



CHINA: WINTER WONDERLAND

2024 - Classic Tour | 16 Days | Physical Level 2

Shanghai – Chengdu – Xian – Beijing – Gubei – Harbin – Beijing

Escape to the magic of China this Christmas, where every city transforms into a winter wonderland. Marvel at the sparkling lights of Shanghai's skyline, relish the warmth of spicy Chengdu cuisine, uncover the ancient secrets of Xian, stand in awe of Beijing's imperial grandeur, and step into the fantastical world of the Ice and Snow Festival in Harbin.

- Discover one of the world's old and largest ice and snow festival's
- Toast the New Year with champagne on the Great Wall
- Get up close to the Giant Pandas
- Discover Beijing's history in its narrow Hutongs
- Travel through diverse landscapes on high-speed trains
- Journey to the past with a vibrant Tang Dynasty performance

To book call **1800936 3998** or visit your local travel agent

Visit wendywutours.co.nz

TOUR MAP



CHINA: WINTER WONDERLAND TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escorts (if your group is 10 or more passengers) and Local Guides
- Visa fees for New Zealand passport holders (please see visa section below for further information)
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

CLASSIC TOURS:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of China on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully-inclusive basis so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

PHYSICAL LEVEL 2:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights.

‘China: Winter Wonderland is rated as a physical level 2 tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it’s more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You’ll be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time.
- On the Great Wall of China In Beijing, some of the walking will be at an incline and uneven ground.
- In Harbin, the average temperature in January during the day is -13°C and at night -24°C. The ground will be slippery and icy. Appropriate winter clothing and sturdy shoes suitable for walking on ice is required.
- In general, there may be snow and ice on the ground throughout your time in China.

Of course, our National Escort and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 16 days in duration including international flights or 14 days in duration based on ‘Land Only’. Join the tour on Day 2 in Shanghai and end the tour on Day 15 in Beijing.

Travellers booked on ‘Land Only’, the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour, or when booking pre and post night accommodation with Wendy Wu Tours.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

It’s our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances we’ll make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

DETAILED ITINERARY**Days 1-2: Fly to Shanghai**

Meals: D

On arrival in Shanghai Pudong or Shanghai Hongqiao Airport, you will be met in the arrival hall by your local guide and/or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer approximately 1 hour to your hotel.

Early check-in is not included. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.



An informal Welcome Dinner will be held on Day 1. Late arrivals will receive a box dinner.

Destination Information

Shanghai – Once known as the 'Paris of the East', Shanghai is now one of Asia's most influential cities. Prior to communist arrival in 1949, Shanghai was a city with European-style mansions and was the most important trading port in Asia. Today it presents a blend of cultures; the modern and the traditional, along with the occidental and oriental. Modern skyscrapers intermingle with 1920s 'shikumen' buildings. This combination is what attracts millions of visitors each year.

Day 3: Shanghai | Christmas Day

Meals: B, L, D

What better way to spend your Christmas Day than in the cosmopolitan city of Shanghai, also known as the 'Paris of the East'. Today's explorations commence with the peaceful Yu Garden and the atmospheric alleys of the old town. Admire the magnificent colonial architecture along the Huangpu River with a stroll along the Bund before visiting a silk factory. Dine at the renowned *Lost Heaven*, one of Shanghai's must-try restaurants inspired by indigenous recipes and cooking techniques from the Yunnan region.



Later, wander through one of the city's festive Christmas markets then cruise on the mighty Huangpu River for stunning views of the Shanghai skyline.

Tonight a German style feast awaits including a drink to toast with your newfound travel companions.

Sightseeing today involves a full day of touring around the centre of the city with 3-4 hours on foot.

Destination Information

Old Town and Yu Gardens – The old town of Shanghai, where cobbled streets are lined with traditional shops selling herbal medicines, handicrafts, Chinese tea and a variety of tantalising snacks, is the original centre of Shanghai and for decades was the seat of Chinese authority in Shanghai.

The Yu Gardens is seen as one of the most perfect examples of Chinese garden style. Built by the Ming-era governor, Pan Yunduan, as a retirement gift for his father, the Yu Gardens is home to exquisite jade rock, koi-filled ponds and stunning, tranquil pavilions.

