

18 Days Beijing, Xi'an, Lhasa, Chengdu, Guilin, Yangtze Cruise and Shanghai Tour

Trip overview

This 18-day masterpiece itinerary is designed for travelers who seek a profound and seamless exploration of China's most legendary landscapes and heritage sites. From the imperial grandeur of **Beijing** and the ancient secrets of **Xi'an** to the mystical heights of **Lhasa**, this tour captures the true essence of the Middle Kingdom.

Your journey begins at the **Great Wall**, followed by an encounter with the **Terracotta Army**. You will then fly to the "Roof of the World"—**Tibet**, where we handle all **Tibet Travel Permit** logistics, allowing you to witness the Potala Palace and Jokhang Temple without stress. The adventure continues to **Chengdu** for a close-up encounter with Giant Pandas, before embarking on a **4-day luxury Yangtze River cruise** through the dramatic Three Gorges.

The grand finale takes you through the karst peaks of **Guilin** and the tranquil **Yangshuo** countryside, ending with the futuristic skyline of **Shanghai**. This all-encompassing tour balances historical depth, cultural immersion, and natural wonder with premium accommodations and expert local guiding.

- **Durations:** 18 Days
- **Destinations:** Beijing - Xian - Lhasa - Chengdu - Guilin - Yangtze River Cruise - Shanghai
- **Tour inquiry:** <https://www.asiachinatour.com/18-days-beijing-xian-lhasa-chengdu-guilin-yangtze-river-shanghai-tour/>

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Beijing – Stepping into the Heart of the Middle Kingdom

Welcome to China! Your grand 18-day odyssey begins in **Beijing**, a city where 3,000 years of imperial history meets a dazzling futuristic skyline.

- **VIP Airport Welcome:** Whether you arrive at **Beijing Capital International Airport (PEK)** or the architectural marvel **Beijing Daxing International Airport (PKX)**, your professional guide and private driver will be waiting for you just outside the baggage claim area with a personalized pickup board.
- **Seamless Transfer:** Relax in a comfortable, climate-controlled vehicle as we transfer you to your hand-picked hotel in the city center. On the way, your guide will provide an engaging introduction to Beijing's layout and point out landmarks like the **Olympic Bird's Nest** or the towering skyscrapers of the CBD.
- **Leisure & Discovery:** The rest of the day is yours to recover from your flight or begin your exploration. We recommend a gentle stroll through the nearby **Hutongs** (ancient alleys) to experience the authentic pulse of local life, or perhaps a visit to a local tea house to savor your first taste of authentic Chinese hospitality.

Accommodation: Selected Luxury/Boutique Hotel in Central Beijing

Meals: On your own arrangement (to allow for flight arrival flexibility)

Transport: Private airport-to-hotel transfer

Day 2: Imperial Grandeur – Tian'anmen, the Forbidden City & Summer Palace

Today, we dive deep into the heart of imperial China, exploring the world's most iconic palace complex and the most exquisite royal garden.

- **Morning: The Pulse of the Nation & The Forbidden City** We start at **Tian'anmen Square**, the vast symbolic center of modern China. Walking across the Golden River Bridges, you will enter the **Forbidden City (Imperial Palace Museum)**. For 500 years, this "city within a city" was the secluded home of 24 emperors. We will lead you through the ceremonial halls and the intricate Inner Court, marveling at the golden-tiled roofs and the legend of its 9,999 rooms.
- **Afternoon: Lakeside Elegance at the Summer Palace** After lunch, we escape the city center to the **Summer Palace**, a masterpiece of Chinese landscape garden design. Stroll along the **Long Corridor**, adorned with thousands of unique paintings, and enjoy the tranquil breeze from **Kunming Lake**. This was the ultimate summer retreat for the Qing

royalty, blending natural hills and water with stunning pavilions and bridges.

- **Evening: Modern Icons – Bird's Nest & Water Cube** On our return journey, we will make a stop at the **Olympic Park** for a photo opportunity. Witness the architectural brilliance of the **Bird's Nest (National Stadium)** and the **Water Cube (National Aquatics Center)**, which look particularly spectacular as they begin to light up at twilight.

Accommodation: Hotel in Beijing

Meals: Breakfast & Lunch (Authentic Local Flavor)

Note:

*Due to daily visitor limits at the **Forbidden City**, ticket reservations are extremely competitive. As your dedicated tour operator, we handle all booking formalities 7 days in advance to ensure your guaranteed entry. We suggest wearing comfortable walking shoes today, as the Forbidden City involves significant walking across ancient stone courtyards.*

Day 3: The Great Wall Adventure & Ancient Beijing's Scholarly Soul

Today blends the awe-inspiring scale of China's military history with the refined elegance of its ancient educational and philosophical traditions.

