



China Highlights

Overview & Itinerary

Start	Shanghai, China
Finish	Beijing, China
Destination	China
Style	Original
Theme	Explorer
Code	CBSD
Trip rating	4.79
Validity	01 Jan 2019 to 31 Dec 2019

Is this trip right for you?

- The overnight train travel included on this trip is in "hard sleeper" class – carriages sectioned off into 3 tier/6 berth compartments. It's not luxury, but it's efficient and a great local experience. If you would prefer more comfort, upgrades to "soft sleeper" (2 tier/4 berth compartments with lockable doors) can be requested, subject to availability, through your booking agent. If you would prefer a trip without overnight train travel, check out our Explore China (CBKS – 2019 only), China: Great Wall Hike, Bike & Kung Fu (CBXG – 2019 only) or South China: Hike, Bike & Kayak (CBXA – 2019 only) trips.
- Be prepared for some long travel days as we need to cover plenty of ground in order to see China's main highlights and include a good variety of experiences.
- We pack a lot in over a short amount of time, so we highly recommend extra time in Shanghai and Beijing before or after your trip to experience more of what these great cities have to offer.
- As a short, city-based trip there isn't a lot of time to experience China's beautiful natural landscapes or get further off the beaten track. If you have more time to explore, consider our Yunnan & Tiger Leaping Gorge (CBSP), North or South China Getaway (CBRF & CBRS), China Experience (CBSE), or Travel the Silk Road (CBSZ) trips.

Physical rating



You will be expected to carry your own luggage, including moving about busy public transport hubs, up stairs and escalators and on and off buses and trains. Although you won't be required to walk long distances, you are expected to be able to walk and handle your own luggage for up to 30 minutes. Good general fitness and mobility plays a big part in making your trip more enjoyable. In some locations it may be possible to hire porters at extra expense paid locally. Please ask your trip leader for help to arrange this if possible but be prepared to manage your own luggage.

Joining point

Greenland Jiu Long Hotel 绿地·九龙宾馆
601 Liyang Road 上海市溧阳路601号 (海宁路)
Shanghai
CHINA
Phone: +86 2165418228

Joining point description

Rooms at the Greenland Jiu Long Hotel are equipped with air conditioning, TV, kettle and private bathroom facilities.

Joining point instructions

An arrival transfer from the airport/train station is available if arranged at the time of booking. Transfers cannot be arranged on arrival. Please advise your flight/train arrival details no later than 14 days prior to your departure. If you plan to arrive earlier, this arrival transfer can only be offered in conjunction with pre-tour accommodation booked through Intrepid.

If you have pre-arranged an arrival transfer with us, our local operator will have sent a driver to the airport who will be holding a sign with the Intrepid logo and your name on it. If there's any issue with meeting your transfer driver, then you can call Mr. Ma Hong Yu at +86 13806208148 from the information center in the airport.

Pudong Airport:

If you choose to travel to the joining point by public transport, you can either take the maglev to Longyang station or take the subway to our hotel by changing twice. Greenland Jiulong Hotel is close to Hailun station on Line 4 (Exit 3) The Airport is 45km from Shanghai Pudong International Airport, approx 200CNY by taxi.

Hongqiao Airport:

If you are landing at Hongqiao international airport, you can take the metro to our hotel which is about 1km to Northern Sichuan Road on Line 10 (Exit 3). It is 19km from Hongqiao international airport to hotel, a taxi would cost around CNY 90.

Problems and emergency contact information

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip, it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local representative straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader/local partner may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction - if this is the case, please ask the leader to speak to their direct manager.

You may also choose to provide details in your online feedback, which we ask you to complete within 30 days of the end of your trip. But we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

For general contact details please use the following page: <http://www.intrepidtravel.com/ourtrips/contact/>

In the case of a genuine crisis or emergency, please contact our local office:

Intrepid's Beijing Office: +861064067328

Itinerary

[+ Expand All](#)

Day 1: Shanghai

Nimen Hao! Welcome to China. Blending 21st-century architecture with old-world character, Shanghai pulses with the beat of new China. Your adventure begins with a meeting at 6 pm this evening. Please look for a note in the hotel lobby or ask reception where it will take place. Settle into your hotel then get a feel for this vibrant city and its bright lights, fevered trade and frenetic pace. The evening is free for your first exploration of the city – perhaps get a taste of Shanghai's eclectic food scene, which draws influence from far beyond China's walls.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Day 2: Shanghai - Xitang

Join your leader today for a walking tour that'll take you back in time. At the Bund you can get a taste of 1920s Shanghai; its spectacular array of Art Deco buildings line what was once the most important financial street in Asia. Wander the narrow winding lanes (longtangs) of Old Shanghai, where you can get a real glimpse into the locals' daily life. Explore the European-influenced French Concession and the tree-lined avenues and Tudor mansions of Luwan's Huaihai Road. In the afternoon, leave Shanghai in the rearview mirror and make the two-hour journey to Xitang, a nearby water town. Once a hub for 19th-century businessmen, Xitang turns on the charm in the evening when all the day trippers go home. Take a stroll along lantern-lit canals and ask your leader for advice on which hole-in-the-wall eatery to pick from, enjoying some classic Chinese cuisine while watching the lights reflected on the waters' surface.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Shanghai - Walking tour

Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Day 3: Xitang - Overnight train

Rise and shine to explore the streets of Xitang. Wander across charming bridges and relax by the canals, sip steaming cups of tea, learn about local history at one of the many museums or simply get lost among the maze of peaceful cobblestone streets – a welcome break from the bustle of modern Shanghai. Return to Shanghai and board an overnight hard sleeper train bound for Xi'an. The journey will take around 15 hours in total, though you'll hopefully be sleeping for most of it. Train travel in China may not be entirely luxurious but it's certainly one of the best ways to come face to face with the country and its people, as it's the main form of transport for locals.

