

CHINA WITH YANGTZE CRUISE

18 DAYS



Travel to the sophisticated city of Hong Kong, in a league of its own. *The Economist* magazine lists Hong Kong as one of the leading cities in the world for best values in luxury goods. Have lunch in Stanley, a district with a fascinating history; take the Peak Tram up to Victoria Peak for a magnificent view of the city and harbor. Travel to China, a country long closed to westerners.

Fly to Guilin, and cruise on the peaceful Li Jiang River, where stunning limestone spires stand guard like sentinels at the river banks. Journey on to Shanghai, often referred to as the "Queen"; its past has been very colorful, but its future promises to be even greater.

Cruise on the Yangtze River and see the majesty of the Three Gorges before they are submerged by the world's largest dam, due to be completed in 2009. Travel to Bingmayong and stand before the 6,000 terracotta warriors at the grand tomb, Qin Shihuang Ling. In Beijing visit the "Forbidden City" and Tian'anmen Square. Walk along the Great Wall.

- Each departure limited to 16 guests
- Luxury hotels or best in each location and cabin 'M/S East Queen'
- 44 à la carte meals (table d'hôte, if unavailable)
- Beverages of your choice with meals except on cruise
- Professionally escorted
- All sightseeing, including entrance fees and special events as indicated in the itinerary
- Arrival and departure transfer by private car
- All gratuities (also your tour manager's) except to ship's crew
- Porterage
- Airport departure taxes

Day 1

USA – HONG KONG

Depart the USA on your flight bound for Hong Kong.

Day 2

HONG KONG

Flying westward across the international dateline, you arrive in Hong Kong in the early evening; upon arrival at the city's new airport, you travel by private car to your hotel, the **Regent**, overlooking Victoria Harbor.

It is located in the city's best location – directly on the waterfront promenade,

where the world watched *The Britannia* depart that 1997 evening with the last English governor and Prince Charles aboard. The lights of the city are visible through the three-story glass wall in the polished rose granite lobby decorated with priceless Asian art.

Unwind from your long flight by relaxing in the mezzanine lounge, with its dramatic view, or in the privacy of your own room, which has a similar view of the city lights. Your sleeping accommodations feature floor-to-ceiling windows, Japanese wallpaper, Tai Ping carpets, Thai silk spreads and cushions, and marble baths with large sunken tubs.

Day 3

HONG KONG

This glamorous city is a fascinating mixture of peoples and styles. Although it is certainly one of the world's most modern cities, it still has neighborhoods that have maintained old ways. After breakfast, you set out to explore the various districts. Crossing the harbor on the Star Ferry to the northern tip of Hong Kong Island, you take a Peak Tram ride up to Victoria Peak for a breathtaking view of the Harbor and the South China Sea.

Then, you drive to Stanley, one of Hong Kong's oldest settlements. Along the traffic-free lanes of Stanley market, cottages and shops have been converted into well-stocked boutiques selling a wide range of clothing, porcelain, rattan ware

and other crafts. After lunch, along the beach at Repulse Bay (named after a British ship), you continue on to the ancient fishing port of Aberdeen. Here, brightly decorated trawlers double as floating homes for local families.

This evening, join your travel companions for dinner at **Lai Ching Heen**, featuring the best Cantonese cuisine in Hong Kong, and a favorite restaurant of master chef Alain Ducasse. (B,L,D)



Sani woman

Day 4**HONG KONG – GUILIN**

This morning is yours to relax or shop. Tsimshatsui remains the most popular shopping district, the stores here cover the full spectrum of quality and value. The complex at Ocean Terminal also offers a huge selection of retailers.

In the afternoon, you fly to Guilin; the name means “cassia tree forest” named for the local trees of the same name. From the air, you can see the agricultural plains (rice is the main crop) adjacent to hills and periodic clumps of bamboo. Guilin itself is a relatively new city; the entire city was razed by the Japanese army in World War II. But it is the intriguing scenery that draws people here – Chinese citizens have recently declared Guilin second among China’s ten most scenic spots. The stunning scenery here is the result of geological disruptions several hundred million years ago. Limestone forms were pushed up through an ancient sea bed; rain and wind eroded the hills to create shapes that make a surreal landscape.

