

China: Ancient Wonders & Modern Cities



Departs anytime (2018 – 19)



Please note: This itinerary can be modified in any way to best suit your school's particular aims, learning objectives and budget.

Please contact us detailing any changes you'd like to make.

China is vast – a spellbinding jumble of wildly differing dialects that gives you a feeling that you're in several different countries rolled into one. Compiled specifically for the student who enjoy sensory overload (!) this itinerary is rich in activities designed to offer insight into China's contemporary history, exponential economic development and ever evolving social and political systems.

Beginning in the megacity of Shanghai we will embark on a thorough exploration of this metropolis before travelling to the Chengdu, home to the country's endangered panda bears. From here we will journey to the ancient city of Xian to view the legendary Terracotta Warriors and learn of this unassuming city's role in the advent of world trade and commerce. Finally, we will travel to Beijing to visit a less known part of the Great Wall, Tiananmen Square and many of the city's other most important places of interest.

A fun & physical Kung Fu class, a Chinese cooking class and a tour of leading manufacturing are some of the other activities featured in this trip, intended to provide students with a great introduction to this important nation.




Billy Penfold
Director

Day 1

Arrive Shanghai

The world's oldest continuous civilisation isn't all smoked glass and brushed aluminium, although in Shanghai where we will touch down today it most is.

On arrival, we will be greeted by our tour leader and escorted to our hotel. Following this, we will head out to explore the nearby streets on foot to gain a feel for the largest city in China and try our out first few words of basic Chinese. Dinner tonight will be a variety of Shanghai specialties followed by a visit to the world's largest Starbucks. (dinner) **Flight details to be advised**

Day 2

Shanghai



Few cities in the world evoke so much history, glamour and mystique in name alone as does this amazing Chinese metropolis. Today we will set out for a thorough exploration of Shanghai beginning in the Wai Tan district (Shanghai Bund) renowned for its landmark buildings and spectacular architecture. This area is regarded as one of the must-see places in Shanghai and gives a great sense of the pulse and frenetic buzz of the city.

Late this morning we will pay a special visit to the Volkswagen automobile manufacturing plant to learn of China's bleeding edge technological prowess which today rivals that of the Japanese and German manufacturers. We will also learn of manufacturing processes and the company's innovations in motor

vehicle technology advances in hybrid, driverless and environmentally friendly cars. Following our tour of the plant, there will be time for a Q & A session with staff from the car manufacturer giving us an insight into the competitive nature of car production both nationally and globally.

Later we will visit the Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Centre to learn about urban development in China and the infrastructure projects being developed to cater to this city with a population larger than Australia. While the Chinese government has gone to great efforts to control rampant urbanisation and migration in recent years many communities in the city have been impacted and marginalised by its frenetic growth and rising economic disparity. Tonight, we take a boat cruise on the Huang Pu River to see the city from another perspective and learn of the river trading route that is so integral to the city. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 3

Shanghai (Student-initiated activities)

Prior to travelling, a Student Educational Adventures staff member will talk to teachers and students about specific activities that your students might like to add to their overseas experience. These activities can be included based on students' knowledge of the country or their interests or passions for any aspect of a country's culture. The activities we can include are many and varied. These may include: an introduction to a country's creative or performing arts scene, visits to local schools, great race activities, youth culture venues, architectural marvels or a plethora of cultural programs. Please contact us for further ideas.

OPTION 1:

Chinese cooking class:



With 1.4 billion people to feed daily coupled with vast geographic and cultural variations, food in China is a big deal.

Today we will have the chance to sample many types of local cuisine during our hands-on cooking class to up our wok skills and dumpling wrapping prowess.

Our activity will take us to one of the city's bustling 'wet' markets to learn of the ingredients for cooking some of China (and the world's) favourite dishes to impress family and friends back home.

OPTION 2:

Chinese Calligraphy: Chinese calligraphy is a traditional form of writing characters from the Chinese language using a brush and ink. It is the root of many other forms of cultural art in China and can be seen adorning the walls of shops, offices and houses. Each period of Chinese history evolved its own style of calligraphy that enables us to learn about the history of the country by studying this art form.

Today we will study this art of dexterity to learn the painting styles and brush techniques for which Chinese art is justifiably famous. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

OPTION 3:



Oriental Pearl Tower:

Today we will visit the distinctive Oriental Pearl TV Tower across the Huang Pu River in Pudong District. This iconic symbol and structure of Shanghai overlooks the entire city from the highest vantage point possible. Within the tower, we walk over the glass-bottomed floor looking down hundreds of metres to the streets below. Panoramic views reveal the entire cityscape and the commercial centre of Pudong comprising dozens of skyscrapers, including the second tallest building in the world. Today we will also visit the Shanghai Development Exhibition Hall to learn of Shanghai's past as well as its long-term aspirations. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

OPTION 4:



Kung Fu: A very special experience awaits us today as we set out to visit a Shaolin Kung Fu sanctuary to learn of this eminent martial art and quintessence of Chinese culture. Here we will gain firsthand experience of Kung Fu and learn some of the art's fundamental skills from a professional teacher.

