



RHS Garden Holidays

Sharing the best in Gardening

TOURS TO CHINA 2015



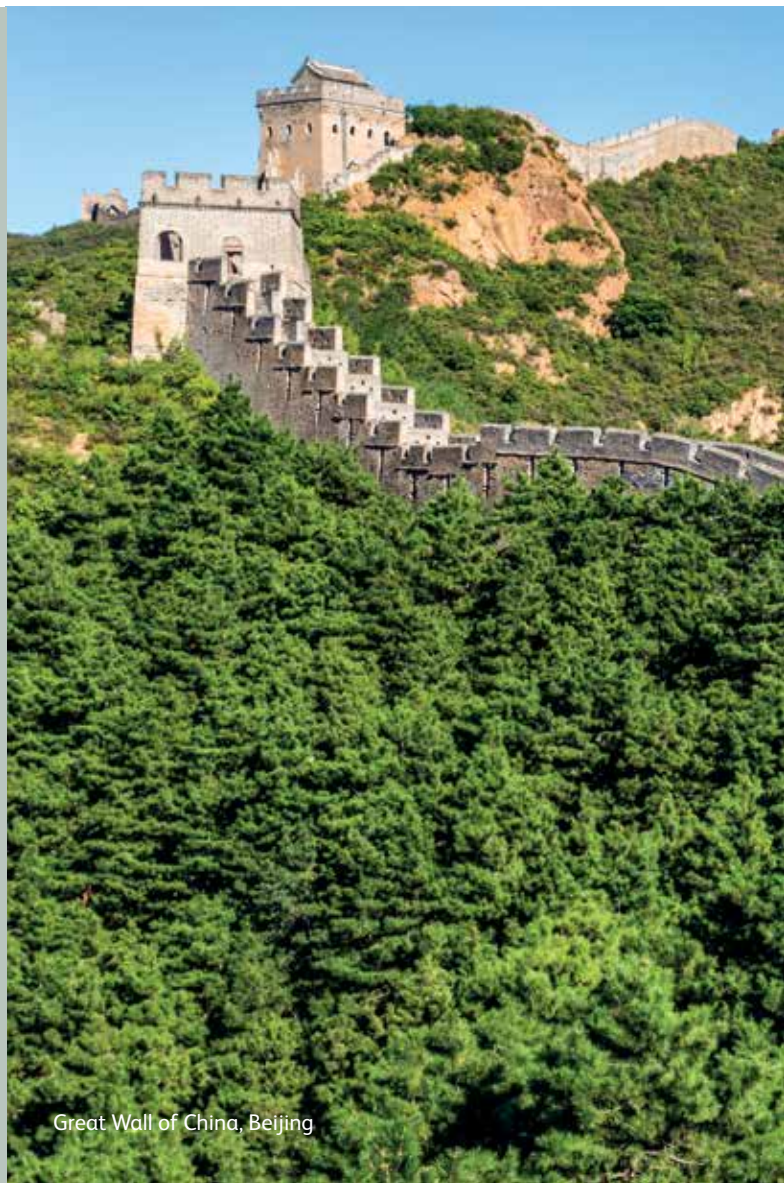
Proudly operated by Wendy Wu Tours

DISCOVER

CHINA

Amazing tours
full of surprise

Join us as we follow in the footsteps of the original plant hunters to China, a source of fascination for plant lovers for the past 200 years. Vast, diverse and rich in culture and history, the country is home to one eighth of the world's plant species.



Great Wall of China, Beijing

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Welcome to our latest RHS Garden Holidays brochure featuring a selection of carefully designed horticultural tours of China. Join us as we follow in the footsteps of the original plant hunters to this country which has been such a source of fascination for plant lovers for the past 200 years. Vast, diverse and rich in culture and history, the country is estimated to be home to one eighth of the world's plant biodiversity.

As a Society, our relationship with China goes back to our earliest days at the beginning of the 19th Century, when John Reeves first started sending us plants and images from his base in Canton. Now, two centuries later, we're delighted to be offering these wonderful horticulture themed holidays in partnership with the UK's leading China experts, Wendy Wu Tours. Their 17 years' experience of operating holidays to the region has helped us

to develop three first class itineraries focusing on the diverse horticultural attractions that this destination has to offer: from the sub-tropical peaks of Guilin to the beautiful gardens of Suzhou; Yunnan's Jade Dragon Snow Mountain and the beautiful Jiuzhaigou to the great nurseries of Sichuan and magnificent Emeishan.

