



Essence of China (21 Days)

Length: 21 days

Trip style: Adventure

Trip code: PEC

Places visited: Beijing, Xi'an, Chengdu, Yangtze River, Yangshuo, Hong Kong

Highlights: Beijing, Forbidden City, Great Wall hike, Xi'an, Terracotta Warriors, Chengdu, Panda, Emeishan, Yangtze River cruise, Yangshuo, Bike ride, Hong Kong

Price: USD 2650 plus local payment of USD 600

OVERVIEW

This trip goes through the essence of China. The ancient capitals of Beijing and Xi'an, the lovely pandas in Chengdu and popular Mt. Emeishan, the almighty Yangtze River boat trip and beautiful countryside scenery in Yangshuo.

We begin our trip in Beijing, the capital of China, and explore many interests of places like the Forbidden City and Tian'anmen Square and the beautiful section of Great Wall at Jinshanling. The awesome Terracotta Warriors in Xi'an will bring you back to the Qin Dynasty 2000 years ago. We will see the Chinese national treasures- pandas in Chengdu, and climb up the popular Mt. Emeishan. We continue our journey on the almighty Yangtze River with the stunning gorges and huge dam project. We will have a cycling tour through the beautiful countryside field in Yangshuo. We will complete our trip in Hong Kong, the pearl of Asia.

Days 1-5	(Sun) Arrive in Beijing, visit Forbidden City, Tian'anmen Square and Great Wall hike at Jinshanling. Speed train to Shanghai.
Days 6-7	Walking tour along the Bund. Afternoon train to Xi'an.
Days 8-9	Half-day tour to Terracotta Warriors. Flight to Chengdu.
Days 10-12	Visit Panda Breeding and Research Base, and then visit Emei Shan Mountain. Stay two nights near the mountain.
Days 13-16	Drive to Chengdu and take speed train to Chongqing, then Yangtze River cruise for three days. Bus to Wuhan, and overnight train to Guilin.
Days 17- 19	Bike ride around Yangshuo. Overnight train to Guangzhou.
Days 20- 21	Arrive in Guangzhou and boat to Hong Kong. Trip ends after breakfast. (Sat)

Itinerary

Days 1-5 Beijing

Your trip starts today with your arrival in Beijing. No activities are planned, so arrive early if you can, as there is plenty to see. There will be a pre-tour briefing with your tour leader late in the afternoon. Please note that your Tour Leader will collect the Local Payment during your group meeting so be sure to take the **600 US dollars** to the meeting along with your travel insurance details. Please bring new USD notes/bills in large denominations. Please see the notice board in the hotel reception for details.

Beijing is abundant in cultural and historical sites. The vast **Tian'anmen Square & Forbidden City**,



built nearly 600 years ago and off limits to citizens for almost all that time, is a truly amazing place. The size might surprise you (it is huge!), but what makes it fascinating is that every square meter is interesting, ranging from intricately carved walkways to colorful, painted ceilings. A visit to China is not complete without walking along the Great Wall. We will travel to **Jinshanling Great Wall**, a largely unrestored and, as such, more authentic section of the famous wall, not crowded with hordes of other tourists. Climbing up this incredible man-made engineer and surveying the spectacular surrounding countryside is an unforgettable experience. There is also ample free time in the itinerary, allowing you to make your own discoveries and explorations. Temple of Heaven and Summer Palace are two other fine examples of extraordinary workmanship and architecture. In the evening, you have the chance to enjoy a performance of the unique Beijing Opera or Kongfu Show (optional).

On Day 5 in the early morning we will take bullet train to Shanghai (5 hours).

Included activities:

Tian'anmen Square & Forbidden City
Great Wall hike from Simatai West to Jinshanling (3 hours)

Optional Activities:

Temple of Heaven CNY35 (USD 5)
Summer Palace CNY30 (USD 5)
Jingshan Park CNY5 (USD 0.8)
Lama Temple CNY40 (USD 6)
Beijing Zoo CNY20 (USD 3)
Kungfu Show CNY180-280 (USD 25-35)
Beijing Opera CNY150-200 (USD 20-25)
Hutong Tour CNY130 (USD 20)
Beijing Duck Dinner CNY80-140 (USD 10-13)

Accommodation: hotel (4 nts)

Meals: 4 breakfasts/1 lunch

Days 6-7 Shanghai

Shanghai is a vibrant, fast-moving city with a fantastic variety of markets and restaurants for eating out. The shopping area on Nanjing Road is situated nearby. We will enjoy free time in Shanghai, and your tour leader can show you how to find the way to the famous Yuyuan Gardens and Bazaar, a representative of private garden in south China and highlight of the city. We might have opportunities to try some wonderful food stalls as well. Acrobat here is recommended for your entertainment at night.

