



Essential Trip Information

China Explorer

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Overview:

An unforgettable exploration of China's wonders; ancient, modern and natural. This is a trip where you get out onto the streets and mingle with locals; join them on public transport and venture into places of great historical, religious and scenic importance. To experience China today is to appreciate the contrast between modern infrastructure and ancient traditions, skyscrapers and incredible scenic beauty.

Travel Season: January to November

Physical Grade: Easy

Itinerary:

Day 1: Beijing Arrival

Nihao! Welcome to Beijing, the capital of China. Your tour begins with a welcome meeting at 6 pm; there will be more information about the meeting location when you arrive at the hotel. Please look for a note in the hotel lobby or ask at reception. Your group meeting will cover more details about your trip including meeting up with your guides in each city.

Accommodation:

- Chongwenmen Hotel or similar (2 nights)

Meals Included:

- There are no meals included today

Day 2: Beijing – Explore the Forbidden City, Hutongs, Temple of Heaven

Today you will explore famous sights of Beijing with your guide. There will be a lot of walking as well as using the subway to get around so make sure you wear comfortable shoes. After breakfast we will take the metro to Tiananmen Square, one of the world's largest public squares, home to the Monument of the People's Heroes and the Great Hall of the People. Then we enter the Forbidden City, built 1406-1420; a ceremonial and political center of the Chinese government for more than 500 years. It was declared a World Heritage Site in 1987 and is listed by UNESCO as the most extensive collection of preserved ancient wooden structures in the world. After the Forbidden City, we will stroll through the alleys formed by lines of traditional courtyards known as Hutong and experience the local lifestyle of Old Beijing. Later, we'll continue by metro to visit the Temple of Heaven before taking a last metro-ride back to your hotel.

Accommodation:

- Chongwenmen Hotel or similar

Meals Included:

- Breakfast

Day 3: Beijing – Hike the Great Wall from Gubeikou to Jinshanling

We leave in the early morning for the Great Wall at Gubeikou. Gubeikou was a vital mountain pass and dates back to the 16th century. Today's hike will start from Wohushan Great Wall, which is 665 meters above sea level. As you hike along with your guide you will see lush vegetation and learn how this part of the wall has crumbled because in the 1950s local farmers took bricks from the wall to build their houses. Pass by a local village and walk around the inner circle of the wall, which was the second defense in case the main wall breached. Today you will hike 12km (c.7 miles) - a total of 4-5 hours walking and 3-4 hours resting, enjoying the views and lunch. Continue walking until late afternoon when you will reach a guesthouse in the village of Erdaoliang in the Jinshanling area where you will spend the night.

Accommodation:

- Jianxia Guesthouse or similar (1 night)

Meals Included:

- Breakfast

Day 4: Great Wall / Xi'an – Hike the Great Wall from Jiankou to Mutianyu – train to Xi'an

In the morning enjoy a home-cooked breakfast in the guesthouse and then drive on for 2 more hours to Jiankou. After a short break, start the hiking on the Great Wall from Jiankou to Mutianyu. The Mutianyu section is repaired so that it is easy to climb up and down. However, Jiankou is untouched and steep, settled on the edge of the mountain top. At midday, enjoy a picnic lunch that is provided by your guide. From the stunning views you can appreciate the difficulty of constructing the wall in ancient times. Hiking distance: approx. 10 km, 6 hours. In the late afternoon we will take a private transfer to Beijing railway station and board the overnight train to Xian.

Accommodation:

- Overnight on soft sleeper train Beijing-Xi'an

Meals Included:

- Breakfast

Day 5: Xi'an - City Wall, Muslim Quarter

Upon arrival at Xi'an station you will be met and be transferred to your hotel. Your adventure starts with a walking tour of the ancient City Wall, the most significant and best-preserved wall extant in China stretching over 13 kilometers around Xian. Then we will take a walk around the trendy Muslim quarter and stroll through the narrow streets dotted with small shops, markets and restaurants. Later we will take the bus to visit the Big Wild Goose Pagoda. Once, the pagoda held old Buddhist relics and classics brought from India by the hierarch Xuanzang. If you are lucky you may catch a fantastic musical fountain show at the north square of the temple.

