

20 Day

Grand China, Yangtze & Tibet

USA – Shanghai – Suzhou – Wuhan – Yichang – Yangtze River Cruise (Three Gorges) – Chongqing - Tibet (Lhasa and Surrounding Area) – Chengdu – Guilin – Xian – Beijing – USA

*****Escorted SMALL group with min. of 10 and max. of 18 passengers*****
Premium service with professional guides, deluxe hotels and sumptuous meals
 Private journeys with VIP service of a private guide, a private chauffeur and a car can also be arranged at extra cost

Marvel at the highlights of Chinese history and culture, enjoy many UNESCO World Heritage Sites
Cruise the Yangtze on deluxe vessel; tour the Great Wall, Terra Cotta Warrior and China's best museum
Explore Tibet's holiest temple and palace, China's best antique garden, and beautiful sceneries
Visit farmers' homes and interact with people from various walks of life

Also includes *Rickshaw ride, Peking Opera, Acrobatic Show, Dumpling Banquet, and Tang Music Show*

The most comprehensive journey to China, including Yangtze and Tibet!

2009 Departure Dates	Tour Cost (US\$) Per person double occupancy departing from				Land Only Includes domestic flights	Single Room Supplement
	Los Angeles San Francisco		New York			
	Tour Cost	Cash Discount Price	Tour Cost	Cash Discount Price		
Mar 18, 25, Nov 4, 11, 2009	4199	3999	4350	4150	3449	895
Apr 8, May 13, Sep 9, Oct 7, Oct 14, 2009	4440	4240	4590	4390	3632	998
Jun 10, Jul 8, Aug 5, 2009	4550	4350	4700	4500	3602	946

US tax of \$98, Int'l flight fuel surcharge \$290, and China domestic air tax \$198 per person is extra
 Rates for departures from other major US gateways are available upon request.

Enjoy Cash Discount Price and save \$200 per person!

To qualify, you must be the first 10 passengers booked on your tour / departure
Initial deposit can be paid by check or credit card

Remaining balance of the tour cost must be paid by check or money order only

Operated by *Orient Odyssey*



*B-Breakfast, L-Lunch, D-Dinner, F-In flight meals,
 SL / SD-Special local flavor meal or banquet*

Day01 USA - Shanghai

Depart from Los Angeles, San Francisco or New York. Enjoy award winning in-flight meals and services. Move the watch one day ahead as we cross the international dateline. *Prices for departures from other major gateway cities are available upon request. F

Day02 Arrive in Shanghai

We reach Shanghai in the evening. After immigration and customs, our representative will greet and accompany us to the 4 star, deluxe, *Argyle Ryden International Hotel Shanghai*. Enjoy a restful night to recover from jetlag. F

Day03 Shanghai

Back in what some might consider its glamorous colonial days, Shanghai was called the “Paris of the East”. Once a muddy fishing village, the region was already a trading centre in 960 AD. As a result of the Opium Wars in the 1840s, the British imposed upon China the the **Treaty of Nanking**, which, among many things, opened up Shanghai other four ports to foreign commerce and residence. Foreign residents were given immunity from the Chinese laws, and settlements, or “concessions” were set-aside for them. Soon Shanghai became the place to be – a city with the best culture, the most opulent dance halls, the largest volume of business, the tallest buildings. It became a mix of cultures that was always to define its internationalism, even up to present times. New ideas also allowed for radicalism – a Shanghai tradition. The Communist Party was founded in the city in 1921, and the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s not only began here, but had its headquarters in Shanghai. Today, Shanghai has undergone an impressive transformation that leaves one breathless.



Where there were once neighborhoods of small houses, there are now high-rises. Where there were once handsome colonial-era buildings, there are now glitzy hotels. In the late 1990s, Shanghai required so many construction cranes that there was a regional shortage in the rest of Asia. It has now become a city of more than 4,000 high-rise buildings. Land that was rice paddies and farmland just a few years ago is suddenly dominated by skyscrapers and instant communities. Marking this ambition is the Shanghai World Financial Center, which will be one of the worlds’ tallest building at 492 meters (1,614 feet) high, just completed in 2008. We have a full day to explore the wonders of cosmopolitan Shanghai. First we tour the famous **Jade Buddha Temple**, home of over 70 monks and **two precious rare Buddha statues** that were carved from a piece of white jade brought from Burma in 1882. We then visit **the “Bund”**, the legendary **waterfront promenade** with the most impressive skyline in the Far East - from 1920’s neoclassic buildings fully restored to their original beauty, to the ultra modern 1,380 feet Jinmao Tower, one of China’s highest buildings. Locals call here **Waitan**, meaning outside beach. During Shanghai’s heyday, the European, American and Japanese