- **Morning: Conquest of the Mutianyu Great Wall:** We head north to the **Mutianyu Great Wall**, a section famous for its 22 watchtowers and breathtaking 90% forest coverage. To ensure a comfortable experience, we include a **round-trip cable car**, whisking you above the steep ridges to the wall's summit. Walk along the Ming Dynasty ramparts, capturing sensational views of the serpentine wall stretching into the distant mountains without the dense crowds of other sections.
- **Afternoon: Wisdom of the Sages – Confucius Temple & Imperial College:** Returning to the city, we step into the tranquil courtyards of the **Confucius Temple**, the second largest in China. Adjacent is the **Imperial College (Guozijian)**, the supreme academy where emperors once lectured. Admire the ancient stone steles that bear the names of thousands of scholars, offering a look at the foundation of the Chinese civil service system.
- **Evening: Chic Hutong Life at Wudaoying:** We conclude the day with a stroll through **Wudaoying Hutong**. Unlike more commercialized alleys, Wudaoying is a perfect blend of old-world Beijing and modern creativity. Explore boutique craft shops, hidden galleries, and cozy cafes—the ideal spot to witness how a "Real Beijing Community" thrives in the 21st

century.

Accommodation: Hotel in Beijing

Meals: Breakfast in hotel & Local Lunch

Expert Tips for Day 3:

*The Mutianyu section is preferred by travelers for its stunning scenery and family-friendly facilities. For an extra thrill, you can choose to take the **toboggan (slide-way)** down from the wall! Also, the air is usually fresher in the mountains, so bringing a light jacket is recommended even in the warmer months. Our private transfer ensures a hassle-free 1.5-hour journey each way, allowing you to rest comfortably before and after your hike.*

Day 4: Divine Rituals & High-Speed Transit to Ancient Xi'an

Today we transition from the imperial heart of Beijing to the ancient starting point of the Silk Road—Xi'an.

- **Morning: The Architecture of Heaven:** Start your day at the **Temple of Heaven**, a masterpiece of Ming Dynasty architecture and a UNESCO World Heritage site. This is where emperors performed solemn rituals to pray for bountiful harvests. Witness local seniors practicing Tai Chi and calligraphy in the surrounding park before marveling at the **Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests**, built entirely of wood without a single nail.
- **Afternoon: Experience China's High-Speed Rail:** Your guide will escort you to **Beijing West Railway Station** and assist with the check-in process for your **High-Speed Train** journey. Traveling at speeds up to 300 km/h, the approximately 4.5 to 5-hour trip is a comfortable way to witness the changing landscapes of North China's plains. Relax in your spacious seat and enjoy the efficiency of modern Chinese infrastructure.
- **Evening: Welcome to Xi'an:** Upon arrival at **Xi'an North Railway Station**, your local Xi'an guide will be waiting at the exit. A private transfer will take you to your hotel located within the city's historic district, where the vibrant night atmosphere of this ancient capital begins to come alive.
- **Accommodation:** Selected Hotel in Central Xi'an
- **Meals:** Breakfast in hotel

- **Expert Tips for Day 4:**

The Temple of Heaven is best visited early in the morning when the local community is most active. For the train journey, we recommend preparing a few snacks, although there is a dining car and trolley service available on board. Our private transfer service handles all your heavy luggage, ensuring a seamless transition between the two great capitals.

Day 5: The Silent Army & Living History – Terracotta Warriors to Muslim Quarter

Today is dedicated to Xi'an's most legendary icons, taking you from the depths of an emperor's tomb to the top of the world's best-preserved city fortifications.

- **Morning: The Terracotta Army (UNESCO World Heritage):** We drive to the outskirts of Xi'an to witness the **Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum**. Recognized as the largest underground military museum in the world, this extraordinary archaeological find houses thousands of unique, life-sized figures guarding the tomb of China's first emperor, Qin Shi Huang. You will explore the main pits, marveling at the distinct facial expressions and intricate details of the soldiers, horses, and bronze chariots.
- **Afternoon: Ancient City Wall & The Great Mosque:** Returning to the city, we explore the **Xi'an Ancient City Wall**. At 14 kilometers long, it is the most complete ancient city wall in existence. You can enjoy free time exploring on foot or **renting a bicycle** to ride along the wide top of the wall for a bird's-eye view of the old city. Next, experience a change of pace at the **Great Mosque of Xi'an**. Built in the 7th century, it is the oldest and largest Islamic mosque in China, featuring a stunning blend of traditional Chinese architecture and Islamic art.
- **Evening: Muslim Quarter & Bell & Drum Tower Square:** Dive into the vibrant energy of the **Muslim Quarter**. This bustling neighborhood is a feast for the senses, filled with authentic eateries and unique travel souvenirs. We conclude our exploration at the **Bell Tower and Drum Tower Square**, where the illuminated towers provide a magnificent

backdrop for photos. You may choose to return to your hotel or stay for an optional Tang Dynasty dinner show.

