Day 1: Australia - Beijing

Depart Australia today on your flight to Beijing. Upon arrival at the airport in Beijing you will be met by your guide and transferred to your hotel.

Tonight, rest and prepare for your full day tomorrow in China’s capital. Beijing, China’s massive capital, has history stretching back 3 millennia. Yet it’s known as much for its modern architecture as its ancient sites such as the grand Forbidden City complex, the imperial palace during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Day 2: Beijing (B,D)

After a delicious breakfast at your hotel set out with your tour leader to discover Beijing’s imperial treasures. Stand in Tiananmen Square, one of the largest and grandest public plazas in the world. Enter the imposing walls of the Forbidden City, once the exclusive domain of the Ming Dynasty, for an extensive tour through this vast complex. Constructed from 1406 to 1420, the complex consists of 980 buildings and covers 180 acres. The palace complex exemplifies traditional Chinese palatial architecture, and has influenced cultural and architectural developments in East Asia and elsewhere. The Forbidden City was declared a World Heritage Site in 1987, and is listed by UNESCO as the largest collection of preserved ancient wooden structures in the world. Afterwards, visit the Silk Factory Outlet to learn about silk, the very trade item which started the famous Silk Road, and its delicate manufacturing process.

Optional Tour: Jump in a rickshaw and enjoy a tour through the ancient and traditional Hutong neighbourhoods of Beijing. These rapidly disappearing neighbourhoods offer a glimpse into Beijing’s past and as part of this tour, you will visit a local family for lunch before shopping in the Beijing Wangfujing Walking District and Beijing Flea Market.

Day 3: Beijing (B,L,D)

Today, you will travel into the rugged mountain landscapes north of the city to the magnificent Great Wall of China. China’s greatest engineering triumph and must-see
sight, the Great Wall wriggles haphazardly from its scattered Manchurian remains in Liáoníng province to wind-scoured rubble in the Gobi desert and faint traces in the unforgiving sands of Xinjīāng. Once on top of this ancient defensive structure, you’ll find that some sections are quite steep, but the views are magnificent and the experience is truly unforgettable. Later, you will then learn about Jade, China’s most precious and celebrated stone, and its manufacturing process at the largest Jade factory in Beijing. After, we continue to the 2008 Olympic Games Sites including the spectacular Bird’s Nest and unique Water Cube before relaxing with an oriental foot massage after a long day on the wall.

Optional Tour: The Legend of Kung Fu Show — If you want to explore the real Chinese Martial Arts & culture, You can’t miss a great Kung Fu show - The legend of Kung Fu at Red Theatre Beijing. A high level performance with the wonderful story layout, perfect stage design, professional martial arts actors, and the real Kung fu actions and scenes. It’s truly unforgettable experience in China.

Day 4: Beijing - Xi’an (B,L)

Today you will board a high speed train to Xi’an. Travelling at up to 300km/h, they are a testament to China’s desire to be a technological power house. Watch as the Chinese countryside zips by before we roll into the walled city of Xi’an. On arrival you will be met by your tour guide and transferred to your hotel. You will have the evening to relax and prepare for your full day tomorrow. Once known as Chang’an (Eternal Peace), it marks the Silk Road’s eastern end and was home to the Zhou, Qin, Han and Tang dynasties' ruling houses. You will appreciate the authentic lifestyles of the people of Xi’an and exploring one of the birthplaces of the ancient Chinese civilization.

Day 5: Xi’an — Terracotta Warriors — Xi’an (B,L)

Today we explore the ancient wonders of Xi’an, and one of the greatest archaeological finds of the 20th Century. For a period of more than 1,000 years, Xi’an served as China’s capital city and remains home to a great number of precious relics and historical sites. Your tour today will include a visit to the Terracotta Warriors and the lively Moslem Street. The Terracotta Warriors Site is considered the eighth wonder of the world and was discovered by accident in 1974. Here you will see the army of over 7,000 soldiers, archers, horses and chariots that has guarded Emperor Qin’s tomb since 210BC. Each figure is unique and the
painstaking repair and evacuation continues to this day. After lunch, you will walk through the famous Moslem Street, where many souvenirs and delicious local snacks can be sampled. Here you must try Roujiamo - one of the most famous dishes of Xi’an.

Optional Tour: – Tang Dynasty Dance Performance - The Tang Dynasty Music and Dance Show, a wonderful performance of the ancient music and dance, is a must when you visit Xian. The show is an outstanding exponent of this ancient stable and prosperous society, keeping alive its splendid culture and providing an insight into the peaceful life style of the period.