There is a full free day for further exploration of Shanghai. Keen photographers are rewarded by an early start to the day, as scores of locals practice Taichi along the waterfront at dawn. The old French Quarter is also a great place to wander around, and the Jade Buddha Temple and the impressive Shanghai Museum are both well worth a visit. The gleaming towers on the Pudong side reflect China's march towards modernization and the rapid rate of changes that are taking place.

On the evening of Day 7, we board another overnight train for our next destination – Xi'an. You can either purchase dinner on the train or buy some food prior to boarding. We stay in four-berth air-conditioned private cabin. A blanket, sheets and a pillow are provided, although some people may wish to bring their own inner sheet. The 11-hour trip is a great opportunity for our group to get to know each other and is a great way to mix with the locals and practice your Chinese-language skills.

Included activities:

Walking tour along the Bund
Yuyuan Garden & bazaar

Optional Activities:

Jinmao Building CNY70 (USD 9)
Jade Buddha Temple CNY30 (USD 4)
Tourist Tunnel CNY 35 (USD 4.5)
Oriental Pearl Tower CNY80-100 (USD 10-13)
Shanghai Museum- Free



Urban Planning Exhibition Centre CNY30 (USD 4)

Acrobatics CNY180-280 (USD 25-35)

Huangpu River Boat Trip CNY50-100 (USD 7-15)

Accommodation: hotel (1 nts); overnight soft-sleeper train (1 nt)

Meals: 2 breakfasts

Days 8-9 Xi'an

We arrive in Xi'an early in the morning. Xi'an topped the other ancient capital cities in China. Many wonderful places are on your exploration list. Food options are excellent here as well, ranging from delicious Muslim fare to great little dumplings in local restaurants. Widely known as the first capital of a united China in 221 BC, the city is the deep root of Chinese history. A half-day tour to the renowned **Terracotta Warriors** shows us to these unearthed pottery statues, considered one of the most important archaeological finds of the 20th Century. Over 6,000 of them were individually sculpted from clay, each having a different costume, height, even facial expression. They are standing in battle formation, facing east in order to protect the tomb of China's first Emperor, the great Qin Shi Huang Di. These soldiers were accidentally discovered by local farmers in 1974. A free day can easily be spent wandering the narrow streets among the Muslim quarter where we find quaint shops, lively markets, groups of white-bearded men in skull caps sipping tea in dingy cafes. For those who are interested in history, please do not miss Shaanxi History Museum, which introduces you the total history of Chinese civilization. Other places you may visit include Bell Tower, Drum Tower, City Wall and Big Wild Goose Pagoda, a famous Buddhist temple.

Included activities:

Walking tour to the Muslim Quarter

Terracotta Warriors

Optional Activities:

City Wall CNY55 (USD 8)

Bike rental on City Wall CNY 20 (USD 3) for one hour, deposit (CNY 200) is required

Big Goose Pagoda CNY25 (USD 4)

Bell & Drum Tower CNY15 +CNY15 (USD 2+2)

Great Mosque CNY20 (USD 3)

Stele Forest CNY75 (USD 12)

Shaanxi History Museum- Free

Dumpling Banquet & Tang Dynasty Show CNY 280(USD 45), Dumplings only CNY100 (USD 15)

Accommodation: hotel (2 nts)

Meals: 1 breakfast/ 1 lunch

Days 10-13 Chengdu-Emei Shan

In the morning of Day 10, we will take a flight to Chengdu.

Chengdu is the capital of south-west Sichuan Province. Sichuan is known for its hot, spicy dishes, considered by the Chinese as the best cuisine within China. After our overnight train journey, this afternoon is an opportunity to relax and an appropriate way of doing this is to simply sit on a bamboo chair at the teahouse in Renmin Park, sipping tea and watching the world go by. There is often an ear-picker with cotton buds wandering around, if you feel the need! A stroll to Wenshu Temple will take you past beggars, children, tourists, fortune-tellers and fireworks sellers. This is an active and noisy place of worship.

