



Your holiday includes

Flights with leading scheduled airlines

- Return economy class flights
- Choose to fly with Cathay Pacific via Hong Kong from London Heathrow, London Gatwick or Manchester
- Alternatively fly with Emirates via Dubai from London Heathrow, London Gatwick, London Stansted, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle or Glasgow
- If you prefer to travel direct, British Airways offers flights from London Heathrow. A supplement from £195 per person will apply
- All airport charges, security charges and any applicable fuel surcharges
- UK Air Passenger Duty

Carefully selected hotels

- First class and deluxe hotels in great locations
- All hotel portorage
- Applicable hotel taxes

Many meals

- Daily breakfast, worth £357 per person
- Thirteen lunches
- Nine dinners

Unforgettable experiences

- Sightseeing tours in Beijing, Pingyao, Xi'an, Chengdu, Shanghai and Suzhou
- The Great Wall
- Visit the Forbidden City and Summer Palace
- Stay in the UNESCO World Heritage site of Pingyao
- Discover the Terracotta Warriors
- Cruise on the Li River
- Visit the Giant Panda Breeding Research Institute
- Three night cruise on the Yangtze River

On the ground

- Services of an experienced Tour Manager and local guides
- All overseas transfers
- Modern, air-conditioned coaches throughout

100% confidence

- Your holiday is covered by our Price Promise*
- Your holiday is fully ATOL protected

* For more information on our Price Promise, please see our booking conditions on pages 204-207.

The Very Best of China

23 days from only £3,895 per person

It's not surprising China is considered one of the world's most fascinating and exciting touring destinations. The country offers ancient history and archaeological discoveries, vibrant and colourful cities, stunning and diverse landscapes, peaceful gardens, giant pandas, and warm and friendly people.

Our leisurely 23-day tour covers all the country's major attractions with a perfect blend of included sightseeing tours and Freedom Days to spend as you please. What's more, you will discover less-visited cultural gems such as Pingyao, and experience an unforgettable three night cruise along the spectacular Yangtze River.

With quality accommodation, all breakfasts and many other delightful meals included, along with an opportunity to stopover in Hong Kong or Dubai on your way home, the Very Best of China tour really does offer exceptional value for money.





Forbidden City, Beijing



Bronze Lion, Beijing

The Very Best of China

Days 1 to 4: UK - Beijing

Day 1: Depart UK

Depart with Cathay Pacific from the UK airport most convenient for you. Choose from; London Heathrow, London Gatwick or Manchester. Alternatively, fly with Emirates from London Heathrow, London Gatwick, London Stansted, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle or Glasgow. No matter which airport or airline you choose there will be no additional cost.

In-flight meals and drinks included

Alternative airline – British Airways

If you prefer, you can fly direct from London Heathrow to Beijing with British Airways. Supplement from £195pp.

Day 2: Beijing, 4 nights

All flights with Cathay Pacific to Beijing will travel via Hong Kong, and those travelling with Emirates will travel via Dubai. Arrive into the wonderful city of Beijing and transfer to the Park Plaza Wangfujing Hotel, conveniently located in central Beijing. Previously known as Peking, China's capital city is a historical treasure trove, boasting over 3,000 years of tumultuous history. However, it's not only this city's ancient monuments that attracts visitors. Its imposing socialist monuments of the 1950s along with the explosive growth of modern buildings and infrastructure, make Beijing an unmissable showcase of China old and new.

This evening, enjoy a welcome drink with your Tour Manager and fellow travellers, to become acquainted and learn more about our forthcoming adventure.

In-flight meals and drinks included

Day 3: Beijing and The Forbidden City

Today, our sightseeing tour of Beijing begins in Tiananmen Square. Measuring around 440,000m², and surrounded by soviet-style buildings, it was here that Chairman Mao declared the founding of the People's Republic of China. We continue to the nearby Forbidden City, the world's largest palace complex and home to China's best preserved collection of ancient and ornate buildings. We have plenty of time to explore the Forbidden City, prior to lunch in a nearby restaurant. In the afternoon, we explore the Temple of Heaven Park, which is the site where, during the Ming and Qing dynasties, emperors prayed for a good harvest.

