

China

Walking Marriages and Ancient Wonders



From matrilineal societies and walking marriages to the effect of the one child policy and roles of women, this three week trip explores the sights of China and the lives of women in Chinese society. We visit rural ethnic groups and meet with city entrepreneurs as well as experience some of China's highlights including The Great Wall, the Terra Cotta Army, panda breeding and some great Chinese food!



Recommended Itinerary:

Day 1 / 2: Arrive Beijing Leave the UK and fly to Beijing, China on an overnight flight. We are met on arrival by our Trip Leader and transfer to the hotel.

Day 3: The Summer Palace Originally a luxurious garden for royal families the Summer Palace became the main residence for royal family members towards the end of the Qing Dynasty. Today we will explore this beautiful park and buildings and learn some of China's history.

Day 4: The Jinshanling Great Wall, Panjiayuan Flea Market In the early morning, we drive directly to Jinshanling Great Wall, known for its well-maintained watch towers. We will be able to hike along the wall, enjoying stunning views of the area. After lunch, we will transfer to Panjiayuan Flea Market, which covers 48,500 square meters!

Day 5: Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City, Overnight Train We will visit Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City where the emperors of the Qing dynasty used to live. We continue to explore Beijing with a visit to the Temple of Heaven where the emperors worshipped and prayed for harvest in the Ming & Qing Dynasties. Tonight will be spent on our overnight train to Xi'an, an adventure in itself!

Day 6: City Wall, Wild Goose Pagoda, The Great Mosque, Women's Seminar On arrival in Xi'an, we have breakfast at a local restaurant, before visiting the City Wall, Wild Goose Pagoda and the Great Mosque in the Muslim Quarter. Later we will meet with local women for a seminar about life in Xi'an and Northern China followed by a traditional dumpling dinner.

Day 7: Tai Chi Lesson, Terra Cotta Warriors Tour, Overnight Train This morning we will hopefully wake up refreshed and energized, ready for a Tai Chi lesson. Afterwards, we will enjoy a tour of the Terra Cotta Warriors, one of China's most famous sights! This evening we will board another overnight train for our journey to Chengdu.

Day 8: Pandas and Sichuan cooking school

Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, is the home of the Giant Panda Breeding Research Base. We will visit the centre and learn about the panda's struggle for survival in modern China, and the environmental issues that are affecting much of China as a whole. After lunch, we visit a local family and learn about the role that Chinese housewives traditionally hold. We will have a homemade cooking class of Sichuan cuisine which will take us step-by-step through the process of preparing a traditional Sichuan meal.

Day 9: Café Meet, People's Park Today we will have the opportunity to meet with local women in a café to discuss the changing roles of women in Chinese society and hear about the life styles of women from ethnic minorities such as the Qiang and Dai

Culture shock rating:



Physical rating:



people. Afterwards, we will enjoy the chance to stroll around People's Park and watch the everyday activities taking place here before watching a traditional face-changing show. For supper we will try a local hotpot.

Day 10: Flight to Lijiang, Lugu Lake Guesthouse This morning we will take the short flight to Lijiang, in the North-West of China's Yunnan province. We will then transfer to Lugu Lake. This area is traditionally home to the Mosuo people who we have come to visit to learn about the history and traditions of their matrilineal society. This includes the fascinating culture of Walking Marriages.

Day 11: Lugu Lake and Surrounding Villages We will have the full day to explore Lugu Lake and the surrounding area while learning more about its history, traditions and people.

Day 12: Lijiang Today we will return to Lijiang and explore the old town which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Here we will see how tourism has had an effect on the lives of local ethnic groups.

Day 13: Dali This morning we will journey to Dali to see how the Bai people are incorporating their traditions into modern life and to learn about the role women have in this minority.

Day 14: Erhai Lake, Meet Artists & Business Women Today we will enjoy an early morning visit to Erhai Lake and hopefully see some traditional Bai fishermen at work. Later we will meet with local artists and business women to learn about their jobs and lives in China.

Day 15: Flight to Guilin, Yangshuo This morning we will travel to Kunming before boarding a short flight to Guilin. From here we will drive for around an hour to Yangshuo, a beautiful town famous for its karst peaks, rivers and laid back atmosphere.

Day 16: Moon Hill, Zhuang Village This morning we can either cycle or drive to Moon Hill, a limestone hill with a natural arch through the middle. It offers a spectacular view for those who can climb the 800 steps to the top! Afterwards we will visit a local village of the Zhuang people to learn about their lifestyle.

Day 17: Lijiang River Boat, Longji Terrace Travelling by boat down the Lijiang River, we will visit the Longji Rice Terrace, one of the most famous (and beautiful) in China. We will stay overnight here in a local village.

Day 18: Trek, Village Bonfire Today we will stretch our legs with a 4-5 hour trek to another Zhuang village, passing through the breath taking scenery of the area. This evening we will have the chance to meet with more local villagers and learn traditional dances at a village bonfire.

Day 19: Return to Guilin, Flight to Shanghai This morning we will drive back to Guilin, exploring the Lijiang River along the way, ready for an afternoon flight to the bustling city of Shanghai.

Day 20: Xitang Water Town Today we will visit Xitang, a beautiful town criss-crossed by nine rivers which have been integrated into the town layout through canal and water lanes. We might even spot some of the areas used in filming *Mission Impossible III*

Day 21: Shanghai Today we will have a full day to explore the sights of Shanghai with our Trip Leader, including highlights such as Shanghai museum and the water town of Bund.

Day 22: Return flight to UK Today we wave goodbye to our Trip Leader and China ready for our return to the UK.

Important information:

It is important to realise that the itinerary needs to be flexible. While every effort will be made to follow the above schedule, in the event of political problems, airline schedule changes or natural events, we will do our best to make your trip as enjoyable and hassle-free as possible, but it is important to EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED and be prepared to accept some slight changes. Relax and have faith in your guides.

	DAYS FOR GIRLS This trip can include a session working alongside Days for Girls, a grass roots organisation aimed at giving every woman and girl access to proper feminine hygiene products and health advice. For more information look on our website: www.thestc.co.uk/travel/days-for-girls
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