banks, trading houses, clubs, consulates and hotels built a collection of buildings in various styles, and gave the Bund its reputation as a “*Museum of Architecture*”. After liberation, all were taken over by the Communist Party. Today, these neo-classical buildings have been renovated and are beautifully lit up at night. Many of the old masters - banks and other institutions have moved back in. We will visit the **Shanghai Museum**, one of China’s finest museums housing precious relics from the imperial dynasties to the colonial days. The bronze collection is reputedly the best in the world. We will stroll on **People’s Square**, bounded on all sides by compelling buildings such as the stunning **Shanghai Grand Opera House**, and the **Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Hall**. Always busy, this has become the heart of the new Shanghai where we can observe all kinds of activity, kite flying, ballroom dancing, or folks out for a leisurely promenade. The highlight of the day will be a visit to a **local home** – part of *Orient Odyssey’s* “**People to People Contact**” program. We will chat with family members, and enjoy an in-depth view of normal Chinese city life. We will also visit a **kindergarten** where enthusiastic youngsters exhibit their talents. After dinner, we attend a world famous **Acrobatic Performance!**
B/L/D



Day04 Suzhou Excursion

We enjoy a scenic coach ride through **verdant rice fields**, passing **villages, small towns** and **markets** of Eastern China to Suzhou, often referred to as “**Venice of the East**”. It is a 2,500 year old city and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, renowned for her traditional gardens, ancient canals and silk production. The construction of the **Grand Canal** began 1,500 years ago for transporting goods to the northern capital of Beijing, over 600 miles away. With prosperity came prestige. As merchants and artisans plied their trades, elaborate gardens were built. We will board a wooden boat to **cruise the Grand Canal, observing the bustling riverfront life**. Then we



tour the [silk spinning mill](#) to [learn how silk is created](#) from the mulberry munching silk worms, to thread producing, to cloth weaving. **Marco Polo** once reported that so much precious silk was produced in Suzhou that every citizen was clothed in it. A highlight of the day will be a tour of [The Fisherman's Net Garden](#), intricately designed with changing scenes at each turn. We will stroll among the pagodas, pavilions, rockeries, fountains, ancient trees and precious flowers. Regarded as one of China's best



antique gardens, the principle of Chinese garden construction – creating an illusion of the universe in a small space – is clearly evident

here. Our tour will end at the [National Embroidery Institute](#), where artists present the [double side embroidery](#) frequently used as state gifts to world leaders. A scenic coach ride takes us back to Shanghai. **B/L/D**

Day05 Shanghai – Wuhan – Yichang

This morning we fly to Wuhan via [Shanghai Airlines'](#) flight FM9361, departing at 8:40 a.m., arriving at 10:15 a.m.. Welcome to central China's most massive and upbeat cities, the important transportation hub that links China's East and West, North and South. Centuries of trade have flooded into here along the impressive Yangtze River, and the city's tight clutch of buildings on the waterway pump with levels of money and modernity to rival Shanghai. Enjoy the [short drive into the city](#). [Drive by the waterfront promenade](#), the [concession-era streetscapes](#), and the recently rebuilt [Yellow Crane Tower](#). We also drive on the impressive [bridge](#) that spans across the mighty Yangtze. After lunch, we continue on a scenic bus journey passing verdant rice fields, small villages and little towns to ancient city of [Jinzhou](#). Rarely visited by conventional tour packages to China, here was once a famous stronghold in the turbulent Three Kingdom Era in ancient Chinese history. Pass the ancient [city wall](#), one of the best preserved in China, we head to [Jinzhou Museum](#). Observe the amazing collection of priceless treasures excavated from a [Han Dynasty tomb](#). One will be amazed by the well preserved artifacts, including large pieces of 2,000-year-old silk embroidered with strikingly beautiful patterns. In the evening we reach

