Code JGCCE **China Express**

Tour Dossier Introduction

Dossier Last Updated: 08-09-2014
Tour Code: JGCCE
Duration: 6 nights / 7 days
Joining City: Beijing
Departure City: Beijing
Nearest Joining International Airport: Beijing Capital International Airport (PEK)
Nearest Departing International Airport: Beijing Capital International Airport (PEK)

Please check this document just before departing in case of last minute changes to your tour.

Tour Documents

PDF Document Web Page

Extra Excursions in China

China Dossier

What's Included

- Arrival & Departure Transfer
- Rickshaw ride through the Hutongs
- Chinese Acrobatic Performance
- Bike ride in Xi'an
- Guided Tours of Beijing
- Guided Tour of Badaling
- 4 nights in hotels, hostels & guesthouses, 2 nights on overnight trains
- 6 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 dinners
- Travel by taxi, on foot
- Group Tour Leader, English-speaking local guide(s) on included excursions

What's not Included

- Entry Fees ($70-75) & a Tipping Kitty ($45-50) arepayable at the start of your tour, administered by your Tour Leader.
- International flights and departure taxes
- Domestic flight taxes if applicable
- Visas, travel insurance, personal items and single rooms.
- Spending money – budget for meals, snacks, drinks, limited souvenirs, laundry, tips and any extras
- Optional excursions - Please see our optional excursions guide on the dossier page for a comprehensive list of optional activities and excursions available on this tour.

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 to 3 - Arrive Beijing

The first day of your tour is simply an arrival day with no pre-organised activities. In order to allow time to relax and see some of the sights you may wish to add pre tour accommodation. On arrival please ask at the reception for information on when the pre departure meeting will be held.

For centuries the political heart of this hugely historic country, Beijing is an ever changing city and a looking glass between old and new, with an abundance of activities to enjoy.

Beginning the day with a pre-departure meeting, we soon head off on a guided sightseeing tour of the nation's capital, host of the 2008 Olympics. For 800 years Beijing has served as capital for several powerful dynasties. We visit iconic Tiananmen Square, home to the mausoleum of Chairman Mao Tse-tung, the founder of Communist China and also the infamous scene of a student uprising and subsequent killings in 1989. On one side of Tiananmen Square is possibly Beijing's most famous sight, the Gate of Heavenly Peace. The gate is the main entry to the Forbidden City. A vision in grandeur, this 'city within a city' was once forbidden to anyone not on imperial business until as late as 1911. It is reported to house 9,999 rooms over 720,00 square metres. Later that day we take rickshaws through the maze of Hutongs that are made up of a lattice work of back alleys, courtyards and compact house, which provide a wonderful insight into a timeless way of life amongst an exploding city. In the evening we will be treated to a meal of traditional Peking duck and the opportunity to further get to know the rest of the group.

The following morning we head out of town for the not-to-be-missed highlight that is a visit to the Great Wall. We travel to a place called Badaling, where we will walk along sections of the wall. No amount of photos can do justice to the sheer scale of the wall and the enormity of the undertaking in constructing it as a line of defence. The whole wall stretches for a seemingly-endless 7,000 kilometres over mountains and through desert all the way to the north-eastern corner of China. Now a UNESCO-protected site, the wall's construction spanned 2,000 years and some 20 different dynasties. The vigorous walk up and along the wall provides a rewarding vista of the rest of the wall winding its way past the horizon and of the surrounding countryside. On the way back to Beijing we will check out a cloisonné workshop, where we'll see practitioners of this ancient craft creating beautifully enamelled metal pieces. In the evening we enjoy an included Chinese acrobatic performance, complete with swinging ropes, juggling hoops, spinning plates and human pyramids, to mention just a few of the spectacles performed.

Optional Excursions: Summer Palace – CNY30 • Beijing Opera – US$40 • Temple of Heaven – CNY35 • Beijing Duck Dinner – US$10 • Gate of Heavenly Peace – CNY15 • Chairman Mao Museum – free • Lama Temple – CNY25 • White Cloud Temple – CNY20 • Forbidden City – CNY60

Day 4 to 4 - Overnight Train to Xi'an

Still in Beijing, we begin the day with an optional trip to the myriad of clothing shops that make up the famous Silk Street, where few visitors find themselves leaving empty-handed. We then head to Kunming Lake, the picturesque setting for the Summer Palace. The present buildings only date back to the beginning of the 20th century but the site dates back to the 12th century. The lake is completely man-made and the excavated earth was used to make Longevity Hill, upon which the palace sits. There is much to see at the Summer Palace and the 730-metre covered Long Corridor with hand-painted scenes of Chinese history and legend adorning the walls.

