



MAGICAL EXPLORER

23 Days – Ultimate China and Japan

Day 1_Depart UK

Depart from Heathrow or your preferred airport on scheduled flights to Beijing. Meals on board.

Day 2_Arrive Beijing, transfer to hotel

Upon arrival in Beijing, you will be greeted at the airport by our English-speaking guide and transferred to your hotel.

If your flight arrives in the morning, we can provide an optional afternoon tour to Lama Temple. Or, the rest of the day is at your leisure.

Day 3_Beijing - Great Wall full day tour

(Includes Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Today, we will visit the less touristy Mutianyu Section of the Great Wall. This section of the wall is also equipped with a cable car if you prefer ride, instead of walk (fee payable locally).

Take your time for breakfast, as we wait for the traffic to ease before setting off. We have allocated a full day to visit the Wall, so that we can have plenty time should you wish to enjoy a good walk.

In the evening enjoy a welcome dinner including Peking Duck.

Day 4_Beijing - must-see landmarks & local family visit **(Includes Breakfast, Lunch)**

Enjoy a full day city tour to soak up the atmosphere of Beijing. Our tour includes visiting the land marks such as Temple of Heaven, Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City.

Also, to have a glimpse of traditional Beijing people's life, we will take a Hutong Rickshaw tour, visit a local family and have lunch with them.

In the evening, book an (optional) local variety show, or you may wish to just relax and explore Beijing by yourselves.

Day 5_Beijing to Pingyao by Bullet train

(Includes Breakfast)

Morning at your leisure. Your hotel is in good location should you wish to explore the surrounding area by yourselves.

We also provide an optional morning tour to the Summer Palace and 2008 Bird's Nest Olympics Stadium (exteriors only).

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Later, transfer to the train station for fast speed train to Pingyao, where you will meet our local guide.

The ancient city of Pingyao is China's best-preserved walled city and home to the oldest bank in China. The laid-back small city has maintained its traditional charm with red-lanterns hung along quaint cobbled lanes and traditional architecture dating back to the Ming and Qing Dynasties. It is no surprise the entire town has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is a living museum providing a rare opportunity to see the vanishing culture of ancient China.

Train D2005 (leaving Beijing 15:29, arriving Pingyao 19:42)

Day 6_Pingyao Ancient Wall & heritage sites - bullet train to Xian

(Includes Breakfast, Lunch)

After breakfast, we start our half-day tour of one of China's best preserved ancient walled Cities.

Pingyao was considered the financial centre of China during the Qing Empire and we visit the first and largest bank in China, which once controlled half of China's Silver trade.

Afterwards, we stroll around the ancient walled town, with fascinating streets lined with rows of 17th–19th century store fronts and residences. The majority of the buildings still retain their original appearance and we enjoy a view across the roof tops of the ancient buildings.

Later we drive for about an hour, to visit the Wang Family Courtyard residence. This was the luxurious home of a high ranking official's family and where generations of the family lived for over 300 years. The vast compound is one of the largest residential complexes built by opulent Merchants.

Lunch will be arranged in a local restaurant, where we enjoy some authentic local food.

Later, we transfer to the train station. You will be met upon arrival and transferred to your hotel for a good night rest.

Day 7_Xian - Terracotta Warriors, local craftsman workshop, evening dinner show

(Includes Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

After breakfast we take a guided tour to see the Terracotta Warriors Archaeological Museum, Xian ancient Bell Tower and Drum Tower. Later we take a leisurely stroll on the ancient city walls.

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Then we go to discover a local craftsman's cave dwelling and learn how to make clay warriors.

Evening entertainment includes: Tang Dynasty Show with dinner of dumplings.

Day 8_Xian to Chengdu by bullet train (Includes Breakfast)

Our fast train to Chengdu is around mid-afternoon, so the morning is free for you to explore Xian at leisure.

Alternatively, you can take a guided morning tour, visiting the Muslim Quarter, Xian's Wooden Mosque and the Big Wild Goose Pagoda.

In the late afternoon we take a flight to Chengdu, the home of China's most famous residents, the Giant Panda.

Our Optional evening variety style show is in one of the best theatres in Chengdu and includes the amazing face-changing performance.

Day 9_Chengdu, Giant panda breeding centre or volunteer programme (Includes Breakfast)

Today we visit the Giant Panda Breeding Research Base. We will visit in the morning, as this is the best time to watch the pandas enjoying their bamboo breakfast.

