



WORLD DISCOVERY  
— HISTORY CULTURE WILDLIFE —

## Classic China



The Great Wall

### DAY 1 - Depart UK.

### DAY 2 – Arrive Beijing. *Hutongs* tour by cycle rickshaw.

On arrival in Beijing in the morning you will be met by a representative of World Discovery outside immigration and customs. You will then be taken by private car direct to your hotel. Enjoy some leisure time and maybe a short sleep after your long flight, and then in the late afternoon your guide will collect you from your hotel for a tour by cycle rickshaw through the narrow streets, or *hutongs*, of Old Beijing, including a visit to a local family home.

### DAY 3 – The Forbidden City. Temple of Heaven.

In the morning visit Tiananmen Square before passing through the Gates of Celestial Peace to enter the astonishing **Forbidden City**, the exclusive enclave of the Ming and Qing dynasty Emperors, totally out of bounds to ordinary Chinese citizens. There are reckoned to be 9,999 rooms in the Forbidden City. It is a vast complex and you will only have time to see a relatively small but nonetheless stunning portion of the palace, including the Meridian Gate, the 'Golden Water Stream' with its five marble bridges, the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the Hall of Middle Harmony, the imperial living quarters and the Palace of Eternal Spring. In the afternoon continue to the exquisite **Temple of Heaven**, rightly regarded as the high point of Ming architecture. Every year on the day of the winter solstice the Emperor would be carried in a glittering procession through the streets of Old Peking to perform sacrificial rituals in the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests, the main building at the temple. The hall is one of Beijing's wonders - made entirely of wood and without the aid of a single nail. The dazzling colours inside are the result of extensive renovation in the 20th century but are totally faithful to the original Ming design.

**Meals included: Full breakfast.**

#### DAY 4 – The Great Wall. Ming Tombs.

A full day excursion north of Beijing to the **Great Wall of China**, one of mankind's most remarkable accomplishments. Begun during the Warring States Period (403-221 B.C.) the wall at one stage stretched for more than 6,000 miles across China. With World Discovery you will visit the section of the wall at Juyongguan Pass, less crowded than the Badaling section closer to Beijing. Also included in today's excursion is a visit to the **Ming Tombs**, approached along the impressive Sacred Way lined with colossal statues of animals and men. In the evening there is the option of sampling a sumptuous Peking Duck Banquet.

**Meals included: Full breakfast.**

#### DAY 5 – Summer Palace. Fly to Xi'an.

Morning excursion to the **Summer Palace** of the Chinese Emperors on the shores of Kunming Lake to the northwest of Beijing. This beautiful spot is where the Emperors escaped from the heat of the city during the summer months. One of the most memorable structures at the Summer Palace is the unique Marble Boat, built on the orders of the infamous concubine Cixi who was virtual ruler of China in the late 19th century and who was largely responsible for unleashing the Boxer Rebellion against all foreigners in China. In the afternoon fly to Xi'an, capital of China under the Tang, Sung and Ming dynasties. Enjoy a gentle introduction to this historic city with a late afternoon guided walk along the ancient City Wall (you may choose to do this excursion by bicycle or electric car).

**Meals included: Full breakfast.**

#### DAY 6 – The Terracotta Warriors.

Qin Shi Huang, who ascended the throne in 246 B.C. whilst still a child, was the first emperor of a unified China. His long reign was characterised by a ruthless efficiency and it was Qin Shi Huang who began the construction of the Great Wall. His tomb, some 28km east of the city of Xi'an, is today little more than a burial mound and attracted little attention until 1974 when some peasants made the astonishing discovery, while sinking a well, of the army of **terracotta warriors** that had been buried to guard the emperor in the afterlife. No written records existed to indicate that such an army had been built. Subsequent excavations revealed the true extent of this marvellous accomplishment - some 8,000 individually designed life-size statues of men (as well as some horses and chariots) covering an immense area. The main site is now housed in a giant hangar for the protection of the statues. The Terracotta Warriors are without doubt a must-see attraction for any visitor to China. In the evening there is the option of attending the famous Tang Dynasty Dance performance with dinner.

