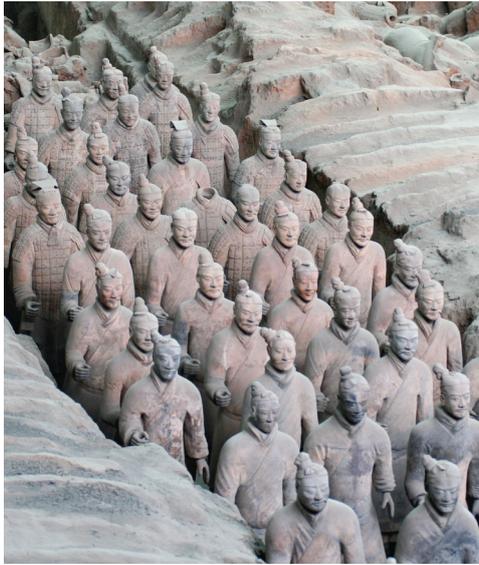


Splendours of China by Rail



TRIP OVERVIEW

Embark on a leisurely exploration of China's intriguing interior, delving into the country's rich cultural legacy as you explore ethnic settlements, bustling city markets and age-old temples by rail. Combining the iconic sights of Beijing and Xi'an with panda encounters in Chengdu, the ancient preserved towns of Zhenyuan and Qingyan and visits to three remote villages, this tour showcases the best of rural and urban China.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to China. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as flight details, visa requirements and travel insurance.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 1: UK to Beijing

Depart London on your scheduled, overnight flight to Beijing, via Shanghai.

DAY 2: Beijing

On arrival in Beijing, you will be met and transferred to your hotel in the heart of China's sprawling capital.

DAY 3: Beijing B/L/D

After a morning at leisure, discover Beijing's rich, imperial history on an afternoon city tour. Explore Tiananmen Square, the world's largest public square, under the watchful eye of Chairman Mao's large, central portrait. From here, enter the vast Forbidden Palace and wander its 9,999 rooms and chambers, brimming with age-old relics. After dinner later this evening, an optional excursion to the Legend of Kung Fu show allows you to marvel at the athleticism and precision of China's martial artists.

DAY 4: Beijing B/L/D

After breakfast, today's tour starts with a visit to the Summer Palace. Walk around the royal grounds and peaceful lake then travel to one of China's most iconic and impressive landmarks, the Great Wall of China. Access the wall from Juyongguan, the site of some of the Ming Dynasty's biggest battles, and stroll through 5th century watchtowers and winding stone paths. Continue on to Silk Street Market, a maze of over 1,700 stalls selling everything from designer dupes to fine silk shirts. Later tonight, feast on Beijing's greatest culinary contribution at a traditional Peking duck dinner.

DAY 5: Beijing to Xi'an B/L/D

Your morning tour visits the ancient sacrificial buildings of the Temple of Heaven. Built to allow prayers to reach heaven, the heavily adorned pillars and ceiling are a spectacular ode to Ming Dynasty architecture. In the afternoon, browse the longstanding, traditional calligraphy and book shops of Liulichang Antique Culture Street and the historic stores of Qianmen Dashilan, where some of China's most notable silk stores are located. After dinner, transfer to the railway station for your overnight sleeper train to Xi'an.

DAY 6: Xi'an B/L/D

On arrival in Xi'an and following breakfast, uncover the extraordinary craftsmanship of the Terracotta Warriors, an 8,000-strong army created

so that no two warriors look alike. Explore these cavernous underground vaults then visit the UNESCO-listed Wild Goose Pagoda. Continue to the Muslim Quarter, a network of market stalls and shops, and the city's Great Mosque nestled in its centre. Enjoy an evening of culture at tonight's entertaining Tang Dynasty dance performance.

DAY 7: Xi'an to Chengdu B/L/D

Travel to Xi'an's City Wall, a long stretch of fortifications which is the oldest in China and provides dramatic views over the city. Take in the defensive stronghold as you walk along its length then journey to the Tangbo Art Museum. Browse through an array of Shaanxi folk artwork and age-old masterpieces before trying your hand at the ancient art of calligraphy. In the late afternoon, transfer to the train station for your high-speed bullet train to Chengdu. Soak in China's picturesque rural landscapes before arriving in Chengdu for your overnight stay.