Accommodation

- Overnight Sleeper Train (1 night)

Included Activities

- Xitang - Walking tour

Optional Activities

- Xitang - Gondola ride - CNY120

Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Special Information

Train compartments are open-plan and clean with padded three-tiered berths (6 to a compartment). We will group our travellers together whenever possible, but this will depend on group size and ticket availability. Sheets, pillows and a blanket are provided, though some travellers prefer to bring their own sleeping sheet. Safe, hot drinking water is always available.

It is a good idea to bring a mug, spoon, knife and fork if you will be preparing your own hot drinks or food on the train (as these are not provided in cabins). Basic bathroom facilities with toilets and washbasins are situated at the end of each carriage. As toilet paper isn't always available, it's best to bring an emergency supply. Keep in mind general train cleanliness may not be to the same standards you are accustomed to. Food is available on the train, but it's a good idea to stock up on snacks for the trip. An optional upgrade from a hard sleeper to a soft sleeper berth (4 travellers per compartment with a lockable

Day 4: Xi'an

Arrive in Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi Province and the largest city in northwest China. Once the imperial centre of China for 2000 years, Xi'an is now a vibrant, modern city dotted with many interesting historical sites and is a great place to explore. Today you'll join your leader on a short walking tour to uncover what was once the start of the ancient Silk Road. Perhaps visit the Bell & Drum Towers, the former built (according to legend) to restrain the dragons that were causing earthquakes, the latter is (unsurprisingly) full of drums, once used to mark time and warn of emergencies. The city also has a wonderful Muslim Quarter, and you'll wander past quaint shops, lively markets, groups of white-bearded men in skull caps sipping tea in cafes and the Great Mosque, one of the most important in China. See the City Walls and Gates, running over 13 kilometres around the city, then check out your eclectic food options ranging from delicious Muslim fare to great Chinese dumplings. Perhaps visit the night markets and try some of the tantalising local specialties such as pao mo (lamb broth with flat bread), hand-pulled noodles and meat skewers.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Xi'an - Muslim Quarter walking tour

Optional Activities

- Xi'an - Small Wild Goose Pagoda - CNY50
- Xi'an - Cycling on City Wall - CNY80
- Xi'an - Great Mosque - CNY25
- Xi'an - Bell & Drum Towers - CNY50
- Xi'an - Cycling on City Wall - CNY99
- Xi'an - Big Wild Goose Pagoda - CNY80

Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Day 5: Xi'an

Today you'll journey outside of Xi'an (approximately 2 hours) and visit what is undoubtedly one of the man-made wonders of the world – the Terracotta Warriors. Learn all about this incredible archaeological find, which was discovered after being buried for 2000 years. These clay statues depicting soldiers, horses and chariots were commissioned by the emperor Qin Shi Huangdi as part of his mausoleum after he ascended to the throne in 264 BC. See over 1000 warriors, each individually sculpted from clay and with a different costume, height and facial expression. Afterwards you'll enjoy lunch with a local family nearby.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Xi'an - Terracotta Warriors
- Xi'an - Home-cooked lunch

Meals Included

- Lunch

Day 6: Great Wall

Today is a big day of travelling so grab some snacks for the journey. Transfer to the railway station then board the high-speed train to Beijing (approx. six hours). Watch the landscape change from farmland and villages to industrialised cities and urban sprawl. On arrival in Beijing, board a private vehicle and make the three-hour drive into the countryside, where you'll spend the night in a family-run guesthouse. This evening your host will show you how to make dumplings for dinner.

Accommodation

- Guesthouse (1 night)

Included Activities

- Great Wall - Dumpling making

Meals Included

- Dinner

Special Information

Please note that our guesthouse tonight is relatively basic comparing to the hotels we stay on this trip, though all rooms have private facilities and wifi is available. Despite the basic facilities of the guesthouse, you'll surely enjoy the warm hospitality of our hosts here. In winter months (Nov-Feb) accommodation may be in an alternate guesthouse from warmer months, with better heating.

Day 7: Great Wall - Beijing

This morning you'll visit a section of the Great Wall and spend some time exploring, taking photos and learning the history of this mighty site (and sight). An incredible piece of engineering, the wall stretches 6000 kilometres west from Beijing. It was originally constructed to protect Chinese empires from invaders from the north and even though it failed in this purpose, it's still one of the country's most remarkable achievements and an iconic destination. Stroll along the top of the wall, which snakes through the hills almost endlessly into the distance, and you may feel like you have it all to yourself. You'll then journey back to Beijing (approx. 3 hours) – your last stop on your tour. The capital of the most populous country on earth, Beijing is frenetic city with ancient pockets. There are plenty of places that will give you a great insight into the nation's ancient past as well as China's contemporary culture.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Great Wall - Jinshanling section

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Special Information

There are many steps and slopes on the way, so you'll need to concentrate hard to keep your footing. You'll need reasonable fitness and walking shoes with good support and grip for this activity. Please note that in winter months (Nov-Feb), we may do a day trip to Great Wall depending on the weather and heating condition at our guesthouses.