Breakfast and lunch included

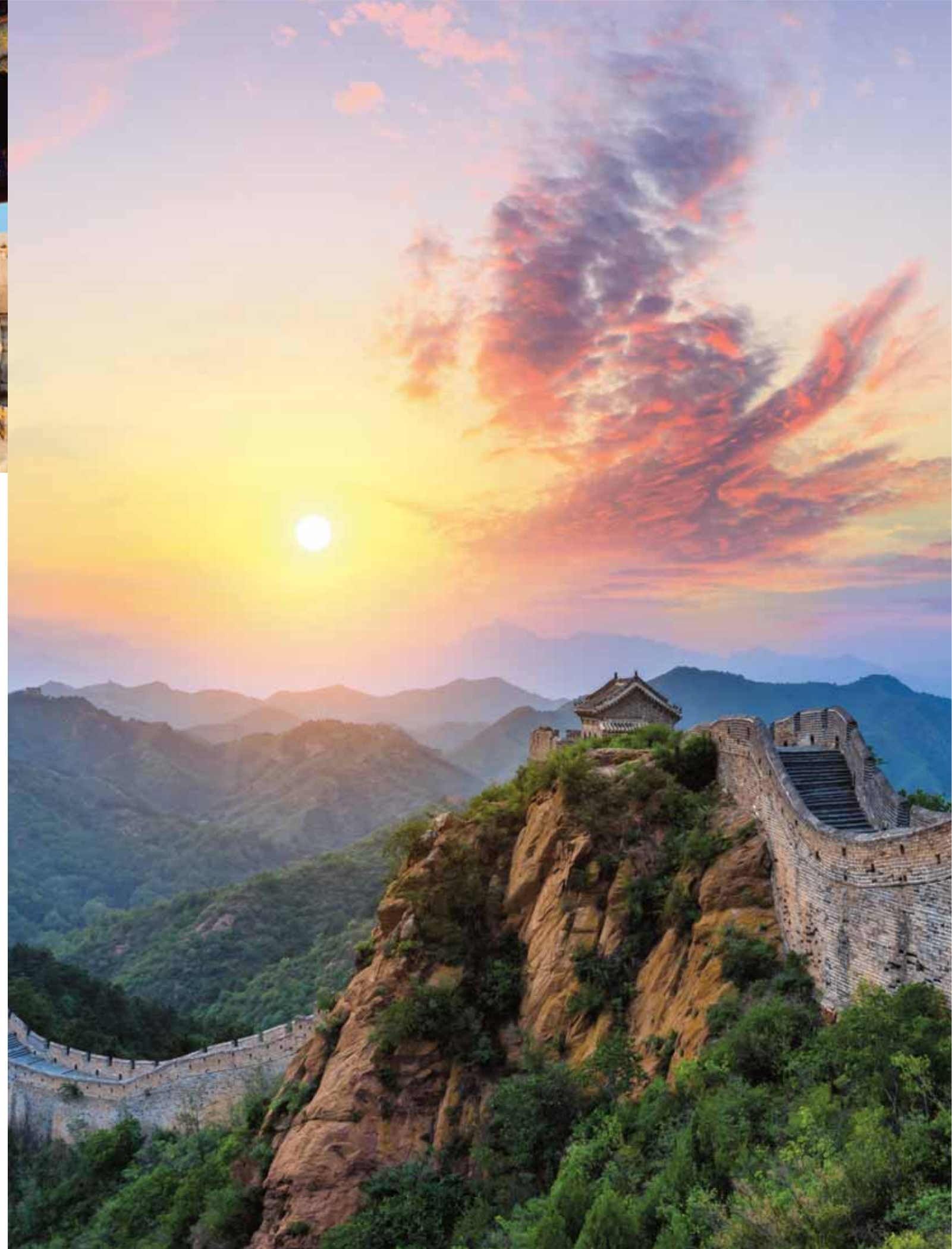
Day 4: The Great Wall

Tour Highlight

China's most iconic sight and greatest engineering triumph, the Great Wall weaves its way through 4,000 miles of northern China's landscapes. This morning, we travel northeast from the city to the Mutianyu section of the Great Wall, famous for its Ming-era guard towers and the fantastic views of the surrounding mountains. We take a short cable car ride to the wall, and have ample time to stroll along part of the wall, and to take in the spectacular landscapes. Following our memorable visit and a hearty lunch, we return to our hotel in the afternoon to relax.

Food is an obsession in China and during the course of our journey, we will encounter an incredible array of different dishes and cuisines. This evening, we will enjoy a classic imperial dish from Beijing: Peking Duck, served with plum or garlic sauce, scallions and pancakes.

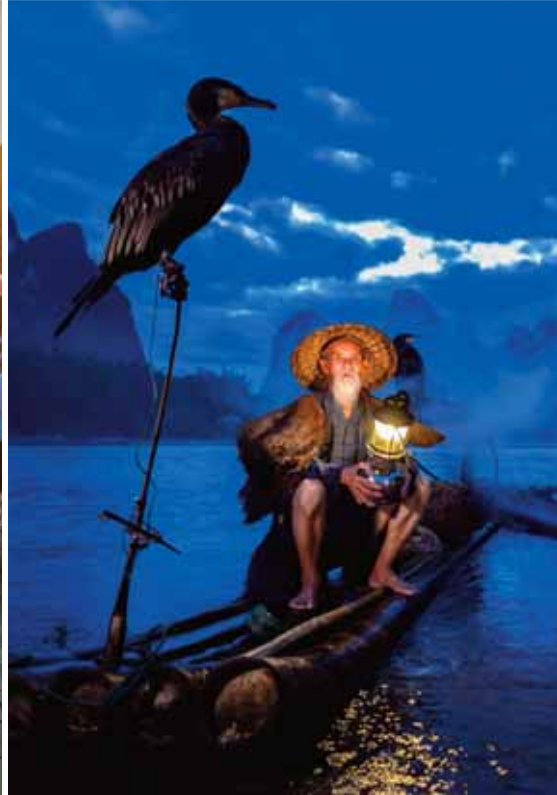
Breakfast, lunch and dinner included



The Great Wall



Pingyao



Cormorant fishing, Guilin



Terracotta Army, Xi'an

The Very Best of China

Days 5 to 12: Beijing - Pingyao - Xi'an - Guilin - Yangshuo

Day 5: Beijing's Summer Palace

