



SILK ROAD EXPLORER

2024 - Go Beyond Tour | 28 Days | Physical Level 2

XIAN – LANZHOU – XIAHE – ZHANGYE – JIAYUGUAN – DUNHUANG – TURPAN –
KURLA – KUQA – AKSU – KASHGAR – URUMQI – BEIJING

Follow in the footsteps of intrepid adventurers by journeying along one of the world's most famous trading routes, the Silk Road. Beginning in ancient Xian, venture across this vast land to reach the fascinating outpost of Kashgar.

- Cycle on Xian's ancient city walls
- Explore Tibetan Xiahe
- Discover the desert oasis of Turpan
- Shop like a local at Kashgar's legendary bazaar
- Enjoy the tranquillity of the Heavenly Lake
- Take a walk on the Great Wall of China

TOUR MAP

SILK ROAD EXPLORER 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 Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) and Local Guides
- Visa fees for New Zealand passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with IATA

The only thing you may have to pay for is 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.

GO BEYOND TOURS:

Venture off the beaten track to explore fascinating destinations away from the tourist trail. You will discover the local culture in depth and see sights rarely witnessed by other travellers. These tours take you away from the comforts of home but will reward you with the experiences of a lifetime. These tours include:

- Walking through classic sites
- Unique cultural experiences and encounters
- Off the beaten track destinations
- More evenings at leisure for independent exploration

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 'Silk Road Explorer' 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 long periods of walking whilst sightseeing, often on steep or uneven ground.
- You will be at a higher altitude in Xiahe. All passengers should rest and stay well hydrated to acclimatise to the higher altitude.
- On some days you will be travelling all day, up to 9 hours, by coach or train.

Of course, our National Escorts 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. If you require any more information about the pace of the tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 28 days in duration including international flights. Due to flight schedules, you may arrive/depart on Day 2.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only, the price includes visa fees and your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to reservations.

Join the tour on Day 2 in Xian and end the tour on Day 27 in Beijing. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

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

Meals: D

Fly overnight to Xian. On arrival, 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 to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure.

An informal Welcome Dinner will be held on Day 2. Late arrivals will receive a box dinner.

**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 fares, Xian is a must-see destination.

Day 3: Xian

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, view the formidable ranks of terracotta soldiers and horses, lined up in ranks to protect the first emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang. The Museum of the Terracotta Warriors and Horses is located around 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, towards the summer months, it can be hot outside. Sightseeing here involves approximately 2 ½ hours on foot. Next, visit the Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer workshop to see smaller models of the warriors being made. Return to Xian and enjoy a gentle cycle ride that will take you the nine miles around the beautifully preserved 14th century city walls that enclose Xian's old town. Explore the Muslim Quarter, Xian's Islamic centre, where there are a myriad of small food stalls selling ample mouth-watering dishes. This evening, enjoy a traditional Shui Jiao dumpling dinner.



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

Muslim Quarter – The Muslim Quarter is the hub of Xian’s Islamic community and is home to many stalls selling a myriad of snack foods, a trove of silks and fabrics, and delightful oriental knick-knacks.

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.

Day 4: Xian - Lanzhou

Meals: B, L, D

Start your day with a visit the Little Wild Goose Pagoda and the Xian Museum, home to a number of relics and artefacts. Later, transfer to the train station to board your 3-hour bullet train to Lanzhou. Enjoy an evening at leisure.



Destination Information

Xian Museum – Housed in the Jianfu Temple alongside the Little Wild Goose Pagoda, the Xian Museum features a number of relics and artefacts recovered in the Xian region, dating back as far as the Han dynasty.

Little Wild Goose Pagoda – Dating back to the Tang Dynasty, the Little Wild Goose Pagoda is one of two prominent pagodas in Xian. A former centre for translating Buddhist scriptures from India, the Little Wild Goose Pagoda was said to have survived one of the strongest earthquakes in world history.

Lanzhou – Lanzhou is the capital and largest city in Gansu Province. It has long been an important trading station between east and west China.