With smaller group sizes of no more than 28 like-minded plant lovers, these journeys are packed with visits to see



For more tour details visit rhsgardenholidays.com



Wendy Wu Tours

Wendy Wu Tours, the UK's leading China specialist, is proud to be partnering with the RHS. Over the last 17 years we have been sharing our passion for China with an award-winning programme of inspiring tour itineraries. As well as showing you the famous sights and landmarks, you will also encounter many hidden treasures such as Jiuzhaigou and Emeishan. Our local guides and national escorts will use their unrivalled knowledge to ensure you won't miss a thing, whether this is a first time visit to China or you are returning to see more of this stunning country.

Each itinerary has something different to offer but all include amazing sights and attractions of this unique and absorbing land.

beautiful gardens and plants in their natural habitat and in cultivation, but there's plenty of time for the cultural and historic highlights too, with visits to Beijing and the Great Wall, the spectacular Terracotta Warriors in Xian and the bustling metropolis of Shanghai.

Our Plant Seekers tour, the most special of all, is a truly once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to travel on an itinerary created by two of the UK's leading horticulturists, Roy Lancaster OBE VMH and

RHS Executive Vice President Jim Gardiner. In 2015, it will be led by Raymond Evison and Christopher Bailes. On this fascinating tour through some of the richest horticultural areas of China, you will follow in the footsteps of the great plant hunters of the past such as Ernest Wilson and George Forrest, including visits to Jiuzhaigou, home to many protected species, and Jade Dragon Snow Mountain in Yunnan province.

All our RHS Garden Holidays help us raise money for our charitable

campaigns and projects, from teaching children to garden and grow food in the Campaign for School Gardening, bringing communities together with Britain in Bloom, conserving Britain's botanical art and books to our vital scientific research into plant health and managing extreme climate. Our China tours specifically assist with the essential restoration of our priceless Reeves Collection of individual botanical paintings and drawings, a unique artistic

record of Chinese horticulture, preserving it for future generations.

Whichever of these intriguing tours you choose, we look forward to welcoming you on a very special RHS Garden Holiday to China soon.

With warm wishes



Sue Biggs,
RHS Director General



Park's Yellow China Rose, 1820's

John Reeves – an original plant seeker

The original 'plant seekers' rank amongst the most famous names in horticultural history and travelled to China during the 19th century. John Reeves, Robert Fortune, and George Forrest were all intrepid explorers, and each made some remarkable and highly significant discoveries.

4 When the RHS was first founded as the Horticultural Society in 1804, Britain had not established an embassy in China, but the Society's founder, Sir Joseph Banks, used every opportunity to encourage research into plant life there. John Reeves, who lived in Canton for around two decades from 1812, was actually the East India Company tea inspector at the time but also happened to be a member of the Society.

From 1817, he began sending plants and drawings of plants from China and the RHS Lindley Library houses a collection of over 800 of these, many of which have age-related and water damage. This collection, much of which has never been seen in public, forms a priceless record of many well-known species dating back to their initial discovery and importation to the UK.

What better way for the RHS to celebrate John Reeves' important work than by offering tours to China almost 200 years after his initial visit. All profits received by the RHS for the sale of these tours will be used to help restore this incredible collection. You will also receive a personal invitation to view the collection once available for public view.

For more tour details visit rhsgardenholidays.com

TRAVELS IN CHINA

A first hand account from Roy Lancaster, who led the inaugural RHS Garden Holidays Plant Seekers Tour.



For garden enthusiasts there can be few experiences more thrilling than following in the footsteps of the plant-explorer heroes of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The 15 day RHS Garden Holidays Plant Seekers tour, which I helped design and co-hosted in May 2014, is just that – a visit to what EH Wilson famously referred to as ‘The Mother of Gardens’, to see, growing in their countries of origin, plants so familiar to them from their own gardens.

Our first stop was sacred Emeishan, which at 3,099m is by no means China’s highest mountain, but is certainly one of the holiest, and one of the richest in its variety of plants, nearly 4000 species at last count. Our first experience of the flora was a late-afternoon sortie around Fuhu Temple, where many plants, familiar and less so, included a large specimen of rare endemic *Cycas szechuanensis*, with its extraordinary yellow, leafy terminal cones.