Following breakfast, we spend the morning exploring the halls, pavilions, palaces, temples, gardens, corridors and bridges of the Summer Palace. The Palace was the playground for the royal family as they escaped the suffocating heat of the summer. As we explore the palace, we marvel at this masterpiece of traditional Chinese landscaping, which has been designed according to the principles of feng shui. We return to the hotel, and our afternoon has been left free to spend as we please. This evening, why not experience a Kung Fu show, featuring dynamic displays of this country's most famous martial art? **Breakfast included**

Day 6: Pingyao, 2 nights

This morning we experience the benefits of China's huge investment in its infrastructure, as we board our bullet train to Taiyuan. On arrival, we enjoy lunch in the Shanxi Hui Guan restaurant, which specialises in Jin cuisine and a multitude of noodle dishes. En route to Pingyao, we stop to visit the Chang family mansion, the former home of one of the richest merchants in the Shanxi Province. Covering a total area of more than 600,000m², the compound has over 4,000 rooms, 50 buildings and 13 gardens. Its courtyards feature some of the country's most elaborate examples of Qing Dynasty decorative architectural features. Later in the afternoon, we make our way to Yunjincheng Hotel, a charming boutique hotel in the centre of Pingyao, whose courtyards and rooms have been lovingly decorated to reflect the history of its surroundings. **Breakfast, lunch and dinner included**