You check into the **Sheraton Guilin Hotel**, facing the Li River near the town’s center. Relax by the pool or in the garden courtyard before dinner. Your à la carte dinner selections are made at the hotel’s Chinese restaurant, offering fine food and live traditional music. (B,L,D)

Day 5**GUILIN – YANGSHUO – GUILIN**

“The river is like a green silk belt, and the hills are like turquoise jade hairpins.” (source unknown) This morning you take a boat excursion on the clear, picture-perfect Li Jiang River from Guilin to the ancient village of Yangshuo, 40 miles to the south. The Li River wanders around hundreds of majestic limestone peaks (some are rounded, others have sharp peaks) that rise sharply beside the glassy surface of the river. Poets have referred to some of these cliffs with such names as “Mighty Lion Riding a Carp”, “Magic Writing Brush”, “Camel Crossing a River”, and “Mitten Mountain”.

Your return to Guilin is by car; enroute, you stop at Fubo Hill, named after a Han dynasty general who saved Guilin from a rebel army and see a two-ton bronze bell. You learn of the legend about the dragon in the Returned Pearl Cave. After dinner in Guilin, explore the night markets for souvenirs. (B,L,D)

Day 6**GUILIN – SHANGHAI**

After a leisurely morning, you fly to Shanghai; at various times this city has been called “Paris of China” and “Queen of

*Li River, Guilin*

the Orient”. It has a very colorful past; today it is being groomed to be the “new Hong Kong”. This afternoon, you visit the new and impressive Shanghai Museum; there are numerous fascinating exhibits of paintings, sculpture, ceramics, jade, furniture, and coins. The bronze collection here is considered by experts to be the best in the world.

You check into the **Portman Ritz-Carlton Hotel**, one of the most refined hotels in Shanghai. The attention provided by the staff and the à la carte menus at the hotel’s restaurants are truly world class. (B,D)

Day 7**SHANGHAI**

Distinctly a city of commerce, the region was already a trading center in 960 AD, flourishing and becoming an important trading port – gateway to the mighty Yangtze River (also known as the Huangpu Jiang). Today, your city sightseeing includes the Bund – the road running parallel to the western bank of the Yangtze. The Europeans, Americans, and Japanese had banks, trading houses, clubs, consulates, and hotels here. The Communist Party subsequently took over these buildings; but now the government has renovated these lovely 1930’s neo-classical buildings.

In the center of the Old City, you visit the Yuyuan Gardens, which took 18 years to create in the mid-16th century. At the adjoining Bazaar, you see more than 100 specialty shops and restaurants set along narrow lanes.

Shanghai is home to China’s best acrobatic troupe; and tonight, you attend one of their astonishing performances at the Shanghai Center Theater. (B,D)

Day 8**SHANGHAI – SUZHOU – SHANGHAI**

You board a train this morning for a short ride westward from the city to visit quaint Suzhou, known as the town of gardens and canals. Tucked behind houses and hidden along narrow streets are charming little gardens. Small islands are connected by canals and zigzag bridges; winding paths lead to tiny spaces with fountains, manicured plants, and fish ponds.

There are records as early as 484 BC that mention Suzhou; it was capital of the state of Wu for a short time. In the early 6th century, it flourished as a trading and silk-manufacturing center. Many officials, scholars, and artists settled here; and local traders became wealthy. The more than 150 gardens date from this period of great prosperity. You visit the silk embroidery



The Bund, Shanghai

institute before returning to Shanghai. (B,L)

Day 9

SHANGHAI – YICHANG – YANGTZE RIVER

You fly to the town of Yichang and board the cruise ship “East King” (or “East Queen”); commissioned in 1995, it is one of the newest vessels sailing the Yangtze River. Beginning in the glaciers of Tibet and joined by numerous tributaries, the Yangtze (“Long River”) flows almost 4,000 miles through the heart of the country eastward to Shanghai and empties into the East China Sea. It has been an important trade and transportation route since ancient times. Sailing on this river compares to cruising the Nile River, through landscape similar to the Grand Canyon; the towering peaks along the Yangtze rise as high as 930 feet.

