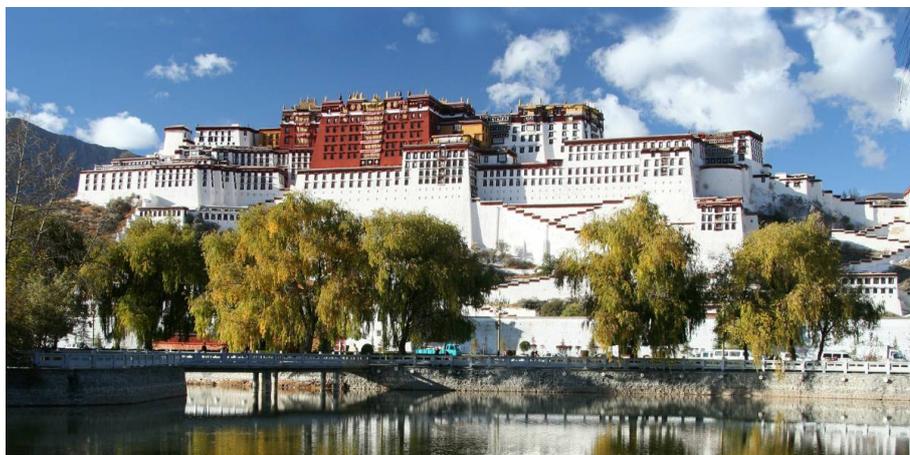


# Highlights of China & Tibet

12 days | Beijing to Lhasa



*Exploring Beijing's grand Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City and the scenic Great Wall at Badaling and Juyongguan Pass, Xi'an's warriors and mighty medieval fortress, the Giant Pandas of Chengdu before continuing to the roof of the world, Tibet - a spiritual land that has exerted its magnetic pull over travellers for centuries.*

## HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

### Trip Highlights

- Beijing - Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City, Pearl markets, Jade Carving Factory, Hutong area of Beijing and Chinese Acrobatic Show
- Badaling and Juyongguan - 2 UNESCO listed sections of Great Wall of China
- Xi'an - UNESCO - listed Terracotta Warriors, Clay warrior workshop, Big Wild Goose Pagoda, City Wall and bike ride, Muslim Quarter.
- Lhasa – Potala Palace, Norbulinka Palace, Jokhang Temple, Drepung Monastery, Sera Monastery, Barkhor Bazaar. Yamdrok Lake, Kamba-la pass
- Yamdrok Lake and Kamba-la Pass - cradled by snow capped mountains

- Chengdu – visit the famous Panda Conservation centre and get up and close with China's national symbol
- Leshan – marvel at the iconic stone Buddha standing over 71 meters tall
- Wenshu Monastery - built during the Qing Dynasty

### What's Included

- 11 breakfasts, 4 lunches and 2 dinners (1 is a Peking Duck dinner in Beijing)
- 10 nights 3 - 4 star hotels
- 1 overnight train: Beijing - Xi'an (4-berth soft sleeper cabin):
- Chinese Acrobatic Performance
- 1 Economy class flight: Chengdu - Lhasa
- High speed train: Xi'an - Chengdu
- Rickshaw ride through the Hutong area of Beijing
- Xi'an - bike ride on medieval City Wall
- 4x4 drive to Yamdrok Lake
- Touring of Beijing, Badaling, Juyongguan, Chengdu, Xi'an and Lhasa
- Tour Guide escorted for groups of 6 or more (days 1 - 6)
- English speaking specialist guides at local sights and for sightseeing in Tibet
- Beijing Capital Airport arrival transfer on day 1 and departure transfer day 12 from Lhasa Airport
- All relevant transfers and transportation in private vehicles
- Tibet Travel Permit (given to you in China)

### What's Not Included

- Tipping Kitty: USD\$80-90pp, paid in local currency
- Entrance Fees: USD\$170-190pp, paid in local currency
- International flights and visa
- Tip for your tour guide is not included in the Tip Kitty. We suggest USD\$3-5 per day, per traveller for a job well done, however the amount is up to you

## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Day 1 : Huan ying

Saturday. Huan ying, welcome to China and the start of your holiday! Airport arrival transfer from Beijing Capital Airport to your hotel for check-in. The remainder of the day offers free time for you to independently explore this astonishing city.