Accommodation:

- Manxin Hotel or similar (1 night)

Meals Included :

- Breakfast

Day 6: Xi'an / Hua Shan – Terracotta Warriors, HuaShan sacred mountain

This morning set off to visit the Terracotta Warriors. You will learn about this incredible archaeological find, discovered in 1976 by farmers digging a well, after being buried for 2,000 years. Three main pits are open for you to view, where just under 2,000 of the total 6,000 warriors – each individually sculpted from clay, each having a different costume, height, and even facial expression – stand in battle formation. After the tour we will drive on for 1.5 hours to Mt. Huashan. HuaShan is known as "The Number One Precipitous Mountain under Heaven." The mountain is one of the Five Sacred Taoist Mountains in China and has a long history of religious significance. Upon arrival, check into the hotel, which is located at the foot of the mountain, then take an orientation walk around.

Accommodation:

- Lotus Flower Hotel or similar (2 nights)

Meals Included :

- Breakfast & Lunch

Day 7: Hua Shan – A full day hiking around the mountain

Today we will explore the magnificent Mt. Hua Shan. Beginning by taking a cable car to the North Peak, we climb up the Ear-Touching Cliff, Heavenward Ladder and Black Dragon Ridge until reaching the Golden Lock Pass. After a lunch break, continue on to visit the Middle Peak (Jade Maiden Peak) and the East Peak (Facing Sun Peak) before the hike to South Peak (Landing Wild Geese Peak). The South Peak is 2,160 meters above sea level, the highest of the five. Here we will have chance to experience the dangerous Changkong

Plank Trail, a 0.3 meter wide plank path built along a seemingly bottomless vertical cliff. Then finally we reach the West Peak. The West Peak is the symbol of Hua Shan; it is the most spectacular of the five peaks. From the West Peak we take the cable car down and return to the hotel. The hike today is about 4 hours, not very tough.

Accommodation:

- Lotus Flower Hotel or similar

Meals Included :

- Breakfast

Day 8: Hua Shan / Shaolin / Luoyang – Train to Luoyang, martial arts at Shaolin Monastery

After breakfast, transfer to Hua Shan North Railway Station for a fast train to Luoyang. Upon arrival it is a one-hour journey to Shaolin Monastery. Spend the rest of the day visiting the Hall of Heavenly Kings, the Pagoda Forest, the Dharma Cave and the Martial Arts Training Center. Watch a live kung fu performance and witness an incredible display of concentration and skills. In the late afternoon drive back to Luoyang and check into the hotel.

Accommodation:

- Peony Hotel or similar

Meals Included:

- Breakfast

Day 9: Luoyang / Shanghai – Luoyang Town & Museum, Longmen Grottoes, train to Shanghai

Spend the morning exploring the old town of Luoyang. Starting from the ancient cultural street and Luoyi Old Town we experience a lively place with residential areas, snack streets, souvenir shops and old buildings. Next we visit the Luoyang Museum where we can find items and various folk art collections from the Zhou period. After that, continue to visit the World Heritage Longmen Grottoes. These are located about 12km south of Luoyang. Steep limestone cliffs extend for almost a mile and contain approximately 110,000 Buddhist stone statues, 60 stupas and 2,800 inscriptions carved on steles. Most of the carvings at the Longmen site date between the end of the 5th century and the middle of the 8th century—the periods of the Northern Wei (486–534 C.E.) through early Tang dynasties (618–907 C.E.). Evening transfer to Longmen Train Station for overnight soft sleeper train to Shanghai.

