

The Best of China



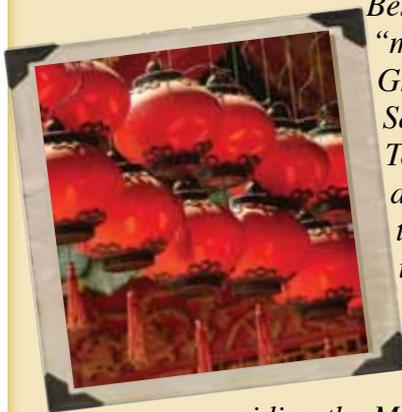
DELUXE YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE - GREAT WALL OF CHINA - TERRA COTTA SOLDIERS - AND SO MUCH MORE!

OCTOBER 17 - 29, 2012
13 DAYS

HIGHLIGHTS

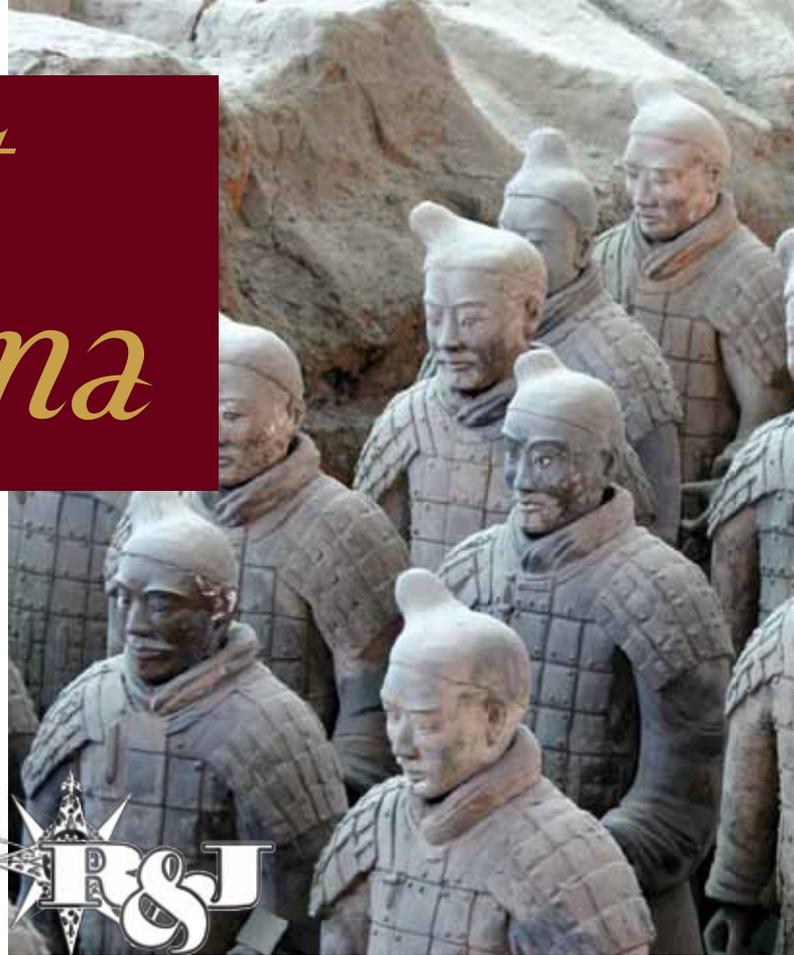
Cruising on the Yangtze River, China's greatest river, has been a dream for many Americans. Make your own dream come true on this memorable tour, which offers you an exciting journey on a 3-night Yangtze Cruise through the splendid Three Gorges as well as visits to China's top three must-see cities: Beijing, Xian, and Shanghai.

This trip features an all inclusive package tour that includes roundtrip transpacific airfare, intra-China transportation and transfers, first class hotel accommodations with American buffet breakfast, and a 3-night Yangtze cruise aboard China's official 5-star cruiser with a private balcony. Plus escorted, private sightseeing tours operated by professional tour manager and local guides, bountiful meals representing China's regional flavors, evening shows per itinerary, and more!