Yichang. After dinner, we board the 4.5 star, deluxe, cruiser [M. S. CCOTC Victoria III or Yangtze Princess](#) or similar class. Settle into the



cabin and check out amenities onboard. This is one of the most deluxe vessels on the Yangtze. All cabins are exterior with a large picture window. There is a

shopping arcade, sauna, massage room, banquet hall, observation deck, beauty salon, library.....etc. During the cruise one can enjoy lectures on Chinese history, calligraphy or painting, and take morning Taichi lessons led by the master. The vessel will stay in port during the night and set sail early in the morning. **B/L/D**

*Shore excursion and cruiser schedule is subject to change due to local weather and condition. Captain will have the final say in view of the safety of the vessel and the passengers.

Day06 Yangtze Cruise – Three Gorges Dam

The Yangtze River originates on the Tibetan Plateau and traverses a distance of 3,900 miles before flowing into the East China Sea near Shanghai. It is the third longest river in the world. With over 700 tributaries, the Yangtze has been the lifeline and major commercial thoroughfare in China.



Our ship will stop at [Sandouping](#) – the site of China's most ambitious engineering project, the massive [Three Gorge Dam](#). We will [walk on the dike](#) and [take a close look](#).

Upon completion, the dam will be 610 feet high and over a mile wide. The hydro electrical power plant will be driven by the world's largest turbines and have the generation capacity of 18 nuclear power plants. A reservoir 372 mile long will be created, flooding thousands of towns and villages, and requiring one and half million people to be relocated. Entire cities will be rebuilt in higher elevations. Centuries old lifestyles will be altered forever. This afternoon our cruiser will enter [Xiling Gorge](#) – the first of the magnificent [Three Gorges](#), sailing through [narrow cliffs](#) and past [dramatic vistas](#). For the next 150 miles, the Yangtze winds through a spectacular [barrier of](#)

limestone ridges. Tonight we enjoy Captain's Welcome Banquet. B/L/D

Day07 Yangtze Cruise – Smaller Gorges

Another day of incredible scenery awaits us! Upon entering Wu Gorge, we will see softly layered peaks forming a surreal backdrop as the ship courses through the rugged canyons. Wu Gorge, celebrated for twelve soaring misty peaks, has inspired Chinese painters and poets for thousands of years. We will change to a smaller motorized wooden sampan for an excursion to the smaller gorges of Daning River or Shennong Stream. Navigate through the clear emerald water surrounded by deep, lush gorges and high forested peaks. Notice ruins of the ancient plank road built along the cliff face and the mysterious hanging coffins of the local Ba people. Group of monkeys sometimes appear from the dense forest near the water. We will return to our cruiser after the excursion. Tonight's dinner is local style cuisine. We will also enjoy the onboard entertainment. B/L/D



Day08 Yangtze Cruise – Fengdu



We sails into Qutang Gorge - the shortest and narrowest of Three Gorges, which is also the most spectacular section. Perpendicular walls rise from the river, narrowing it to a width of 328 ft and requiring the helmsman to exert great concentration in steering the vessel through the narrow passage. Today's shore excursion goes to Fengdu - the legendary "City of Ghosts". Walk up the hill to enjoy the interesting collection of ancient shrines and temples dedicated to the gods of the underworld, depicting the "after death" experience. (Based on water and weather condition, this excursion may be replaced by a visit to Wanzhou – a fascinating town with a bustling market and a museum, or Shibaozhai – an ancient 12 storey wooden pagoda built along a sheer rock cliff amidst the mighty Yangtze). B/L/D

Day09 Chongqing - Lhasa (11,181 ft)