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

Day one is designed to be an arrival day for all passengers, so there are no formal arrangements on this first day.

### Overnight - Beijing

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# Highlights of China & Tibet

## Day 2 : Tiananmen Square & Forbidden City

This morning we gather for a short Welcome Meeting. Your entrance fees and tip kitty will be collected at this time. Then, it's time to set off and see some of Beijing. A patriotic vision of grandeur, Tiananmen Square is a square for the public and also home of the mausoleum of Chairman Mao Tse-tung and the striking Monument to the People's Heroes. In the square Mao's gargantuan mausoleum in granite where since his death in 1976, he has lain in state in his crystal coffin. We'll have a stroll on the square, which attracts many pleasure seekers wishing to take photos, all under the watchful eye of the dutiful guards.

Perhaps one of Beijing's most famous sights is the Gate of Heavenly Peace. Up above the gate and looking out across to all his people, is a famous colour portrait of Chairman Mao Tse-tung. Today, he is looking at a different Beijing, one that is quickly entering the 21st century. The Gate of Heavenly Peace is the main entry point into the Forbidden City. A vision in grandeur with its imperial yellow roofs and vermilion walls, the Forbidden City, once forbidden to all those except on imperial business until 1911, when the last emperor, Puyi overthrown. Built between 1406 and 1420, it served as the imperial palace for the Ming and Qing dynasties. We enjoy a guided walk through the city's many temples, grand halls and courtyards. An all-out assault on the eyes, it said 720,000 sq meters lavishly constructed Forbidden City boasts 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 enjoy an eye boggling Chinese acrobatic performance. Swinging ropes, juggling hoops, spinning plates and human pyramids are just a few tricks these show stoppers pull out

followed by a Welcome Dinner of Peking Duck. **Overnight - Beijing (B, D)**

## Day 3 : Great Wall of China



After a free morning to further explore the city, we drive beyond Beijing to Badaling, where we can walk a section of the famous Great Wall. An enduring symbol of Chinese civilisation and genius, the UNESCO protected Great Wall of China was built as a defensive structure. The immense construction took place over a period of 2,000 years and followed different routes and building extensions as required. 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!

This evening we spend the night at our quaint hotel which offers views of the Great Wall near Juyongguan Pass. We rate our accommodation this evening as 'basic'. Guest rooms are clean and offer ensuite facilities, though furnishings and amenities are outdated. We use the Changjuyuan hotel (with very few alternatives in the area), due to its exceptional location - just minutes by bus from the Juyongguan section of the Wall. The location of the property affords us the opportunity to be at the Juyongguan Pass section of the wall early tomorrow morning to enjoy a leisurely walk along the wall, without the tourist masses. **Overnight - Juyongguan Pass (B)**

## Day 4 : Morning at the Great Wall



Beijing - Xi'an. We rise early this morning and head (5 min bus drive) to the Great Wall at Juyongguan Pass when it opens to beat the crowds.

Surrounded by rugged mountains, Juyongguan Pass was an important military stronghold from the days of 770BC! This part of the Great Wall is in good condition and offers those who want it, a quite challenging walk to the top - but those willing to give it a go will be rewarded with magnificent views! This part of the wall has a number of Buddhist temples including the fascinating Cloud Platform which is famous for its Buddhist inscriptions and carvings. The 'platform' was originally the base for a number of Stupas.

Later we visiting a Jade Carving Centre to learn about this ornamental rock and its importance in Chinese culture. After lunch we head back to Beijing. Free time is offered in the cavernous Pearl Market - an Aladdin's Cave of clothing, jewellery and electronic gadgets, before travelling by express soft sleeper train to Xi'an in Shaanxi Province.

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

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# Highlights of China & Tibet

be purchased on the day at the front gate.

**Overnight - Sleeper Train (B, L)**

## Day 5 : Terracotta Warriors



Arrive Xi'an. This morning we visit the famous Terracotta Warrior archaeological site. Emperor Qin's Terracotta Warriors comprise more than 7,000 life-sized soldiers which stand in military formation in excavated pits under the cover of a modern protective hanger. Made of local clay, no two faces are alike, each is said to be an individual portrait.