DAY 8: Chengdu to Guiyang B/L/D

Meet Chengdu's most famous residents on today's trip to the Panda Breeding and Research Centre. Concerted efforts to save this beloved endangered animal have increased the centre's population to 120 giant and 76 red pandas. Watch the comical creatures napping, snacking and playing in natural enclosures before continuing on to People's Park, a green oasis in the city centre. Take a walk along nearby Jinli Ancient Street and admire the elegant architecture of its buildings, which house handcraft shops. Next, transfer to the train station and board your high speed train to Guiyang. On arrival you will be transferred to your hotel for dinner.

DAY 9: Guiyang to Kaili B/L/D

After breakfast, set out for a morning of sightseeing, starting with a visit to the grand Jiaxiu Tower. Wander the ornate interior of this structure built in honour of the province's great intellectuals then continue on to Qingyan Ancient Town. Travel back to 14th century China as you explore this preserved town and its stone pavilions, ancestral halls and watchtowers. Delve deeper into the country's colourful culture as you journey to the city of Kaili, home to the Miao ethnic minority, for your overnight stay.

DAY 10: Kaili B/L/D

China is home to 56 ethnic groups, each with their own distinctive culture, and the city of Kaili is the ideal base from which to explore the villages of some of its most fascinating ethnic minorities. After breakfast, drive to the Zhenyuan Ancient Town of the Miao people, founded in 202BC. Although it covers a mere 1.2 square miles, this amazing settlement boasts over 160 scenic spots, including palaces, caves, temples and a spectacular central river. After a walk around the town, visit the imposing temple complex of Black Dragon Cave before travelling onward to Langde Miao Village to

witness the daily life, customs and dress of the Miao people. Return to Kaili for the night.

DAY 11: Kaili to Guilin B/L/D

Your cultural experience continues as you make your way to the Matang Gejia Village. Witness the colourful clothes of the Gejia people, created using a traditional dyeing method, and delve into their rich, unique customs and traditions. At the nearby village of Shiqiao Miao, learn more about the villagers' ancient paper-making traditions and wander amongst their simple but elegant log houses as they go about their daily activities. In the afternoon, board your bullet train to Guilin, arriving in time for dinner and your overnight stay. *Please note the bullet train has restricted Carry-ons; Aerosol spray cans containing hairspray, hair gel, styling mousse, insecticide and air freshener must be under 120 ml (4.2 fl oz)*

DAY 12: Guilin B/L/D

Take in some of China's most dazzling scenery on today's trip to the rice terraces of Longsheng. Known locally as 'dragon's backbone' for their shape, these stepped terraces of rippling, multi-coloured rice fields are set on dramatic mountain slopes. Journey to the Zhuang Minority Village for fascinating insight into the lives of the Zhuang people, renowned for their vibrant headdresses, hospitality and culture of singing and dancing.

Explore the village with its stilted houses and multi-storey wooden buildings before returning to Guilin for the night.

DAY 13: Guilin to Shanghai B/L/D

See China from a new perspective as you embark on a boat trip down the Lijiang River. Sail between karsts and past riverside villages and verdant rice paddies on a breath-taking journey that showcases rural China at its best. After lunch on your boat, disembark in Yangshuo and walk along West Street, a shopping area with a fascinating mix of Eastern and international elements, where traditional jade stores lie next to Italian cafes. This evening, transfer to the airport for your flight to Shanghai where you will be transferred to your hotel on arrival.

DAY 14: Guilin to Shanghai B

Enjoy the day at leisure, giving you the chance to explore Shanghai at your own pace. Why not stroll along the waterfront promenade of the Bund, dine in the eateries of the French Concession area or simply take the day to relax back at your hotel.

DAY 15: Shanghai to the UK or extension B

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your return flight to the UK or continue on to your chosen extension.

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP



Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience, location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotels to leisure hotels. Hotel accommodation is generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note there is no international classification system for hotels, and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and China. All group tours hotels have private bathroom facilities and air-conditioning, where needed.

