

China Itinerary

Program Summary

Destinations	China <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beijing • Luoyang • Chengde 	Trip Highlights
Learning Focus	Education Cultural Interaction Ancient Cultures Martial Arts Modern Art Comparative Religion Body Mechanics	
Program Length	16 days	
Accommodations	Hotels Student Quarters at Shaolin School	
Travel Timeframe	July 2010 <i>For current travel dates please go to www.discoverystudentadventures.com</i>	

Daily Highlights

Day 1: Depart the U.S.

- Greet your fellow travelers in your departure city before boarding your international flight to Beijing, China.

Day 2: En route

- Lose a day as you cross the International Date Line en route to Beijing, China.

Day 3: Beijing

- Arrive in Beijing and begin your exploration of this enigmatic city.
- Practice Tai Chi with a lesson from a master. Tai Chi is an internal Chinese martial art practiced for holistic health reasons. The Chinese feel they need to remain in motion, especially as they age, to promote health and longevity. Groups of people practice Tai Chi together every morning in parks all over China as you will soon witness.

Overnight: Beijing

Day 4: Beijing

- Meet one of the pioneers in “Ping Pong Diplomacy,” Mr. Zhuang Zedong, and learn about his unique story as one of the athletes responsible for the beginnings of Ping Pong diplomacy.
- Experience the scale of Tiananmen Square, the largest open public square in the world, entry to the Imperial City and the Forbidden City.
- Explore the Forbidden City. Built during AD 1406-1420, it is the world’s largest and best-preserved Imperial Palace. As you cross threshold after threshold, you come closer to the inner courtyards that were once only open to members of the Imperial household. Learn the significance to the creatures that reside along the rooflines, and the dragons that wind among the paving stones to China’s history and culture.

Overnight: Beijing

Day 5: Beijing

- This morning, visit the National Stadium, known as the “Bird Nest”. This amazing and modern structure was the site of the historic 2008 Olympics opening ceremony. Further your Olympic exploration and survey of modern engineering at the National Aquatics Center, also known as the “Water Cube.” The unique outer covering of the Water Cube allows more light and heat penetration than traditional glass, resulting in a significant decrease in energy costs.
- Meet and observe Chinese athletes who are training for the upcoming 2012 Olympics. Speak with the coaches who help these men and women strive for their Olympic dreams.

Overnight: Beijing

Day 6: Beijing - Chengde

- Hike one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World – the Great Wall of China. The wall, which is not continuous but actually built in multiple sections, extends for over 3,000 miles. Though only hiking a portion of the wall, be prepared for an arduous hike over rough terrain, as the stone work is rough hewn and thousands of years old.

Overnight: Chengde

Day 7: Chengde

- Visit Puning Temple, often nicknamed “Big Buddha Temple” because it houses the world’s tallest Buddha. Then explore Puning Temple’s grand-scale neighbor, the Putuo Temple.
- Meet a lama who will teach you about Buddhism and share details of his daily life.
- Traverse the Imperial Walls of the Summer Mountain Resort in Chengde and take in breathtaking vistas of the once forbidden-to-commoners imperial garden of China’s royal families.

Overnight: Chengde

Day 8: Chengde-Beijing

- Journey back through the Chinese countryside with its views of dark mountains, extensive fields and the occasional pagoda-topped building. Work on your conversational Chinese as your guide uses this time to walk you through more phrases to use while you explore China.
- Brave a wild ride through the labyrinth of old Beijing, the Hutongs, by rickshaw. In recent history, many of the Hutongs have been demolished to make way for modern progress and motor vehicle friendly streets. However, the remaining have begun to be designated as protected in an attempt to preserve this aspect of Chinese cultural history. Conservation and preservation can be an important part of protecting our cultural resources, as well as our natural resources.

Overnight: Beijing

Day 9: Beijing

- Spend your morning brightening the lives of the Songtang Hospice children who will benefit from the interaction and excitement of English-speaking visitors. Take part in an interactive service project to enrich the benefit of your visit even further. This may include facility maintenance/repair, a collaborative art project, or another activity appropriate to this meaningful encounter.
- Experience 798 Chinese Contemporary, Beijing's most active art enclave dedicated to showcasing the works of contemporary Chinese artists. Chinese contemporary art had a more hidden history until the past decade, and considered too risky for even Chinese collectors. However, contemporary Chinese art has established itself in international, as well as domestic, markets.
- Discover the one thing you cannot miss while in Beijing, their local specialty, the Duck Dinner.

Overnight: Beijing

Day 10: Beijing

- Find enlightenment at the Temple of Heaven. This complex was visited by the Emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties for annual ceremonies of prayer to Heaven for good harvest. Though considered a Taoist temple, the Chinese heaven worship performed there pre-dates Taoism.
- Learn from the experts, the local Chinese enthusiasts, the art of kite flying. Kites were thought to be invented in China in around 200 BC; originally as a war machine in the Han dynasty.
- This afternoon, help the children of a local orphanage with their English skills. English is becoming popular in China as a second language, since the further opening of China's economy to Western markets. Many Chinese parents believe part of preparing their children for future success in their chosen career path are English language lessons. Children within group homes do not have as many opportunities as other children, and the chance to further their language skills with native speakers is a welcome and beneficial one not often afforded to them.
- Embark on an overnight train through the Chinese countryside.

Overnight: Beijing–Luoyang Overnight Train

Day 11: Luoyang

- Transcend the everyday while immersing yourself in the beauty of the Longmen Grotto and its carvings. One of the most important Buddhist sculptures in China, the site resembles dozens of honeycombs with approximately 2,000 grottoes and niches, over 40 crematory urns and thousands of stone tablets and Buddhist images and statues.
- Welcome to the Shaolin Tagou Martial Art School where you will be a student for the next few days and be introduced to the art of Kung fu. You will be living side by side with Chinese students and staying in their dormitory with them. You will share meals as well as community chores with your Chinese counterparts.

Overnight Highlight: Student Quarters at Shaolin Tagou Martial Art School

Day 12-14: Luoyang

- Begin your introduction to the art and mechanics of Chinese Kung fu. Attend your lessons and practice as diligently as the Chinese students over the next few days.
- Learn the body mechanics and mental focus behind the physical motions. Witness demonstrations of more advanced students that will challenge your perception of the potential of the human body.
- Help with the maintenance of the facilities alongside the other students in such tasks as sweeping courtyards.
- Meet with a Shaolin monk and learn more about the spiritual side of this experience, as well as Shaolin's place in traditional Chinese belief systems.

Overnight Highlight: Student Quarters at Shaolin Tagou Martial Art School

Day 15: Shaolin-Luoyang-Beijing

- Say farewell during a closing ceremony this morning and participate in a demonstration of Kung fu alongside the Chinese students
- Afternoon return to Luoyang and overnight train to Beijing

Overnight: Luoyang–Beijing Overnight Train

Day 16: Depart for U.S.

- Transfer to airport for your flight home