Emperor Qin's army of 2,200 year old terracotta warriors were discovered in 1974 by local farmers who happened to be digging a well. Previous emperors used to be buried with their slaves but slavery had been abolished. So, to make up for this, Qin had the warriors made to be buried near him to protect him in the afterlife. Delicate excavation continues on site, where hundreds of warriors remain smashed like eggs, not due to the passage of time but rather a peasant revolt after the emperor's death.

The emperor's tumulus (ancient grave mound) is located about a mile away and is said to contain untold treasures. To date, only trial archaeological digs of the main site have been completed. We then visit a workshop where you'll see modern-day crafts people producing terracotta warrior figurines, followed by the Muslim Quarter.

Tonight, we welcome you to join the 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 6 : City Wall Bike Ride



Xi'an - Chengdu. After breakfast, we enjoy a bike ride atop the Xi'an City Wall (electric car option available). Dating back to 1370 the 12m-high walls are some of the few remaining urban fortifications still standing in China today and after extensive restorations the City Walls offer ample opportunities from which to explore Xian. Our last Xi'an stop is one of Xian's most iconic landmarks, the Big Wild Goose Pagoda.

Late this afternoon we take a high speed train to Chengdu. Reaching speeds of up to 300km per hour the journey is an experience in itself!

**Overnight - Chengdu (B, L)**

## Day 7 : Great Panda Research Base

A short drive out of town takes us to the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding. China's Giant Pandas are considered the most endangered mammal on the planet. Due to a loss of habitat in the Sichuan, Shaanxi, and Gansu Provinces it is estimated that there are less than 1500 giant pandas remaining in the wild - 80% of which are located in Sichuan Province.

The centre opened in 1993 and for the purpose of breeding, research and education. A team of 46 collaborating with researchers from 8 different countries and 15 guest experts work within the facility. Covering an area of over 92 acres, there is plenty of space for the Giant Pandas and several species of rare and endangered animals to freely roam. Visiting the Panda nursery is a must, here you can get relatively close to the centre's infant population.

The Breeding Center has achieved breakthroughs in captive breeding, has set up the largest semen and cell bank for the Giant

Pandas in the world and created the first Giant Panda stud book!

Later we visit the Wenshu Monastery, built under the guidance of Zen Master Ci Du Hai Yue in 1697, during the Qing Dynasty. The temple is a hidden gem with few tourists visiting and a stop much be made at the delightful teahouse located inside the temple grounds which serves a fine cup of green tea and some of the best vegetarian food in the city. After we stop by the well trodden Jinli Lu street - meaning 'ancient pedestrian street' in the old city filled with food stalls and vendors of every description. We also visit the Wuhou Memorial temple - this peaceful temple is set amongst beautiful and expansive gardens.

The evening is spent at leisure. If you are interested, most nights Sichuan Opera is performed at the Shufengyayun Theatre and tickets can be booked in advance or locally. First and second class seats are the best!

**Overnight - Chengdu (B)**

## Day 8 : UNESCO Great Buddha of Leshan

Driving to Leshan our morning is spent exploring the UNESCO World Heritage Listed Dafo (Great Buddha), which is carved into the red sandstone face of Lingyun Hill overlooking the treacherous confluence of the Min, Qingyi and Dadu rivers below it. Dafo has huge 8m feet, his ears droop 7m, his shoulders span 28m and his nose measures a whopping 5.6m! Evening at leisure. **Overnight - Chengdu (B, L)**

## Day 9 : Potala Palace

Chengdu - Lhasa. Spend the morning at leisure before our noon flight to Lhasa (please note this is an unescorted flight. Upon arrival to Tibet you will drive (aprox 1.5 hours) to the fabled city of Lhasa. Once we reach our destination we kick off our sightseeing with a visit to Lhasa's most enduring image, the Potala Palace - the winter home of the Dalai Lamas and a masterpiece in design. The Dalai Lama's Summer palace, Norbulingka, is our next place of pilgrimage. However, it is the Jokhang Temple which will be the most enlightening stop of the day. The holiest

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## Highlights of China & Tibet

shrine in Tibet, it houses a solid gold shrine of the enlightened Buddha.

