

China Explorations Tour Itinerary

Day 1

Our *edventure* begins as we fly through the night to China!

Day 2

Arrive in Beijing

Today we will arrive in Beijing, the ancient capital of China with over thousand years' history. It was in this city that Chairman Mao proclaimed the People's Republic of China in 1949. Receive a welcome from our guide, transfer to hotel & learn your first Chinese greeting "Nin Hao".

Accommodation: Holiday Inn Central Plaza

Day 3

Beijing – City Tour

An expert local guide introduces you to the Chinese capital, a treasure chest of imperial monuments. "Beijing" means "Northern Capital". See *Tiananmen Square (Gate of Heavenly Peace)*, the largest public square in the world. Visit the *Forbidden City (Gugong)*, accessible only to members of the Imperial Court until as late as 1949, it is surrounded by a moat & protective wall in the center of the city. See the golden-roofed *Imperial Palace*, one of the world's greatest architectural achievements as well as the *Summer Palace*. Enjoy a *Beijing Opera* in the evening.

Accommodation: Holiday Inn Central Plaza

Day 4

Beijing – Great Wall & Tai Chi Lesson

Visit the Great Wall of China, one of the great wonders of the world. Construction began in the 5th century BC as a defense against the Mongols & 300,000 people (many of whom are buried in the wall) labored on it over several centuries. The wall extends across mountains & valleys for over 3,000 miles-perhaps only a tenth of its former length! A short HIKE to the top of the remote *Jinshanling section* (or pay a small optional fee to ride the cable car up), with less tourist, to see the views far from the tourist crowds & learn a *Tai Chi lesson*. Back to Beijing in the late afternoon. When darkness hits, visit the *Beijing Olympic Stadium Bird's Nest and Water Cube* (picture stop outside only). In the evening we will enjoy a delicious *Chinese banquet with Peking Roast Duck* & experience Chinese food as an art.

Accommodation: Holiday Inn Central Plaza

Day 5

Beijing City Tour – Hutongs & Temple of Heaven

We will take a *rickshaw to explore* the old streets or *hutongs* (ancient city alley or lane) of Beijing. Although the city has become an international metropolis, its small lanes & alleyways still provide access to dwellings for half the total urban population. In the afternoon we will walk around the quiet and wide *Temple of Heaven (Tiantan)*, a huge outdoor complex adorned with Ming & Qing relics, used to worship emperor ancestors and pray for a good harvest season. Tonight, take an *overnight train from Beijing to Xi'an* (9pm-8am 11hr ride overnight).

Accommodation: Union Alliance Atravis Executive Hotel

Day 6

Xi'an City Tour

Xi'an, the city which had been the most prosperous capital for over 1,000 years, located at the eastern end of the Silk Road. While on a city tour, see the 7th century *Big Wild Goose Pagoda* (built upon the orders of Xuan Zang, the monk who introduced Buddhism to China), visit *Shaanxi Provincial Historical Museum* in the morning, unfolding the long history of China and the *City Wall*. Then, learn about the ancient Chinese art of calligraphy at the *Xi'an Stele Forest Museum*, the largest stone library in China with seven major exhibition halls, displaying ancient calligraphy, historical records & stone carvings. Afterwards, drive to the center of the city and visit the 118-foot high *Bell Tower* & the *Great Mosque*, one of China's oldest Muslim temples.

Accommodation: Union Alliance Atravis Executive Hotel

Day 7

Xi'an / Chengdu

Visit the *Museum of the Terra-Cotta Army*, which exhibits the amazing collection of figures discovered by peasants digging for water in 1974. The army's 8,099 painstakingly modeled, life-size warriors & horses-of which NO TWO are alike-were sculpted to protect the tomb of Emperor Qin Shi Huangdi, founder of the Qin Dynasty & the first ruler to unify China. We will then *visit a local school* in the country side of Xi'an & have the opportunity to communicate with local students. *Fly to Chengdu* in the late afternoon.

