



Himalayan

EXPRESS

20 Days

Fully Inclusive from the UK

Explore the mystical land of Tibet to discover fabulous palaces, holy monasteries and sacred temples. The highlight of this visit to the Roof of the World is the rail journey across the stark and dramatic Qinghai Plateau. We complete our tour with the famous sights of Xian and Beijing.



YOUR TOUR DOSSIER

This document is designed to be read in conjunction with the other pre-departure information provided by Wendy Wu Tours including the tour itinerary as described in our brochure and/or website. It aims to provide a straightforward description of the physical activities involved in sightseeing or travelling during the tour.

If there are any particular challenges, from the length of time spent on your feet, the length of drives and flights, to the standard of remote accommodation for our more adventurous tours; they will be explained here.

All passengers must read this document to ensure the itinerary is suitable for their interests and physical capabilities. This is not your final itinerary and therefore does not mention all the sites visited.

FULLY INCLUSIVE

Price includes international flights, departure taxes, current fuel surcharges, domestic transportation, accommodation, all meals, daily tours, entrance fees, guides and visa fees for UK passport holders.

Welcome to Wendy Wu Tours

China continues to amaze, fascinate and thrill our passengers, many of whom have travelled to one country in Asia with us, then another, year after year. We urge you to keep in mind all the rewards, as well as challenges of travelling in a country with a history, culture and attitude so unlike your own.

A typical day's sightseeing may include the bustle and noise of a city street, sights and smells of a local market and interacting with the locals. Travelling in China requires patience and potential delays are to be expected due to standards of service. There is a low level of English spoken throughout China, so your local guides or National Escort will be indispensable during your trip.

We have found that our passengers who embark with a sense of humour and adventure, who accept that things do not always go to plan, are those who find their experience most rewarding.

This tour is not strenuous but it is longer in duration and includes several days where long periods of driving, sightseeing on foot and climbing of steps may be necessary. Anyone with an average level of fitness should be able to complete this itinerary. Of course our local guides always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance, but they cannot be expected to cater for passengers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. If you do have mobility difficulties, please contact us for our range of private tours which are more flexible and can better cater for individual needs.

To fully participate in this tour, you must be able to:

- Walk, sometimes for long distances, and sometimes over uneven surfaces without assistance
- Complete some long days of touring with minimal breaks
- Climb steps sometimes without handrails
- Step on/off coaches without assistance
- Dis/embark between moving pontoons, docks and boats, sometimes without handrails or assistance

The more difficult aspects of this itinerary include the areas of high altitude between Lhasa and Xining and the long driving distances along mountain roads.

This tour involves three overnight train journeys which are in first class soft sleeper compartments where each cabin consists of four berths (sharing).

This itinerary visits areas which are popular with domestic Chinese tourists, but not yet known by international tourists. Facilities in Tibet and Xining typically cater for Chinese people and this could mean the hotels serve few if any western dishes for breakfast. Chinese breakfast dishes include cold vegetable and pickle dishes, bean curd noodles, soups, congee (a rice porridge), steamed buns with pork or sweet red bean and green tea. You may also be served fruit, a fried egg, or toast – although the bread tends to be very sweet. Black tea and coffee are not always served, but can be requested. Fresh milk is not generally available. Other meals (lunch and dinner) could include dishes of local style, meaning there may be bones or fat in meat and fish. In Tibet, produce is limited and except wheat, barley and yak, everything else is trucked in from other parts of China. Yak milk and yak butter may be also served and local dishes include simple vegetable noodle soups (thugpa) or dumplings (momo).

Although China is developing quickly, it still lacks international standards of civil infrastructure and therefore tourist facilities. For example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade; concepts of personal responsibility are different to those in the UK. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in the UK. However, all of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense as well as refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort/Local Guides.

Altitude

This itinerary visits the following areas of high altitude:

1. Lhasa is at an altitude of 3,650m [11,975ft].
2. While driving across the Tibetan Plateau we will reach a maximum altitude of 5,050m [16,568ft].
3. The rail journey between Lhasa and Xining will reach a maximum altitude of 5,072m [16,640ft].

If you have an existing respiratory, vascular or coronary condition, we recommend checking with your doctor before undertaking this itinerary.



Days 1-2: UK/Chengdu

You will be met at Chengdu Airport in the arrivals hall by your Local Guide and/or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all the other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer (1 hr drive) to your hotel. There is no sightseeing today. A tour introduction will be held in the hotel later today or tomorrow morning. There will not be food or drinks served at this meeting; it is simply an opportunity for your group to meet and learn more about travelling in China.