Accommodation: Selected Hotel in Xi'an

Meals: Breakfast in hotel & Local Specialty Lunch

Expert Tips for Day 5:

*The Terracotta Warriors site is vast; your guide will strategically navigate the pits to ensure you see the most significant figures while avoiding the largest crowds. In the **Muslim Quarter**, be sure to try the local 'Roujiamo' (Chinese burger) or 'Yangrou Paomo' (pita bread soaked in lamb soup) for a truly authentic taste of Xi'an. If you plan to bike on the City Wall, the best time is late afternoon when the stone ramparts are bathed in a golden sunset glow.*

Day 6: The Golden Age of Xi'an & Flight to the "Roof of the World"

Today we bridge the gap between the ancient Tang Dynasty capital and the spiritual heart of Tibet—Lhasa.

- **Morning: Relics of Dynasties & The Big Wild Goose Pagoda:** After checking out, we visit the **Shaanxi History Museum**, one of China's premier museums. Here, you will discover a vast collection of over 370,000 relics, from prehistoric tools to exquisite Tang Dynasty gold and silver treasures. Following this, we explore the **Big Wild Goose Pagoda**, an architectural masterpiece originally built in 652 AD to house Buddhist scriptures brought from India. Enjoy a contemplative walk through the surrounding temple gardens and admire this iconic symbol of Xi'an's 1,400-year history.
- **Afternoon: Flight to the Tibetan Plateau:** Your guide will escort you to **Xi'an Xianyang International Airport (XIY)** for your flight to **Lhasa**. This approximately 3-hour journey takes you over the dramatic, snow-capped peaks of the Himalayan ranges.
- **Arrival in Lhasa (3,650m):** Upon landing at **Lhasa Gonggar Airport**, your local Tibetan guide will greet you with a traditional **Hada (a white silk scarf)**, symbolizing purity and welcome. A private transfer will take you to your hotel in the holy city of Lhasa, providing a brief introduction to the local culture and landmarks along the way.

Accommodation: Selected Hotel in Lhasa (Acclimatization focused)

Meals: Breakfast in hotel

Expert Tips for Day 6:

*Lhasa is situated at an altitude of **3,650 meters (11,975 ft)**. To ensure a smooth transition, the*

most important thing today is to **rest and stay hydrated**. We recommend avoiding strenuous activity, hot showers, or alcohol on your first night to allow your body to adjust to the thinner air. Our selected hotels in Lhasa offer oxygen-enriched environments to help you acclimate comfortably for the adventures ahead.

Day 7: The Spiritual Heart of Tibet – Potala Palace & Jokhang Temple

Today, you will explore the most sacred landmarks of Lhasa, witnessing the profound faith and architectural marvels that define the "Roof of the World."

- **Morning: The Potala Palace – A Himalayan Masterpiece:** We begin our exploration at the **Potala Palace**, an iconic golden feather upon the roof of the world. Built in the 7th Century, this architectural wonder has served as the winter palace of the Dalai Lamas for centuries. As you ascend its historic steps, you will discover the most valuable collections in Tibet, including the magnificent **gilded burial stupas** of former Dalai Lamas and the ancient **Meditation Cave** of the 33rd great king of Tibet. The panoramic view of Lhasa valley from the top is simply breathtaking.
- **Afternoon: Jokhang Temple – The Center of Faith:** After lunch, we head to the **Jokhang Temple**, the ultimate tour destination for Tibetan Buddhists. This sacred site houses the **Jowo Sakyamuni statue**, a life-sized statue of the Buddha at the age of twelve, which is the most venerated object in Tibetan Buddhism. The atmosphere here, filled with the scent of butter lamps and the sound of rhythmic chanting, offers a deep insight into the spiritual life of the Tibetan people.
- **Late Afternoon: Barkhor Street & The Holy walking:** Surrounding the Jokhang Temple is **Barkhor Street**, a vibrant circumambulation circuit and marketplace. You can join the local adventurers in their devotional walk around the temple, witness the devotion of those prostrating, or explore the bustling stalls for authentic Tibetan handicrafts, thangkas, and unique souvenirs.

