



Enjoy Christmas and 5 star New Year's eve climbing the Great Wall, sightseeing in Beijing, tackling terracotta warriors & throwing snowballs at Harbin's Ice Sculpture festival!



WHAT YOU SEE AND WHAT YOU GET

Trip Highlights

- BEIJING - Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City, UNESCO listed Emperor's Summer Palace, Silk Alley markets, Cloisonne Factory, Hutong area of Beijing, Chinese Acrobatic Show
- BADALING - UNESCO listed Great Wall of China
- LUOYANG – UNESCO listed Longman Caves and stone carvings, White Horse Buddhist Temple, Peony Square activities
- XI'AN - UNESCO listed Terracotta Warriors, Clay warrior workshop, Big Wild Goose Pagoda, City Wall and bike ride, Muslim Quarter, Great Mosque and market.

- HARBIN – Harbin Ice Lantern Festival, Harbin Snow and Ice World, Zhoalin Park and Sun Island Park

What's Included

- 10 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 4 dinners
- 2 nights 5 star hotel in Harbin, 6 nights 3-4 star hotels
- 2 overnight trains - Beijing - Luoyang, Harbin - Beijing (soft sleeper cabin)
- Chinese acrobatic performance
- Rickshaw ride through Beijing's Hutongs
- Xi'an - bike ride on medieval City Wall
- Economy class flight - Xi'an – Harbin
- Touring of Beijing, Luoyang, Xi'an and Harbin
- Tour leader escorted for groups of 6 travellers or more
- English speaking specialist guides at local sights
- All relevant transfers and transportation
- Airport arrival and departure transfer on day 1 and day 11

What's Not Included

- Tipping Kitty: \$65 USD
- Entrance Fees: \$198 USD
- International flights and visa
- Tip for your tour guide. We recommend you allow USD\$3 - 5 per day, per traveller. Tipping your guide is an entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Beijing

Sunday, 23 December 2012. Welcome to China and the start of your holiday! Arrive Beijing Airport and included transfer to our hotel. The remainder of the day offers free time. **Overnight - Beijing**

Day 2 : The Forbidden City



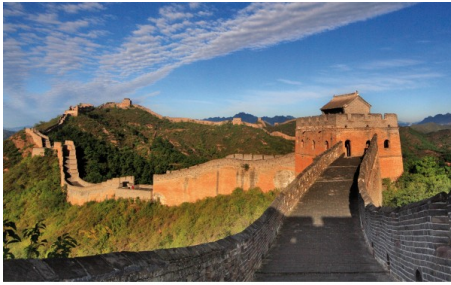
This morning we gather for a short a Welcome Meeting. Your entrance fees and tip kitty will be collected at this time. Then, it's time to set off and see some of Beijing. A patriotic vision of grandeur, Tiananmen Square is a square for the public and also home of the mausoleum of Chairman Mao Tse-tung, the Communist father of the Communist People's Republic and the striking Monument to the People's Heroes. In the square Mao's gargantuan mausoleum is an austere behemoth in granite where since his death in 1976, he has lain in state in his crystal coffin. We'll have a stroll on the square, which attracts many pleasure seekers wishing to take photos, all under the watchful eye of the dutiful guards.

Perhaps one of Beijing's most famous sights is the Gate of Heavenly Peace. Up above the gate and looking out across to all his people, is a famous colour portrait of Chairman Mao Tse-tung. Perhaps today, he is looking at a different Beijing, one that is quickly entering the 21st century. The Gate of Heavenly Peace is the main entry point into the Forbidden City. A vision in grandeur with it's imperial yellow roofs and vermilion walls, the Forbidden City, once forbidden to all those except on imperial business until 1911, when the last emperor, Puyi, was turfed off his throne. Built between 1406 and 1420, it served as the imperial palace for the Ming and Qing dynasties. We enjoy a guided walk through the city's many temples, grand halls and courtyards. An all-out assault on the eyes, it said 720,000 sq m lavishly constructed Forbidden City boasts 9999 rooms!