Day 8: Beijing

Make your way to the centre of the city. Tiananmen Square – supposedly the largest downtown square in the world – is the symbolic centre of Chinese power. Framed by the Gate of Heavenly Peace, Mao's Mausoleum and the Great Hall of the People, it's a place of pilgrimage for the Chinese tourists who consider it to be the heart of their nation. It's from here that you'll enter the enormous Forbidden City, which was built more than 500 years ago and has been off limits to commoners for almost all that time. Despite the transformation of the city around it, the Forbidden City looks much like it always has. Explore the halls and courtyards and you'll appreciate the might and grandeur of the Imperial Chinese court during the Ming and Qing dynasties. In the afternoon, enjoy some free time to explore on your own. Maybe check out the Temple of Heaven before getting together with your fellow travellers for a farewell dinner. There's no better way to celebrate the end of your journey than with a crispy Peking duck unless, of course, you don't eat duck.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Beijing - Tian'anmen Square & Forbidden City
- Beijing - Tiananmen Square

Optional Activities

- Beijing - Temple of Heaven - CNY40

Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Day 9: Beijing

There are no activities planned for the final day and you are able to depart the accommodation at any time after check out. There's so much to see and do in Beijing so we highly recommend staying an extra few days. Perhaps take a trip to the 798 Art District, cycle round the city with Beijing Urban Adventures or explore the beautiful, Tibetan-style monastery of Yonghegong (the Lama Temple).

Optional Activities

- Beijing - Beijing by Bike Urban Adventure - CNY530
- Beijing - Lama Temple - CNY25

Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Finishing point

King Parkview Hotel (Huayu Hotel) 北京华育宾馆
55 Shatan Hou Street 地址: 北京东城区沙滩后街 55号 (近五四 大街, 在景山公园东门对面的胡同里)
Dong Cheng District
Beijing
100009
CHINA
Phone: +86 (010)58757888

Finishing point description

King Parkview Hotel is centrally located in Beijing, close to many historical and cultural landmarks, including Jinshan Park, the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square and the National Art Museum, and the hutong area. The hotel offers comfortable rooms including en-suite bathroom, TV & AC. Hotel rooms may include a vanity pack which are not complimentary. You will be charged at checkout if you open or use the vanity pack.

Finishing point instructions

Beijing Capital International airport is located north-east of Beijing, 25 km from the city centre. One of the biggest airports in the world, it is relatively easy to navigate and many signs are written in English. Most international flights take off from Terminal 3.

For more information about Beijing Capital Airport, please go to <http://en.bcia.com.cn/>

A departure transfer from the airport is available if arranged at the time of booking. Please advise your departure flight details at least 14 days prior to your departure. If you plan to stay longer, this departure transfer can only be offered in conjunction with post-tour accommodation booked through us.

If you plan to make your own way to the airport:

Your tour leader can advise you when is the best time to leave for your flight depending on local traffic condition. It is suggested to leave from your hotel at least 3 hours before your flight time. Taxi is the easiest way to go to the airport. It should take around 45 minutes to 1 hour to Beijing Capital Airport at about CNY120 under normal condition.

Alternatively, you can take metro or taxi to Dongzhimen airport express station, which should cost around CNY30 (taxi). Then take the airport express from Dongzhimen (CNY25, service time: 06:00 – 22:30) to Beijing Capital Airport.

Alternate Finishing points

For trips departing on the following dates, use this finish point.

06 Apr 2019 (CBS190406), 12 Apr 2019 (CBS190412), 20 Apr 2019 (CBS190420), 21 Apr 2019 (CBS190421), 04 May 2019 (CBS190504), 09 Jun 2019 (CBS190609), 15 Jun 2019 (CBS190615), 06 Jul 2019 (CBS190706), 07 Jul 2019 (CBS190707), 14 Jul 2019 (CBS190714), 20 Jul 2019 (CBS190720), 03 Aug 2019 (CBS190803), 10 Aug 2019 (CBS190810), 17 Aug 2019 (CBS190817), 24 Aug 2019 (CBS190824), 01 Sep 2019 (CBS190901), 08 Oct 2019 (CBS191008), 09 Nov 2019 (CBS191109)

Beijing GuanTong JianHui Hotel

No.6, Yaziqiao Rd,Guanganmen, Xicheng District, Xicheng, Beijing, China

Beijing

100055

CHINA

Phone: +8610 5791 6699

Description

Featuring a fitness center, each room at this hotel is air conditioned and is equipped with a flat-screen TV with cable channels. You can also find laundry facilities and an electric kettle in the room. All rooms come with a private bathroom. For your comfort, you will find slippers, free toiletries and a hairdryer. A buffet style breakfast is served at the hotel. The on-site restaurant features an international buffet and an a la carte menu of authentic Chinese dishes. Guests can also enjoy relaxing and refreshing drinks at the on-site coffee house.

Instructions

Beijing Capital International airport is located north-east of Beijing, 25 km from the city centre. One of the biggest airports in the world, it is relatively easy to navigate and many signs are written in English. Most international flights take off from Terminal 3.

For more information about Beijing Capital Airport, please go to <http://en.bcia.com.cn/>

A departure transfer from the airport is available if arranged at the time of booking. Please advise your departure flight details at least 14 days prior to your departure. If you plan to stay longer, this departure transfer can only be offered in conjunction with post-tour accommodation booked through us.

If you plan to make your own way to the airport:

Your tour leader can advise you when is the best time to leave for your flight depending on local traffic condition. It is suggested to leave from your hotel at least 4 hours before your flight time. Taxi is the easiest way to go to the airport. It should take around 1 hour to Beijing Capital Airport at about CNY150 under normal condition.