Progress can be a double-edged sword. While there will be benefits to the interior provinces that have lagged behind the economic growth seen on the coast, over one million people must relocate their homes. Thirteen cities, 140 towns, 1,352 villages, 657 factories, 66,000 acres of cultivated land, as well as many historical relics and archaeological sites, will be submerged under water when the new dam is completed. It will be more than one mile wide and 600 feet high; upon its completion in 2009, a reservoir over 350 miles long will be created.

Settle into your private cabin before joining your fellow travelers in the lounge. In the evening, your ship enters the

enormous lock at Gezhou Ba Dam (currently one of China’s largest dams) as you begin your journey upriver toward Chongqing. (B,L,D)

Day 10

YANGTZE CRUISE – THREE GORGES (SANXIA)

This morning, you pass Sandouping, where work on the new hydroelectric dam has already begun; when completed, it will be the world’s largest. The majesty of the renowned Three Gorges – 75 miles in length – is unique; however, it will be lost forever with the completion of the Three Gorges Dam.

The first of the gorges (and longest at 41 miles) is Xiling; it is known for its swift currents and whirlpools. It actually consists of several smaller gorges. You see the Yellow Hill Temple overlooking the southern riverbank. You pass the Fragrant River, clearly visible by its green waters in contrast to the brown Yangtze. (B,L,D)

Day 11

YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE

You continue cruising up the Yangtze, you pass the city of the White Emperor (Baidi Cheng) and the town of Fengjie, both areas are famous for their succulent green oranges. You pass the town of Wanxian with its steep staircase leading upward from the river edge – all these will be submerged with the completion of the dam.

Later in the day, you come to Shibaozhai (Stone Treasure Stronghold). There is a legend about the 18th-century stone temple here – rice trickled through a small hole in the temple wall and fed the resident monks. However, when the monks enlarged the hole in an attempt to obtain more rice, the “treasure” dried up. (B,L,D)

Day 12

CHONGQING – XI’AN

The ship docks at the 2,000-year-old mountain city of Chongqing, built on a rocky promontory overlooking the point where the Yangtze and Zialing Rivers join.

Chiang Kaishek led his Nationalist government during World War II from this city.

You visit the old city area around Liberation Square full of small meandering alleys; steep steps lead down to the river edge. The houses are built into the slopes; often the front doors are actually on the top floor and the lower floors overlook the river. Nearly 85% of the new reservoir behind the Three Gorges Dam will fall within the city limits of Chongqing.

Later, you board your flight to Xi’an; capital of Shaanxi Province. During the Tang dynasty (618-907) Xi’an was the largest city in the world. The Silk Road linked the city to central Asia and Europe; thousands of traders lived here. The walls that surrounded the city during the Tang dynasty no longer exist, although portions of the wall built during the Ming dynasty still stand in the city center. Work is underway to reconstruct the 40-foot high walls, as well as the moat outside the wall.

You visit the Shaanxi History Museum, housed in a beautiful Chinese-style building, which has very impressive exhibits of pottery from the Ming and Qing dynastries, and Shang and Zhou bronze cooking vessels in addition to tools from the Palaeolithic and Neolithic ages.

Your hotel here is the **Hyatt Regency Xi’an**, without question the best hotel in the city, conveniently located within the old city wall near the heart of the shopping district. The elegant setting includes atriums, multi-tiered fountains, and expansive greenery. Join your companions for dinner this evening in the restaurant here, which features a wide selection of Chinese cuisine. (B,L,D)

Day 13

XI’AN

Today you take an excursion to see the underground terra-cotta army of Bingmayong. This display is only part of a grand tomb built by Emperor Qin. Pit number 1 contains 6,000 life-size warriors and horses. The figurines are lined up in neat lines; many hold authentic weapons.



M/S East King

The head of each soldier had been copied with the features of his live counterpart. Once, it was customary to bury the slaves of aristocrats when their masters died. When this practice was banned, the slave-owners began using figurines as funerary objects. Pits number 2 and 3 are smaller, but also feature figures in battle formation. Excavation is continuing, and you can watch the work in progress.

In an adjacent museum, you see a stunning model of a Qin dynasty bronze chariot with horses and coachman similar to those used by the Emperor during his inspection tours of the countryside.

