Take in the highlights of Japan and China on this 15 day tour from Tokyo to Beijing. See the impressive Nijo Castle and the Geisha district of Kyoto, stroll through the bamboo forest in Kamakura, climb the Great Wall, encounter Emperor Qin's incredible Terracotta Warriors in Xi'an, sample Japanese and Chinese cuisine and much more.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Tokyo - Sensoji Temple district and temple, Harajuku, Takeshita street, Meiji Shrine & Shibuya Crossing
- Kamakura - Big Buddha Statue, Hokokuji Zen temple and the Bamboo Forest and delightful village atmosphere. Opt to take part in a Tea Ceremony
- Lake Kawaguchi located within Fuji Hakone Izu National Park - spectacular mountain scenery and views of Mt Fuji
- Staying in a ryokan - sampling Japanese hospitality, bathing in natural hot springs, wearing a Samue (casual Kimono) and sleeping on a futon
- Kyoto - UNESCO listed Nijo Castle, Sanjusangen-do Temple with its 1000 life-like statues & Kinkakuji (Golden temple) Temple
- Kyoto - walking tour of the famed Geisha district (Gion), with its ancient cobbled streets, streams, bridges and quaint teahouses and the opportunity to see Geisha and Maiko en route to their next engagement
- Shanghai - Plaza Tower, The Bund and Old Shanghai, Yuyuan Garden, Huangpu River skyline of Pudong City
- Xi'an – Terracotta Warriors, Big Wild Goose Pagoda, Muslim Quarter & City Wall bike ride
- Badaling - Great Wall of China at Badaling
- Suzhou - Grand Canal boat trip and Lingering Garden
- Beijing – Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City, rickshaw ride around the Hutongs, Pearl Market and evening Chinese acrobatic performance

What's Included

- 10 breakfasts, 4 lunches and 2 dinners (including a Japanese dinner at the Lake Kawaguchi)
- 12 nights 3 - 4 star accommodation (including 1 night in a traditional Japanese inn)
- 2 overnight trains (4 berth soft sleeper cabin)
- Japan airport arrival transfer by train from Narita or Haneda International Airport to tour hotel on day 1. Departure transfer (unesescorted) - by train or bus from Kyoto Station to Osaka Airports (ITM & KIX) on day 8
- China airport arrival transfer from Shanghai Airport on day 8 and departure transfer to Beijing Capital Airport on day 15
- Guided sightseeing and walking tours in Tokyo, Kamakura, Lake Kawaguchi, Kyoto, Shanghai, Suzhou, Xi'an, Beijing and Badaling
- Lake Kawaguchi & Mt Fuji - Kachikachiyama Ropeway and observatory. For tours staying at Lake Kawaguchi between 14 Apr – 28 May each year we’ll visit to the Fuji Shibazakura (Moss Phlox) Festival with Mt Fuji as the backdrop
- Shanghai - Huangpu River cruise
- Suzhou - historic Grand Canal cruise
- Xi'an - bike ride on medieval City Wall
- Chinese acrobatic performance
- Rickshaw ride through Beijings' Hutongs
- Escorted by a licensed English speaking Japanese/Chinese tour guide/s for groups of 6 or more, English speaking specialist guides at local sites
- All transportation and transfers - buses, trains and rail passes (including Suica Swipe Card)
- Baggage forwarding service from Tokyo to Kyoto (one bag per person)

What's Not Included
**Tokyo to Beijing**

- **Tipping Kitty**: USD$50-60pp in China, paid in local currency
- **Entrance Fees**: Japan USD$25-35pp, China USD$100-110pp, paid in local currency
- **International Flights**: (including the flight from Osaka to Shanghai on day 8), visas and tipping
- **Laundry, drinks, items of a personal nature**
- **Tip for your tour guides**: We recommend you allow USD$3 - 5 per day, per traveller. Tipping your guide is an entirely personal gesture.
- **If you are opting to pay the single supplement**, allowing you the privacy of your own room on this tour, a single room will be provided for all nights with the exception of day 5 (our overnight stay at Lake Kawaguchi), where single rooms are not available. For this night you will be matched up with a fellow tour member of the same gender.

### DETAILED ITINERARY

**Day 1 : Tokyo**

Saturday. Welcome to Japan and the start of your holiday! Arrival at Haneda or Nara Airport, you will be met by your tour guide or a representative from On The Go Tours. The prominent sign depicting our company logo easily identifies our representative.

Should you not be able to locate our guide/representative please do not leave the arrivals area. If after waiting 30 minutes at the arrivals area and you are still unable to locate our guide/representative, please call the 24 hour contact person noted on your tour voucher.

If arriving on a flight landing prior between 06:00 - 06:30 and you’ve sped through customs to find that our guide is not in the arrivals hall to meet you, please be patient as our guide will enroute arriving on the first train of the day scheduled to arrive at 06:30 without delays.