Our Yangtze cruise will end at the mountain city of Chongqing – China's largest metropolitan area with a population of over 30 million. We

will be greeted by the guide on the dock and transferred to the airport to check-in for China Southern Airlines' flight CZ3183, departing at 11:10 a.m., reaching Lhasa, the spiritual heartland of Tibet at 1:30 p.m.. The flying journey itself is an unforgettable experience, with impressive scenes of snowcapped mountains over the Tibetan Plateau, the earth's highest ecosystem, and one of the last remaining great wildernesses and the source of Asia's greatest rivers. We fly over the great white citadel of Gongga Shan (24,783 ft), the Hengduan Range, and the massive, deep, valleys of some of Asia's greatest rivers, the Mekong, and the Yangtze. As we near the Plateau we can also see the 25,439-foot Namcha Barwa, the easternmost rampart of the Himalaya. Upon arrival at Gongkar Airport (a lofty 12,129 feet), we will be met by our Tibetan guide and driver. A scenic drive takes us along the mighty Lhasa river. On route, we will enjoy Orient Odyssey's "People to People Contact" program and stop at a Tibetan village and a school, where we have the opportunity to interact with Tibetan peasants, teachers and students. Take pictures of traditional Tibetan houses, Buddhist murals, and the spectacular landscape of rivers, highlands and mountains. After arriving at the deluxe, 5 star, Xinding Hotel Lhasa, one of the newest luxury properties in the region, we rest for couple of hours. It is important not overexert ourselves on the first day in Tibet. A good rest is necessary to acclimate to the high altitude (11,811 feet). Should the need arises, oxygen and Chinese herbal medicines are available at the hotel, which can help easing symptoms of AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness). Lhasa, the very name conjures up lofty and romantic images, rose to prominence in the 7th century AD when the great ruler Songtsen Gampo established his capital here and began to construct the spectacular Potala Palace. Some of the most precious Buddhist relics, carvings and paintings were brought into Tibet as dowries for his Chinese and Nepali wives. Literarily means "country of the gods", Lhasa is home of the Dalai Lama, the incarnation of Avalokiteshvara, the essence of compassion for all sentient beings. Tonight we enjoy a leisurely stroll on the bustling street on the way to our dinner restaurant. B/F/D

Day10 Lhasa and Surrounding Area

Our unforgettable day begins with a visit of the majestic Potala Palace. Its gold-clad roofs greet from afar. Stood on Marpori, the Red Mountain,

the Potala Palace was built in the 7th century by King Songtsen Gampo. Then after the completion in 1645, the Dalai Lamas resided here as religious and secular rulers. The section called White Palace was constructed first; half a century later, the red Palace was completed, rising like a huge tower from the sea of white-painted buildings. **Abbe Huc**, wrote in 1845 in his book *Travels in Tartary, Tibet, and China*, “The palace of the Tale (Dalai) Lama merits, in every respect, the celebrity which it enjoys through the world”. The Potala Palace contains over 1,000 rooms, ceilings supported by more than 15,000 columns, numerous [ceremonial halls](#), [small chapels](#) and [meditation halls](#), each featuring [centuries-old wall paintings](#), [carvings](#), and [ancient Buddhist scriptures written in 24 karat gold](#). There are eight vaults of deceased Dalai Lamas. They were lavishly decorated with gold, diamonds, turquoise, corals, and pearls. At



roof of the Potala, we can enjoy a breathtaking view of the valley and city below. Here we also visit [the apartment of the current Dalai Lama](#),

who came here as a young boy from eastern Tibet after being recognized as the reincarnation of Avalokiteshvara, the Buddha of Compassion. Next we go to [Tibet’s holiest temple, the Jokhang](#). Built by King Songtsen Gampo in 647 A.D., it is full of magnificent carvings and paintings, and is home to the [7th century Jobo Buddha statue](#), which is said to be one of the only three in the world blessed by Lord Buddha. The golden Jobo statue is richly decorated with jewels and usually covered with brocade and silk bands. At the feet of the Buddha, lamps made of heavy silver and filled with yak oil burn continually.

Guiseppe Tucci once wrote “An endless, three story high flight of chapels surrounds



(the statue), decorated with the smiling and sneering Buddhist pantheon. Blissful and terrific gods fill the shade of the cells and peer unexpectedly out of their mystery.” The [Jokhang](#) is circled by [Barkhor Street](#), a sacred ritual path where pilgrims and traders gather every day. To gain merit, the pilgrims prostrate themselves in the dust and circle around the Jokhang; others

turn their prayer wheels. The street throbs with action from dawn to dusk. We [observe Tibetans](#) in colorful traditional robes chanting with their prayer wheel in hand; vendors selling their wares



from religious crafts to daily needs; monks meditating at the side of the road; housewives and store keepers doing the cleaning; kids on their way to school. We will take our time to brose in this area and experience the heartbeat of Tibet! **B/L/D**

