

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Walk the Great Wall (WG 2017)



TRIP DURATION
10
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Tour Type: Small Groups
Trek Grade: Moderate

Trip Code: WG

Trip Highlights - Walk the Great Wall

- ✓ Beijing - Visit Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City
- ✓ Old Dragons Head - Visit the point where the Great Wall meets the sea
- ✓ Jiaoshan - Walk on spectacular sections of the wall near its eastern end
- ✓ Panjiakou - Take a boat trip where the Wall crosses the water
- ✓ Eastern Qing Tombs - Visit the stunning Imperial Tomb Complex of the Qing Dynasty near Zunhua
- ✓ Jinshanling - Beautiful section with numerous beacon towers

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 8 nights Standard Hotel
1 night Simple Hotel

Included Meals: 9 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners

Start Point: Join trip: Beijing

End Point: Trip ends: Beijing

Transport: Bus, Boat

Countries: China

Walk The Great Wall

Stretching from the Yellow Sea to the edge of the Gobi Desert, some 4300 kilometres, the magnificent ramparts and watch towers of the Great Wall were built to protect China's northern frontier from raiding Mongol horsemen. Our walk concentrates on some of the most interesting and spectacular sections including the 'Old Dragon's Head' and Jinshanling. This trip really gets off the beaten track and explores rural China.

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.

Accommodation Grade: Standard

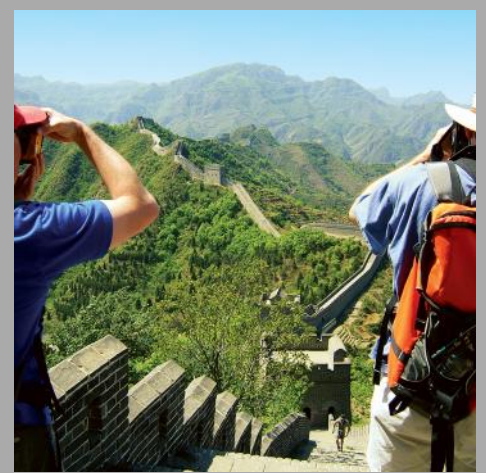
Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

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.

Trek Grade: Moderate

For those who are fit and active, these moderate walks are normally on good paths and tracks at low altitude. Days may include some fairly demanding ascents and descents, so previous experience is preferable but not essential.



Your trip 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 trip Beijing

Arrive Beijing and check-in at hotel.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Beijing city tour including the Forbidden City

A full day in Beijing, 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 western-most 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. The afternoon is free for you to explore this fascinating city and you may choose to go on a tour of the hutongs (old residential districts of the city - optional). There is 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 3 Drive to Shanhaiguan where Great Wall reaches the sea

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'. After visiting Old Dragon's Head 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 4 Trek on Great Wall to Jiaoshan Pass; 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 5 Boat trip by the Wall, walk at Luowenyou

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 6 Visit Eastern Qing Tombs; trek on 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: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 7 Drive to Gubeikou; beacon tower walk 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 drive to our hotel in Simatai (about 20 minutes away). Total walking about 6hrs.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 Hike on Great Wall towards Simatai

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 passing up to 23 of the total 35 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 9 Return to Beijing; optional visit to Summer Palace

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 10 Trip ends in Beijing

Our tour ends this morning after breakfast.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Notes

Our trek along the Great Wall is in a remote area off the beaten tourist track. 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: 9 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners included in the price of this trip. 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 Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip 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 £: 6.00 - 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.

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

Beijing - Opera £15.00; Acrobatic performance £24.00; Summer Palace £5.00 (plus £12 private transfer); Temple of Heaven £3.50. Hutong Tour £16.00; Kung Fu show £24.00 Birds Nest tour £10.00.

Please note that it may not be possible to do all of the optionals.

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 approx £20 for tips.

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

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 Trip

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.

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

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>.

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 booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

EXPLORE!
The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducing Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

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 www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

China: A visa is required by all nationalities. A single entry visa should be arranged in advance of travelling.

In order to apply for your Chinese visa you will need to submit supporting documents from our local supplier confirming your itinerary and travel arrangements, which we will obtain on your behalf. So that we can provide this for you, and to ensure all local arrangements are in place, we require a copy of your passport no later than 8 weeks before you are due to start your trip. Once we have your passport copy we shall process and pass on the documents you require 6-8 weeks before your trip, please be mindful of this when applying for your visa. If you require the supporting documents earlier than this, please contact Explore so we can arrange this.

Passengers wishing to extend their stay in China should be aware that current visa regulations only allow foreigners to stay in the country for up to 30 days. Please consider this when planning your trip.

You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on **0208 5431846**.

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.

Preparing for your Trip

DAILY DISTANCES

Day 3	4km	500m	2.5hrs
Day 4	4.5km		2.5hrs
Day 5	8.5km		5.5hrs
Day 6	3.5km		2.5hrs
Day 7	10km		5hrs
Day 8	6km		5hrs

Optional Walks

Trekking Details

We trek on 6 days with walks ranging from 2.5 to 6 hours. Much of the route involves negotiating the steep stone stairways along the wall. We have graded this trek as moderate although there are a few sections that are a little more strenuous.

Trekking Terrain

Some sections of the wall are broken and a little overgrown and certain stretches of the Wall have some very steep sections involving climbing on high steps - because of this the tour is not recommended for vertigo sufferers. It is possible to travel in the support vehicle if you do not wish to partake in any particular walk.

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.

Clothing

Lightweight raingear year round and some warmer clothes in April and October.

Equipment

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 rehydration salts useful in the summer months.

Footwear

Light walking boots are recommended for the walk, comfortable shoes or trainers and sandals for other sightseeing.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and a daysac for personal items. Remember that you'll have to carry your own luggage, so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on trip: 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

Electric Supply & Plugs

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, 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.

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

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, 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) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

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 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip 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: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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