

Backroads to Beijing

8 days | Shanghai to Beijing



Take the road less travelled from Shanghai to Beijing. Explore the scintillating city of Shanghai and cultural Qufu, birthplace of Confucius. Cruise the picturesque waterways of Suzhou and admire the views from the summit of holy Mt Tai Shan. Visit a local village, meet the children of a kindergarten school, have lunch with a local family and more on this fascinating 8 day tour.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Shanghai - Shanghai Plaza Tower, The Bund and Old Shanghai, Yuyuan Garden, Huang River skyline of Pudong City
- Suzhou - UNESCO listed gardens, Grand Canal and waterways, Silk factory, Lingering Garden
- Qufu – UNESCO listed Confucius Mansion, temple and forest
- Bu Yung village – village, homestead and kindergarten
- Jinan – UNESCO listed Mt Tai Shan (Peaceful Mountain). Heaven Street, Cloud Bridge, Jade Emperor's Temple
- Beijing - extend your stay to explore the capital

What's Included

- Shanghai Airport arrival transfers on day 1 and departure transfer on day 8 from Beijing Capital Airport
- 7 breakfasts and 3 lunches
- 6 nights 3 - 4 star hotels, 1 overnight train: Shanghai - Qufu (4-berth soft sleeper cabin)
- Touring of Shanghai, Suzhou, Qufu and Jinan
- Shanghai - Huangpu River cruise
- Suzhou - historic Grand Canal cruise
- Return cable car journey – Mt Tai Shan
- Tour Guide escorted for groups of 6 or more
- English speaking specialist guides at local sights
- All relevant transfers and transportation in private A/C vehicles

What's Not Included

- Tipping Kitty: USD\$50-60pp, paid in local currency
- Entrance Fees: USD\$110-120pp, paid in local currency
- International flights and visa
- Tip for your tour guide is not included in the Tip Kitty. We suggest USD\$3-5 per day, per traveller for a job well done, however the amount is up to you
- Laundry, drinks, items of a personal nature

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Shanghai

Saturday. Arrive into Shanghai airport where you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Spend the rest of the day at leisure. **Overnight - Shanghai**

Day 2 : City tour



This morning we gather for a short Welcome Meeting. Your Entrance Fees and Tip Kitty will be collected at this time (as detailed in the exclusions section of your Trip Notes).

Today we explore the cosmopolitan city of Shanghai. On our guided tour of the city we'll visit the iconic Oriental Pearl TV tower, Shanghai's Bund, where on and around the waterfront promenade are a vast series of grandiose pre-1949 buildings, the picturesque Yuyuan Gardens and the Old City. This evening enjoy a cruise on the Huangpu River

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and admire Shanghai's incredible illuminated skyline. **Overnight - Shanghai (B)**

Days 3-4 : Suzhou & Shanghai



Shanghai - Suzhou - Shanghai - Qufu. On day 3 we travel by road to Suzhou (if the tour group is small the journey may be undertaken by high speed train). A sort of oriental Venice, ancient Suzhou is interwoven by a series of striking canals and pretty waterways which feed a series of classical gardens, laid out here since the Song dynasty a thousand years ago, they are justly famous across China. Suzhou sits very close to the Grand Canal. At 1800km, it is the longest canal on earth and ranks alongside the Great Wall as China's greatest engineering achievement. We enjoy a cruise and visit a silk workshop. The silk trade has flourished here since the Tang dynasty. Later, we return to Shanghai.

There's plenty to see and do in Shanghai and day 4 is free for you to venture to the Old City, French Quarter or opt to shop along the famous Nanjing road. Late hotel check out has been pre-arranged, with use of your room until 6pm. We then transfer to the station and bunk down in our soft sleeper train cabins en route to Qufu. **Overnight - Shanghai (1) Sleeper Train to Qufu (1)** (B:2, L:1)

Day 5 : Remarkable Confucius Temple



This morning we arrive into Qufu, birthplace of Confucius and home to the Confucius Temple, which ranks with Beijing's Forbidden City as a great classic Chinese architectural complex. With 466 rooms and over a kilometre long, the complex was built and dedicated to the descendants of the great sage, who lived here continuously for more than 2,500 years, spanning 77 generations. The grandeur and opulence of the mansion conveys the power and wealth of the mighty Kong clan and their head Yansheng Duke (Confucius' direct male descendant). The clan rose throughout imperial history as the family head was granted increased privileges. With the decline of imperial rule, the end was nigh and in 1940, the last of the family line - Kong Dechend - fled to Taiwan during the Japanese invasion. Not surprisingly, half of Qufu now claims descent from the Kongs.