The next day, we ascended the mountain summit, observing a wealth of plants enroute, among which *Ichyoselmis* (*syn. Dicentra*) *macrantha* and *Anemone davidi* were in full flower, as was *Rhododendron faberi* and the rare *Sorbus helenae* introduced to the west by EH Wilson, who first visited this mountain in 1903.

The next stop was in the upper regions of the course of the Min River – somewhere that featured quite heavily in

Wilson’s travels in Sichuan. In flower-studded alpine pastures, we were delighted to discover a miniature golden kingcup, *Caltha scapos*a and *Polygonatum hookeri*, a tiny Solomon’s seal. That afternoon came a particular highlight, the delicate *Primula palmata* and minute green-flowered *Kingdonia uniflora*, a curious member of the buttercup family named after Frank Kingdon Ward who discovered it.



Cycas szechuanensis

We travelled on to the mountainous Jiuzhaigou National Park – with its lush forests, lakes and impressive waterfalls. Here we

wandered through the forest, examining treasures such as an outstanding lady’s slipper orchid, *Cypripedium tibeticum*, and the lovely *Dipelta elegans*, barely known in western gardens. Throughout our walk, familiar shrubs included *Deutzia longifolia* and *Philadelphus subcanus*, their branches heavy with white blossom.



Cypripedium tibeticum

Our visit to Kunming Botanic Garden was a chance to see a fine specimen of *Cathaya argyrophylla*, known as the ‘panda of the plant world’ such is its rarity. We also visited the Stone Forest at Shilin, where a wealth of plants included two shrubs, *Pistacia weinmanniifolia* with rich crimson young growths and *Mahonia duclouxiana* with bold foliage, as well as a form of Chinese ivy, *Hedera nepalensis var sinensis*. The mahonia and ivy are grown in the UK, although neither is common; the *Pistacia* I have yet to see in a garden here, its tender nature preventing it from being widely grown.

The final highlight was a visit to the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain range. Here, we walked into the hills to the Gang Ho Ba Valley, and saw conifers such as *Pinus yunnanensis*, *Picea likiangensis* and *Larix potaninii* as well as three species of evergreen oak. An absolute treat was the rare *Daphne calcicola*; sadly its yellow flowers had faded, but those of diminutive *Iris barbatula* and three *Roscoe*a species were still in evidence.



Nuorilang Falls

During our time on this tour we were constantly reminded of the great plant collectors and explorers – names of whom are commemorated in the plants we saw and we will continue to be reminded of and indebted to them whenever we visit a garden in the future.

‘A version of this article was initially published in the October 2014 issue of The Garden magazine: www.rhs.org.uk/thegarden

All photos by Roy Lancaster.

PLANT SEEKERS

An exclusive trip of a lifetime to follow in the footsteps of the original plant hunters, discovering a diverse wealth of flora.



15 days from **£4,990**
Fully Inclusive from the UK

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- Lijiang's old quarter
- Emeishan's diverse flora
- The Nine Villages Valley
- Jade Dragon Snow Mountain
- Designed by Jim Gardiner & Roy Lancaster and led by Raymond Evison & Christopher Bailes



Stone Forest, Kunming



Days 1-2: Fly to Chengdu

Fly overnight from the UK to Chengdu. This evening, get to know your fellow garden enthusiasts at a welcome reception with your RHS hosts.

Day 3: Leshan

Travel to Leshan to visit the Grand Buddha which, at 71 metres, is the world's largest stone Buddhist monument. This UNESCO World Heritage-listed site is carved into a hillside overlooking the confluence of the Dadu and Min Rivers – a short boat trip gives excellent views. Continue on to Emeishan and visit Fuhushi Temple, an atmospheric temple surrounded by lush forest.

Day 4: Emeishan

Explore sacred Emeishan, a revered Buddhist mountain, notable for its exceptionally diverse vegetation – a tenth of China's plant species are found here. Examine the species

at Emeishan's Rare Botanical Garden before taking a cable car up to Wannian Temple where there will be time to explore. The afternoon is yours to admire the striking, ever shifting, natural beauty of the mountain and its setting. The RHS guides will take you to some significant botanical spots before returning to Chengdu.

Day 5: Huanglong

Fly to Nine Villages Valley and transfer to Huanglong. Hundreds of pools in vivid colours, formed by thousands of years of mineral deposits, tumble gently down the Huanglong Valley. A diverse forest ecosystem, the area also lies close to the intersection of four flora regions: the tropical and subtropical zones of the Northern Hemisphere, Eastern Asia and Himalaya – spend the afternoon studying plant life.