After meeting up with your tour guide/representative, together you will travel by train into the heart of the city and check into your hotel. **Overnight - Tokyo**

**Day 2 : Tokyo Sightseeing - Sensoji Temple district, Harajuku & Shibuya**

Today we explore the capital. Taking the subway to Asakusa we visit the lively Sensoji Temple district, which is home to Tokyo’s first temple and scores of interesting souvenir and craft stalls. In the afternoon we head to Harajuku, which is a magnet for young and fashionable Tokyoties with its hip shops and cafes. Here we’ll visit the impressive Meiji Shrine where the emperor Meiji and his wife are enshrined. Yoyogi Park beside the shrine is a popular hangout for locals on Sundays with bands playing, drum circles, dancers and busking, if you are interested.

The last stop of the day is the Shibuya crossing - regarded as one of the busiest intersections in the world. The famed junction has no less than 7 pedestrian crossings and when the traffic lights turn red a wave of pedestrians, up to a 1000, converge onto the intersection from every direction. Here we’ll grab a coffee or cold drink and rest our weary feet at the Starbucks, with second floor vantage point, located directly opposite the crossing and look down upon the exciting spectacle, guaranteed to give that ‘I'm in Tokyo feeling’. Total walking distance today: Approx 8 - 10km.

**Day 3 : Kamakura & the Bronze Buddha**

Today offers a guided tour of the Tokyo Edo Museum & Free Time

This evening offers free time though if travelling in January, May and September (tonight or any other night you are in Tokyo) you might like spend the evening watching a Sumo tournament. There are three professional Sumo tournaments held in Tokyo each year with each tournament lasting 15 days with a number of matches held throughout the day. If interested, you should book tickets independently (we cannot book these on your behalf) in advance as on the day of a match only a few balcony seats are held back for same-day sale (again, these you must independently organise). **Overnight - Tokyo**

**Day 4 : Tokyo Edo Museum & Free Time**

Today offers a guided tour of the Tokyo Edo Museum which focuses on the lifestyle and culture experienced by Tokyoties over the city’s 400-year history. The museum houses some of the city’s best original artefacts and replicas of Edo-era buildings and landmarks.
Day 5: Mt Fuji & Lake Kawaguchi

Tokyo - Lake Kawaguchi. This morning we travel by highway bus (with luggage forwarding) to Lake Kawaguchi, located at the foot of Mt Fuji in the Fuji Hakone Izu National Park. The scenery is stunning with panoramic views of a snow-capped Fuji most of the year. Upon arrival, we’ll travel along the Mount Fuji Panoramic Ropeway and visit the observatory. For tours staying at Lake Kawaguchi between 15 Apr – 28 May each year we’ll visit the Springtime Fuji Shibazakura (Phlox Moss) Festival, held at Motosu Lake, where the landscape is covered in a vibrant, hot pink moss with Fuji as the backdrop. No trip to Japan would be complete without sampling authentic Japanese hospitality at a traditional ryokan (a Japanese inn), which is where we’ll bed down tonight. At the ryokan, sample tasty local cuisine and take a relaxing dip in the natural hot spring baths.

Note: If you have booked a single room with us we have not included the cost of you having a single room at our ryokan in Lake Kawaguchi. Ryokans by their very nature don’t offer single rooms so tonight, and tonight only you will be matched up with a fellow traveller of the same sex for the evening.

Average kilometres walked today: 5.5km
Overnight - Lake Kawaguchi (D)

Day 6: Kyoto - Sanjusagen-do Temple & the Geisha District

Lake Kawaguchi – Kyoto. The area has some great hiking trails and early this morning you might like to opt for a hike along the foreshores of the lake.

After enjoying a Japanese breakfast, we travel by bus to Mishima, to connect to the bullet train to Kyoto - Japan’s ancient and cultural capital.

As one of the most culturally rich cities in Asia, Kyoto is home to an abundance of UNESCO World Heritage sites, Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines. Here we enjoy a guided tour of the famous statues of Kannon, the goddess of mercy at Sanjusagen-do Temple, where one thousand life-size statues of Kannon are made of Japanese cypress clad in gold leaf. Standing in 10 rows of 50, each hand crafted and slightly different from the next. Late afternoon we head to Gion, for a walking tour of this famous Geisha district. After you may wish to watch a cultural performance at Gion Corner Theatre where you’ll have the opportunity to watch a Maiko (apprentice Geisha) performing. Overnight - Kyoto (B)

Day 7: Kyoto - Nijo Castle, Golden Pavilion & free time

This morning we offer a guided tour of Nijo Castle, one of the city’s most impressive UNESCO sites. Built by the first Tokugawa shogun in 1603, the exquisite Nijo Castle is a wonderful example of Momoyama architecture.

After we visit Kinkakuji (Golden Pavilion) a stunning Zen Buddhist temple, part of the Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto World Heritage Site. The top two floors of the monument are completely covered in gold leaf. Set upon a small lake with landscaped gardens the large completely gilt structure is impressive as it is beautiful Temple. Kinkakuji Temple continues to be one of Japan’s most visited temples. This afternoon offers free time for you to relax or to further discover the many sights of Kyoto at your own pace. Consider visiting Fushimi Inari Shrine, famous for its winding path lined by thousands of bright red torii gates. Just a short train ride away from the main Kyoto station, this must-see sight is free to visit and is open 24 hours a day. You might also wish to hire a Kimono and walk the streets as many Japanese do or take part in a cooking lesson.

