

EXPLORE!

Tour Notes



China Highlights + Walk the Great Wall (HCW 2015)



TOUR DURATION
17
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Busy

Tour Type: Small Groups
Tour Comfort: Standard

tour Code: HCW

Tour Highlights - China Highlights + Walk the Great Wall

- ✓ Yangshuo - Float through dramatic karst scenery on the Li River
- ✓ Xian - Meet the incredible 'Terracotta Army'
- ✓ Beijing - Explore Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City
- ✓ Old Dragons Head - Visit the spot where the Great Wall disappears in to the sea
- ✓ Trek the Great Wall - Follow the wall along the far eastern sections at Jioashan to Panjiakou where the wall crosses a lake
- ✓ Eastern Qing Tombs - Visit the stunning Imperial Tomb Complex of the Qing Dynasty near Zunhua.

Tour Essentials

Accommodation: 14 nights Standard Hotel

2 nights Basic Overnight Train

Included Meals: 16 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 0 dinners

Start Point: Join tour: Hong Kong

End Point: Tour ends: Beijing

Transport: Bus, Train, Boat, Flight

Countries: Hong Kong, China

China Highlights and Walk The Great Wall

This adventure combines some of the Orient's main cultural sights with a walk along some of the lesser-visited parts of the Great Wall. We travel from the skyscrapers of Hong Kong to the imperial palaces of Beijing. Cruising along the Li River we pass vast paddy fields and unusual limestone pinnacles. We fly to Xian where we discover the incredible Army of Terracotta Warriors and the Giant Wild Goose Pagoda. In Beijing we explore the famous Tiananmen Square and the maze of palaces and gardens of the Forbidden City. Starting from the 'Old Dragon's Head' - where the Wall meets the sea - we walk towards Simatai. We spend several days hiking along some of the most spectacular sections, stopping to take a boat ride across the lake at Panjiakou and visit the Eastern Qing Tombs.

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: Busy

There may be early starts, long journeys and tiring days along the way, but you'll return home feeling you've really experienced as much as you possibly could.

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 Hong Kong

Arrive Hong Kong and check into hotel.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 



China Highlights + Walk The Great Wall HCW



 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 In Hong Kong

Situated in a dramatic setting, Hong Kong is a lively, sophisticated city and the world's third largest financial centre. We start with an orientation walk and leave the afternoon free for optional excursions. Public transport is efficient and easy to use. You can take a funicular railway to Victoria Peak or a launch out to a floating restaurant in Aberdeen Harbour. Alternatively explore the jade market or admire the latest sartorial and electronic fashions.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 In Hong Kong ; overnight train to Guilin

This morning will be left free to explore Hong Kong further. In the late afternoon we transfer by coach to the Sheng Shui train station close to the Chinese border. From Sheng Shui we then take a train to reach the pedestrian only border at Lu Wu. As we cross on foot and porters are not available please make sure you can comfortably carry your own luggage. After clearing immigration and customs we walk the short distance to nearby Shenzhen station from where we take an overnight train to Guilin.

Overnight: **Basic Overnight Train**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 Boat on Li River to Yangshuo

On arrival in Guilin we will make a quick stop at a local hotel for breakfast before we head to the Bamboo Reed Dock where we board our boat on the Li River and cruise to Yangshuo. Lunch is taken aboard the boat during the journey as we pass along the most scenic stretch of the river. We will pass paddy fields, villages and stunning limestone scenery en route. An afternoon arrival in Yangshuo offers the opportunity to explore this laid back town - a contrast to the bustle of Hong Kong. During this free time you may wish to take one of the optional bike rides or walks in the surrounding villages. Alternatively you could head to one of the many limestone pinnacles around the town, the best known being the Moon Hill.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 5 In Yangshuo; fly Xian

Yangshuo has a lot to offer so most of the day is left free for you to explore at your own pace. You can walk into the surrounding karst summits or hire a bike and cycle through country back lanes. Alternatively, you can soak up the atmosphere of this beautiful riverside town. You may want to practice your bartering skills in the local market - here art students from Guilin sell their batiks, silk paintings, Tai Chi, cooking, calligraphy, mahjong, or you may be tempted to buy a 'Little Red Book'. Later on today we fly to Xian. Perhaps stopping at the Chinese Medical Research Centre en route to the airport.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 6 In Xian

