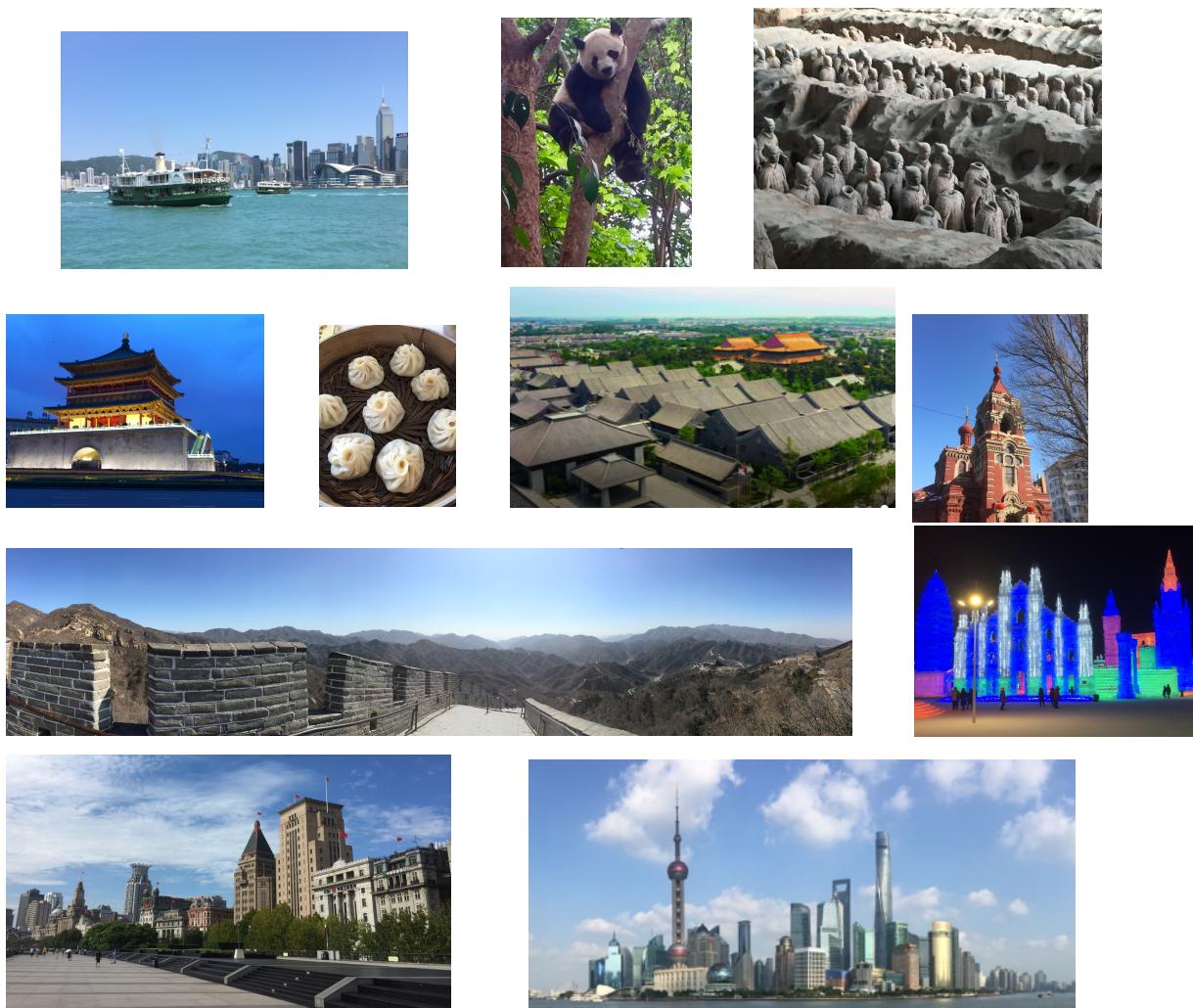


Immerse Yourself in China's Winter Wonders

with Jeremy Clarke

January 4 to January 17 (14 days and 14 nights), visiting:
 Hong Kong, Chengdu, Xi'an, Qufu, Beijing, Harbin and Shanghai.



*Per person: \$10,500 twin share (almost all-inclusive¹, except airfare),
 with \$750 single supplement.*

¹ See below for inclusions and exclusions, plus terms and conditions.