Please note: Travellers will fly without tour guide accompaniment to Tibet. Upon arrival to Tibet you will meet with our local guide who will conduct sightseeing arrangements throughout your stay. Flight time from Chengdu to Lhasa is subject to availability and change. On occasion it may be required that you fly to Lhasa on day 8 or later in the evening, today. **Overnight - Lhasa (B)**

### Day 10 : Drepung Monastery



Our exploration of Lhasa continues today as we take the short journey to the 15th century Drepung Monastery. Formerly one of the central monasteries of Tibet it was torn asunder during the Cultural Revolution and continues to rebuild its walls and status today. Just north of Lhasa is the Sera Monastery, still a working retreat 600 years after its foundation as a main teaching monastery and one of the three great Gelukpa 'Universities' once housing more than 5500 monks. You will see young novices learning scriptures in the Debating Garden and being rewarded for a correct answer with a resounding hand-clap from their master. Returning to Lhasa we will experience the Barkhor markets which surround the Jokhang temple and sell all things Tibetan. **Overnight - Lhasa (B, D)**

### Day 11 : Yamdrok Lake

An early morning start as we drive out toward the Himalayas. From Lhasa, itself at 3500m, we travel over the Kamba-La pass and reach 4794m above sea level. As we journey along the winding road, weaving our way through the rocky mountains and valleys, in the far distance on a very clear day it may be possible to catch a glimpse of the High Himalayan Peaks of Everest and Lhotse.

From the top of the pass we can look down on the deep azure waters of Yamdrok Lake, cradled by snow capped mountains before dropping down to the shores itself. One of Tibet's 3 holy lakes, nomadic tents, pilgrims prostrating and children hunting with sling shots on the stony beaches make this something you are likely to have never experienced before. Rising back into these vivid and rugged mountains we head back to Lhasa, looking for herds of Yak along the way. **Overnight - Lhasa (B)**

### Day 12 : Lhasa

Wednesday. Our tour concludes after breakfast and hotel check out is at noon. Included onward departure transfer to the airport. **(B)**

#### 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.**

#### 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.



#### Holiday Inn Express Beijing Minzuyuan

Located just a stones throw from the Beitucheng Subway station, with access to

Line 10 & Line 8, the Holiday Inn Express Beijing Minzuyuan is a perfect base to explore the many amazing highlights of Beijing. Within walking distance of the hotel you'll find the famous Birds Nest Olympic Stadium. The hotel boasts a stylish restaurant offering breakfast, lunch and dinner.



#### Grand Dynasty Culture Hotel

Located a stone's throw away from the Ancient City Wall and Islamic Mosque, is the Grand Dynasty Culture Hotel. The hotel offers modern comforts in the heart of the city. Each air-conditioned guestroom features WiFi, a minibar and satellite TV. There is an onsite restaurant which serves a daily buffet or a la carte breakfast as well as a variety of Asian and Western dishes. During free time, guests can enjoy a relaxing massage or work out in the fitness centre.



#### Holiday Inn Express West Gate

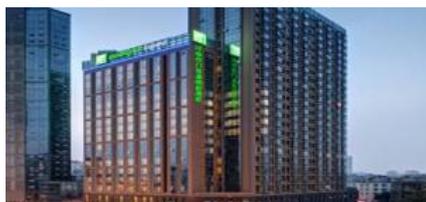
The newly opened Holiday Inn Express West Gate is a bright and modern hotel in downtown Chengdu. Guest rooms are clean and stylish with excellent amenities. Wi-Fi is available and complimentary wired internet is available in all rooms. Breakfast is served buffet style in the restaurant with a delicious array of Western and Chinese dishes. There is also an onsite bar available for refreshing beverages. Located in the north of Chengdu and a 20 minute walk from Baiguolin Subway Station.

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# Highlights of China & Tibet



## Yak Hotel

In the heart of the old part of Lhasa, the Yak Hotel offers clean comfortable accommodation decorated in a classic Tibetan style. Guest rooms are simply furnished with authentic Tibetan artwork and decent amenities - including local tea - great for warming up with after a day's activities. The hotel also boasts a roof top terrace where you can sit and relax and admire stunning view of the Potala Palace! Well located just a short walk from the Jokhang Temple and Ani Tsankhung.