We depart Chengdu in the morning of Day 11 and visit the **Giant Panda Breeding Research Base** situated near the city. The giant panda is one of the world's most endangered species and has become Chinese national treasures and an icon for conservation movements everywhere. It is still found in parts of the Sichuan province, but is very difficult to spot in the wild. After visiting this lovely park, we continue onto **Emei Shan** by bus (2 hours) and will base us at the foot of the mountain.

In the morning of Day 12 we wake and prepare ourselves for a leisurely hike up to the Golden summit of Mount Emei. In this 8 hour hike we avoid many of the tourists to pass through villages and amazing countryside as we make our way to the summit. After this hike we overnight on the summit to enjoy



a spectacular sunset. On Day 13 we make our way down from the Golden summit to the car park where we drive back to Chengdu to take the speed train to the industrial city of Chongqing, the gateway to the Yangtze River and starting point of our Yangtze River cruise.

Included activities:

Panda Breeding and Research Center
Mt. Emeishan (entrance and bus)

Optional Activities:

Sichuan Opera Show CNY140 (USD 23)
Wuhou Shrine CNY30 (USD 5)
Wenshu Temple CNY10 (USD 1.5)
People's Park – Free
Hot Pot CNY 60-100 (USD 10-15)

Accommodation: hotel (1 nt), guesthouse (2 nts)

Meals: 4 breakfasts/ 1 lunch

Days 14-16 Chongqing-Yangtze River Cruise-Yichang-Wuhan

We board our boat to commence a cruise on one of the great rivers of the world in Chongqing. Before boarding, you may wish to purchase some small snacks to take with you on the boat. **The Yangtze** (also known locally as the Changjiang River) is, at 6,300 kilometers, the world's third longest waterway. It rises deep in the heart of the province of Qinghai, to the north of Tibet, and flows relentlessly eastwards until it empties into the East China Sea near Shanghai. Effectively dividing the country into north and south, the river not only supplies the rural heart of China, but has also spawned many industries reliant upon its power. The Yangtze has also inspired poets, writers and travelers over the centuries. The "Sanxia", as they are known in Chinese, stretch for 200 kilometers and vary from 100 meters to 300 meters in width.

Over the next two days, we start the cruise through the famous Three Gorges. With the construction of the Three Gorges hydroelectric project, life along this majestic river is changing at a rapid pace. The scenery is spectacular! We enjoy our cruise on a tourist-class boat between Chongqing and Yichang. This is a much more comfortable way to travel than on the local boats that ply the same route, and offers a fascinating insight into life along the river. We spend three nights on board and sleep in twin share cabins with private facilities in accommodation similar to a small hotel room. Bedding and sheets are provided, as are all meals throughout the cruise. On Day 16 we disembark from our riverboat and drive to Yichang, the gateway of Yangtze River, where we will drive to Wuhan to catch the overnight train to Guilin (approximately 13 hours).

Please note that all rooms on the Yangtze cruise are on a twin share basis. If you are not already sharing a room with someone from your group, you may be required to share with someone (of the same gender) from outside your group. This could be a member of another tour group or a local person.

Included activities:

Three Gorges river cruise
Shore excursion to Fengdu, the Ghost City
Shore excursion to Lesser Three Gorges (Daning River)
Shore excursion to Three Gorges Dam site

Accommodation: boat (3 nts), overnight soft-sleeper train (1 nt)

Meals: 3 breakfasts/ 2 lunches/ 2 dinners

Days 17-19 Yangshuo

We arrive in Guilin in the early morning and transfer to the small countryside town of Yangshuo (1.5 hrs). Yangshuo, a place nestled amongst the imposing limestone karst formations that have inspired poets and painters for centuries. This small town is a haven for back-packers and here we stay in a delightful local style hotel.

Day 18 we take a half-day **bike ride** through the surrounding countryside to gain an insight into rural



life in South China and have a scrumptious lunch in a local restaurant at the foot of **Moon Hill**. It is also a wonderful area for exploring individually, as every turn in the road brings you to another picture-postcard location- this is why Yangshuo is the favorite with PANDA travelers. A boat trip on the Li River to the surrounding town is an option to consider in your free time.

Day 19 we drive to Guilin to the overnight train to Guangzhou.