Rest assured that all accommodation used by Mercury Holidays is regularly inspected by our staff and partners to ensure that standards meet your needs. If you have booked a triple share please note that your room will be a twin room with a rollaway bed or sofa bed added. This may limit the floor space in the room.

Please note: final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.

Overnight trains

On the overnight trains, travellers who have not chosen to upgrade to a private cabin will be allocated a four-berth shared cabin. In this event, it is not guaranteed that travellers will be allocated cabins with fellow tour members or with passengers of the same gender. Overnight train facilities feature Asian-style toilets. These are local Chinese and Vietnamese trains and standard may not match what you are used to at home. Upgrade to a private cabin for an additional supplement.

Meals

Breakfast is always western style and served in the hotel each morning. Dinner (when included) will be taken in local restaurants or at the hotel. A variety of restaurants are visited giving you the chance to experience a range of dishes and flavours. Unlike the western world, Chinese people do not normally pre-heat their plates and food can be presented at a variety of temperatures, which is a typical Chinese way of doing things.

ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in Beijing you will be met by a representative from our local agent, **China Travel Service**, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/**China Travel Service** will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your national guide will be on hand 24 hours a day should you have any queries. However, if you need to contact your representative during your stay the details are:

China Travel Service

Head office address: 15F CTS (HK) Grand Metropark Hotel Beijing, No.338 Guang'an Men Nei Street, Xicheng District, Beijing, China
Telephone: 0086 10 85908336 / 0086 10 85908341

Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for **China Travel Service:** 0086 10 85228340 / 0086 10 85228725
During Office Hours: Ms. Linda Liu (Mobile): 0086 61 3911043036
After Office Hours: Ms. Shine Cao (Mobile): 0086 61 8284532334

WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

Visas

A visa is required for entry into China. We work closely with The Travel Visa Company who will be able to arrange your visa for you on your behalf. Please call them on 01270 250 590 and quote 'Mercury Holidays'. The cost of the visa is approximately £68.50, when calling the Travel Visa Company, they will advise you of the most up to date fees. All applicants who wish to apply for a China Tourist Visa must do so in person at the Chinese Visa Application Centre in London, Manchester, Belfast or Edinburgh where fingerprint information will be collected. Fingerprints are not required for children under the age of 14 and adults over the age of 70. The visas take around 10 working days to issue and are valid for unlimited trips to China for 2 years from the date of issue. We therefore recommend that you apply for your visa 8 weeks before travel, however please be aware that your passport will be required for the application so make sure that you will not need it during this time. Please see the below information that may be required when applying for your Chinese Visa; Company license number; 91110000710938407L. Company name: China Travel Service Head Office (Beijing) Co. Ltd. Contactor mail: lhs.oz@ctsho.com

Insurance

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call 0800 781 4237 and quote 'WK830' for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays 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.

Health and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check any health and vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include; www.fco.gov.uk, www.travelhealthpro.org.uk, www.hpa.org.uk, your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

Tour Guides - National Guides

This is a fully escorted tour, meaning that you will be met on arrival by your national guide who will remain with you for the duration of your trip. You will also be joined by a local guide in each of the cities which you visit, ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times. Should the tour not meet minimum numbers, then it will be operated with local guides only.

Private Tour

If you have booked a private tour then you will be accompanied by a Driver Guide or a Driver and Local Guides. These will be available to you aduring all scheduled sightseeing. Private Tours can depart on any day of the week depending on flight and train schedules and the opening days of the attractions. They will follow the itinerary as described in the brochure unless you have been advised otherwise and you will still have all of the same meals, sightseeing and local excursions included.

Tipping

It is customary to tip your national guide, local guide and driver approximately £3.50 (CNY30.00) per person per day. Your national guide will collect this for your convenience on the first day of your tour in Beijing, approximately £45.00 per person (CNY990.00) for the total duration per person. Tips are collected in Chinese Yuan.

Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with a good level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves climbing of steep stairs and getting on and off coaches. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties. All our tours feature a "Tour Pace" to help find the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights, climb stairs and get on and off coaches

WHAT TO PACK

- Sunscreen and hat in summer
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Camera and charger
- A travel plug adaptor - The voltage in China is 220 Volts. It is advisable to bring a multi-adaptor

Please note; Lighters are not allowed on planes ,trains or sights of special interest, such as Tiananmen square, Forbidden city, The Temple of Heaven , Terracotta Warriors , Three Gorges Dam , Wild Goose Pagoda.

The following items cannot be transported in Checked Baggage; Mobile phone battery charging packs, Lithium batteries of lower than 100 Wh for laptops, mobile phones and cameras among other personal portable electronic devices. These items must be put in your hand luggage.

and boats. The tour pace for Splendours of China By Rail is rated as Advanced. A higher level of fitness as required as you may be on your feet for most of the day though this will be interspersed with regular breaks and vary from day to day. You will be walking around the sights, getting on and off coaches, trains, boats and climbing steps which may be irregular. There may be some time spend at high altitude. You will stay in variety of hotels, possibly including overnight trains, and accommodation standards may not match those you are used to at home. Our guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 10, and the maximum will be 40. If in the unlikely event there are less than 10 people booked on your tour date, we will endeavour to reduce any disruption to your holiday and try to operate your tour with lower passenger numbers. If we are not able to operate your departure date, then you may be asked to change to a different date and a full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

Currency Exchange

The currency in China is the Renminbi, known as RMB or CNY. It is often referred to as the yuan. We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. US Dollars are widely accepted in China should you wish to keep an alternative currency on you. We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. It is important that you budget carefully and ensure you have the right form of currency before you arrive in the country. Cash machines will also be available throughout the tour in order to withdraw money in your local currency.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, any meals not included in the itinerary as well as drinks and any additional snacks. Approximately £400 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour. It is a good idea to try and maintain a supply of small notes and change in the local currency for tipping or small purchases.

Credit Card Information

As normal practice you will be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card, you may be asked for a cash deposit. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. The schedules of the domestic airlines in country are subject to frequent changes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction &/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

Passport Information

Your Passport Information is required for this tour. This information is required at least 90 days prior to your departure. Failure to provide this information on time may result in your booking being cancelled with loss of deposit.

Public Holidays

If you are travelling within the below Chinese Public Holidays, please note that celebrations last for several days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open but may be crowded. Chinese New Year is on 22nd January 2023 & 10th February 2024. Golden Week public holidays fall annually between 1st – 4th of May and 1st – 7th of October.

- Loo paper for public WCs
- Binoculars
- Personal first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Your initial flight is to Beijing Capital International Airport with China Eastern Airlines (MU) via Shanghai, departing from London Heathrow Terminal 4.

IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure. A printed E-ticket is no longer required at check-in, all you need to do is present your passport to the staff at the desk and your boarding pass will be given to you.