Day 3: Chengdu

The Panda Reserve is located only 10km from the city centre. It is not guaranteed that you will be able to see the feeding of the younger pandas, as this only happens at the start and end of each day. Sightseeing here involves approx 1.5 hrs on foot. There are electric carts offered by private vendors and these can be organised at your own cost.

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Day 4: Chengdu/Lhasa

Transfer (30 mins drive) to the airport for your morning flight to Lhasa (flight duration 2 hrs). Drive 2 hrs (95km) to the city of Lhasa and check-in at the hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure to allow for acclimatisation to the higher altitude. Lhasa is situated at 3,650m.

Days 5-7: Lhasa

Over the next three days you will be able to explore some of the most sacred places and sites in Tibet, amongst the procession of pilgrims and bustle of the city. Sightseeing at all of the monasteries and palaces involves climbing steps and walking over uneven surfaces in dim light.

In late 2006, the Tibetan Government imposed a new system of allocating entrance tickets to the Potala Palace. To limit the number of tourists inside at any one time, tickets must be bought in advance and are valid for a set time of day, so this may affect the order of the rest of your sightseeing in Lhasa too.

Day 8: Lhasa/Gyantse

Drive via Shigatse and then drive along the Northern Friendship Highway to Gyantse (altitude 4,000m). In the afternoon visit the Pelkor Monastery, the Kumbum and ruins of the Old Fort – sightseeing here involves the coach driving you half way up the hill to parking lot then you must climb some stairs (15 mins). Total driving is approx 7 hrs (360km) with a maximum altitude of 5,050m.

Day 9: Gyantse/Shigatse

Drive to Shigatse (altitude 3,900m) through the Nyang-Chu Valley. Explore Tashilhunpo Monastery; a significant and active place of study as well as the seat of the Panchen Lamas. It is a very large complex so you will be able to spend some time here. Shigatse is the second largest city in Tibet, however, it still retains an interesting local market and one of the largest functioning monasteries in Tibet. Total driving is approx 2 hrs (90km) with a maximum altitude of 4,300m.

Day 10: Shigatse/Lhasa

Drive approx 220km along the Northern Friendship Highway, then turn south along Kyichu River, cross the Yarlung Tsangpo and ascend the Karo La Pass at 5,050m. From here you can see spectacular views of the Yamdrok Tso Lake and Nojin-Kangtsang Glacier. Enjoy a simple picnic lunch prepared by the hotel this morning lunch at a simple local restaurant. This afternoon, continue driving north to Lhasa and check-in at hotel. Total driving is approx 7 hrs (370km) with a maximum altitude of 5,050m.

Day 11: Lhasa/Xining

Transfer 30 mins to Lhasa Railway Station and board your overnight sleeper train to Xining – usually a 25hr journey (1,900km). During the day you will ascend to the highest point at the Tangula Pass at 5,072m but spend most of the journey at 4,000m.

Day 12: Xining

Arrive at Xining (altitude 2,300m), capital of Qinghai Province and transfer (30 mins drive) to the hotel breakfast and to freshen up. Later, drive 1 hr (26km) to visit the Ta'er Temple. Sightseeing here involves 2 hrs on foot and the pilgrim circuit (kora) involves walking over uneven ground and climbing some slopes.

NB: The railway section between Xining and Xian is in high demand and can be difficult to confirm for groups of 15+ people. This means that the itinerary for days 12 and 13 is very subject to change.

If overnight soft sleeper tickets are not available, you will travel during the day (soft seat class).

Day 13: Xining/Xian

Enjoy easy sightseeing around Xining. Later, transfer to Xining Railway Station and board the overnight sleeper train to Xian – usually a 10 hr journey (890km).

Day 14: Xian

Arrive at Xian Station around midday and after lunch transfer to your hotel, where you can freshen up. Sightseeing at the Little Wild Goose Pagoda involves 1 hr on foot.

Day 15: Xian

The Museum of the Terracotta Warriors is located just over 1 hr drive outside of Xian. From the bus park to the Museum entrance is a 15 mins walk, usually without any shade. There are electric carts offered by private vendors which can be organised at your own cost. There is no electric cart available for the return from the Museum exit to Bus Park. Within the Museum area the warriors can be seen in 3 different "pits", which are active archaeological digs. The site is large and, towards the summer months, can be hot outside. Sightseeing here involves 2.5 hrs on foot. This afternoon we visit the City Walls. The Local Guide will give you time to explore at your own pace. There are options here to hire a bicycle or an electric cart to drive along the length of the walls. These are offered by private vendors and can be organised at your own cost.