Day 5: Lanzhou

Meals: B, L, D

Today, take a leisurely walk by the Yellow River before enjoying a moment of tranquillity at the hilltop Baita Temple. Along the river and in Baita Park you can see locals practising exercises like Tai Chi and Square Dancing. Walk about 15 minutes from the temple and enjoy some delicious hand stretched noodles for lunch. Your visit to Baita Temple involves 2 hours of walking and climbing some steps.

**Destination Information**

Baita Temple – Translating as the ‘White Dagoba Temple’, the Baita Temple dates back to the Mongol Yuan Dynasty. The Temple’s location offers fantastic vistas over the city.

Day 6: Lanzhou

Meals: B, L, D

Drive approximately 3 hours to picturesque Liujiaxia Lake and take a 40-minute speedboat ride across the water to the extraordinary Thousand Buddha Caves of Bingling Temple. Here, there is a wealth of Buddhist murals, statues and sculptures. Also visit the statue of Maitreya. Please note that the speed boats are small and very limited on space. At Bingling Temple there are dirt paths, wooden walkways and stairs built around the side of the cliff face.



The upper levels of caves have been closed for several years. Return to Lanzhou in the early evening.

Destination Information

Liujiaxia Lake – The Liujiaxia Lake is a reservoir that connects to the Yellow River.

Bingling Temple – The Bingling Temple is a series of grottoes carved into the caves alongside the Yellow River. Sculptures date back to over 1600 year. Make sure to check out the statue of Maitreya, over 27m high.

Day 7: Lanzhou - Xiahe

Meals: B, L, D

Check out of your hotel early this morning and drive around 3 hours to Lingsha. Lunch may be later than usual as there are no suitable restaurants until reaching Lingsha. In the afternoon, continue for around 2 hours through the scenic Jishi Mountain Pass to arrive in Xiahe – an autonomous region of Hui and Tibetan ethnic minorities. After check-in at your hotel, it is advisable in order to rest to acclimatise to the higher altitude (approximately 3,100m).



Destination Information

Xiahe – Though in Gansu Province, Xiahe is heavily populated by the Tibetan population and is home to the Labrang Tibetan Monastery.

Day 8: Xiahe

Meals: B, L, D

Visit the impressive Labrang Monastery, home to a maze of prayer wheels, chapels and chörtens. Explore on foot for around 2 hours. Take some time to reflect before heading back to Xiahe to wander around the town itself. For lunch, dine on a traditional Tibetan meal, consisting of yak meat, tsampa and vegetable hotpot with dumplings.



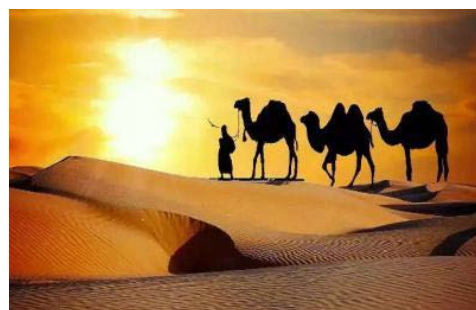
Destination Information

Labrang Monastery – The Labrang Monastery is one of the six great monasteries of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism. Outside of Tibet, Labrang is one of the largest Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries in the world.

Day 9: Xiahe – Zhangye

Meals: B, L, D

Depart early this morning for the return drive through Lingsha to Lanzhou, which takes around 5 hours. After lunch, transfer to the railway station for your 3-hour bullet train to Zhangye, once an important commercial town along the Silk Road. On arrival, check in to your hotel.



Destination Information

Zhangye – Zhangye became the garrison headquarters after General Huo established control of the Hexi Corridor.

Day 10: Zhangye - Jiayuguan

Meals: B, L, D

Rise early this morning to visit the Danxia National Park at sunrise. Return to Zhangye and visit the Giant Buddha Temple. Transfer to the station and take the bullet train approximately 1 and a half hours to Jiuyaguan.



Destination Information

Danxia National Park – With a landscape of red cliffs and multicoloured ridges of strata, Danxia National Park was formed by the erosion of red sandstone. Visiting at sunrise means you can see the colours of the mountains change continuously as the position of the sun changes.