Today we explore the incredible mansion and temple before taking a rickshaw ride around the city wall and visiting the eerie Confucius forest. The forest is studded with tombs and graves of Kong family members dating back some centuries. Anyone with the surname Kong can still be buried here today. This evening we take a stroll through the colourful night market. **Overnight - Qufu (B)**

Day 6 : Traditional Bu Yang Village



Qufu – Bu Yang Village - Mt Tai Shan – Jinan. A short drive leads us to Bu Yang Village. The principles of Communism and communal work and land ownership are somewhat still in place here. We stop for a light lunch at Mr Peng's (one of the party officials) home. Seated around the family's low to the ground lazy Susan, Mrs Peng serves up local dishes and copious bottles of beer. This is real village life!

A short stroll leads us to the village prep-school, where we step into the class room to be swarmed by the mass of 5 year old's all vying for our attention. If you have bought any educational items with you to hand out to children, this would be the time to do so. Some suggestions of what you may like to bring are:

- Wall charts – map of the world, numbers, letters, multiplication tables
- Any visual teaching resources, coloured cardboard, junior scissors, rulers, sharpeners, lead pencils
- Reading books – suitable for any age between 4 – 12 yrs
- Sporting equipment – cricket bat, tennis balls, soft balls, skipping ropes, elastics
- Toothbrushes, toothpaste, liquid soap for washrooms

Later we drive to Mt Tai Shan, perhaps the holiest of the five Chinese holy mountains devoted to Taoism. There are more than 6000 steps to the summit, streams of pilgrims take the challenge, we take the cable car. With stunning scenery and many ancient temples dotting the slopes we visit Heaven Street, Cloud Bridge and the Jade Emperor's temple before a short drive to Jinan.

Overnight - Jinan (B, L)

Day 7 : Sightseeing Tour Of Jinan

Jinan - Beijing. Today we embark on a short city sightseeing tour of Jinan, capital of Shandong province in Eastern China, and enjoy a fabulous Hotpot lunch. Afternoon express train journey to Beijing. **Overnight - Beijing (B, L)**

Day 8 : Beijing - China's bustling capital

Saturday. Tour ends after breakfast and included onward transfer to Beijing Capital Airport. Or consider extending your stay to explore China's bustling capital.

If you require a transfer to Daxing International Airport, this can be arranged at an additional fee, please speak with your reservations consultant for further details.(B)

HOTELS

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Highlighted below are some of the hotels which we frequently use on this tour, though we reserve the right to substitute these hotels to ones of a similar standard.

Please refer to your Tour Voucher for your confirmed arrival hotel and further arrival information.

Ramada Encore Shanghai Hotel

Ideally located close to several plazas and shopping centres, this modern hotel offers you a comfortable stay in one of China's fastest growing cities. Guestrooms are equipped with all the essential amenities, with free WiFi and access to the breakfast buffet included. The onsite Dakang Restaurant also serves lunch and dinner, and you can expect a tasty menu featuring both Western and Chinese cuisine. Other amenities include a fitness centre, coffee shop and small convenience store.



Queli Hotel

The Queli a sublime hotel that combines excellent service with a great location to ensure each guest a fantastic stay. Designed in traditional Shandong style, the beautiful complex blends with the ancient town of Qufu and boasts modern amenities including a business centre and a bar. Rooms are spacious and comfortable and have been decorated with a neutral colour scheme. The hotel is in the city centre, adjacent to the Confucius Temple and 16 km from the railway station.



Shungeng Hillview Hotel

Situated at the foot of a mountain, this modern hotel sits amongst wonderful landscapes and offers splendidly decorated rooms with an array of mod-cons. The hotel has several restaurants, a bar, a health club featuring a sauna and fitness centre, and a number of other recreational facilities including bowling, tennis and billiards. Upon entering guests can marvel at the magnificent lobby before making their way to their spacious room. The hotel is 3km from the city centre, 6km from the railway station and 38km from the airport.