**Meals included: Full breakfast.**

#### DAY 7 - Xi'an. Fly to Hangzhou.

After breakfast discover the highlights of the Old City of Xi'an. Formerly Chang'an, Xi'an was the imperial capital of China for no less than 11 dynasties from 1000 B.C. to 1000 A.D. and was the eastern terminus of the fabled Silk Road. It reached its golden age during the Tang Dynasty (7th to 10th centuries A.D.), when the city's population grew to more than a million inhabitants. Today Xi'an is a modern metropolis of some 5 million people but the Old City Walls are still largely intact and there are several interesting historical sites worth seeing. This morning you will visit the **Bell Tower**, originally built in the 14th century though much restored, the **Muslim Quarter**, the **Big Wild Goose Pagoda** and the impressive **Shaanxi History Museum**, well laid out and with English captions. In the afternoon fly to Hangzhou, another former imperial capital which was also southern terminus of the ancient Grand Canal.

**Meals included: Full breakfast.**

## DAY 8 - Hangzhou.

According to the old Chinese proverb "In Heaven there is paradise, on earth Hangzhou". Despite the high-rise modern city that has expanded in recent years, much of the traditional beauty of this garden-city remains today, especially in the form of the Xi Hu or West Lake around which the city curls. Your sightseeing in Hangzhou begins with the **Lingyin Temple**, one of the largest Buddhist temple complexes in China, founded in the 4th century A.D. At its zenith the Lingyin Temple was home to 3,000 monks. Continue to the **Liuhu or 'Six Harmonies' Pagoda**, occupying a spectacular site overlooking the Qiantong River. This towering structure was built during the Northern Song dynasty (386-581). Hangzhou is renowned as a centre of tea production and the village of Longjing ('Dragon Well') is said to produce the finest variety of green tea in all China. Visit the **tea garden** and, depending on the time of year, see the different stages of processing. The highlight of your visit to Hangzhou is a relaxing boat trip on the **West Lake**.

**Meals included: Full breakfast.**

## DAY 9 - Wuzhen. Continue to Shanghai.

Step back into the past with a visit to the canal town of Wuzhen, which still retains its traditional wooden waterside houses, arched stone bridges and narrow cobblestone streets, and is famed for its local handicrafts. You will visit this pretty town, enjoy lunch and take a boat ride on the canals before continuing by road to China's largest and most cosmopolitan city, Shanghai.

**Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch.**

## DAY 10 - Shanghai.

Shanghai is rapidly developing into one of the most sophisticated and dynamic cities in East Asia, but alongside its modern architecture can still be found reminders of the past. Your sightseeing in Old Shanghai this morning includes the beautiful **Yu Yuan Garden**, a classical Chinese garden featuring pools, walkways, bridges and rockeries, created in the 16th century during the Ming dynasty, and the **Jade Buddha Temple**, a monastery built in 1882 to enshrine two magnificent Buddha statues imported from Burma. Each of the statues is carved from a single piece of white jade. The temple, closed in 1949 when Mao came to power, reopened in the 1980s and is now flourishing again with more than a hundred monks in residence. The afternoon is free to explore the city, perhaps walking along the famous 'Bund' waterfront with its elegant colonial architecture, or shopping in busy Nanjing Road. In the evening there is the option of enjoying a Dim Sum Banquet and Acrobatics Show.

**Meals included: Full breakfast.**

## DAY 11 - Shanghai. Fly to Guilin.

The morning is free. In the afternoon fly to Guilin, with its backdrop of bizarre yet beautiful mountains that bring to life the classic scenery celebrated on Chinese scrolls.

**Meals included: Full breakfast.**

## DAY 12 - Cruise on the Li River to Yangshuo .

The best way to enjoy the incredible scenery of the Guilin region is to take a cruise on the Li River to the town of Yangshuo. The relaxing journey lasts about 6 hours and takes you beneath the spectacular karst peaks that have been carved by the elements over millions of years into bizarre shapes, each one of them given a name and an associated legend. As well as the mountains you will see rural scenes along the riverside - farmers in the fields wearing their conical hats, water buffalo grazing, and fisherman using trained cormorants to assist them in their work. Disembark in the picturesque town of Yangshuo, where you will have time

to browse in the market before being driven by car back to your hotel in Guilin.

**Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch.**

### **DAY 13 – Guilin sightseeing. Depart for home.**

A half day tour of some of Guilin's highlights begins with a visit to the summit of **Fubo Hill** for a panoramic view of the surrounding landscape. Continue to the spectacular **Reed Flute Cave**, with its amazing stalactites and stalagmites illuminated in bright colours, and a pretty underground lake creating perfect reflections. You will also travel to **Elephant Trunk Hill**, where a small pagoda sits on the summit. In the evening transfer to the airport for your flight to Hong Kong to connect with your international flight home.

**Meals included: Full breakfast.**

### **DAY 14 - Arrive home.**

Arrive London Heathrow in the morning.