

**CHN****The Highlights of Eastern China****9 days**

Created on: 5 Jul 2025

**Day 1      *Arrival in Beijing***

Welcome to Beijing, the capital of the People's Republic of China. While many of its elements are common to other Chinese cities, the sum of this city -- its scope and presence in history -- has no equivalent in China or anywhere else in the world.

Beijing is not only the political and administrative center of the People's Republic of China; it is also China's single greatest repository of monuments and treasures from the imperial era. This city is the second-largest and fastest growing municipality in today's China, the home and workplace of approximately 9.3 million people.

Overnight in Beijing.

Meal Plan: Dinner, if required.

**Day 2      *Beijing: City Tour***

Our full day of sightseeing will start with a visit to Tian'anmen Square, the place where one million students rallied for democracy in 1989. This is the largest public square in the world. Originally built in 1651, the square was quadrupled in size in 1958 to its present 40.5 hectares (100 acres) during a massive citywide reconstruction program.

From here we will walk to the Forbidden City, a huge complex of palaces, pavilions, courtyards and gardens, which was off-limits to commoners for 500 years. Now open as a Palace Museum, this is where the emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties lived and carried out their administration.

After a break for lunch we will have a tour of the Summer Palace, located in the northwest area of the city. During the late Qing Dynasty this was the summer retreat from Beijing's heat for the imperial family and court. Originally created as an imperial garden by Emperor Qianlong, it was destroyed and plundered during the Second Opium War in 1860. In 1888 the notorious Empress Cixi used the money intended for the Chinese Navy to build this opulent summer retreat for herself. In 1900 the Summer Palace was damaged extensively once again during the Boxer Rebellion, but was rebuilt shortly thereafter. Today this is considered to be the best preserved and the largest imperial garden in China.

This evening's special Chinese welcome dinner features delectable Peking duck.

Overnight in Beijing.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

**Day 3      *Beijing: Great Wall***

This morning we travel north of Beijing to the Great Wall of China. Rising and falling in concert with the ridges of the northern hills and undulating far off into the distance, the Great Wall consistently exceeds visitors' expectations and remains one of humankind's most remarkable accomplishments.

We will have plenty of free time to explore the wall before making a break in our day for lunch. After lunch in a local restaurant, we will visit the famous Ming Tombs -- the most expensive burial complex of any Chinese dynasty, and one of the finest preserved pieces of 15th century art and architecture. We then return to Beijing in the afternoon.

Tonight we will experience a taste of 'local culture' at the Peking Opera, including a behind the scenes look at the colourful make-up being applied to the performers.

Overnight in Beijing.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

#### **Day 4**      ***Beijing - Xi'an***

This morning we will enjoy a rickshaw ride through one of Beijing's Hutongs -- the city's medieval quarter of old homes and narrow alleyways. Since the mid-20th century, the number of Beijing hutongs has dropped dramatically as they are often demolished to make way for new roads and buildings. More recently, some hutongs have been designated as protected areas in an attempt to preserve this aspect of Chinese cultural history.

This evening we will board our overnight sleeper train to X'ian.

Overnight train.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

#### **Day 5**      ***Xi'an: Terra Cotta Warriors***

Today we will visit the nearby Dayan Pagoda, built in 652 AD. As a symbol of old Xi'an, the 'Big Wild Goose Pagoda' is a well-preserved ancient building and a holy place for Buddhists.

Today we also view the Terra Cotta Warriors, an impressive legion of thousands of life-size terra cotta warriors that has been guarding the emperor's burial site for over 2,000 years. In 1974, a group of peasants digging a well in Lintong County, about 30 km east of Xi'an, accidentally made one of the century's greatest archaeological discoveries. What they stumbled upon were thousands of life-size terra cotta warriors; an estimated 8,000 figures have thus far been identified. As part of our tour we will visit pits 1, 2, and 3 as well as the amazing Bronze Chariots.

This evening you may chose to attend an optional 'Tang Dynasty' dinner show, featuring a colourful assemblage of classical performances (+/- \$50).

Overnight in Xi'an.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

#### **Day 6**      ***Xi'an - Lingyin Temple***

Today we fly to Hangzhou, a city known for its beautiful gardens and picturesque surroundings. An old Chinese saying declares, "There is heaven above, Suzhou and Hangzhou below." Marco Polo once referred to Hangzhou as the most enchanting city in the entire world. The real beauty here is most evident in the famous West Lake area--the effective, if not geographic, centre of Hangzhou. Our sightseeing today will include visits to the Pagoda of Six Harmonies and the Lingyin Temple, one of the most famous ancient temples in China.

Overnight in Hangzhou.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

#### **Day 7**      ***Hangzhou - Wuzhen - Shanghai***

Today we will enjoy a leisurely morning cruise on the West Lake. Ancient Chinese people praised the West Lake area as a land of intoxicating beauty. From here we will travel by coach to Wuzhen, one of China's ancient water towns where narrow canals thread their way through the flagstone streets and alleys. We then continue on to Shanghai, the "Paris of the East".

Shanghai, one of the largest cities in the world, is China's most populous as well as its most "urban" city. Despite the profound changes in the social and economic structure brought on since 1949, Shanghai retains the look and feel of a great Western metropolis, with a population that seems quite at home amidst the press of crowds and the throbbing energy and diversity of city life.

Tonight there will be time to enjoy this lively city.

Overnight in Shanghai.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

### **Day 8**      ***Shanghai: City Tour***

We will spend today exploring Shanghai, including the city's famous waterfront promenade known as the Bund. We will also visit the tranquil Yuyuan Garden, possibly the most celebrated classical Chinese Garden in Shanghai. We will also visit the Jade Buddha Temple, famous for its two rare statues of Buddha carved out of a single piece of white jade. A Chinese monk brought the two statues from Burma in 1890, eight years after the temple's construction. Many worshippers still attend services here, although most are older people and overseas Chinese.

Today we will also visit the world-renowned Shanghai Museum that houses sensational works of art from all Chinese periods, beautifully displayed on several floors. Out of a collection of 120,000 pieces, the museum is especially famous for its bronzes, jade, and ceramics.

This evening, your Tour Leader will host a special farewell dinner.

Overnight in Shanghai.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

### **Day 9**      ***Departure from Shanghai***

Say your final goodbyes as you head home from China today.

Meal Plan: Breakfast