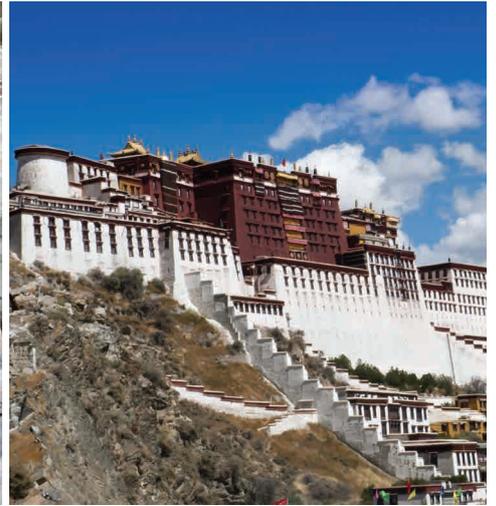
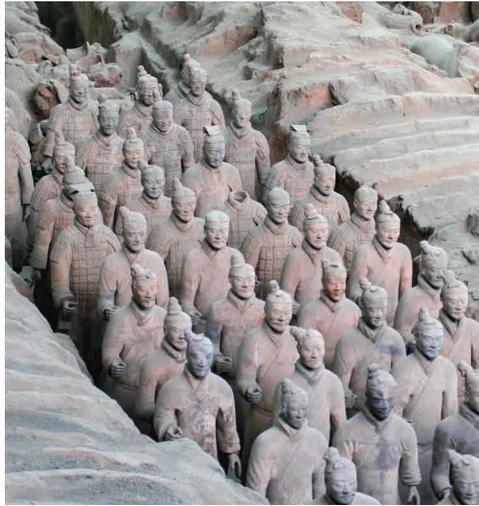
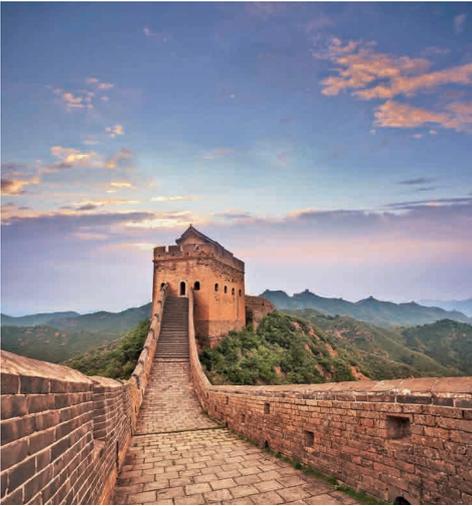


CHINA & TIBET RAIL ADVENTURE



TRIP OVERVIEW

Embark on an epic train journey across the Roof of the World from the heart of China to the Himalayan Kingdom of Tibet. Stroll along the Great Wall of China and come face-to-face with Xi'an's Terracotta Warriors before travelling through incredible landscapes to Lhasa, the heart of Tibetan Buddhism and one of the highest cities in the world. Finish your tour in Chengdu, meeting the charismatic Giant Pandas.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to China. Please take the time to read this dossier and to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of your tour. It includes important information such as flight details, visa requirements and travel insurance.

Your included meal guide:

B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner

DAY 1: UK to Beijing

Depart London on your scheduled overnight flight to Beijing.

DAY 2: Arrive Beijing D

On arrival in Beijing, meet your local guide before transferring to tonight's hotel. Enjoy a welcome dinner this evening.

DAY 3: Beijing B/L/D

Travel to the Great Wall of China, built over 2,000 years ago as a final defence against marauding Mongol invaders. Stretching over 5,500 miles, stroll along the wall to admire panoramic views of mountain peaks and rolling grasslands. Return to Beijing and explore the traditional gardens and exquisite architecture of the Summer Palace.

