

### Taste of China (11 Nights)

Beijing X 4 Nights

Xian X 2 Nights

Guilin X 1 Night

Yangshuo X 1 Night

Hong Kong X 3 Nights



## Introduction

China has long been a draw for the intrepid traveller, since the days of Marco Polo, and even before that. While it has been a trade partner for many centuries there is still something incredibly alien about this country which, even in the grip of huge economic growth and a swing towards a more capitalist society, maintains traditions and culture that go back thousands of years.

China's main cities continue to grow and re-build at pace, but hidden within the new bastions of modernisation and commerce are small oases of the ancient such as Yu Gardens in the centre of Shanghai. There are many examples of traditional Chinese buildings, monuments and temples all over the country, showing their pagoda-esque style on a grandiose scale. There are no finer examples of this than the Forbidden City and Summer Palace in Beijing.

Outside of the 2 main metropolises, there are many other interesting smaller cities and towns with much to offer, as well as the most obvious attraction, the Great Wall of China. The sheer scale of this wall, which stretches (in generally good condition) for around 6,000 kilometres, is mind boggling when you consider construction started in

7,000 BC. Aside to the number one attraction, there are other amazing must see sights such as the Terracotta Warriors and the Li River.

Further afield in China's central and south western provinces, the landscapes start to change, as do the people and the culture. In our opinion, rural China is where the country becomes really interesting and you will see no better example of that than in the south west in Yunnan province, home of the minorities. Close to the border with north Vietnam, there is a cauldron of cultures here and an array of ethnic minorities, including the famous Naxi minority and their Dongba culture. From Dali's pagodas and beautiful Erhai Lake to Lijiang's charming old town in the shadow of Jade Snow Dragon Mountain, the area shows a really different side to China, with subsistence farming prevalent in the outlying countryside and some amazing scenery. Further north, you enter Zhongdian County, thought by many to be the home of "Shangri-La" (paradise) which inspired James Hilton's 1933 novel, Lost Horizon. Whether this was the valley he stumbled upon or not, there is no doubting its beauty. Further north again, Chengdu, famous for its panda

conservation, offers an insight into a different kind of city, as well as a visit to the rural outpost of Leshan and its famously enormous Giant Buddha.

Remember, our itineraries are examples as well as scheduled departures and travelling in China with private transport and guides is very cheap to do still. As such, other parts of China can be explored with relative ease, though a sense of adventure still prevails when travelling west into the desert region of Urumqi as you begin to retrace the old silk road passage to Europe. A great way to enter China is to enter via the Trans-Siberian/ Mongolian rail route which you can take from Moscow to Beijing. There is also a new rail route from Beijing to Tibet (Lhasa) where more fascinating sights can be seen.

Whilst the Li River provides an interesting day trip, the Yangtze River surely has to be one of the most revered river trips in the world. With some great quality cruise ships now plying the way (typically) between Yichang and Chongqing, a 3-7 night cruise on this stunning waterway is a great way to cap off an amazing trip to China.



**Day 01 Depart to Beijing**

**Day 02 Arrive in Beijing.** On arrival to Beijing, you will be met by your local guide who will give you a brief introduction of Beijing. The rest of the day will be free at leisure. *Overnight at the Shangri-La Hotel Or similar*

**Day 03 Beijing** In the morning, you will visit Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City. You will also see the halls of clocks and treasure, which are not included in standard tours. In the afternoon, you will take two cultural lessons to try Chinese paper cutting and Chinese calligraphy respectively. Then taste some amazing Beijing Roast Duck for dinner. **(B, L, D)**  
*Overnight at the Shangri-La Hotel Or similar*