The Bund – Recognised as Shanghai's former 'Wall Street', the Bund is home to an impressive collection of buildings from the early trade houses of the 1850s to the glamorous Art Deco modernism of the 1920s. Originally the home of the foreign population of Shanghai, the Bund's architecture has inherited much western influence and is a stark contrast to the Pudong skyline, sitting across the Huangpu River.

Silk Factory – The Silk Factory is an educational journey through the production of silk, one of China's most famous and luxurious materials. Learn about the use of silkworms and silk moths in its production; the manufacturing process; as well as silk's journey along the Silk Road which brought this product across Asia and Europe.

Huangpu River Cruise – There is no better way to see the juxtaposition of eras in Shanghai's history than by taking a cruise on the Huangpu River. At night, the dazzling colours and lights from Pudong shine bright onto the more modest twilight of the Bund.

Day 4: Shanghai – Chengdu

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, explore Xintiandi with its 1920's style shikumen buildings. Then transfer to the airport for your 3.5-hour flight to Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province and home of the Giant Panda.



Destination Information

Xintiandi – An affluent area, Xintiandi is a newly redeveloped district in the centre of Shanghai, home to boutique shopping and luxurious dining. The buildings here are designed and redeveloped from traditional style of Shanghai housing from the early 20th century, called Shikumen.

Chengdu – China's symbolic western capital and the residence of the country's most lovable black and white bear, Chengdu has an abundance to offer. With a fast-paced economy that is dragging China's west into the 21st century, it is no wonder that Chengdu's appeal is growing year on year. As the gateway into Sichuan Province's large collection of sights, as well as Chengdu being its own trove of historical and cultural treasures, Chengdu is a definite, a necessity, a must-visit on any trip to China.

Day 5: Chengdu

Meals: B, L, D

Today you will see China's most famous resident, the giant panda. Visit the Panda Conservation Centre where you can learn about China's celebrated bear. See these lovable creatures in surroundings that mirror their natural habitat. It is not guaranteed that you will be able to see the feeding of the younger pandas, as this only happens at the start and end of each day.



Later, spend 1-2 hours sightseeing around People's Park, visiting a teahouse and the famous Matchmaker's Corner where parents look for suitable suitors for their children.

Tonight, enjoy a traditional Sichuanese hot pot meal.

Destination Information

Panda Conservation Centre – With over 80 pandas, the Chengdu Panda Research Base is equipped with the latest technology and research materials to gain a further understanding in how we can protect the panda and maintain, if not increase, its numbers. The park is set up to resemble the mountain and forest regions in north Sichuan, the original home of the Giant Panda, with extensive bamboo trees and large green spaces. Red Pandas, the Giant Panda's lovable cousin, and flamboyant peacocks too roam the park, making for an interesting mix.

People's Park – People's Park is a pleasant respite from urban Chengdu. Here you can see beautiful golden koi, locals dancing and practicing Tai Chi.

Sichuanese Hot Pot – Sichuan hot pot is a very popular dish, especially for those cold winter evenings. Like a European stew, hot pot consists of a thick simmering stock where ingredients including meat, vegetables, wonton, dumpling and anything else you can think of, are thrown in and cooked in front of you.

Day 6: Chengdu – Xian

Meals: B, L, D

Today, board your bullet train to the former ancient capital of Xian, a journey of 3.5 hours.

This evening, dine on a delicious Shui Jiao dumpling banquet and watch a performance of Tang Dynasty dancing.



Destination Information

Xian – Xian has long played a pivotal role in China’s extensive history and has been a thriving hub for cultural exchange, economic trade as well as national politics for centuries. Home to some of China’s most ancient sights, diverse architecture and delicious fare, Xian is a must-see destination.

Tang Dynasty Dancing show – Xian, previously known as Chang’an, was an important cultural and historical centre in not only China but in the known-world. The Tang Dynasty dancing show is an exciting exponent of this prosperous society and keeps alive the splendour of this period.

Day 7: Xian

Meals: B, L, D

Spend the morning viewing the enigmatic ranks of the life-sized Terracotta Warriors. The Museum of the Terracotta Warriors and Horses is located approximately a 1-hour drive outside of Xian. From the bus park to the museum entrance there is a 15-minute walk. There are electric carts offered by private vendors which can be organised at your own cost. There is no electric cart available for the return from the museum exit to the bus park. Within the museum area the warriors can be seen in three different ‘pits’, which are active archaeological digs. The site is large and will take about 2 and a half hours to explore.