Holiday Inn Temple of Heaven

The Beijing Holiday Inn Temple of Heaven is an elegant and comfortable hotel with well-furnished and spacious rooms. Practical in design, the guestrooms feature internet access and the hotel also boasts a range of restaurants and bars, as well as an indoor swimming pool. Located just a 10 minute walk from the Temple of Heaven, the hotel is the perfect base from which to explore this fascinating city.



Holiday Inn Express Beijing Minzuyuan

Located just a stones throw from the Beitucheng Subway station, with access to Line 10 & Line 8, the Holiday Inn Express Beijing Minzuyuan is a perfect base to explore the many amazing highlights of Beijing. Within walking distance of the hotel you'll find the famous Birds Nest Olympic Stadium. The hotel boasts a stylish

restaurant offering breakfast, lunch and dinner.



Guides & Groups

Our longest group tour in India is our Mandarin Sunrise – 15 day tour. All other group tours that we offer are sectors of this larger tour. Some travelling on your trip may only travel with you for a week or more and others may continue on to complete the full 15 days. It also might be that you end your holiday part way through the longest tour and others in the group continue on. Whenever there is 6 persons or more on your holiday you will have a tour guide escorting/ travelling along with you. Your guide will conduct the sightseeing arrangements, or accompany you where the local law dictates that a local guide must conduct the sightseeing in this region. Where the group number is less than 6 persons you will travel from place to place with a driver and meet a local guide at each new destination that will conduct your sightseeing arrangements in this location.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Entrance fees

Entry fees to most sites are not included although reasonably priced. In China, we'll collect the entrance fees on Day 2 of the tour at the Welcome Meeting (the amount is noted under exclusions on the first page of this document). A comprehensive breakdown of the entrance fees is provided upon arrival. All funds collected in China for entrance fees and optional excursions (that you may wish to undertake) are payable in local currency - Chinese Yuan (CNY).

Note: If you are over the age of 60 at time of travel, a discounted ticket or free entry to some sites may be possible (subject to change by the government). Entrance fees will be collected in full on day 2, and your guide/s will attempt to get a discount at each

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site on your behalf. If a discount is obtained your guide will issue a refund at this time. Please make your guide aware of this (if you are eligible) at the Welcome Meeting so that the discount can be requested throughout the tour.

Tipping kitty

At the start of your tour at the Welcome Meeting, we'll collect a small tipping kitty (the amount is noted under exclusions on the first page of this document) from all tour participants to cover tips throughout your holiday. This saves you the hassle of knowing when and how much to tip bellhops, luggage handlers, bus drivers, train conductors and other support staff throughout the tour.

This amount does not include a tip for your tour guide. For a job well done, we suggest USD\$3-5 per traveller, per day. Tipping your guide is an entirely personal gesture and ultimately the amount is up to you.

Groups & guides

Some of our group tours are sectors of a larger tour. Some travellers on your trip may only travel with you for part of your tour. It also might be that you end your holiday part way through a longer tour and others in the group continue on.

Guides: We believe the best way to see a country is through the eyes of a local and as such we only employ tour guides native to the country you are visiting. Our guides are passionate, caring, knowledgeable and fun, and by travelling with a local you to get to see the wonders of the country through their eyes. Tour guides will remain with groups of 6 or more. Where groups are 5 or less, travel between cities will be unescorted with transfers at either side of the airport/train station and a local guide will conduct the scheduled sightseeing within each city.

China Country Guide

Welcome to China - Arrival transfer

For tours starting in Beijing A complimentary airport arrival transfer is included when arriving into Beijing Capital Airport. After

attending to immigration and customs formalities, please proceed to the arrival hall. If arriving to Beijing into Terminal 2, when exiting immigration to the arrivals hall, please turn right where our representative will be waiting. If arriving into Terminal 3 you will be met just outside the restricted area. The prominent sign depicting our company logo easily identifies our representative. Please have your Tour Voucher handy and make it available to our representative. Our representative will assist you with your luggage and escort you to our vehicle, for your transfer to your hotel.

