

China Family Explorer

12 Days | Beijing to Shanghai



SEMI INDEPENDENT: Discover China's iconic sites on this family tour starting in Beijing hiking along the Great Wall, riding around the Hutongs and watching a stunning acrobatics performance; marvel at the iconic Terracotta Warrior army in Xi'an and make your own clay warrior; get close to the furry panda's in Chengdu and learn the art of cooking authentic Sichuanese cuisine before exploring the spectacular Shanghai skyline.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Beijing – roam the streets of China's fascinating capital Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City, Jongshan Park, Temple of Heaven, Summer Palace
- Hutong – explore Beijing's old lanes on Rickshaw tour and dine with a local family
- Acrobatics – watch a stunning acrobatics performance in Beijing
- Great Wall of China – hike to Mutianyu section of Great Wall. Optional cable car and toboggan rides available
- Tai Chi – unwind with a Tai Chi lesson in the park followed by tea ceremony

- Terracotta Warriors- walk among the famous UNESCO listed Terracotta warriors made to protect the emperor in the afterlife and make your own clay warrior
- Xi'an – cycle along the famous ancient city walls
- Calligraphy – master the visual art of calligraphy with a lesson at the Small Wild Goose Pagoda
- 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
- Sichuan Province – enjoy learning how to prepare local Sichuanese cuisine in Chengdu
- Shanghai – discover People's Square, Nanjing Road, the Bund and Lujiazui district
- Huangpu River – cruise along the river for spectacular views of the city

What's Included

- 11 nights 4 star accommodation
- 11 breakfasts, 2 lunches
- Airport transfer day 1
- Hutong Rickshaw tour
- Local guides for scheduled sightseeing in Beijing, Xi'an, Chengdu and Shanghai
- Tai Chi lesson and traditional Chinese tea ceremony
- Acrobatic performance

- All entrances listed in itinerary
- Private transportation except when travelling by train
- Trains: Beijing - Xi'an and Xi'an - Chengdu
- Economy flight: Chengdu - Shanghai
- Clay Terracotta Warrior making
- Calligraphy lesson
- Cooking class in Chengdu
- Evening cruise Huangpu River

What's Not Included

- Laundry, drinks, items of a personal nature
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture
- International flights

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Welcome To China

Welcome to Beijing Capital Airport where you will meet your local driver who will take you to your accommodation. Get some rest and get ready for your Chinese adventure tomorrow!

Overnight - Beijing

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Day 2 : Beijing City Tour



Today we explore Beijing's authentic culture and explore an area that has survived the city's tumultuous history, remaining as a capsule of traditional Chinese living. We begin by boarding our rickshaw transportation and roam the winding Hutong streets and old residential lanes, which are built around a courtyard and well. We stop at a local family's courtyard and enjoy an authentic Hutong style meal.

After lunch, we uncover China's imperial history at Tiananmen Square, one of the largest public squares in the world and the gateway to the Forbidden City. Take some time to wander around the square, visit Tiananmen Tower, The Great Hall of the People, the memorial hall for Chairman Mao (not included) before continuing through the square to the Forbidden City and exploring the centre of Beijing, the once imperial palace for emperors during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Later, we travel to Jingshan Park for breath-taking panoramic views of the city and square. To dine in true Beijing style, we recommend trying some Peking roast duck.
Overnight - Beijing (B, L)

Day 3 : The Summer Palace

This morning, we begin by finding our inner zen with a Tai Chi lesson in the park, embracing the serene nature around us. Continuing our journey, we visit the Temple of Heaven the largest sacrificial building in China, and temple used by emperors for sacrifices to appease the heavens and grant good crops and prosperity for its worshippers. After exploring the grounds, we visit a small tea house in the corner of the park for an authentic Chinese tea ceremony.

This afternoon, we explore the Summer Palace, China's best-preserved imperial garden, set on the banks of Kunming Lake. Here you can opt to take in the incredible landscape whilst enjoying a boat cruise (book/pay locally) on the lake, or perhaps discover the court area, the Garden of Virtue and Harmony and much more. The rest of the evening is at leisure to relax or further independent explore this mesmerising city.

Overnight - Beijing (B)

Day 4 : The Great Wall



Our final day in Beijing is spent visiting one of the most iconic sights in the world – the Great Wall of China. Built over 2,300 years ago, the wall was built in different areas by different dynasties to protect against invasions and extended to protect the trade on the Silk Road. We travel to the Mutianyu section of the Great Wall and spend the day walking and exploring this 1.8 mile stretch of wall. There is an option to take the kids up to the wall on a cable car and make the way down by a fun toboggan ride. Your entertainment this evening is a traditional Chinese acrobatic performance, see juggling, wire walking and much more! **Overnight - Beijing (B)**

Day 5 : Drum and Bell Towers

Beijing - Xi'an. Bid farewell to the Chinese capital and your Beijing tour leader this morning and make your way to Xi'an by bullet train. On arrival you are met by a new local leader and transferred to our hotel to freshen up. This afternoon, we visit the Drum and Bell Towers which were used in ancient times to sound at dusk and dawn, located in the heart of the city. The Bell Tower offer panoramic views of the city, and the Drum Tower offers views of the Muslim Quarter, our next stop. The Muslim Quarter is the starting point of the ancient Silk Road. Wander through the

city's bustling markets and sample some of the food market cuisine, which makes this area so famous. This evening, we recommend you sample a traditional Hui Muslim meal.