While arduous, this half-day activity will give us an understanding of the spirit of Kung Fu as a spiritual philosophy and not just the self-defence qualities that most people associate with.

Later we will also experience a display of this incredibly physical and specular combat sport. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 4

Shanghai ✈️ Chengdu



A morning flight will take us to Chengdu, one of the country's largest inland cities. On arrival, we will out to visit the renowned Chengdu Panda Breeding Research. This facility serves as one of the world's most important animal research centres with vast enclosures designed to simulate a natural habitat for many rare and endangered species.

Chengdu provides a wonderful venue to get lost in green forests and visit the famous UNESCO site of Leshan, both activities we will enjoy today. At over 70 metres tall, giant Buddhas of Leshan are the largest in the world. Today our tour leader will provide us with informative commentary, about this famous site. For dinner, we will enjoy the city's renowned hotpot as we

explore the lanes and courtyards of the *Wide and Narrow Alleys* quarter.

(breakfast, lunch, dinner) **Flight details Shanghai – Chengdu to be advised**

Day 5

Chengdu 🚆 Xian

After a leisurely breakfast we will visit Du Fu Cottage, the former residence of the great Tang Dynasty poet called who lived in the 8th century. We will later visit *Jinli Old Street* - one of the most rustic thoroughfares in China with history and architecture going back to the second century AD. This archetypal Chinese street features traditional residential dwellings as well as tea houses and specialty food shops.

In the afternoon we will make our way to the train station for our overnight train trip to the far-flung city of Xian.

NB: Train carriages are 4 berth, air condition with lockable doors and western style toilets. Food and snacks can be purchased on board. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 6

Xian



The fabled city of Xian (pronounced 'see-an'). Once the terminus of the Silk Road, the glory days of Xian may have ended in the early 10th century during the advent of Maritime trade. Xian's Ming-era city walls remain intact were vendors of all descriptions still crowd the narrow lanes that we will visit today on bicycles. Bicycle on top of the citadel wall to learn about the city's history and successive rulers.

As evening approaches we visit the city's Muslim Street that retains the flavour and atmosphere of the old Silk Road where Muslim and occidental traders plied their wares from Europe all the way to Malaysia. We will explore the myriad of surrounding streets famous for traditional snacks, confectionary and a great array of spices and dishes being cooked using age-old methods. (breakfast, dinner)

Day 7

Xian



This morning we will visit the site of the Terracotta Warriors. The Terracotta Army isn't just Xian's premier sight, it's one of the most famous archaeological finds in the world. This life-size army of thousands has silently stood guard over the soul of China's first unifier for more than two millennia but only as recently as 1974 when farmer stumbled across these figures while sinking a well in a small village outside the city.

On arrival at the historic sight, we will watch an introductory film then visit the main burial pits around the site. The main pit containing columns of warriors with horse-drawn chariots representing the main body of the formation which also served as the emperor's principal fighting force. It is estimated that there are over 1,000 pieces of pottery figures and horse-drawn chariots and saddled horses.

Later today we will visit the city's imposing old city walls still stand. Built in 1370 during the Ming dynasty, the magnificent 12-metre high walls are surrounded by a moat. We will head back to our hotel after this very full day to freshen up before dinner. (breakfast, dinner)

Day 8

Xian Beijing



This morning we visit the City's world-class history museum to view some of the world's finest examples of ancient bronze, golden figures and jewellery as well as the only intact kneeling archer terracotta statue, still with original paint. Xian is also a centre of sustainable technology in China, something we will learn of today we visit a solar panel plant to learn of this advanced industry. China is currently transitioning to implement massive solar energy initiatives and move away from increasingly unpopular damming (hydro) schemes and coal power plants.

Leaving Xian, we head to the train station and board the high-speed train that will take us to Beijing. Capable of exceeding speeds of 320 kilometres per hour, our train journey will provide us time to marvel at the efficiency of high-speed rail travel which is fast replacing the tedium or aircraft travel in China and the greater Asian region.

Arriving in Beijing this evening we transfer to our hotel passing huge high-rise apartment blocks, ancient temples, orderly cues and photos of Chairman Mao on many street corners. We will enjoy our first meal of 'Beijing style' cuisine at a popular local eatery. (breakfast, lunch) **Train schedule: Xian – Beijing**

Day 9

Beijing

We will awake to the sounds of millions of people going about their daily routines before setting off to visit the city's splendid Summer Palace. The Summer Palace was built within a large, natural garden on the foundations of Longevity Hill and Kunming Lake. The natural landscape of hills and open water is combined with artificial features such as pavilions, temples and bridges to form a harmonious ensemble.



Despite suffering several attacks over the centuries, the Palace has managed to survive the country's Cultural Revolution – a topic our tour leader will offer us some insight into today.