If, for any reason you have trouble locating our representative after waiting 20 minutes (remember Beijing is a busy International Airport) or your flight to China is delayed, please call or send a text message (standard text message, not Messenger or WhatsApp) to the emergency contact number as stated on your Tour Voucher.

If you require a transfers from Daxing International Airport, this can be arranged at an additional fee, please speak with your reservations consultant for further details.

Visas & passports

Visa requirements are subject to change and visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from China.

After booking your holiday, please provide us with your passport details as soon as possible so that we can proceed to book all services. Please be advised visa requirements are subject to change, therefore it is essential that you check current visa requirements with the embassy before travel. For information about visas, head to www.onthegotours.com/China/Visas

Please note: If you plan to renew your passport between now and your departure date, please let us know as soon as possible (not your soon to be old passport details). When booking accommodation, trains or flights, we must have the details of the

passport that you will be carrying with you on your trip.

Health requirements & water

You should seek medical advice for vaccinations and about medications before travelling.

As tap water is not safe to drink in China, only drink bottled mineral water which is readily available from hotels, shops and restaurants. Make sure bottled water is sealed.

Essential packing

Please check local temperatures so you can pack accordingly. Visit www.worldclimate.com

- Food in China is very different and arguably better than your local takeaway! If you prefer western snack food, consider bringing a supply
- Sunglasses, hat, sunscreen, swim costume, basic torch/flash light and umbrella for sun or rain
- Comfortable closed in walking shoes for climbing the Great Wall etc
- DEET based mosquito repellent and antihistamine cream
- Universal travel adaptor
- Tour Voucher and a copy of your travel insurance policy, spare passport photos and a photocopy of your passport
- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs
- Plastic poncho to go over your jacket. Whilst site-seeing, you can be in the rain for an extended period and even a rain jacket can get soaked. You can purchase a cheap one locally, but we suggest taking one from home of a better quality that doesn't rip easily
- If your tour includes an internal flight, most airlines have a 20kg baggage limit
- Note: The government has introduced a policy for the purpose of environmental protection, whereby hotels no longer supply disposable items such as slippers, shower caps, tooth brush/paste, etc

Porterage

Pack as light as possible! In China, most often porterage is not available at railway stations and you will need to carry your own luggage. Bags with wheels can be a hindrance when climbing several flights of stairs, though are

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a blessing when walking lengthy distances to reach our awaiting transportation.

Media restrictions

There are restrictions on all media, including social media and free press throughout China. Whilst on holiday, you will have limited or no access to social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Google Plus - so no Google Maps and no Play Store. To bypass the firewall, you could look at downloading a VPN, which is much easier to do before you go to China.

WeChat:

Communication between the group and Tour Guide or Leader is best via the app: WeChat. Please install this App prior to your holiday as it is very hard to download the app once you have arrived in China. If you opt to open the WeChat account prior to arrival and it requests that you have to be contacted by someone already on WeChat before opening your account, don't worry, this can be done locally with your guide (just have the app downloaded ready to finalise opening your account locally).

There is also limited international calling options, so please check with your local provider before leaving home, to source the best roaming or online options to keep in regular contact with family and friends during your travels.

Travelling by train

Fast and efficient, China's first rail lines were laid in the 19th century, and today the government continues to invest heavily in this crucial mode of transport which connects many parts of the country. When travelling during the day, 'soft' seats, that is to say 'upholstered' seats are provided.

For overnight travel on some of our "Signature Range" tours, clients are accommodated in 'soft class' sleeper cabins. Aboard each wagon are 9 compartments that comprise of 4 bunks per compartment. Four people of mixed gender share one compartment. On occasion, dependent upon group size, you may be sharing with local people on the overnight journey, though sometimes dependent upon how the Chinese Railways

Booking Office configure the bookings, the cabin may be filled with four of our passengers.

A dining wagon serves reasonably priced Chinese food of the noodles and rice variety, along with snacks and drinks. A very simple menu is published in English. Each wagon offers a WC and hand basin facility. At one end, is a Chinese squat-style WC, whilst at the other end is a modern Western-style WC. Cabins are lockable from the inside and luggage is stowed in overhead compartments and under the bottom bunk. Bed linen and slippers are supplied, and often there is a TV mounted on the wall at the end of each bed that may even work. Most channels are broadcast in Mandarin, excluding one English Channel, which has little of interest on it!