Nine Villages Valley

Day 6: Explore the Nine Villages Valley

A World Biosphere Reserve of ragged peaks, sapphire lakes, abundant forest and rushing waterfalls, the Nine Villages Valley is considered one of China's most beautiful areas. It is home to over 2,500 recorded plant species and more than 150 tree species. Take a bus to the far end of Rize Valley to explore the primeval forest – a rich stretch of virgin forest full of untamed flora and fauna. Hike back through the valley passing the park's many vivid lakes, admiring the spectacular sights, and plant life en route.

Day 7: Nine Villages Valley

Return to the Nine Villages Valley to continue absorbing the wonderful sights. Enjoy the breathtaking views from Long Lake, high at the head of the valley, and admire Five Coloured Pool, renowned for having the most varied and intense colours

of all the park's lakes. Drive to Songpan, where there is time to explore.

Day 8: Fly to Kunming

Transfer to the airport for your flight to Kunming via Chengdu.

Day 9: Kunming Botanical Gardens

Spend the morning in the lovely Western Hills, surrounded by evergreen forest scenery. This afternoon, see the fascinating species of the Kunming Botanical Gardens, which has a particular focus on flora that is endemic to Yunnan Province.

Day 10: The Stone Forest

Meander through the formations of the UNESCO-listed Stone Forest, where towering limestone pillars stand treelike in a fascinating illusion of petrified woodland. The rest of the day is free to spend at your leisure – Kunming, the capital of Yunnan, is a laidback city that is lovely to explore.

Day 11: Lijiang

Fly from Kunming to Lijiang. The quintessential Chinese 'old town', Lijiang's old quarter is a jumble of cobbled streets, precarious wooden buildings and rustic stone bridges – in short, a delightful place to aimlessly wander. Spend a free afternoon doing just that.

Day 12: Jade Dragon Snow Mountain

Today we follow in the footsteps of famous botanist Joseph Rock. Visit the fascinating Lijiang Alpine Botanic Garden, built jointly with Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and Kunming Institute of Botany. Discover the fascinating Baisha village, where the local Naxi people live much as they did 500 years ago during the Ming Dynasty, before taking some time to explore around the Baishui area. Visit Yufeng Temple en route back to the hotel.

Day 13: Ganghoba Valley

Explore the mysterious Ganghoba Valley where there is a wealth of majestic mountain scenery and diverse flora to enjoy.

Day 14: Chengdu

Fly to Chengdu. This afternoon is at leisure to explore and in the evening, enjoy a performance of Sichuan Opera.

Day 15: Fly Chengdu to UK

Fly to the UK, arriving home the same or following day.



Baisha Village

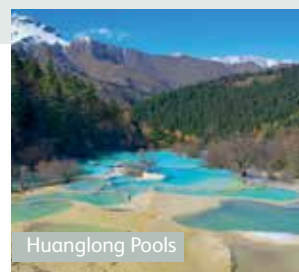
Tips from the Experts

"I am very much looking forward to visiting these areas in China again. I have a great interest in a wide range of plants, but my focus is on the Genus Clematis. During my last expedition to China I found at least 45 Clematis species, including a new plant to science an inter-species hybrid."

Raymond Evison

"China was rightly described by Ernest 'Chinese' Wilson as 'Mother of Gardens'. Its floral richness reaches a peak in autumn, when the rich mixtrues of deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs blazes with colour and fruit. The RHS Plant Seekers tour takes in many of the region's floral hotspots."

Christopher Bailes



Huanglong Pools

Departure Dates & Prices

15 Sep 2015 from £4,990

Fully Inclusive price includes:

- Entrance charges for included sightseeing
- All transportation during the tour
- All meals
- Internal & international flights
- National escort & local guides
- All accommodation
- Visas for UK & EU passport holders
- RHS gift membership per booking

Excludes:

- Compulsory tipping amount of \$80 paid at the beginning of the tour
- Personal expense during travelling
- Single supplement from £1,340

In the unlikely event that named tour leaders are unable to travel we make provide alternative leaders with similar horticultural knowledge.

Fitness Level: Active

CHINA'S MOUNTAINS & GARDENS

Discover eastern China's horticultural highlights from spectacular mountain landscapes to classical gardens.