This afternoon we will visit the Temple of Heaven where the Emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties reigned. Listed as a World Heritage site, the Temple of Heaven is a very recognisable example of Chinese architecture on which buildings across Asia are modelled today. It is in the gardens surrounding the Temple we will partake in Tai Chi, a popular pastime with residents any time of the day. Tonight we head to the Wangfujing Arts precinct to see fine arts and crafts on display in a tranquil setting. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 10

Beijing (Great Wall of China, Beijing Art precinct)



One of human's kinds crowning achievements and the only man-made structure to be visible from the moon – China's Great Wall is the country's most important place of interest. Today we will visit the remote Mutianyu section of this enigmatic structure originally conceived to impede the progress of Mongol invaders in the 16th Century. Depending on our energy levels, today we will walk a five kilometres section of the wall as our tour leader explains to us the history and military and political implications of this amazing structure.

Later we will visit Beijing's renowned 798 Arts District. This precinct is one of the coolest spots in Beijing packed with brilliant galleries, hole-in-the-wall museums and great cafes. The district provides a unique insight into the mentality of a population struggling to express themselves in a society that habitually suppresses freedom of expression. We will have the opportunity to talk to curators at one or two of the most interesting exhibits about this social phenomenon. Tonight, we enjoy a meal of the city's delicious signature dish - *Peking Duck*. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 11

Beijing



Time will be set aside to explore one of the few remaining hutong backstreet districts to give us an insight into what Beijing life must have been like over a 100 years ago. The 'hutong' streets are a made up of street stalls selling cheap snacks, laundry shops, communal toilet blocks, antique shops, traditional style wooden houses, and hand pulled transport of all shapes and sizes. There is plenty of time for bargaining and interacting with the locals to be had. We explore little laneways on foot and by way of a rickshaw ride. Here we will learn of the secrets of making Chinese dumplings hosted by a family whose ancestors have perfected this typical Chinese dish over several generations.

Mid-afternoon, we will take part in a highly enjoyable (and physical) martial arts class. Our instructors will teach us some basic drills and patterns while explaining the theory behind this martial art that originated in the temple of Shaolin some 1,500 years ago.

This evening we will be taking in one of Beijing's famous Peking Opera's performances - a must-see event while visiting China. It showcases fascinating performing arts tradition accompanied by traditional music, theatrics and martial arts. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 12

Depart Beijing ✈

This morning we check out of our hotel and visit one of the most popular attractions in Beijing, The Forbidden City. This most important of Chinese sites was the Imperial Palace during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, located in the centre of Beijing. It served as the residence of twenty-four emperors over several dynasties and was the political and ceremonial centre of Chinese government.



Just opposite The Forbidden City is Tiananmen Square that we will visit briefly. This vast public space was the scene of a highly publicised crackdown as Chinese troops violently retook the square in Beijing where pro-democracy protesters had set up camp for weeks. The Tiananmen Square massacre, as it came to be known, left an unknown number of casualties with some estimates in the thousands. So controversial was this movement that the Chinese government's extensive censorship apparatus—which employs two million online censors — still rigorously blocks information about the protest today. We head to the airport and check in for our homebound flight. (breakfast, lunch) **Flight details to be advised**

Summary

Grading

Easy; Students will be required to be in good health to get the most out of this trip while any one of reasonable fitness will be able to take part. There are no real physical difficulties however students will be expected to walk every day. You will also be expected to be able to ride a bike and be able to participate in a light hiking activity. It will be necessary for you to carry your own luggage throughout the trip but only for short distances.

Accommodation

Student accommodation is on a twin/triple share basis. Teacher accommodation is on a single room basis. Hotels hold a 3-star equivalent rating.

Transport

Modern air-conditioned bus, boat, train, plane.

Group Size

Minimum group size 20 students & 2 staff members travelling *free of charge*.

▲ [Smaller group sizes can be quoted upon application](#)

Your Tour Leader

Your tour leader is probably the person who most influences the success of your trip. Thus, Student Educational Adventures employs our own team of meticulously trained student dedicated, local tour leaders - not foreigners, imported at your students' expense with no language skills or insight into your host culture.

These nationals are not only the best folk to show you their country. They are your teachers, translators and an enthusiastic purveyor of authentic experiences. They are there to facilitate your immersion into new cultures and are the bridge between you and the world of education and new experiences.

Your tour leader is always with your students throughout your trip and is thoroughly versed in safety protocols and duty of care responsibilities. This ranges from assisting in the most basic of health and safety measures to ensuring that teachers & students are always safe during our trips. All have been chosen because of their ability to deal with the needs and unique issues associated with escorting young people through this wonderful and at times, most foreign of regions.

China – Ancient Wonders & Modern Cities (12 days)

Inclusions

- All accommodation, transport, activities, entrance costs and other programs as describe in the itinerary
- Student Educational Adventures tour leader throughout the trip & additional specialist guides as required
- Additional internal flight Shanghai - Chengdu
- Meals (along with drinking water) as listed in the daily itinerary
- Pre-departure support, briefings & planning meetings for students and parents
- 24/7 in-country support

Exclusions

- International flights to/from China
- Meals not listed in the itinerary
- China Visa