For overnight travel on budget "Essentials Range" tours, clients are accommodated in "open" 6 berth bunks. We try to get all of our travellers in the same compartment/seating area so that you can have fun getting to know each other better, playing games etc. It is possible to upgrade to a four-berth soft sleeper on your trip, please contact us at time of booking for rates (upgrades are only possible if the open class ticket has not already been purchased and please note that you will be sleeping in another carriage to that of those in the 6 berth carriages).

Shopping in China

China is a virtual Aladdin's Cave. Government-run Friendship Stores in almost all cities stock a range of fixed-price souvenirs and handicrafts and can offer a reasonable idea of what is acceptable in terms of quality and price. After a visit to the Friendship Store, visit private stores, craft shops and local department stores. However, the best shopping is often at public markets. If you see something you want, buy it when you see it - prices don't vary greatly, but selection can vary from location to location.

In the tourism industry it's common practice for commission to be offered in exchange for recommending particular shops or suppliers. This can become an issue when clients feel obliged to purchase. We do our best to avoid

this by monitoring all shopping experiences offered.

All shopping experiences on your tour have been noted in the itinerary and they have been carefully selected based upon positive feedback from On The Go travellers. You are under no obligation to partake in a listed shopping experience and you are most welcome to wait inside or outside the premises.

Although we only visit reputable retailers, please note that we cannot explicitly guarantee the quality of their products. All purchases made whilst on holiday with us are at your own discretion. Please make sure that you are completely happy with your purchase. On The Go cannot be held responsible for any items that you buy if they fail to meet expectation, or any shipping arrangements. Proceed with caution.

Holidays & events

China has many important National Holidays and events that are celebrated throughout the country. During these times (the lead up to them and afterwards) there can be delays to public transport, the roads can be much busier and many sites are a lot more crowded as the locals take this time to visit family, celebrate the holiday and experience the wonders and amazing places within their own country.

During this time you'll likely to encounter a celebratory atmosphere, but an additional level of patience, flexibility and understanding goes a long way so that you may enjoy your holiday.

As tourists, you will be generally be unaffected and your tour guide will do their best to plan around these events. Though when initially planning your holiday, if you prefer not to travel when sites are crowded or are concerned about delays, then travelling during these holidays is possibly not for you. For more information: www.timeanddate.com/holidays/china/2021

It's not like home!

Travel to far - flung corners of the earth involves lifestyles and conditions that are

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sometimes very different from what you are used to back home. You must come prepared to cope with unusual situations, local inadequacies and unpredictable events as and when they occur. Foreign travel is definitely not suitable for people who expect or demand everything to go exactly as planned. With the greatest respect and in the interest of your ultimate enjoyment you must understand this. Things can and do change in foreign countries.

Please visit www.onthegotours.com/China/Travel-tips-and-useful-info for what to wear, local customs, currency, WiFi and other helpful information to prepare for your holiday.

- Always take some antiseptic hand gel or antibacterial hand wipes with you and BYO toilet paper as its rare in public toilets
- Be prepared as the locals smoke everywhere in China
- The Chinese don't have an awareness of personal space, be ready to have people standing very close to you, nudge you or even walk into you, they are not being rude, it's just a very different culture
- Many tourists report scams in Shanghai, so be friendly but careful. Never ever follow a stranger anywhere
- Spitting and snorting is common in China as they see the use of tissues as unhygienic
- Some locals won't queue and will often walk straight to the front of a line with no awareness or care of what they have done wrong
- Chinese people are delighted if you make any attempt to speak Mandarin, even if it's only a couple of words

Toilets/washrooms

Public toilets, when found, are usually 'squats' - holes in the ground with footrests at either side and often don't possess a door! They can be a novelty and are easy to use. The custom is to wash with water from a jug or little pipe attached to the toilet using your left hand. Doesn't appeal? Here are some hints!

- Time yourself with the accommodations you are staying at
- If you are out and about, find the nearest hotel, restaurant, fast food outlet, or toilets at tourist attractions, which all tend to have Western style facilities
- Ask your tour guide to make a stop

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