You will have plenty of time to watch the pandas and enjoy their playful antics. The Breeding Centre also usually sell a photo opportunity with a Panda (pay on the spot). Please be aware the fee is high and there is always a long queue, but it is a great souvenir.

* For guests who prefer to get an even closer to the lovely pandas, you can opt to take a full day **volunteer programme** at **Dujiangyan Panda Base** instead of the Breeding Centre. We can re-arrange the tour of Jin Li Street and Kuan Zhai Ally to day 8 in this case.*

Towards lunch time, our guide will drop you off at the popular Jin Li street and Kuan Zai Ally, where there are plenty of cafes, restaurants, tea houses and handicraft stalls to explore. You may choose to either lingering in this charming place for a leisurely enjoyable afternoon by yourselves, or take an optional tour to Leshan Giant Buddha Statue. The Leshan Buddha tour includes a pleasant boat ride, providing a fantastic opportunity to photograph the huge statue carved into the hillside.

Day 10 Chengdu to Guilin tour (Includes Breakfast, Lunch)

In the morning, we take a flight to Guilin, where we meet our local guide and transfer to your hotel.

After a short time to freshen up, we have a guided tour of Guilin. Our tour includes visiting either the delightful Fubo Hill or Elephant Trunk Hill and the exotic rock formations in Reed Flute Cave.

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Day 11 Guilin - Yangshou - Li River cruise & countryside bike ride

(Includes Breakfast, Lunch)

After breakfast we take an hour drive to Zhujiang Dock and board our boat for a leisurely cruise down the picturesque Li River, surrounded by majestic limestone hills and rice terraces. The cruise is a great opportunity to witness the lifestyle of rural communities that live along the river banks. You are likely to see many forms of river transport, farmers busy working in the rice fields, children playing along the banks and water buffalo cooling themselves in the river.

Lunch will be served on board and we will disembark upon arrival at Yangshuo. This is a charming ancient town that is famous for its beautiful scenery and tranquil countryside.

A 2 hour countryside cycling is arranged for this afternoon, and much more leisurely paced and flexible option to explore Yangshuo as we can stop at any places. For guests not fond of bikes, electronic car is an option.

*Optional Evening entertainment** The spectacular Liusanjian Impression show is an outdoor performance set to the scenic backdrop of Yangshou's mountains and rivers. This masterpiece combining awesome natural scenery with an excellent theatrical production.

Day 12 Yangshou - Daxu Ancient Town

(Includes Breakfast, Lunch)

After breakfast, we will drive about one hour to reach Daxu Ancient Town near Guilin. Daxu means "big market" and it was historically one of the "four biggest markets" of Guangxi Autonomous Region.

We can observe the local's traditional way of life in this less touristy place.

Day 13 Guilin to Shanghai – city tour

(Includes Breakfast, Lunch)

We leave Guilin and take a flight to Shanghai. Meet our local guide upon arrival and check-in to our hotel.

After a short rest, we start our city tour of Shanghai. Our tour includes visiting Yu Garden, famous for its rock gardens, pavilions, halls and ponds. We then explore the famous promenade and marvel at the futuristic landscape of magnificent towers and building situated along the Huangpu River and the Bund. Finally, our tour takes us to the historic districts of Shanghai and we visit the former colonial French quarters, known locally as 'Heaven on Earth'.

Optional evening entertainment available to book: Martial art show, dance show etc.

Day 14 - Shanghai - Tokyo

(Includes Breakfast)

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Today, you will be met at your hotel and transferred to the Maglev train station in Shanghai (during train service hours).

Our local guide will assist you to board the futuristic and super-fast Maglev train with a top speed of 267mph. The train will take you to the airport in time for your flight to Japan. Upon arriving at Narita Airport in Tokyo, you are met by our tour assistant and transferred to central Tokyo by Airport Limousine bus or train.

Day 15 Tokyo City tour

Morning city tour of Tokyo visiting Tokyo Tower and Meiji Shrine. Next, we drive by the Akasaka Guest House and the National Diet Building, home to the Japanese House of Parliament. Our tour continues to the Imperial Palace East Gardens and a drive and stroll along Ginza high street.

Afternoon is free at leisure, or take an optional afternoon Tokyo city tour. *Ask for details at time of booking.*

Day 16 Tokyo

Free day to explore Tokyo at your leisure, or purchase an optional full day tour to either Nikko, or Kamakura and Yokohama.