Giant Buddha Temple – Otherwise known as the Dafo Temple, this is where the largest reclining Buddha in China resides.

Jiayuguan – Long an important resting point on the Silk Road, Jiayuguan is perhaps most famous for the Jiayu Pass, the largest and most intact pass of the Great Wall of China.

Day 11: Jiayuguan

Meals: B, L, D

Drive around 20 minutes to visit the Jiayu Fortress before taking a walk on the Jiayu Pass and the western extremes of the magnificent Great Wall for panoramic views over the starkly beautiful Gobi Desert. Here there will be about 1 hour allocated to explore this section of the wall at your own pace; there are some steep sections so please be careful.



Destination Information

Jiayu Fortress – The Jiayu Fortress is the city's main attraction and protects the pass which lies between the snow-capped peaks of the Qilian and Black mountains.

Jiayu Pass – The Jiayu Pass is the western most point of the Great Wall of China and is the largest and most intact section of the Great Wall.

Day 12: Jiayuguan – Dunhuang

Meals: B, L, D

Drive 4 hours westward along the Hexi corridor to the oasis city of Dunhuang. Located on a major trade and cultural crossroads, Dunhuang, known as the 'City of Sands', sits in a verdant oasis on the edge of the Taklaman Desert. Visit the Shazhou Night Market this evening and try local snacks (at your own expense).



Destination Information

Dunhuang – Dunhuang was a major post on the Silk Road and is best known for the temple system of Mogao Grottoes. It is also an oasis town, with nearby Crescent Moon Spring.

Day 13: Dunhuang

Meals: B, L, D

Early this morning, drive 30 mins out of town to visit the Mogao Grottoes Museum and the Mogao Grottoes, a system of temples and sanctuaries that exhibit wonderful examples of Buddhist paintings and statues that span thousands of years. Sightseeing at Mogao involves approximately 3-4 hours on foot. Lunch today will be a simple meal as the choice of restaurants in this area is limited.



Please note: Mogao has high visitor numbers every day and the site guides tend to pressure groups to move through the caves faster than people would like. It can be very difficult and awkward for our Local Guides or National Escorts to change this, so your patience and understanding is requested.

Destination Information

Mogao Grottoes – Mogao Grottoes are one of the largest and grandest collections of Buddhist art in the world. In the past, the Mogao Grottoes acted as monasteries and housed monks, nuns, artists and calligraphers.

Day 14: Dunhuang

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, drive around 10 minutes to Crescent Moon Spring, nestled amongst rolling sand dunes, and the famous Singing Sand Dunes, a phenomenon produced by the wind blowing through the grains. You will spend about 3 hours walking or riding camels. The cost of the camel ride is not included in your tour cost, but you can arrange this at your own expense.

**Destination Information**

Crescent Moon Spring – One of the most picturesque images on the Silk Road, the Crescent Moon Spring is an oasis nestled amongst sand hills in the desert. It is named after its crescent shape.

Day 15: Dunhuang – Turpan

Meals: B, L, D

Time at leisure in Dunhuang until you will transfer approximately 2 hours by bus to the train station for your high-speed day train to Turpan. You will be in 2nd class soft seats and the train journey takes approximately 4 hours. On arrival in Turpan, transfer to your hotel.

**Destination Information**

Turpan – Turpan is the centre of a fertile oasis and has long been inhabited. Another important trading city on the Silk Road, Turpan is famous for its grape production.

Day 16: Turpan

Meals: B, L, D

Today, visit the ruins of ancient Jiaohe. Spend 2 hours exploring the ruins before enjoying some leisurely sightseeing around the elegant Emin Minaret.

**Destination Information**

Jiaohe Ruins – Jiaohe Ruins were established by the Chinese during the Han Dynasty as a garrison town. Located 8km out of Turpan, the Jiaohe Ruins are one of the best preserved ancient cities in the world.

Emin Minaret – The Emin Minaret was founded in 1777 by Emin Hoja, a Turpan general. The minaret's architectural style is inspired by those in Afghanistan.

Day 17: Turpan – Kurla

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, learn about the fascinating Karez Irrigation Canals of Turpan. Afterwards drive approximately 6 hours to the old trading town of Kurla.