DAY 4: Beijing B/L/D

Visit expansive Tiananmen Square, the scene of many significant moments in Chinese history, before passing through the Gate of Supreme Harmony into the Forbidden City, the private kingdom of Emperors for over 500 years. In the afternoon explore China's largest existing masterpiece - the 15th century Temple of Heaven before setting your senses racing with a delicious Peking duck dinner this evening. Tonight, board your overnight train to Xian.

DAY 5: Beijing to Xi'an B/L/D

Starting point of the Silk Route and birthplace of ancient China, contemporary Xi'an is a fascinating city to explore. Wander along the 14th Century City Walls that still surround the heart of the town, before visiting the Small Wild Goose Pagoda built in 652 to hold sacred Buddhist figurines.

DAY 6: Xi'an B/L/D

Begin today by witnessing the awe-inspiring 'Eighth Wonder of the World', Xi'an's hand-crafted 8,000 strong Terracotta Warriors, constructed to protect China's first emperor in the afterlife. Continue onwards, crisscrossing through the narrow avenues of Xi'an's Muslim Quarter, teeming with bustling market stalls and fragrant cuisine and enjoy an evening of traditional music and dance at a dynamic Tang Dynasty show.

DAY 7: Xi'an to Lhasa B/Lunch box/D

Transfer to Xi'an's railway station for an early train to Xining, where you will visit the city's undulating hillsides and significant religious structures. Spend the afternoon visiting the famous Thangka museum (Qinghai Tibetan Medicine Culture Museum) As the world's only Tibetan medicine professional museum, the Museum aims at showcasing the development history of Tibetan medicine in the form of rare cultural relics. In the evening take an overnight train to Lhasa.

DAY 8: Lhasa

The Qinghai-Tibet Railway is one of the 21st Century's greatest engineering marvels, taking you past glaciers, mountains and Himalayan villages on your climb to Tibet. Cross the highest point at Tangula Pass early in the morning where long-haired yaks dot a countryside of surpassing beauty. On arrival into Lhasa, transfer to the hotel for an evening at leisure.

DAY 9: Lhasa B/L/D

After breakfast, marvel at Tibet's most iconic landmark, the Potala Palace. Guarded by gargantuan walls and turrets, this exceptional winter palace of the Dalai Lama majestically sits 100 metres above the city and continues to serve as a spiritual symbol of Tibetan Buddhism. After a short walk, gaze in awe at the golden blaze radiating from the 7th century spiritual hub of Jokhang Temple, which, unsurprisingly continues to attract thousands of pilgrims. Following in their footsteps, snake the pathways of Borkhar Bazaar, a buzzing market square which encompasses this 'House of Buddha', taking the opportunity to pick up a souvenir along the way.

DAY 10: Lhasa B/L/D

After breakfast, visit Norbulingka, a spellbinding palace complex and regal summer residence of the Dalai Lama. Translating as 'Jewel Garden', stroll around the luscious gardens, bursting with flourishing landscapes, before taking in the delights of the lavish 600 year old Sera Monastery. Nestled in the shadows of Tatiput Hill, wonder at this incredible monument's golden scriptures and elaborate murals which envelop the walls of one of the greatest monasteries in Tibet.

DAY 11: Lhasa to Shigatse B/L/D

Depart Lhasa this morning and bask in the early morning sunshine from your train to Shigatse. On arrival, enjoy a guided tour of the magnificent Tashilunpo Monastery, Tibet's largest religious establishment, and view the abundant temples and mesmerising golden tombs of former Panchan Lamas within this breathtaking spiritual complex. Continue to Gang Gyen carpet workshop to observe the skilled workmanship of local women, meticulously weaving and spinning traditional Tibetan carpets, characterised by their bright colours and intricate design.

DAY 12: Shigatse to Gyantse B/L/D

Experience an authentic taste of Tibetan life with a visit to an orthodox family home, gaining a fascinating insight into the ways in which religion has moulded their culture. This afternoon, discover the charm of Pelkor Chode Monastery, distinctive for its unique exterior and entrancing vistas of surrounding mountainsides and admire a multitude of Tibetan sutras, which continue to entice a constant influx of intrigued pilgrims.