Baggage Allowance

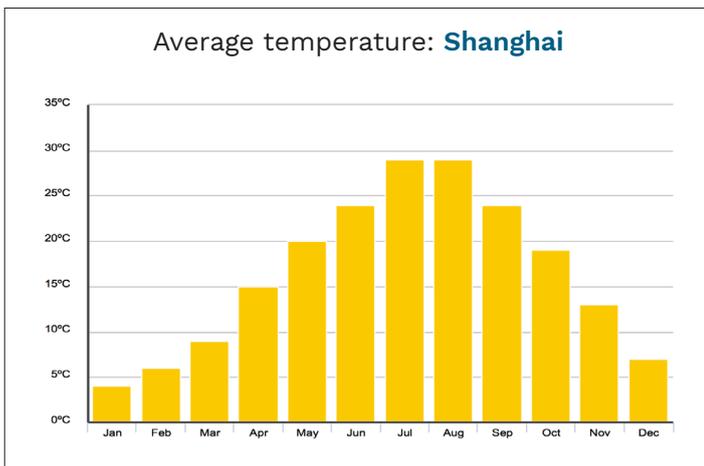
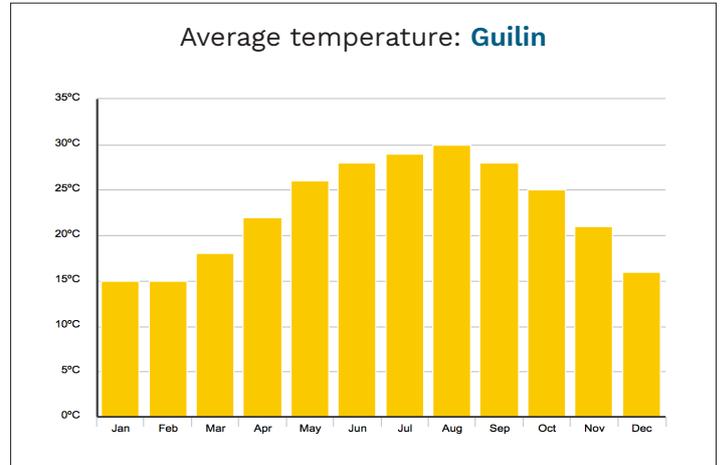
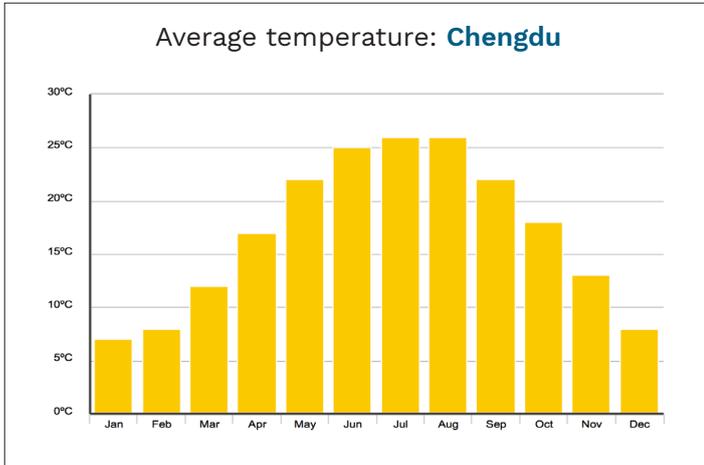
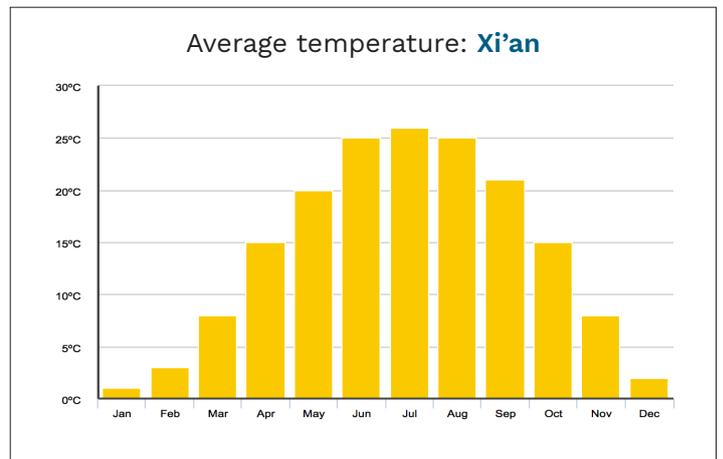
Baggage allowance (per person): Please note that the baggage allowance may vary. Please refer to your final documentation for the correct allowance. For example, if it shows "20k" this means your allowance is 20kg. If it shows "2PC" this means your allowance is two bags not exceeding 23kg each. Important note: For handling purposes the maximum weight of any single piece of baggage is 23kg. If the allowance shown on your ticket exceeds this you will need to take an additional bag. You may also take hand luggage of 5kg not exceeding 56cm x 36cm x 23cm in size.

Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras on 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



Shanghai City Stay Extension

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522



TRIP OVERVIEW

Known as the 'Paris of the East', Shanghai is China's largest city with futuristic skyscrapers and a fascinating heritage. Take a stroll along the waterfront Bund, the dazzling jewel in East Asia's pre-war crown, with views across the river to the towering skyscrapers of Pudong and a new Shanghai.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension in Shanghai.

