

## China Culinary Journey (14 Days)

### TRIP FACTS

**Starts in:** Shanghai      **Ends in:** Beijing  
**Grade:** Cultural  
adventure

### COUNTRIES VISITED

China

### TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

Shanghai, Suzhou, Chengdu, Leshan, Giant Pandas, Xian, Terracotta Warriors, Beijing, Forbidden City, Great Wall Trek at Simatai



The food and flavours of a destination are integral to the overall travel experience. Each region of China has something special to offer. With the help of our tour escort and renowned food writer, Michael Shafran, our culinary journey takes in the 'must see' sights of East China while tantalising the taste buds with some of China's finest cuisine. For some cultures, dining isn't just about nourishment. It's a reason for living.

The eastern flank of China is of enormous historical and cultural interest. We commence our journey in Shanghai, the largest city in China once known as the Paris of the East. A visit to Chengdu allows us to come face to face with China's most famous natural icon – the giant panda. Xian is home to both a flourishing Muslim population and the world-renowned 2,000-year-old Terracotta Warriors. In Beijing we explore all the major places of interest, including the Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven and the Summer Palace. We also visit an unrestored and remote section of the Great Wall, allowing us to absorb the immenseness of this incredible structure without jostling for a position with thousands of other tourists. One of the trip's highlights is a cooking lesson in Xian under instruction from the senior chef, we cook a mouth-watering 3 course meal and then enjoy the fruits of our labour.



Michael Shafran launched yourRestaurants and yourBars online and has also served as a noted food and travel journalist for such magazine titles as Delicious, Vogue Entertaining + Travel and GQ Australia, and still keeps his fork and knife warm as a reviewer for The Age Good Food Guide. Travel through this amazing country with Michael and discover its culinary Meccas.

### DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

#### Day 1 / Arrive into Shanghai

On arrival in Shanghai you are transferred to your hotel. In the evening you meet your tour leader and the other group members for a pre-tour briefing. This is generally followed by an optional group dinner at a local restaurant for Shanghai Cuisine-Xiao Nan Guo.

Accommodation: Metropole Hotel Shanghai

## Day 2 / Shanghai

After breakfast we walk to the famous Yuyuan Gardens and Bazaar, a fascinating highlight of the city and worth exploring for its tranquil Chinese garden and wonderful food stalls. We then continue to the famous Bund or waterfront area, where dozens of imposing European colonial buildings, remnants of the concession era, line the promenade.

Here you can take an optional boat tour along the Huangpu River or visit the Towers at Pudong to enjoy a bird's eye view of the Bund and Huangpu New District. This evening we visit the local food market before enjoying a dinner of traditional Shanghai Dim Sum at Ding Tai Feng.

Accommodation: Metropole Hotel Shanghai

Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

## Day 3 / Suzhou

After breakfast this morning we transfer to the railway station and board the day train for a 40 minute journey to Suzhou, famous for its canals and silk industry. However, its most famous assets are its magnificent landscaped gardens, which are all works of art. This afternoon we enjoy a leisurely bike ride to explore the impressive 'Humble Administrators' Garden' & Silk Museum. The remainder of the afternoon is free for you to visit the Old quarter of the city- San Tang Street or the smaller, yet intricate 'Garden of the Master of the Nets'. This evening we enjoy food famous to the area - Sweet & Sour Crispy Mandarin Fish at Song he Restaurant.

Accommodation: Chang Men Hotel Suzhou

Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

## Day 4 / Suzhou to Chengdu

Half an hour from Suzhou, past the famous Baodai Bridge, is the medieval water village of Tongli, which evokes the feeling of being transported back in time to a bygone era. It has retained much of its original character, so much so that it is often used as an outdoor film set. On our morning trip there, we get to walk on narrow streets alongside quaint canals and visit another classical Chinese Garden.

We return to Shanghai and catch an afternoon flight to Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province. Sichuan is known for its hot, spicy dishes, considered by the Chinese as the best cuisine within China. In such a food-loving country, that is no mean achievement. We transfer to our hotel and enjoy some free time to explore the city. There is a large statue of Chairman Mao in the middle of the city and the tranquil Renmin Park is well worth a visit, with its beautiful gardens and interesting teahouses.