Accommodation: Holiday Inn Express Chengdu Gulon

Day 8

Chengdu / Leshan / Emeishan

From Chengdu, drive to *Leshan to visit the Giant Buddha statue*, the largest carved stone Buddha in the world. Carved directly into a deep cliff over 1,000 years ago, the Giant Buddha plays an important role in depressing the surging rivers. We will *take a cruise* to adore its over view, then hike on the beautiful mountain to enjoy the Buddha closely. In the late afternoon we will head for one of the four sacred Buddhist mountains in China, *Emei Mountain*, an UNESCO World Heritage Site. The monasteries on this mountain make the earliest references to the Shaolin Monastery as Chinese boxings' place of origin. We will also *visit a local Kungfu school* & learn some from the master.

Accommodation: Hua Sheng Hotel in Emei

Day 9

Emeishan / Chengdu

We will ascend the *summit of Mt Emeishan*, kingdom of the monkeys, in the morning. *The Cloud Sea & Giant Golden Buddha* will be the wonder of our trip. Be careful, you may be stopped by some naughty monkeys for food! Back to Chengdu in the afternoon. *Visit a local Chinese hospital* to witness Chinese herbs, acupuncture & massage. In the evening, experience a *Sichuan Opera in the old style Tea house* & mask changing.

Accommodation: Holiday Inn Express Chengdu Gulon

Day 10

Chengdu / Guilin - Panda Garden

Chengdu is the hometown of pandas & we will visit the *panda breeding zoo* that houses 30 pandas year round. It will be an amazing experience to make friends with so many lovely pandas! For an optional fee [RMB 1200/person], you can even take a picture holding a panda in your lap! *Fly to Guilin*.

Accommodation: Guilin Park Hotel

Day 11

Guilin - Li River Cruise

In the morning we will embark on a *Li River Cruise*. Gorgeous Karst peaks give you surprises at each bend of the limp river under the blue sky. Water buffalo patrol the fields, peasants reap rice paddies, school kids and fisherman float by on bamboo rafts. With its breathtaking scenery and taste of a life far removed from the concrete metropolis, the scenery along the Li River become one of China's top tourist destinations. Arrive in Yangsuo in the afternoon. *Bike riding in the village of Yangsuo* and free time on *West Street*.

Accommodation: Yangshuo New Century Hotel

Day 12

Guilin / Shanghai

In the morning visit the *Reed Flute Cave (Ludi Yan Cave)*, a fascinating gallery of natural limestone cave sculptures beneath the karst landscape. The cave is a famous scenic spot 240 meters long, offering a magic fairland of stalactites, stalagmites, stone columns, curtains & flowers in fantastic shapes & colors. In the afternoon *fly to Shanghai*.

Accommodation: Holiday Inn Express Wujiachang

Day 13

Shanghai – City Tour

Welcome to Shanghai, China's largest & most cosmopolitan city. Shanghai means "up from the sea" & it has been an important port of China for centuries. As the economic center of China & Asia, we will visit the modern section of Lujiazui, with the 468 meters high *Oriental TV Station Tower* & the 492 meters high *Shanghai Global Financial Hub*. You will ascend the summit of global financial center to have a bird's eye view of Shanghai. In the afternoon visit the *Shanghai Children's Palace*, providing after school enrichment for gifted children, see students learning a wide range of extracurricular activities like music, dance, art, model making, science, technology & computer science. Then a visit to *the Bund*, once considered the "Wall Street of the East", it is a beautifully landscaped promenade overlooking the waterfront. In the evening, enjoy a thrilling display at a *Chinese Acrobatics Show*.

Accommodation: Holiday Inn Express Wujiachang

Day 14

Shanghai

Begin the day shopping & admiring the crafts & delicacies in the interesting shops that line the *Nanjing Road*. Then take the *Maglev Train* to the airport where you will check in for your flight home.