Day 8: Goodbye Japan, Hello China

Please note the floating Torii Gate will be under construction from June 2019 to August 2020. Overnight - Kyoto (B)

Saturday. Take the train (unescorted) from Kyoto Station to Osaka Airport for your flight to Shanghai (flight not included). Arrive Shanghai Airport and included transfer to hotel. The rest of the day is free for you to relax or head out and explore the city.

Please note: The flight from Osaka - Shanghai is not included in the cost of this tour. China Eastern Airlines, Shanghai Airlines, Air China, Japan Airlines all fly direct. If you provide us with your flight details, we will be there to meet you at Shanghai airport and transfer you to your hotel. Overnight - Shanghai (B)
Tokyo to Beijing

Day 9 : Shanghai city tour

This morning we gather for a short Welcome Meeting. Your Entrance Fees and Tip Kitty will be collected at this time (as detailed in the exclusions section of your Trip Notes).

A city with a turbulent history and a promising future, Shanghai is the best of old and new with grand colonial architecture engulfed by gleaming skyscrapers. Today we embark on a guided tour taking in sites including the lofty Plaza Tower, tranquil Yu Garden, the Old City and the bustling Bund. In the evening, we’ll take a cruise on Huangpu River and enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.

Overnight - Shanghai (B, D)

Day 10 : Suzhou - an oriental Venice

Shanghai - Suzhou - Xi’an. Today we visit ancient Suzhou, which is reminiscent of Venice, with its series of canals, picturesque waterways and classical gardens. We enjoy a cruise on the Grand Canal, tour the Lingering Garden - a beautiful classical Chinese garden dating back from the Ming Dynasty and visit a silk workshop. Later we return to Shanghai for our overnight train to Xi’an. Overnight - Sleeper Train (B, L)

Day 11 : Xi’an & Big Wild Goose Pagoda

Upon arrival into Xi’an we transfer to our hotel for breakfast and check in with time to freshen up. Today we visit the iconic Big Wild Goose Pagoda, one of Xian’s most iconic landmarks, followed by the vibrant Muslim Quarter.

Later we enjoy a leisurely bike ride along the Xi’an City Wall. Dating back to 1370 the 12m-high walls are some of the few remaining urban fortifications still standing in China today.

This evening, On Broadway - Chinese style we can attend a Tang Dynasty dinner and performance with Chang’an music and dance originally performed for the illustrious Tang emperors - includes dinner, a traditional performance and return transfers (bookable locally Yuan 350 per person). Overnight - Xi’an (B, L)

Day 12 : Terracotta Warriors

Xi’an - Beijing. Today we visit the famous Terracotta Warrior archaeological site. Emperor Qin’s 2,200 year old terracotta army of life-sized warriors and horses were designed to offer protection to the emperor in the afterlife. The 7,000 clay warriors stand in military formation in excavated pits under the cover of a modern protective hanger and no two faces are alike.

Later we visit the clay workshop, specialising in making replica figurines of the Terracotta Warriors. After dinner we board the overnight express train bound for Beijing.

Overnight - Sleeper Train (B, L)

Day 13 : Tiananmen Square & Forbidden City

We arrive into Beijing bright and early this morning, where we’ll enjoy a full day of sightseeing in the city. First stop is Tiananmen Square which is home of the mausoleum of Chairman Mao Tse-tung and the striking Monument to the People’s Heroes. We’ll have a stroll around the square, all under the watchful eye of the dutiful guards.

The iconic Gate of Heavenly Peace, with its giant portrait of Chairman Mao Tse-tung, is the main entry point into the Forbidden City. Built between 1406 and 1420, The Forbidden City served as the imperial palace for the Ming and Qing dynasties and only those on imperial business could enter it until 1911, when the last emperor, Puyi, was removed from his throne. We enjoy a guided walk through the city’s many temples, grand halls and courtyards. The 720,000 sq m lavishly constructed Forbidden City has a staggering 9999 rooms.

This afternoon we take rickshaws to explore the Hutongs of Beijing. As our trusty rickshaw driver peddles us through the network of alleys, old back lanes, traditional courtyards and compact houses we gain a fascinating snapshot of the city’s traditional way of life. There is time to meet a local family and take a peek inside their home, before returning to our hotel. This evening, we’ll watch and incredible Chinese acrobatic performance.

Overnight - Beijing (B)
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Day 14 : The Great Wall

Today we drive beyond Beijing to Badaling, where we can walk a section of the famous Great Wall. The UNESCO protected Great Wall of China was built as a defensive structure over a period of 2,000 years. Snaking some 6700 kms across barren hills, deserts, mountains and plateaux, the now partially ruinous Great Wall stretches east to west in northern China. At one time perhaps nearly 9700 kms long, the wall was garrisoned by 1 million soldiers and featured over 1,000 fortified passes and 10,000 beacon towers. A little steep in sections, but the photo opportunities are worth a million dollars!

After our walk we have lunch and visit a jade carving factory. In the afternoon we visit the bustling Pearl Market where you'll find anything from jewellery and clothing to gadgets and DVDs.

Note: For those that are not interested in shopping at the Pearl Market, you have the option of visiting the Temple of Heaven if you haven’t done so already, the entrance gate is directly across the road from the Pearl Market. In 1998, the temple was added to the World Heritage List and in 2005 underwent a USD$5.9 million face-lift in preparation for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The temple is well worth a visit especially now renovated. Entrance fees are approx. 35¥pp (dependent upon time of year) and entrance tickets can be purchased on the day at the front gate. The Temple of Heaven was added to the World Heritage List in 1987 and is the last imperial palace in China where the emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties held formal mandarin court ceremonies.

