mirror their natural habitat. It is not guaranteed that you will be able to see the feeding of the younger pandas, as this only happens at the start and end of each day. Sightseeing involves approximately 1 and a half hours on foot and there are electric carts offered by private vendors that can be organised at your own cost. Later, travel 4-5 hours by coach to Chongqing, where you will board your Yangtze River Cruise vessel.



Please note that 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.

Please be aware that there are a number of steps involved in embarking and disembarking your Yangtze River Cruise Ship, particularly during low tide. If you think this may be an issue, please inform us in advance.

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

Panda Conservation Centre - With over 80 pandas holding residence, the Chengdu Panda Research Base is equipped with the latest technology and research materials to gain a further understanding in how we can protect the panda and maintain, if not increase, its numbers. The park is set up to resemble the mountain and forest regions in north Sichuan, the original home of the Giant Panda, with extensive bamboo trees and large green spaces. Red Pandas, the Giant Panda's lovable cousin, and flamboyant peacocks too roam the park, making for an interesting mix.

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 22: Yangtze River Cruise

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 Taoist and Buddhist sculptures.

Day 23: Yangtze River Cruise

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 for approximately 15km. 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. Once just a stream, the Three Gorges Dam raised the water level to 70-100m in depth, depending on the season.

Day 24: Yangtze River Cruise - Shanghai

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, board 2 hour flight to cosmopolitan 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

Please note that the flight schedule can be unreliable, so last-minute changes to the flight routing and itinerary may occur. Your National Escort/Local Guide will advise of any changes.

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

Shanghai is China’s great metropolis, where east and west collide on streets lined with futuristic skyscrapers and 10th century temples. Today’s explorations start with a visit to Chenghuang Temple and the atmospheric alleys of the old town. Admire the magnificent colonial architecture with a stroll along the historical Bund and visit the Silk Factory. Sightseeing today involves 3-4 hours on foot. This evening, view the city from the Huangpu River on a panoramic cruise before sampling some traditional Shanghai cuisine.



Destination Information

Chenghuang Temple – Built during the Ming Dynasty, the Chenghuang Temple was built to protect the safety of the people of Shanghai. An old saying suggests that “one who fails to reach the temple never reaches Shanghai”.

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.

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 26-27: Depart Shanghai

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 arriving home the same or 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.



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.

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 the 1st of February 2022 and on the 22nd of January 2023. 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 \$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

Wendy Wu Tours is committed to always providing a safe and healthy environment for all passengers. We work closely with our airline partners to take effective measures to protect you from contracting and spreading COVID-19, in accordance with legal requirements and government guidelines. Please follow the below link for more details on our COVID vaccination policy: <https://www.wendywutours.com.au/help-and-visas/covid-vaccination-policy/>

COVID Safe

Your safety and well-being will always be our Number 1 priority which is why we've instituted the most stringent COVID health and safety protocols on all of tours. As we continue to monitor current restrictions and operational impacts, these protocols will evolve, and we will provide detailed guidelines for your particular tour prior to departure. For further details please go to the following link <https://www.wendywutours.com.au/about-us/travel-with-confidence/>

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: December 2021