

## Beyond the City Walls - 12 days

# go guide

don't leave home without it



A World Of Discovery



Take the road less travelled from bustling Beijing to cosmopolitan Shanghai. Visit the Great Wall, Forbidden City and Terracotta Warriors, before discovering the striking limestone peaks of Guilin, the fascinating eclectic mix of minority groups in Yangshuo and Longsheng's incredible Dragons Backbone.



### 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
- Xi'an - UNESCO listed Terracotta Warriors, Clay warrior workshop, Big Wild Goose Pagoda, City Wall and bike ride
- Yangshuo – free time. A picturesque village with quirky street markets set within a karst mountain backdrop. Sailing, rafting, hiking and outdoor pursuits

- Longsheng – the Dragon's backbone rice terraces, Ping'an village and minority groups
- Shanghai - free time. Visit the Jade Buddha Temple, Oriental Pearl Tower, Yuyuan Garden, The Bund & Old Shanghai

#### What's Included

- 11 breakfasts, 2 lunches & 2 dinners
- 10 nights 3-4 star hotels
- 1 overnight train (soft sleeper cabin) Beijing - Xi'an
- Chinese acrobatic performance
- Rickshaw ride through Beijings Hutongs
- Xi'an - bike ride on medieval City Wall
- Airport arrival and departure transfer on day 1, day 7 and day 12
- Touring of Beijing, Badaling and Xi'an
- Tour leader escorted for groups of 6 or more
- English speaking specialist guides at local sights
- All relevant transfers and transportation
- 1 economy class flight - Xi'an - Guilin
- 1 economy class flight - Guilin - Shanghai
- Day trip to the Dragon's backbone and Lonji Village

#### What's Not Included

- Tipping Kitty: \$70 USD
- Entrance Fees: \$75 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

Saturday. Beijing - Welcome to China and the start of your holiday! Enjoy an arrival transfer to our hotel. If arriving into Terminal 2, please turn right once you've passed customs to reach the pick up

point. If arriving into Terminal 3, you will be met just outside of the restricted area. **Overnight - Beijing**

#### Day 2 : Forbidden City

Beijing. This morning, we enjoy a Welcome Meeting. Then, it's time to set off and see some of Beijing. We embark on some guided sightseeing of the nation's capital, the host of the 2008 Olympics.

Tiananmen Square partly framed by illustrious Chang-an Avenue is essentially the heart 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. 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, 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.

The Gate of Heavenly Peace is the main entry point into the Forbidden City. A vision in grandeur with its 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 is a city within a city. Beijing was always a walled city but the Forbidden City, seat of the great emperors, was the innermost sanctum of the city. 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 is said that the 720,000 sq m lavishly constructed Forbidden City boasts 9999 rooms!

Later we take a rickshaw ride through the Hutongs of Beijing, weaving through old back lanes, traditional courtyards and compact houses, gaining a fascinating snapshot of the city's traditional way of life. This evening, we enjoy a Welcome Dinner

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updated on 19-01-2012



of Peking Duck at a city restaurant. **Overnight - Beijing (B, D)**

### Day 3 : The Great Wall



Beijing. Some say it can be seen from space, but unless you're a top gun at NASA, you'll probably never know. Instead, experience the real deal. Today, we travel beyond Beijing to Badaling, where we can walk (and almost climb on some sections) on the Great Wall. No matter how many pictures you've seen, the Great Wall of China is still an incredible sight to behold. An enduring symbol of Chinese civilisation and genius, the UNESCO protected Great Wall of China was built as a defensive structure. Although the present wall dates mainly from the Ming dynasty, some 20 states and dynasties were involved in its immense construction 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 nearly 1 million soldiers and featured over 1,000 fortified passes and 10,000 beacon towers.

Today's visit offers a healthy, if steep and vertiginous walk, made all the more breathtaking by the stunning views. Before returning to the hotel we visit a cloisonne workshop, where we'll see firsthand the production of decorative items utilising the techniques of this practised and ancient craft.

Tonight, enjoy an eye boggling Chinese acrobatic performance. Swinging ropes, juggling hoops, spinning plates and human pyramids are just a few tricks these show stoppers pull out! **Overnight - Beijing (B, L)**

### Day 4 : Summer Palace

Beijing-Luoyang. A chance to cross a few palms with silver at Silk Alley markets, where even the most hardened nonshoppers manage to walk away with something they really desire!

Set on picturesque Kunming Lake is the Summer Palace. 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 unusual is the solid marble boat on Kunming Lake! We view from a distance the 2008 Olympic Stadium commonly referred to as the 'birdsnest' and an aquatic centre, en route to the train station. **Overnight - Sleeper Train to Xi'an (B)**

### Day 5 : Terracotta Warriors



Xi'an. Arrive Xi'an and hotel check in. Most famous for the Terracotta Warriors, perhaps the find of the 20th century and only just usurped by the discovery of King Tut's goldladen 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. Afterwards we visit a workshop where you'll see modern-day crafts people producing terracotta warrior figurines. This evening we offer an optional bolt on, a Tang Dynasty dinner and performance with Chang'an music and dance. **Overnight - Xi'an (B, L)**

### Day 6 : Big Wild Goose Pagoda

Xi'an - Shanghai. Spend the morning at leisure before visiting the Big Wild Goose Pagoda and enjoying a bicycle ride atop the Xi'an City Wall.