Day 7: Pingyao

Tour Highlight

Not many UK visitors can lay claim to have visited Pingyao, which is surprising because this UNESCO World Heritage Site is China's best preserved ancient walled town and is a true highlight. The city was at its peak during the Ming dynasty (1368 – 1644) and, incredibly, Pingyao has managed to keep its imposing town walls and watchtowers, elegant courtyards and ancient temples largely intact. What's more, 30,000 locals still reside in the old town, which creates the vibrancy of this living and breathing community. This morning we explore the streets of Pingyao, including visits to its fine temples, government buildings and the Rishengchang Financial House Museum, which began life as a humble dye shop before transforming into China's first bank and pioneering the use of paper cheques as a form of payment.

With a visitor pass allowing free entry to many more of Pingyao's delights, your afternoon could be easily spent further exploring the town. Alternatively, you may wish to make the short journey to the Shuanglin Temple for an optional tour of this astonishing Buddhist temple, with its impressive complex of ancient halls and intricately carved statues. **Breakfast included**

Day 8: Xi'an, 2 nights

We say farewell to Pingyao and board our bullet train to Xi'an - one of China's most famous cities with a long and fascinating history. A considerable amount of this ancient city has managed to survive alongside its modern developments. We make a stop to explore the magnificent city walls, which date back to the Ming dynasty around 1370, and enjoy incredible views of Xi'an old and new from our vantage point on top of the 12m-high wall. We reach the Holiday Inn Big Wild Goose Pagoda Hotel later in the afternoon, where we stay for the next two nights. One of the delicacies in Xi'an is its fantastic dumplings, and this evening enjoy sampling a selection of dumplings – each are handmade into a variety of shapes and with a selection of delicious fillings.

Breakfast, boxed lunch and dinner included

Day 9: The Terracotta Warriors

Tour Highlight

Discovered in 1974 by a group of farmers drilling a well, the Terracotta Army is one of the most famous and spectacular archaeological discoveries in the world. Today we explore the pits containing the terracotta soldiers, which have stood guard since 246 BC when Emperor Qin Shi Huang commissioned the work for his mausoleum. Each life-sized warrior has been crafted with individual facial features and clothing, and are arranged in battle formations alongside their horses and chariots. We also visit the equally fascinating Qin Shi Huang Emperor Tomb Artefact Exhibition Hall, which contains many artefacts including a pair of bronze chariots and horses, which are displayed with some of the original weaponry. After lunch, we visit the Small Wild Goose Pagoda, before returning to our hotel. Later, why not enjoy an evening of traditional music and dance at the Tang Dynasty show?

Breakfast and lunch included

Day 10: Guilin, overnight

Following breakfast, we head to the airport in time for our flight to Guilin. Upon arrival our waiting coach will take us to the Sheraton Hotel, ideally situated in central Guilin and overlooking the Li River. In the evening, there is an opportunity to take an optional Lakes and Rivers cruise, or you may prefer to enjoy a traditional cormorant fishing display.

Breakfast included

Day 11: Li River & Yangshuo, 2 nights

Tour Highlight

The countryside through which the Li River flows is a photographer's dream. During our four hour cruise, we glide serenely between verdant hills, enjoying iconic scenes of wallowing water buffalo and farmers tending their crops against a backdrop of limestone peaks. Our cruise finishes in Yangshuo, where we meet our waiting coach and head to Yangshuo Resort. Our home for the next two nights enjoys an idyllic and peaceful location on the banks of the Yulong River, and is a

