

EXPLORE!

Tour Notes



Family Beijing to Hong Kong (FQCH 2015)



TOUR DURATION
15
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Full On

Tour Type: Small Groups
Tour Comfort: Standard

tour Code: FQCH

Tour Highlights - Family Beijing to Hong Kong

- ✓ Beijing - Walk along the Great Wall at Mutianyu. Explore Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City
- ✓ Xian - Meet the famous Terracotta Army of Qin Shi Huangdi.
- ✓ Villages and Rice Terraces - Homestays and hikes amongst the rural villages of the Dong and the Zhuang.
- ✓ Yangshuo - Float through the beautiful karst landscapes of the Li River.
- ✓ Hong Kong - Free time to explore one of Asia's most vibrant cities.

Tour Essentials

Accommodation: 7 nights Standard Hotel
3 nights Basic
Overnight Train
2 nights Simple Hotel
2 nights Simple Guesthouse

Included Meals: 12 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 0 dinners

Start Point: Join tour: Beijing
End Point: Tour ends: Hong Kong
Transport: Bus, Train, Flight
Countries: China, Hong Kong
Minimum Age: From 8 years

Family Beijing to Hong Kong

Travelling across China by train and plane, this fast-paced journey takes us from the imperial palaces of Beijing to the skyscrapers of Hong Kong. Trip highlights include Xian's Terracotta Army (and making your own army figure), giant pandas in Chengdu and the rural town of Yangshuo. We also walk through the vast Dragon's Backbone rice terraces, stay in traditional village houses, fly kites and meet the local Huang and Dong tribes and enjoy their traditional singing and dancing.

Why Book this tour

This adventure is an epic journey across China taking a number of overnight trains and a flight to cover the huge distances that are involved. Families who want to really discover a country and don't mind travel around will really enjoy this holiday - plus there are lots of added extras such as flying kites, making a Terracotta statue, visiting a Panda sanctuary and a cooking lesson.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Tour Comfort: Standard

Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Tour Pace: Full On

These fast paced tours move on quickly from place to place and with lots of early starts and long busy days, they're packed with experiences.

Your tour itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

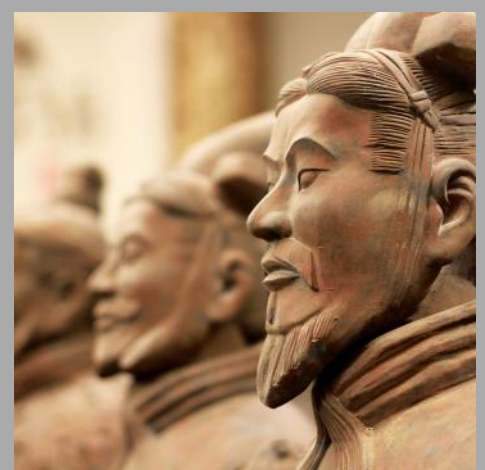
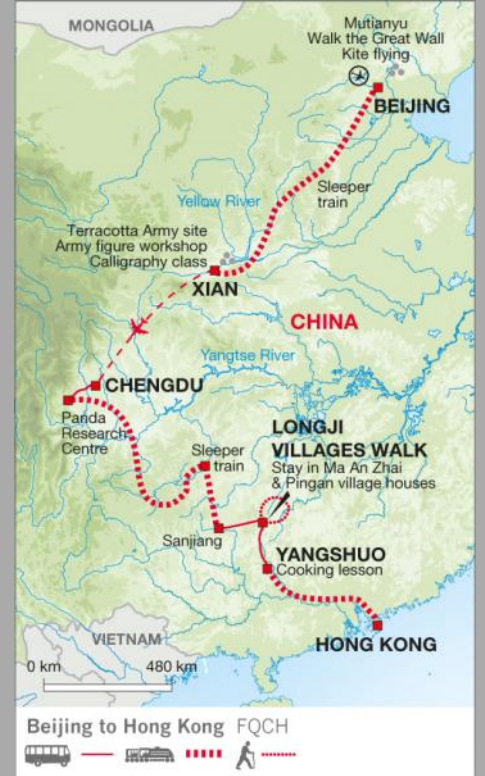
While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced Tour Leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your Tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join tour Beijing