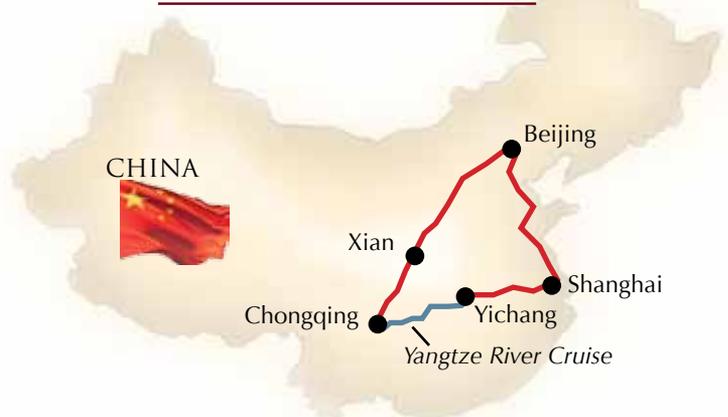


Besides the visits to the "must see" sites such as Great Wall, Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City, Terra-cotta Warriors, and Three Gorges Dam, this tour also has some unique features such as local family home visit in Beijing with home hosted lunch,

riding the Maglev, the world's fastest magnetic levitation train in Shanghai, and an included Suzhou – China's famed water town.



MAP AT A GLANCE



Day 1 - Home to Beijing

Depart Mpls/St. Paul Int'l Airport for our flights to Beijing. En route, cross the International Date Line.

Included Meals: Inflight Meals (2)

Day 2 - 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.

Hotel: Marriott Beijing City Wall

Day 3 - 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. 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. Welcome dinner tonight, you savor a specially prepared meal of Beijing Duck, cooked to crispy perfection.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4 - 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.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5 - Beijing to 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 nail, 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. Later, you take photo stop at the "Bird Nest" and visit the exterior portion of this magnificent complex — the main stadium of 2008 Beijing Olympics. After lunch, you tour the idyllic Summer Palace, with its sprawling encampment of temples, pavilions, the marble boat, and the 728-yard Long Corridor. Enjoy a boat ride on Kunming Lake (Not available in winter season). Later, transfer to the airport for a flight to Xian to experience the historical side of your China trip. Located in the Yellow River Basin in China's heartland, Xian is one of the birthplaces of civilization. It has seen 3,100 years of development and 11 dynasties, giving it equal fame with Athens, Rome and Cairo as one of the four major ancient civilization capitals. Xian reached its peak during the Tang Dynasty at 10th century with a population of one million and is rich with cultural and historical significances.

Hotel: Xian Grand Noble Hotel

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6 - Xian

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 visit a workshop that produces the replica Terra-cotta Warriors. Lunch at a local restaurant, followed by an ex-



citing excursion 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 feast of culinary and cultural delights with a special Dumpling (dim sum) banquet followed by a fascinating 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.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7 - Xian to Chongqing – Yangtze Cruise

After breakfast, you are transferred to the airport for a flight to Chongqing, one of China's largest cities with a population of over 30 million. During WWII, Chongqing was China's wartime capital. U.S. General Stillwell was the Commander of the US Forces here and the "Flying Tigers" was also based in Chongqing. Time permitting, you visit Chongqing's Old Town. This is one of China's most naturally preserved, active old towns. Explore Ming and Qing dynasty courtyard homes. Later, you board M.V. President Prime with private balcony. Settle into your cabin and check out the numerous amenities on board. The Yangtze River originates on the Tibetan Plateau and traverses a distance of 3900 miles before flowing into the East China Sea, near Shanghai. It is the third longest river in the world, after the Amazon and the Nile. With over 700 tributaries, the Yangtze River has been the lifeline and major commercial thoroughfare in China for millennia.

Ship: M.V. President Prime

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8 - Yangtze River Cruise

Your cruiser sets sail early in the morning and later stops at Fengdu. You then take a shore excursion to explore China's city of Ghosts, where all souls are said to return here to accept final judgments



after their death. You visit temples and shrines dedicated to the gods of the underworld and other landmarks including Ghost Torturing Pass, Last-glance-at-home Tower, and Nothing-to-be-done Bridge. Depends on the water level and sail schedule, you may alternatively visit the Snow Cave, nature's subterranean wonder filled with stalactites and stalagmites. Back onboard in the afternoon, your cruise continues and enters Qutang Gorge – the shortest, narrowest and probably the most fascinating of the three, noted for its fantastic scenery resembling an elegant Chinese painted scroll. Tonight is Captain's welcome banquet.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9 - Yangtze River Cruise