This afternoon we take rickshaws to explore the Hutongs of Beijing. As our trusty rickshaw driver peddles us through the network of alleys, old back lanes, traditional courtyards and compact houses we gain a fascinating snapshot of the city's traditional way of life. There is time to meet a local family and take a peek inside their home, before returning to our hotel. Tonight, we enjoy a Peking Duck dinner at a city restaurant. **Overnight - Beijing (B, D)**

Day 3 : Xmas at The Great Wall



Merry Christmas. Today, we drive beyond Beijing to Badaling, where we can walk a section of the famous Great Wall. An enduring symbol of Chinese civilisation and genius, the UNESCO protected Great Wall of China was built as a defensive structure. The immense construction took place over a period of 2,000 years and followed different routes and building extensions as required. Snaking some 6700 kms across barren hills, deserts, mountains and plateaux, the now partially ruinous Great Wall stretches east to west in northern China. At one time perhaps nearly 9700 kms long, the wall was garrisoned by 1 million soldiers and featured over 1,000 fortified passes and 10,000 beacon towers. A little steep in sections, but the photo opportunities are worth a million dollars!

Continuing, we visit to a cloisonne workshop. Tonight, enjoy Xmas dinner (Chinese banquet style) and an evening of choreographed death-defying acrobatic feats. Doing the 'splits' is an elementary skill, when compared to what these showstoppers will pull out on the night. Bicycles and rings of fire are common props in a show that will leave you wanting to see more. **Overnight - Beijing (B, L, D)**

Day 4 : Summer Palace

Beijing - Luoyang. Opt for an early morning walk through the local market before we set off to see the Summer Palace, set on Kunming Lake. The buildings date back only to the turn of the 20th century, though the site goes back to the 12th century. It is said that the Dowager Empress Cixi liked to travel with a retinue of at least 1,000. Her arrival at the rebuilt Summer Palace in 1905 was met by 458 eunuchs, and her two main meals consisted of some 100 dishes. Nice!

Perhaps most famous of all the structures at the Summer Palace is the wonderful Long Corridor, a

covered walkway 730m long, and extraordinarily hand-painted with scenes from Chinese history, legend and literature. An imperial folly is the solid marble boat on Kunming Lake. The lake may even be frozen solid but no chance of ice skating on it. A chance to cross a few palms with silver at Silk Alley markets. Silk Alley and similar shoppers markets across the city are retail havens for bargain knock-off ski jackets, big brand handbags, jewellery, accessories and souvenirs. Some bling jewellery for the lady and perhaps a genuine copy Rolex Sub-Mariner watch and matching Mont Blanc fountain pen and rollerball set for the gent?

Later this evening we travel by overnight soft sleeper (4 berth cabin) train to Luoyang. En route we'll get an opportunity to view the Beijing 2008 Olympic Stadium – commonly referred to as the 'birds nest' and aquatic centre. **Overnight - Soft Sleeper Train to Luoyang (B)**

Day 5 : Longman Grottoes



Arrive to Luoyang by sleeper train and transfer to our hotel. After timeto freshen up we head off in search of the UNESCO world heritage listed 6th Century Longman Caves. Carved into the cliffs along the Yi River, the 1300 caves (grottoes) were hollowed out by humans to create temples inside the mountain. Adorned with more than 100,000 statues and images of Buddha and his disciples carved during the Northern Wei Dynasty. Experts consider them an artistic triumph of Buddhist stone carving. Later this afternoon we tour stunning White Horse Temple, the first Buddhist temple in China. **Overnight - Luoyang (B, D)**

Day 6 : Luoyang - Xi'an

Early this morning we walk to Peony Square to watch or partake in a little exercise. Hundreds of local people enjoy their daily exercise by practising ballroom dancing, performing tai chi, sword fighting and play sports like badminton and hacky sack in the early hours of the morning. After some free time we board the new high speed epress train to Xi'an, evening at leisure. **Overnight - Xi'an (B)**

Day 7 : Xi'an & The Terracotta Warriors



Most famous for the Terracotta Warriors, perhaps the find of the 20th century and only just usurped by the discovery of King Tut's gold-laden tomb in Egypt, Emperor Qin's Terracotta Warriors comprise more than 7,000 life-sized soldiers which stand in military formation in excavated pits under the cover of a modern protective hanger. Made of local clay, no two faces are alike, each is said to be an individual portrait.