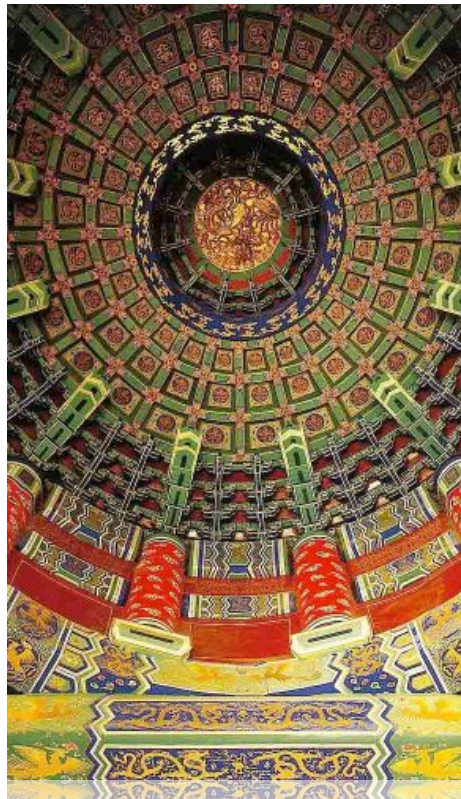
**Day 04 Beijing** Today you will travel to the Summer Palace and learn to practice Taichi for 1 hour there. A private tutor will be provided. In the afternoon, take a rickshaw to explore the old hutongs in Beijing. You will visit a local family and see what a Beijinger's life is like. **(B, L)**  
*Overnight at the Shangri-La Hotel Or similar*

**Day 05 Beijing** In the morning, you will visit the Temple of Heaven, where Qing emperors used to hold ceremonies and offer sacrifice to Heaven to pay respect and pray for social stability and a good harvest. In the afternoon, visit Beijing Capital Museum - one of the best museums in China. **(B, L)**  
*Overnight at the Shangri-La Hotel Or similar*

**Day 06 Beijing/Xian** Today you will travel to Mutianyu Great Wall which has fewer tourists than Badaling. It is about a 1.5 hour drive away from downtown Beijing. A cable car ride is included. After the tour, you will be transferred to the airport for your flight to Xian. On arrival in Xian, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. **(B, L, D)**  
*Overnight at the Jianguo Hotel. Or similar*

**Day 07 Xian** In the morning, you visit the famous Terracotta Warriors and continue to explore the famous food street in Xian: Muslim Street. The vendors offer varieties of local food, like cold noodles and fried persimmon. At night, watch the fantastic Tang Dynasty Show and enjoy Chinese dumplings for dinner. **(B, L, D)**  
*Overnight at the Jianguo Hotel. Or similar*

**Day 08 Xian/Guilin** This morning, visit the ancient City Wall, and the Wild Goose Pagoda. In the afternoon you will visit the



Shaanxi History Museum after which you will be transferred to the airport for your flight to Guilin. When you arrive in Guilin, you will be transferred to your hotel. **(B, L, D)**  
*Overnight at the Guilin Royal Garden Hotel. Or similar*

**Day 09 Guilin/Yangshuo** This morning, you will enjoy a 4-hour boat ride over the picturesque Li River. Lunch will be served on board. The cruise ends at Yangshuo, a small but quaint town. Enjoy some free time in the West Street and then pay a visit to Moon Hill. **(B, L)**  
*Overnight Yangshuo at the Morning Sun Hotel. Or similar*

**Day 10 Yangshuo/Guilin/Hong Kong** In the morning, you will be transferred back to Guilin where you will visit Elephant Trunk Hill and also have a short visit to Reed Flute Cave. Later transfer to the airport to board your flight to Hong Kong. On arrival to Hong Kong you will be transferred to your hotel. **(B, L)**  
*Overnight at the Regal Hotel. Or similar*

**Day 11 Hong Kong** Today you will have a guided of Hong Kong. The highlights include Wong Tai Sin Temple, Birds' Garden, Avenue of Stars, Aberdeen, Stanley Market and the Victoria Peak. Later you will be transferred back to your hotel. **(B)**  
*Overnight at the Regal Hotel. Or similar*

**Itinerary:***Taste of China***Duration:***12 Days & 11 Nights***2014 Departures:***TBA***Highlights:***The Forbidden City, Xian for the Terracotta Warriors and a Boat Ride on the Li River and more.***Prices starting from around:***£ 2,800.00 p/p incl flights*

**Day 12 Hong Kong** Free day at leisure to explore the city at your own pace. **(B)**  
*Overnight at the Regal Hotel. Or similar*

**Day 13 Depart from Hong Kong** After Breakfast at your hotel you will be transferred to the airport for your onward flight. **(B)**

