

LIBRARY PROFESSIONAL-EDUCATIONAL-FUN

10 DAY CHINA LIBRARY TOUR

Nov. 5-14, 2012

THIS IS OUR 9TH TRIP, ASK FOR REFERENCES FROM PREVIOUS TRAVELERS

Mean Plan: IM: In-flight Meals, B: Breakfast, L: Lunch, D: Dinner, SL: Special Lunch, SD: Special Dinner

NOV 05, MON: Beijing

Board Air China nonstop flight **CA986** from San Francisco to Beijing. En route, cross the International Date Line. (IM)

NOV 06, TUE: Beijing

Arrive in Beijing in the afternoon. Meet your local representative and transfer to your hotel. Relax and enjoy the evening in China's historic and vibrant capital city. Beijing Traders Hotel by Shangri-La

NOV 07, WED: Beijing

Tour Beijing's imperial treasures. First, Tiananmen Square, the largest public square in the world, capable of holding a million people. Stroll across its vast expanse. An assortment of historical buildings, Communist monuments and huge museums, including Chairman Mao's Mausoleum, the Monument to the People's Heroes, and the Great Hall of the People – home of the National People's Congress, flank the Square. Walk through the Gate of Heavenly Peace, under the famed portrait of Chairman Mao, to enter the Forbidden City, a 9,999-room compound, where the 24 emperors of the Ming and the Qing Dynasties ruled the Middle Kingdom for nearly 500 years (1420-1911). Experience the architectural splendor of the palaces, ceremonial courtyards and private quarters.

In the afternoon, you join our Culture InSites™ Program and experience the world of Beijing's Hutongs, via rickshaw. This network of courtyard homes and narrow lanes traditionally linked the old city. Tour the maze-like alleyways and neighborhood residences. See the locals as they go about their daily activities. Highlights include a visit to a traditional courtyard style home. This unique tour starts with a meal served at the home of a local family. Later, you will also visit **China National Library**. Tonight, you attend a special dinner of Beijing Duck, cooked to crispy perfection. (B,L,SD)

NOV 08, THU: Beijing

After breakfast, you take a drive to the northwest of Beijing to visit the Sacred Way of Ming Tombs, regarded as China's finest example of imperial tomb architecture. Situated in a peaceful valley, the site was chosen by the Ming emperors as their burial place for its auspicious Fengshui alignment — a ridge of mountains to the north cradles the tombs on three sides, opening to the south and protecting the dead from the evil spirits carried on the north wind. Here you will walk along the elegant Sacred Way that leads to the tombs. Beginning with a grand marble gateway more than 400 years old, the long avenue is lined with 36 massive stone sculptures of officials, lions, elephants, camels and mythical beasts.

Lunch at a local restaurant, followed by a visit to a Jade store, you take a scenic drive through the countryside and mountains to reach China's most renowned monument—the Great Wall. Since the Great Wall is the single greatest attraction of China travel, we take you to the less-visited and more "original" Mutianyu section and try to avoid the most accessible and consequently the most crowded section of Badaling.

The wall was begun in the 5th century BC to keep out foreign invaders. Construction continued for centuries, eventually linking up the walls of the former independent kingdoms. The Great Wall meanders through China's northern mountain ranges from the Yellow Sea to the Gobi Desert — a distance of over 3500 miles! Chairman Mao once said "You haven't walked on the Wall, you haven't been a good Chinese". You will take a gondola up to the Wall and then have ample time to explore this ancient edifice. (B,L,D)

NOV 09, FRI: Beijing – Xian

In the morning, you visit the Temple of Heaven; this remarkable building is considered the supreme achievement of traditional Chinese architecture. During each winter solstice, the Ming and Qing emperors

would perform rites and make sacrifices to Heaven praying for good harvest for their empire. The most striking edifice is the “Hall of Prayer of Good Harvests”, which according to the emperor’s Fengshui masters, is the exact point where heaven and Earth met. Built in 1420, this masterpiece of Ming architecture, features triple eaves, dramatically carved marble balustrades, and gorgeous glazed azure roof that symbolizes the color of heaven. Built without a single nails, this 120-foot-high structure is fixed by four inner pillars represent the seasons, and two sets of 12 columns denote the months and the traditional Chinese division of a day.