Our stay in Xian reveals the extraordinary continuity of Chinese civilisation. Xian (Changan) served 11 dynasties and was the very starting point of the Silk Road between Central Asia and Europe. Its ancient monuments include, the Big Wild Goose Pagoda (64m, a 7-storey high structure with a superb overview of the city) and the Great Mosque, a wonderful 15th century working mosque within the old muslim Hui District, which we include in our sightseeing tour. The afternoon is free but highly recommended is an optional visit to the Shaanxi National Museum which takes us through a million years of Chinese history.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 7 Visit Terracotta Warriors; Overnight train to Beijing

Today we visit one of the highlights of any visit to China - the magnificent Terracotta Warriors and Horses who guard the Qin Shi Huangdi Tomb. There are literally thousands of lifesize warriors, dating from 200BC. This dramatic find of the 1970s is considered one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of the century. We should have time to stop at the on-site factory to see how the warriors are made today. Later this afternoon we take an overnight train to Beijing.

Overnight: **Basic Overnight Train**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 Arrive Beijing, visit the Forbidden City.

Beijing is China's capital and its political and cultural centre. The city has been the capital for most of the period since Kublai Khan made it the capital of his mighty Asian Empire in the late 1200s. All clocks in this vast country are set by Beijing time despite the westernmost regions being some 5000kms away. During our stay we shall visit the Forbidden City, the one-time home of the Ming and the Manchu (Qing) emperors and a treasure trove of eastern wares. There is the option to visit the Summer Palace an old and very extensive imperial garden complex with a large boating lake and impressive palace buildings. There is also the possibility of seeing a Beijing opera in the evening, or perhaps an acrobatic performance (optional). The opera in Beijing is considered to be the best in China.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 9 Visit Great Wall or Free Day

Today we drive out to a renovated part of the Great Wall at Mutianyu, situated 90km north of the city. Began in the 3rd century BC by Shi Huangdi, thousands of conscripted workers laboured on it and many lie buried in its brick and stone ramparts. It is incredible to think that this wall spans the entire country! Here there is a 2km section to walk along with watchtowers and views of the surrounding countryside. En route we may also get to visit a cloisonné workshop where you can see examples of this ancient metal-working technique. If you prefer to rest your legs before the trek begins today can be spend relaxing and exploring Beijing.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 10 Drive to Shanhaiguan

Leaving Beijing we drive to Shanhaiguan. It is here that the Great Wall reaches the Bohai Sea at a point called Laolongtou or the 'Old Dragon's Head' - named after the legendary carved dragon's head that once faced the ocean. The city was a garrison town with a large square fort (which still exists) with huge gateways facing the four compass points. The east gate is an impressive structure known as 'First pass under Heaven'. It has these words inscribed at the top signifying the ancient Chinese perceived division of the world into 'civilised China' and the 'barbarians'. This afternoon we head to Laolongtou, known as the Old Dragon's Head wher the Great Wall meets the sea. After this we then drive to the First Pass where we have our first opportunity to walk on the wall and visit the Great Wall Museum.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 11 Trek on Great Wall; drive to Panjiakou

Today we walk out of town along an old section of the wall to the impressive Jiaoshan Pass where it heads into the mountains for the first time. The fitter amongst the group may wish to continue up to a high point for spectacular views (weather permitting). This afternoon we take the scenic drive to Panjiakou where the wall crosses water.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 12 Boat excursion. Walk on wall at Luowenyou; drive to Eastern Qing Tombs

This morning we take a boat excursion on the reservoir at Panjiakou. The surrounding scenery is stunning – the wall following undulating ridges across the rugged hills before plummeting into the water at two points, Panjiakou and Xifengkou. Joining our vehicle again we head for Luowenyou where we are able to walk for approximately 10kms on a rugged and quite steep section of the wall with glorious views across the surrounding area. From Luowenyou we continue to our hotel in the grounds of the Eastern Qing Tombs near Zunhua.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 13 Visit the Eastern Qing Tombs; trek on Great Wall to Huangyaguan