After an early dinner we fly to Guilin. Upon arrival transfer to Yangshuo (approximately 1.5hrs drive). Early dinner and late evening check in. **Overnight - Yangshuo (B, D)**

### Days 7-8 : Yangshuo



Yangshuo. Yangshuo offers a world of opportunity for exploring the great outdoors. With breath-taking beauty, striking limestone mountain scenery and pure clean rivers, one can choose to go swimming or tubing down the Yu Long River, hike or hire a bicycle or motorbike and head off on one of the many mountain trails. Stop to watch the local fishermen use their trained cormorants to catch fish (a centuries old tradition, though somewhat commercialised these days) and perhaps take a sailing trip on a bamboo raft up stream or down stream, hand paddled or motorised. You can also visit any number of the giant local caves or go to Xanadu a primitive minority village bursting with rural charm, culture and genuine hospitality. If this is not enough, Yangshuo is also China's foremost venue for rock climbing, with around 300 bolted routes and several companies offering guiding and equipment hire.

At a slower pace, discover West Street, which has retained its traditional styles and is laden with quirky shops, tea shops, antiques, art studios, calligraphers, t-shirt designers and souvenir curios. Maybe take a beginners art class with a local painter or enjoy a morning class at the 'Cloud 9' cooking school. West Street is a sort of 'Global Village' where the local ethnic minority of Hui, Zhuang, Yao people (each with their own distinct appearance, traditions and culture) mix with the Han Chinese, foreign travellers and a number of foreign residents managing cafés and restaurants.

By nightfall sit back and relax at any one of the many al fresco cafes, pubs or bars serving cold beer and delicious speciality foods. Catch a film at an outdoor cinema or attend the nightly 'Impression Liu Sanjie' performance. This popular musical extravaganza is performed outdoors by the river with a mountain backdrop by a cast of more than 500 singers and dancers.

Yangshuo is yours to explore at leisure on day 7 and until late afternoon on day 8, where we return to Guilin. **Overnight - Yangshuo (1) Guilin (1) (B:2)**



## Day 9 : Longsheng - Dragon's Backbone



Guilin – Longsheng – Shanghai. This morning we drive to Longsheng. Here, we explore the rice terraces of the Dragon's Backbone! Beginning at the base of Mt Longji the verdant green rice fields coil the steep mountain layer upon layer climbing to its summit. Where there is soil a terrace has been made! Taking a walk along the stone paths no more than a metre wide, we'll pass many of the Yao and Red Yao minority women, baskets on their backs, who are also climbing skyward.

Reaching the 'Seven Stars accompanying Moon' lookout, soak up the spectacular views. The full panorama offers thousands of ribbon like terraces cascading to the meandering streams and valley floor beneath. Evening flight to Shanghai.

**Overnight - Shanghai (B)**

## Days 10-11 : Discover Shanghai



Shanghai. Focus your eyes on spectacular Shanghai. Perhaps China's most modern city, its amazing Pudong skyline is stunning. The next two days are free for you to explore the city at leisure. Consider visiting the Jade Buddha Temple, Yuyuan Garden and street market, The Bund, shopping along Nanjing Road or taking a cruise along the Huangpu River. **Overnight - Shanghai (B:2)**

## Day 12 : Shanghai

Wednesday. Shanghai. Our tour concludes after breakfast and onward transfer to the airport. (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.

## 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.

## Guilin & Yangshou

Renowned for its striking, if bizarre scenery: vast areas of karst limestone outcrops that rise up from flat rice paddy fields, Guilin is often the subject of Chinese painting. The Lijiang River cruise is a true pleasure that offers an endless procession of peaks and simple villages. Cruising at a sedate pace along the often misty river, local village boys paddle out to the river boats with all manner of souvenirs, whilst local fishermen use trained cormorants to catch fish. Charming Yangshuo, a river town lined with cafes and little shops selling handicrafts, clothing and curios offers gentle respite far from the madding crowds of the cities. In Guilin, Reed Flute Cave offers the chance to walk inside a gargantuan and deep limestone cave that features innumerable stalactites, stalagmites and rocky outcrops.

## Shanghai

Pre – 1949, cosmopolitan Shanghai was a magnet for seekers of wealth, idle colonialists, explorers

and the dispossessed. A legacy of these heady times, is Shanghai's Bund, where on and around this waterfront promenade, are a vast series of grandiose pre-1949 buildings. After four decades of austerity, economic reforms implemented by Deng Xiaoping reawakened Shanghai. Just across the Huangpu River is the new Shanghai, a high-tech development of sky scrapers, the centre piece of which is the rocket-shaped Oriental Pearl TV tower. Mercedes and BMW cars cruise the neon-lit streets, modern department stores rub shoulders with cool bars and Shanghai is staking its claim to being China's foremost metropolis.

### 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 in the south. If combining the north and south, you'll experience 2 distinct weather patterns. Apr-May -

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updated on 19-01-2012



perfect in the north, if 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 portage 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

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