Shanghai (2 nights)

Your stay will take place at the 4★ Ocean Hotel on Bed and Breakfast. The recently refurbished Ocean Hotel is conveniently located at the bustling North Bund shopping zone. Guests can enjoy a range of facilities including a fitness centre, indoor swimming pool and Spa at the Ocean Hotel.

Meals

Breakfast is included every day and is western style and served in the hotel each morning. No other meals are included for your add-on.

Hotel Information:

4★ Ocean Hotel

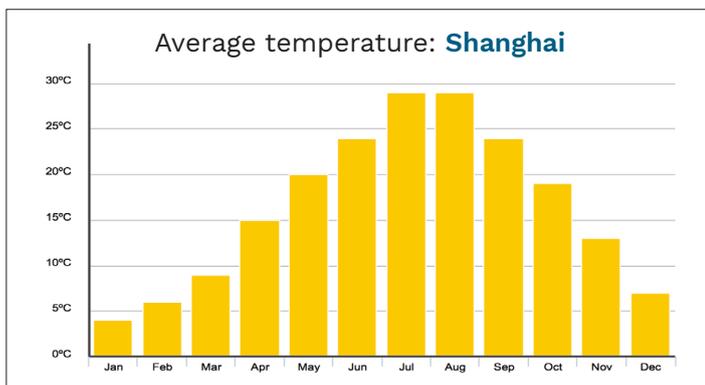
Address: 1171 Dongdaming Rd, Hongkou, Shanghai, China, 200082.

Contact number: 0086 21 6545 8888

If you have booked another hotel, other than the one featured above, this will be shown on your invoice.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



Currency

The currency in China is the Renminbi, known as RMB or CNY. It is often referred to as the yuan. We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. US Dollars are widely accepted in China should you wish to keep an alternative currency on you.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any lunches and dinners, as well as personal purchases, such as souvenirs, laundry and drinks.

Tour Guides

Your stay in Shanghai is not escorted by a tour guide and your time will be free to explore the area at your own pace. Please note This extension takes place after your main tour.

Please note

This extension takes place after your main tour.



Ocean Hotel

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0333 003 0522**

Hong Kong City Stay Extension

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522



TRIP OVERVIEW

Add on 3 nights, 4 days in Hong Kong and you'll have the chance to visit one of the Far East's most iconic cities. Part of the British Empire for over 100 years, its fusion of Eastern and Western culture waits to be explored.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension in Hong Kong.

Guide to meals included:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 15: Shanghai to Hong Kong

Depart Shanghai in the morning and fly to Hong Kong. You will find your shared coach transfer at B18 at the arrival hall (see map), operated by Airport Shuttle and will be transferred to your hotel.

DAY 16: Hong Kong B

After breakfast, you will embark on a half-day tour of the city with an English-speaking guide, where you can visit some of the city's most famous sights. The afternoon is left to you to spend at your leisure, exploring fascinating Hong Kong.

DAY 17: Hong Kong B

Enjoy a day at leisure to experience Hong Kong at your own pace. Why not visit the outlying island of Lantau, home to the 34m-tall bronze Tian Tan Buddha statue, or take a ferry to the gambling mecca of Macau?

DAY 18: Hong Kong to the UK B

You will be picked up at your hotel in the morning for your return flight to the UK, via Shanghai.

Hotel information

Your stay in Hong Kong will take place at the **4★ The Cityview**. The modern Cityview hotel occupies a great position in downtown Kowloon, within walking distance of many of the city's iconic sites including the Temple street night market and Jade market. The rest of Hong Kong and Kowloon can be explored via the nearby MTR station which is only a minutes walk away.

Hotel address: 23 Waterloo Rd, Yau Ma Tei, Hong Kong

Phone: 00852 2783 3888

If the hotel listed is unavailable an alternative will be used of a similar standard.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take some extra money with you to cover any meals not included, drinks and personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, and any extra snacks.

Currency

The currency in Hong Kong is the Hong Kong Dollar (HKD). We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK; however, ATMs are available throughout Hong Kong.

Tour Guides

This add-on to Hong Kong is not escorted. Whilst you will be accompanied by an English speaking guide on your half day city tour on day two, the rest of your time in Hong Kong will be at your leisure.

Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 2, and the maximum will be 10.

Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for **HK Target Travel**:

Mon-Fri: 09.00 - 17.30, Sat: 09.00 - 13.00

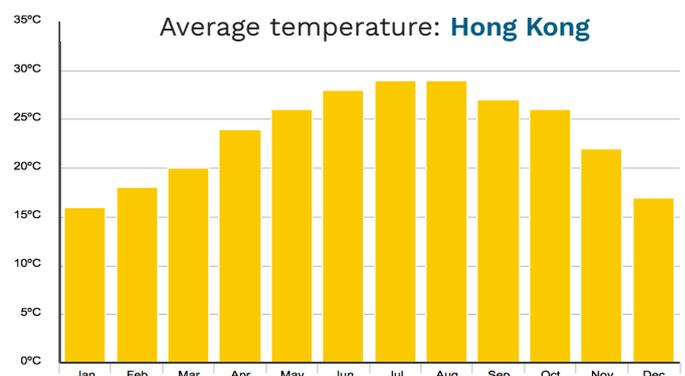
Closed Sunday and Hong Kong public holidays

Office: 00852 2312 1812

Emergency: 00852 9432 5300

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



FLIGHT INFORMATION

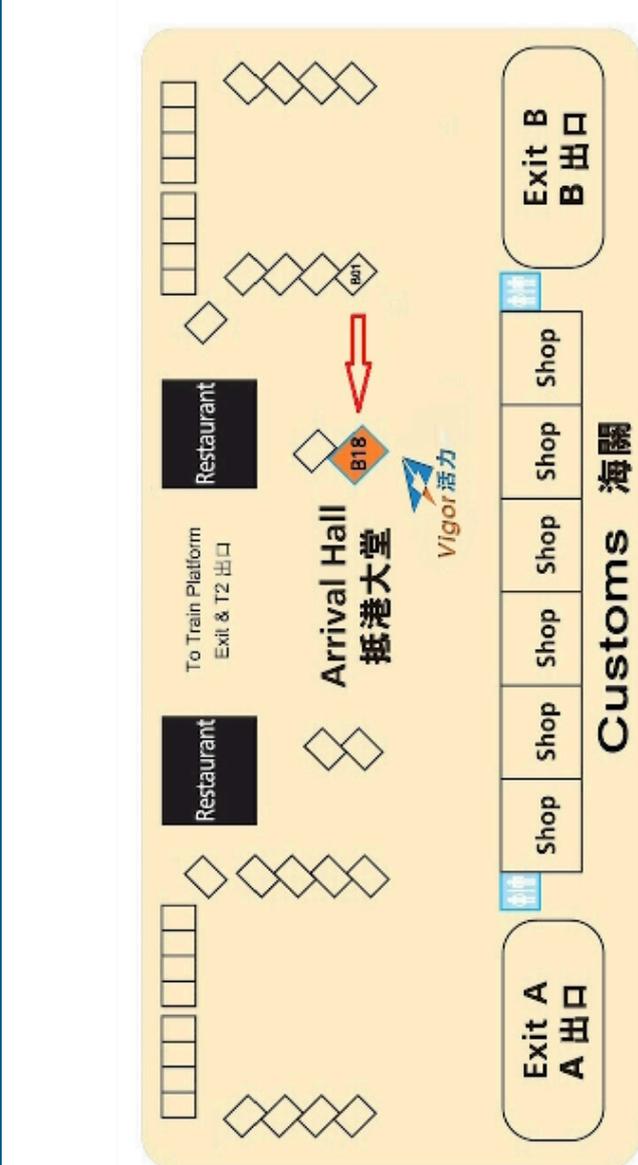
Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0333 003 0522**

Hong Kong City Stay Extension

Please see below a map to show the location of the Airport Shuttle desk at B-18 in Hong Kong International Airport.

After immigration & customs clearance, proceed to the arrival hall, counter B-18 for your arrival transfer



香港國際機場 客運大樓 抵港大堂 B18
Counter B18, Arrival Hall B,
Hong Kong International Airport