After this, visit the Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Workshop to see smaller models of the warriors being made. Later, stroll on the beautifully preserved 14th century city walls that enclose Xian’s old town. The local guide will give you time to explore the ancient city walls at your own pace. There are options here to hire a bicycle or an electric cart to drive along the length of the wall. These are offered by private vendors and can be organised at your own expense.

Please note: If you wish to undertake a bike ride on the Ancient City Wall, we strongly recommend wearing a helmet.

Destination Information

Terracotta Warriors – One of the most significant archaeological discoveries of the 20th century, this unearthed terracotta army is comprised of over 7,000 soldiers, horses and chariots. The army was built in life-sized form by thousands of workers and designed by Emperor Qin Shi Huang to defend himself in the afterlife.

Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Workshop – See smaller versions of the enigmatic Terracotta Warriors being created at the captivating Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Workshop; even purchase your own portable soldier.

Ancient city walls – Dating back to the Ming Dynasty in the 14th century, the Xian ancient city wall is one of the best preserved urban fortifications in China.

The wall's ideal spot and layout gives visitors a bird's eye view over this fantastic city. Follow the locals' example and take a bike ride to get an ever more spectacular experience.

Day 8: Xian – Beijing

Meals: B, L, D

Transfer to the train station and take the speedy bullet train for 5 and a half hours to Beijing.

In the afternoon, enjoy a leisurely stroll in the Hutongs and have dinner with a local family.

Please note you will need to carry your own luggage on and off the train.

**Destination Information**

Beijing – Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China. With its unequalled wealth of history, Beijing served as the centre for the many different empires and cultures that ruled China and has been the heart of politics and society throughout its long history. The ancient monuments, the stories of days gone by as well as the dynamic and modern city Beijing has become today, make it a destination not to be missed.

Hutongs – The Mongol rulers of Beijing established this style of housing in the 13th century as tenancy for the growing population of the city. Hutongs were designed to reflect the Chinese system of Feng Shui with 4 hutongs joining together to make a courtyard in the middle, known as Siheyuan. In more recent times, the hutong suburbs were in jeopardy of disappearing, but a fierce debate between developers and those who fought to protect the architecture and the hutong way of life diminished the threat.

Day 9: Beijing – Gubei Watertown | New Years Eve

Meals: B, L, D

Explore the Summer Palace, once a holiday retreat of the Qing emperors.

Continue 2 hours by road to the charming Gubei Watertown, a beautifully recreated ancient town nestled against the backdrop of the Simatai section of the Great Wall.

The afternoon is yours at leisure. You may wish to wander the town's canals, relax at a hot spring resort, or get cozy at a local teahouse.



As the sun goes down, soar up to the heights of the Great Wall by cable car and watch a series of illuminations light up this ancient wonder. Stroll along the top before returning to the town to farewell the year with a delicious New Years Eve dinner.

Please note: You may wish to pack an overnight bag for your trip to Gubei Watertown. Main luggage can be left in safe storage at the hotel in Beijing and collected upon your return.

Destination Information

Summer Palace – The former holiday retreat of the Qing emperors, the Summer Palace is a stunning example of Chinese garden style. The Summer Palace incorporates the Fengshui notion of ‘Mountain’ and ‘Water’, seen here with tranquil Kunming Lake and magnificent Longevity Hill. A favourite resort of the Empress Dowager Cixi, the Summer Palace is home to a stunning Marble Boat and the Long Corridor, one of the longest outdoor passageways in the world.

Great Wall of China – Originally built under the first Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang, the Great Wall of China is the country’s most iconic sight. Snaking through the northern countryside from the Gobi Desert in the west into the Bohai Sea in the east, the Great Wall of China is the longest wall in the world and was used as a fortification against northern nomadic tribes. The current structure dates back to the Ming Dynasty - over 700 years old.

Day 10: Gubei Watertown – Beijing | New Years Day

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy a leisurely morning then transfer 30-minutes to the Jinshanling section of the Great Wall. Toast the New Year with a glass of champagne atop the wall. Jinshanling is much less frequented by tourists than other parts of the Wall. The stark, yet magnificent surroundings allow you to put yourself in the shoes of those who walked this incredible edifice hundreds of years ago. This once-in-a-lifetime walk on the Jinshanling section of the Great Wall will last 1 hour, depending on the weather.