In the afternoon, you tour the idyllic Summer Palace, with its sprawling encampment of temples, pavilions, and the 728-yard Long Corridor. The Summer Palace served the Qing Dynasty as an imperial retreat from the stifling summer confines of the Forbidden City. It is most associated, however, with the Empress Dowager Cixi who paid for the extravagant Marble Boat with funds meant for the modernization of the Imperial Navy. It is the best preserved and the largest imperial garden in China.

Time permitting, you take a photo stop at the “Bird Nest” and “Water Cube”, and visit the exterior portion of these magnificent complexes – the main stadiums of 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Then transfer to the train station for an exciting overnight train ride to Xian. Your accommodation tonight is soft sleeper (group should divide into groups of 4 for the train compartments) and this unforgettable journey gives you an opportunity to experience China’s “train culture” which otherwise unavailable if you take a flight.

Overnight Train to Xian via Z19 (9:18 pm – 8:19 am) (B,L,D)

NOV 10, SAT: Xian

Wake up to the sunrise in central China’s heartland; you arrive in the ancient city of Xian, a historic gateway to the Silk Road and the capital of the Middle Kingdom for 11 dynasties. In a time when ancient Beijing was just a remote trading post, Xian was the capital of China and one of the world’s largest and richest cities, with a population exceeding one million in the 10th century. Have a hearty breakfast at your hotel then set off for a day tour.

Visit [Xian City Library](#) and meet with their staff. Today’s excursion takes you to modern China’s greatest archaeological discovery – The Terra Cotta Warriors and Horses, which silently guarded the tomb of China’s First Emperor for over 2,200 years. In 1974, a local farmer uncovered the first of three massive earth and timber vaults, while digging a well. The extensive excavation, still in progress, has yielded over 6000 life-sized terra cotta warriors, each individually sculpted, with the physical characteristics of the humans they were modeled after. Archers, infantrymen, horses and bronze chariots have also been unearthed. A Circle Vision documentary is available on site.

Tang Dynasty (AD 618-907), traditionally regarded as the golden age of China, was a time of patricians and intellectuals, Buddhist monks and Taoist priests, poetry and music, song and dance – a period of peace and exceptional creativity lasting 300 years. This evening, you attend a Dumpling (dim sum banquet) followed by Tang Dynasty stage show. Indulge yourself in this remarkable show and reinvent your China dream with a travel back in time to the world of China’s Golden Age, then come back to the present with a greater understanding of this amazing time. [Xian Grand Noble Hotel](#) (B,L,SD)

NOV 11, SUN: Xian – Shanghai

In the morning, you visit the Wild Goose Pagoda, a Tang Dynasty landmark. This seven-story pagoda was initially constructed in 652 AD to house the Buddhist sutras brought back from India by the monk, Xuan Zang, who later translated them into Chinese. His pilgrimage to India is immortalized in the Chinese classic, The Journey to the West.

Later, you fly to Shanghai via **CA1215 (1210/1410)**, China’s vibrant financial and artistic center. Shanghai, literally means “above the sea”, is China’s largest and most dynamic city, with a population of 18 million. In the 13th century it became a minor county seat and so it remained until the mid-19th century when British commercial ambitions led to war with China. The ensuing Treaty of Nanking allowed the British to trade freely from certain ports including Shanghai. The city soon became an outpost of glamour, high living, and ultimately decadence. In the 1930s, Shanghai is renowned as “the Pearl of the East”.

Some places are forever associated with a single landmark and in the case of Shanghai it is surely the Bund. In the afternoon, you take a walk along the waterfront promenade of the Bund. The Bund was at

the heart of colonial Shanghai, flanked on one side by the Huangpu River and on the other by the hotels, banks, offices, and clubs that were the grandiose symbols of western commercial power. See the ships and barges on the Huangpu River, en route to the sea or going upstream to the interior of China. The modernistic Oriental Pearl TV tower looms in the background redefining the skyline.

Afterwards, you visit the Oriental Pearl TV Tower to have a stunning view of Shanghai, followed by a tour to Shanghai Municipal Wax Museum.

<http://www.starwoodhotels.com/sheraton/property/area/index.html?propertyID=3372> (B,IM,D)

NOV 12, MON: Shanghai

In the morning, we will tour the [Shanghai City Library](#).

Afterwards visit People's Square and tour the architectural inspiring Shanghai Museum, with its 120,000 piece collection of ancient Chinese relics. The priceless collection includes jade, bronze, ceramics, paintings and furniture.

After lunch, we drop you at the heart of old Shanghai city bazaar. This complex, with its classical architectural details, maze of walkways and reflecting pools, has been a marketplace and social center for over 200 years. You enjoy a free afternoon to explore Old Shanghai. (B,L) Dinner on our own or with group.