Accommodation:

- Overnight on soft sleeper train Luoyang /Shanghai

Meals Included :

- Breakfast

Day 10: Shanghai – Walking tour of Shanghai

We arrive in Shanghai in the morning. Today we will enjoy a walking tour that will take us back in time. The first stop is the City God's Temple area, a folk temple neighboring Yuyuan Garden. The City God Temple in Shanghai originated as the Jinshan God Temple, dedicated to the spirit of Jinshan or "Gold Mountain", an island off the coast of Shanghai. It was converted into a City God Temple in 1403, during the Yongle era of the Ming dynasty. Its popularity turns the surrounding area into a large pedestrian area that hosts an array of shops, restaurants and teahouses, as well as annual temple fair events. Yuyuan Garden is the most extensive ancient garden with Ming and Qing architectural styles. We'll stroll along the narrow winding lanes (longtangs) of Old Shanghai where we can get a real glimpse into the locals' daily life. Shanghai Museum is a highlight of the tour. The museum design is in keeping with Feng Shui principles. It houses a great permanent collection and hosts various exhibitions with over 120,000 pieces. In the evening, we will explore the Bund. This spectacular array of Art Deco buildings line what was once the most important financial street in Asia.

Accommodation:

- Metropolo Jinjiang Classiq Shanghai Nanjing Road

Meals Included:

- Breakfast

Day 11: Shanghai - Depart

Today is your last day in Shanghai. There are no activities planned, and you are free to leave the accommodation at any time.

Meals Included:

- Breakfast

Itinerary changes:

If unforeseen circumstances require a change in the trip itinerary, China Adventure Travel will make every effort to select alternative hotels of the same quality and to keep the activity modifications minimal.

Services

Included:

- 7 nights in a double/twin room in 3-4 star hotels, 1 night in guesthouse, 2 overnight trains (first class)
- Local English speaking guide services in each city
- Private or public transfers in each city as specified
- Sightseeing tours with entrance fee
- Soft sleeper trains Beijing-Xi'an & Luoyang-Shanghai (4 pax shared cabin)
- Regular class fast train Huashan-Luoyang
- 10 breakfasts and 1 lunch

Excluded:

- Chinese visa
- International airfare
- Travel insurance

Arriving & Departing

Start: Beijing, China

Joining Hotel

Beijing Chongwenmen Hotel 北京崇文门饭店

No. 2 Chongwenmen West Street, Beijing. 北京市崇文门西大街 2 号

Joining point instructions:

When arriving at Beijing International Airport you can make your way to the joining hotel by taxi (easiest option), or by subway (economic option).

By taxi: Follow the signs to the taxi ranks once you have come out of the baggage hall. The ranks are clearly defined and traffic guards will systematically put you into a taxi. Show the taxi driver the address of the hotel in Chinese characters as shown in the Joining Point Section. A taxi ride will take between 45min-1hour depending on traffic and should cost between 100-120 Yuan (plus an extra 10 for the toll fee).

***DO NOT GO WITH ANYONE WHO APPROACHES YOU OFFERING A METERED TAXI WHICH IS PARKED IN THE LOT. THEY WILL RIP YOU OFF.**

By Metro: Once you have come out of the luggage hall, follow the signs to the underground Airport Express Line. This line takes you to the center of Beijing, DONGZHIMEN (东直门). The airport express line from Terminal 3 of the airport to Dongzhimen takes about 16 minutes. Train hours are from 6:30am to 10:30pm. When you arrive Dongzhimen, get off and connect to Line 2. This line takes you to CHONGWENMEN 崇文门 (5 stops). Use EXIT C. Your hotel is about 10 meters away in sight.

Meeting time: 18:00 pm on arrival day (Beijing local time)

End: Shanghai, China

Ending point instructions:

You can make your way to Shanghai Pudong Airport by taxi (easiest option), or by subway (economic option).

By taxi: Normally speaking, our guide will help you call the taxi. You may also ask the hotel reception for help. A taxi from your hotel to Pudong Airport costs about CNY 140-185, depending on traffic and time.

