

Days 1-2 Fly to Beijing

Fly overnight to Beijing, China's historical capital. Depending on your time of arrival the rest of the day is yours to start soaking up the local culture.



Day 3 Temple of Heaven

We begin in Beijing's symbolic heart with a stroll across Tiananmen Square, flanked by imposing government buildings and the mausoleum of Chairman Mao. At the head of the square the sprawling magnificence of the Forbidden City is a monument to dynasties past. Entering through the Gate of Supreme Harmony, you will find a complex of a thousand rooms and many imperial treasures. Later soak up the harmonious ambiance of the Temple of Heaven, an orderly oasis in a bustling urban landscape, where you can watch, or participate in, a dance class. This evening sit down to a traditional dinner of Peking Duck.



Day 4 Great Wall of China

This morning is dedicated to China's most iconic sight – the Great Wall. Stretching thousands of miles from the Yellow Sea to the Gobi Desert, over all sorts of dramatic landscapes, it is one of the world's most impressive feats of engineering. Taking a walk on this incredible structure is the best way to appreciate both the wall itself and the magnificent scenery that it crosses. Savour a relaxed afternoon in the idyllic landscapes of the Summer Palace as you wander through traditional gardens and admire exquisite architecture. Jade is revered throughout China, it is said to bring fortune and prosperity to those who wear it. You will have an opportunity to visit a Jade museum, where you will be able to buy a small handcrafted piece. A Chinese acrobatic show rounds off the day.



Day 5 Fly to Xian

Fly to Xian. An illustrious and age-old city, Xian is one of the four great ancient capitals of China. It is also the capital of Shaanxi province, and the starting point of the fabled Silk Road with a history spanning 3,100 years. Take a leisurely stroll on the beautifully preserved 14th century city walls that enclose Xian's old town to get your bearings, before a delicious feast of traditional Shui Jiao dumplings and a performance of Tang Dynasty dancing.



Day 6 Terracotta Warriors

After their fortuitous discovery by local farmers in the 1970s, the Terracotta Army of China's first Emperor Qin Shi Huang has intrigued visitors ever since. Spend the morning viewing the enigmatic ranks of life-like warriors who stand in their original formations at the exact location they were excavated. Visit the workshop of the craftsmen who recreate Terracotta Warriors in the style of their ancient counterparts. Watch the skilled production process and buy a souvenir warrior to take home. Fly to Chengdu.



Day 7 Grand Buddha of Leshan

Travel to Leshan to see the Grand Buddha, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, at 71 metres, this is the world's largest stone-carved Buddhist monument. A short boat trip on the river will give even better views of the statue. Returning to Chengdu, there will be a stop at the riverside village of Huanglongxi, where cobbled streets and rickety wooden buildings retain the charms of the Qing Dynasty. Sample a delicious Sichuan meal this evening.



Day 8 Giant Pandas

A visit to Chengdu's famous Panda Conservation Centre allows you to see and learn about China's celebrated bears. See them up close in surroundings that mirror their natural habitat as they chomp through piles of bamboo. A look around the informative museum gives an overview of the Reserve's breeding programme. Also, visit the Shu Brocade Embroidery Museum, then enjoy a hot beverage in a traditional tea house before visiting Matchmakers Corner where parents search for worthy suitors for their children.



Day 9 Fly Chengdu to UK

Return flight to the UK, arriving home the same or following day.

