

Immerse Yourself in China's Wonders with Jeremy Clarke

September 13 to September 26 (14 days/13 nights)

Visiting: Hong Kong, Guilin, Yangshuo, Xi'an, Shanghai and Beijing.



Total: *Per person \$10,500 (twin share), single supplement \$750.*
(Almost all-inclusive, minus international airfares)

Day 1 September 13, Sunday 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 included]

Day 2 September 14, Monday Hong Kong to Guilin [BLD]

After a morning in Hong Kong, with an optional stroll around Kowloon Park, we catch a high-speed train through the countryside of southern China to Guilin, passing through immigration procedures at the Hong Kong West Kowloon train station, a short walk from the hotel. Our new hotel is next to one of Guilin’s beautiful lakes and scenic spots, alongside the serene Li River. [B= breakfast included; L = lunch included; D= dinner included]

Day 3 September 15, Tuesday Guilin to Yangshuo [BLD]

We get transferred to our ferry in the morning and then take a lazy cruise down the Li River through the amazing countryside that has inspired thousands of artists and photographers. A real highlight! During the afternoon and evening we explore the markets, streets and wharves of this delightful town, all the more enjoyable because the busloads of tourists-on-the-clock have left.

Day 4 September 16, Wednesday Yangshuo [BD]

We enjoy a full day of wandering freely around Yangshuo, including Yangshuo Park and the Xu Beihong former residence. Although Yangshuo is daily inundated with tourists on the ferry, mostly they leave almost immediately after they arrive so we’ll have the small river town mainly to ourselves. There are also optional tours to neighbouring scenic spots that Jeremy can help arrange - such as rafting down a river - and then in the early evening, in the shadow of Yangshuo’s karst peaks, we attend a wonderful concert and light show, curated by famed Chinese film director Zhang Yimou. (No organised lunch today).

Day 5 September 17, Thursday Yangshuo to Xi'an [BLD]

Today is a travel day as we move further into the heartland of China, both physically and historically, and we make our way from the quiet riverside to the ancient city of Xi'an (formerly Chang'an, the Tang dynasty capital). We will take our own bus to Guilin airport and then fly to Xi'an. Here we will arrive in time to wander the Muslim food markets near the Drum and Bell Towers before dinner.

Day 6 September 18, 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, Jeremy will lead the group to a nearby restaurant back in town where we relax after our momentous day.

Day 7 September 19, Saturday Xi'an [BD]

We enjoy a welcome free day. After the sights of the last few cities, we can catch our breath and wander the old capital at individual leisure, or simply catch a breath. Jeremy's favourites include walking or even cycling the old city walls and visiting the art district near the Beilin Museum. No formal lunch today. We re-gather in the early evening and enjoy a dinner food tour, buzzing through back streets on tuk-tuks as our local guide takes us to hard-to-find family-owned restaurants.

Day 8 September 20, Sunday Xi'an to Shanghai [BLD]

Today is another highlight as we take one of China's highspeed trains from the beginning of the Silk Road in the west to the futuristic skyscrapers of Shanghai on China's east coast. As we pass through

one province after another we will see first hand the interplay of rural endeavor and the growth of China's urbanized hinterlands, and likely be surprised by the scale and scope of this world super power. Farms are at the foot of solar panels that clamber over mountainsides like coverlets on a bed and wind turbines slide past our windows as the train reaches speeds over 300km a hour. Once we reach Shanghai we will be met at the train by our own bus and then 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 highrise buildings over the Huangpu and the colonial buildings along the Bund. We will dine at a nearby local restaurant.

Day 9 September 21, Monday 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 garden features outside of Suzhou. Afterwards we will reflect on such splendor in a Michelin rated ("Bib Gourmand") Shanghai 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 enjoy an hour long river cruise along the Huangpu, between old and new. Afterwards we will dine in a restaurant near our hotel.

Day 10 September 22, Tuesday Shanghai [BLD]

In the morning and early afternoon Jeremy will lead our tour past, around and through some of the finer Shanghai Art-Deco buildings gathered together in the downtown district, both near the Bund and near the People's Park (the old Shanghai racecourse). For lunch we will again enjoy some of Shanghai's renowned street food, once more in a Michelin listed hole-in-the-wall restaurant that has been in operation since 1932. For the remainder of the afternoon people are at leisure to interact with Shanghai as they wish, and Jeremy can provide recommendations regarding art galleries and creative districts, trendy markets and fashion strips, as well as places to watch the world go by. Shanghai is one

of the world's great cities, with a highly efficient metro, so it is both easy to get around and a delight to wander and be surprised by. We will meet again for dinner in another fine establishment.

Day 11 September 23, Wednesday Shanghai to Beijing [BLD]

Today we farewell the thriving port city, perhaps after an early morning walk along the Bund or after joining in with locals exercising along the main street (or even just a sleep in and a quality coffee), and make our way north to the nation's capital, Beijing. We catch the third of our long distance high-speed trains and in the course of our journey pass through the food plains of the north and over China's two greatest rivers: the Yangtze and the Yellow River. Once more we get to relax and watch the world pass by at truly impressive speeds. We arrive in the late afternoon and once more are taken to our hotel, before having the chance to wander the inner city alleyways, finishing with a Mongolian hotpot dinner in the bustling Drum and Bell Tower district.

Day 12 September 24, Thursday Beijing [BLD]

After yesterday's quieter day on the train, 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 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. 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 local restaurant.

Day 13 September 25, Friday Beijing [BLD]

No journey to Beijing is complete without a visit to the Forbidden City, which stands north of 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. For our final afternoon, there is either free time or an optional wander with Jeremy to wherever the group wishes to go, perhaps markets, or another alley district or a temple. For our final formal meal together we will enjoy a Beijing Duck banquet cooked by a restaurant that has been operating since 1864.

Day 14 September 26, Saturday Beijing [B]

Today is the formal end of the tour and Jeremy will assist people with travel arrangements to the Beijing international airport or Beijing train station. It may be that people may wish to stay on for a few days and Jeremy can assist with this too.

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

(Almost all inclusive, save for international airfares)

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 food tour and Yangshuo evening performance;
- 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).