Tonight we will catch an overnight train to Xi'an.

Day 5 to 5 - Xi'an

On our first morning in Xi'an we visit one of the greatest archaeological finds of the 20th century: Emperor Qin's Terracotta Warriors. Made up of some 7,000 life-sized soldiers standing in military formation in excavated pits under what can only be described as a great big aircraft hangar. Made of local clay, no two soldiers' faces are alike, as each is said to be an individual portrait, which does little to make it any less eerie.

Emperor Qin's army of 2,200-year-old soldiers was discovered in 1974 by local farmers digging a well. The reason for the warriors was that emperors were buried with their slaves, but slavery had been abolished by the time of Qin. To compensate, the emperor had the warriors made to protect him in the afterlife. Many of the soldiers are severely dismembered, said to be the result of a peasant revolt after the emperor's death rather than the passage of time. The emperor's tumulus (ancient grave mound) is located about a mile away and, according to folklore, contains untold treasures and so far nothing but a few exploratory digs have been attempted to find out. In the evening you have the option of a Tang Dynasty dinner and a performance of Chang'an music and dance, originally performed for the illustrious emperors.

Optional Excursions: Bell Tower – CNY27 • Drum Towers – CNY27 • Great Mosque – CNY25 • Goose Pagoda – CNY25 (additional charge of CNY20 to climb the pagoda) • Small wild goose pagoda – CNY50 • City Walls – CNY40

Day 6 to 6 - Overnight Train to Beijing

We begin the next day with a tour of the Big Wild Goose Pagoda, the enduring symbol of Xi'an, which was first built in 652 to hold sutras collected in India by a wandering monk. We then go for a leisurely bike ride on Xi'an's medieval city wall and visit to the Muslim Quarter. The spectacular wall and moat is 15 kilometres in perimeter and dates back to the Ming Dynasty. Later in the day there is an optional excursion to see pandas at the Shaanxi Rare Wildlife

Rescue and Breeding Centre, a two-hour drive from Xi'an. The centre offers care to a small number of injured giant pandas from the around the region.

In the evening we catch the overnight train back to Beijing.

Day 7 to 7 - Depart Beijing

Your adventure of a lifetime comes to an end today. If you have a late flight or have lengthened your stay by adding post tour accommodation you will have more time to explore the sights.

Tipping Kitty

On this tour we operate a compulsory tipping kitty system to save you money and embarrassment in countries where tipping is a way of life and where requests for tips can be infuriatingly persistent. Each member of the group contributes approximately US$40 per person to the kitty. The tour leader uses this kitty to pay tips to any people who provide services to the group as a whole e.g. guides, porters, drivers, housekeeping staff in hotels etc. Your tour leader does not benefit from this kitty.

Day by Day Itinerary

Day	Activity	Country	Meals	Single Room
Day 1	Beijing	China		✓
Day 2	Beijing		BD	✓
Day 3	Beijing		BL	✓
Day 4	Overnight train to Xi'an		B	
Day 5	Xi'an		BL	✓
Day 6	Overnight train to Beijing		BD	
Day 7	Beijing		B	

(B - Breakfast, L - Lunch, D - Dinner included)

For tours that include the option of a single supplement, a ? will indicate in which destinations single rooms are available. The detailed and day by day itineraries above are provided in good faith and it is our intention to adhere to the published route. Changes may be made before or during your tour for operational or safety reasons or to incorporate improvements. Impromptu changes may also occur whilst you are travelling as a result of one-off circumstances such as an excursion being closed on a particular day, weather conditions or transport. Delays are rare but occur occasionally and for this reason and the reasons above this itinerary should be considered as a guide only. Published transport times are approximations and may vary depending on local conditions.