NOV 13, TUE: Suzhou & Tongli VISIT SHZHOU and TONGLI-NEW THIS YEAR

In the morning you travel by motor-coach to Suzhou, which is often referred, by the Chinese, as the "Venice of the East". Suzhou is a 2,500-year-old city renowned the world over for its traditional gardens, ancient canals and silk production. In 1997 Suzhou's classic garden was designated an UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The construction of the Grand Canal in the 7th century created a means whereby silk, the prized commodity from this region could be transported to the Northern capital, Beijing, a distance of over 600 miles. With prosperity came prestige as merchants and artisans plied their trade. During the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), Suzhou flourished as a place of refinement, drawing an influx of scholars and merchants, who built themselves numerous elegant gardens.

The Chinese garden developed as a synthesis of two concepts linked in Taoist philosophy — scenery and serenity: the contemplation of nature in isolated meditation led to enlightenment. Therefore, the educated and wealthy built natural-looking retreats for themselves with an urban environment. The garden creates poetic and painterly concepts, and aims to improve on nature in creating a picture that looks natural but is in fact entirely artificial. For this the Chinese garden designer used four main elements: rocks, water, plants, and architecture.

Upon arrival, you visit the Garden of the Master of Fishing Nets, and experience all of the elements of a classical Chinese garden. It is said that the Master of the Nets Garden was named after one of its owners — a retired official who wished to become an accomplished fisherman. Dating to 1140, it is considered by many, the finest of all Suzhou's gardens. Although exceptional small, it succeeds, with great subtlety, in introducing every element considered crucial to the classical Chinese garden. It includes a central lake, discreet connecting corridors, pavilions with miniature courtyards, screens, delicate latticework, and above all, points which "frame a view", as if looking at a perfectly balanced photograph. The best known building is the "Pavilion for Watching the Moon", from where the moon can be viewed in a mirror, in the water, and in the sky.

Later, you tour the Silk Spinning Mill, where you will learn how silk is created from the mulberry-munching silkworms to produce thread and fine cloth. Afterwards, you travel to Tongli, a pretty little water town typical of the region. Tongli gives visitors a good idea of what Suzhou must have been like in its heyday. Reminiscent of scenes from traditional Chinese paintings, it is complete with canals, arched stone bridges, cobbled lanes, and tile-roofed wooden houses. Visit a courtyard mansion to learn about the lavish life style of its residents. Then, learn about traditional Chinese wedding customs at a local folklore museum. Take an exciting ride on a gondola and experience the charm of Tongli's waterways. You will have free time to browse and buy some local specialties along Old Street, which is lined with Ming style homes and storefronts. In the late afternoon, you travel by motor coach to Shanghai and enjoy your evening at leisure (B,L,D)

NOV 14, WED: Shanghai – Beijing – U.S.A.

After breakfast, you board the Maglev, the world's fastest magnetic levitation train, for your trip to the Pudong International Airport. The Maglev travels at a speed of 287mph and will cover the 20 mile distance in less than 8 minutes! Board your return flight home, and arrive in U.S.A. later today. * Maglev is available for San Francisco departures only. (B,IM)

DEPARTURES & FARES

Travel Dates : November 5-14, 2012, 1849.00 + fees and taxes \$433.00*

Itinerary, hotels and fees and taxes subject to change! *

Do not book connecting flights until departure times are confirmed.

Trip is open to library professionals and all who love libraries

GATEWAY: San Francisco (SFO)

Departure date November 5, time: to be advised Return date, November 14, 2011, time: to be advised,

BIRCHARD COMPANY-Call for more information

877/439-3767, FAX 909/625-2208 www.ezdrop.biz, ron@birchard.biz

[facebook link for 2011 trip is posted as China Library Tour 2011](#)

Price quote includes:

- Transpacific airfare from SFO to China with Air China
- All intra-China flights, train beth, transportations and transfers
- Hotel accommodation with private bath and American buffet breakfast
- Private sightseeing tours including entrance fee as specified
- Bountiful meals as per itinerary
- Professional service of a National Guide accompany you from Beijing to Shanghai
- Professional service of a local guide in each destination city

Price quote excludes:

- Add-on airfare from your home city to SFO
- Expenses of personal nature
- Gratuities to guide, bus drivers, porters
- Any cost not specifically listed in the itinerary

Tour code: 121105PT