Alternatively, you can take taxi to Dongzhimen airport express station, which should cost around CNY50(taxi). Then take the airport express from Dongzhimen (CNY25, service time: 06:00 – 22:30) to Beijing Capital Airport.

Itinerary disclaimer

ITINERARY CHANGES:

Our itineraries are updated regularly throughout the year based on customer feedback and to reflect the current situation in each destination. The information included in this Essential Trip Information may therefore differ from when you first booked your trip. It is important that you print and review a final copy prior to travel so that you have the latest updates. Due to weather, local conditions, transport schedules, public holidays or other factors, further changes may be necessary to your itinerary once in country. The order and timing of included activities in each location may also vary seasonally to ensure our travellers have the best experience. Your tour leader will keep you up to date with any changes once on tour.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

A selection of optional activities that have been popular with past travellers are listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This isn't an exhaustive list and should be used as a guide only for some of what might be available. Prices are approximate, are for entrance only, and don't include transport to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated. All activities are subject to availability. It may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination, so some pre-planning for what you are most interested in is advised. When it's recommended that travellers pre-book these activities, look for a note in the Special Information section of the day-to-day itinerary. For most, they can either be organised independently on the day, or let your leader know you are interested and they can assist.

Where activities are considered medium or high risk, we work with operators whose safety and credentials we have sighted and assessed. Although it is possible that you may find the same activity cheaper with another operator on the ground, we cannot vouch for the safety or quality of that operator. Medium and high risk activities not listed above have not been assessed by us and as such our staff and leaders are unable to assist you with organising these activities. Activities that contravene our Responsible Travel policies are also not listed. Please remember that the decision to partake in any activity not listed is at your own discretion and risk.

URBAN ADVENTURES:

Join us for the Best. Day. Ever. Urban Adventures are for those who want to get away from the tourist crowds and really connect with a city, with a local by their side. The experience can be as short as a couple of hours, or as long as a whole day, but in every case our Urban Adventures tours take travellers to interesting places to experience local culture and see what makes a place unique. If you are travelling before or after your trip with us and would like to book an Urban Adventure in advance, please contact your booking agent or use this link: <http://www.urbanadventures.com/?aff=2226>. While on tour with us, your leader can assist in booking other Urban Adventures.

Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! We rely on your feedback. We read it carefully. Feedback helps us understand what we are doing well and what we could be doing better. It allows us to make improvements for future travellers.

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/feedback/>

Essential Trip Information

Important notes

1. A Single Supplement to have your own room is available on this trip, excluding the overnight train.
2. A scanned copy of the personal details page of your passport needs to be sent to your booking agent no later than 40 days before departure in order for us to purchase your train tickets.
3. Overnight train accommodation on this tour is in 6-berth 'hard-sleeper' class. Bedding is provided and wash basins and toilets (squat/western) are available in each carriage, but there are no shower facilities. An upgrade to a Soft Sleeper train compartment (4-berth compartment) is available to book on this trip.
5. Please note while traveling through mainland China you will not be able to access some popular internet websites.

Passport and visas

As a general rule most countries expect that your passport has a minimum of 6 months validity remaining. Please ensure the name on your passport matches the name on your booking and airline tickets. Your passport details are required to complete your booking. Your consultant will contact you when this is required.

Take a copy of the main passport pages and other important documents with you, and leave another copy at home with family or friends.

Visas are the responsibility of the individual traveller. Entry requirements can change at any time, so it's important that you check for the latest information. Please visit the relevant consular website of the country or countries you're visiting for detailed and up-to-date visa information specific to your nationality. Your consultant will also be happy to point you in the right direction with acquiring visas. Visas can take several weeks to process, so familiarise yourself with any requirements as soon as you have booked your trip to allow for processing time.

CHINA VISA

Most nationalities require a visa for mainland China. You must obtain your Chinese visa in advance. It is not possible to get a visa on arrival and Chinese visas can be difficult to obtain outside your country of residence. You may be able to apply for your visa in Hong Kong if you have time here before your trip departs. You will need a Single Entry Tourist for your trip valid for 30 days.

Hong Kong is not considered part of mainland China for immigration purposes and most nationalities do not require a visa. Please check with an embassy for specific requirements for Hong Kong.

Please make sure if you have a transit anywhere in China before arriving at your destination that you check with your airline to see if the transit will require using your visa.

INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR CHINESE VISA APPLICATION:

List the destinations you will visit in China in chronological order on your application form. Do not mention Tibet anywhere on your application form, even if your tour goes here. You will be given a specific itinerary to use if booking a Tibet trip. While Tibet is not off limits to travellers, you must first obtain a Chinese visa BEFORE we apply for your Tibet permit on your behalf.

Including Tibet on your visa application without being booked on a government arranged tour will lead to your visa being rejected.