Group Size

This tour has an average group size of 15-20 passengers per Tour Leader

Joining your tour

Your joining location is:

Beijing Rainbow Hotel
No. 11 Xijing Road
Xuanwu District
Beijing

Tel: (+86) 10 6301 2266

If you have booked pre tour accommodation, you will also be staying at this hotel. Please check your tour vouchers for confirmation details.

There are safe deposit boxes for your use (you will get an itemised receipt). Please leave all of your important documents, money and travellers cheques here when you go out but remember to carry some form of ID and a photocopy of your passport with you.

It is advisable not to wear chains or expensive looking watches or jewellery while in major cities. You should also keep your camera concealed when not in use and carry daypacks on your front for extra safety.

Arriving in Beijing

On entering China you must be able to prove that you are leaving by plane or have a confirmed and presentable alternative travel ticket as evidence.

When arriving at Beijing International Airport we recommend that you obtain some Chinese yuan as soon as you arrive. There are international ATMs inside the airport, as well as money exchange offices offering a good rate. The rate will always vary slightly depending on where you go, it may be worth changing a small amount of money at the airport for your transport, and then finding a bank or money exchange within the town centre.

Airport Transfers

Your tour includes an arrival transfer from the airport to the hotel. If you arrive at Terminal 2, when exiting immigration to the arrivals hall, please turn right where our representatives will be waiting. If you are arriving at Terminal 3, you will be met just outside the restricted area.

You will need to present the voucher given to you to the representatives upon arrival. If for any reason you have arrival complications and are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, or on arrival you are unable to make contact with our rep within 30 mins of clearing customs and immigration, please call the emergency contact number and speak to our China representatives who will then advise you of the best course of action.

Local Emergency Contact Details

Please call these numbers before calling the Asia-wide emergency contact number.

Jin: (+86) 130 0173 4809
Yucai: (+86) 139 0640 7659
On call mobile in Beijing: (+86) 134 0119 3209

Emergency Contact Details

In the unlikely event of an emergency, please contact our Asia Destinations Manager on +44 (0)203 129 3763

Emergency contact details are a service for emergency calls only. We respectfully request that you consider the urgency of your enquiry. Non-urgent enquiries should be made during office hours. Visit **contact us** page for office hours.

Keeping in Touch

Your tour leader will point out internet cafes in all major cities and towns and Wi-Fi may be available in some hotels. Mobile phones may not work locally depending on your network. If you have an unlocked phone you may be able to purchase a local SIM card. Hotel details, apart from the joining hotel, are not given in advance and are subject to change, so if someone needs to contact you urgently during your tour the best method is to contact our office who can pass a message on to the tour leader.

Money

For personal spending money we recommend bringing US dollars, Pounds Sterling or Euros to exchange for or use alongside local currency. Travellers cheques are not accepted everywhere and can be expensive to exchange, but offer a more secure way of transporting funds. While bank cards provide a very good way to access funds overall, it is not recommended to rely on them as your sole source of funds as cash machines do not always work and may not be available in remote locations. Carry a mix of cards and cash with you, including notes in small denominations.

ATMs are fairly commonplace and pay out in local currency, except in Cambodia where US dollars is the main form of currency. If the ATM doesn't work after the first two attempts, find another machine as it may retain your card the third time. Always make sure no one else sees your PIN number when using ATMs.

Your spending money should cover some meals, optional excursions, souvenirs, drinks, laundry, border and airport taxes and any visas obtained locally. We provide guideline prices for optional excursions in the itinerary to help you budget, but ultimately the amount you will need to budget for your trip very much depends on your individual requirements. We recommend bringing extra money to cover emergencies or unexpected situations.

Tipping

Tipping is a part of the life in Asia, but you should not feel obliged or pressured to tip if you have not received good service. A gratuity of 10% of the total bill is recommended in restaurants. Gratuities are usually expected for local guides on included and optional excursions. Tips are also appreciated by Tucan Travel tour leaders at the end of your tour and we recommend an average of $2-$4 per person per day for the duration of your tour. This is only if you feel that their service was up to standard and is completely at your own discretion.

Packing List

The best advice when packing is to travel light and leave space for souvenirs in your bag.

Luggage

It is important to bring luggage you can carry and lift comfortably, potentially up several flights of stairs in hotels where elevators are not available and between bus/train stations and hotels. There may be times when you have to get your luggage through crowded streets which may be cobbled or store your luggage in lockers. Luggage too large for lockers will have to be left insecurely or carried for the duration of the day.