Arrive Beijing and check-in at hotel. The rest of the day is free to relax, or perhaps explore something of our local surroundings and acclimatise a little to the enigma that is Beijing. Our hotel in Beijing was established by the Tobacco Monopoly Bureau of Hunan Province and is close to the Temple of Heaven, Taoranting Park and the railway station hotel and is 30 minutes-walk to the Tiananmen Square. All rooms have satellite TV, a safety box and Internet Access. There are a number of restaurants, one of which is known for its Hunan cuisine and serves Chinese and



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Western style dinners. There is a tea garden serving Chinese and Western drinks, chess and card room and even a foot massage room. Foreign exchange and laundry are also available.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Free in Beijing to visit Tiananmen Square.

Today offers a chance to explore something of a city that has been at the centre of China, politically and culturally, since the days of the great Kublai Khan. You could pay a visit to Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City, home to the Ming and the Manchu (Qing) emperors for over 500 years. Other options include a visit to the Temple of Heaven, a trip out to the Summer Palace, or a tour of the city's fascinating hutongs (traditional alleys and backstreets) by rickshaw.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Drive to the Great Wall at Mutianyu and fly kites by the wall or the Olympic stadium. Overnight train to Xian

This morning we drive by private bus to Mutianyu, some 125 kilometres to the north-east of the city, to pay a visit to China's famous Great Wall. One of the country's most iconic symbols, the Great Wall stretches from the China Sea to the Gobi desert, a journey of over 5,000 kilometres. The section we visit today is one of the best preserved parts of the wall, built over 400 years ago during the Ming dynasty. Over 10 kilometres in length, this magnificent structure crosses five mountain passes and features two beacon towers and nearly 70 watchtowers. We then fly kites either by the Great Wall or the square by the Birds Nets stadium, the main venue of the Beijing Olympic Games. Try out this ancient Chinese tradition as you battle with the wind to reach for the sky. This evening we then take the overnight train to Xian.

Overnight: **Basic Overnight Train**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 Free day to explore the Shaanxi National Museum or the Muslim Quarter

We arrive in Xian early this morning and walk the short distance to our hotel in time for breakfast. The rest of the day is then free to make the most of China's old imperial capital. You might like to pay a visit to the Big Wild Goose Pagoda, a 64 metre high structure that offers some superb views out across the city. Another possibility is a visit to the Shaanxi National Museum. Alternatively, the network of alleys that make up the city's Muslim Quarter provide an excellent destination for a day of exploring. The hotel in Xian offers good sized rooms with en-suite facilities and internet connection, TV, air-conditioning and a tea/coffee maker. Hotel facilities include a restaurant, fitness/health centre, sauna, laundry service, safety deposit boxes and Wi-Fi. The hotel is located close to the railway station with the bus for the Terracotta Warriors leaving from across the road.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 Visit the Terracotta Warriors and Workshop and Calligraphy Class

Today we visit one of China's most famous sights, the Terracotta Army of Emperor Qin Shi Huangdi. Travelling by private bus, we spend three to four hours exploring this incredible site, visiting the three excavated pits that hold, literally, thousands of life-sized archers, soldiers and charioteers. Buried here to guard the tomb of China's first emperor, the Terracotta Army is considered to be one of the greatest archaeological finds of the last century. Before experiencing the site, we visit a workshop close by where we witness the making of smaller versions of the Terracotta figures which gives some idea of the challenge that the Chinese craftsmen had when making the life sizes equivalent. Returning to Xian, we then travel onto the Tang Art Museum where we try our hand at the ancient art of calligraphy which of course is Chinese letter writing - learn how to write your name in this ancient communication style. Returning to Xian by public bus.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 6 Morning flight to Chengdu. Free day

A morning flight to Chengdu, the capital of China's Sichuan Province, brings us to a city that once marked the starting point of the old southern Silk Road. Set along the western edge of the Sichuan Basin, Chengdu can trace its ancestry back over 2,500 years and is famed throughout China for its food and its embroidery. The city is also home to the world famous Panda Breeding and Research Centre which lies just on the outskirts of the city. On arrival, the rest of the day is free to relax. The hotel has a prime location located close to the train station and city centre. The rooms have a traditional Oriental style design and offers en-suite facilities and internet