15 days from **£3,590**
Fully Inclusive from the UK

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- Chenshan Botanical Gardens
- Classical Chinese gardens in Suzhou
- Breathtaking Huangshan
- Spectacular Lushan
- Cosmopolitan Shanghai



Lushan



Days 1-2: Fly to Shanghai

Fly overnight from the UK to Shanghai. This evening, get to know your fellow garden enthusiasts at a welcome reception with your RHS hosts.

Day 3: Chenshan Botanical Garden

Spend the day exploring the Shanghai Chenshan Botanical Garden with a private guide. Covering 200 hectares and packed with over 9,000 species, Chenshan is comprehensive and beautifully landscaped. It is categorised into 26 special gardens. This evening view the glittering city of Shanghai from the waters of the Huangpu River – the best way to really appreciate the juxtaposition of the charming colonial architecture of the Bund and the futuristic skyline of Pudong.

Days 4-5: Suzhou's Ancient Gardens

Drive to the charming Garden City of Suzhou, renowned for its historic gardens. Over the next two days you will visit four paramount examples of classical Chinese garden design – the Humble Administrator's Garden, Master of the Nets Garden, Lingering Garden and Lion Forest Garden. As well as being exquisite and elegant these historical 'Mountain and Water' gardens perfectly demonstrate the importance of harmony and natural beauty in Chinese culture. There'll also be a relaxed cruise on the thousand year old Grand Canal on the first evening.

Day 6: Travel to Hangzhou

This morning is free for you to spend as you wish – Suzhou has more than 50 classical gardens as well as a quaint old centre and plenty of traditional waterside architecture to



Hangzhou

explore. Travel to the imperial city of Hangzhou, set in the midst of a lush agricultural region.

Day 7: Explore Hangzhou

Enjoy a morning exploring the diverse flora of the Hangzhou Botanical Garden before taking part in a tasting of locally-grown tea. In the afternoon, stroll around the legendary West Lake which exudes old-world oriental charm with banks draped with willow trees and dotted with ancient pagodas. Visit the Lakeshore Garden where you may see peach trees, lotus and osmanthus.

Day 8: Travel to Tunxi

This morning is free for personal exploration of Hangzhou – there are plenty of interesting sites to visit. Travel to Tunxi, the gateway to the Huangshan Scenic Area.

Day 9: Mt Huang

Much celebrated, and an endless source of inspiration

in Chinese art and literature, Mt Huang (Yellow Mountain) is a granite massif of towering peaks crowned with swirling mists. Spend the day soaking up the breathtaking sights and take the Yungu cable car up to the summit, where we will spend the night. There are plenty of fern, moss and tree species to examine.

Day 10: Mt Huang Sunrise

Get up early for a magical sunrise over the jagged peaks and continue to savour the spectacular scenery for the rest of the morning. Travel back down the mountain by cable car and return to Tunxi.

Day 11: Jingdezhen

Travel to the charming city of Jingdezhen, known as China's 'Porcelain Capital'. Quality ceramics have been produced here for 1,700 years. Visit the museum and factory to discover more about the production process. Continue on to Lushan.

Day 12: Lushan

Explore the Lushan Botanical Garden with an expert guide. The garden is close to the summit of Lu Mountain, a significant cradle of Chinese history and culture. Admire the views from Wulao Peak. The rest of the day is free to explore Lushan at leisure.

Day 13: Lushan

Visit Lushan Flower Diameter Park; Jinxiu Valley, known for its rich ecosystems and wide variety of flowers; and the fascinating Xianren Cave. Head to the picturesque Lulin Lake and explore the plantlife of Lushan.

Day 14: Fly to Shanghai

Take a morning flight to Shanghai. This afternoon wander around the delightful Yu Gardens.

Day 15: Fly Shanghai to UK

Fly to the UK, arriving home the same or following day.



Humble Administrator's Garden



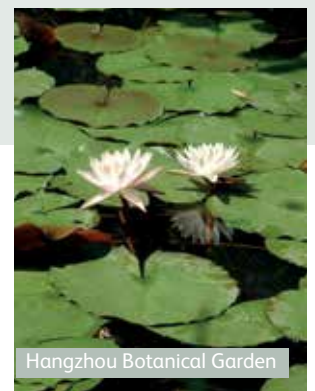
Huangshan

RHS Specialist Host

We are proud to have designed our RHS Garden Tours in conjunction with some of the world's leading horticulturalists.