Day 17 Tokyo – Mt Fuji & Hakone tour - Kyoto

(Includes Lunch)

You will be picked up from your hotel and driven by deluxe motorcoach to Mount Fuji. Lunch will be provided at a Hotel /Restaurant in Hakone.

In the afternoon we proceed to the Hakone National Park where we will take a cable car ride with the opportunity to see the magnificent volcanic Hakone mountain range below. We will then travel to the Owakudani Boiling Valley and afterwards take a boat cruise on Lake Ashi.

After the tour take Bullet train to Kyoto.

For your convenience and due to luggage restriction on the bullet train, we have arranged free luggage transfer to take your large luggage directly to Kyoto (1 bag per person).

Day 18 Kyoto morning tour

Morning sight-seeing tour of Kyoto, including visiting Nijo Castle, former residence of the Tokugawa Shogun. Next, we visit the Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion) and Kyoto Imperial Palace.

Optional Nara afternoon tour.

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Day 19 Kyoto

Kyoto has so much charm - free time explore Kyoto or take one of our optional tour cultural tours or experiences.

Day 20 Kyoto – Hiroshima

Check out of your hotel and leave your luggage with the bell boy. Then you have free time to explore Kyoto on your own and we recommend visiting the magnificent Kiyomizu Temple or take a stroll along the Philosophers Path.

In the late afternoon / early evening proceed to Kyoto station by yourself and board your train to Hiroshima.

For your convenience and due to luggage restriction on the bullet train, we have arranged free luggage transfer to take your large luggage directly to Osaka (1 bag per person). Therefore, prepare an overnight carry bag for your stay in Hiroshima

Day 21 Hiroshima & Miyajima tour

Today enjoy a full day tour to Hiroshima & Miyajima. Tour highlights include Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park / museum, Atomic Bomb Dome, a boat ride to the Island of Miyajima and the beautiful Itsukushima shrine and floating red Torii Gate.

Day 22 Hiroshima - Osaka

In the morning self transfer to Osaka by Bullet train.

Rest of the day is free at leisure to explore Osaka, which is easily navigated using the underground subways. A must-see sight in Osaka is the magnificent Osaka Castle located in the city centre. Then explore Dotonbori which is one of the most popular streets in Osaka and runs adjacent to a canal. If you want to explore more historic culture then visit the beautiful and peaceful Shitennoji Buddhist temple, the oldest officially administered temple in Japan.

Day 23 Osaka - departure

You will be transferred to the futuristic Kansai International Airport in Osaka for your departure flight homeward.

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HOTELS

Beijing - Park Plaza Beijing Wangfujing (Superior Room), Regent Hotel (Deluxe Room), Four Seasons Hotel (Superior Room).

Pingyao - Yun Jin Cheng Hotel (Executive twin Suite).

Xian - Grand Mercure Renmin Square (Superior Room).

Chengdu - Sofitel Chengdu Taihe (Deluxe Room).

Guilin - Sheraton Guilin Hotel (Superior Room).

Shanghai Pullman Shanghai Jing An (Superior Room), Fairmont Peace Hotel (Fairmont Room).

Tokyo - Keio Plaza hotel.

Kyoto - New Miyako (Southern wing).

Hiroshima - New Hiroden

Osaka – Granvia Hotel

(Or similar subject to availability)

What's Included

- Free consultation with China and Japan travel experts from our Manchester office.
- All International and Internal Flights, with full ATOL Protection.
- Selections of quality hotel accommodation in well furnished rooms with private facilities.
- Airport/hotel transfers.
- Sightseeing tours by professional English-speaking tour guide.
- All entrance fees, whilst on guided tours.
- Overland luggage transfer Tokyo – Kyoto - Osaka.
- All bullet train tickets (reserved seats) as specified in the itinerary.
- Meals as specified in the itinerary.
- No commercial compulsory shopping trips.

What's Excluded

- Optional tours and extensions.
- Tips in China (no tipping in Japan).
- Travel Insurance.
- Chinese visa (we can provide a Visa service if requested). No visa is required to Japan.

The itinerary is designed according to the most updated information available. On rare occasions, changes can occur due to local conditions which are out of our control, such as flight, train, hotel changes etc. We will always act in your best interest to handle any amendments if this did occur. We reserve the right to change, amend or alter the itinerary if required.

Please refer to our website for all current tour details, Terms and Conditions and FAQ pages for up-to-date tour information and further essential information about this tour.

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