DAY 13: Gyantse to Lhasa B/L/D

Enjoy a day of serenity with a visit to some of Tibet's most astounding scenery. Surrounded by towering snow-sprinkled mountaintops, pause at the peaceful freshwater lake of Yamdrok, an astonishing turquoise vision which glistens upon the sun's arrival. Next, prepare to be overwhelmed by the imposing Karola Glacier from the neighbouring highway only 300 metres away and look towards the wispy clouds and untouched white snow-capped peak, before returning to Lhasa this

evening.

DAY 14: Lhasa to Chengdu B/L/D

Following your morning flight to the diverse city of Chengdu, incorporate a visit to Chengdu People's Park; saunter this area of contrasts, basking in its tranquil charm with a refreshing cup of tea from a traditional teahouse, or alternatively, participate in a vivacious performance in Rockery Square. A pleasant meander leads to the quaint streets of Wide and Narrow Alleys, offering a laid-back atmosphere and glimpse of ancient Chengdu from its plentiful cafes and courtyards to Xian.

DAY 15: Chengdu B/L/D

Take delight in a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Chengdu Panda Breeding and Research Centre, home to one of China's largest panda habitats. From a close-up view, look out for pandas snacking on a tasty treat, or peeping out of treetops in enclosures built to imitate their natural habitat. Conclude your adventure tonight with a succulent Sichuan meal. Optional excursion (payable locally) – Immerse yourself in a night of vibrant dance and history at a Sichuan Culture Evening Show.

DAY 15: Chengdu to the UK B

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your return flight to the UK via Beijing

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP



Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience, location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotels to leisure hotels. Hotel accommodation is generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note there is no international classification system for hotels, and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and China. All group tours hotels have private bathroom facilities and air-conditioning, where needed.

Rest assured that all accommodation used by Mercury Holidays is regularly inspected by our staff and partners to ensure that standards meet

ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in Beijing you will be met by a representative from our local agent, **China Travel Service**, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/ **China Travel Service** representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your national guide will be on hand 24 hours a day should you have any queries, however if you need to contact your representative during your stay the details are:

Head office address

China Travel Service Head Office (Beijing) co. Ltd

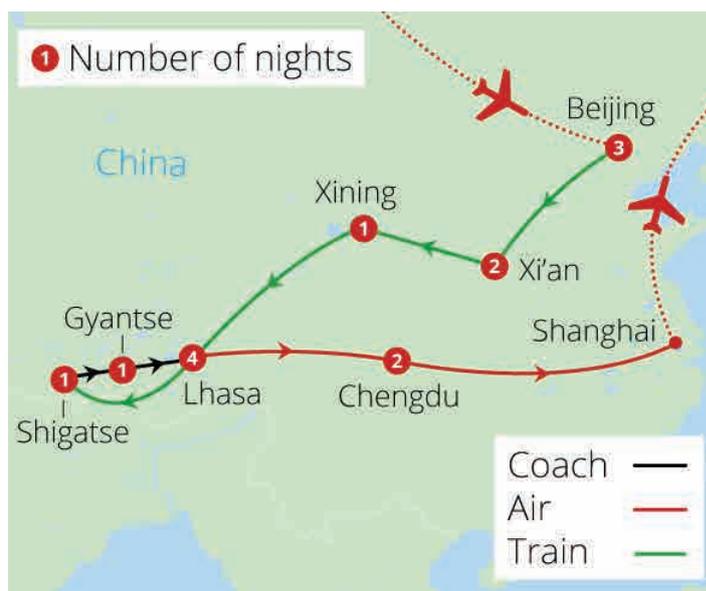
Address: Room 919, CITS tower, Dongdan North Road No.1 Dongcheng District, Beijing, China