Day 16: Xian/Beijing

Sightseeing at the Shaanxi Museum and Muslim Quarter involves 2 hrs on foot. Beware of your valuables while browsing the Muslim Quarter's alley market stalls. Later, transfer to Xian

Railway Station and board the overnight sleeper train to Beijing – usually a 12 hr (1,200 km).

Day 17: Beijing

Arrive at Beijing Railway Station and transfer to your hotel, where you can have breakfast and freshen up. Later, drive 1.5 hrs to the Summer Palace in the north of the city. The palace is set over an extensive park and man-made lake complex and there is 2-3 hours walking involved at this site.

NB: Hotel check-out time in China is midday so your group's rooms are unlikely to be available. This morning you will commence sightseeing and return to your hotel later.

Day 18: Beijing

Sightseeing in central Beijing involves approx 3-4 hrs sightseeing on foot during the morning to see Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City. Visiting Mao's Mausoleum is subject to the length of the queue, as so many domestic tourists visit every day. This afternoon, visit the Temple of Heaven – at least 2 hrs on foot here.

Day 19: Beijing

We rise early this morning to drive 1.5 hrs (50km) northwest of the city to the Great Wall. The aim of this is to avoid the crowds of tourists who will arrive later in the morning, and the heat of the day. Visiting the Wall involves walking 200m from the bus to the first section. After your group has been given an introduction to the Great Wall's unique history you will have free time to explore the rest at your own pace.

Day 20: Depart Beijing

Transfer from your hotel to Beijing Airport for your flight to the UK.

“ **EXPERIENCE ONE OF THE PLANET'S GREATEST RAIL JOURNEYS CROSSING THE ROOF OF THE WORLD IN MYSTICAL TIBET.** ”



TOUR EXTENSIONS



Adding an extension is the perfect ending to your group tour. Hong Kong is known for its endless shopping opportunities and the breathtaking skyline across the Victoria Harbour. If you're flying with Emirates, then why not stop off in the exciting city of Dubai which highlights the contrasts between old and new. And make the most of the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai. From 1st May to 31st October more than 200 countries from across the globe will exhibit at this spectacular event presenting their ideas on the theme "Better City, Better Life".

Please refer to our brochure and/or website for a list of the specific extensions available for this tour.

HOW TO BOOK

Choose your perfect tour

Select from our choice of fully inclusive group tours or flexible private touring options.

Add further arrangements

Make the most of your holiday by adding extra arrangements such as a visit to Hong Kong, a stop-off in Dubai or a World Expo Extension in Shanghai.

Select flight options

Travel in style and upgrade your flight. We can also arrange departures from many UK regional airports.

Check availability and prices

Call us or speak with your travel agent and we will check the availability of flights and tour places and confirm your full package price.

Secure your tour place

Group tour places can usually be confirmed immediately on payment of a deposit of £250 per person. Private touring arrangement can usually be confirmed within 48 hours.

Complete your booking

Once your tour has been booked we will send you written confirmation either by email or post.

It is essential that you promptly send to us a completed booking form which includes further vital information (such as passport numbers) and so we can check that your personal details are correctly recorded.

To book now speak with one of our experienced travel consultants on **0844 499 3899** or see your preferred travel agent.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Group Size

This tour will operate with a National Escort with a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 28 passengers.

Itinerary Changes

Order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

The schedules of the domestic airlines in China are subject to frequent changes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your Local Guide or National Escort will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them.

Roads in China have generally been improved over recent years, but some road construction and/or weather conditions may still lengthen the driving times.

NB: Times and distances listed in this Tour Dossier are approximate.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with us that you take out suitable travel insurance covering at least circumstances leading to the cancellation of your booking and providing sufficient medical cover for illness or injury and repatriation while overseas.

You must provide us with the name of your insurers and their 24 hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Tipping

As with most countries, tipping is a way of life in China. For our passengers' convenience we ask for a compulsory amount to be paid at the beginning of our group tours to cover tipping for guides, drivers, restaurant staff etc.

Tipping amounts can be found in our brochure and/or website. Exact tipping amounts will be stated in your final documentation pack.

Additional Information

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, your final documentation pack will include a travel guide, suggested packing list and a phrase book.

Please refer to the Wendy Wu Tours brochure and/or website for details on departure dates, prices, itineraries and inclusions. Please also refer to the brochure for full booking conditions.

“ADDING AN EXTENSION IS THE PERFECT ENDING TO YOUR TOUR.”