Day11 Lhasa and Surrounding Area

Today we enjoy an excursion to two of the great monasteries of central Tibet; [Drepung Temple](#) and [Sera Monastery](#), both are considered among the most sacred. Each of them was once home to over ten thousand Lamas, and were the primary religious educational centers and pillars of the theocratic state. If we are lucky, we will see lamas morning [chanting of the sutras](#). Go behind the scenes we head to [the temple kitchen](#) where once 5,000 dishes were prepared at each meal. We will see spectacular collection of priceless murals, carvings, and crafts. Feel free to chat with monks, who are always eager to answer our questions. *Orient Odyssey* had carefully planned the tour logistics so we will arrive at the right time to observe the rarely watched theatrical [monk debate](#). In the back yard of the monastery,



hundreds of monks debate about Buddhist philosophy, using ritualistic body and arm movements to present their points. This afternoon we will also visit [Norbulinka](#), “[Precious Stone Garden](#)”. It is the Dalai Lama’s exquisite and beloved summer palace from where his holiness went into exile in 1959. We will see the [magnificent wall paintings](#) in [the audience hall](#), describing in detail the experiences of the 14th Dalai Lama, framed by legends from the lives of the Buddha and Tsongkhapa. We also visit his holiness’ [meditation room and bedroom](#), and the striking [God King’s throne](#) in [the reception hall](#). The furniture has been untouched from the moment his holiness left the building in 1959. The clock on the wall was stopped and pointed at the very minute of his departure. The big radio in the

living room is set on the station his holiness listened the very night he left his homeland. Tonight, through special arrangement of *Orient Odyssey's* "People to People Contact" program, we visit a Tibetan family and enjoy an in-depth exploration of authentic local life. We will sip the yak butter tea, and interact with household members. B/L/D

Day12 Lhasa – Chengdu

In the morning we reminisce about our visit to the "roof of the world" at the Tibetan Museum. We will inspect excavated treasures, and immerse ourselves in the history and culture of Tibet. Then we enjoy the scenic drive to the airport and depart via *Air China's* flight CA4404 at 11 a.m., reaching Chengdu at 12:55 p.m.. We will be greeted and transferred to the 5 star, luxurious, *Samsara Hotel Chengdu*, one of the newest deluxe property in town. The history of Chengdu can be traced back 2,000 years. Despite the rapid economic development, in contrast to other Chinese urban centers, Chengdu has preserved a traditional serene atmosphere. Tonight we will enjoy a dinner featuring spicy Sichuan dishes, then attend the "Changing Face" performance from the Sichuan opera, a presentation of amazing colorful costumes and unbelievable acrobatic talents. B/F/SD



Day13 Chengdu – Guilin

The highlight of the day will be a tour of the United Nation sponsored Giant Panda Research and Breeding Center. We will witness the ambitious conservation effort to save the endangered species. Eighty percent of the world's 1,000 remaining giant pandas reside in this province. We will see dozens of pandas wandering through a semi-natural domain of bamboo groves and forest. A theatre presents a movie about the evolution, habits, habitats and conservation of Pandas. We can even observe baby Pandas and cubs up close. It is the only place in the world where one can view the activities of young Pandas. A visit to the Temple of Marquis Wu is also on today's agenda. View sculptures of



famous historical personalities, memorial stones, scrolls and sacred implements. Next, through *Orient Odyssey's* "People to People Contact" program, we visit one of many traditional teahouses scattered across the city where locals recline on bamboo armchairs, play mahjong and socialize. Sample Sichuan-style afternoon tea and interact with local residences. Savor the unique panorama of Chinese social life, observing people playing cards, reading newspapers, practicing Sichuan opera, or playing Chinese chess. Our program ends at Wangjianglou – the Park of Riverview Pavilion. Check out the ancient Chongli Pavilion with its striking ornaments, green glazed tiles and red lacquered columns, surrounded by more than a hundred varieties of bamboo. A leisurely walk in the serene bamboo forest is an experience not to be missed! *China Southern Airlines'* evening flight CZ3242 will leave at 5:30 p.m., arriving in Guilin, in China's southwest at 7 p.m.. We check-in at the centrally located, 4 star, superior, *Osmanthus Hotel Guilin*. Situated in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Guilin is considered China's most scenic city. It is celebrated for her picturesque karst limestone pinnacles and the meandering Li River. One old Chinese saying describes the landscape as "*the best scenery under heaven*". Its misty limestone peaks "*rise as suddenly from the earth as trees in a forest, and surrounding the city like mountains floating in an imaginary sea*". B/L/D



Day14 Guilin

A beautiful day awaits! Guilin, literally means "cassia tree forest", named for the local cassia or osmanthus trees, whose scent wafts through the city in autumn.