Accommodation: Selected Hotel in Lhasa

Meals: Breakfast in hotel & Traditional Tibetan Lunch

Expert Tips for Day 7:

Visiting the **Potala Palace** involves climbing over 1,000 stone steps at high altitude; we recommend walking slowly and taking frequent breaks to catch your breath. Due to strict heritage protection rules, the visit inside the Potala is limited to 1 hour, so stay close to your guide to catch all the historical highlights. For the most authentic experience on **Barkhor Street**, follow the

walking path in a clockwise direction, which is the traditional way to show respect in Tibetan culture.

Day 8: Authentic Tibetan Life & The Famous Monk Debates of Sera

Today offers a perfect contrast between the peaceful, pastoral life of the Tibetan countryside and the vibrant, intellectual energy of one of Tibet's greatest monasteries.

- **Morning: Dadong Village – A Rural Paradise:** We drive 25 kilometers to **Dadong Village**, widely celebrated as the most beautiful village in the Lhasa region. Tucked into a hidden valley, this ancient village offers a glimpse into a world unchanged by time. We will first visit the tranquil **Nyimatang Monastery**, a hidden gem known for its spiritual serenity. Afterward, enjoy a **leisurely walk** through the village to visit a local **Tibetan family**. You will have the unique opportunity to experience authentic country life, learn about their daily traditions, and savor a home-cooked Tibetan lunch.
- **Afternoon: Sera Monastery & The Art of Debate:** In the afternoon, we drive back to the edge of Lhasa to visit **Sera Monastery**, one of the "Great Three" Gelug university monasteries of Tibet. Founded in 1419, it remains an important center for Buddhist learning. The highlight of the visit is the **famous monk debates** held in the courtyard between 3:00 PM and 5:00 PM. Witness the monks' animated gestures—clapping hands and dramatic movements—as they challenge each other on Buddhist philosophy, a practice that has been a core part of their education for centuries.

Accommodation: Selected Hotel in Lhasa

Meals: Breakfast in hotel & Authentic Home-cooked Tibetan Lunch

Expert Tips for Day 8:

*The **Monk Debates** at Sera Monastery are a visual highlight, but please remember it is a place of study; guests are asked to remain quiet and respectful. Photography is usually allowed in the courtyard, but flash and video may be restricted—your guide will inform you of the latest rules. In **Dadong Village**, trying the local 'Yak Butter Tea' and 'Tsampa' with your host family is the best way to immerse yourself in the local culture!*

Day 9: From the High Plateau to the Land of Abundance

Today, you bid farewell to the "Roof of the World" and fly to **Chengdu**, the vibrant capital of Sichuan province, famous for its giant pandas and laid-back lifestyle.

- **Morning: Farewell to Tibet:** After a final Tibetan breakfast, your guide will escort you to **Lhasa Gonggar Airport** and assist with your check-in. This marks the completion of your spiritual journey in Tibet.
- **The Flight Experience:** The flight to Chengdu is one of the most scenic in Asia. As you depart, look out your window for a spectacular bird's-eye view of the **Himalayan and Hengduan mountain ranges**, with their snow-capped peaks and deep river gorges cutting through the plateau.
- **Afternoon: Arrival in Chengdu & Leisure Time:** Upon arrival at **Chengdu Shuangliu (CTU) or Tianfu (TFU) International Airport**, your local Chengdu guide will meet and transfer you to your hotel. The remainder of the day is yours to relax and adjust to the lower altitude. You might enjoy a stroll to **Chunxi Road** or the **Taikoo Li** area, where ultra-modern architecture sits alongside the ancient **Daci Temple**.

Accommodation: Selected Hotel in Chengdu

Meals: Breakfast in hotel

Expert Tips for Day 9:

*For the flight from Lhasa to Chengdu, we highly recommend checking in early to secure a **window seat on the right side of the plane**. This usually offers the best views of the stunning mountain peaks! Once in Chengdu, you'll likely feel a boost of energy as you return to a lower altitude. For dinner, consider trying a mild version of **Sichuan Hotpot** or wandering through **Jinli Ancient Street** for local snacks like 'Guokui' (crispy meat-filled pancakes).*

Day 10: Pandas & The Art of Chengdu Leisure

Today is dedicated to China's national treasure and the famously relaxed lifestyle of Chengdu, a city that perfectly balances conservation with centuries-old traditions.

- **Morning: A Morning with Giant Pandas:** We start early with a visit to the **Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding**. This world-class facility is the best place to see giant pandas in a setting that mimics their natural habitat. You will observe pandas of all ages, from tiny pink newborns (seasonal) and playful "kindergarten" toddlers to relaxed adults munching on fresh bamboo. We will also visit the **Red Panda** enclosure to see these agile, copper-colored cousins of the giant panda.