Destination Information

Kurla – Kurla is situated close to the site of the ancient city of Loulan. During the Han Dynasty, this was the only route from the central plains to the western regions. Kurla is an old trading town famous for its fragrant pears.



Karez Irrigation System – The word karez means “well” in the local Uyghur language. This underground well irrigation system is unique to central Asia.

Day 18: Kurla – Kuqa

Meals: B, L, D

Drive 5 hours to Kuqa, where you will visit the Subashi Ruins, a lost city of the Silk Road located in the Taklamakan Desert. Sightseeing here involves approximately 30 minutes on foot.



Destination Information

Kuqa – A former centre for Buddhism on the Silk Road, Kuqa was home of Kumarajiva, the first person to translate the Buddhist scriptures into Chinese.

Day 19: Kuqa – Aksu

Meals: B, L, D

Drive 2 hours out to the Kyzil Thousand Buddha Caves, a spectacular blend of art styles. Sightseeing here involves up to 2 hours on foot, including numerous steep stone steps. Some of the upper-level caves are currently closed to the public. Afterwards, drive another 5 hours to Aksu.



Destination Information

Kyzil Thousand Buddha Caves – Kyzil Thousand Buddha Caves is a set of Buddhist rock caves, built between the 3rd and 8th centuries. Although many of the paintings in the caves have been destroyed, those that remain are still as colourful as they were originally.

Day 20: Aksu – Kashgar

Meals: B, L, D

The journey continues through the Taklamakan Desert, along the ancient Silk Road, all the way to Kashgar. The drive takes approximately 7 hours. *Please note that due to security checks along the way, the total journey might take up to 9 hours.*



Destination Information

Kashgar – Kashgar is an oasis city and is geographically one of the westernmost cities in China. Kashgar has a long and rich history as a vital trading point on the Silk Road. Due to its location, Kashgar’s culture, way of life, cuisine and traditions are heavily influenced by the cultures of China, the Middle East and Pakistan. Mosques and veiled women create a truly Central Asian atmosphere.

The old town in the centre of this modern city has charming narrow streets which hold its deeply entrenched heritage. It is certainly one of the highlights of our tour.

Day 21: Kashgar

Meals: B, L, D

Although now a modern city, the sights and sounds of Kashgar's bazaar have remained unchanged for millennia, as it continues to be an integral trading post like it was in its Silk Road heyday. In the heart of the city, visit the Id Kah Mosque before spending some free time exploring the old alleys that intertwine around Id Kah Square. Here you will see artisans producing copper pots, traditional musical instruments, carpet and kilim rugs, as well as carpenters making colourful children's cots. Visit the Minority Art and Handicraft Shop. Marvel at the elegantly tiled tomb of Abakh Hoja, built in 1640 to reflect the artistic style of Samarkand.



Destination Information

Id Kah Mosque – The largest mosque in China, Id Kah Mosque has over 10,000 worshipers on every Friday. The mosque dates back to the 15th century.

Tomb of Abakh Hoja – Tomb of Abakh Hoja is renowned as the holiest Muslim site in Xinjiang, China, and is a beautiful example of Islamic architecture, with tiled ceilings and impressive minarets.

Day 22: Kashgar - Urumqi

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, visit the Old Street, Craftsmen Street and a local bazaar. Later, fly 1 hour and 40 minutes to Urumqi.



Destination Information

Kashgar Sunday Bazaar – No visitor to Kashgar should miss the world's largest Sunday Bazaar. Here, will see many fascinating scenes including huge crowds of donkey carts, horse carriages, animals, and people gathering at this bargain extravaganza.

Urumqi – Urumqi is the capital of Xinjiang Province and was a major hub for trade from the Tang Dynasty all the way to the Qing Dynasty. The city today has a thriving economy.

Day 23: Urumqi

Meals: B, L, D

Today, travel to Tian Chi (Heavenly Lake), formed in a crater atop Baekdu Mountain, where yurts nestle on its grassy banks. The journey will take 2-3 hours, changing to the local 'environmental buses' where necessary to reach the lake. Visit a Kazakh Minority family in their yurt to learn about their way of life. In the evening, enjoy local Uyghur lamb skewers for dinner.