Day 15 : Beijing

Saturday. Our Chinese adventure comes to an end today. Hotel check out and transfer to the Beijing Capital Airport, to meet your onward flight.

If you require a transfers to Daxing International Airport, this can be arranged at an additional fee, please speak with your reservations consultant for further details.

HOTELS

Highlighted below are some of the hotels which we frequently use on this tour, though we reserve the right to substitute these hotels to ones of a similar standard.

Please refer to your Tour Voucher for your confirmed arrival hotel and further arrival information.

Yaesu Terminal Hotel

Enjoying an enviable location on a cherry-blossom lined street in the centre of Tokyo, Yaesu Terminal Hotel is just a short jaunt away from the city's main railroad station giving travellers easy access to locations across the city. A comfortable 3-star hotel with a natural theme, a permanent art exhibit in the hotel lobby and an in-house restaurant serving freshly prepared local cuisine; it is a soothing place to relax after a busy day of sightseeing. Hotel guests can make use of the free Wi-Fi, benefit from complimentary bathrobes and slippers and enjoy entertainment on a flat-screen TV.

Ramada Encore Shanghai

Located on the fast growing City West Road in the heart of Shanghai’s prime business district, this modern hotel offers guests accommodation that is both comfortable and convenient. The elegant rooms, with their contemporary design and stylish interiors, are all equipped with the essential amenities, including air-conditioning, cable TV, complimentary high-speed Internet access and in-room coffee making facilities.

Dormy Inn Premium Kyoto

Located just a short walk from Kyoto Station and the lofty Kyoto Tower, you really cannot get more central than this! Combining convenience with comfort, this contemporary hotel boasts modern guest rooms with flat screen televisions, complimentary WiFi, refrigerators and a private toilet – though washing facilities are shared. Buffet breakfast is available, with a choice of local and western dishes on offer. The hotel is surrounded by a wide choice of shops and restaurants, and there are plenty of cultural landmarks just a short stroll away. After a day of sightseeing guests can relax with a soak in the hotel’s natural hot spring baths or opt for a sauna and massage.

Yamagishi Ryokan

With stunning views over Lake Kawaguchi, which is located just one minute away, the Yamagishi Ryokan is a gorgeous accommodation and an excellent base for exploring the area around the lake. Rooms are designed according to traditional Japanese styles with low furniture and lots of natural light. Breakfast and dinner are both included with the room and are served in the hotel's dining room. After dinner, guests can take a dip in one of the hotel's baths or relax with a coffee in the lounge. The hotel is located just an 8 minute walk from Kawaguchiko Station.

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Rezen Hotel Xi’an Zhonglou
For those that like to independently explore, this hotel is in a great location to see all the highlights Xi’an has on offer. The Wulukou Metro Station is just a short walk away, Xi’an Railway Station 1km away and Hui People Street 3km away. To make your stay comfortable, this hotel features free Wi-Fi, A/C, Fitness Centre and shop.

Holiday Inn Temple of Heaven
The Beijing Holiday Inn Temple of Heaven is an elegant and comfortable hotel with well-furnished and spacious rooms. Practical in design, the guestrooms feature internet access and the hotel also boasts a range of restaurants and bars, as well as an indoor swimming pool. Located just a 10 minute walk from the Temple of Heaven, the hotel is the perfect base from which to explore this fascinating city.

Solo Travellers
There are no compulsory single supplements on our Japan group tours, so if you’re travelling solo and are happy to share a room with a fellow traveller of the same sex we’ll match you up. Alternatively if you prefer the privacy of your own room you can choose to pay a single room supplement, however please note that single rooms are not available at the Lake Kawaguchi ryokan so you will be matched up with a fellow traveller of the same sex for the evening of day 5.

Arrival Transfers in China
Welcome to Shanghai!
When arriving into Shanghai Airport, after attending to immigration and customs, please proceed as follows:

Pudong International Airport:
T1: Please meet at the Family Mart
T2: Please meet at Starbucks

Hongqiao Airport:
T1: Please meet at the exit
T2: Please meet at KFC

Please have your tour Voucher handy and make it available to our representative who will be waiting for you in the arrivals hall, holding a prominent On The Go Tours logo signboard, ready to escort you to our awaiting transportation and onward to your tour start hotel.

If, for any reason you have trouble locating our representative after waiting 30 minutes in the arrival hall or your flight to China is delayed please call the emergency contact number as stated on your tour Voucher. Please do not leave the airport and travel to the hotel yourself. Please call the contact number as stated on your Tour Voucher.

We schedule our arrival transfers to collect all travellers on flights scheduled to land within the same hour. As such after meeting our arrival transfer person you may be required to wait (there are seats available and a cafe close by) till other passengers, who will also be transferring with you to the same tour start hotel.

China Entrance Fees - Collected in Yuan
Entry fees to most sites are not included, although reasonably priced. In China, we collect entrance fees on Day 2 of the tour (the amount is noted under exclusions on page one of this document). A comprehensive breakdown of the entrance fee total is provided upon arrival.