- **Afternoon: Cultural Immersion at Jinli Ancient Street:** Returning to the city center, we wander through **Jinli Street**. Lined with Qing Dynasty-style architecture, this bustling pedestrian street is the heart of Sichuan's folk culture. You will be immersed in a world of traditional artisans, shadow puppetry, and street performers. It's the perfect place to sample authentic snacks like "Three Cannonballs" (sticky rice balls) or watch local craftsmen create intricate sugar paintings.
- **Late Afternoon: Bamboo Groves & Tea at Wangjiang Pavilion Park:** We conclude the day at **Wangjiang Pavilion Park**, a hidden gem dedicated to the Tang Dynasty poetess Xue Tao. The park is famous for its collection of over 150 species of **rare bamboo**. Enjoy a truly local experience by sitting in a riverside open-air tea house, sipping fragrant **Jasmine tea**, and watching locals engage in mahjong and lively conversation.

Accommodation: Selected Hotel in Chengdu

Meals: Breakfast in hotel & Sichuan Cuisine Lunch

Expert Tips for Day 10:

*Pandas are most active in the morning during their **feeding time (8:30 AM – 10:00 AM)**; they tend to sleep during the heat of the afternoon, so an early start is essential. In **Wangjiang Pavilion Park**, don't just walk through—take 30 minutes to sit in a traditional bamboo chair at the tea house. It is the most authentic way to experience "Chengdu Pace." If you are a fan of spicy food, ask your guide for a recommendation for authentic 'Mapo Tofu' or 'Dan Dan Noodles' for lunch!*

Day 11: Flight to Guilin – Into the Heart of China's Karst Landscapes

Today, you transition from the cultural riches of Sichuan to the ethereal beauty of Guilin, a city legendary for its limestone mountains and winding rivers.

- **Morning: Flight to Guilin:** After breakfast, your guide will escort you to the airport for your flight to **Guilin**. Upon arrival at **Guilin Liangjiang International Airport (KWL)**, you will be greeted by your local guide and a private vehicle, ready to begin your exploration of this "Gallery of Nature."
- **Afternoon: City Icons & Limestone Wonders:** We start at **Elephant Trunk Hill**, the undisputed symbol of Guilin. Situated at the confluence of the Li River and Peach Blossom River, this landmark strikingly resembles a giant elephant drinking from the water. Next, we delve underground into the **Reed Flute Cave**. This "Palace of Natural Arts" features a

breathtaking walk through ancient stalactites and stalagmites, illuminated by colorful lights that create a beautifully eerie, dreamlike atmosphere.

- **Late Afternoon: Leisure at Seven Star Park:** We conclude the day's tour at **Seven Star Park**, the largest comprehensive park in Guilin. It is home to elegant stone bridges, hidden caves, and the famous **Camel Hill**. It's a wonderful place to see how the natural karst formations integrate seamlessly into the city's green spaces. Following the tour, you will be driven to your hotel for check-in and leisure time.

Accommodation: Selected Hotel in Central Guilin

Meals: Breakfast in hotel

Expert Tips for Day 11:

*Guilin's weather is quite humid, so we recommend having an umbrella or light raincoat handy. In **Reed Flute Cave**, the ground can be slightly slippery due to the natural moisture of the limestone; please wear shoes with good grip. For your free evening, we suggest a stroll around the **Two Rivers and Four Lakes** scenic area near the city center—the illuminated pagodas and bridges at night are a photographer's dream!*

Day 12: Li River Cruise – Drifting Through a Classical Chinese Painting

Today, you will experience the essence of Guilin's scenery as you cruise down the Li River, a journey that has inspired poets and painters for millennia.

- **Morning: Embarking on the "Hundred-Mile Gallery":** Your guide will meet you at your hotel and drive you to **Mopanshan Pier** (or Zhujiang Pier) to board your **Li River Cruise**. As the boat drifts downstream towards **Yangshuo**, you will be surrounded by thousands of emerald karst peaks rising abruptly from the riverbanks. Keep your camera ready for iconic sights such as **Nine-Horse Fresco Hill**, **Yellow Cloth Shoal** (the image featured on the 20 RMB note), and the peaceful scenes of water buffalo grazing and fishermen on bamboo rafts.
- **Afternoon: Arrival in Yangshuo – A Rural Retreat:** Upon arrival at the Yangshuo pier in the early afternoon, you will immediately feel the shift to a slower, more relaxed pace of life. This charming town is nestled in the heart of the karst landscape. Your guide will escort you to your hotel, after which you are free to soak in the tranquil countryside atmosphere.