Emperor Qin's army of 2,200 year old terracotta warriors were discovered in 1974 by local farmers who happened to be digging a well. Previous emperors used to be buried with their slaves but slavery had been abolished. So, to make up for this, Qin had the warriors made to be buried near him to protect him in the afterlife. Delicate excavation continues on site, where hundreds of warriors remain smashed like eggs, not due to the passage of time but rather a peasant revolt after the emperor's death. We visit a workshop where you'll see modern-day crafts people producing terracotta warrior figurines.

This evening, On Broadway - Chinese style we can attend a Tang Dynasty dinner and performance with Chang'an music and dance originally performed for the illustrious Tang emperors. Check out our Tang Dynasty bolt-on for more details. **Overnight - Xi'an (B, L)**

Day 8 : Big Wild Goose Pagoda

Xi'an – Harbin. This morning we bike ride (solo or tandem) atop the amazing old City Wall with no vehicular traffic to mow us over. An awesome sight, the City Wall and moat is over 15km in perimeter offers unique views of the city and residence offers beneath, going about their daily lives. Visits to the Big Wild Goose Pagoda, the Muslim Quarter and Great Mosque with time to explore. Afternoon/evening flight to Beijing and onward flight to Harbin. **Overnight - Shangri La Hotel - 5 star (B)**



Day 9 : New Years Eve and Ice Sculpture Festival



Today we hit Sun Island Park for the International Snow Sculpture Competition. The festival is open to visitors from 20 Dec (although the official opening occurs on 05 Jan). This is a wonderful time to visit as sculptors will still be adding final touches to their masterpieces. This evening we head out to Zhaolin Park for the enchanting Ice Lantern Garden Party. Ice blocks standing some 8 metres tall, resembling giant ice lollies are sculpted into the most unusual designs; a rooster, a dragon boat, a pair of cupids fluttering in the heavens and a cavalry about to do battle. Each is lit up with hundreds of Traditional Chinese lanterns and a multitude of neon creating the most spectacular photo opportunities. Before the stroke of midnight we will take a prized position our hotel bar. Ring in the new year with plenty of lights, ice and 'local Maitai firewater spirit'. **Overnight - Shangri La Hotel - 5 star (B, D)**

Day 10 : Ice Festival - Happy New Year!



Harbin - Beijing. Happy New Year. We spend the day at leisure enjoying the festivities at the Harbin Snow and Ice World. Imagine sliding down a 100m ice luge resembling the Great Wall of China. You can pick up some serious speed if wearing a slick winter coat. Climbing to the top of a replica of the Emperor's Summer Palace in Beijing, complete with towers, guard house, moat and seven arched bridge or sail away on Empress Dowager Cixi's ice marble boat. Living up to its name the 'Ice World' is totally beyond imagination, unusual, enchanting, inspiring and down right bizarre. What will be on offer this year is anyone's guess. Later this evening we bid farewell to Harbin boarding our overnight sleeper train to Beijing. **Overnight - Soft Sleeper Train to Beijing (B)**

Day 11 : Goodbye China



Wednesday, 02 January 2012. Arriving into Beijing, hotel breakfast and onward departure transfer to the airport. Tackling Terracotta Warriors, seeing some amazing ice sculptures that will all be gone before the spring and climbing the Great wall on Xmas day, we hope you have had a wonderful Christmas and New Year's tour in China! Note: Onward flights should be booked for departure after 2pm.(B)

Beijing

China's capital city, host of the 2008 Olympics, is also China's political, economic and cultural centre. Established in 1045 BC, for 800 years alone it served as the capital of several powerful dynasties. A heady mix of old and new, with stunning sights, excellent shopping at Silk Alley market and the traditional Hutongs, with alleys and courtyards sandwiched together in the old back lanes.

Forbidden City

Built between 1406 and 1420, The Forbidden City served as the imperial palace for the Ming and Qing dynasties and is said to contain 9999 rooms. Residence of the emperors and focal point of the empire, entry was forbidden to all those, except on imperial business until 1911, when the last emperor, Puyi was overthrown. It is a giant complex, dominated by vast gates, temples, halls and palaces, replete with imperial yellow tiled roofs, surrounded by a protective moat.