This evening we can enjoy a traditional Sichuan Hotpot (dinner is optional and not included in the tour price).

Accommodation: City Garden Hotel Chengdu

Meals included: 1 breakfast

## Day 5 / Leshan

On a day trip, we travel to Leshan, where we see the world's largest Buddha, carved into the hillside near the confluence of the Dadu and Min Rivers. A seated figure (as opposed to the 'standing' or 'reclining' Buddha images found elsewhere), it is a staggering 71 metres high. It is over 1000 years old and took almost 100 years to build. It is not only impressive at close quarters, but can be viewed on a boat from a distance in order to gain a different perspective. We return to Shanghai this evening to enjoy a traditional Sichuan dinner and optional Opera with Face-changing and fire spitting show.

Accommodation: City Garden Hotel Chengdu

Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

## Day 6 / Chengdu

This morning we 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 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.

In the afternoon we enjoy a local cooking class and create a typical Sichuan feast! After an early dinner, we are transferred to the train station to catch the local train to Xian. Food on the train is limited so we recommend you purchase some snacks for the journey.

Accommodation: Quad share sleeper train

Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner



## Day 7 / Xian

The capital of Shaanxi Province and the largest city in northwest China, Xian is a wonderful place to explore. Food options are excellent here, ranging from delicious Muslim fare to great little dumplings in Chinese cafes. Widely regarded as the first capital of a united China in 221 BC, the city is rich in history. On arrival in Xian, we are transferred to our hotel. The afternoon is at leisure to make our own discoveries. Xian has a wonderful Muslim Quarter and time can easily be spent wandering the narrow streets where we find quaint shops, lively markets, groups of white-bearded men in skull caps sipping tea in cafes, and the Great Mosque, one of the most important in China. We enjoy an appetizing dinner tonight sampling some of the local Muslim fare.

Accommodation: City Lion Hotel

Meals included: 1 dinner

### **Day 8 / Xian**

A half-day tour to the renowned Terracotta Warriors introduces us to these entombed statues, considered one of the most important archaeological finds of the 20th Century. Over 6000 of them were individually sculpted from clay, each having a different costume, height, and 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 Shihuang. Peasants digging a well only discovered the underground vault, which was home to this army for two millennia, in 1974. In the afternoon we drive back to the hotel to freshen up before venturing out to a local restaurant notable for their dumpling banquet, the De Fachang Restaurant.

Accommodation: City Lion Hotel

Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

### **Day 9 / Xian to Beijing**

Our morning is free to explore the local temples and markets. Later in the afternoon, we join in a local cooking class to learn about Northwest Chinese cuisine. Under instruction from the senior chef, we cook a mouth-watering three course meal and then enjoy the fruits of our labour. Following dinner, we are transferred to Xian train station for the onward train journey to Beijing. Travelling in 'soft-class', four-berth compartments. The 12-hour trip is a great opportunity for our group to get to know each other.

Accommodation: Quad share sleeper train

Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

### **Day 10 / Beijing**

On arrival in Beijing we are transferred to our hotel to check in and freshen up. We then walk through the Hutongs, an ancient city alley or lane typical in Beijing, to the imposing Tiananmen Square. Beijing offers endless opportunities for exploration. The enormous Forbidden City, built more than 500 years ago and off limits to commoners for almost all that time, is a truly amazing place. Its size might surprise you (it is huge!), but what makes it fascinating is that every square metre is interesting, ranging from intricately carved walkways to colourful, painted ceilings. Tonight we enjoy dinner at a famous local Dim Sum Restaurant at Jin Ding Xuan for Guangdong dim Sum.