- **Evening: West Street Immersion:** Spend your evening at **West Street** (Xijie), the oldest street in Yangshuo with over 1,400 years of history. Today, it is a vibrant blend of East and West, lined with ancient architecture, boutique shops, craft bars, and authentic eateries. It's the perfect place to dine with locals and fellow travelers alike.

Accommodation: Selected Boutique Hotel or Resort in Yangshuo

Meals: Breakfast in hotel & Buffet Lunch on the Cruise

Expert Tips for Day 12:

*The Li River Cruise takes approximately 4 hours. We recommend spending most of your time on the **observation deck** to fully appreciate the panoramic views. For your free night in Yangshuo, don't miss the chance to try '**Beer Fish**' (**Pijiu Yu**), the town's most famous signature dish. If you are looking for a spectacular evening activity, ask your guide about tickets for '**Impression Sanjie Liu**', a grand outdoor light and music show performed on the river itself.*

Day 13: From Pastoral Yangshuo to the Mountain City of Chongqing

Today, you travel from the serene karst mountains of the south to the bustling "Mountain City" of **Chongqing**, where you will embark on a luxury cruise down the mighty Yangtze River.

- **Morning: High-Speed Journey to the West:** After a final breakfast in Yangshuo, you will be driven back to the railway station for your **Bullet Train (G-Train)** journey to **Chongqing**. Experience the incredible efficiency of China's rail network as you traverse through tunnels and over soaring bridges, connecting the scenic Guangxi province with the rugged landscapes of Sichuan and Chongqing.
- **Afternoon: Arrival in the "Mountain City":** Upon arrival at the station, your local Chongqing guide will greet you. Before boarding the ship, you will get a glimpse of Chongqing's unique architecture—a vertical city where buildings are built into steep hills and light rails often pass through apartment blocks.
- **Evening: Embarkation at Chaotianmen Port:** You will be escorted to **Chaotianmen Port**, the confluence of the Yangtze and Jialing Rivers. After checking into your cabin on the **Luxury Cruise Ship**, enjoy the breathtaking night view of Chongqing's skyline, often compared to a scene from a futuristic movie. The ship will set sail at approximately **9:00 PM**, marking the beginning of your Yangtze River adventure.

Accommodation: Luxury Yangtze Cruise Ship (Private Balcony Cabin)

Meals: Breakfast in hotel

Transport: Private vehicle & High-speed Bullet Train

Expert Tips for Day 13:

*Chongqing is famous for its **night scenery**; we recommend standing on the ship's sun deck during departure to see the illuminated **Hongya Cave** and the colorful bridges from the water. Since the ship departs late, you might have time to try a bowl of authentic **Chongqing Xiaomian** (spicy noodles) near the port. Once on board, keep your passport handy for a smooth check-in process at the cruise reception.*

Day 14: Yangtze River Exploration – The Mythical Shibaozhai or Ghost City

Wake up to the gentle movement of the ship as you cruise deeper into the heart of the majestic Three Gorges region. Today, your luxury vessel will dock for a fascinating shore excursion into China's spiritual and architectural past.

- **Morning: Shore Excursion – A Tale of Two Wonders:** Depending on your cruise line's specific itinerary, you will explore one of the following legendary sites:
 - **Shibaozhai Pagoda:** This 400-year-old architectural marvel is a 12-story red pavilion built flush against a sheer rectangular cliff. Known as the "Pearl of the Yangtze," it is one of the few remaining ancient wooden structures in China built without nails. The climb to the top offers a stunning panoramic view of the river.
 - **Fengdu Ghost City:** Perched on Ming Mountain, this sprawling temple complex is dedicated to the Chinese afterlife. It is a unique cultural site that blends Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Explore the "Bridge of Helplessness" and the "Ghost Torturing Pass," adorned with intricate statues and murals that depict the traditional Chinese vision of the spiritual world.
- **Afternoon: Scenic Cruising & Cultural Lectures:** Return to the ship for a gourmet lunch. Spend the afternoon on the sun deck as the limestone cliffs begin to narrow. You may also participate in on-board cultural activities, such as **Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)** workshops, kite making, or Tai Chi lessons led by the ship's master.
- **Evening: Captain's Welcome Banquet:** Enjoy a formal Captain's Welcome Dinner followed by a spectacular evening of entertainment performed by the multi-talented crew, showcasing traditional Chinese folk dances and music.

Accommodation: Luxury Yangtze Cruise Ship (Private Balcony Cabin)

Meals: Buffet Breakfast, Lunch & Captain's Welcome Dinner

Expert Tips for Day 14:

For **Shibaozhai**, the stairs inside the pagoda can be narrow and steep; we recommend wearing sturdy walking shoes. If you visit **Fengdu**, please note that it involves a fair amount of uphill walking; while golf carts are often available for an extra fee, walking allows you to see the intricate details of the temples. On the ship, don't miss the **TCM lecture**—it's a fascinating introduction to herbal medicine and acupuncture that many international travelers find incredibly insightful.