The Great Wall

An enduring symbol of Chinese civilisation and genius, the UNESCO protected Great Wall of China was built as a defensive structure. Some 20 states and dynasties were involved in its immense construction over a period of 2,000 years. Snaking some 6700 kms across barren hills, deserts, mountains and plateaux, the now partially ruinous Great Wall stretches east to west in northern China. At one time, the wall was garrisoned by nearly 1 million soldiers and featured over 1,000 fortified passes and 10,000 beacon towers. Today, a visit offers a healthy, if steep and vertiginous walk on perhaps one of the world's most legendary attractions.

Luoyang - Ming Tombs

The Ming Tombs are a group of mausoleums of some thirteen Ming emperors, their empresses and concubines. There are three tombs usually open including Dingling, tomb of the 13th century

emperor and the only excavated tomb; Changling, the largest, tomb of the third emperor and Zhaoling.

Terracotta Army - Xi'an

The discovery of Emperor Qin's army of 2,200 year old terracotta warriors was made in 1974 by a local farmer who happened to be digging a well. More than 7,000 life-sized warriors stand in military formation in excavated pits under the cover of a modern protective hanger. Made of local clay, no two faces are alike – each is said to be an individual portrait. Delicate excavation continues on site, where hundreds of warriors remain smashed like eggs, not due to the passage of time but rather a peasant revolt after the emperor's death.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Please Note

Collection of entrance fees and tipping kitty is collected in local currency, CNY - Chinese Yuan.

Visas

China Visa

Visas are required by all visitors to China. It is essential that a tourist visa is procured prior to travel. We will provide you with an invoice/ itinerary indicating that you are travelling to China on a pre-arranged holiday. Visa forms are also available from us and also supplied upon booking. The visa is valid for entry within 3 months, so you cannot apply any earlier. Please ensure your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of return from China. We also offer a visa service for those residing in the UK, please contact us for information. Visa requirements are subject to change. Visa procurement is also the responsibility of the traveller and not of On The Go Tours.

Visa for Hong Kong

Most Western visitors to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China do not require a tourist visa issued in advance of travel. Currently, UK nationals can stay up to 180 days. Nationals of Australia, Canada, Eire, most other EU countries, New Zealand and the US do not require a visa for a stay not exceeding 90 days, while holders of RSA passports can remain for up to 30 days. If entering Hong Kong from mainland China and returning to mainland China a multiple Chinese entry visa is required.

Visa for Tibet

Tibet - If travelling to Tibet, a Tibet Travel Permit is required. The permit will be arranged by our office in China. Please contact On The Go Tours prior to departure for the most up to date Tibetan entry information.

Climate

In all, China has a great diversity of climates. To sum it up - China experiences hot summers in most parts of the country, very cold winters in the north and comfortable winters in the south! Sep-Oct is warm to hot and dry across the country. Nov-Mar is winter with very cool temps in the north, whilst mild

A Chinese New Year - 11 days



in the south. If combining the north and south, you'll experience 2 distinct weather patterns. Apr-May - perfect in the north, a little humid and rainy in the south. Jun-Aug can bring a few showers.

Health Requirements

It is recommended that you be vaccinated for Tetanus, Polio, Typhoid and Hepatitis A. A Malarial risk exists in remote areas of the south, and Rabies and Meningitis are present in Tibet and remote areas. Vaccination requirements can change so please check with your local health care provider before travel.

Currency

USD, Euro and other major currencies can be converted into Chinese Yuan (CNY) prior to your departure or upon arrival to China. A number of ATM's are located in the baggage collection area at Beijing Airport should you wish to withdraw cash upon arrival. We recommend you bring a mix of cash and credit/ debit cards for use at ATM's. Exchange rates are subject to fluctuations.

- USD 1 = 6.5 CNY
- GBP 1 = 10 CNY
- AUD 1 = 6.2 CNY
- EURO 1 = 8.6 CNY

Note: In Tibet the Chinese Yuan is the only acceptable form of currency. If bringing foreign currency for exchange USD is best. ATM's and credit card facilities are limited.

Holiday Money

Funds collected in China for entrance fees and tip kitty (if applicable to your holiday) or optional excursion that you may wish to participate are payable in local currency (CNY).