Accommodation: Dong Fang Hotel

Meals included: 1 dinner

### **Day 11 / Beijing**

After breakfast we transfer by taxi to the Temple of Heaven which is located conveniently close to our hotel. It is a fine example of extraordinary workmanship and a photographer's delight. We then take a morning walk in the adjoining gardens and visit ancient buildings and engage with the locals by playing Taiji or learning to write calligraphy using cold water to write on the ground. In the afternoon we transfer by subway to the Hutong Club where we are introduced to the basics of Chinese tea and tea brewing in a fun and interactive way. Dinner is prepared for us by the local experienced chefs.

Accommodation: Dong Fang Hotel

Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

### **Day 12 / The Great Wall at Simatai**

This morning we drive for about 3.5 hours to Simatai. It's a largely unrestored and, as such, more authentic section of the Great Wall, not crowded with hordes of other tourists. Being perched on this incredible engineering feat and surveying the spectacular surrounding countryside is an unforgettable experience. Be sure to wear good comfortable walking shoes for the hike. Alternatively, you can choose to use the cable car lift to the top of the wall. Lunch is at a local restaurant before we drive back to Beijing where the afternoon is at leisure. Our hotel is located in the south of the city and a walk in any direction will unveil all sorts of wonderful surprises. There are good shopping opportunities at the various markets around the city, such as the centrally located Dashilan Market. Wang Fu Jing Avenue is the famous shopping area where you can sample some local food at the food market....perhaps even scorpion! In the evening, you have the chance to enjoy a performance of the unique Beijing Opera or the spectacular acrobats (optional).

Accommodation: Dong Fang Hotel

Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch

### **Day 13 / Beijing**

We visit the remarkable Summer Palace today, built for the Qing emperors for their summer escape in ancient times. We have the entire morning to wander and marvel at this ancient palace. In the afternoon, we have free time to visit some local markets such as Pan Jia Yuan Old Flea Market, the Silk Market or the Pearl Market. Tonight we enjoy a farewell dinner with our new friends. We save the best for last as we dine in the famous Quan Jv De Restaurant for succulent Peking Roast Duck!

Accommodation: Dong Fang Hotel

Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

### **Day 14 / Beijing - Tour ends**

Your tour ends today after breakfast. Your tour leader can assist you to book your transfer to Beijing Airport for your ongoing flight.

Meals included: 1 breakfast

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## About Peregrine

Peregrine has been operating adventure holidays since 1977. Today we can help you discover all four corners of the globe, from the Polar regions, to Africa, Latin America, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and beyond. We offer high-quality, excellent-value, small-group adventures to interesting areas of the world, in harmony with the local people and the environment.

## Trip grade

### Cultural adventure

With focus on local cultures and historic sites, these trips have the perfect mix of discovery, exploration, comfort and relaxation. Some trips may include a little walking or a night or two 'roughing' it. Check the itinerary for details.

## Included

Local tour leader, local guides, arrival transfer, transport, sightseeing and entrance fees, Two cooking classes.

**Accommodation:** 11 nights comfortable hotel, 2 nights overnight train

**Meals:** 11 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 10 dinners

**Transport:** on foot, overnight train, private vehicle, taxi

## Not included

International flights, international and domestic departure taxes, departure transfer, 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 us or your travel agent.

## Travelling responsibly

We care about the places and people that we meet on our journeys, and we try to ensure that we give something back, as well as taking away so many incredible memories. For more information on our commitment to responsible tourism, visit [www.peregrineadventures.com/rt](http://www.peregrineadventures.com/rt)

## Peregrine Community Trust

The Peregrine Community Trust, a division of Peregrine Adventures, provides funds for local community projects and initiatives that promote responsible and sustainable tourism development in the destinations in which we operate. First and foremost, but not exclusively, the Trust supports projects and initiatives that advance education and employment within the tourism and hospitality industry. The Trust operates on a not-for-profit basis, with funds donated by us, our staff and our travellers, with every cent going to the nominated projects.

By donating to one of the projects supported by The Peregrine Community Trust you will help promote responsible and sustainable tourism and make a positive difference for communities and travellers right now, and for the future. For online donations go to: [www.peregrineadventures.com/trust](http://www.peregrineadventures.com/trust)

## Subscribe to e-news

About once a month, we send out an electronic newsletter with news, specials and interesting articles. Subscribing is easy, and you can unsubscribe just as easily at any time.

