



CHINA EXPLORER

2024 - Go Beyond Tour | 16 Days | Physical Level 4

BEIJING – GUBEI WATER TOWN – XIAN – PINGLE – CHENGDU – YANGTZE
RIVER CRUISE – SHANGHAI

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

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

TOUR MAP



CHINA EXPLORER TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated on your itinerary
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) and Local Guides
- Visa fees for New Zealand passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with IATA

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 4:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights.

‘China Explorer’ is rated as a **physical level 4** tour. A good level of fitness is required as you need to be comfortable walking for 2-3 hours and covering longer distances. Walking or other activities such as cycling will be at a gentle pace and will involve straightforward terrain.

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

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

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 16 days in duration including international flights. Depending on flight times some passengers may arrive/depart on day 2.

Travellers booked on ‘Land Only, the price includes visa fees and your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to reservations.

Join the tour on Day 2 in Beijing and end the tour on Day 15 in Shanghai. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

DETAILED ITINERARY**Day 1-2: Beijing**

Meals: D

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 welcome dinner excluding soft drinks/wine and tour introduction will be held in the hotel this evening.

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 3: Beijing

Meals: B, L

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



Please note: The Forbidden City is closed on Mondays. If this day of touring falls on a Monday, your touring in Beijing will be switched round so that the Forbidden City is visited on an alternative day. In an effort to preserve the Forbidden City, the number of entry tickets per day has been significantly reduced. Whilst every effort will be made to obtain the tickets, should this not be possible, then you will instead visit the Forbidden City from the outside and visit the nearby Prince Kung’s Palace Museum.

Destination Information

Tiananmen Square – Built under the guidance of Chairman Mao Zedong, Tiananmen Square is one of the largest public squares in the world, said to hold a capacity crowd of over one million.

It houses not only the Monument to the People’s Heroes, it is also the final resting place of Chairman Mao himself in the Mausoleum of Mao Zedong.

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

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

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

Day 4: Beijing – Gubei Water Town

Meals: B, L, D

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



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

Destination Information

Temple of Heaven – Set in a 267-hectare park surrounded by a long wall and with a gate at each compass point, the Temple of Heaven is absolutely unique. It is one of the most perfect examples of Ming architecture, created as a place of worship for the Emperors, who would ask for prosperity, longevity and good harvest for the people.

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

Day 5: The Great Wall

Meals: B, L

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



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

Destination Information

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

Day 6: Beijing – Xian

Meals: B, L, D

Today, board a bullet train to Xian, approx 5 hours in second class soft seats. On arrival, explore the Muslim Quarter, Xian's Islamic centre, where there are a myriad of small food stalls selling ample mouth-watering dishes. Have a traditional Xian dinner this evening and enjoy an evening at leisure, possibly soaking up the atmosphere at lively Defu Lane.



Destination Information

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

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

Day 7: Xian

Meals: B, L

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



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

Destination Information

Terracotta Warriors – One of the most significant archaeological discoveries of the 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 Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Workshop; even purchase your own portable soldier.

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

Day 8: Pingle

Meals: B, L,D

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



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

Destination Information

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

Day 9: Pingle – Chengdu

Meals: L, D

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



Destination Information

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

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

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 that 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.

Day 10: Chengdu – Yangtze River Cruise

Meals: B, D

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



Please note: The Yangtze River cruise section of your itinerary will not be confirmed by the cruise operators until after you commence your tour as it is subject to local river conditions and water levels. Your Local Guide will do their utmost to keep you informed of any changes but cannot guarantee against delays or – in rare cases – cancellations of sections of your itinerary. Shore excursions are subject to change depending on local conditions. A detailed itinerary will be handed out on the vessel each day.

If you do not wish to take part in a shore excursion but you still wish to disembark the cruise ship, there is a mandatory port tax which must be paid by each customer. The port tax amount is approx. USD20-USD30 per person; however, this amount can vary and for security reasons, it is not always possible to disembark at all ports of call.

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

Destination Information

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

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

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

Day 11: Yangtze River Cruise

Meals: B, L, D

Today, visit Xiaoguanshan Ancient Folk Culture Park and Mt. Shuanggui near Fengdu. 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 local river conditions and the cruise programme, you may visit Shibaozhai Temple or Fengdu Ghost City instead.

**Destination Information**

Xiaoguanshan Ancient Folk Culture Park – near Fengdu is a noted site for the relocation and reconstruction of architectural and cultural relics, after the water level rose on the Yangtze as a result of the Three Gorges Dam project. The park reproduces historic ancient residential buildings, courtyards, temples, wood carvings and city gates in the Fengdu region, providing a deep sense of its history and ancient way of life. Performances here include Sichuan opera, acrobatics, folk music, and puppet shows.