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connection. The restaurant serves a variety of local dishes with a charming café and cocktail lounge to complement the dining facility. There is also a laundry service, safety deposit boxes, salon, fitness centre, sauna and impressive lobby.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 7 Visit Chengdu Panda Research Centre. Overnight train to Sanjiang

This morning we travel by private bus to the Panda Research Centre, to see for ourselves an animal that has become synonymous with China itself. Home to numerous free roaming Giant Pandas, the ultimate aim of the centre is to reintroduce these rare animals back into the wild, in such numbers as to ensure their survival. To that end, the centre has enjoyed an extraordinary level of success with new-born pandas over the past few years. After our visit we return to Chengdu to catch the overnight train on to Sanjiang.

Overnight: **Basic Overnight Train**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 Arrive Sanjiang and transfer to Ma An Zhai Village; village walks

Arriving in Sanjiang early this afternoon, we take private minivans on to Ma An Zhai, a Dong minority village that lies amongst the forested hills along the Hunan, Guizhou and Guangxi borders. One of over 55 minority groups that live in this region, the Dong are renowned for their architecture, particularly their covered bridges and multi-storey drum towers. This afternoon we have a chance to see some of these remarkable structures ourselves, on a walk between the villages. We follow a fairly level path and pass through three Dong villages on our route as well as taking time to visit the local school and small market. The walk takes approximately 3 hours. We spend the night in village houses with a chance to learn about this rural and traditional way of life. The guesthouse is small and simply but clean and airy, with air-conditioned and en-suite rooms designed in a typical Chinese style and is located in the Tong village close to the Rain and Wind Bridges with good views of river. There are ample opportunities to walk around the villages and also to enjoy the Tong village show. Wi-Fi is available.

Overnight: **Simple Guesthouse**

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 9 Drive to Pingan Village; village walks

The village of Pingan sits perched on the central ridge of the Dragon's Backbone, a visually stunning series of rice terraces that runs along the meandering contours of surrounding hills. Driving there this afternoon, we take a walk around the village, meeting some of the local Zhuang people and taking in the unique agricultural feat of engineering that has created this remarkable landscape. Today's walk follows the rice terraces and there are a lot of steps along the route, we take our time to enjoy the views and take plenty of breaks to rest our legs. We walk for approximately three hours in total. The guesthouse in Pingan is a small family run hotel set in a wooden style building design. There are good views of the local area and over the rice terraces from the balcony. The guesthouse gives a good location to wander around the surrounding area and discover the local village. The rooms are simple but clean with air conditioning, TV and internet access in the lobby.

Overnight: **Simple Guesthouse**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 10 Morning walk to Longji Village. Afternoon drive to Yangshou

The Zhuang migrated into this region of China over 5,000 years ago and today represent the largest of the country's minority groups. Skilled in weaving and embroidery, the Zhuang follow a fascinating tradition of beliefs that are deeply rooted in the power of nature. This morning we take a walk for around three hours to another Zhuang village at Longji following a flat path. We then drive on to the small market town of Yangshou late this afternoon. Nestling besides the banks of the Li River, Yangshou lies amongst what many consider to be some of the most scenic landscapes in China. The hotel in Yangshou has tastefully decorated rooms with air-conditioning and heating, private bathrooms, radio, TV and phone. It is easy walking distance from the centre and close to the famous Western Street and a local food market that opens in the evening. There is a bar and lounge area, shopping arcade and Chinese and Western Restaurants. The hotel also offers laundry service, safe-deposit box and even shoe shine facility. There is a bank next door for currency exchange.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 11 Morning cooking lesson with optional cycle ride or raft along the Li River

We visit a cooking school in the city where the whole family learn how to prepare a number of traditional Chinese dishes using local produce for our lunch today. The afternoon is free for you to relax and soak up the atmosphere of this beautiful riverside town or you