Included activities:

Bike ride in the countryside
Moon Hill

Optional Activities:

Bamboo Rafting CNY120-150 (USD 20-25)
Zhang Yi Mo River Light Show CNY188-288 (USD 30-45)
Cooking School CNY100 (USD 15)
Li River Cruise CNY130-150 (USD 20-23)
Calligraphy, Painting, Language, Kungfu, Taiqi -1 Hour Lesson CNY50 (USD 8)

Accommodation: hotel (2 nts), overnight soft-sleeper train (1 nt)

Meals: 2 breakfasts/ 1 lunch

Days 20-21 Hong Kong

Arriving in Guangzhou in the morning, we head to the ferry terminal and catch the hydrofoil to Hong Kong. There is just so much to see and do in Hong Kong. You can take a funicular ride up to Victoria Peak and enjoy magnificent views over the city, wander through the Stanley Market or just shop until you drop! On our last night we can get together for a group dinner or go out and enjoy some of the many bars and nightclubs around town. Every evening there is a spectacular Sound and Light Show on the skyscrapers of Hong Kong Island - 8:00 to 8:20pm. Check with your hotel reception for details. Be warned - after Mainland China, you will not find Hong Kong a cheap city!

Our trip ends in Hong Kong on Day 21. Checkout time is usually around 12 Noon; however you are free to leave at any time in the morning. If you are a first-time visitor to Hong Kong, it is recommended that you extend your stay to further explore this exciting city. A journey up to the top of Victoria Peak on the famous Peak Tram is a good introduction to Hong Kong. Additional accommodation can be arranged on request. The hotel staff will be on hand to advise you how to get to the airport.

Accommodation: hotel (1 nt)

Meals: 1 breakfast

TRIP DOSSIER

About PANDA Adventures

Based in Beijing, China, PANDA Adventures (www.pandaadventures.com) is the leading operator of adventure tours in China. PANDA can help you discover all corners of China, from ancient capitals, Beijing and Xi'an to modern metropolis, Shanghai; from the mother river, Yellow River to almighty Yangtze River; from dynamic minority Yunnan to mysterious Tibet. We offer high-quality, excellent-value, small-group trips to interesting areas of the country, in harmony with the local people and the environment.

Physical Rating: 3

Each trip is given a Physical Rating, which indicates how much physical activity is required to participate in it. This rating helps you choose a trip that is suitable to your level of fitness and abilities, and one that you will enjoy taking part in. Physical activity on a PANDA adventures tour falls into the following categories.

Rating of 1 - Getting around on your own, up and down hotel steps and carrying your own bag.

Rating of 2 - Light walking and hiking that is suitable for most fitness levels.

Rating of 3 - May include moderate hiking, biking, rafting, kayaking and other activities that require only an average/moderate level of fitness to enjoy.

Rating of 4 - May include high altitude hiking of up to 8 hours per day or other activities that require



a moderately high level of fitness.

Rating of 5 - High altitude trekking suitable only for those with a higher level of fitness and endurance.

Culture Shock Rating: 2

Each trip is given a Culture Shock Rating, designed to help you choose a trip that is suitable to your travel tastes and preferences. The Culture Shock Rating lets you know how much "difference" you can expect from the experience - whether there's any familiar food available, if you'll need to adapt a little or a lot to the surroundings and the kind of home comforts (if any) you can expect. Culture Shock is rated according to the following scale:

Rating of 1 - Little or no adjustment at all is required. The comforts of home are here for the most part.

Rating of 2 - A generally easy trip but there may be the occasional remote lodging, market meal or language barrier.

Rating of 3 - Expect an occasional cold shower and remote or even multi-share accommodation, and public transportation...Remember though, this is all part of your PANDA authentic travel experience!

Rating of 4 - Expect to rough it here and there. This may mean a packed public bus, very remote and rustic accommodation, and no access to western-style food.

Rating of 5 - You are totally off the beaten path with none of the comforts of home, and are exposed to a totally foreign culture to what you are accustomed ... Sounds fantastic doesn't it!

Group Size: Max 12, Avg 10

Accommodation: hotel (11 nts), guesthouse (3 nts), overnight train (3 nts), boats (3 nights)

Included:

PANDA tour leader, local guides, transport, sightseeing and entrance fees.

Not Included:

Visas, insurance, other meals, any optional tours and activities during free time, tips and items of a personal nature.