Day 1 January 4, Monday Hong Kong [D]

We meet in Hong Kong in the evening and stroll down to the glittering “Fragrant Harbour”, enjoying the bustle and busyness of this famous entrepôt, before a late night supper. [D=dinner]

Day 2 January 5, Tuesday Hong Kong to Chengdu [BLD]

In the morning we fly to Chengdu in far western China, a UNESCO City of Gastronomy and home to the Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding. We are met at the airport and transfer to our hotel. Once there we will explore the nearby Tianfu Square, and then head on to enjoy the district around the Wuhou Memorial Temple and the Jinli Ancient Street. Both of these provide fine examples of the ancient culture of the Three Kingdoms, as well as performances of Sichuan Opera face changing.
 [B= breakfast; L= lunch; D = dinner]

Day 3 January 6, Wednesday Chengdu [BLD]

Today is an absolute highlight of the tour as we visit the giant pandas and their companions, the red pandas. Baby pandas are born in late August and September and thus, by the time we visit, the young cubs will have just been released from their nurseries and are enjoying their first steps and tumbles outside, perhaps even in the snow! Later we will visit the Kuan and Zhai alleys with their artisanal workshops and wine bars, and finish up in the evening with a food tour down Chengdu’s back streets to prize winning local restaurants.

Day 4 January 7, Thursday Chengdu to Xi'an [BLD]

After our day of wonder we change things up a little and as we venture to the start of the old Silk Road, Xi'an, we top speeds of more than 340 km/h on the first of our high-speed train rides. Once known as Chang'an, capital of the Tang dynasty, Xi'an is not only a place of great historical interest, it is one of the few cities in China with its old city wall intact, 14 km in length. We will arrive in time to

wander the Muslim food markets near the Drum and Bell Towers before dinner, and have the chance to promenade among the lanterns on the walls at night.

Day 5 January 8, Friday

Xi'an

[BLD]

Although every day is a highlight, today's itinerary is extra special as we spend the bulk of the morning and early afternoon exploring the UNESCO World Heritage site, Emperor Qin Shihuang's mausoleum. This is home to the wondrous terracotta warriors, wrestlers, chariots and horses. Regardless of whether one has seen these at an art exhibition or in documentaries, nothing prepares one for the vast array of warriors in battle formation, the covered chariots and the ongoing archeological work being done. After some free time in the afternoon, the tour will be joined by a local guide – someone Jeremy has worked with on many occasions – and he will lead us on the second of our food tours throughout the city, both on foot and in tuk-tuks.

Day 6 January 9, Saturday

Xi'an to Qufu

[BLD]

Today we continue to delve deep into the history of China as we take another ultra-modern high-speed train to the birthplace of Confucius, the ancient city of Qufu in Shandong province. We will stay in the historical centre of this small hinterland city (less than 700,000, compared to Chengdu's more than 20 million people for instance) and enjoy being here in the quiet of winter, wandering the streets within the Ming-era city wall and rivers and moats. Qufu also has a regional cuisine that we will enjoy at dinner before warming ourselves in our hotel, right in the heart of the old city.

Day 7 January 10, Sunday

Qufu

[BLD]

The philosopher, statesman and educator Confucius lived in the 6th century before the common-era and yet his influence still lives on. Qufu is considered his hometown and although obviously much has changed over the centuries, there is a desire now to reverence his legacy and educate others about it. To that end there are several key sites that commemorate the famous philosopher – such as the Temple of Confucius and the ancient family mansion – and these are also UNESCO World Heritage listed sites. We will explore these at leisure today. Qufu's cityscape provides a fine contrast between the futuristic buildings of Hong Kong, the lively markets of Xi'an and the trendy vibes of Chengdu and, in



addition to its importance as a historical site, it is also a very relaxing city. Again we will end our day dining at a fine local restaurant.

Day 8 January 11, Monday Qufu to Beijing [BLD]

We travel across the northern plains today as we jump centuries from the ancient to the modern and catch our third and final high-speed train to Beijing. China's capital has prize-winning modern buildings and halls of power, as well as alleyways where old folk fly pigeons and listen to songbirds. Our hotel is situated in the heart of the metropolis, both close to the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square as well as to the markets, restaurants and shops that make Beijing such a surprisingly vibrant city. In winter the inner city lakes freeze over, families take their children skating, people enjoy warming dishes and the dusk glows through the bare trees. Once we arrive in Beijing we will dive into its winter delights and partake of a Mongolian style hotpot in the evening.

Day 9 January 12, Tuesday Beijing [BLD]

After the quiet of Qufu and train rides, today we have a chance to clock up a good number of steps – or not, as the mood takes one – as we visit one of the New Seven Wonders of the World and another UNESCO World Heritage site, the Great Wall. We will visit the Great Wall at Mutianyu, in part because of the fine views, and the steep but not too steep ascent, as well as the cable car possibility for those who prefer a slightly easier day. The added advantage is that rather than travel hours to far-flung reaches of the Wall, this nearer section allows us to pursue some other activities in the later afternoon. Winter means we are not jostled by tour groups and with luck snow may lie on the ramparts. Once back from the Wall, and some free time for people to wander at leisure in the nearby district or to rest after another major day, we will try some local delicacies in another nearby restaurant such as lamb with cumin or vegetable shasliks or shredded beef in beancurd wraps.