Making a reasonably early start this morning, we hope to have this lovely site to ourselves. The Eastern Qing Tombs are the largest and most complete of the Imperial Tombs in China with 5 emperors, 15 empresses and 136 concubines all buried here. In addition the surrounding mountains contain the tombs of hundreds of lesser nobles such as princes and dukes. We are able to enter a few of the beautifully carved tombs which mostly date back to the 17th and 18th Centuries. That of Emperor Qianlong covers almost half a square kilometre. Leaving the tombs we drive to a point on the Great Wall where there is access, and walk for 2-3 hours into Huangyaguan. This section of the wall is very quiet and offers some great views – the first part of the walk is an ascent up to a prominent tower before descending down to another tower near the river. From here we cross the river and walk into the town and our hotel for the night.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 14 Drive from Huangyaguan to Gubeikou; walk along the wall to Jinshanling

Today we drive from Huangyaguan to Gubeikou. On arrival we walk through the small village of local farm houses, a great opportunity to see life in rural China up close. From here we will walk up on to the wall along a mountain path. This section of the wall takes us past 16 beacon towers and we get to see a part of the wall in the distance that is restricted and not usually seen. We leave the wall at Jinshanling and head to the hotel. (Approx 6 hours walking.)

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 15 Trek on Great Wall towards Simatai; return to Jinshanling

Today we aim to walk on one of the most stunning sections of the Wall between Jinshanling and Simatai – both locations where the wall has been refurbished. The walk between these two places is on partially ruined sections, with some quite steep ascents and many steps to be climbed. In 2010 Simatai was closed to the public, so we'll walk as far as we're allowed towards Simatai before returning to Jinshanling for a second night. We pass 18 watch-towers on this walk – these provide the only shade along the route and give us an excuse to pause and admire the breath-taking views. (approx 4-5 hours walking)

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 16 Drive to Beijing

Today we return to Beijing. We should arrive back into the city by early afternoon with late afternoon free for further personal exploration. You may wish to take an excursion to the Summer Palace or the Temple of Heaven in Tiantan Park (both optional).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 17 Tour ends Beijing

Our tour ends this morning after breakfast.

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Rating

As tourism developed relatively recently in China, accommodation is usually modern, spacious and comfortable, albeit rather generic. Most hotels are large and purpose built and though rarely characterful, you can generally rely on good facilities. In Beijing, Shanghai, Xian and Hong Kong the hotels that we use are of international style generally with business facilities, restaurants and bars and all mod cons, though few have pools. In other cities and large towns the standard is similar although on a lesser scale. In small towns or villages where tourism is less prevalent, the hotels we use are smaller and facilities are more limited, though we generally stay in the best place in town. Rooms will still be en suite but rooms can be basic. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be somewhat erratic and although the welcome is warm, service levels may be less efficient than you may be used to.

Aboard the overnight sleeper train, berths are usually in 1st class 'soft sleeper' lockable compartments for 4 which have 2 sets of bunks with clean bedding provided. WC and washbasins are provided for shared use at the end of each carriage. Hot meals and snacks are usually sold to your berth on overnight journeys. In times of large demand we may have to travel in 2nd class 'hard sleeper' which consists of sectioned off compartments for 6, leading off an open plan carriage. 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.

Our hotels in Beijing and Xian enjoy relatively central locations in these large cities, within walking distance of the Temple of Heaven and the Muslim Quarter respectively. Hotels in the countryside are generally of a lesser standard. Our trek along the Great Wall is in a much more remote area off the beaten tourist track. Here our accommodation is in local hotels and guesthouses. Rooms are twin-bedded and en-suite but plumbing and electricity supplies can be somewhat erratic. Although the welcome is warm, service levels may be less efficient than you may be used to. Our choice in these areas is limited and we do use the best available hotels. Any shortcomings are more than made up for by the experience of small town China and enjoying some spectacular locations close to the Great Wall.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 16 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.

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.

Hong Kong

Lunch £: 7.50

Dinner £: 14.00

China

Lunch £: 5.00

Dinner £: 10.00

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.