Today we enjoy a cruise on the Li River, a lovely waterway meandering through and around natural masterpieces. The mirror-like surface reflects the surrounding verdant limestone peaks. Along the river banks are bamboo groves, sleepy villages, and fishermen on wooden rafts, cormorants, water buffalo and soaring karst

pinnacles. The scenery has inspired countless ancient poets through out the history and is regarded as one of the most beautiful in China. As the Tang Dynasty poet **Han Yu** wrote, “*The river like a blue silk belt, the hills like hairpins of jade.*” Our river journey ends at the famed Yangshuo, lying within a half circle of steep hills on the west bank of Li River. Stroll at our own leisure on the cobble stone street in the marketplace, lined with restaurants and handicrafts stalls, or enjoy a drink in one of numerous small cafés operated by foreign settlers who fell in love with the serene village life and decided to stay. A scenic drive brings us back to the city, passing through a karst landscape with fascinating spires, many with vertical cliffs that shoot up eerily from the flat plains. Before we return to the hotel, we will take a leisurely stroll at the Elephant Trunk Hill, a mountain shaped like an elephant sipping water, a favorite gathering place for poets and scholars in ancient times. B/L/D

Day15 Guilin – Xian

After breakfast, we will explore the massive underground network of Reed Flute Cave, observing stalactites and stalagmites in ever changing, bizarre shapes, looking like pagodas, mushrooms, lions, waterfalls and icicle chandeliers. Not to be missed is the awesome spectacle of Grand Chamber, also known as “*the Crystal Palace*”

said to be able to hold 1,000 people at once. We will see the enchanting subterranean pond at the far end, where the rocks,



bathed in soft lights, reflect in the water in a landscape much like that of the best scenery along the Li River. The next stop is the Fubo Hill. We will climb to the top and enjoy a breathtaking view of the surrounding city. In the afternoon we fly to Xian via China Eastern Airlines’ flight MU2174, departing at 4:15 p.m., arriving in Xian at 6:05 p.m.. The guide will greet and accompany us to the 5 star, luxurious, Grand New World Hotel Xian. After dinner, enjoy the evening at leisure. B/L/D

Day16 Xian

Welcome to Xian, the capital for the Middle Kingdom for eleven dynasties (from the 11th century B.C. to the 10th century A.D.), once among the world’s largest and richest

metropolises. As early as the 10th century, its population already exceeded one million. Today’s program calls for a visit to one of China’s greatest archeological discoveries – the site of the Terra Cotta Warriors and Horses. Undisturbed for 2,200 years, over 6,000 life sized clay soldiers, each with different costumes and unique facial expressions, stand underground in battle formation guarding the tomb of China’s First Emperor Qingshihuang. The figures are arranged in typical battle formation in 11 columns comprised of officers, soldiers



holding spears and swords (many of them authentic weapons), and others steering horse-drawn chariots. In 1974, a well-digging peasant serendipitously uncovered the first of three massive earthen and timber vaults. It became one of the century’s greatest archaeological finds. Archeologists unearthed life sized terra cotta warriors, each individually sculpted, with the physical characteristics of the humans they were modeled after. Also found were archers, infantrymen, horses and exquisite bronze imperial chariots. We will see a movie depicting the history and secrets of the site, and then walk on the ramp that encircles the main pit for a sweeping perspective of the excavated artifacts.

We will then watch the on-going excavations in pit number 2 and 3. In the afternoon we head to the ancient City Wall – one of the best preserved in China. The legendary Silk Road began here, which linked the Middle Kingdom and the Empire of Rome into a trading network of Silk and Tea. Next is a visit to a local farmer’s house. As part of Orient Odyssey’s “People to People Contact” program, we will interact with peasants and their family members to gain a fascinating insight into China’s rural village life. We also visit a local village school and interact with



students _____ and teachers. Tonight we will savor the local delicacy, a specially prepared Dumpling Banquet!