Additional Accommodation:

Extend your holiday by booking some pre or post tour accommodation - ask PANDA or your travel agent.

Transport: Train, local bus, boat, walking, cycling, plane

Meals Included: 17 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 2 dinners

Local Guides & Group Tour Leader:

For a group with 5 people or less, PANDA local guides will serve the group in different destinations. For a group with 6 people or more, a PANDA group tour leader will accompany the trip from beginning to end. The aim of the local guides and group tour leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are traveling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends.

Joining Hotel:

Soluxe Courtyard Hotel Beijing

No. 2 Xitao Hutong, Jiugulou Da Jie, Xicheng District, Beijing

Tel: 86-10-8402 1188

北京阳光老宅院酒店

地址: 北京市西城区旧鼓楼大街西缘胡同 2 号 (鼓楼桥南 200 米路西)

电话: 010-8402 1188

Joining Instructions:

When arriving at Beijing Capital International Airport you have a choice of metered taxi or airport bus.



Please follow the signs for taxis or bus which is clearly marked once you exit from the baggage hall. DO NOT GO WITH ANYONE WHO APPROACHES YOU WHO SAYS THEY HAVE A METERED TAXI IN THE PARKING LOT. THEY WILL RIP YOU OFF!!!! The taxis are all lined up out from of the airport and have traffic guards directing people into a waiting taxi. The ride from the airport to our starting hotel will take between 50-60 minutes depending on traffic and should cost approx. 95-120 Yuan (plus 5 yuan for the airport tollway). There are about 6 different airport buses that drop you off at different places around the city. The staff at the airport bus counter can tell you which bus will be closes to your hotel. The cost is 16 yuan. If you have paid for an arrival transfer when you booked your trip our driver will be waiting for you with a PANDA Sign with your name on it. Please check carefully once you exit the baggage hall as there seem to be hundreds of people waiting outside in the arrival area.

Arrival Complications:

We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, as soon as possible please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your trip leader (if you are not on a group tour please refer to the emergency contact details provided in this dossier). If you are unable to get in touch with your leader, please refer to our emergency contact details. If you have pre-booked an airport transfer and have not made contact with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, we recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel, following the Joining Instructions. Please apply to your travel agent on your return for a refund of the transfer cost if this occurs.

Emergency Contact:

Mobile: 86-**139-1136-1359** - Gary (local manager)

What to Take:

What you need to bring depends on the trip you have chosen. We suggest that you pack as lightly as possible as you are expected to carry your own luggage. As a rule we try not to have to walk more than 15-20 minutes with your bag which is why we recommend keeping the weight of your bags between 10-15kg/22-30lb. Suitcases are not recommended for PANDA Adventures trips! Most travelers carry a backpack or rolling bag of small to medium size (no XXL ones please!) as they need to fit under the beds when traveling on sleeper trains. You will also need a day pack/bag to carry water, cameras and other electronics like ipods and mobile phones. If your trip involves overnights in homestays, villages or camping then you usually have the opportunity to rent sleeping bags if need be instead of bringing them with you.

Checklist:

- Passport (with photocopies)
- Travel insurance (with photocopies)
- Airline tickets (with photocopies)
- USD cash and travelers cheques
- Credit or debit card (see personal spending money)
- PANDA vouchers and trip dossier
- Any entry visas or vaccination certificates required
- Day pack for daily personal items
- Wet wipes / Moist towelettes
- Alarm clock
- Flashlight
- Sun hat, Sun block, Sunglasses
- Insect Repellent
- Water bottle and Plastic mug for train journeys
- Ear plugs for train journeys or light sleepers
- Small towel and swim wear
- Toiletries (biodegradable)
- Sturdy walking shoes/Sport sandals
- Money belt
- Shorts for summer months (June - September)
- Long trousers
- Hiking pants/track pants
- Shirts/T-shirts
- Warm clothes for Nov-April



Fleece, Jacket, hat and gloves
Umbrella or waterproof jacket
Cover for backpack or plastic bags to keep clothes dry
Camera, film and memory chip
Reading/writing material
Binoculars
Pocketknife
First-aid kit (should contain lip salve, Aspirin, Band Aids, anti-histamine, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, re-hydration powder, extra prescription drugs you may be taking).