Name of Host/Inviting Organisation:

Intrepid Travel Beijing Co. Ltd.
606 InterChina Commercial Building
33 Dengshikou Street
Dongcheng District
Beijing 100006
+86 10 6406 8022

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR CHINESE VISA APPLICATION:

- * Hotel List - this will be sent to you by Intrepid or your travel agent at time of booking. If you do not receive this, email us with your booking number and trip details.
- * Official invitation from licensed Chinese tourism company - this will be provided from us together with the Hotel List to all travellers regardless of whether it is required by the consulate or not and will assist with your application.
- * Itinerary - print off a copy of your specific trip itinerary from our website www.intrepidtravel.com and include it with your application, marking the dates you will visit each destination if required (exception - Tibet tours)
- * Photocopy of your passport
- * Passport size photos (up to 4 may be required)
- * Check with the consulate for any other specific requirements

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR CHINESE TRAIN TICKET BOOKINGS:

Intrepid requires you send the following at the time of booking or at least 30 days prior to travel:

* Clear, colour scanned copy of the personal details page of your passport

(Please make sure that this copy is for the passport that you will be travelling on. If you have to renew your passport after booking please notify us as soon as you have a new passport number and bring your old passport with you on your trip in case it is requested)

Medical and health information

All travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully on this trip. When selecting your trip please make sure you have read through the itinerary carefully and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please note that if, in the opinion of our group leader or local guide, any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, Intrepid Travel reserves the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information or for any necessary vaccinations before departure. We recommend that you carry a first aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements as they may not easily be obtained at the locations on this trip. Please ensure that you are adequately prepared.

AIR POLLUTION IN CHINA:

Air pollution is a recognized issue for travelers in China, particularly in Beijing where the geographical location of the city exacerbates its effects. We provide travellers with certified PM (particulate matter) face masks as an option to be worn as protection during times of high levels of pollution. On days where the Air Quality Index (AQI) is above 101, some activities may be altered for the health and safety of our travellers and leaders. The US Embassy in Beijing provides a hourly updated AQI reading and explanation of the levels here: <http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/aqirecent3.html>

The high levels of air pollution in major urban and industrialised areas in China may aggravate bronchial, sinus or asthma conditions. Children, the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions may be especially affected. Please ensure you bring the required medication with you if you have any of these type of medical conditions.

You can check the pollution index levels for many cities on the following website: <http://aqicn.org/city/beijing/>

Food and dietary requirements

FOOD IN CHINA:

What IS authentic Chinese food like? Check out these articles to get a taste:

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/china-food-trip-blog/>

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/china-food-stereotypes/>

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/a-guide-to-traditional-chinese...>

VEGETARIANS & VEGANS

Vegetarians in China certainly won't go hungry as there are always plenty of meat free options on menus including vegetable, tofu and egg dishes. Your leader can advise on some local favourites. Dairy is uncommon in Chinese cooking, although in some regions like Tibet, Xinjiang and Yunnan you will find milk products as part of the local cuisine. Vegans should also have few problems finding tasty meals in most locations. Nearly all cities will have vegetarian restaurants, often near to temples or monasteries that specialise in Buddhist cuisine. Check out this blog for a guide to eating vegetarian in Beijing: <https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/a-vegetarians-guide-to-beijing/>

DIETARY NEEDS

Wherever possible we will cater for dietary needs for included meals, but there may be times when those with special requirements may wish to supplement inclusions with their own supplies from markets or supermarkets.

ALLERGIES

For those suffering from particular food allergies, your group leader will endeavor to disclose to their fullest knowledge the main ingredients in dishes being consumed. It is, however, your personal responsibility to ensure that you do not ingest any foods to which you are allergic.

Accommodation

Hotel (6 nights), Overnight Sleeper Train (1 night), Guesthouse (1 night)

OCCASIONAL ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION

The style of accommodation indicated in the day-to-day itinerary is a guideline. On rare occasions, alternative arrangements may need to be made due to the lack of availability of rooms in our usual accommodation. A similar standard of accommodation will be used in these instances.

TWIN SHARE / MULTI SHARE BASIS

Accommodation on this trip is on a twin/multishare basis. Please note there may be times where facilities will be shared rather than ensuite and rare occasions when you share a room with passengers travelling on our different trips than your own.

CHECK-IN TIME

Throughout the trip we request that our hotels prepare rooms in time for our arrival, especially if we're arriving prior to normal check-in time. However this isn't always possible which means we won't be able to check-in immediately on arrival at some hotels. Instead, we can store our luggage and explore our new destination.

PRE/POST TRIP ACCOMMODATION

If you've purchased pre-trip or post-trip accommodation (if available), you may be required to change rooms from your trip accommodation for these extra nights.

CHINA**HOTEL ROOMS:**

Some travellers have reported that hotels/accommodation in this region tend to have harder bed mattresses than those they are used to at home. You may like to request an extra quilt or bedding from the hotels if you find this an issue.

SMOKING ROOMS:

Smoking is prevalent in China and hotels generally do not offer specific non smoking rooms. Larger hotels with central air conditioning will sometimes transport the smell of smoke between rooms. While we ask our hotels to ensure our rooms are well cleaned and ventilated well before occupation in some cases this is not possible, and the smell of smoke may linger. Please speak to your leader about the possibility of changing rooms if you encounter this.

WIFI:

WiFi is often available in hotel reception areas and sometimes in rooms. Your leader will be able to advise on the best places to get connected.

HARD SLEEPER TRAINS CHINA:

We use hard sleeper class trains for most of our overnight train journeys in China. These are not as rough as they sound - compartments are open-plan, clean, with padded berths (6 to a compartment) and sheets, a blanket/quilt & pillow provided. We recommend bringing your own sleeping sheet if you are concerned about the quality/cleanliness of sheets being not what you are used to. Most trains have a dining carriage where meals or snacks are available and all have hot water in each carriage for tea and instant noodles. While we aim to have our groups staying together there may be times where due to ticket availability the group will be staying in different compartments and carriages. Those travellers opting for a Soft Sleeper Upgrade (where available) may need to board the train from a separate waiting area and be in another carriage from the rest of the group. While railway services are rapidly being modernised in China, some train journeys on less frequented routes may use older rolling stock and the carriages of a more basic standard.