Another day of incredible views awaits you upon entering Wu Gorge. The softly layered peaks form a surreal backdrop as the ship courses through the rugged canyons. So sheer are the cliffs that it is said the sun rarely penetrates. Wu Gorge, celebrated for its twelve misty peaks soaring above, has been the inspiration of Chinese painters and poets throughout the centuries. The most famous is Goddess Peak, which resembles the figure of a maiden kneeling in front of a pillar. She is believed to be the embodiment of Yao Ji, the 23rd daughter of the Queen Mother of the West. Yao Ji, accompanied by 11 fairy handmaidens, was sent to oversee the Jade Pool of the Western Heaven, and end up staying there to protect the boats from the dangerous rapids. These 12 maidens became the 12 sentinel peaks of Wu Gorge. You then change to the "peapod" boat for a trip up the crystal-clear Daning River through its magnificent Lesser Three Gorges to experience the excitement and awe of bygone days of river travel in China. Notice the ruins of the ancient plank road along the cliff face as well as the coffins of the Ba people suspended from the cliffs above. The contrasting heights of these gorges and the narrowness of the river make this area one of the most dramatic scenes in the world. Tonight you have a dinner featuring local cuisine and enjoy onboard entertainment.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10 - Yichang to Shanghai

Your memorable cruise continues as you enter the spectacular Xiling Gorge. Choose your vantage point as the ship transits the five stage shiplocks, the largest shiplock in the world. Your cruiser makes a brief stop at Sandouping, the site of modern China's most ambitious engineering project – the construction of the Three Gorges Dam and Hydroelectric Power Plant. View the current phase of this 17 year project. When completed, the dam will be 610 feet high and over a mile wide. The hydroelectrical power plant will be driven by the world's largest turbines and have the generating capacity of 18 nuclear power plants. A reservoir 372 miles long will be created, with the end result of displacing 1.5 million people, submerging 1000s of their towns and villages and wiping out numerous archaeological sites. Whole cities have been relocated, precious topsoil brought to higher elevations and centuries-old lifestyles altered forever. Disembark at Yichang, the terminus of your memorable Yangtze cruise, you board a flight to Shanghai, 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."

Hotel: Pullman Skyway Shanghai

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Inflight Meal

Day 11 - Shanghai

Walk along the Bund, the elegant riverside promenade which symbolized European and foreign influence and affluence in the 1930s. 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. Then visit the futurist Pudong area. Transformed from once fertile farmland, this new area, is rapidly becoming the symbol of modern China with its world class hotels, international financial institutions, and commercial centers. Enjoy a stunning view of Shanghai from the 88th floor of the Jinmao Tower, the tallest building in China. At 1,380 feet, it is the world's third tallest building, as well as home to the world's tallest hotel, the Grand Hyatt Shanghai. In the afternoon, visit 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, etc. After dinner, attend an unforgettable performance of the Shanghai Acrobats.
Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12 - Suzhou & Tongli

After breakfast, you travel by motor coach to the fabled water town of Suzhou. Suzhou is often referred, by the Chinese, as the "Venice of the East." It is a 2,500-year-old city renowned the world over for its traditional gardens, ancient canals and silk worm production. In 1997 Suzhou was designated an UNESCO World Heritage Site. The construction of the Grand Canal created a means whereby goods 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. Elaborate gardens were built. Visit the Garden of the Master of Fishing Nets, and experience all of the elements of a classical Chinese garden. In the afternoon, tour the Silk Spinning Mill, where you will learn how silk is created from the mulberry-munching silkworms to produce thread and fine cloth. Marco Polo once reported that so much precious silk was produced in Suzhou that every citizen was clothed in it. Later, you travel to Tongli, another unique water village, in the region. 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 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. Afterwards, you travel back to Shanghai.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 13 - Shanghai to Beijing to Home

We will board the Maglev, the world's fastest magnetic levitation train, for your trip to the Shanghai Pudong International Airport. The Maglev travels at a speed of 287mph and will cover the 20 mile distance in less than 8 minutes! Then board your return flights for home.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Passport & Visa is required. R&J Tours will be taking care of the China Visa for you. The fee per person is \$170.00. For your convenience while on tour, we have detailed ALL Gratuities for this trip, \$175.00 per person. This should be paid at final payment date.



2012 TOUR DATES & PRICES:

DATES:	October 17 - 29, 2012 (13 Days)
PRICE PER PERSON:	\$4295 Double \$5050 Single
PRICE INCLUDES:	RT Airfare including taxes, fuel surcharges, & baggage fees! 33 Meals including inflight meals, Hotels, Cruise & Activities as stated
DEPOSIT DUE PER PERSON:	\$200 pp deposit at time of reservation, Full payment is due August 3, 2012.
OPTIONAL TRAVEL PROTECTION PP:	\$305 double (per person) / \$407 single
TOUR PACE:	Moderate Walking

R&J TRAVEL BUCKS \$55 Travel Bucks Earned With This Tour

1-800-758-6877 or www.rjtoursonline.com