Return back to Beijing by road and enjoy an evening at leisure.

Please note parts of the pathway at Jinshanling are rocky and unmaintained; it is strongly advised that you wear sturdy footwear today. Your guide will direct you where you can walk to.

Destination Information

Jinshanling Great Wall – Located north east of Beijing, the Jinshanling Section of the Great Wall winds through stunning mountain scenery and offers panoramic views over the countryside. This Ming Dynasty section of the Great Wall offers one of the most breathtaking walks from the Gubeikou section.

Day 11: Beijing – Harbin

Meals: B, L, D

Walk across the lengths of Tiananmen Square and into the magnificent Forbidden City. You will spend approximately 2 hours sightseeing on foot.

Transfer to the train station for your 5-6 hour bullet train journey to Harbin, home to the Harbin International Ice Festival.



If this day of touring falls on a Monday, your touring in Beijing will be switched around so that the Forbidden City is visited on an alternative day.

Destination Information

Tiananmen Square – Built under the guidance of Chairman Mao Zedong, Tiananmen Square is one of the largest public squares in the world, said to hold a capacity crowd of over one million. It houses not only the Monument to the People's Heroes, it is also the final resting place of Chairman Mao himself in the Mausoleum of Mao Zedong.

Forbidden City – The sacred centre of the Chinese empire for 500 years and home to the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Forbidden City is a vast complex of over 900 buildings and covers an area of 180 acres. Since 1987, the Forbidden City has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site and its palatial architectural style has been an influence on many imperial buildings throughout Asia.

Harbin – Harbin is the capital city of Heilongjiang Province, located close to the Siberian border. Each year, Harbin makes the most of its freezing winters by hosting the world famous Ice and Snow Festival. Harbin is a beautiful 'warm' city in winter. While outside averages -13°C during the day, most houses, gardens and trees are decorated with ice and snow, homes, shops and all indoor areas are kept warm at a comfortable 22°C.

Day 12: Harbin

Meals: B, L, D

This morning you will visit the Shong Hua River, while here we will observe ice water swimming, ice windsurfing and other amazing winter activities.

Head across to Sun Island, located in the middle of the river. This is a popular outdoor retreat for locals to simply relax, picnic and enjoy these 38 square kilometre landscaped parklands.



This evening you can mingle with people from all over to celebrate the joyous Ice Lantern Festival and admire thousands of spectacular ice carved animals, plants and buildings all brought to life in the beautifully illuminated festival grounds. Sightseeing involves approximately three to four hours walking outside in cold temperatures.

Please note that the ground will be slippery and icy therefore please ensure you wear suitable clothing and footwear today. Whilst in Harbin, sightseeing will be subject to change depending on local conditions.

Destination Information

The Harbin International Ice Festival – One of the world's largest ice and snow festivals held annually in Harbin during the winter months. Snow and blocks of ice are carved into the shapes of buildings and animals and lit up with coloured lights to provide a glittering spectacle in the evening.

Ice Lantern Festival – Originating in the early 1960s, Harbin's ice lantern art, derived from traditional folk styles, utilises construction and sculpture techniques with electricity as the light source. Evolving into an iconic representation of Harbin's ice and snow culture by the late 19th century, the first Harbin Ice Lantern Show was held in 1963 in Zhaolin Park.

Shong Hua River: A vital watercourse in northern China, the Shong Hua River contributes to regional ecosystems and providing water resources for surrounding communities. Every winter, the freezes over.

Sun Island: A scenic area located on the north bank of the Songhua River. During the winter months, visitors can explore snow sculptures, ice lanterns, and enjoy various winter sports and activities in this picturesque area.

Day 13: Harbin

Meals: B, L, D

This morning enjoy the festivities visiting Ice and Snow World. Here you will view the many sculptures on display. The inspiration for these sculptures is usually derived from traditional Chinese fairy tales or world-famous monuments. There is a variety of optional activities on offer at Ice and Snow World, including the ice maze, ice bars, skating and if time permits you will have free time to choose how you like to spend your time here.



Please note these activities will be at your own expense and are not included.

