

China – Ancient & Modern **Highlights Of Beijing, Xian & Hong Kong**

Day 1 Departure

Enjoy full meal service on your scheduled wide-bodied flight to Beijing.

Day 2 Arrive Beijing

Our English-speaking guide will meet us at the airport and accompany us on our transfer by private coach to our hotel in central Beijing. This afternoon, time permitting, we will travel to Olympic sites including the brand new **Beijing Stadium** where the opening ceremony and many events took place. We will enjoy dinner in a local restaurant.

Day 3 Beijing

Our morning commences in **Tian'an Men Square**, the world's largest public square (the size of 90 football fields). In the centre of the square stands the Monument to the People's Heroes, a 124-ft. granite obelisk, engraved with scenes from famous uprisings.

We continue with a visit to the **Forbidden City**, a massive complex of red-walled buildings and pavilions topped by a sea of glazed vermilion tile. It is by far the largest and most intricate imperial palace in China and receives more visitors than any other attraction in the country. Our visit will include the Inner Court, where only the emperor, his family, his concubines, and the palace eunuchs were allowed, and the Hall of Mental Cultivation, where emperors lived.

Our afternoon concludes with a visit to the **Temple of Heaven**, an enormous park and altar to Heaven directly to the south of the Forbidden City. Each winter solstice, the Ming and Qing emperors would lead a procession here to perform rites and make sacrifices designed to promote the next year's crops.

Tonight we will attend either a **Martial Arts demonstration show** or choose to watch an **Acrobat Show**.

Day 4 The Great Wall Of China & Ming Tombs

This morning we will journey outside of the city for a visit to the **Great Wall of China**, one of the world's most awesome and impressive sights. The Great Wall snakes its way from east to west for nearly 4,000 miles, and has been in existence for over 2,600 years.

This afternoon we visit the **Ming Tombs**, where 13 of the 16 emperors who ruled China during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) are buried. This is the most extensive burial complex of any Chinese dynasty and the tombs are constructed in conventional fashion, with memorial halls at the front and burial chambers to the rear. Among the many Sacred Ways, the one at Ming Tombs is the best preserved and complete, it is the earliest and biggest stone archway existing in China today.

This evening we will enjoy a **Peking Duck Dinner**.

Day 5 Summer Palace – Hutong Tour – Overnight Train to Xian

This morning we begin with a visit to the **Summer Palace**, the grandest imperial playground in China. The compound is an expanse of elaborate Qing-style pavilions, bridges, walkways, and gardens, scattered along the shores of Kunming Lake.

This afternoon we will take a **Beijing Hutong Tour**. A hutong is a unique form of community with a small street or a lane between two courtyards. There are thousands of hutongs in Beijing, most of which were built in the Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties. We will enjoy a fascinating tour by **Rickshaw**, which offer a magnificent glance into residential Chinese life.

Later, we take the brand new express train (first class soft sleeper), which drives through the night. Buffet dinner will be served cafeteria-style on the train.

Day 6 Arrive Xian – Terra Cotta Warriors

We arrive in Xian, a former capital of 11 dynasties, including the Tang Dynasty, during China's "Golden Age." Upon our arrival, we will check into our hotel where we have breakfast, before embarking on a tour around the **Xian City Walls**. The magnificent Xian City Wall was constructed in the early Ming Dynasty, and is one of the best-preserved ancient walls around a city anywhere in the world, and the best example of a walled city in China. The wall contains watchtowers, moats, gates and towers.

This afternoon we will visit the **Qin Terra Cotta Army Museum**. In 1974 a group of peasants made what was to become the greatest archaeological find of the 20th century when they unearthed fragments of a life sized Terra Cotta Warrior. Excavation of the vault revealed thousands of warriors and their horses, an entire army designed to follow its emperor into eternity. The site is near Qin Mausoleum, and the emperor's Terra Cotta Army was found in three underground timber lined vaults. We will view the thousands of life size soldiers, standing in military formation with their vivid facial expressions frozen for eternity, some of which are being restored to display their original rich coloration.

This evening our guide will take us to a bustling **local market** for shopping.

Day 7 Xian - Flight To Hong Kong

Our morning starts with a visit to the **Wild Goose Pagoda**, to the south of Xian.

We then board our flight to Hong Kong. Hong Kong is situated on one of the world's most beautiful harbours and is a major factor in the industrial, political and financial affairs of the world. The city provides visitors with some of the best shopping in the world, an exciting night life, and marvellous international cuisine. Visitors see the storybook side of old China in the junks, rice paddies, and narrow streets festooned with red and gold signs. But, they will also find the modern.

Our introductory **City Tour** will introduce the highlights of Hong Kong, including the tram to Victoria Peak, where we will get one of the best possible views of Hong Kong.

After dinner this evening, we will explore the **Temple Street Night Market**, a wonderful place to spend an evening, featuring countless stalls that sell clothing, watches, imitation designer handbags, sunglasses, sweaters, cassettes, and more. The name of the game is bargaining. The market is also famous for the seafood stalls, where you can sample clams, shrimp, mussels, and crab. We will follow Temple Street to its northern end past the overpass, in the vicinity of the **Tin Hau Temple**, where we will find palm readers, musicians, and street singers.

Day 8 Hong Kong / Departure

This morning we will visit the **Hong Kong Museum of History**, which opened in 2001. This is Hong Kong's ambitious attempt to chronicle its long and fascinating history, starting with the formation of its natural history and its beginnings as a Neolithic settlement, and continuing through its development as a fishing village and subsequent transformation into a modern metropolis. Through displays that include dioramas, replicas of fishing boats, models, reconstructed traditional housing, furniture, clothing, and items from daily life, the museum introduces Hong Kong's ethnic groups and their traditional means of livelihood, customs, and beliefs.

Alternatively, we can arrange visits to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange or International Finance Centre.

You will have an afternoon of leisure for individual sightseeing and shopping for souvenirs and bargains. You can choose from a thousand worlds within this tiny island: visit Tiger Balm Gardens to see a beautiful pagoda, take in a Chinese opera, shop for bargains at Stanley Market or any of the numerous street markets.

This evening after dinner your bus takes you to the airport for the return flight home, flight departure is around midnight.

Day 9 Arrive UK

Land back in the UK.