Tel: 0086 10 8522 8725 / 0086 10 8522 8722

WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

Visas

A visa is required for entry into China. We work closely with The Travel Visa Company who will be able to arrange your visa for you on your behalf. Please call them on 01270 250 590 and quote 'Sunspot'. The cost of the visa is approximately £68.50, when calling the Travel Visa Company they will advise you of the most up to date fees. All applicants who wish to apply for a China Tourist Visa must do so in person at the Chinese Visa Application Centre in London, Manchester, Belfast or Edinburgh where fingerprint information will be collected. Fingerprints are not required for children under the age of 14 and adults over the age of 70. The visas take around 10 working days to issue and are valid for unlimited trips to China for 2 years from the date of issue. We therefore recommend that you apply for your visa 8 weeks before travel, however please be aware that your passport will be required for the application so make sure that you will not need it during this time. Please see the below information that may be required when applying for your Chinese Visa; Company license number ; 91110000710938407L



your needs.

Meals

Breakfast is always western style and served in the hotel each morning. Lunch and dinner will be taken in local Tibetan and Chinese restaurants and served with either one beer or soft drink. A variety of restaurants are visited giving you the chance to experience a range of dishes and flavours. Unlike the western world, the Chinese do not normally pre-heat their plates and food can be presented at a variety of temperatures.

Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for **China Travel Service**:

During Office Hours: 0086 10 85228725 OR 0086 10 85228722

After Office Hours: Ms. Linda Liu (Mobile): 0086 61 3911043036

Ms. Staring Wang (Mobile): 0086 61 3810153047

Company name: China Travel Service Head Office (Beijing)Co. Ltd Contactor mail: lhs.oz@ctsho.com You will require a visa for entry into Tibet. If you have a British passport we have included the cost of the visa in your tour and this will be arranged for you by our team in China. Important: in order for us to process your visa for Tibet you must provide us with a colour photocopy of your passport. Therefore, you do not need to organise a visa for Tibet before you travel. Please note: we can only arrange a visa for British passport holders, all other nationalities are on request and you must check with us prior to booking.

Insurance

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance

with Holiday Extras, please call 0800 781 4237 and quote 'WK830' for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Health and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check any health and vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include; www.fco.gov.uk, www.travelhealthpro.org.uk, www.hpa.org.uk, your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with a good level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves climbing of steep stairs and getting on and off coaches. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties.

All our tours feature a "Tour Pace" to help find the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights, climb stairs and get on and off coaches and boats. Our tour paces are marked with dots out of 3, with the differences being as follows:

- 1 Dot the tour is Easy-Going
- 2 Dots the tour is Intermediate
- 3 Dots the tour is Advanced

China and Tibet Rail Adventure is rated as 3 Dots meaning that the tour pace is Advanced. A higher level of fitness as required as you may be on your feet for most of the day though this will be interspersed with regular breaks and vary from day to day. You will be walking around the sights, getting on and off coaches, trains, boats and climbing steps which may be irregular. There may be some time spend at high altitude. You will stay in variety of hotels, possibly including overnight trains, and accommodation standards may not match those you are used to at home.

Our guides will always endeavor to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 10, and the maximum will be 40. If in the unlikely event there are less than 10 people booked on your tour date, we will endeavour to reduce any disruption to your holiday and try to operate your tour with lower passenger numbers. If we are not able to operate your departure date, then you may be asked to change to a different date and a full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

Tour Guides

This is an escorted tour meaning that you will be met by a local guide in each of the cities that you visit, ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

Tipping

It is at your customary to tip both your driver and guide. We would recommend to tip approximately £4.00 -£4.50 (CNY35.00 CNY40.00) per person per day. This is a total of £60 per person (CNY550.00) to budget for tips on your trip. For your convenience your local guide will collect tips at the beginning of each city visited. Tips are accepted in the Chinese Yuan.

Currency Exchange - IMPORTANT

The currency in China and Tibet is the Renminbi, known as RMB or CNY. It is often referred to as the yuan. We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. US Dollars are widely accepted in China and Tibet should you wish to keep an alternative currency on you.