Later you will tour the city centre, filled with grand European-style buildings, including Central Avenue and Sophia Cathedral. Sightseeing involves approximately three to four hours walking outside in cold temperatures.

Please note that the ground will be slippery and icy therefore please ensure you wear suitable clothing and footwear today. Whilst in Harbin, sightseeing will be subject to change depending on local conditions.

Destination Information

Ice and Snow World – Spanning over 750,000 square meters and utilising more than 300,000 cubic meters of ice and snow, the impressive Ice and Snow World features more than 2,000 ice sculptures, landscapes, ice castles, rides and stage shows.

Central Avenue - Also known as Zhongyang Street, is a historic and iconic thoroughfare in Harbin, China.

Renowned for its European architectural influences, the street is a testament to Harbin's multicultural past. Stretching for about 1.4 kilometers, Central Avenue is lined with a mix of Baroque and Renaissance-style buildings, housing a variety of shops, boutiques, restaurants, and cafes.

Sophia Cathedral – Built in 1907, this Orthodox church reflects the city's cultural diversity and Russian influence during the early 20th century. With its distinctive green-domed architecture and intricate detailing, the cathedral is a visual masterpiece.

Day 14: Harbin – Beijing

Meals: B, L, D

Transfer to the train station for your 5-6 hour bullet train journey to Beijing.

This evening, farewell your group and tuck into a delicious local delivery, Peking duck.

Please note you will need to carry your own luggage on and off the train.

**Destination Information**

Peking Duck – A favourite of the Emperor's court and the upper-class elite during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Peking duck quickly spread throughout Chinese society to become a national favourite and a symbol of China.

Day 15-16: Depart Beijing

Meals: B

Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred from your hotel to Beijing Daxing or Beijing Capital Airport, according to the departure time of your international flight, arriving to New Zealand a day later.

Late check-out is not included. Additional nights before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.

CHINA TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

China - Entry visas are required by all visitors to China. Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. Please note - Once an online visa application has been completed all passengers between the ages of 14-69 years old, you may be advised to visit one of three visa centres in New Zealand – Auckland, Wellington, or Christchurch. Full details will be advised by Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into New Zealand.

Please note the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate; Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa. Currently a visa is required for New Zealand Passport holders. Your travel consultant will inform you if any changes are applicable prior to your departure.

INSURANCE:

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance. We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original.

GROUP SIZE:

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by both a National Escort and local guides. There will be no more than 28 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu our groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 10 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

EATING IN CHINA:

Chinese cuisine is one of the most influential, diverse and flavoursome culinary styles in the world with a legacy stretching back thousands of years. Often you'll find that the local Chinese style is very different from what you're used to at home. We welcome people on our tours with a wide variety of tastes and as such try to present an array of food to suit everyone in the group. Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes, their individual flavours as well as the different ways they are prepared and cooked throughout China.

Dishes served in restaurants on our group tours are varied. Some will be vegetable-based with meat mixed in, and a few will be meat-based. Traditionally, Chinese people cook with a lot of vegetables because meat used to be hard to come by.

Dishes often come pre-seasoned with soy sauce or other sauces. Our restaurants are well aware of the western palate – there are plenty of non-spiced options. Most meals are served with plain rice on the side which is intended as an accompaniment to your meal. Unlike the western world, Chinese people do not normally pre-heat their plates and food can be presented at a variety of temperatures, which is a typical Chinese way of doing things.

When eating meals on group tours, you will be seated around a circular table with other tour members. Dishes will be served in the traditional ‘family style’ on a lazy susan; meaning that various dishes will be laid out on a spinning turntable in the centre of the tabletop. These dishes are intended to be shared amongst the group – there is always more than enough to feed everybody. ‘Family style’ means that there is a pair of serving chopsticks for each dish which are used specifically to serve the food (please ask your server if you require a fork or spoon) and everybody will help themselves to all the dishes on the lazy susan. You will have an individual bowl, chopsticks and cup for your own use. Please be courteous and consider your fellow diners; if your favourite dish is on the other side of the table, it will make its way round to you soon! We find our customers really enjoy this sociable style of eating.