Day 6: Xi’an - Chengdu (B,L)

Today we begin with a visit to the Wild Goose Pagoda. The temple was originally used by a large team of scholars to translate the Buddhism Scriptures into Chinese and subsequently became a holy place for pilgrims. We then continue on to the Provincial Museum, which documents China’s archaeological finds which date as far back as the Neolithic Age (20,000 years ago). It is then on to the Ancient City Wall. Built in 194 BC it is the oldest and best preserved ancient city wall in all of China. It was built under the rule of the Hongwu Emperor as a military defense system. It exhibits the complete features of the rampart architecture of feudal society. Later, we proceed to the airport for our flight to the Sichuan capital, Chengdu. On arrival you are met and transferred to your hotel where the evening is at leisure.

Day 7: Chengdu (B,L)

Today you will begin with a visit to the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding. The Panda Breeding Centre first opened in 1987, and is a semi-wild area where the pandas are able to roam freely. You will then visit the Jinli Old Street, which was originally built as a commercial street during the Shu Kingdom (221 A.D.263 A.D.) and then adopted the traditional architectural style of Sichuan Province during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Jinli Old Street combines the essence of stepping back in time.

Optional Tour: Sichuan Opera – Enjoy an evening of Sichuan Opera, which is an important part of Chengdu culture. In addition to singing and martial arts, Sichuan Opera has many unique features that set it apart such as fire breathing, changing faces and juggling pottery.
Day 8: Chengdu - Chongqing (B,D)

This morning we re-board the ultra modern bullet train and make the trip to Chongqing (taking approximately 2 hours). Today we explore the city of Chongqing and visit the Ciqikou Old street where is located on a hill above the Jialing River in the western part of Chongqing city. Chongqing itself has undergone many changes over the centuries, changes that have not been reflected in Ci Qi Kou with the consequence that the village conveys an impression of what Chongqing would have been like in the distant past. It is a small ancient town and was a busy commercial dock in Min and Qing Dynasties. On arrival you will be transferred to the port to board your Yangtze River Cruise ship and begin your memorable 3-night cruise down the Yangtze River.

Day 9: Yangtze Cruise (B,L,D)

After breakfast we undertake a shore excursion to the Fengdu Ghost City to see why it’s regarded as the “City of Ghosts”. The temples built on Ming Mountain depict the punish instruments and demon paintings, demonstrating the Chinese people’s imagination of hell. You may also want to visit the legendary Shibaozhai. The site has a history of over 400 years when it was built into the side of a 200 metre tall hill. The striking 9 story red pagoda was built in 1819 to make it easier for people to reach the Buddhist temple at the very top of the hill. After, return to the ship and continue to pass through the mountains of Eastern Sichuan as your luxury vessel meanders along the Yangtze.

Day 10: Yangtze Cruise (B,L,D)

Today you will enjoy a shore excursion to the Lesser Three Gorges - a shining pearl hidden in remote mountains. They are much smaller and narrower than most other gorges along the river but they are renowned for the dramatic scenery that surrounds their shores. Along the Yangtze River you will appreciate the beauty of the Qutang Gorge and Wu Gorge and visit the ancient plank road, Mengliang Stairway and the Hanging Coffins. You may also want to visit the White Emperor City, an ancient temple that is located atop Baidi Mountain on the northern bank of the Yangtze River in Fengjie County. After, return to the ship and continue sailing into the eastern section of the river.
Day 11: Yangtze Cruise - Yichang - ✈ - Shanghai (B,D)

This morning you have the option of joining in a Tai Chi lesson before continue for a shore excursion of the Three Gorges Dam Site. The dam is one of the largest construction projects undertaken by mankind and the biggest hydropower project in the world. In the afternoon you will disembark the cruise and transferred from Yichang to Shanghai by flight and welcomed to Shanghai, China! On arrival, be transferred to your hotel before dinner this evening.

Day 12: Shanghai (B,L)

Today you will discover China’s largest financial and commercial centre, visit the Shanghai Nanjing walking district and explore the Shanghai Museum to learn more of the local culture and history. Visit the Bund by the Huangpu River and experience the city where the old meets the new.

Optional Tour: Huangpu River Cruise - Cruise along the Huangpu River, past many of Shanghai’s famous sites such as the People’s Hero Monuments, the Bund, the Oriental Pearl Tower, the bustling International Passenger Station of Shanghai Harbour, the docks, the Wu Song ancient gun fort relics and the impressive skyline of the Pu Dong business district.

Day 13: Shanghai - ✈ - Australia (B)

Today you will be transferred to the airport for your onward flight home. We hope you have enjoyed and unforgettable journey!

Day 14: Australia

Arrive home today