Breakfast and lunch included

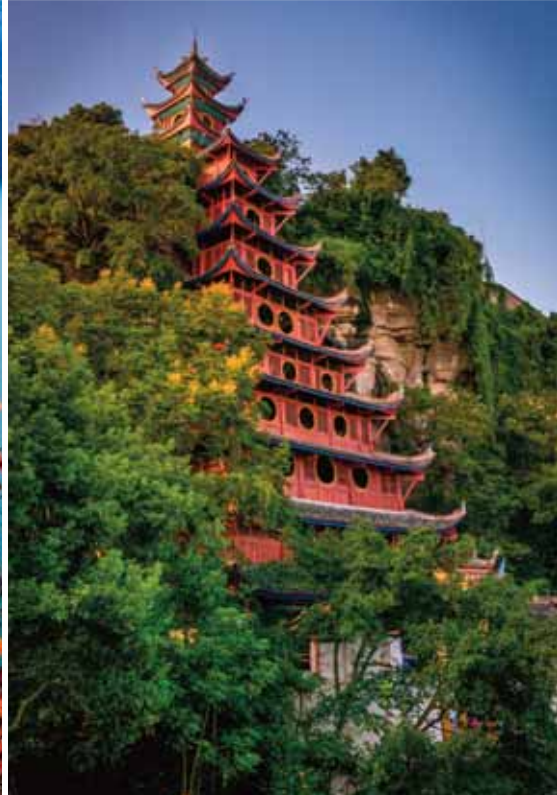
Day 12: Yangshuo Freedom Day

Although our day has been left at leisure to soak up the wonderful surroundings, we have the opportunity to enjoy a selection of fantastic optional activities. Why not take a gentle bike ride along the banks of the Yulong River? Alternatively you may prefer to float downstream on a bamboo raft or join a small cookery class, where you will visit a local market to choose ingredients, before creating a selection of local dishes. In the evening, there's also a chance to experience the enchanting Impression Liu Sanjie show, where six hundred performers take to the Li River to deliver a spectacular light show with illuminated karst peaks as a backdrop. Whatever you choose to do – enjoy!

Breakfast included



Yangtze River



Shibaozhai

The Very Best of China

Days 13 to 17: Chengdu - Yangtze River cruise

Day 13: Chengdu, 2 nights

After breakfast, we make our way to the airport for our flight to Chengdu, in the Sichuan Province, renowned for its teahouse culture and its most famous inhabitants – the Giant Pandas. Enjoy lunch at the charming Tibet Hotel, where we spend our next two nights. Later, we take a gentle stroll through The People's Park, which is often filled with dancing, song and tai chi. The park is also home to some of the city's favourite teahouses, where we stop to sample one of their brews and perhaps mix with the locals over a game of Mahjong.

Breakfast and lunch included

Day 14: Chengdu & Pandas

Tour Highlight

With over 80% of the world's Giant Panda population found in Sichuan Province, it's little surprise to find the area taking the lead in conservation projects to save this endangered species. The panda is the national symbol of China, and today we visit the Giant Panda Breeding Research Institute, which is home to around 120 giant and 76 red pandas. The project allows us to see these loveable and rare creatures at close quarters in a near-natural habitat setting. Later in the afternoon, we explore the bustling stalls and shops of the Wide and Narrow Alleys, two ancient streets restored in Ming and Qing architectural styles.

Enjoy dinner in one of the local restaurants, serving traditional dishes, cooked with distinctive Sichuan flavours. Later, we recommend venturing to the Sichuan Opera for a one of a kind cultural performance, including acrobats, dancers, puppets and the amazing 'face-changing' mask spectacle.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

Day 15: Yangtze River Cruise

Tour Highlight

Our morning is free to spend as we please. In the afternoon, our bullet train whisks us from Chengdu to Chongqing, where we board either the MV Century Legend or MV Century Paragon, for a fabulous three night cruise along the Yangtze River. Our accommodation is in well-proportioned Deluxe Cabins, with private en-suite facilities and balcony. Whilst on board, all our meals are included. Following dinner and our safety briefing, enjoy a drink at the Captain's welcome party, as the cruise sets sail.