SOFT SLEEPER UPGRADE:

An optional upgrade from a hard sleeper to a soft sleeper berth (4 travellers per compartment with a lockable door) may be available for some overnight train journeys on this trip for those who are after a little more comfort. Travellers who are interested in purchasing this upgrade should be aware of the following:

- Soft sleeper carriages are often at the other end of the train from hard sleeper class where those travellers who have not booked the upgrade, along with the group leader, will be staying. If you've purchased the upgrade it's likely that you'll be away from the other members of the group and without the services of your group leader while on the train.
- At many railway stations in China, soft sleeper passengers board the train separately from those in other carriage classes. If you have purchased the upgrade it's likely that you'll need to board the train on your own. Your group leader will give you instructions but may not be able to assist you in boarding and alighting the train.
- If you've purchased the upgrade you'll be sharing a compartment with locals or other travellers. Compartments are not segregated by gender so please be aware you could be sharing with members of the opposite sex.
- While we aim to book tickets for all travellers who have purchased the upgrade in the same carriages and compartments, please note that we aren't able to guarantee this due to high demand for tickets on some routes and at peak times.
- We are unable to offer the upgrade during the busy times for train travel in China including New Years, May National holidays, Summer holidays and October national holidays.
- This service is only available for travellers who have purchased the upgrade prior to joining the trip. On rare occasions it may be possible to upgrade to a different carriage class once on the train itself for an additional cost paid to the train conductor but this can't be guaranteed and shouldn't be relied on as an option. If you would like to ensure you travel soft sleeper class on all train journeys you will need to purchase the upgrade at time of booking your trip.

GUESTHOUSES

In smaller, rural locations in China we often stay in guesthouses, which are mostly small family run establishments. Facilities are basic compared to hotels and towels may not be provided. Please note that on occasion the group may be accommodated in separate guest houses or home stays within walking distance of each other.

Transport

Overnight Sleeper Train, Private Vehicle, Public Bus, High Speed Train, Subway

Money matters**SPENDING MONEY:**

When it comes to spending money on the trip, every traveller is a little different. You know your spending habits better than we do, so please budget a sensible amount for things like meals not included, drinks, shopping, optional activities and laundry. It's always better to bring a little more than you think you'll need. Also make sure you've read your trip details thoroughly so you know what's included in the trip price and what isn't. This should make budgeting a little easier. You'll find this info in the Inclusions section of your Essential Trip Information (that's this document).

CHINA

The official currency in China is the Yuan or Renminbi (CNY). 1 renminbi (yuan) = 10 jiao (mao).

ATMs are widespread, so the easiest way to access cash on your trip is to bring a credit/debit card. Please check with your bank about overseas withdrawal fees before you depart and look for ATMs with your card logo. You may find that your card does not work in certain ATMs, so we recommend purchasing some CNY in your home country so you have some cash for your first day.

Currency exchange is available at major banks and some hotels. The easiest foreign currencies to exchange are USD and EUR, however please be aware of the security risk of carrying large amounts of cash. Commission is sometimes charged for currency exchange. Check the rate before you exchange and carefully check the amount you are given and ask for a receipt.

Please note that due to restrictions on currency conversion for foreigners in China it may not be possible to change left over CNY back into foreign currency, so please plan your budget and spending money well by withdrawing/exchanging what you need as you go.

TIPPING IN CHINA:

If you're happy with the services provided a tip - though not compulsory - is appropriate. While it may not be customary to you, it's of great significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels, inspires excellent service, and is an entrenched feature of the tourism industry across many of our destinations. Although can be difficult to source we advise you to carry small notes of local currency each day to make tipping easier.

In China tipping is not compulsory, but has become expected in the travel industry and is considered a way of showing appreciation for great service.

The following amounts are per person suggestions based on local considerations and feedback from our past travellers:

- Restaurants, markets, and taxi drivers - tipping is not customary and is not expected by the locals.
- Local guides: Throughout your trip you may at times have a local guide in addition to your tour leader. We suggest US\$2-US\$5 per day for local guides depending on their service and their involvement with the group.
- Drivers: You may have a range of drivers on your trip. Some may be with you for a short journey while others may be with you for several days. We would suggest a higher tip for those more involved with the group, however we suggest US\$2-US\$4 per day for drivers.
- Your Tour Leader: You may also consider tipping your tour leader for outstanding service throughout your trip. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline US\$4-US\$6 per person, per day can be used. Of course you are free to tip more or less as you see fit, depending on your perception of service quality and the length of your trip. Remember, a tip is not compulsory and should only be given when you receive excellent service.

Please don't tip with coins, very small denomination notes, or dirty and ripped notes. This is regarded culturally as an insult.

Depending on the type of trip you are doing and the number of local staff involved, your tour leader may discuss with you the idea of running a group tipping kitty, whereby everybody contributes an equal amount and then your group leader pays the tips while keeping a running record of all monies spent. The record can then be checked at any time and any money remaining at the end of the tour returned to group members. This is often the easiest way to avoid the hassles of needing small change and knowing when and what is an appropriate amount to tip.