By Metro: Once you come out of the hotel, follow the sign to Nanjing Dong Lu metro station, which is about 50 meters away. Take Line 2 which will take you directly to Pudong Airport. The whole journey takes about 50 minutes, 17 stops in total.

Finishing time: You are free to depart at any time

During your trip

Accommodation

Hotel (7 nights): Normally speaking, all our tours are based on twin share. If you prefer to have your own private room throughout your trip, please select "single supplement" during your booking process.

Guesthouse (1 night): In smaller, rural locations in China we may stay in guesthouses, which are mostly small family run establishments. Facilities are basic compared to hotels.

Soft sleeper train (2 nights): We use soft sleeper trains (4 travelers per compartment with a lockable door) for most of our overnight train journeys in China. Basic bathroom facilities with toilets and washbasins are situated at the end of each carriage. As toilet paper isn't always available it's best to bring an emergency supply. Most trains have a dining carriage where meals or snacks are available and all have hot water in each carriage for tea, coffee and instant noodles. While we aim to have our groups stay together there may be times where due to ticket availability the group will be spread over different compartments and carriages.

Transport:

We have two overnight trains: one is from Beijing to Xi'an, while the other is from Luoyang to Shanghai. For these overnight train journeys, we use soft sleeper berths (4 travelers per compartment with a lockable door). Also, we have a short fast train ride from Hua Shan to Luoyang.

Private transfers will be arranged in each city between stations and hotels. We also have walking tours in some of the cities. During these walking tours, our guide will take you around using subway or public bus where necessary. This will offer you an opportunity to experience the real life of China. Fast trains in China are clean, comfortable and modern. The top speed can reach 250 - 350km/h, while the ticket prices are reasonable. Overnight train is an easily accessible way to make the most of the time you have in China.

When travelling by train in China you will need to pass through security checkpoints similar to those at airports. Please be aware that items that may be classified as 'weapons' might be confiscated (even from your suitcase) as all luggage travels in the compartment with you. We recommend leaving items that may

fall into this category (eg. valuable pocket knives or scissors) at home.

Meals:

10 Breakfasts, 1 Lunch

Note: Generally meals are not included in the trip price when there is a choice of eating options to give you the maximum flexibility. Our guides will suggest local authentic restaurants for you during your trip.

Food in China:

China is far too big and diverse to have one unified style of cookery. Regional cultural differences vary greatly among different areas of China, giving rise to the different styles of food. The most praised "4 Major Cuisines" are Chuan (Sichuan Province), Lu (Shandong Province), Yue (Cantonese or Guangdong Province) and Huaiyang (Jiangsu Province), representing West, North, South and East China cuisine correspondingly.

VEGETARIANS & VEGANS:

Vegetarians in China certainly won't go hungry as there are always plenty of meat-free options on menus including vegetable, tofu, and egg dishes. Your leader can advise on some local favorites. Dairy is uncommon in Chinese cooking, although in some regions like Tibet, Xinjiang and Yunnan you will find milk products as part of the local cuisine. Vegans should also have few problems finding tasty meals in most locations. Nearly all cities will have vegetarian restaurants, often near to temples or monasteries that specialize in Buddhist cuisine.

Single Room Requests:

Single travelers joining group trips are paired in twin-share accommodation with someone of the same sex for the duration of the trip. Some of our Independent trips are designed differently and solo travelers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price. If you have paid the single supplement, you will get your own single accommodation for all night stops, excluding overnight trains and Yangtze cruises.

If you wish us to book the Pre & Post accommodation, following is the extra cost:

If you'd like to spend more time in Beijing or Shanghai, we'll be happy to organize additional accommodation (subject to availability).

Pre-accommodation at Chongwenmen Hotel, extra cost:

US\$85.00 per room per night including breakfast

Post-accommodation at Metropolo Jinjiang Classiq Shanghai Nanjing Road , extra cost:

USD\$90.00 per room per night including breakfast

Tour Guides:

English speaking local expert guides are arranged in each city. Please note that different guides will be arranged for each of the different cities as local guides have more specific knowledge of his/her own area which adds to the enjoyment of your trip. All our guides will provide information on the places you are travelling through and recommend great local eating venues. They will help you have the best trip possible.