China Tipping Kitty
At the start of your arrangements in China, we take a small tipping kitty (the amount is noted under exclusions) from all tour participants to cover tips throughout your holiday. This saves you the hassle of knowing when and how much to tip bellhops, luggage handlers, bus drivers, train conductors and other support staff throughout the tour.

This amount does not include a tip for your tour guide. For a job well done, we would suggest USD$3 - 5 per person per day. Tipping your guide is an entirely personal gesture and ultimately the amount is up to you.

If travelling on a group tour with less than 6 participants we do not collect a tipping kitty and recommend the following amount to cover tips paid directly by you to bellhops, luggage handlers, your driver and local guide: CNY50/USD$8 - per person per day of your tour.

Food
One of the best things about visiting any country is sampling its cuisine and during your stay in Japan you’ll probably be wishing to do just that. Many Japanese restaurants specialise in one particular type of food. Sushi is of course the most famous dish, but Japanese food does not stop with raw fish; other specialties include teriyaki (marinated beef/chicken/fish seared on a hot plate), sukiyaki (thin slices of beef, bean curd and vegetables cooked in soy sauce and then dipped in egg), and tempura (deep fried seafood and vegetables).

If everything so far sounds a bit meat and fish orientated don’t be alarmed - there are vegetarian options in Japan. Try the wonderful zaru soba (buck-wheat noodles served cold), a bowl of Udon (thicker noodles) in a mountain vegetable soup, tofu steak or

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Packing
One medium sized suitcase is recommended for travel around Japan and you will also want to pack a small backpack or day pack for daily use. This small back pack will also come in use when your main suitcase has been forwarded ahead, such as when visiting Lake Kawaguchi on our groups tours or when travelling from Kanazawa to Kyoto on our Cherry Blossom tour.

Make sure you pack comfortable shoes as an extended time will be spent on the feet – new high heels are not such a smart way to do this kind of trip! Also shoes will often be taken off and put back on, so something that is easy to put on and take off is best!

Non-Smoking Rooms
Japan trails behind the western world in regards to its anti-smoking laws. Although it’s uncommon to see Japanese people walking along the street smoking, as this is culturally frowned upon smoking is still permitted in bars, some restaurants and hotels. It is becoming more common for hotels offer an indoor smoking room rather than allowing smoking throughout the property, though many hotels still only have a small inventory of non-smoking rooms. Where possible we do book as many non-smoking rooms as we can, though we cannot guarantee that in each city a non-smoking room will be offered. It often is, but again this cannot be guaranteed.

The restaurants we do book are non-smoking and if heading out to a bar we will reserve a spot in the non-smoking section of the bar. If you are extremely sensitive to cigarette smoke you may wish to reconsider travelling on one of our group tours but instead book a tailor-made holiday with us where we be able to select small high-end boutique properties that operate a 100% no smoking policy.

Own arrangements
If you have made your own arrangements for accommodation, trains, planes or further sightseeing etc. independent of your holiday with us, our guides are more than happy to select small high-end boutique properties that operate a 100% no smoking policy.
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Climate
In all, China has a great diversity of climates. To sum it up - China experiences hot summers in most parts of the country, very cold winters in the north and comfortable winters in the south! Sep-Oct is warm to hot and dry across the country. Nov-Mar is winter with very cool temps in the north, whilst mild in the south. If combining the north and south, you’ll experience 2 distinct weather patterns. Apr-May - perfect in the north, if a little humid and rainy in the south. Jun-Aug can bring a few showers.

Health & Water
You should seek medical advice before travelling to China from your local health practitioner and ensure that you receive all of the appropriate vaccinations. As a guide it is recommended that you be vaccinated for Tetanus and Polio, if you haven’t had a booster in the last ten years. Food and waterborne diseases are more common, so we recommend vaccinations for Typhoid (valid 3 years) and Hepatitis A (validity varies). There is a malarial risk in remote southern areas of China, so do check the current situation before travelling.

As tap water is not safe to drink in China, only drink bottled mineral water which is readily available from hotels, shops and restaurants. Make sure bottled water is sealed.

Currency
The currency of China is the Chinese Yuan.

Pound Sterling, US Dollars, Euro and other major currencies can be exchanged in China. Exchange facilities are available at various bureau de changes and banks in major towns have ATMs or it is possible to get some before you leave home. It’s advisable to request bank notes in smaller denominations, as it can sometimes be hard to get change from large notes and smaller notes are handy for smaller purchases and gratuities.

Traveller’s Cheques are not recommended as they’re often difficult to exchange and incur high fees.

You could download a Currency Converter app to use during your travels.

Time & Voltage
China is 8 hours ahead of GMT. The country operates on one time zone, so clocks are set according to Beijing time, meaning, given the size of the country, sunrise and sunset can occur at peculiar times! Voltage is 220v, 50Hz AC. Chinese plugs come in many designs: 3-pronged angle pins as used in Australia; 3-pronged round pins as used in Hong Kong; 2-pronged flat pins as used in the USA; or 2 round narrow pins as used in Europe. To cover all bases, pack a travel adaptor!