Local Dress:

In China the dress standard is more conservative than it is in western countries. Things also changes quickly, nowadays the young Chinese share the same hobbies with their western counterparts. When packing try to pick loose, lightweight, long clothing that will keep you cool in the usually hot and humid climate of summers. In predominately Buddhist and Muslim regions we ask that you dress respectfully and avoid very short shorts/skirts and singlets/tanktops when visiting temples or mosques or other holy sites.

Spending Money:

Every traveler is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travelers may drink more than others while other travelers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

Money Exchange:

As currency exchange rates in Asia fluctuate often we ask that you refer to the following website for daily exchange rates: www.xe.com As of August 2011 the exchange rate for HONG KONG was 1 USD = 7.76 HKD (Hong Kong Dollar) and CHINA was 1 USD = 6.30 CNY (Chinese Yuan Renminbi). There are many ATM machines that accept both Visa and Mastercard but these are limited to major cities. We also recommend the use of cash and traveler's cheques in USD currency. Major credit cards are accepted in most shops but they may charge a 2-4% transaction fee.

Overnight Train:

We use soft sleeper class trains for our overnight train journeys. It's comfortable though not luxury. There are 4 berths in a private air-con cabin. There may be a stranger, either local or foreigner, if your group is not big enough to occupy the whole cabin. Luggage will go with you into the cabin. You can put it either under the sleeper or above your head to the luggage space. Boiling water is available. Most trains have a trolley selling snacks and drinks on the train along the way. However you have more options at the supermarket before boarding the train at the train station.

Meals:

Eating is a big part of your traveling in China. Traveling with PANDA Adventures you experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available out in the world. Generally breakfasts are included; lunches and dinners are left to you the flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat. Your group leader or local guide will be able to suggest favorite restaurants during your trip. There is no obligation to do this though.

Allow USD 150 for meals not included.

Activities Included:

Included activities are listed in the day-to-day itinerary, all other activities are optional and at your own expense. If you choose not to participate in the included activities on this itinerary, the cost will not be refunded.

Optional Activities:

A selection of optional activities are listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This isn't an exhaustive list and should be used as a guide only. Prices are for entrance only and don't include transport costs to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated. It may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination. Optional activities aren't necessarily endorsed or recommended by PANDA nor included in price of this trip. If you do any optional activities, you do so at your own risk and it must be clearly understood that your participation is your own decision and doesn't form part of your contract with PANDA.



Local Payment:

Your tour leader will collect **USD 600** from each person on Day 1. It is to be paid in cash, with new clean notes preferably in denominations of 50/100.

The local payment is the final part of your overall tour cost. It is to be paid in cash, in the currency indicated, to your tour leader at the start of your trip. The Local Payment is put towards local expenses, such as arranging trains as well as entrance and guide fees. Local Payments also reduce the need to wire or transfer funds which can become very expensive. This lowers our operational costs so we can pass the savings on to you. Please note that the Local Payment is non-refundable.

Emergency Fund:

Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD200 (or equivalent) as an "emergency" fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (eg. a natural disaster) necessitate a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

Tipping:

It is customary to tip service providers in travel industry in Asia, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. Tipping is expected - though not compulsory - and shows an expression of satisfaction with the people who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. When only local guides are employed in the trip (group size less than 5), you may do this individually or as a group at the end of each destination. When a tour leader looks after the group (group size more than 6), your Tour Leader will offer to collect the money and tip with the group tipping kitty. Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from \$3-\$4 USD per person per day depending on the quality and length of the service; ask your tour leader for specific recommendations based on the circumstances. Also at the end of each trip if you felt your PANDA Tour Leader did an outstanding job, tipping is appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline \$3-4 USD per person, per day can be used.

Laundry:

Generally laundry facilities are offered by our hotels for a charge. There will be times when you may want to or have to do your own laundry so we suggest you bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap.

Safety and Security:

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while traveling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travelers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit box which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. When traveling on a trip, please note that your group leader or local guides has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Your leader or local guides will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your group leader or local guides will assist you with options available in a given location please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time.

A Couple of Rules:

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is not acceptable for PANDA travelers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy and local law. Our group leader or local guides has the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or they use prostitutes.