## Post tour Accommodation - guide included

If booking post tour accommodation with us in Tibet the services of a tour guide have been included in our cost. It is mandatory that for every night a foreign tourist stays in Tibet, a tour guide must be hired for each pay. Details of your operator who organised your Tibet permit and respective guide are noted on your permit should authorities wish to check.

So it is your choice if you would like to utilise the services of your guide. Your guide is available to conduct any additional guided sightseeing that you may wish to do. You may also choose not to use his services and further explore Lhasa independently - which you are free to do. Keep in mind that foreign tourists need to have paid for the services of a tour guide but this does not mean that your guide needs to escort you on every outing you take.

## Guides & Groups

Our longest group tour in China is our Yin & Yangtze – 16 day tour. All other group tours

that we offer are sectors of this larger tour. Some travelling on your trip may only travel with you for a week or more and others may continue on to complete the full 16 days. It also might be that you end your holiday part way through the larger tour and others in the group continue on. Whenever there is 6 persons or more on your holiday you will have a tour guide escorting/ travelling along with you. Your guide will conduct the sightseeing arrangements, or accompany you where the local law dictates that a local guide must conduct the sightseeing in this region. Where the group number is less than 6 persons you will travel from place to place with a driver and meet a local guide at each new destination that will conduct your sightseeing arrangements in this location.

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

### Entrance Fees

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.

All funds collected in China for entrance fees and optional excursions, that you may wish to undertake are payable in local currency - Chinese Yuan (CNY).

Note: If you are over the age of 60 at time of travel (tours departing in 2020) a discounted or free entry to some sites may be possible. Entrance Fees will be collected in full on day 2, and your guide/s will attempt to get a discount at each site on your behalf. If a discount is obtained your guide will issue a refund at this time. Please make your guide aware if you are eligible at the pre departure meeting so that the discount can be requested throughout the tour.

### Tipping Kitty

At the start of your group tour, 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 luggers, 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 short stay, private tour or 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.

## Arrival Transfers

**For tours starting in Beijing** When arriving into Beijing Capital Airport and attending to immigration and customs formalities, please proceed to the arrival hall. If arriving to Beijing into Terminal 2, when exiting immigration to the arrivals hall, please turn right where our representative will be waiting. If arriving into Terminal 3 you will be met just outside the restricted area.

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

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 (remember Beijing is a busy International Airport) 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.

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# Highlights of China & Tibet

## Groups & Guides

Some of our group tours are sectors of a larger tour. Some travellers on your trip may only travel with you for part of your tour. It also might be that you end your holiday part way through a longer tour and others in the group continue on.

Guides: We believe the best way to see a country is through the eyes of a local and as such we only employ tour guides native to the country you are visiting. Our guides are passionate, caring, knowledgeable and fun, and by travelling with a local you to get to see the wonders of the country through their eyes. Tour guides will remain with groups of 6 or more. Where groups are less than 6, travel between cities will be unescorted with transfers at either side of the airport/train station and a local guide will conduct the scheduled sightseeing in that city.

## China Country Guide

### Visas

#### China Visa

Visas are required by all visitors to China. It is essential that a tourist visa is procured prior to travel. We will provide you with an invoice/itinerary indicating that you are travelling to China on a pre-arranged holiday. The visa is valid for entry within 3 months, so you cannot apply any earlier. Please ensure your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of return from China.

If you're a resident of the UK and would like someone to handle your visa application for you then we recommend CIBTvisas. Please visit <http://www.cibtvisas.co.uk/onthego> for more information.

#### Visa for Hong Kong

Most Western visitors to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China do not require a tourist visa issued in advance of travel. Currently, UK nationals can stay up to 180 days. Nationals of Australia, Canada, Eire, most other EU countries, New Zealand and the US do not require a visa for a stay not exceeding 90 days, while holders of RSA passports can remain for up to 30 days. If

entering Hong Kong from mainland China and returning to mainland China a multiple Chinese entry visa is required.

#### Visa for Tibet

Tibet - If travelling to Tibet, a Tibet Travel Permit is required. The permit will be arranged by our office in China. Please contact On The Go Tours prior to departure for the most up to date Tibetan entry information.

