



MAGICAL EXPLORER

12 Days – Essential China tour

Day 1_Depart UK

You may either book your own international flights, or take the tour option which includes flights under our ATOL protection.

International airfare from UK is between £550 to £800 per person (economy class return). Price varies depending on season and availability. There are great deals on flight booking search engines.

Day 2_Arrive Beijing, transfer to hotel

Our Tour Guide and driver will meet you at the airport and take you to your hotel in Beijing.

If your flight arrives in the morning and you have the afternoon free, we'd recommend taking optional Afternoon Tour to the Lama Temple.

The Lama Temple (Yonghegong) is one of the most important Tibetan Buddhist temples in the world, built in the 17th century.

After the temple visit, our guide will take you to explore some colourful cultural streets of the capital city, Houhai area. It has an abundance of local handcrafts shops and numerous bars and restaurants. The tour lasts about 2.5 hours, and our guide will either escort you back to hotel, or you may stay longer by yourselves to enjoy the local buzzing atmosphere.

Day 3_Beijing - the Great Wall, full day

(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.

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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).

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.

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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.

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.

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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 explore at your own leisurely, or come with us for an optional tour to see the Leshan Giant Buddha Statue. The optional tour includes a pleasant boat ride to see the huge statue carved into the hillside.

You may choose either lingering in this charming place for a leisurely enjoyable afternoon by yourselves, or come with us for an optional tour to Leshan **Giant Buddha Statue**. Upon arrival we will take a pleasant boat ride, during which there will be great opportunities to photo the huge statue carved into the hillside.

Day 10_Chengdu to Shanghai by flight, Shanghai tour

(Includes Breakfast, Lunch)

We leave Chengdu 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'.

Day 11_Shanghai - free day

(Includes Breakfast)

We leave this final full day for you to explore this cosmopolitan city at your own leisure, to relax, and perhaps do some shopping in Shanghai's incredible shopping malls.

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Or you may wish to take an optional tour with us to the Water village of Zhu-jia-jiao. We will take a pleasant stroll through the village and you will have the opportunity to take a relaxing boat ride.

There are a number of tour extensions available, to give you more in-depth and varieties of China. Please browse 'China Tour Extensions' under China region for details and prices. Or, there are options such as Seoul stopover, or taking one of our Japan guided tours as an extension of your dream holiday to the Far East.

Day 12_Shanghai to home - Maglev train

(Includes Breakfast)

Today, you will be met at your hotel and take the super fast Maglev train to the airport (Please note this is subject to train operating times). If the train is not operating, our local guide will escort you to the airport by private transportation).

Extra nights at the same hotel in Shanghai can be provided upon request, with re-arranged airport transfer for free.

4 Star Hotels

Beijing - Capital Hotel (tower A deluxe Room)

Pingyao - Da Xi Tang Hotel (Deluxe Room),

Xian - Titan Times Hotel (Standard Suite)

Chengdu - Sofis Jinyuan Hotel (boutique room in A wing)

Shanghai - Sunrise On The Bund (Standard Room)

(Or similar, subject to availability).

Upgrade hotels available to suit your preferences, such as: **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), **Shanghai** Pullman Shanghai Jing An (Superior Room), Fairmont Peace Hotel (Fairmont Room).

What's Included

- **FREE** consultation with China travel experts from our Manchester office.
- **NEW** itinerary can be tailor-made to your exact expectations.
- **SMALL GROUPS** for greater flexibility - average 8 travellers in 1 group.
- **CHOICES** - all air fares included, or have deals/save air miles yourself.
- **FAST** Bullet train tickets in China, streamlined transportation service.
- **PRIVATE** airport/hotel transfers.
- **PROFESSIONAL** English-speaking tour guide.
- **ALL** tours including entrance fee.
- **DELUXE** 4 star hotels with private facilities. Upgrade available.
- **FLEXIBILITY NO** commercial compulsory shopping trips.

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What's Excluded

- Optional tours and extensions.
- Tips - recommend £3 for guide and £2 for driver per day but not compulsory.
- Single supplement.
- Travel Insurance.
- Chinese visa.
- International air fare can be booked separately based on your preference with full ATOL Protection.

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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