One of the RHS' most distinguished horticulturalists is excited to join you on this departure of China's Mountains and Gardens, and will guide you through China's diverse and world renowned plant life.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to learn first hand from the RHS about one of the most important botanical centres in the world.



Hangzhou Botanical Garden

Departure Dates & Prices

04 Oct 2015 from £3,590

Fully Inclusive price includes:

- Entrance charges for included sightseeing
- All transportation during the tour
- All meals
- Internal & international flights
- National escort & local guides
- All accommodation
- Visas for UK & EU passport holders
- RHS gift membership per booking

Excludes:

- Compulsory tipping amount of \$80 paid at the beginning of the tour
- Personal expense during travelling
- Single supplement from £940

In the unlikely event that named tour leaders are unable to travel we make provide alternative leaders with similar horticultural knowledge.

Fitness Level: Active

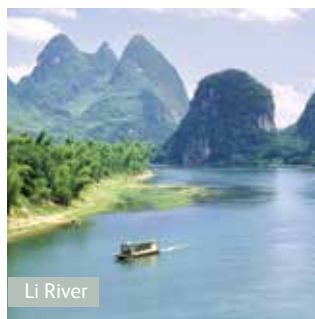
GARDENS OF CHINA

This wonderful tour combines China's most iconic monuments, natural sights and finest botanical gardens.

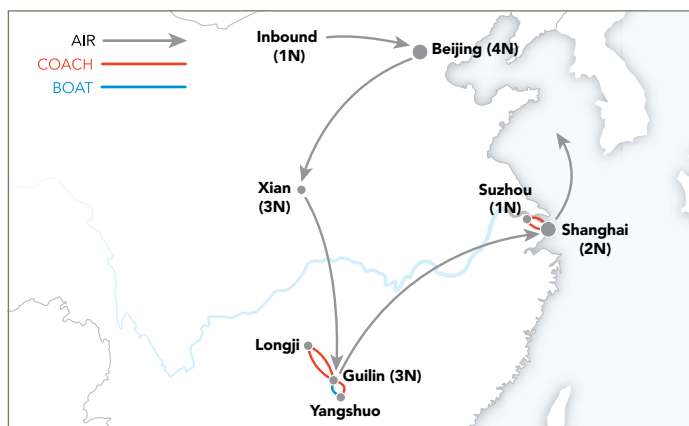
15 days from **£3,390**
Fully Inclusive from the UK

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- Great Wall and Terracotta Warriors
- Beijing's landscaped gardens
- Cruise the Garden City of Suzhou's waterways
- Chenshan Botanical Gardens
- Li River Cruise



Li River



Days 1-2: Fly to Beijing

Fly overnight from the UK to Beijing, China's vibrant capital. This evening, get to know your fellow garden enthusiasts at a welcome reception.

Day 3: Beijing's gardens

Wander through Beijing Botanical Garden with an expert guide, home to over 6,000 diverse species of plant. This evening sit down to a traditional dinner of sumptuous Peking Duck.

Day 4: Great Wall

Appreciate the sheer magnificence of the Great Wall with a morning walk along this incredible structure at the Mutianyu section. Later, savour an afternoon in the idyllic landscapes of the Summer Palace, a masterpiece of Chinese landscape garden design based on the principles of harmony and natural beauty. Round off the day with a Chinese acrobatic show.

Day 5: Imperial Beijing

Stroll across the vast Tiananmen Square and into the splendour of the Forbidden City. Within you'll find a thousand rooms and plenty of fascinating treasures plus the Emperor's Garden, a classical imperial garden. Soak up the harmonious ambience of the grand, buddhist Temple of Heaven, an orderly oasis in a bustling urban landscape.

Day 6: Xian

Fly to Xian, the capital of Shaanxi province. An illustrious and age-old city, Xian is one of the four great ancient capitals of China and starting point of the fabled Silk Road with a history spanning 3,100 years. Visit the Hanyangling Mausoleum, the joint tomb of Emperor Jing, the fourth emperor of the Western Han Dynasty, and Empress Wang. Enjoy the fascinating museum. Tuck into a delicious feast of traditional Shui Jiao dumplings and enjoy a Tang Dynasty dance show.