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may want to hire bikes and cycle out into the surrounding countryside, climb to the top of 'Moon Hill' for some wonderful views across the open plains and out to the distant mountains or try a rafting trip along the Li River. A wander through the town's local market offers a chance to barter for everything from batiks and silk paintings to Chairman Mao's Little Red Book. If you decide to try bamboo rafting we recommend you are confident swimming 25 metres unaided.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 12 Morning free. Overnight train to Shenzhen

After a free morning in Yangshou we then take an overnight train to Shenzhen, just to the north of Hong Kong. A testament to the resurgence of China as a modern world power, Shenzhen is one of the country's most successful Special Economic Zones. It is also the end of our journey across mainland China.

Overnight: **Basic Overnight Train**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 13 Cross border into Hong Kong. Free on arrival

On arrival in Shenzhen this morning we need to cross the border into Hong Kong by way of the Lu Wu rail connection. This requires us carrying our own bags across the border, where our local Hong Kong guide will be waiting to take us to our hotel. The rest of the day is then free to relax and enjoy one of Asia's most vibrant cities.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 14 Free in Hong Kong

You are free to take in Kowloon's bustling waterfront today, perhaps taking a trip on the famous Star Ferry to enjoy one of the world's most famous cityscapes from the water. Other options include a ride on Hong Kong's funicular railway to the top of Victoria Peak, where you can enjoy some panoramic views out across the city and the outlying islands. You could also visit the Lam Tsuen Wishing Tree, one of the city's most popular shrines, or take a stroll through the stalls and markets of Li Yuen Street in search of some last minute bargains.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 15 Tour ends Hong Kong

Tour ends this morning after breakfast.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Ability to swim required

An ability to swim is essential for your safe enjoyment of the water based activities on this trip. If you wish to participate in these activities then we insist that you are able to swim.

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Rating

The majority of hotels in China offer check in from 12noon. On days where we will arrive on a sleeper train the Tour Leader will try and arrange an early check in for the group, however this may not be possible. When travelling on sleeper trains we use a combination of a 'hard sleeper' berth (usually on the Chengdu to Sanjiang and Shenzhen to Guilin journey), which are berths with 6 beds (3 on each side) and a curtain to separate from the main carriage and 'soft sleeper' berths, which are berths with 4 beds (2 on each side) which would be allocated to the Explore group. Due to the nature of booking train tickets in China we cannot guarantee that the entire group will be in the same carriage and you may be sharing your berth with non-Explore passengers or both sexes.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 12 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 0 dinners included in the price of this tour. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

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Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

China

Lunch £: 5.00

Dinner £: 10.00

Hong Kong

Lunch £: 7.50

Dinner £: 14.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

China

Bottle of Beer £: 2.00

Water £: 1.50

Hong Kong

Bottle of Beer £: 2.40

Water £: 1.30

Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

Beijing - Opera £15.00, Hutong trip £13.00, Temple of Heaven £3.50, Summer Palace £5.00 (entrance only)

Xian - City Walls by bike - £10.00; Tang Dynasty show and dumpling banquet £25.00, Wild Goose Pagoda £5.00

Yangshuo - Sound and Light show £21.00 (£26.00 for VIP seat), Bamboo rafting £25.00, Painting lesson £8.00, Calligraphy lesson £8.00

Please note there will not be time for all these optionals.

Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Local Staff: Accordingly you should allow approx. £25 per person for gratuities for local staff.

Foreign Exchange

China

ATM Availability: All major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance: Most major restaurants and stores.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers cheques can be changed in Hong Kong and at the Bank of China in all major cities but only during bank opening hours. Please note this is very time consuming and is not recommended.

Local Currency: Renminbi/Yuan

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Either EUR, USD or GBP.

Where to Exchange: In all towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival. When changing money ask for a receipt so you can change Yuan back into your own currency when leaving China.

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Hong Kong

ATM Availability: All major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance: Most major restaurants and stores.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers cheques can be changed in Hong Kong and at the Bank of China in all major cities but only during bank opening hours. Please note this is very time consuming and is not recommended.

