

In Pursuit of Pandas



TRIP OVERVIEW

The giant panda population of China has grown in leaps and bounds due to sustained efforts to save this lovable creature. Enjoy unforgettable panda encounters at the Dujiangyan Panda Base & Panda Conservation Centre then take in China's iconic sights as you visit the 8,000-strong Terracotta Army, stroll along the Great Wall and wander the sprawling Forbidden Palace complex on this tour of China's most impressive natural and manmade highlights.

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 visa requirements and travel insurance.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 1: UK to Chengdu

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

DAY 2: Chengdu

On arrival in Chengdu, you will be met by a local guide and transferred to your hotel.

DAY 3: Chengdu B/L/D

Enjoy a once-in-a-lifetime encounter with Chengdu's giant pandas on one of the highlights of this tour – a trip to the Panda Conservation Centre, where you'll be rewarded with a close-up viewing of baby and adult pandas lounging in enclosures built to imitate their natural habitat. Enjoy a morning to observe them at play before continuing on to the Shu Brocade Museum where you can marvel at this intricate method of embroidery. See parents playing Cupid at Matchmaker's Corner in the People's Park then sample fragrant, local teas at a traditional tea house before returning to your hotel.

DAY 4: Chengdu B/L/D

Your second memorable panda experience takes you to the Dujiangyan Panda Base. Watch these lovable animals playing, napping and eating as you stroll around multiple enclosures. Look out for the 'overseas returnees' – all pandas born abroad have to be returned to China by the age of 2. Next, take in centuries-old pagodas and buildings on a visit to picturesque Jiezi Ancient Town. Return to Chengdu for a flavourful Sichuan dinner.

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

Experience China's high-speed rail network as a bullet train carries you to Xi'an. After check-in and lunch near your hotel, delve into the sights of Xi'an as you stroll along the ancient city walls, built as fortifications in the 14th century. This evening, enjoy a taste of tradition as you feast on traditional shui jiao dumplings and watch a riveting Tang Dynasty dance performance.

DAY 6: Xi'an to Beijing B/L/D

After 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 witness how replicas of these figures are skilfully crafted at the Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Centre. This afternoon, transfer to the airport for your flight to Beijing, with the remainder of the day to relax after checking into your hotel.

DAY 7: Beijing B/L/D

Marvel at one of mankind's greatest feats as you stroll the Great Wall of China, taking in a mere portion of this formidable structure which took over 1,800 years to construct. Access the wall at the Juyongguan Pass, which also boasts beautiful waterside temples and towers. After lunch, explore the intricate pieces on display at the Jade Museum then take in the ancient royal residence of the Summer Palace. This evening, an entertaining Chinese acrobatic show rounds off the day.

DAY 8: Beijing B/L/D

Discover Beijing's long, imperial history on today's full-day 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 before travelling onward to the tranquil Temple of Heaven. Later this evening, dine on fragrant Peking duck and enjoy an outdoor dance performance.

DAY 9/10: Beijing to the UK or extension B

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

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP

Accommodation guide

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.

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 Shanghai you will be met by a representative from our local agent, **China Travel Service**, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/local representative 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 China Travel Service during your stay the details are:

China Travel Service:

Address: 15F CTS (HK) Grand Metropark Hotel Beijing, No.338 Guang'an Men Nei Street, Xicheng District Beijing, China

Office Telephone Number: 0086 10 85908336 / 0086 10 85908341

Emergency contact information

During Office Hours: 0086 10 85228340
0086 10 85228725

After Office Hours: Ms Linda Liu (Mobile): 0086 61 3911043036
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 & 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 sufficient time before your departure. Sources of information include: www.fco.gov.uk, www.hpa.org.uk, www.travelhealthpro.org.uk, your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

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 and boats. The tour pace for In Pursuit of Pandas is rated as Intermediate. A good level of fitness is required as you may be on your feet for approximately four hours in a day, though this will be interspersed with regular breaks and will vary from day to day. You will be walking around the sights, and may be getting on and off coaches, trains and boats and climbing steps which may be irregular. You will stay in variety of hotels throughout the tour. 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.

Tour 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 during 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. Please allow approximately £45 (360 RMB) per person for the duration of your tour. For your convenience, this will be collected by your national guide on the first day of your tour in Shanghai. Tips are collected in Chinese yuan.

Group Size

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

maximum will be 35. 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 want an alternative. 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 £500 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.

WHAT TO PACK

- Insect repellent and sun cream
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Waterproof lightweight jacket
- Sunglasses and hat
- Ruck sack
- Binoculars
- Camera and charger
- Loo paper for public WCs

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 – China

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.

Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. 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 and/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.

- Long sleeve shirt and long trousers
- Swimwear
- Personal toiletries
- Anti-bacterial hand sanitiser
- A multi adapter travel plug - The electricity supply is 110V or 220V. You will need a special three pin plug adapter
- First aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc

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. Spray cans of any form are not allowed on trains or planes. 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.

FLIGHT INFORMATION

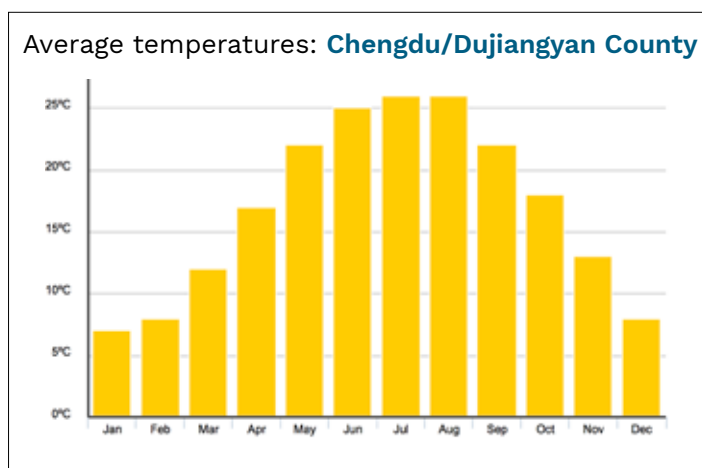
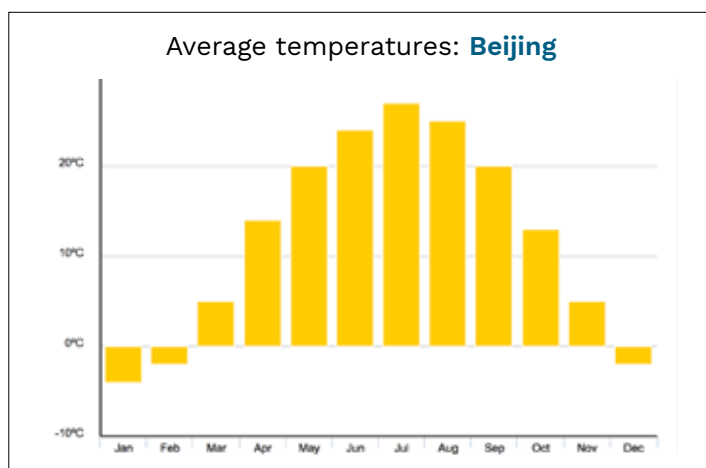
IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details, including terminal, airline and baggage allowance, will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure. A printed E-ticket is no longer required at check-in, all you need to do is present your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

Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking, lounges or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras Tel. 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.



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 9: Beijing to Hong Kong

Depart Beijing 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 10: 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 11: 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 12: 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.

On Arrival

You will meet your driver at the arrival hall after customs clearance. The driver will be holding a sign marked with your name & the Mercury Holidays logo at the Arrival Hall Exit. If you have any problems finding the driver, please call 00852 9030 8030 for help.

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

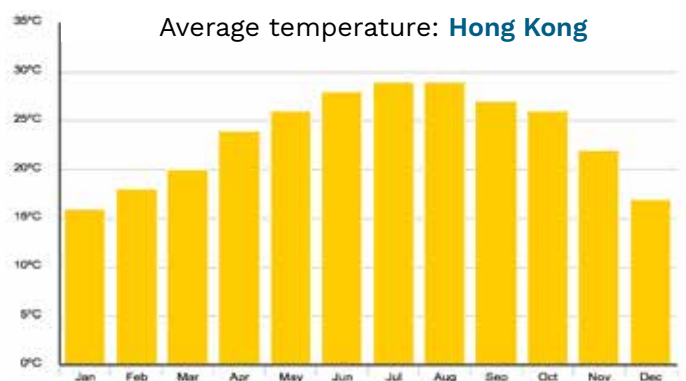
Closed Sunday and Hong Kong public holidays

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

For your arrival transfer, after clearing customs and collecting your bags, you will meet the driver in Arrival Hall B. The transfer driver will holding a sign marked with guest name & Sunspot/Mercury Holidays logo.

For your departure transfer from the hotel to the Airport you need to be waiting in the hotel lobby at your designated pick up time as informed by our guide after the city tour.

Driver contact details (Mr Eric) - (852) 65331890