Time

China is 8 hours ahead of GMT. The country operates on one time zone, so clocks are set according to Beijing time, meaning, given the size of the country, sunrise and sunset can occur at peculiar times!

Essential Packing

As light as possible! In China most often portorage is not available at railway stations and you will be required to carry your own luggage. Bags with wheels can be a hindrance when climbing several flights of stairs, though are a blessing when walking lengthy distances to reach our awaiting transportation.

- Food in China is very different to your local takeaway !If you prefer western snack food consider bringing a supply.
- Sunglasses, hat, sunscreen, swim costume, torch & umbrella for sun or rain.
- Comfortable closed in walking shoes for climbing the Great Wall
- DEET based mosquito repellent & antihistamine cream
- Chinese plugs come in at least 3 designs: 3 prong angle pins similar, though smaller than those used in Australia; 2 prong flat pins (type A) or 2 round pins, European

style (type C). To cover all bases, pack a travel adaptor!

- Two spare passport photos & a photocopy of your passport
- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs.

Arrival Transfers

If your tour or short stay includes an airport arrival transfer (as indicated in the 'What you Get' section of this Go Guide) our arrival procedure is as follows:

Arrive to Beijing International Airport, where after you have attended to customs and immigration formalities, please proceed to the arrival hall. If arriving to Beijing via Terminal 2, when exiting immigration to the arrivals hall, please turn right where our representative will be waiting. If arriving via Terminal 3 you will be met just outside the restricted area.

Please have your tour voucher handy and make it available to our representative who will be waiting for you in the arrivals hall, holding a prominent On The Go Tours logo signboard, ready to escort you to our awaiting transportation and onward to your tour start hotel

If, for any reason you have trouble locating our representative(remember Beijing Airport can be very busy) after waiting 30 minutes in the arrival hall or your flight to China is delayed please call the emergency contact number as stated on your tour voucher.

If travelling on our Eye on Shanghai Short Stay(with arrival via Shanghai Airport) or one of our 'Short Stays' where an airport arrival transfer is included in your holiday, the procedure for meeting you at the airport is the same as those detailed above.

Toilets/Wahrooms

Public toilets, when found, are usually 'squats' - holes in the ground with footrests at either side and often don't possess a door! The custom is to wash with water from a jug or little pipe attached to the toilet using your left hand. Doesn't appeal? Here are some hints!

- Time yourself with the hotels you are staying at.
- If you are out and about, find the nearest hotel, restaurant, fast food outlet, or toilets at tourist attractions, which all tend to have Western style facilities.
- Ask your tour guide to make a stop.
- Pack a roll of toilet paper and anti-bacterial wipes for your own comfort.

Travelling By Train

Fast and efficient, China's first rail lines were laid in the 19th century, and today, the government continues to invest heavily in this crucial mode of transport which connects many parts of the country. When travelling during the day, 'soft' seats, that is to say 'upholstered' seats are provided. For overnight travel, clients are accommodated in 'soft class' sleeper cabins. Aboard each wagon are 9 compartments that comprise 4 bunks per compartment. Four people of mixed sex share one compartment. On occasion, dependent upon group

size, you may get the opportunity to share with local people on the overnight journey, though sometimes dependent upon how the Chinese Railways Booking Office configure the bookings, the cabin may be filled with four of our passengers. A dining wagon serves reasonably priced Chinese food of the noodles and rice variety, along with snacks and drinks. A very simple menu is published in English. On the Beijing - Xi'an service, there is also a small bar serving drinks including alcohol. Each wagon offers a WC and hand basin facility. At one end, is a Chinese squat-style WC, whilst at the other end is a modern Western-style WC. Cabins are lockable from the inside and luggage is stowed in overhead compartments and under the bottom bunk. Bed linen and slippers are supplied, and often there is a TV mounted on the wall at the end of each bed that may even work. Most channels are broadcast in Mandarin, excluding one English channel, which has little of interest on it!

Porterage

In China most often portorage is not available at railway stations and you will be required to carry your own luggage. We recommend you pack as light as possible as there can be several flights of stairs and a lengthy walk to our awaiting transportation.

A Chinese New Year - 11 days