**Journey time: Beijing- Xi'an (approx 5 hours)
Overnight - Xi'an (B)**

Day 6 : Terracotta Warriors!



Today's highlight is the Terracotta Warrior archaeological site! Numbering into the thousands and standing in battle-ready formation, this army was created to protect the Emperor Qinshihuang in the afterlife. After walking amongst this incredible army, you have the chance to make your own to take home during our visit to the model factory.

Tonight, watch the city's incredible fountain light show.

Overnight - Xi'an (B)

Day 7 : Xi'an to Chengdu

Xi'an - Chengdu. Rise early this morning to pay a visit to the Small Wild Goose Pagoda, one of the best-preserved Buddhist temples from the Tang Dynasty, before we enjoy a bike ride atop the Xi'an City Wall. The 12m high walls are said to be one of the largest ancient military fortifications in the world.

We will then learn the art of calligraphy from a local artist, and this afternoon we leave our leader and take a high-speed train from Xi'an to Chengdu. The rest of the evening is at leisure.

**Journey time: Xi'an - Chengdu (approx 4 hours)
Overnight - Xi'an (B)**

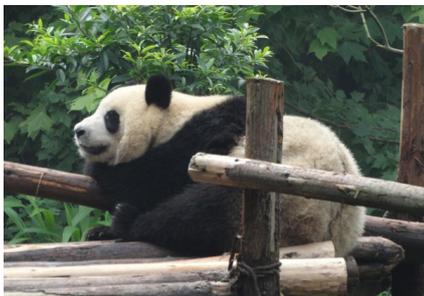
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Day 8 : Chengdu Pandas & Leshan Buddha Park



The highlight today is to visit China's furry mascot, the Giant Panda, in the Giant Panda Research & Breeding Centre. The centre was created to help imitate the panda's natural environment for rearing and breeding. Explore the grounds and watch adult panda's enjoying bamboo, and the baby pandas in the nursery, as well as other endangered animals. This afternoon we drive to Leshan and hike through the UNESCO listed World Heritage Site - Leshan Buddha Park to take in the incredible view of the biggest stone Buddha in the world - standing over 71 meters in height, set on the hillside of Xijuo Peak, facing the convergence of the Minjiang, Dadu and Qingyi Rivers.

This evening we recommend sampling Chengdu's famous hot pot for dinner, a must try (book/pay locally).

NOTE: There is the option to swap this day to volunteer at the Dujiangyan pandas base for an additional fee (2050RMB total based on a family of 4). **Overnight - Chengdu (B)**

Day 9 : Cooking Authentic Local Cuisine

Spend the final day in Chengdu cooking some authentic local cuisine and eating the fruits of our labour, for lunch. We spend the afternoon exploring the Chengdu Museum, the largest comprehensive museum in the city, boasting an area of approximately 12,000 sq. meters and housing over five decades of history. We then wander down Jinli Street, a street famous for baldachin cloth during the Qin Dynasty, admiring the traditional style buildings and trying the local delicacies. Evening at leisure.

Overnight - Chengdu (B, L)

Day 10 : People's Square & Nanjing Road



Chengdu – Shanghai. You have an early start today as you leave bustling Chengdu and adventure leader behind and board a morning flight to Shanghai where we are met by your new leader at the airport and transferred to our hotel to freshen up.

It's time to get acquainted with the stunning metropolis and we explore People's Square in the heart of the city to admire the open gardens and high-rise buildings. Continue to Nanjing Road, the famous shopping district with over 600 shops and restaurants, before walking along the famous Bund waterway for spectacular photo opportunities, capturing over 26 architectural styles including Baroque and Renaissance. We end the day with a cruise along the Huangpu River for spectacular view of the city's famous skyline.

Overnight - Shanghai (B)

Day 11 : Yu Yuan Gardens & Pearl TV Tower

Today's highlight is to marvel at the iconic scenery of the Yu Yuan Gardens and Bazaar, said to be the most celebrated classical Chinese garden in Shanghai. Explore the maze of gardens, lakes, rockeries and dragon walls before walking along the bazaar, located next to the gardens with beautiful Chinese architecture selling antiques, souvenirs and local snacks. For lunch, we recommend trying the famous Xiao Long Bao dumplings. This evening, we make our way to the financial Lujiazui district and head to the top of the Pearl TV Tower to enjoy panoramic views of this iconic city. **Overnight - Shanghai (B)**

Day 12 : Our Adventure Ends Today

Our tour ends after breakfast. We can arrange a departure transfer upon request. We would be delighted to help you extend your stay in Shanghai and book more nights for you if you would like to further explore this charming city - why not end your family adventure with a day at magical Shanghai Disneyland.(B)

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

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.

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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

Please check local temperatures so you can pack accordingly. Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

As light as possible! In China, most often portorage 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

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- 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.

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.

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,

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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 - 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

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