We recommend a frameless backpack or a sports type shoulder bag which fits comfortably on your shoulders, as they are less bulky and easier to handle than rigid suitcases or framed backpacks. Suitcases are not suitable for our tours and are not recommended. Tucan Travel takes no responsibility for damage to your luggage while on tour.

In addition to your main bag, you will need a small daypack for your everyday excursions. Try to keep this bag as light as possible and make sure that all main sections of your bags can be padlocked. This daypack should have enough room to carry food and snacks for long hikes and treks and space to carry belongings for overnight excursions.

Sleeping Sheet

Sleeping bags are not required on this tour, but a sleeping bag liner/sleep sheet is optional if you wish to bring one along. Some passengers like to use them on long bus journeys and overnight trains.

Clothing and Footwear

We recommend packing lightweight and durable clothes. Nights can be cold at higher altitude, so it is a good idea to bring at least one pair of warm trousers plus several thinner sweaters / fleeces which you can layer. Please avoid military or camouflage-patterned clothing as it can cause problems and in some countries may be illegal. In some sacred and religious areas you will be required to cover your shoulders and knees as a sign of respect (this often applies to men as well as women). A sarong or light scarf can be very useful in these scenarios.

Good, comfortable walking shoes are essential. These do not need to be expensive boots, but they should have good ankle support and grip, be worn in and ideally waterproof.

Essential items:

- [ ] A lightweight water/windproof jacket with hood
- [ ] East to pack wide-brimmed hat of cap
- [ ] Towel - you will need a towel for most overnight excursions
- [ ] Swimwear
- [ ] Sandals or thongs/jandals/flip flops

Suggested items:

- [ ] Money belt
- [ ] Sunglasses
- [ ] Small calculator
- [ ] Small collapsible umbrella
- [ ] Universal washbasin plug
- [ ] Head torch or flashlight
- [ ] Travel alarm clock
- [ ] Lip balm, sun block with high UV factor
- [ ] Wet wipes
- [ ] Cheap plastic watch
- [ ] Plenty of spare memory cards for your camera
- [ ] Spare rechargeable batteries for camera
- [ ] Writing materials, address book and diary
- [ ] Travel games, cards and a couple of paperbacks
- [ ] Toilet paper (best to carry a roll with you at all times and/or tissues)
- [ ] Small medical kit with diarrhoea remedy, rehydration salts, antiseptic cream, sterile dressings, plasters, bandages, pain-killers, safety pins etc.
- [ ] Plastic bags for waterproofing
- [ ] Inflatable pillow
- [ ] Swiss army type penknife
- [ ] Binoculars
- [ ] Travel plug adaptor with a USB port
- [ ] Small sewing kit
- [ ] Insect repellent (DEET 35% min) and bite cream
- [ ] Antibactarial hand clensing gel
- [ ] Ear plugs and sleep mask
- [ ] Travel sickness tablets
- [ ] Spare pair of spectacles or contact lenses and solution
- [ ] Hard drive or USB stick to back up your photos
- [ ] Pocket size phrasebook
- [ ] Pegless washing line & travel laundry detergent (bio-degradable preferable)
- [ ] As gifts for local children - pens, coloured pencils, small notepads. To discourage a begging mentality we recommend that you try to give these gifts at schools or childcare centres rather than on the street.

Laundry

There are usually laundromats or laundry services in or near most of our hotels. Hotel services can be pretty costly however your tour leader will be able to recommend cheaper options. If you wash clothes yourself take care not to be too obvious where you hang them as most hotels do not like guests washing and drying their clothes in the hotel rooms.

Electricity Supply

The power supply in Asia differs not only from country to country but sometimes from region to region within a country.

