

China: Politics, environment & culture (13 days)



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.

From cosmopolitan cities to ancient capitals and remarkable diversity, this 13-day trip of China is designed for adventurous students seeking to explore, examine and gather insight into the social fabric and the politics of this amazing nation.

Beginning in Beijing, we will learn of the unbridled changes this city has endured and its transition from a feudal to socialist to capitalist society with excursions to The Great Wall, Tiananmen Square and several other places of historical significance to facilitate this understanding. From Beijing, we will travel to Shanghai by fast train to enjoy a thorough exploration of this city of superlatives before going to Nanjing. Here we will learn more about China's rich and tumultuous history and the environmental challenges it faces.

Other activities will include a visit to see China's native panda bears an excursion to the sublime provinces of Guilin and Longsheng and a journey down the road less travel to Yangshuo County, a beautifully preserved region nestled on the banks of the Lijiang River renowned for its ancient customs, stunning scenery and ethnic diversity.

Most importantly, this trip is designed to foster students' Asian awareness and provide a very memorable introduction to a country that will no doubt influence and affect all others in the decades to come.




Billy Penfold
Director

Day 1

Arrive China - Beijing

It's not just the ancient architecture that wows visitors, Beijing is also home to some of the world's most innovative modern and jaw-dropping structures built on a scale that screams, 'Look at me!'

The scale and majesty of this important city will become quickly apparent as we are greeted in Beijing by our tour leader today and set out to view some of its most important sites including Houhai Lake, the birds next Olympic stadium and its imposing boulevards that we will cycle along over the days to come. We take in the beautiful and peaceful surrounds of the lake which holds popular restaurants, and cafe precincts. Dinner will be at a local restaurant nearby our hotel. (dinner) **Flight details to be advised**

Day 2

Beijing



Awaking to the sounds of millions of people going about their daily routines, we will set out after breakfast to visit the Summer Palace. The Summer Palace is a large natural garden that was built 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, halls, palaces, 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 and was open to the public in recent times.

This afternoon we will visit the Temple of Heaven where the Emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties offered sacrifices to Heaven to pray for good harvests. Listed as a World Heritage site, the Temple of Heaven is a sample of quintessential Chinese architecture on which buildings across Asia are modelled. It is here we get to experience Tai Chi. Time permitting we head to Wangfujiang Arts and shopping street to see fine arts and crafts on display. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 3

Beijing



This morning we will journey out of the city to see the Great Wall of China (Mutianyu section), this enigmatic wall was constructed in 1502 and was once considered an important military fortification protecting the city. We will take a cable car up to the wall and then walk along its sections. We will learn about the fortifications, military strategy and see where guarding soldiers slept in lookout towers. While returning to the city, we will stop at the Tombs of the Ming Dynasty. They are a collection of mausoleums located on Tianshou Mountain and are recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage site. While many countries struggle to implement environmental policy, China's environmental issues are particularly acute as its population struggles with issues of air quality and waste management – something we will learn more about during our time in China. On the flip side, the Chinese are rapidly adopting many important green initiatives such as the North Shelterbelt Program or the Green Great Wall which consists of a series of wind breaking forest strips designed to hold back the expansion of the Gobi Desert (Inner Mongolia). Tonight, we enjoy a tasty Peking Duck dinner. (breakfast,

lunch, dinner)

Day 4

Beijing Shanghai



This morning we visit one of the most popular attractions in Beijing, The Forbidden City. This iconic site served as the Imperial Palace during the Ming and Qing Dynasties and the residence of some twenty-four emperors over several dynasties. The Forbidden City consists of the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the Hall of Middle Harmony and the Hall of Preserving Harmony and is regarded as the largest and best-preserved palace complex in the world.

Directly opposite the Forbidden Palace lies Tiananmen Square that we will visit. 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. The ban is so total that not only is the search term “Tiananmen Square” censored, but so too are related words and phrases. Early afternoon we head to the train station and board a fast train bound for Shanghai and transfer to our hotel. (breakfast, lunch) **Train: BEIJING – SHANGHAI**

Day 5

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: Shanghai Circus



one to be told.