Essential Packing
As light as possible! In China, most often portage is not available at railway stations and you will be required to carry your own luggage. Bags with wheels can be a hindrance when climbing several flights of stairs, though are a blessing when walking lengthy distances to reach our awaiting transportation. If travelling in early spring we recommend you pack warm clothes, layering works best this time of year.

• Food in China is very different and arguably better than your local takeaway! If you prefer western snack food, consider bringing a supply
• Sunglasses, hat, sunscreen, swim costume, basic torch/ flash light & umbrella for sun or rain
• Comfortable closed in walking shoes for climbing the Great Wall
• DEET based mosquito repellent & antihistamine cream
• Chinese plugs come in many designs: 3 prong angle pins similar, though smaller than those used in Australia; 2 prong flat pins (type A) or 2 round pins, European style (type C). To cover all bases, pack a travel adaptor!
• Two spare passport photos & a photocopy of your passport
• A small daypack for your day-to-day needs
• Plastic poncho to go over your jacket. Whilst site-seeing, you can be in the rain for an extended period and even a rain jacket can get soaked. You can purchase a cheap one locally, but we suggest taking one from home of a better quality that doesn’t rip easily

PLEASE NOTE:
• If your tour includes an internal flight, that most airlines have a 20kg baggage limit.
• As of July 2019, the Shanghai government has introduced a new policy for the purpose of environment protection, whereby all hotels will no longer supply disposable items such as slippers, shower caps, tooth brush/paste, body lotion, combs, nail files etc. Currently, these items are provided in Xian, Beijing, Luoyang etc, but this policy will be rolled out eventually throughout the rest of China also. Items that may still be provided by hotels (should they choose) are shampoo, conditioner and soap. With this in mind, please ensure you pack any necessities needed for your holiday.

Toilets/Washrooms
Public toilets, when found, are usually ‘squats’ - holes in the ground with footrests at either side and often don’t possess a door! The custom is to wash with water from a jug or little pipe attached to the toilet using your left hand. Doesn’t appeal? Here are some hints!
• Time yourself with the accommodations you are staying at
• If you are out and about, find the nearest hotel, restaurant, fast food outlet, or toilets at tourist attractions, which all tend to have Western style facilities
• Ask your tour guide to make a stop
• Pack a roll of toilet paper and anti-bacterial wipes for your own comfort

Media Restrictions
There are restrictions on all media, including social media and free press throughout China. Whilst on holiday, you will have limited or no access to social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Google Plus - so no Google Maps and no Play Store.

To bypass the firewall, you could look at downloading a VPN, which is much easier to do this before you go to China.

WeChat:
Communication between the group and Tour Guide or Adventure Leader is best via the app: WeChat. Please install this App prior to your holiday as it is hard to do download the app once you have arrived in China. If you opt to open the WeChat account prior to arrival and it requests that you have to be contacted by

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www.onthegotours.com
uk: 020 7371 1113 info@onthegotours.com
AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com
NZ 0800 44 77 69 CAN 1 866 890 7038
USA 1 866 606 2960 SA 0800 990 311

This information has been compiled with care and good faith. They give an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. Any costs shown are subject to change, though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.

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someone already on WeChat before opening your account, don’t worry, this can be done locally with your guide (just have the app downloaded ready to finalise opening your account locally).

There is also limited international calling options, so please check with your local provider before leaving home, to source the best roaming or online options to keep in regular contact with family and friends during your travels.

Travelling By Train

Fast and efficient, China’s first rail lines were laid in the 19th century, and today, the government continues to invest heavily in this crucial mode of transport which connects many parts of the country. When travelling during the day, ‘soft’ seats, that is to say ‘upholstered’ seats are provided.

For overnight travel on "Signature" tours, clients are accommodated in ‘soft class’ sleeper cabins. Aboard each wagon are 9 compartments that comprise 4 bunks per compartment. Four people of mixed sex share one compartment. On occasion, dependent upon group size, you may be sharing with local people on the overnight journey, though sometimes dependent upon how the Chinese Railways Booking Office configure the bookings, the cabin may be filled with four of our passengers.

For overnight travel on "Budget" tours, clients are accommodated in open 6 berth bunks. We try to get all of our travellers in the best roaming or online options to keep in touch while on tour, but please note this is not always possible.

Fast and efficient, China’s first rail lines were laid in the 19th century, and today, the government continues to invest heavily in this crucial mode of transport which connects many parts of the country. When travelling during the day, ‘soft’ seats, which is to say ‘upholstered’ seats are provided.

For overnight travel on "Signature" tours, clients are accommodated in ‘soft class’ sleeper cabins. Aboard each wagon are 9 compartments that comprise 4 bunks per compartment. Four people of mixed sex share one compartment. On occasion, dependent upon group size, you may be sharing with local people on the overnight journey, though sometimes dependent upon how the Chinese Railways Booking Office configure the bookings, the cabin may be filled with four of our passengers.

For overnight travel on "Budget" tours, clients are accommodated in open 6 berth bunks. We try to get all of our travellers in the best roaming or online options to keep in touch while on tour, but please note this is not always possible.