Day 15: The Grandeur of the Three Gorges – Qutang, Wu & Hidden Streams

Prepare your camera for a day of unparalleled natural beauty as we navigate the most dramatic stretches of the Yangtze River, where steep limestone cliffs rise vertically from the emerald waters.

- **Morning: Traversing the Great Gorges:** We begin the morning by entering **Qutang Gorge**. Though only 8 kilometers long, it is the shortest and most magnificent of the three, featuring the famous **Kuimen Gate**—the towering entrance depicted on the back of China's 10 RMB note. We then sail into the 45-kilometer **Wu Gorge**, legendary for its "Twelve Peaks." Experience the ethereal beauty of the rising mists and zigzagging river bends that have inspired countless generations of Chinese landscape painters.
- **Afternoon: Exploring the Hidden Tributaries:** Transfer to smaller boats for an intimate shore excursion into one of the Yangtze's pristine tributaries: **The Lesser Three Gorges**, **Shennong Stream**, or the enchanting **Goddess Stream**. These narrower canyons offer a different perspective: crystal-clear waterfalls, mysterious hanging coffins on limestone cliffs, and the chance to see local wildlife and water birds. This is the closest you will get to the untouched, wild beauty of ancient China.
- **Evening: Farewell Banquet & Narrow Gorges:** As the ship approaches the final gorge—**Xiling Gorge**—enjoy a grand Farewell Banquet. The evening atmosphere on the deck, surrounded by the silhouettes of the towering peaks, provides a perfect conclusion to your river odyssey.

Accommodation: Luxury Yangtze Cruise Ship (Private Balcony Cabin)

Meals: Buffet Breakfast, Lunch & Farewell Dinner

Expert Tips for Day 15:

For the passage through **Kuimen Gate** in Qutang Gorge, have a 10 RMB note ready for a classic 'photo-in-photo' shot! During the afternoon excursion on smaller boats, the temperature can be slightly cooler due to the shade of the narrow cliffs, so we recommend bringing a **windbreaker or light jacket**. If you are visiting **Shennong Stream**, keep an eye out for the traditional 'trackers'

(Pailao) who used to haul boats upstream—a fascinating glimpse into the river's historical culture.

Day 16: The Engineering Marvel & Flight to Cosmopolitan Shanghai

Today, we witness the pinnacle of modern human engineering before flying to **Shanghai**, China's dazzling gateway to the future.

- **Morning: The Three Gorges Dam – A Global Icon:** After breakfast, you will disembark at **Maoping Port** in the scenic Xiling Gorge. A short coach transfer brings you to the **Three Gorges Dam**, the world's largest hydropower project and a feat of modern construction. From the 185-meter-high viewing platform, you can witness the massive five-tier ship locks and the sheer scale of the dam, designed for flood control, power generation, and to revolutionize navigation on the Yangtze.
- **Afternoon: Journey to Yichang & Flight to the Coast:** Following the dam visit, you will be driven to the **Yichang Sanxia Tourist Center** by midday. From here, we provide a private transfer to **Yichang Sanxia Airport (YIH)** for your flight to **Shanghai**.
- **Evening: Arrival in the "Pearl of the Orient":** Upon landing at **Shanghai Pudong (PVG) or Hongqiao (SHA) Airport**, your local Shanghai guide will meet you and transfer you to your hotel. As you drive into the city, the dramatic skyline of the **Bund** and the towering skyscrapers of **Pudong** will provide a stunning contrast to the natural gorges you explored just hours before.

Accommodation: Selected Hotel in Central Shanghai (near the Bund or Nanjing Road)

Meals: Breakfast in hotel

Transport: Private vehicle & Domestic flight

Expert Tips for Day 16:

*At the **Three Gorges Dam**, photography is best from the 'Tanzi Ridge,' which offers the most comprehensive view of the entire dam structure and the ship locks. Once you arrive in **Shanghai**, if you still have energy, we recommend a night walk along the **Bund**. The colonial-era buildings on one side and the neon-lit 'Cyberpunk' skyscrapers on the other offer the most iconic view in all of Asia.*

Day 17: Shanghai's Time Capsule – From Ancient Gardens to Sky-High Views

Today, you will traverse the timeline of Shanghai, from its ancient roots in the Ming Dynasty to its current status as a leading global financial hub.