CONTINGENCY FUNDS:

We try to plan for every eventuality, but there are still some things beyond our control. Please make sure you have access to an extra US\$500 for emergencies (e.g. severe weather, natural disasters, civil unrest) or other events that result in unavoidable changes to the itinerary (e.g. transport strikes or cancellations, airport closures). Sometimes these things necessitate last minute changes to enable our trips to continue to run, and as a result there may be some extra costs involved.

Packing

What you need to bring will vary according to the trip style you have chosen, the countries you are visiting and when you are travelling. Generally speaking, we recommend you pack as lightly as possible and make sure that you are able to carry and lift your own luggage, and walk with it for short distances or up or down a flight of stairs. Our travellers usually find the smaller their luggage is, the more they enjoy the trip not having to worry about carrying heavy bags! Aim to keep your main luggage under 15kg.

Many travellers carry their luggage in a backpack, although an overnight bag with a shoulder strap would suffice if you travel lightly. Smaller suitcases or backpacks with wheels are convenient although we recommend your bag has carry straps or handles.

If you are taking overnight trains, or primarily using public transport then the smaller your luggage the easier it will be to store under or above bunks. A lockable bag or small padlock will be useful especially when travelling on public transportation as well.

You'll also need a day pack/bag to carry water, camera, and jacket etc. when you're exploring during the day.

Below are some ideas and helpful tips on what you specifically need for this trip.

Essential:

- Clothing: a mixture of lightweight and dry fast clothing and warm layers are recommended essential for travelling in this region. Long shirts, pants, scarves are useful for covering shoulders & knees when visiting religious sites.
- Shoes: sturdy and comfortable shoes for walking long distances are essential.
- Personal travel documents inc. your passport (visa), travel insurance, flight tickets and trip notes. Photo copies of your passport and visa, passport size photos and travel insurance will be handy. While not valid, a photocopy makes it very much easier to obtain replacements if necessary.
- small first aid kit including items such as mild pain killers, electrolytes, Band-Aids and insect repellent, and essential medicine depending on your doctors advice.
- Money: cash/credit card/EFTPOS card and money belt
- Sun protection like hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses.

Recommended:

- Refillable water bottle (1.5 litre capacity suggested): The sale of bottled water contributes to an enormous environmental problem around the world. In addition to the water in bottles, the production of a 1 litre plastic bottle takes 2 litres of water and 200ml of oil. A large proportion end up in limited landfill or discarded in waterways and natural environments.
- Cell phone, camera with spare batteries, charger, and adapter plug
- Hand wash, travel wipes, toiletries and small towel
- Watch/alarm clock and torch/flashlight (and spare batteries)
- Torch or flash light esp. for stay at local guesthouses or home stays

Optional:

- Sleeping bag. Useful for camping, overnight trains and poorly heated hotels, particularly during the winter months of Dec - Feb when temperatures are low.
- Sleep sheet. If you are travelling during the hot season you may wish to pack a sleep sheet so you will be comfortable no matter what the weather.
- Ear plugs to guard against street noise and snorers.
- A good book, a journal and music player for overnight train rides and longer drives.

Other things to consider:

- Check weather in destinations you are travelling to online a few days before you go to make sure you pack appropriate clothing
- Laundry facilities may not be available in all destinations, so make sure you have a few cycles of clothes to tide you over until your next chance to wash

Climate and seasonal information

CHINESE NATIONAL HOLIDAYS:

Please note that China's national holidays are the peak travel season for Chinese nationals. During this time, literally the whole country is on the move - that's over a billion people. Although these are fascinating and exciting times to travel in China, please be aware your group will almost definitely experience transport delays and massive crowds at tourist attractions and train stations. It's common for there to be difficulties in securing train or flight tickets at our preferred times, hotels become overbooked, traffic chaotic and changes to the itinerary are often necessary as a result. If clockwork organisation is important to you we advise you book outside of the weeks of the extended Chinese New Year in January/February, in the first week of May and the first week of October. If you decide to travel during this period please come with an open mind and be prepared for changes on the ground.

Here are the major holiday periods in China:

Chinese New Year: Feb 15-21 2018, Feb 4-10 2019, Jan 24-30 2020

Qingming Festival: Apr 5-7 2018, Apr 5-7 2019, Apr 4-6 2020

May Day: Apr 29-May 1 2018, May 1 2019, May 1-3 2020

Dragon Boat Festival: Jun 16-18 2018, Jun 7-9 2019, Jun 25-27 2020

Mid Autumn Day: Sep 22-24 2018, Sep 13-15 2019, falls within National Day holidays 2020

National Day: Oct 1-7 2018, Oct 1-7 2019, Oct 1-8 2020

Group Leader

All Intrepid group trips are accompanied by one of our group leaders. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. Intrepid endeavours to provide the services of an experienced leader however, due to the seasonality of travel, rare situations may arise where your leader is new to a particular region or training other group leaders.

Your leader will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the places visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. At Intrepid we aim to support local guides who have specialised knowledge of the regions we visit. If you were interested in delving deeper into the local culture at a specific site or location then your leader can recommend a local guide service in most of the main destinations of your trip.

Safety

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure and ensure that your travel insurance covers you for all areas your itinerary covers. Please refer to our website's safety page for links to major travel advisories and updates on safety issues affecting our trip.