Mount Shuanggui – faces the Yangtze River and is a national forest park known for its picturesque scenery, which integrates history, culture and modern art. Mt. Shuanggui has for centuries been a favorite destination for literati and artists. There are cliff brush writings of calligraphists here from the Song Dynasty to the present day, and pavilions are named for notable historic figures.

Day 12: Yangtze River Cruise

Meals: B, L, D

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 13: Yangtze River Cruise – Shanghai

Meals: B, L

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



Later, board a bullet train from Yichang to Shanghai approx 7hrs 40mins in second class soft seats.

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 14: Shanghai

Meals: B, L, D

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

**Destination Information**

Yu Gardens – The Yu Gardens is seen as one of the most perfect examples of Chinese garden style. Built by the Ming-era governor, Pan Yunduan, as a retirement gift for his father, the Yu Gardens is home to exquisite jade rock, goldfish-filled ponds and stunning, tranquil pavilions.

Huangpu River – The Huangpu River flows through the centre of Shanghai and separates the city into Pudong, meaning ‘east of the Huangpu’ and Puxi, ‘west of the Huangpu’. Cruising down the river, you will see the contrast of the historical Bund architecture on one side of the river with the modern Pudong skyline on the other side. At night, the banks of the Huangpu light up, turning Shanghai into a neon wonder.

The Bund – Recognised as Shanghai's former 'Wall Street', the Bund is home to an impressive collection of buildings from the early trade houses of the 1850s to the glamorous Art Deco modernism of the 1920s.

Originally the home of the foreign population of Shanghai, the Bund's architecture has inherited much western influence and is a stark contrast to the Pudong skyline, sitting across the Huangpu River.

Silk Factory – The Silk Factory is an educational journey through the production of silk, one of China's most famous and luxurious materials. Learn about the use of silkworms and silk moths in its production; the manufacturing process; as well as silk's journey along the Silk Road which brought this product across Asia and Europe.

Dasy 15-16: Depart Shanghai

Meals: B

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 arrive home in New Zealand 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.



CHINA - TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

China - Entry visas are required by all visitors to China. Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. Please note - Once an online visa application has been completed all passengers between the ages of 14-69 years old, you will be advised and will be required to visit one of three visa centres in New Zealand – Auckland, Wellington or Christchurch. Full details will be advised by Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into New Zealand.

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. Currently a visa is required for New Zealand Passport holders. Your travel consultant will inform you if any changes are applicable prior to your departure.

INSURANCE:

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also 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 original

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.

When eating meals on group tours, you will be seated around a circular table with other tour members. Dishes will be served in the traditional 'family style' on a lazy susan; meaning that various dishes will be laid out on a spinning turntable in the centre of the tabletop. These dishes are intended to be shared amongst the group – there is always more than enough to feed everybody. 'Family style' means that there is a pair of serving chopsticks for each dish which are used specifically to serve the food (please ask your server if you require a fork or spoon) and everybody will help themselves to all the dishes on the lazy susan. You will have an individual bowl, chopsticks and cup for your own use. Please be courteous and consider your fellow diners; if your favourite dish is on the other side of the table, it will make its way round to you soon! We find our customers really enjoy this sociable style of eating.

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. 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!

**PLEASE INFORM US OF ANY ALLERGIES AND/OR SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS
AT TIME OF BOOKING**

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 from 9 – 16 February 2024 and 28 January – 4 February 2025. Golden Week public holidays fall annually between 29 April – 3 May and 30 September – 7 October.

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.

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. Internal flights during your tour are arranged locally, so you will not be given a ticket until your guide helps you check in.

Bullet 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. Passengers are not allowed to carry any aerosols over 100ml. Passengers are also not allowed to carry flammable gases or liquids including styling gel, compressed air or insecticides; any explosives, magnetised material, knives (including Swiss Army 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). The National Escort will inform you of specific details prior to boarding.

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and China is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience, Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed to local guides and drivers throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the national escort.

If you are travelling in a smaller group with local guides only, then tipping is paid in each destination. To be fair to the guides we ask for slightly higher amounts per traveller with small groups.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy, but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour, we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

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 New Zealand and China. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone.

In China, 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.

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 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 AND OPTIONAL TOURINGS:

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.

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.

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 the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps.

These palaces were built to provide defence 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. 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 Doctor or Health centre for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Safetravel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.safetravel.govt.nz

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.safetravel.govt.nz as in the event of an emergency, New Zealand Consular assistance will be more readily available.

Up until the day you travel, it is vital you keep up to date and familiarised with the entry requirements as these can change at short notice. You are personally responsible for completing any entry forms, conducting any covid tests (if necessary), etc and adhering to countries' specific entry requirements.

You can also access the New Zealand 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 along with a link to our website where you can find your visa information (if applicable) and other important information. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to 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 whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

Updated: May 2024