After dinner we enjoy a beautiful performance of Tang Dynasty Singing and Dancing. B/L/SD

Day17 Xian – Beijing

Our Hainan Airlines’ flight HU7238 will depart at 9:05 a.m., reaching Beijing at 10:45 a.m.. We

will check-in at the 4.5 star, deluxe, *Comfort Suites by Choice Hotels*, a luxurious all suite property with a central location. Over the past 1,000 years, Beijing has served as the primary residence for three major dynasties. Under the rule of Kublai Khan in the 13th century, the city was known as Khanbaliq – the City of the Khan, and it was a magnificent winter residence for the Yuan dynasty emperor. During the Ming



dynasty, which replaced the Yuan, Beijing received the layout that survives today. The Qing emperors lived in the place until the dynasty collapsed in 1911. Our sightseeing begins at the magnificent [Forbidden City](#), also called [Ta Nei](#), “[The Great Within](#)”, a 9,999 room compound, the royal residence of the imperial family for over 500 years. In 1421, after 17 years of construction, the Ming emperor Yongle moved into the new palace. Until the founding of the republic in 1911, the palace was the imperial residence and center of the Middle Kingdom during the reign of 24 emperors, from the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) until Puyi, the last emperor of the Qing dynasty, and of China. We will experience the architectural splendor of the [grand palaces and halls](#), beautiful [ceremonial courtyards](#) and exquisite [private quarters](#). An estimated 8,000 – 10,000 people once lived here, including 3,000 eunuchs, as well as maids and concubines.

Behind walls that are more than 30 ft high, and within the 160 ft broad moat, life in the Imperial Palace was dictated by complex rules and rituals. Entry was denied to ordinary people. Today gates lead to a fascinating display of Chinese history in what may be the best preserved site of classical Chinese architecture at its pinnacle. We exit the palace by walking through [the Gate of the Heavenly Peace](#) under the famed portrait of Chairman Mao, and enter [Tiananmen Square](#) – [the largest public plaza in the world](#) that can hold a million people. We [stroll across](#) its vast expanse and [see](#) an [assortment of historical buildings, monuments and 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. After dinner, we enjoy an interesting [Peking Opera Culture Performance](#) tonight. B/L/D

Day18 Beijing

A scenic drive through countryside takes us to the most famous monument in China – [the Great Wall](#). The “original” wall was built in the 5th century BC to exclude foreign invaders. Construction continued for centuries, eventually linking up the walls of the former independent kingdoms. The Great Wall stretches through China’s northern mountain ranges from Yellow Sea to the Gobi Desert – a distance of over 3,500 miles. We will enjoy ample time to [walk the wall at our own pace](#), and take in the enormity of this edifice. From the high points we can



[view the breathtaking scenery](#), where the mighty wall climbs and descends a lovely mountain landscape. On route back to the city, we will visit a [cloisonné factory](#) and observe the painstaking labor intensive procedure, creating unbelievable art pieces. This afternoon we explore the idyllic [Summer Palace](#) - the “[Garden of Cultivated Harmony](#)” built by the notorious Empress Dowager Cixi, using money intended for the creation of a naval fleet. Originally a concubine of the third rank, Cixi had placed herself on the Dragon Throne after the death of the emperor and ruled in an unscrupulous and self-centered way for 50 years, initially in the name of her young child. By deploying young women and other earthly distractions, she kept him away from matters of government until his death at the age of 18. Bypassing the legal inheritance, she installed her young nephew as emperor and governed from “behind the throne”



until he was of age. She then retired to the Summer Palace, but continued to meddle in court politics until she died in 1908. We will [explore this beautiful imperial resort, with its temples, lakes and pavilions](#). [Enjoy a leisurely stroll](#) through the [Long Corridor](#) – of light wooden construction and decorated with painted scenes from Chinese mythology. The

2,572 ft covered pathway runs parallel to the Northern shore of the picturesque [Kunming Lake](#) to a decorated [marble boat](#) where Ci Xi, looking out over the lake, took tea. On route return to the city we take a [picture stop](#) in front of the famous 2008 [Beijing Olympic Venues: The Bird Nest](#) and [Water Cube](#). B/L/D