A must for any student who ever tried gymnastics or even trampolining - Shanghai hosts several world-class acrobatic theatres where we can enjoy the world's best performances of gravity-defying contortionism, juggling, unicycling, chair-stacking, and plate-spinning acts that will leave you thrilled. These acrobatic shows combine traditional Chinese arts and modern technologies. The performers present Chinese acrobatics, martial arts, and dance perfectly in harmony with the music. While we marvel at the highly proficient skills of the performers, the story of China's evolution from its ancient past to the future is

OPTION 2: Huangpu River Cruise



A cruise on the Huangpu River will afford us views of Shanghai far more enthralling than anyone could see from the mainland, allowing us the best vantage point from which to truly appreciate Shanghai's classic skyline views of colonial architecture and modern skyscrapers along the river. This includes the Huangpu River, a symbol of Shanghai, and the diving line that has witnessed the city's history and its development.

Today we will also visit the city urban planning commission to learn of the future for this city of superlatives and benchmark by which most other world cities are measured. A must for all students of architecture and those interested in city planning and urban development.

OPTION 3:



Art & youth culture. Today we will visit M50 – Shanghai's hip creative district and urban hub of Shanghai's art scene, set amongst the backdrop of restored factories and home to the infamous Shanghai graffiti wall.

With a collection of modern and contemporary art galleries constantly churning out new and exciting exhibitions, M50 remains one of the most innovative places to see free art in all of Asia. We will talk to curators from various galleries today to learn of the societal trends that are re-defining art in China, as well as an artist who are constantly pushing the limits of what's acceptable in this still conservative country. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 6

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 also visit the Bund. Symbolic of concession-era Shanghai, the Bund was the city's Wall Street, a place of feverish trading and fortunes made and lost. Originally a towpath for dragging barges of rice, this waterfront area was gradually transformed into the grand district one sees today.

Later in the morning, we will pay a special visit to the Volkswagen automobile manufacturing plant to learn of China's technological prowess, which today rivals that of the Japanese and other 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. Later there will be time for a question and answer session with staff to learn of car production, both nationally and globally. In the afternoon we take in the Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Centre to learn about urban development in Shanghai and the infrastructure projects being developed to cater to this city with over 24 million residents. Tonight, we take a boat cruise on the Huang Pu River to see the city from another perspective and witness the river trading route that is so integral to the city. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 7

Shanghai Nanjing



This morning we head to Shanghai train station for the fast train bound for Nanjing. This clean and attractive city – whose name means 'Southern Capital'— boasts a rich and impressive historical heritage and is the gateway to another China which bear little resemblance to its more populated northern region.

This morning we will explore many of the sites and must-see attractions of the beautiful region of China, including Hongshan Forest Zoo where we will see elephants, white tigers, orangutans, panthers, gibbons and of course giant pandas. The zoo has thousands of animals divided into sectors for herbivores,

primates, reptiles and birds. We will also learn about conservation and breeding programs explained by the staff at the zoo.

Train: SHANGHAI - NANJING (2 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 2 dinners)

Day 8

Nanjing



An astonishing sight at the top of an enormous stone stairway, Sun Yat-sen's tomb is a mandatory stop for Chinese visitors and one we will explore this morning. Reverentially referred to as *guófù* (Father of the Nation), Dr. Sun is a revolutionary and political leader, esteemed by both communists and Kuomintang, or the Nationalist Party of China alike. He died in Beijing in 1925 and had wished to be buried in Nanjing, with far less pretence than the many fewer rulers who preceded him.

Later today we will visit the disquieting Memorial Hall of the Nanjing Massacre. This hall documents the atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers against the

civilian population during the occupation of Nanjing in 1937. They include pictures of actual executions – many taken by Japanese army photographers – and a gruesome viewing hall built over a mass grave of massacre victims. While overwhelming at times, this memorial provides an important historical link to the past, and insight into China's national psyche and where it sees itself in the region.