Your National Escort will do their utmost to cater for any special requests such as gluten free or vegetarian meals, however, people on restricted diets should expect complications. Although most Asian countries are now quite developed, only quite recently have they started to widely accept Western guests. Western food requirements are quite far removed from Asian food requirements, and even medical reasons can be quite difficult to explain. While our ground partners will do everything they can to cater for a wide range of dietary requirements on tour, we ask kindly for your patience and understanding that they cannot always be delivered to the standard you will be used to at home. It is recommended that passengers with food intolerances bring snacks or additional food items with them, especially when travelling further from major cities as not all dietary requests will be met due to the limited foods available. Please read your travel guide which you will receive with your final documents for more information about eating in China. We recommend that when it comes to Chinese food, you stay open minded, try to be adventurous and always have a go with the chopsticks!

PLEASE INFORM US OF ANY ALLERGIES AND/OR SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS AT TIME OF BOOKING.

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between New Zealand and China.

All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Due to environmental regulations, not all hotels in China provide toiletries in the rooms. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

TRANSPORT:

Trains: On this tour, you will take a high-speed “bullet” train journey. You will travel in second-class soft seats with air conditioning. For train journeys you must ensure that you pack liquids, aerosols and gels/lotions in your hand luggage as per recent regulations. Passengers are not allowed to carry any aerosols over 100ml. Passengers are also not allowed to carry flammable gases or liquids including styling gel, compressed air or insecticides; any explosives, magnetised material, knives (including Swiss Army knives), scissors or sharp items (medication is fine). Bag checks are conducted randomly and any of these items may be confiscated before boarding the train (in hand luggage or main luggage). The National Escort will inform you of specific details prior to boarding.

High-Speed Train Facilities: The second-class seats are in a 3 x 2 seating configuration. Facilities vary from train to train. Most carriages have a western style toilet. Most seats will have a foldable tray table and power socket for charging your electronic devices. There are dining carts on board if you wish to purchase your own additional food.

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Roads in China have generally improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road – not just 1-2 kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only. There may be sections of road where the surface is bumpy but our drivers will do their utmost to lessen the impact.

Planes: Internal flight/s are based on economy class, with reputable airlines. Lithium Ion batteries, usually used in laptops, cell phones and digital cameras, must be carried in your hand luggage (not in your checked luggage). Portable chargers with a case that does not state the capacity or with a capacity of 160wh and more are not allowed on internal flights at all.

DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA:

Though parts of China match the west in modernity and technological advances, it is important to remember that China is still a developing country and as such, many aspects of tourism in China do not have the solid infrastructure and safety standards as seen here in the west.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:

If you are travelling within the below Chinese Public Holidays please note that celebrations last for several days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open, but may be crowded. Chinese New Year is from 9 – 16 February 2024 and 28 January – 4 February 2025. Golden Week public holidays fall annually between 29 April – 3 May and 30 September – 7 October.

SOUVENIRS:

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs; so in each city, we will visit a workshop or factory which demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone so we aim to take you to places which hold local interest; for example, in Shanghai you will be able to see how silk is created all the way from the silk worm to beautiful garments; and in Xian we will take you to a workshop which creates replicas of the Terracotta Warriors, from tiny little warriors to seven foot behemoths! We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and China is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience, Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed to local guides and drivers throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the National Escort.

If you are travelling in a smaller group with local guides only, then tipping is paid in each destination. To be fair to the guides we ask for slightly higher amounts per traveller with small groups. Yangtze cruise companies operate a service charge policy and this is paid separately when boarding the vessel.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

LUGGAGE:

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. In general, we recommend packing only as much as you can lift as you will need to carry your own luggage on and off trains. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

On occasion, your guide will offer optional activities locally if time permits. A list of optional activities and approximate costs will be provided with your final documents. These can be arranged by your guide and are paid for locally.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

Wendy Wu does not give specific health advice, but we do recommend you see your doctor at least six weeks prior to travel for advice and to allow time for any necessary vaccinations. Please remember to take your itinerary with you. Safe travel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.safetravel.govt.nz

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.safetravel.govt.nz as in the event of an emergency, New Zealand Consular assistance will be more readily available.

Up until the day you travel, it is vital you keep up to date and familiarised with the entry requirements as these can change at short notice. You are personally responsible for completing any entry forms, conducting any covid tests (if necessary), etc and adhering to countries' specific entry requirements.

You can also access the New Zealand Government's travel advisory service for up-to-date information about your destination on the same website.

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

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