#### The information above is not applicable for the Beijing and Shanghai Visa Free Tours.

**NOTE:** Visa requirements are subject to change so please check with your embassy before booking your holiday.

### 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

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# Highlights of China & Tibet

- 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 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

same compartment/seating area so that you can have fun getting to know each other better, playing games etc. It is possible to upgrade to a four-berth soft sleeper on your trip, please contact us at time of booking for rates (upgrades are only possible if the open class ticket has not already been purchased).

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.

## Highlights of China & Tibet - 12 days

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# Highlights of China & Tibet

## 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 speciality 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.

**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.

## 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 2020 - New Year (countrywide)
- 24-30 Jan 2020 - Chinese New Year (countrywide)
- 20 Mar-16 Apr 2020 - Peach Blossom Festival (Shanghai)
- 04-06 Apr 2020 - Tomb-Sweeping Day (countrywide)
- 19 Apr 2020- Formula One World Championship (Shanghai)
- 1-3 May 2020 - Labor Day (countrywide)
- TBA Jun 2020 - Shanghai International Film Festival (Shanghai)
- 25-27 Jun 2020 - Dragon Boat Festival (countrywide)
- 25 Aug 2020 - Double Seventh Festival (countrywide)
- 1 Oct 2020 - Mid-Autumn Festival (countrywide)
- 1-8 Oct 2020 - National Day Holiday (countrywide)
- 25 Oct 2020 - Double Ninth Festival (Chongyang Festival, countrywide)
- 25 Dec 2020-25 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

## Tibet Country Guide

### Visa Requirements

All nationalities require a China visa and Tibet permit to enter Tibet. Please be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and therefore it is essential that you check current visa requirements with the embassy before travel. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from Tibet.

### Entering Tibet From China

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# Highlights of China & Tibet

If you are travelling on our 'Take Me To Tibet' group tour or travelling to China and Tibet on a private tour with us, we will arrange the Tibet permit on your behalf and the cost of the permit is included in your tour price. Once your booking has been confirmed we will contact you with the documentation required for you to obtain your China visa. It is your responsibility to obtain your China visa prior to departure and then the Tibet permit will be issued in China and given to you on tour.

## Entering Tibet From Nepal

It is only possible to enter Tibet from Nepal with a visa and permit issued by the Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu. If you are travelling to Nepal and Tibet with us the China visa/ Tibet permit will be arranged for you by On The Go. You will require 3 passport photos in order to obtain your Tibet permit and Nepal visa and it's a good idea to have a spare one. Before booking your flights and trip to Tibet please contact your travel agent or one of our consultants for the most up to date Tibet visa information.

Upon booking you will need to advise us of your international flight details and you will also need to provide us with the following: a coloured scanned copy of your passport information and photo page and a completed China Visa form. We will provide you with the form which you will need to print it out, fill in by hand and attach a passport photo. Then create a colour scanned copy of the completed visa form with photograph and email it back to us in PDF format.

The cost of the Tibet visa/permit is not included in the price of our tours that start in Nepal and is to be paid directly by you to our representative in Kathmandu upon arrival on day 1.

The current cost of a Tibet visa/permit on a one day visa service is:

British, Australian and EU passport holders:  
USD \$120  
USA passport holders: \$220

If you are spending several days in Nepal before travelling into Tibet it may be possible for us to use a 3 or 5 working day embassy

visa service in Kathmandu, at a lower cost. Contact us for further details.

## Currency in Tibet

The currency in Tibet is the Chinese Yuan (CNY)

Pound Sterling, US Dollars or other major currencies can be exchanged locally at the Bank of China in Zhangmu, Shigatse and Lhasa. Many hotels also have exchange facilities. There are ATMs in Lhasa and Shigatse and credit cards may be accepted in large hotels, shops and restaurants. 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.

## Voltage & Time

Standard voltage is 220 volts, 50Hz AC. Primary sockets generally require Continental or European plugs, of the two round pin variety, or 2 flat pin similar to those found in America. We recommend that you pack a universal travel adaptor. You will need a voltage converter, and plug adaptor in order to use U.S. appliances.

Tibet is 8 hours ahead of Greenwich Meantime (GMT) and does not observe Daylight Saving.