- **Morning: Cultural Heritage at People's Square:** We begin at **People's Square**, the vast urban heart of Shanghai. Here, you will visit the **Shanghai Museum**, a world-class institution whose architecture resembles an ancient bronze vessel. Explore eleven galleries housing rare treasures, including ancient ceramics, intricate jade carvings, and Ming Dynasty furniture, offering a profound look at 5,000 years of Chinese artistry.
- **Midday: The Vitality of Nanjing Road & The Bund:** Take a walk down **Nanjing Road**, China's premier shopping street, where the energy of the city is palpable. This leads you directly to **The Bund**, Shanghai's iconic waterfront. Stroll along the Huangpu River to admire the "Gallery of World Architecture"—a row of 52 grand colonial-era buildings that stand in dramatic contrast to the futuristic skyscrapers across the water.
- **Afternoon: Serenity at Yu Garden & The Old City:** Step back in time at **Yu Garden**, the crown jewel of Shanghai's Old City. Designed during the Ming Dynasty, this 5-acre sanctuary is a masterpiece of classical landscape design, featuring exquisite rockeries, tranquil koi ponds, and ornate pavilions. Surrounding the garden is the vibrant **Yuyuan Bazaar**, perfect for discovering traditional crafts and local snacks.
- **Late Afternoon: Lujiazui Skyline & Jin Mao Tower:** We cross the river to **Lujiazui**, the "Wall Street of the East." After marveling at the **Oriental Pearl Tower** from below, you will ascend to the **88th-floor Observation Deck of the Jin Mao Tower**. From this dizzying height, enjoy a mind-blowing 360-degree view of the Huangpu River and the dense forest of skyscrapers that define modern China.

Accommodation: Selected Hotel in Shanghai

Meals: Breakfast in hotel & Authentic Shanghai Dim Sum Lunch

Expert Tips for Day 17:

*The **Shanghai Museum** is extremely popular; your guide will handle the necessary pre-reservations to ensure smooth entry. At **Yu Garden**, don't miss the chance to try the famous 'Nanxiang Steamed Buns' (Xiaolongbao) at the bazaar nearby. For your final evening in China, we recommend a **Huangpu River Night Cruise**—the way the city lights reflect off the water is the perfect visual finale to your 18-day adventure.*

Day 18: Shanghai Departure – Farewell to China

Today marks the conclusion of your grand 18-day odyssey through the Middle Kingdom. From the imperial wonders of Beijing and the sacred peaks of Tibet to the misty Three Gorges and the futuristic skyline of Shanghai, you have witnessed the incredible diversity of this ancient land.

- **Morning: Final Moments in Shanghai:** Enjoy a final leisurely breakfast at your hotel. Depending on your flight or train schedule, you may have some last-minute time for souvenir shopping or a final stroll along the peaceful streets of the Former French Concession.
- **Seamless Departure Transfer:** Your private tour guide and driver will meet you at your hotel at the pre-arranged time. You will be transferred in comfort to **Shanghai Pudong International Airport (PVG)**, **Hongqiao Airport (SHA)**, or **Shanghai Railway Station** for your onward journey. Your guide will assist with your luggage and ensure you arrive at the correct terminal for a hassle-free check-in.
- **Accommodation:** / (End of Service)
- **Meals:** Breakfast in hotel
- **Expert Tips for Day 18:**

*For international departures from **Pudong (PVG)**, we recommend leaving your hotel at least 4 hours before your flight to account for traffic and check-in procedures. If you are heading to the airport during peak hours, ask your guide about the **Maglev Train**—it's the world's fastest commercial high-speed electric train and an exhilarating way to end your trip! We wish you a pleasant journey home and hope to welcome you back to China soon.*

Booking Policy

Cancellation Policy

Cancellation by Customer

- Cancellation received before 60 days: FREE of charge
- Cancellation received from 30 days to 59 days prior arrival date: 20% of total rate
- Cancellation received from 15 days to 29 days prior arrival date: 40% of total rate

- Cancellation received from 7 days to 14 days prior arrival date: 70% of total rate
- Cancellation received less than 7 days prior arrival date or No show: 100% of total rate

Children Policy

The rate for children applicable for one child sharing a twin or double cabin with two adults.

- For infant (<04 years old): Free of Charge
 - 04 - 11 years old without bed: 50% adult rate
 - 04 - 11 years old with extra bed: 75% adult rate
 - Above 11 years old with extra bed: 100% adult rate
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Tel:

Beijing: +86 904-6699-222

Chengdu: +86 904-6699-234

Lhasa: +86 904-6699-253

Cambodia: +84 904-6699-555

Address:

Address 1: Floor 4, Global Center, Chengdu, Sichuan, China

Address 2: Chaoyang Road No.21, Guilin, Guangxi, China

Email:

info@asiachinatour.com

Website:

www.asiachinatour.com