- Vietnam, Thailand & Laos require a European plug with two circular metal pins
- Singapore and Malaysia requires a three square pin power sockets as in the UK.
- Japan requires a plug with two flat parallel prongs similar to those used in North and Central America. However, the Japanese plug has two identical flat prongs.
- China use a Japanese-style plug with two parallel flat blades; Australian-style plug with two flat angled blades and one vertical grounding blade; British-style plug with two flat blades and one flat grounding blade; South African/Indian-style plug with two circular metal pins above a large circular
- Cambodia uses a European plug with two circular metal pins or Japanese-style plug with two parallel flat blades.
- Nepal uses 2 or 3 round prongs as found in the US. You will also need a voltage converter.
- India use South African/Indian-style plug with two circular metal pins above a large circular grounding pin.
- Central Asia, Indonesia, Russia and Mongolia use a European plug with two circular metal pins.

We recommend bringing a universal plug adaptor with you.

Health, Fitness & Safety

Vaccinations

It is important to consult your doctor or travel clinic in good time before your tour departs to determine what vaccinations you require. You may need several vaccinations and/or malaria tablets and you should be aware that some inoculations require more than one visit and can take several weeks to administer. Always carry your International Certificate of Vaccination with your passport.

Malaria can be found in some parts of Asia. The risk is greater in rainforests or other areas at sea level. If required make sure you pack sufficient prophylactics for the duration of your tour and the incubation period after. You should take a good insect repellent (with DEET) and apply liberally and regularly. Flying-insect spray or mosquito coils (containing a pyrethroid insecticide) can help clear rooms of mosquitoes and may be worth bringing.

Pack a Medical Kit

A medical kit is handy for minor wounds and ailments. In areas with limited or dubious medical facilities, an emergency medical kit containing sterile syringes is also advisable. By law our staff are not allowed to administer first aid or give drugs to travellers, so please be prepared with your own supplies.

If you are taking medication, please ensure you bring an adequate supply and a letter from your doctor to avoid potential issues at border crossings.

Fitness & Suitability

This is a public transport-based tour so it is essential that you be able to carry your bags over distances between bus and train stations and hotels, generally for up to 20 minutes. Disruptions happen and while your tour leader will make every effort to ensure your trip runs smoothly, patience, a sense of humour and willingness to get involved and help your tour leader are essential ingredients for a successful and happy group.

If you have any pre-existing medical conditions please let us know at the time you book or as early before departure as possible. Depending on the severity of the condition, you may be asked to produce a medical certificate from your doctor approving your participation in this tour. While this would only happen in very exceptional circumstances, if we consider you incapable completing this tour or you have concealed an existing medical condition which is affecting your ability to participate in the tour of Tucan Travel reserve the right to turn you away without reimbursement.

Safety & Security

Asia is generally safe, even more so in a group. Reasonable precaution is advised; do not bring valuable jewellery or watches (even fakes can catch the eye of a thief), do not walk by yourself at night, heed your tour leader's advice and always keep an eye and a hand on your camera and bags in public places. Tucan Travel cannot accept responsibility for any valuables left in safe deposits in hotels or on public transport.

Travel Guides

If you would like to discover more about your destination, including history, geography, climate and language, please have a read of our country travel guides available here: **http://www.tucantravel.com/destination-travel-guides/asia-travel-guides**.

Documents

Passport

Your passport should be valid for at least 6 months after you have finished your tour with sufficient blank pages for visas and immigration stamps. Photocopy your passport, leaving one copy at home and taking one with you on tour. If you lose your passport while on tour, you will be responsible for any expenses incurred such as extra accommodation and transport while replacing your passport and will not be entitled to a refund of any unused portion of your tour.

Tour Documents

Before you depart you will be issued with a voucher for your tour and separate vouchers for any extra services such as airport transfers and pre/post tour accommodation. Please print these out and bring them with you. This dossier is updated regularly, so we recommend checking our website for the latest version just prior to the start of your tour.

Final Balance

The balance for your tour is due no later than 60 days prior to the start of your tour and no tour vouchers will be issued until this is received. In addition please send the following details at least 60 days before you depart:

- Passport number, date of issue, date of expiry, nationality and place of issue
- Your full name and date of birth
- Flight arrival details in your starting city
- Special requirements, e.g. special dietary requirements or allergies

Please let us know if you are travelling with another person on the tour but have made separate bookings and we will endeavour to make suitable rooming arrangements.

Visas

All countries have visa requirements that are subject to change at short notice. A general guideline for visa requirements is available here: **http://www.tucantravel.com/before-you-go/visa-guide**, but you must check with your local embassy or consulate for the very latest visa requirement information based on your nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have all necessary visas for your tour. If you would like help applying for visas, we have recommended visa agencies on our visa page that we work with regularly.