Emergency Contact:

Should you need to contact us in an emergency situation, it is best to call the following numbers:

Head office: Mr. Charles Cai @ +86-13802969861

Beijing office: Mr. David Liu @ +86-13379009576

Note: Mr. David Liu from Beijing office is mainly responsible for tours starting from Beijing; while Mr. Charles Cai is responsible for tours starting from Shanghai, Hong Kong and so on.

China Visa:

All nationalities require a visa to visit China. Visas are the responsibility of the individual traveler. You must obtain your Chinese visa in advance. It is not possible to get a visa on arrival and Chinese visas can be difficult to obtain outside your country of residence. Please, keep in mind that all countries require passports valid for at least 6 months from the moment of departure from the country.

Please make sure that if you will transit anywhere in China before arriving at the joining point that you check with your airline to see if the transit will require using your visa. For example: transiting through Beijing to Hong Kong to join a trip from where you will then re- enter China.

You will be provided with a Hotel List and Letter of Invitation to assist you in applying for your visa. These are the primary documents you should use to apply for your visa as they are issued by our local office in China. This will be sent to you by e-mail at the time of booking.

Tibet: Permits to enter and travel in Tibet must be applied prior to arrival through authorized agencies in Tibet. We will apply for these permits for you.

In order to apply for permits we will need scanned copies of your passport photo page, your Chinese visa and your arrival plans at least xxx days prior to travel. Do not renew your passport after permits have been applied for – it may delay your permit and disrupt your trip.

Arrival plans: We need to know how you will arrive in Lhasa and from which city – eg flight Chengdu-Lhasa / train Xining-Lhasa...

Cancellation policy

All cancellations must be in writing and be made by the person who signed the booking form. If you cancel your booking, cancellation charges will be imposed as shown below:

- a) 45 days or more prior to departure-loss of deposit
- b) 45-30 days before departure-30% of tour cost
- c) 30-20 days before departure-60% of tour cost
- d) Less than 20 days-100% of tour cost

Suggested Packing list

ESSENTIAL

Travel Items

- ☐ passport
- ☐ wallet (credit cards, travelers' checks, bank cards, ID)
- ☐ cash for incidentals, gratuities
- ☐ airline tickets/e-ticket confirmation details
- ☐ small (max vol 1 liter) zip-top, clear plastic bag to carry all liquids, gels and aerosols in carry-on luggage (liquids, gels and aerosols must be in 100ml or smaller containers – some airlines 50ml. Check)
- ☐ medications and copies of prescriptions
- ☐ toiletries
- ☐ sunglasses
- ☐ sunscreen and lip ointment
- ☐ insect repellent

Clothing

- ☐ clothing and shoes for restaurants
- ☐ shorts
- ☐ lightweight pants
- ☐ casual shirts
- ☐ comfortable walking shoes
- ☐ lightweight jacket or vest
- ☐ fleece jacket/vest or warm sweater
- ☐ hat with brim
- ☐ sleepwear
- ☐ underwear and socks
- ☐ swimsuit
- ☐ breathable windproof and waterproof rain gear (jacket) and/or umbrella

OPTIONAL

Clothing & Other Items

- ☐ daypack, waist pack and/or lightweight canvas bag to hold purchases (highly recommended)
- ☐ warm jacket
- ☐ binoculars
- ☐ camera, memory card/film, charger/spare batteries
- ☐ current converter and outlet adapter
- ☐ travel alarm clock
- ☐ reading material field guide
- ☐ list of important addresses and contact numbers
- ☐ photocopy of front page of passport (kept in separate place from passport)
- ☐ money belt

Always Improving:

The details presented above are based on the current trip's activities and accommodations. We are always seeking new opportunities to make improvement for a better travel experience. We will keep you updated if there's any change.