**Destination Information**

Tian Chi – Tian Chi is an alpine lake in Xinjiang, literally translating as 'Heavenly Lake'. The Lake offers water activities and stunning mountain panoramas.

Day 24: Urumqi - Beijing

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy a short visit to the Xinjiang Museum which houses collections of costumes, historical relics and mummies. Later, fly 3 ½ hours to Beijing and transfer to your hotel.

Destination Information

Xinjiang Museum – An important centre for the Silk Road, the Xinjiang Museum is home to ten halls of treasures, most famously a desert-mummified body and Buddhist frescoes from the Kyzil Thousand Buddha Caves.



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.

Day 25: Beijing

Meals: B, L, D

Today, take a walk on the Great Wall of China, appreciating the wall itself and the dramatic scenery. You will rise early this morning to drive approximately 2 hours northwest of the city to the Juyongguan Pass of the Great Wall. The aim of this is to avoid the crowds of tourists who will arrive later in the morning, as well as the heat later in the day. Your visit here involves walking from the bus to the first section.



After your group has been given an introduction to the Great Wall's unique history you will have free time to explore at your own pace. Later, visit the Jade Factory where you will be able to buy a small handcrafted piece. In the afternoon, visit the Summer Palace, located in the north of Beijing, where you can enjoy idyllic landscapes in traditional Chinese gardens.

Destination Information

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.

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.

Jade Factory– Learn about one of China's most symbolic and important materials: jade, at this comprehensive factory. Jade is said to bring fortune and prosperity to those who wear it. Learn how to spot real jade, watch artisans at work carving this precious stone, and even buy a piece to take home yourself.

Day 26: Beijing

Meals: B, L, D

Walk across the lengths of Tiananmen Square into the magnificent Forbidden City. Afterwards, soak up the harmonious ambience of the Temple of Heaven. Sightseeing will involve approximately 3-4 hours on foot. Next, visit Yandaixiejie, where you will have some free time to wander the hutongs. Have lunch with a local family who call the hutongs home. This evening, dine on Peking duck and watch a Chinese acrobatic show.



Please note: The Forbidden City is closed on Mondays. 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.

Temple of Heaven - Set in a 267-hectare park surrounded by a long wall and with a gate at each compass point, the Temple of Heaven is absolutely unique. It is one of the most perfect examples of Ming architecture, created as a place of worship for the Emperors, who would ask for prosperity, longevity and good harvest for the people.

Chinese Acrobatics – Chinese Acrobatics incorporates many forms of dramatic art, including acrobatics, contortionism, juggling, and plate spinning, to name a few.

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.

Days 27-28: Depart Beijing

Meals: B

Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred according to your flight time. Arriving home the following day.

Late check-out is not included in our China group tours. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day in China, please contact our reservations department who can confirm additional pricing and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.



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 will be advised and will be required 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

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. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive group tours from dinner on the day of the groups' arrival until breakfast on the groups' day of departure.

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. 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**

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.

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.

TRANSPORT:

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 use to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only.

There may be sections of road where the surface is comparatively bumpy, but our drivers will do their utmost to lessen the impact.

Planes: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines. Internal flights during your tour are arranged locally, so you will not be given a ticket until your guide helps you check in.

Bullet trains: On this tour, you will take a high-speed 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.

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.

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.

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.

In China, 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.

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 five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. 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.

EXCHANGING CASH:

It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling to cities outside of Beijing and Shanghai. US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout China and other currencies can generally be exchanged in hotels and airports provided notes are new and undamaged. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Your National Escort will remind you to do this before departure.

PERSONAL EXPENSES AND OPTIONAL TOURINGS:

Personal Expense - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available.

Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

CLIMBING STEPS:

Sightseeing at nearly all the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps.

These palaces were built to provide defence against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

We recommend that you contact either your Doctor or Health centre for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Safetravel 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 along with a link to our website where you can find your visa information (if applicable) and other important information. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

It is 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 will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

Updated: Mar 2024