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of our hotels have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Your leader will accompany you on all included activities, however during your trip you'll have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your leader will assist you with the available options in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your Intrepid itinerary, and Intrepid makes no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgement when selecting an activity in your free time. Please also note that your Leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it's deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

For more details on the type of conditions and safety standards you can expect on your trip, please refer to Intrepid's operational safety policy on our website. We recommend that you take a moment to read through this information before travelling, and would appreciate any feedback on how well it's being implemented in the field:

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/contact-us/safety>

CHINA

China is a safe country to travel in and very few travellers will experience any safety concerns. Serious crime against foreigners is relatively rare, but incidents do occur. Foreigners can be targeted for passports, electronic devices, mobile phones, purses and handbags. Major tourist sites and areas frequented by foreigners attract thieves and pickpockets. Take extra care at major tourist sites, street markets, Beijing International Airport, major international events and conferences and popular bar areas after dark.

There are occasional incidents with taxi and pedicab drivers who insist the passenger misunderstood the fare. Avoid travelling in unmarked or unmetered 'taxis' and insist on paying only the meter fare. Ask the driver for a receipt (fapiao), on which the taxi number should be printed. You can take this to the police to lodge a complaint.

Counterfeit bank notes (especially RMB100) are increasingly common. They are generally crumpled to avoid detection. Unscrupulous traders may try to switch your genuine bank notes for counterfeits. A common scam when paying a taxi fare with a RMB100 note occurs when the taxi driver swaps the note for a fake note, and returns the fake note to the passenger, refusing to accept it for payment as it's counterfeit. Check carefully before accepting notes. It is quite normal to do so.

Beware of scams particularly in popular tourist areas. A regular example is the 'tea tasting' scam. Scams usually involve a foreign national being invited to visit a bar, shop or cafe - for example to practice English or meet a girl - but results in demands for an exorbitant fee, often payable by credit card. This can result in threats of violence or credit card fraud.

A couple of rules

Everyone has the right to feel safe when they travel. We don't tolerate any form of violence (verbal or physical) or sexual harassment, either between customers or involving our leaders, partners or local people. Sexual relationships between a tour leader and a customer are strictly forbidden.

Use or possession of illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our trips. If you choose to consume alcohol while travelling, we encourage responsible drinking, and expect that you'll abide by the local laws regarding alcohol consumption.

The sex tourism industry is known to exploit vulnerable people and have negative consequences on communities, including undermining the development of sustainable tourism. For this reason, patronising sex workers will not be tolerated on our trips.

By travelling with us you are agreeing to adhere to these rules. Your group leader has the right to remove any member of the group for breaking any of these rules, with no right of refund.

If you feel that someone is behaving inappropriately while travelling with us, please inform your tour leader or local guide immediately. Alternatively, contact us on the emergency contact number detailed in the Problems and Emergency Contact section of this Essential Trip Information.

Travelling on a group trip

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. Your fellow travellers will probably come from all corners of the world and likely a range of age groups too. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part. Due to privacy reasons we are unable to provide you with contact details and any personal information about your fellow travellers booked on your trip prior to departure.

SINGLE TRAVELLERS:

Our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and don't involve a compulsory single supplement. Single travellers share with people of the same gender in accommodation ranging from twin to multishare. Some of our itineraries have accommodation booked on a mixed gender share basis and where applicable this will be specified in our Trip Notes. On a selection of our trips, you have the option to pay a single supplement to ensure that you have your own accommodation (where available). Please note that this only applies to accommodation during the tour - pre-trip and post-trip accommodation will be booked on a single room basis.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all our trips. We require that, at a minimum, you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects.

When travelling on a trip, you won't be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance and the insurance company's 24 hour emergency contact number has been seen by your leader.

If you have credit card insurance your group leader will require details of the participating insurer/underwriter, the level of coverage, policy number and emergency contact number rather than the bank's name and credit card details. Please contact your bank for these details prior to arriving in-country.

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/insurance.php>

Responsible Travel

We believe strongly in low impact or rather positive impact tourism. Broadly speaking this means that we try to minimise the negative aspects of tourism on the local cultures and environments that we visit and highlight the positive aspects. Please visit our website for further details and suggestions on how you can be a responsible traveller.

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/ourtrips/rt/responsibletraveller>

LOCAL CUSTOMS:

It's always a good idea to learn something about local customs before you travel, and visiting China is no exception. Your leader will be on hand to guide you through cultural differences during your trip, but here are some tips to get you started: <https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/china-etiquette-guide/>

LOCAL DRESS:

As with everywhere we travel, we strongly recommend wearing modest clothing in China (ie. covering shoulders and wearing shorts or skirts to the knee) both for your own comfort, and to respect that standards may be more conservative than in your home country, especially outside of major cities.

The Intrepid Foundation

Help us change thousands of lives by creating meaningful work and supporting skills training in communities around the world.

The Intrepid Foundation is the not-for-profit for Intrepid Group. We work with local organisations around the world to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable individuals and communities through sustainable travel experiences. With our travellers' help, we've contributed more than AU \$6 million to over 100 community organisations since 2002.

Did you know that tourism is one of the biggest contributors to the global economy, making up 1 out of every 10 jobs? That's why we support local projects that create meaningful jobs and give people the skills they need to work in the destinations we take you to. And it's why we exist – to make it easy for travellers to give back to the communities and places they've been in an effective and meaningful way.

All donations to The Intrepid Foundation are matched by Intrepid Group dollar for dollar (up to AU\$10,000 per donor and AU\$500,000 in total each financial year, excluding emergency appeals). And because Intrepid Group covers all administration costs, every cent goes directly to the projects. Donating is simple and secure. Please ask your leader for information about the projects we support through The Intrepid Foundation or visit our website:

<http://www.theintrepidfoundation.org/>