Breakfast and dinner included

Day 16: Yangtze River Cruise

Following breakfast, there is an optional tour of the 'ghost city' of Fengdu. Alternatively, you may prefer to relax on board or enjoy a presentation on traditional Chinese medicine. This afternoon, we cruise along scenic waters prior to our arrival into Shibaozhai, where we can climb up to a nine-storey red pavilion and hilltop temple, affording spectacular views over the Yangtze. We return to the ship and freshen up for dinner with our fellow travellers. **Breakfast, lunch and dinner included**

Day 17: The Three Gorges

The Three Gorges comprise arguably the most spectacular landscapes of the magnificent Yangtze River. In the morning, we sail through the first of these gorges - Qutang Gorge. We disembark and board a smaller vessel for an excursion along the Goddess Stream. The smaller ship allows us to get much closer to the soaring mountains, which rise up from the Yangtze tributary. Returning to the ship, we journey through the awe-inspiring Witches Gorge, before arriving at Maoping.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

From the moment I phoned and booked until departure, I received excellent and first class service from the office in Ormskirk. Nothing was too small or too large to deal with, they were superb.

Mr & Mrs Lamb, Cumbria



Giant Panda



Suzhou



Yuyuan Gardens, Shanghai

The Very Best of China

Days 18 to 23: Shanghai - Suzhou - UK

Day 18: Shanghai, 4 nights

We disembark the ship after breakfast and board our coach for a morning excursion to the remarkable Three Gorges Dam - the largest hydroelectric dam in the world. During our visit we will truly appreciate the immense scale of this hydroelectric project which cost an estimated US\$37 billion to complete. We continue to Yichang, where we board either our flight or train to Shanghai. Upon arrival, we transfer to the Jin Jiang Tower Hotel, where we spend our final four nights in China. **Breakfast and lunch included**

Day 19: Shanghai

Shanghai is China's most glamorous and prosperous city, where Chinese and Western cultures run side by side. This morning our sightseeing tour begins with a walk along the Bund, on the banks of the Huangpu River. The Bund perfectly encapsulates the diversity of Shanghai, with the grandiose Art Deco architecture of the city's former banks and trading houses on one side of the river, and the futuristic skyline of Pudong on the other. We continue to the charming Old Town, which is the original centre of the city and retains many of its original temples, alleyways and buildings. Our morning ends in Yuyuan Gardens. Taking 18 years to build during the Ming dynasty, the gardens survived wars and rebellions, and today are a fine example of classically styled Chinese Gardens.

This afternoon we explore the impressive collection of Chinese artefacts housed in Shanghai Museum. In the evening, witness a spectacular performance of skill and grace as we experience the world-class Shanghai Acrobatic Show.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

Day 20: Suzhou Tour Highlight

We embark on a full day tour to Suzhou, a city famed for its culture and elegance, and home to many artists and scholars, drawn to the city by its UNESCO-listed classical gardens. Our first stop is to explore one of China's most famous gardens - the Humble Administrator's Garden, with its bamboo islands, many ponds, humpback bridges and beautiful pavilions. Enjoy a relaxing cruise along the Grand Canal prior to lunch. In the afternoon, visit the Master of the Nets Garden, which is relatively small, but gives the impression of being much larger thanks to its ingenious use of space. Suzhou embroidery is considered to be one of the four major regional styles of Chinese embroidery, and our final stop of the day is a visit to a silk factory to see how incredible images are brought to life with fine, highly detailed stitching. **Breakfast and lunch included**

Day 21: Shanghai Freedom Day

A Freedom Day in Shanghai to spend as you please. Take an optional cruise on the Huangpu River, visit a local community project and enjoy lunch with a local family, or possibly explore the French Concession area on a walking tour. Whatever you choose, our Tour Manager will be very happy to help. This evening, we bid farewell to China and our new-found friends in style, with a dinner of authentic Shanghainese cuisine, served in the elegant Xian Qiang Fang Restaurant.