A dining wagon serves reasonably priced Chinese food of the noodles and rice variety, along with snacks and drinks. A very simple menu is published in English. On the Beijing - Xi’an service, there is also a small bar serving drinks including alcohol. Each wagon offers a WC and hand basin facility. At one end, is a Chinese squat-style WC, whilst at the other end is a modern Western-style WC. Cabins are lockable from the inside and luggage is stowed in overhead compartments and under the bottom bunk. Bed linen and slippers are supplied, and often there is a TV mounted on the wall at the end of each bed that may even work. Most channels are broadcast in Mandarin, excluding one English Channel, which has little of interest on it!

Time Keeping

Punctuality is very important throughout the tour and you will usually be given a time to meet your tour leader and the rest of the group in reception. In the event that you miss the meeting time you will have to make your own way to where the group are, this will be at your own expense.

Delays can occur on the trips, although they are rare we recommend you do not book onward travel too close to the end of the tour to allow time for delays. We take no responsibility for any missed flights or additional expenses if the group arrives late to the departure city.

Porterage

In China most often porterage is not available at railway stations and you will be required to carry your own luggage. We recommend you pack as light as possible as there can be several flights of stairs and a lengthy walk to our awaiting transportation.

Shopping

China is a virtual Aladdin’s Cave. Government-run Friendship Stores in almost all cities stock a range of fixed-price souvenirs and handicrafts and can offer a reasonable idea of what is acceptable in terms of quality and price. After a visit to the Friendship Store, visit private stores, craft shops and local department stores. However, the best shopping is often at public markets. If you see something you want, buy it when you see it - prices don’t vary greatly, but selection can vary from location to location.

Top buys include silk products, embroidery, Chinese calligraphy and paintings, ceramics, jade and stone carvings, lacquer ware, Chinese tea, Cloisonne, Mao reproduction propaganda souvenirs such as the famous ‘Red Book’, caps and buttons, personalised ink seals and clothing of every kind. Markets in Beijing and Shanghai commonly sell top quality ski jackets and leisure attire by big name brands. Additionally, copied goods such as handbags, watches and shoes are available in plentiful supply in these markets.

Ethnic crafts are a specialty in some regions including Xi’an and Kunming. If wishing to buy antiques, proceed with caution. It’s highly likely that the antique will be a skilful reproduction. However, if it is the real deal, you’ll need paperwork from the Chinese Administrative Department of Cultural Relics which must then accompany the article being exported.

On many of our tours we include some shop visits/stops, where you will learn about a product or craft and often these stops include demonstrations with the option to purchase items afterwards. Although these stops have been vetted, management or staff may change and if you feel that these stops are not to standard please inform your guide at this time so that this may be rectified immediately. Shopping stops are not for everyone so we don’t include many, the stops chosen bring an element of education of local culture or tradition for those that usually don’t like to shop. Depending on what side of the shopping fence you sit on, we offer this inclusion to cater to the majority, based on client feedback.

IMPORTANT: Set your budget and don’t be swayed, remember the caveat – ‘Let the buyer beware’. Any purchases made whilst on holiday with us, irrespective of whether the store is recommended by us or other, are at your own discretion. Please make sure that you are completely happy with the product you are purchasing and the delivery arrangements (we would recommend you take away with you any purchases rather than rely on shipping services). On The Go cannot be held responsible or accountable for items bought in country or shipping arrangements. Proceed with caution.
Tokyo to Beijing

Holidays & Events

China has many important National Holidays and events that are celebrated throughout the country. During these times (the lead up to them and afterwards) there can be delays to public transport, the roads can be much busier and many sites are a lot more crowded as the locals take this time to visit family, celebrate the holiday and experience the wonders and amazing places within their own country.

During this time you’ll likely to encounter a celebratory atmosphere, but an additional level of patience, flexibility and understanding goes a long way so that you may enjoy your holiday.

As tourists, you will be generally be unaffected and your tour leader will do their best to plan around these events. Though when initially planning your holiday, if you prefer not to travel when sites are crowded or are concerned about delays, then travelling during these holidays is possibly not for you. Below several of the holidays and the approximate dates, more information: https://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/china/2020.

- 01 Jan - New Year (countrywide)
- 24-30 Jan - Chinese New Year (countrywide)
- 20 Mar-16 Apr - Peach Blossom Festival (Shanghai)
- 04-06 Apr - Tomb-Sweeping Day (countrywide)
- 19 Apr - Formula One World Championship (Shanghai)
- 1-3 May - Labor Day (countrywide)
- TBA Jun - Shanghai International Film Festival (Shanghai)
- 25-27 Jun - Dragon Boat Festival (countrywide)
- 25 Aug - Double Seventh Festival (countrywide)
- 1 Oct - Mid-Autumn Festival (countrywide)
- 1-8 Oct - National Day Holiday (countrywide)
- 25 Oct - Double Ninth Festival (Chongyang Festival, countrywide)
- 25 Dec -25 Feb 2021 - Harbin Ice Festival (Harbin)

It's Not Like Home!

Travel to far-flung corners of the earth involves lifestyles and conditions that are sometimes very different from what you are used to back home. You must come prepared to cope with unusual situations, local inadequacies and unpredictable events as and when they occur. Foreign travel is definitely not suitable for people who expect or demand everything to go exactly as planned. With the greatest respect and in the interest of your ultimate enjoyment you must understand this. Things can and do change in foreign countries.