Hong Kong

Bottle of Beer £: 2.40

Water £: 1.30

China

Bottle of Beer £: 2.00

Water £: 1.50

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

Hong Kong - Victoria Peak tram, £2

Yangshou - Sound and Light show £21.00 (£26 for VIP seat) ; bicycle hire £5.00; painting lesson £5.00; calligraphy lesson £8.00; cooking class £13.00.

Xian - Shaanxi National Museum, free entry. City wall by bike - £10.

Beijing - Summer Palace, £5. Opera, £15

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 recognised 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. Accordingly, you should allow £45 for tipping. 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.

Foreign Exchange

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.

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.

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 must be arranged prior to travel. Please consult with your nearest Chinese Consulate for further, up to date information regarding the visa process and cost.

PLEASE BE AWARE: Passengers wishing to extend their stay in China should note that current visa regulations only allow foreigners to stay in the country for up to 30 days. Please consider this when making your travel arrangements.

Passengers with flights that transit via Beijing or Shanghai airports (Beijing Capital International airport, Shanghai Pudong International airport and Hongqiao International airport) should take note of the following:

Citizens of certain countries holding a valid passport, a visa for their final destination and a transit flight ticket with a confirmed departure seat and date leaving within 72 hours to a third country (region), may be exempt from a transit visa, provided that their stay within the Beijing or Shanghai administrative regions does not exceed 72 hours.

On arrival at Beijing or Shanghai Airports please head for immigration and look for a desk marked Transit Visa Exemption. Please have all your necessary travel documentation on you such as your onward tickets, passport etc. as you will need to show this to the immigration officer. Please ensure you state to the immigration officer that you want to transit without visa. This is especially important if you do not want your Chinese visa to be invalidated. You will then be given a stamp called a transit pass (Hexagon Shape) rather than the normal regular immigration stamp (Oval Shaped).

Please refer to your local Chinese Consulate for a list of countries that are eligible for the 72 hour transit visa exemption within Beijing and Shanghai airports. Nationalities that are not eligible for exemption may need to obtain a double entry visa and should seek further advice from their local Chinese Consulate.

Please ensure that your passport has a minimum of 6 months validity from the date of return to your home country. All visa information is subject to change regularly, so please check with your local consulate for the most up to date advice for the countries you are visiting.

For UK residents - Explore has partnered with Visaswift, a company who specialize in visa processes. Please visit their website, www.visaswift.com/explore.aspx for further assistance and information.

Vaccinations & Protection

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.

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.

Preparing for your Tour

Trekking Terrain

Although most of the walking on this tour is graded moderate it should be stressed that certain stretches of The Wall have some very steep sections and often involve climbing on high steps. Because of this it is not a tour for vertigo sufferers. Please also note that some sections of the wall are broken and a little overgrown. It should also be pointed out that it is possible to travel in the support vehicle if you do not wish to partake in any particular walk.

Climate

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.

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.

Clothing

Lightweight raingear year round. If you are travelling on the winter departures pack warm sweaters, gloves, scarf, hat, warm coat, thermal underwear.

Equipment

A small torch. A Mandarin phrase book may be helpful. You may wish to bring a trekking pole with a rubber tip and a torch. You may also find re-hydration salts useful in the summer months.

Footwear

Comfortable shoes with good grip for the Great Wall and sandals. Light walking boots are recommended for the walk, comfortable shoes or trainers and sandals for other sightseeing.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of lockable baggage and a shoulder bag. If you wish to leave some of your belongings/shopping in Beijing after the China Highlights section of your tour, please bring an extra bag with you (or you can buy an inexpensive one locally). Remember, you are expected to carry your own baggage – so don't overload yourself. 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 bottles onto aircraft if they have been checked in as main luggage. Any bottles in the hand luggage may be confiscated.

Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg

General Information

Country details

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

China

Population: 1,339,724,852

Size of Country: 9,640,821 sq km

Major Language: Mandarin

Religion: Mainly Buddhist

Electric Supply & Plugs

Hong Kong

3 Pin Flat

China

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.

EXPLORE! The Adventure Travel Experts available online 24/7

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.

These tour notes were printed on 27/02/2015 00:49:03