Local Currency: Hong Kong Dollar.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Either EUR, USD or GBP

Where to Exchange: In all towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival. When changing money ask for a receipt so you can change Yuan back into your own currency when leaving China.

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of joining any of our tours that you must have valid travel insurance. It must indicate that you have cover for (at least) medical expenses and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling in England and Scotland. We also strongly recommend your policy includes curtailment, personal effects and cancellation protection as all deposits paid are non-refundable. You will also need to ensure your travel policy covers you for all activities you intend to do whilst on tour.

We are delighted to include FREE travel insurance **for all qualifying customers** who book an Explore trip from 01 January 2015.

For more information about Travel insurance and to check whether you are eligible to receive free cover, please visit www.explore.co.uk/insurance. Explore Worldwide Ltd are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The registration number can be checked by visiting the the FCA's website www.fca.gov.uk or by contacting them on 0800 111 6768.

Visa Information

China: A visa is required by all nationalities. A single entry visa should be arranged in advance of travel, this can be obtained through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK; Visaswift, at <http://www.visaswift.com/explore.aspx>.

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

Passengers wishing to extend their stay in China should be aware that current visa regulations only allow foreigners to stay in the

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country for up to 30 days. Please consider this when planning your trip.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

Lone Parents

China

Single parents or other adults travelling alone with children should be aware that some countries require documentation confirming that the individual has authority to travel with the minor. It is crucial that you contact the Chinese embassy for further information on exactly what may be required.

Hong Kong

Vaccinations & Protection

China

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, infectious hepatitis, typhoid, tetanus and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Travellers may wish to take immunisation against Japanese Encephalitis. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

Hong Kong

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, infectious hepatitis, typhoid, tetanus and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Travellers may wish to take immunisation against Japanese Encephalitis. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

Preparing for your Tour

Climate

China

China has primarily a temperate climate, with a wide spectrum of extremes due to its huge area. Summer months are hot and rainy though in the south the climate is tropical and we can experience rain at any time of the year, often falling in sharp tropical rain-storms which are heavy but short lived. Winter is colder and drier, temperatures in Beijing can be as low as -12c.

Hong Kong

Hong Kong enjoys more of a sub-tropical climate and the winter months tend to produce temperatures in the high teens, with January being more susceptible to cloud cover, with occasional rain and cold fronts.

Clothing

Lightweight clothing is needed all year round with some warmer clothes for the cooler evenings. Casual clothes are the most practical. You may also wish to bring some lightweight rainwear or an umbrella.

Equipment

Torch, insect repellent, sunglasses, sun cream and a water bottle. A Mandarin phrase book may also be helpful.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes, trainers and sandals

Luggage: On Tour

It is essential that your baggage is lockable; the airport authorities insist on this. Please be aware, before boarding a flight in China that the Chinese authorities will only allow glass bottles onto aircraft if they have been checked in as main luggage. Any glass bottles in the hand luggage may be confiscated. Please bring a shoulder bag large enough to carry clothing and toiletries for the nightstop in Ping An as we will not bring our main luggage with us for the night.

Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg

General Information

Country details

China

Population: 1,339,724,852

Size of Country: 9,640,821 sq km

Major Language: Mandarin

Religion: Mainly Buddhist

Time Difference to GMT: +8

Hong Kong

Population: 7,061,200

Size of Country: 1,104 sq km

Major Language: Chinese, English

Religion: 3 main religions - Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism

Time Difference to GMT: +8

Electric Supply & Plugs

China

3 Pin Flat

Hong Kong

3 Pin Flat

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award-winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, elephant, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family-run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Our commitment to the environment

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures and traditions, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people), Dekamer (a turtle rescue centre in Turkey) and Kids Saving the Rainforest (a wildlife rescue centre in Costa Rica supported through the LATA foundation). We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation and Friends of Conservation.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

- [The Travel Foundation](#)
Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk
- [Tourism Concern](#)
Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk
- For further information on responsible travel go to <http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/>

Know before you go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at <http://www.explore.co.uk/essential-travel-information/travel-resources/travel-safety>

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2014 and 31st December 2015.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2015 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2015. 2016/17 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2016.

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