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## Passport

Well before travelling, 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. Some countries may require that you have a return air ticket, or have sufficient funds to purchase such a ticket.

## Insurance

On all our holidays you must have comprehensive travel insurance that covers you for medical costs associated with hospitalisation, emergency travel and repatriation back to your home country. Please take your insurance policy with you when you travel. We are able to recommend a policy for you. You may take other cover, of course, but we require you to be adequately insured before we can allow you to participate in our programmes. Your local leader will need to see and record your policy details at the pre-tour briefing, so please bring a copy along to the meeting. If you arrive without travel insurance your tour leader 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 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.

## Visas

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.

**Please note if you are travelling from China, into Hong Kong or Kyrgyzstan 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.

It is your responsibility to ensure you have all required visas for your trip. Rules and regulations governing the issuance of visas are constantly changing, and vary for different nationalities and you should check visa requirements with your travel agent or relevant consular authority well before travel.

## Vaccinations

Vaccinations may be required for this trip. Please consult your doctor or a travel health specialist. The choice of vaccinations can depend on a range of issues including the specific destination, the duration of the trip, your personal health and of course what vaccines you have had before.

**Compulsory vaccines:** These days the only compulsory vaccine is for yellow fever, which is required for many countries in Africa and South America. It should be done at least 10 days before travel and must be recorded in an official certificate book. Please note that very often you may not need to show this certificate book when entering these countries, but you will need to produce it to immigration/customs on returning to your home country.

**Routine Background Vaccines:** We strongly endorse current public health recommendations that all travellers should be up-to-date with their routine vaccines such as tetanus, diphtheria, measles/mumps/rubella, polio and influenza, and paediatric vaccinations for children.

**Travel Vaccinations:** While the food and water-borne diseases such as hepatitis A and typhoid will apply to most of our travellers, other travel vaccines such as hepatitis B, rabies, meningitis, Japanese encephalitis and cholera may apply to select travellers, especially long-term travel. Travel health experts can advise on what is required and also what is not required!

**Malaria:** There is no vaccination against malaria, which is transmitted by mosquito bites and is a risk in many less-developed tropical areas, particularly in Central, East and West Africa, Melanesia (especially Papua New Guinea) and the Amazon region. In Asia (particularly India) and Central America it may be a problem in rural areas. Protection against mosquito bites is essential and where the risk is considered high, anti-malarial medications are recommended. Anti-malarial medications should be discussed with experts as there are different medications available and not all medications suit all people or all destinations. We prefer that trekkers to altitude try to avoid the use of mefloquine (Lariam) if possible.

For travellers from Australia and New Zealand, we strongly recommend Travel Doctor-TMVC clinics to obtain the most up-to-date advice on health risks and vaccinations (see [www.traveldoctor.com.au](http://www.traveldoctor.com.au) for locations and detailed vaccine information or phone 1300 658 844 for an appointment in Australia). Some vaccines require more than one dose, so arrange for your visit at least 4-6 weeks before you travel. Travellers living outside Australia and New Zealand will need to consult a similar organisation in their own country (please ask your travel agent for recommendations), but can still access the following link for information:

[www.traveldoctor.com.au/travelreport.asp?UnqID=0.4630191&PageID=10&nav=personal-traveller](http://www.traveldoctor.com.au/travelreport.asp?UnqID=0.4630191&PageID=10&nav=personal-traveller)

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## About this information

It is important that you should read these notes in conjunction with the detailed trip specific **Pre Departure Information**. This information is supplied to you at the time of booking and contains extensive information about subjects such as climate, clothing and gear, medical and visa matters, currencies, and other information about the countries visited.

The information provided here is given in good faith and has been compiled with all reasonable care. However, things change and some of the information may become out of date. Please keep this in mind when you read it and check with us if you want to be sure about something. The document was correct at time of printing, but you can check online for the most up to date version. If you have any queries, please contact your travel agent or our staff in Australia. We are here to help you!