WHAT TO PACK

- Sunglasses, sunscreen and hat in summer
- Warm clothing and thermals in winter
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Camera and charger
- A plug adaptor - the voltage in China & Tibet is 220 Volts. It is advisable to bring a multi-adaptor.
- Antibacterial hand gel

We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. It is important that you budget carefully and ensure you have the right form of currency before you arrive in the country. Cash machines will also be available throughout the tour in order to withdraw money in your local currency.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, any meals not included in the itinerary as well as drinks and any additional snacks. Approximately £300 person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour. It is a good idea to try and maintain a supply of small notes and change in the local currency for tipping or small purchases.

Itinerary changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. The schedules of the domestic airlines in country are subject to frequent changes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction &/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

Altitude Sickness

Altitude sickness is a fairly common condition that can occur when you ascend to a high altitude (generally higher than 2,500 metres above sea level) quickly. The decrease in atmospheric pressure can make breathing more difficult as the body is not able to take in as much oxygen. Most cases are mild with symptoms that can include: headache, nausea, dizziness and exhaustion. Several of the places in Tibet are located at high altitude (over 2,500 metres above sea level) including Lhasa, Shigatse and Gyantse. Therefore, you may find you experience some symptoms at this altitude. It is advised that at these high altitudes, you keep hydrated and avoid alcohol. If you do experience symptoms of altitude sickness during your tour, ensure you tell your guide immediately who will be able to advise the best thing for you to do. You can contact your GP before you travel for advice on medication for altitude sickness.

Tibet Permit

Passport and visa information are very necessary documents for applying Tibet Permit. It usually takes at least 20 days to get the Permit. Therefore your prompt information will be greatly helpful to improve our working efficiency. Please provide us your scanned photocopies of your passport and Visa to China 30 days prior to your departure.

In view of the particularity of Tibet, we will not bear any legal liability or compensation for any change of itinerary due to force majeure factors such as state policy or weather

Passport Information

A scanned copy of your Passport and Chinese Visa is required for this tour. This information is required at least 60 days prior to your departure. This is necessary information we require in order for us to apply for your Tibet Permit. Failure to provide this information on time may result in your booking being cancelled with cancellation charges as per our terms and conditions.

Public Holidays - China

If you are travelling within the below Chinese Public Holidays, please note that celebrations last for several days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open but may be crowded. Chinese New Year is on 25th January 2020 and Friday 12th February 2021. Golden Week public holidays fall annually between 1st – 3rd of May and 1st – 7th of October.

Please note; Lighters are not allowed on planes, trains or sights of special interest, such as Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City, The Temple of Heaven, Terracotta Warriors, Wild Goose Pagoda, Potala Palace. Spray cans of any form are not allowed on trains or planes.

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Your initial flight is to **Beijing Airport** with **Air China (CA)**, departing from **London Heathrow Terminal 2**.

IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

Baggage Allowance

Each passenger is entitled to 20KG of hold luggage plus 1 item of hand luggage not exceeding (Max 7kg - 50cm/37cm/25cm) in size and 1 personal item such as a handbag, briefcase or laptop case. Weight restrictions will be finalized on E-ticket receipt. Should you wish to take additional luggage you will need to pay extra at check-in. Check-in should be at least 3 hours before departure.