Health:

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information well before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be



aware that sometimes we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities, and for legal reasons our leaders or local guides are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc. In China pharmacies tend to stock the same western drugs as you get at home but they are usually produced locally so please bring the full drug name with you when trying to purchase a prescription drug. When selecting your trip please carefully read the brochure and itinerary and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please refer to the Physical and Culture Shock ratings in this dossier for trip specific information. For travelers over 70 years a completed Medical Form is required. PANDA reserves the right to exclude any traveler from all or part of a trip without refund if in the reasonable opinion of our group leader or local guides they are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group.

Medical Form:

Our trips bring together people of all ages. It is very important you are aware that, as a minimum, an "average level of fitness and mobility" is required to undertake our easiest programs. Travelers must be able to walk without the aid of another person, climb 3-4 flights of stairs, step on and off small boats, and carry their own luggage at a minimum. Travelers over the age of 70, or travelers with a pre-existing medical condition, are required to complete a short medical questionnaire, which must be signed by their physician. This is to ensure that senior travelers have the necessary fitness and mobility to comfortably complete their chosen trip. While our leaders or local guides work hard to ensure that all our travelers are catered for equally, it is not their responsibility to help individuals who cannot complete the day's activities unaided. Please refer to the physical and culture shock ratings in this dossier for more information.

Travel Insurance:

Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. You must have comprehensive travel insurance that covers you for medical costs associated with hospitalization, emergency travel and repatriation back to your home country. Please take your insurance policy with you when you travel. You may take other cover, of course, but we require you to be adequately insured before we can allow you to participate in our programs. Your PANDA leader or local guides will need to see and record your policy details at the pre-tour briefing at the starting city, so please bring a copy along to the meeting. If you arrive without travel insurance your tour leader or local guide will require you to purchase a policy before you continue your journey with us.

If you are covered by a policy arranged through your credit card company you will be asked to provide evidence of this cover, as well as a 24-hour emergency contact number. Many credit card companies do not provide an insurance policy number. In this instance, the tour leader or local guides will need to record your credit card number, as this is required to activate any request for emergency assistance. You should also bring along the travel insurance information booklet provided by your credit card company. It is your responsibility to ensure that you meet the requirements set out by your credit card company in order to be effectively covered and that the cover offered is of a suitable standard.

Passport & Visas:

Well before traveling, please ensure that you have a current passport, with an accurate photo, that is valid for at least six months after your scheduled return home. Also check that your airline tickets are in exactly the same name as your passport.

Please note that visas for China and Hong Kong are the responsibility of the individual traveler. The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. Australians, Americans, Canadians, British and New Zealanders do currently require a visa for China. For all other nationalities please reconfirm your visa requirements with your travel agent. For the most up to date information please check your governments' foreign ministry website or with your travel agent as rules do change. It is important that you check for yourself. For most travelers there will probably have an embassy and consulate in the country that you live in. **Please note if you are traveling from China, into Hong Kong then back into China, you will need a double entry Chinese visa.** Note that on some occasions people transiting through China on way to Hong Kong have been made to go through immigration and had their single entry visa stamped making this invalid. Do not allow your visa to be stamped if you are only going through transit.

Keeping in Touch:

If you need to be contacted while traveling we recommend that you set up an email address that can be accessed on the road, rather than relying on postal mail. Email cafes are becoming increasingly



commonplace and cheap throughout the country, and have quickly become the preferred way for our leaders and travelers to stay in touch. If someone wishes to contact you in an emergency while you are on one of our trips we recommend that they contact your local booking agent, or refer to our Emergency Contact. We recommend that family and friends don't try to contact you through phoning hotels en route, as our hotels are subject to change.

Feedback:

After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us and we'll give you 5% off the price of your next PANDA trip if your feedback is completed of finishing your trip.

We Want Your Photos:

Want to see your photos in print or on the web? Then enter our annual "Great PANDA Travel Photo Contest". Simply go online to www.pandaadventures.com/webPro/photoGallery upload your images for a chance to win great prizes including a trip for two! Every year, PANDA Adventures publishes the best photos received from our travelers in our new brochure. If you prefer to submit slide film or photos instead of digital entries online, just make sure they are clearly marked with your name and contact details on each and the place where it was taken. Unfortunately, we are unable to return any entries. Send mailed entries to "Photo Editor" at our head office.

The information in this dossier has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and PANDA. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travelers, comments and our own research. The group leader or local guides will advise you of any changes at the pre-tour meeting. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to improve the itinerary. VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your dossier to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.