Important things to check when applying for visas:

- Does the validity of the visa cover the duration of your time spent in the country?

- Do you require a single or multiple entry visa(s) for your tour?
- Are you required to show additional documentation when you arrive in a country? (Examples include proof of onward travel and travel itinerary)

Some visas are only valid for entry within three months of the date of issue which means on some of our longer tours the visa would expire before you are scheduled to enter the country. In these cases you must obtain the relevant visa during your tour. If it is necessary for you to obtain any visas en-route, please contact Tucan Travel or your travel consultant and inform your tour leader at the start of the tour. If you do not have the appropriate visas, Tucan Travel will not reimburse any expenses incurred in acquiring visas or any unused portion of the tour.

It is best to apply for visas in your home country if possible. If applying for visas by post, please allow plenty of time before departure and send your application by registered mail. Postal applications tend to be given a lower priority than in person applications and can take longer to process.

Special Note: If you have dual nationality it is advised not to obtain different visas in different passports. Although this may sometimes be cheaper, you may encounter problems at border crossings if your exit stamps from one country are not the same as your visa for the next.

Travel Insurance Policy

Travel insurance is compulsory for all tours. You must be adequately insured for medical, hospital, baggage and personal expenses, any necessary extra travel (rejoining tour or repatriation) as well as curtailment and cancellation.

We strongly recommend that all clients carry a copy of their full policy document with them at all times, together with any certificate showing the policy number and emergency contact details. Your tour leader will also ask for a photocopy of your insurance document, so please take this to the pre-departure meeting at the start of your tour. You will not be able to commence your tour unless you can provide proof of insurance to your tour leader.

Document Checklist

- [ ] Tour Voucher & Vouchers for extra services
- [ ] Passport (with photocopies of information pages and visas)
- [ ] Tour Dossier
- [ ] Cash & credit/debit cards (best to take a mixture and more than one card in case one does not work)
- [ ] Travel Insurance Certificate and photocopy for tour leader
- [ ] Travel consultant's phone number and email address
- [ ] Proof of onward travel, ie airline ticket

Optional Excursions

Optional excursions are not operated by Tucan Travel and while every effort is made prices may not be up-to-date and are intended as a general guide to help you budget for your trip. Prices for vehicle-based excursions such as game drives are approximate based on the optimum number of participants and the actual price may vary depending on group size.

Sufficient safety equipment such as helmets and life jackets are sometimes not available and Tucan Travel is unable to provide this equipment. If you intend to participate in an optional excursion you may like to consider bringing your own safety gear.

Excursions are run by a local operator or third party with both Tucan Travel and the Tour Leader acting as a booking agent only. Optional activities are not part of the tour and Tucan Travel's booking conditions do not apply to them. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the correct travel insurance for the excursions you intend to take part in and Tucan Travel is not liable for any injuries incurred.

Responsible Travel

We work hard to ensure our tours are sustainably and ethically run. You can read our responsible travel policy and advice on how you can travel responsibly here:**http://www.tucantravel.com/about-us/responsible-travel**.

Meet Up

Our free Meet Up app, available on Facebook, on iTunes and Google Play is an opportunity to chat with others passengers before you depart or keep in touch when you arrive back from tour. Information on the app is available here: **http://www.tucantravel.com/before-you-go/meet-up**

Add-ons & Extras

On many of our Group Tours, we spend one night in our arrival and departure cities. If you want to explore these cities more we can book pre and post tour accommodation, city tours and airport transfers for you. Price information can be found on the price page of each tour. We also have **Add-ons** - short

packages that can be booked alongside a tour or on their own and have been carefully designed to ensure you don't miss out on popular highlights.

Illegal Drugs

The possession or use of illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our tours. When overseas you are subject to local laws and the penalties for breaking these laws can be harsh. In order to safeguard the interests of the group as a whole, our tour leaders have been instructed to insist that any person found with illegal drugs leave the tour immediately – without refund. The tour leader's decision on this matter is final. If you need to carry certain drugs with you for purposes of medication, please inform your tour leader and ensure that you carry a copy of your prescription or letter from your doctor.