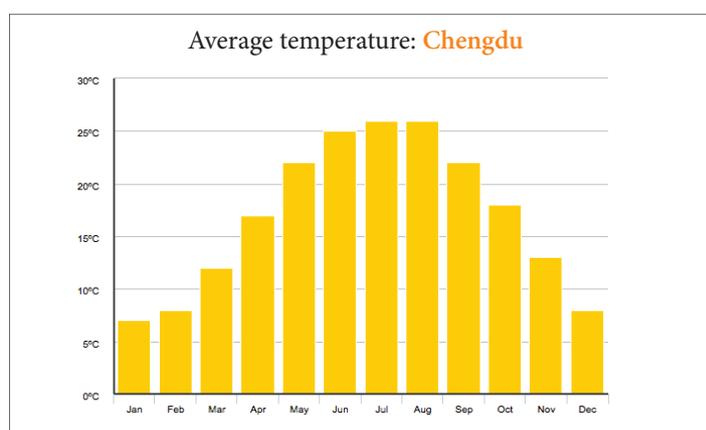
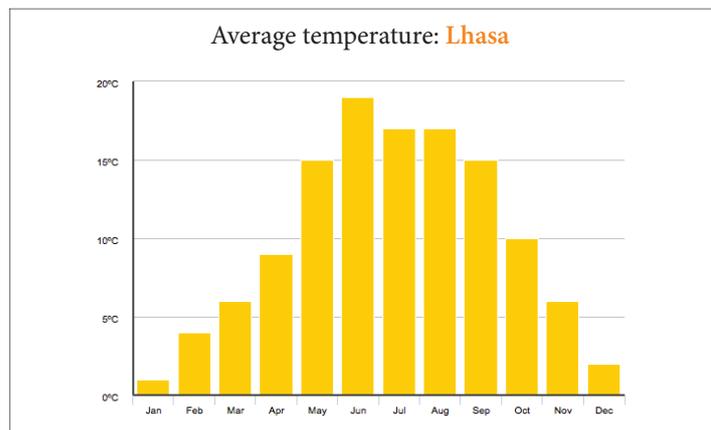
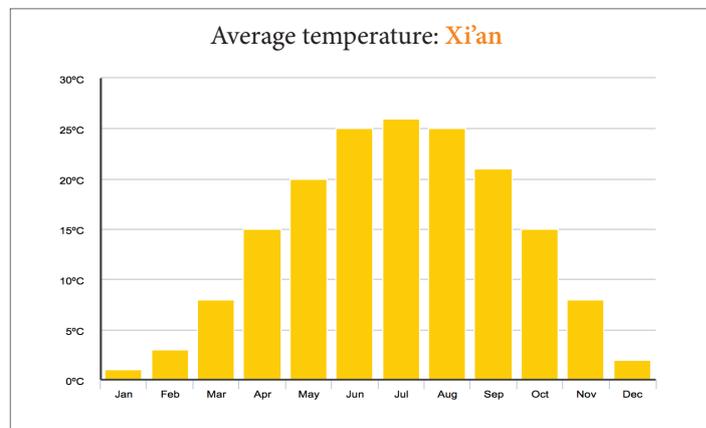
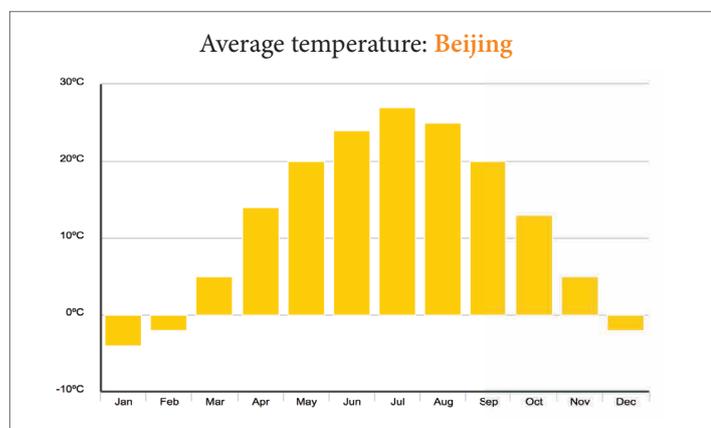
Please note that the hand luggage allowance for your internal flight is weight of 5kg not exceeding 20cm*30cm*40cm in size.

Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras on 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

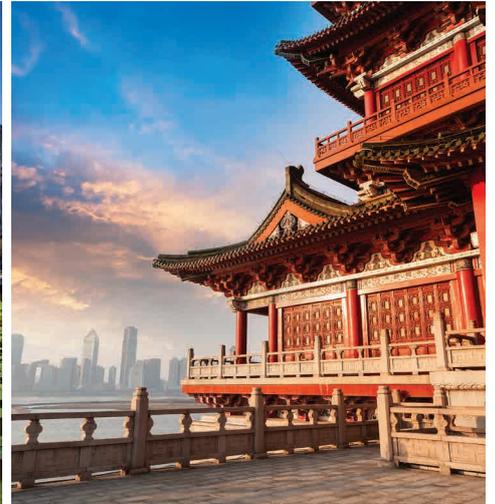
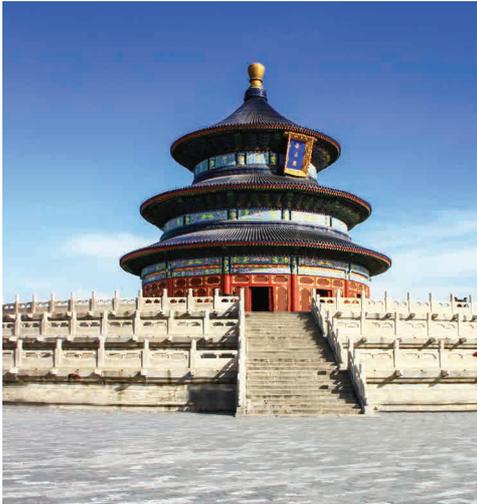
WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



BEIJING CITY STAY

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0843 224 0723



TRIP OVERVIEW

One of China's six ancient capitals, Beijing truly is an extraordinary place to visit. With a rich history spanning over 5,000 years and famous sites including the Great Wall, Tiananmen Square and the Summer Palace, this city promises to intrigue and delight.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require during your extension tour to Beijing.

Hotel

Your 2 night stay in Beijing on Bed and Breakfast will take place at the following hotel:

Beijing (2 nights) 4★ Landmark Hotel

Positioned in the heart of Beijing's bustling City Centre, this elegant and contemporary 4★ hotel benefits from its prime position, close to top cultural and tourist attractions. Relax and unwind at the hotel's superb guest facilities including an indoor swimming pool, sauna room and spa facilities and experience Beijing's diverse cuisine with 11 varied offerings from the hotel's fantastic restaurant

Hotel Information

4★ Landmark Hotel

Address: 8 North Dongsanhuan Road, Beijing, China, 100004

Contact number: 0086 10 6590 6688

Meals

Breakfast is included every day and is western style and served in the hotel each morning. No other meals are included for your add-on.

Currency

The currency in China is the Renminbi, known as RMB or CNY. It is often referred to as the yuan. We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. US Dollars are widely accepted in China should you wish to keep an alternative currency on you.

Tour Guides

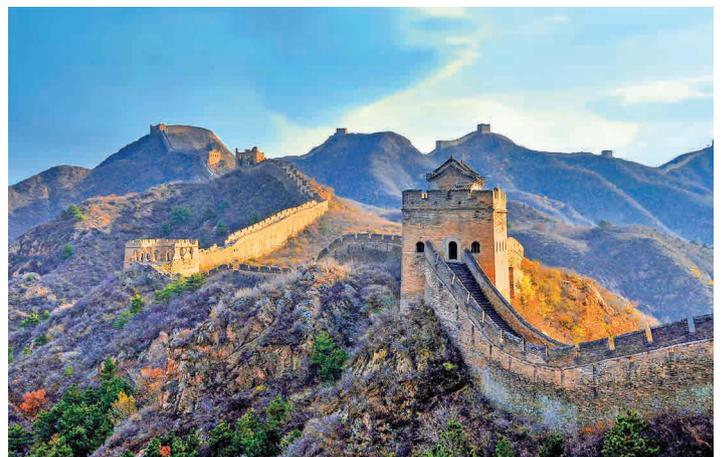
Your stay in Beijing is not escorted by a tour guide and your time will be free to explore the area at your own pace.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any lunches and dinners, as well as personal purchases, such as souvenirs, laundry and drinks.



4★ Landmark Hotel



FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0843 224 0723**