Great Wall of China

Day 7: Terracotta Warriors

The Terracotta Army of Emperor Qin Shi Huang has intrigued visitors since their fortuitous discovery in the 1970s. Spend the morning viewing the enigmatic ranks of life-like warriors. En route visit a pomegranate farm with an introductory talk to gain an insight into the local agriculture. Savour an afternoon of relaxation at the Huaqing Hot Springs.

Day 8: Xian

Explore the Xian Botanical Gardens accompanied by an expert guide. Take an afternoon stroll on the beautifully preserved 14th century city walls that enclose Xian's old town. Explore the atmospheric alleys of the Muslim Quarter and the many Islamic food stalls. Find tranquillity in the gardens of the Grand Mosque.

Day 9: Fly to Guilin

Fly to the charming city of Guilin. Join an expert guide to explore the Guilin Botanical Gardens,

where you'll find over 3,000 species of subtropical plant life.

Day 10: Li River Cruise

Take a relaxed cruise along Li River to the charming village of Yangshuo. Around every river bend is a view to take your breath away as jagged karst peaks loom over rural scenes of lush greenery, grazing buffalo and local fishermen. Take a leisurely saunter around Yangshuo before visiting a farming family to learn a little about the local agriculture. Return to Guilin.

Day 11: Longji Rice Terraces

Travel to Longji to view the extensive rice terraces that cover the hillsides creating intricate patterns as they tumble down to the river below. Enjoy hiking through the village of Ping An to a look out point, studying plant life en route, and enjoy the amazing views of the rice terraces from above. Those who do not wish to walk can spend their time exploring the rice fields of Ping An Village.

Day 12: Travel to Suzhou

Fly to Shanghai and transfer to the beautiful garden city of Suzhou. Take a relaxed cruise on the thousand year old Grand Canal and visit a local silk mill where you'll be able to follow the age-old silk production process from the cultivation of silkworms up to creating the final piece. The rest of the day is free for you to spend at leisure.

Day 13: Suzhou's Gardens

The charming Garden City of Suzhou is renowned for its historic gardens. Visit two paramount examples of classical Chinese garden design – the Humble Administrator's Garden and the Master of the Nets Garden. As well as being exquisite, these historical 'Mountain and Water' gardens highlight the importance of harmony and natural beauty in Chinese culture. Return to Shanghai.

Day 14: Shanghai Botanical Garden

Spend the day exploring the Shanghai Chenshan Botanical Garden with a private guided tour. This is the largest municipal botanic garden in China and is renowned for its penjing garden as well as its diverse array of Chinese plants. This afternoon wander around the delightful Yu Gardens before viewing the city from the water with a cruise on the Huangpu River.

Day 15: Fly Shanghai to UK

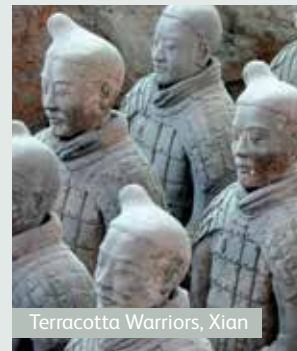
Fly to the UK, arriving home the same or following day.



Suzhou gardens



Forbidden City, Beijing



Terracotta Warriors, Xian



Longji Rice Terraces

Departure Dates & Prices

31 May 2015	from	£3,390
30 Aug 2015	from	£3,490
20 Sep 2015	from	£3,490

Fully Inclusive price includes:

- Entrance charges for included sightseeing
- All transportation during the tour
- All meals
- Internal & international flights
- National Escort & local guides
- All accommodation
- Visas for UK & EU passport holders
- RHS gift membership per booking

Excludes:

- Compulsory tipping amount of \$80 paid at the beginning of the tour
- Personal expense during travelling
- Single supplement from £490

Fitness Level: Moderate



RHS Garden Holidays

Sharing the best in Gardening

CHINA TOURS

Plant Seekers



15 days from **£4,990** per person
See pages 6-7

China's Mountains and Gardens



15 days from **£3,590** per person
See pages 8-9

Gardens of China



15 days from **£3,390** per person
See pages 10-11

To book, visit rhsgardenholidays.com or call **0203 735 1855**

Office Open Hours: Monday to Friday 9:00am – 5:30pm Saturday to Sunday 10:00am – 4:00pm

For any queries relating to an existing booking, call our team on **0203 735 1855** or email china@rhsgardenholidays.com

rhsgardenholidays.com