Breakfast and dinner included

Day 22: Depart Shanghai

The day is ours until it's time to depart for the airport. Our flights to our chosen UK airport operate via either Hong Kong with Cathay Pacific or via Dubai, if flying with Emirates. If choosing British Airways, your flight will be direct into London Heathrow. **Breakfast, and in-flight meals and drinks included**

Day 23: Arrive UK

Today we arrive into our chosen airport; London Heathrow, London Gatwick, London Stansted, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle or Glasgow, bringing an end to our incredible adventure. **In-flight meals and drinks included**



Pudong, Shanghai



Shanghai



Hong Kong

Stopovers & Special Stays

If you would like to explore somewhere new on your way home from China, a stopover or a Special Stay is a perfect way to make your journey more relaxing and to experience a wonderful new city.



Hong Kong - Regal Kowloon

Two nights from £345 per person

The Regal Kowloon Hotel is conveniently located in Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong's renowned shopping and entertainment district. The hotel offers three restaurants, serving a range of Chinese, American, Italian and international dishes.

Your stopover includes return airport transfers, two nights at your chosen hotel and daily breakfast.

Please see pages 190-193 for more details on homebound stopovers.

Dubai - Marriott Hotel Al Jaddaf

Two nights from £345 per person

Located within easy reach of Dubai Mall, the Marriott Al Jaddaf is the perfect alternative to a beachside hotel. With an outdoor swimming pool, deluxe spa and a choice of seven restaurants it's a great location from which to explore downtown Dubai.

Indulge in a Special Stay



If you are celebrating a special occasion or you would simply like to treat yourself, then our Special Stays offer a unique experience in some of the world's finest hotels.

Peninsula Hotel, Hong Kong

Two nights from £595 per person

Considered the Grande Dame of the Far East, the Peninsula has been entertaining guests since 1928. Price includes a two night stay, daily breakfast, transfers and their classic afternoon tea.

Ritz Carlton, Al Wadi Desert, Dubai

Two nights from £895 per person

Inspired by Bedouin architecture, experience a different Dubai amid the beauty of the desert. Price includes a two night stay, transfers and half board.

Please see pages 194-195 for more information on Special Stays.

Departure Dates & Prices

2020 Departures

08 September 2020	£3,995 per person
10 October 2020	£3,995 per person

Prices

Prices are per person based on two people sharing a twin or double room.

Supplements

Single occupancy supplement £1,295.

Deposit

£1,000 per person if travelling Economy Class, £1,950 per person if travelling Premium Economy with Cathay Pacific or World Traveller Plus with British Airways, and £3,750 per person for Business Class or Club World.

Stopovers

Extend your holiday with a stopover in Hong Kong or Dubai from £345 per person.

Flight upgrades

Cathay Pacific upgrade to Premium Economy from £995 per person, or Business Class from £2,995 per person.

Emirates upgrade to Business Class from £3,495 per person.

British Airways upgrade to World Traveller Plus from £1,095 per person, or Club World from £3,295 per person.

2021 Departures

20 March 2021	£3,895 per person
17 April 2021	£3,995 per person
11 May 2021	£3,995 per person

Visa information

A valid China Tourist visa is required to travel to China. For more information on applying for your visa and the associated costs, please refer to our Important Information on pages 200-203.

Travel times

For information on daily travel timings, please refer to the relevant itinerary on our website.

Important information

Prices are subject to the availability of flights in the lowest available booking class and may change, however the correct price will always be confirmed before you book.

Full booking conditions are available on pages 204-207.

Call to book

Our award-winning team of travel experts is happy to answer any questions you may have, and to help you book your holiday with Distant Journeys.

Call us on

01695 577 961

Monday - Friday 9.00am - 5.30pm

Saturday 9.00am - 5.00pm

Should you prefer, please feel free to email us with your enquiry.

Email: enquiries@distantjourneys.co.uk