Day19 Beijing

A highlight in the morning will be a [Rickshaw ride](#) through old Beijing's atmospheric [Hutongs](#), a network of centuries old courtyard homes and narrow lanes that once pervaded the traditional city, once the center of daily life for Beijing citizens



living outside the Imperial Palace. Each Hutong once has its own community with its own history. The alleys - some are so narrow that only one person can walk by at a time - are usually flanked by the gates and walls of [siheyuan](#) - [the traditional courtyard homes](#). Passing through maze like alleyways, we observe locals go about their daily life. At the road side elders are playing a game of Chinese chess or mahjong. Shopkeepers are selling traditional snacks like *jian bing* (pancakes) and *baozi* (steamed buns). Enjoy *Orient Odyssey's* "People to People Contact" program, we will [visit an old courtyard home, chatting with residents](#). The clash of new and old are apparent: with the capital's rapid development, Hutong, along with the century old life styles are disappearing fast. The program also includes a visit to a local [Kindergarten](#). Enjoy the performances by talented youngsters. Mingle with teachers and learn how China's education system effect the country's future generations. No tour of Beijing would be complete without a visit to the [Temple of Heaven](#) - the most magnificent building in the imperial capital, representing the pinnacle of ancient Chinese architecture. We will go to the massive round shaped wooden [Qinian Dian](#),

"Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests", constructed without the use of a single nail. Its three levels are covered with deep blue tiles that symbolize the color of heaven. The roof is supported by 28 pillars: the four largest ones in the centre represent the four seasons and the double ring of 12 represent



the 12 months and the traditional divisions of the Chinese day, each comprising two hours. This is the best place in Beijing to watch early morning enthusiasts of Taichi, Gongfu, calligraphy, ballroom dancing, badminton, Peking opera and kite flying. The tour will end at [Antique Market](#) where we can hunt for exquisite souvenirs and bargains. Tonight we enjoy the delicious farewell dinner. The multi-plate feast includes the famous local flavor dish of [Peking Duck](#), roasted to the crispy perfection. Red wine is on us! B/L/SD

Day20 Beijing - USA

After breakfast, we savor the memory of our [Grand China and Tibet Odyssey](#), and board homebound flight, arriving in USA on the same day. B/F

*Optional Extension

Our programs are flexible! You can extend your stay in Beijing to explore more historic highlights, or shop for antiques at local markets. Or, travel on to Hong Kong, Macau or even Mongolia! Please contact us for more information.

*International Flights

Orient Odyssey features [Northwest / Delta Airlines](#), [China Eastern Airlines](#), [Asiana Airlines](#) or [Korean Airlines](#) as the international carrier for this package. Based on your departure cities and tour logistics, Orient Odyssey reserves the right to secure other major international carrier for your journey. Flight arrangements will be finalized at least 60 days before departure.

*Sample int'l flight schedules are as follows - note schedules are subject to change:

From Los Angeles (LAX):

DEP:	NW001	Los Angeles - Tokyo	1255 / 1630
	NW025	Tokyo - Shanghai	1840 / 2105
RTN:	NW030	Beijing - Tokyo	0855 / 1405
	NW002	Tokyo - Los Angeles	1545 / 0915

From San Francisco (SFO):

DEP	NW027	SFO - Tokyo	1340 / 1705
	NW025	Tokyo - Shanghai	1840 / 2105
RTN	NW030	Beijing - Tokyo	0855 / 1405
	NW028	Tokyo - SFO	1600 / 0915

From New York (JFK):

DEP	NW1561	New York - Detroit	0900 / 1107
	NW025	Detroit - Shanghai	1415 / 2105
RTN	NW088	Beijing - Seattle	0930 / 0540
	DL162	Seattle - New York	1233 / 2100

***Note**

Fuel surcharges and taxes are subject to change. Due to lowered fuel cost, actual fuel surcharge might be less than quoted. Updated and accurate amount will be advised before the final payment due date. Tour cost is quoted based on current foreign exchange rate as of Dec 1, 2008. Price is guaranteed once full payment is received.

Kindly refer to General Terms & Conditions

To inquire, please feel free to call

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