Day 10 January 13, Wednesday Beijing [BLD]

No journey to Beijing is complete without a visit to the Forbidden City, which stands opposite the imposing Tiananmen Square. Today we will enjoy the knowledge of a local guide (from a tour

company Jeremy uses regularly), and explore the massive complex that was the centre of imperial power for more than 500 years and home to 24 emperors. We will marvel at the imperial architecture and symbolism, as well as the collection of rooms and gardens contained within this mammoth and fascinating complex. After lunch at a nearby restaurant – a welcome rest! – we will visit Jingshan Park behind the Forbidden City and enjoy a 360 degree vista of Beijing. After free time in the afternoon we will enjoy a Beijing Duck cooked by a restaurant that has been operating since 1864.

Day 11 January 14, Thursday Beijing to Harbin [BLD]

Today we fly deeper into the northeast and reach one of China's true winter wonderlands, the icy city of Harbin along the Songhua River. Interestingly, due to its early location at the eastern end of the Trans-Siberian Railway the city is marked by Russian architecture and cuisine, and we will also explore both these aspects. After our arrival, in the early evening, we will wander the cobblestone pedestrian street and enjoy the festivities and activities down on the frozen river before retiring to a restaurant founded in 1901 to enjoy a fine Russian style meal.

Day 12 January 15, Friday Harbin [BD]

After several days of amazing experiences, we will relax in the morning and enjoy free/down time. People may wish to visit the ice sculptures in the nearby Zhaolin Park, visit the Jewish Museum, the old Saint Sophia's Church or stroll the early morning food market. We will gather together in the mid afternoon and in our own bus will travel to the Ice and Snow World, where we will meander through the world's largest ice sculptures. These are brightly and cleverly illuminated and they make the park – and the experience – a place of wonder ... even if it might be around minus 20 degrees! After braving this place of beauty we will repair to a warm, toasty northeastern style restaurant after another wonderful day. (No organized lunch today).

Day 13 January 16, Saturday Harbin to Shanghai [BLD]

After the cold of the northeast we will fly our way back south to the warmer climes near the coast and we will enjoy the culture, architecture and nightlife of Shanghai, our final destination. Once we reach

Shanghai we will be taken to our hotel in the heart of the metropolis. We will then walk through the bustling night streets to the river and from a rooftop bar wonder at both the high-rise buildings over the Huangpu and the colonial buildings along the Bund. We will dine at a nearby local restaurant.

Day 14 January 17, Saturday Shanghai [BLD]

Today we will experience the old part of Shanghai. This includes a taste of some of China's finest teas in a centuries old tea-house, a wander through a famous market district and then Jeremy will guide people through Shanghai's finest scholar garden, the Yu Gardens. These were built in the latter 1500s and showcase some of the finest Chinese garden features outside of Suzhou. Afterwards we will reflect on such splendor in a Michelin rated ("Bib Gourmand") Shanghai *xiaolong bao* (dumpling) restaurant. After lunch, for those with energy, we will head towards the French Concessions and wander the tree lined streets, marveling at the architecture and perhaps even finding a wine bar or two. Others may wish to head back to the hotel at leisure, either along the Nanjing Road pedestrian street or the newly renovated Jiujiang Road. Later, in the early evening, we will head towards the wharves and catch ourselves an hour long river cruise along the Huangpu, between old and new. Afterwards we will conclude our tour of China's wonderful historical and gastronomical sites with dinner in a restaurant near our hotel.

Day 15 January 18, Sunday tour finishes after breakfast

The group disperses today, and Jeremy will assist with transport arrangements. Likewise people may wish to stay longer in Shanghai and Jeremy is also willing to assist with bookings.

Total: Per person \$10,500 (twin share), single supplement \$500.

Inclusions and exclusions:

The Tour Price includes the following items:

- full accompaniment by Jeremy, including expert commentary and translation;
- all accommodation in central, high quality hotels;
- internal transfers in our own bus, internal plane ticket, train tickets, metro tickets, ferry tickets and taxis;
- entrance tickets to museums, historical sites and events are included;
- Xi'an and Chengdu food tour;
- local guides where appropriate, from companies Jeremy has vetted;
- all meals are included, apart from where indicated in the itinerary,;
- In-country gratuities are also covered.

Exclusions:

- Alcohol, snacks and soft drinks are not included;
- Souvenirs are not included;
- In-room expenses (telephone charges, mini-bars, room service, dry cleaning etc etc)

(Complete Terms and Conditions document available upon request).