## Health Requirements

You should seek medical advice before travelling to Tibet from your local health practitioner and ensure that you receive all of the appropriate vaccinations. As a guide Diphtheria, Tetanus, Typhoid, Hepatitis A, Rabies and Polio are strongly recommended. You may also be advised to take anti-Malarial medication.

### WATER

As tap water is not safe to drink in Tibet, only drink bottled mineral water which is readily available in hotels, shops and restaurants.

## Altitude Sickness

An altitude of over 3,000 meters is defined as high altitude and given parts of Tibet

are higher than this level, it is possible to experience differing degrees of symptoms which include headaches, nausea, dizziness, fatigue and shortness of breath. These symptoms will usually decrease in severity during acclimatization and mild cases of altitude sickness should not interfere with light activity. It is important not over exert yourself if travelling to altitude and drink plenty of fluids and eat carbohydrate food to keep the body properly hydrated. Please report any symptoms of Altitude Sickness immediately to your tour leader.

## Climate in Tibet

Central Tibet is generally mild from April to November, making it the best time to visit. Due to the high altitude it is rarely scorching, but the sun's rays are very strong. From December to February/March it becomes very cold and temperatures regularly drop below freezing. Travel during these months is not advisable. Tibet does not have a typical monsoon season, but May to September are the months with the highest rainfall (which mostly occurs in the evenings).

## Style of Trip

Local guides provide sightseeing and assistance at each port of call, the tours are not escorted throughout by a tour leader. On flights you will therefore travel without a guide and will be met upon arrival at your destination and transferred to your hotel. In Chitwan National Park guiding will be provided by the lodges own expert jungle guides. Transportation is a combination of internal flights and private air conditioned vehicles.

## Group Size

The number of travelers participating our Tibet tours and treks varies from week to week. Our maximum group size in Tibet is 15, with an average of 2 - 6 travelers on each departure.

## Entrance Fees

On our Tibet group tours, entrance fees are not included must be budgeted for by you. The total cost of the entrance fees which need to be paid locally, as noted under 'Exclusions'

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# Highlights of China & Tibet

on the first page of these Trip Notes. Entrance fee amounts can change and as such upon arrival, your tour leader will highlight the exact total entrance fee cost for your tour. Entrance fees are to be paid in CNY and they will be collected on day 2 of your tour.

## Temple Etiquette

Please take particular care when visiting religious places, such as temples and monasteries. Dress and behave appropriately - don't wear shorts or sleeveless tops and do not smoke or hold hands. Shoes and hats should be removed. Within temples no carvings, statues or deities should be touched. Photography is prohibited in certain sections of most sacred sites and please do not attempt to be photographed with Buddhist monks. If in doubt ask your local guide for further information.

## Food in Tibet

Tibetan food consists mainly of barley, meat and dairy products. Staple foods include; Yak butter which is refined from the milk of cattle and goats and 'tsamba' which is made of roasted barley, ground with flour and mixed with a little tea, butter, curds and sugar to add flavour. 'Tubo' is a common evening dish; a type of gruel made from dried meat, tsamba and wheat flour. Tibetans are limited to only being able to eat things that grow at over 4000m, which means vegetables are very scarce and people in the higher altitudes eat a lot more meat instead. In winter beef and mutton is cut into strips and air dried in order to preserve it, it is then barbecued or eaten raw.

In Lhasa there are numerous restaurants and noodle places serving national dishes and also Indian, Western and Nepali cuisine. A tasty specialty are 'momos,' which are tiny steamed or fried dough parcels containing meat or vegetables.

## Shopping in Tibet

Shopping in Lhasa is a popular tourist activity and Barkhor Street Bazaar is the best place for it. In Barkhor there are lots of stalls, selling a wide range of goods including; Yak wool jumpers, silver ornaments, jewellery and handicrafts. Tibetan incense is a good

souvenir, Tibetans use it to worship Buddha and drive away evil spirits. Thangkas (religious scrolls) are also very popular, the higher quality ones have a hand-painted image (rather than printed) in the middle, with very detailed backgrounds. The quality of Thangkas can vary dramatically, so take care when purchasing one.

It is a good idea to buy any practical items you may need in Lhasa before you travel to more remote towns. There are department stores which will supply all of your everyday goods. In the markets, small shops and stalls, you should barter and generally try to cut the asking price by 50 percent.

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