Day 9

Nanjing Guilin - Longsheng

We take a direct flight from Nanjing to picturesque Guilin in the south. Exiting the airport, we head directly to the Longsheng mountains. This area is recognisable to anyone familiar with Chinese cinema as the mountains here are a celebrated region of this vast country. We begin by walking a short distance uphill up to Ping An village, the highest village nestled on the mountainside where we will see terrific views of the Longsheng (Longji) terraced rice fields. These rice fields are one of the two most beautiful terraced rice fields in all of China.

According to the historical records, the fields were first constructed in the Yuan Dynasty by the Zhuang and Yao minority tribes. Amongst the numerous villages, we will see old wells, covered bridges and handmade irrigation systems. (breakfast, dinner) **Flight: NANJING – GUILIN**

Day 10

Longsheng - Guilin



Magical moments await us today as we explore the Longji rice terraces and admire the man-made agricultural pearls that decorate the slopes of these mountains. During our trek, we will also visit a unique cobblestone village and talk to elders who maintain their strong traditions and beliefs. Nearly all the young people from this village and the surrounding area have left and migrated to the cities in search of work, leaving only the young and the elderly. The Longji rice fields received their name because the rice terraces resemble a dragon's scales, while the summit of the mountain range looks more like the backbone of a dragon.

For lunch, we eat local delicacies unique to this region then depart Longsheng for our journey back to Guilin in time to visit Elephant Trunk Hill. The hill is the symbol of Guilin, and the stony features resemble an elephant drinking water. This will be followed by dinner and a look at bustling Pedestrian Street. (breakfast, dinner)

Day 11 Guilin - Yangshuo



Leaving Guilin, we will drive a short distance to the local port and board a public riverboat for a morning cruise on the Li River. The Li River and surroundings are famous for its beautiful karst landscape backdrop, and are depicted in many memorable images and art of China (some of which may be found on the country's currency). Our boat journey will allow us to view a variety of the region's most scenic areas including the Ox Gorge, jagged mountains and the famous sites of the Elephant Trunk Hill and Pagoda Hill. Arriving in Yangshuo, we travel out to Fuli, an ancient village nestled on the banks of the river. Having withstood time, the village has retained its original

architecture and now home to several handcraft workshops. It is here that we will learn and participate in the famed Chinese art of fan making and calligraphy.

While young people all over the world are rushing to learn Mandarin OR While Mandarin is becoming a language of choice to many, the Chinese still are obsessed with learning to speak English. We may well discover this evening, as we are accosted by friendly locals to engage in conversation and practice English along the town riverside walking street en route to dinner. (breakfast, lunch)

Day 12 Yangshuo



This morning we visit the Silver Cave, one of the largest and most impressive caves in the area famed for the odd-shaped karst formations. We will then take part in a market tour and a hands-on cooking lesson hosted by one of the town's local chefs. After learning the secrets to Chinese cooking, students will be enjoying their own homemade lunch.

Our afternoon's activities include a scenic bamboo rafting trip along the Yulong River, rowing past spectacular mountain backdrops and pastoral scenes.

As the sun sets, we will enjoy a bicycle ride through the countryside, exploring quaint villages that has remained unchanged in hundreds of years. To end the night, we will be strolling down Yangshuo's own Pedestrian Street for a final dinner in China. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 13 Depart Yangshuo ✈️

After breakfast, we will set out to take part in a highly enjoyable Tai Chi class. Our instructors will teach us some basic drills and patterns while explaining the theory behind this relaxing yet tiring discipline popular throughout China. We have a final time to relax and enjoy some last-minute shopping. After lunch, we head to the airport for our flight back home. (breakfast, lunch, dinner) **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.

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Inclusions

- All accommodation, transport, activities, entrance costs and other programs as described in the itinerary
- **Additional internal flight Nanjing - Guilin**
- Student Educational Adventures tour leader throughout the trip & additional specialist guides as required
- Meals (along with drinking water) as listed in the daily itinerary
- 24/7 in-country support

Exclusions

- International flight to/from China
- Meals not listed in the daily itinerary
- China Visa (if required)