- Be prepared as locals smoke everywhere in China
- The Chinese don't have an awareness of personal space, be ready to have people standing very close to you, nudge you or even walk into you, they are not being rude, it's just a very different culture
- Many tourists report scams in Shanghai, so be friendly but careful. Never ever follow a stranger anywhere
- Spitting and snorting is common in China as they see the use of tissues as unhygienic.
- Some locals won't queue and will often walk straight to the front of a line with no awareness or care of what they have done wrong
- Always take some antiseptic hand gel or antibacterial hand wipes with you and BYO toilet paper as its rare in public toilets. Squat toilets are very common, they can be a novelty and are easy to use
- Chinese people are delighted if you make any attempt to speak Mandarin, even if it’s only a couple of words

Visas

UK, AUS, NZ, USA and CAN passport holders do not require a visa at present to enter Japan for touristic purposes for a stay of up to 90 days.

South African passport holders can obtain a visa prior to arrival for touristic purposes, for a stay of up to 90 days.

A full passport with two full blank pages and at least 6 months validity beyond date of exit from Japan upon entrance is essential. Please check your personal visa requirements with your embassy if you are from another country.

Please double-check all visa requirements with the Japan embassy at least one month before travel as the above is intended as a guide.

Please Note: Visa information is subject to change. Contact your nearest Japanese Embassy for the most up to date information. www.onthegotours.com/Japan/Visas

Fitness & Tour Transportation

We utilise public transportation in Japan because it’s modern, punctual and easy to use. Japan’s bullet trains run at speeds of up to 320km/h so they’re undoubtedly the quickest way to get around the country. Additionally, we use buses, trains and our trusted feet for sightseeing within the cites. This provides a unique insight to how the locals do it, and also means that we avoid heavy traffic and delays. We will walk an average of 3.5 – 9km each day, with steps, slopes and often uneven ground at sites.

Please note also that there may be times when you may not get a seat and will need to stand for the duration of travel and that you will be required to carry your own luggage at stations.

With the above in mind, it makes a lot of sense to spend time getting additional exercise in preparation for your holiday and wearing suitable footwear whilst on our Japan tours.

Is This Holiday For You?

Travelling to far-flung corners of the earth often involves encountering lifestyles and conditions that are very different from what you are used to back home. As such it is important to come prepared for unusual situations, local inadequacies and unpredictable events as and when they occur. Foreign travel is definitely not suitable for people who expect everything to go exactly as planned, as things can and do change in foreign countries. The people, customs, creed and languages are different from one region to the next.

Japan is a country of unparalleled contrasts, a destination where you’ll be afforded plenty of unique encounters, and if you can travel...
Tokyo to Beijing

with an open mind you will have a wonderful time here. In return, please remember to demonstrate sensitivity and respect for local customs.

**Climate**

Weather conditions vary in Japan depending on location and time of year. Typically summers are hot and humid, whilst winters are significantly colder - especially in the mountains, with a dry climate and light snowfall. Spring and Autumn offer warm days and cool nights, making this a wonderful time to explore the highlights of Japan. June is considered the rainy season with hot and muggy weather. Temperatures do vary depending on the region, so be sure to check in advance when travelling to the far north or far south of Japan.

**Health**

While Japan is considered safe make sure you are up to date on routine vaccinations; it is also recommended to be vaccinated for Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Japanese B Encephalitis.

Japan does have mosquitoes in the summer months, but Malaria is not a problem in Japan. If you are allergic to bites from mosquitoes please take appropriate precautions; anti-mosquito sprays and creams are widely available in Japan or you could bring your own from home.

Some medication including the stimulant dexamphetamine (used to treat ADHD) and pseudoephedrine (found in some cold and flu tablets) is banned. There are strict rules on the import of medication, and what can be brought into the country for personal use, check if your medication is legal and find out if any quantity restrictions or certification requirements apply. Consult your doctor about alternatives well in advance of travel.

Water is safe to drink in all areas of Japan.

**Currency**

The official currency in Japan is Japanese Yen (JPY).

Most major currencies can be exchanged at the airport. Please bring JPY with you from home or exchange your preferred currency to JPY at the airport. Traveller’s cheques can be exchanged in major banks, larger hotels and some duty free shops. While credit cards are becoming increasingly popular in Japan, they are not commonly used for making purchases as in western countries so you are best to pay in cash where possible.

Avoid cash machines at banks as these do not normally accept foreign-issued cards. Instead use the Post Office cash machines from which you will be able to take out money using Visa cards, MasterCard, Cirrus or Maestro. Note that Post Offices may only be open during office hours Mon to Fri. Convenience store chain 7-Eleven will have ATMs in almost all of its stores which will accept most foreign-issued credit and debit cards.

Japan is a mainly cash using country, so it is recommended to bring a healthy amount of cash with you to get started (around JPY 50,000), not USD or other currencies which are only easily changeable at the airport. While credit card usage is increasing, be prepared to use cash.

**Time & Voltage**

Time: Japan is 9 hours ahead of GMT and does not observe daylight savings.

Voltage: In Japan the standard voltage is different from other regions of the world at 100V, and power outlets accept a flat 2-pin plug (similar to North American outlets). To cover all bases, it is best to pack an international travel adaptor!