There are also surveys which support the existence here of an immense necropolis of all of China in miniature, underneath a 154-foot hill. Old records indicate the ceiling of this buried necropolis is studded with jewels and mercury was pumped in to create flowing "rivers". (High contents of mercury have been found in soil tests.) It is not yet known if the entire area will be excavated; twelve villages and half a dozen factories would have to be relocated. (B,L,D)

Day 14

Xi'an – BEIJING

Traveling northeast from Xi'an this morning, you fly to Beijing. The city of Beijing is laid out in a grid according to ancient feng shui principles. Feng shui (literally "wind" and "water") is a combination of traditional spiritual laws that are followed to attract good luck and prevent bad fortune. Masters of feng shui are consulted to advise on designs of buildings and layout of one's home and office. The theories are primarily based on the principle of *qi* – life's spirit - which is divided into *yin* and *yang*. Beijing lies on a plain bordered on the north by hills topped by the Great Wall and open to the south, an auspicious direction, as it is toward the south that the generosity and warmth of yang is thought to reside. All the important buildings in the old city face south, protected from harmful influences of the north.

Your hotel, **The Palace**, is located close to the Forbidden City. You enter at mid level of a five-level atrium enhanced with a cascading fountain, pale wood trim, and subtle marble. Dining this evening is a treat in one of the several restaurants at the hotel; select from excellent Cantonese, Chiu Chow, and Sichuan entrees, as well as International dishes. (B,L,D)

Day 15

BEIJING

Beijing has been the primary center for three major dynasties over the past 1,000 years. It was the winter residence for the Yuan dynasty emperor. The layout of the city was designed during the Ming dynasty, which replaced the Yuan. The Qing emperors lived in the palace until the dynasty collapsed in 1912. But the history of the surrounding area goes back much further - the discovery of "Peking Man" is proof that prehistoric humans were settled in the area more than 500,000 years ago.

This morning, you go to Tian'anmen Square – large enough to hold one million people – to visit the Imperial Palace (the "Forbidden City") where you see the biggest and best preserved grouping of ancient buildings in China. There are numerous monuments from China's past and present: the Gate of Heavenly Peace, the Great Hall of the People, the Mao Mausoleum. (B,L,D)

ACCOMMODATIONS

Hong Kong – The Regent (2 nights), *Condé Nast Traveler Gold List '01*

Exceptional service, meticulous attention to detail and superb facilities are the perfect complement to a supremely convenient location poised at the edge of magnificent Victoria Harbor. It is recognized as one of the world's best hotels

Guilin – Sheraton Guilin Hotel (2)

Nestled on the banks of the Li River amid lush, tree-lined avenues, the Sheraton Guilin Hotel offers high standards of service, fine cuisine, and excellent facilities to travelers visiting this fascinating city. It is just moments away from the lively and colorful evening market.

Shanghai – Portman Ritz-Carlton (3)

In 1998, the distinctive elegance and high standards for which Ritz-Carlton Hotels are known were introduced to China with the opening of this hotel on famous Nanjing Road. Personalized service make the hotel the address of choice for discerning travelers.

Yangtze River cruise – 'M/S East King' (3)

Enjoy an exterior cabin (180 sq.ft.) with all the amenities one can expect from a state-of-the-art ship.

Xi'an – Shangri-La Golden Flower (2)

Xi'an's easy international 5-star hotel. Spacious, luxuriously appointed rooms feature all the modern amenities. A remarkable setting, close to the business and shopping districts, and convenient to the famous Terracotta Warriors Museum.

Beijing – The Palace (4), *Condé Nast Traveler Gold List '01*

Within easy walking distance of the Forbidden City, Tian'anmen Square, and the Museum of Chinese History, this hotel is in the very center of Beijing, between the main shopping districts of Wangfujing and Dongdan. There is a wonderful selection of dining options including Cantonese, Italian, Bavarian, and International cuisine.



Terra cotta warriors, Xi'an

FOR RESERVATIONS, PLEASE TELEPHONE TOLL FREE: 1-888-377-8023



The Great Wall

Day 16

BEIJING – GREAT WALL

Today, you drive north out of the busy city to visit the famed Great Wall, a spiney-backed “dragon” that winds through five provinces, two autonomous regions and up into the Gobi Desert. The very earliest sections of the wall were built in the fifth century BC; but these segments were all connected and extended around 200 BC during the Qing dynasty. From the high points of the wall, the views of the city are magnificent.

Of the dynasties for whom Beijing has been the capital, only the Ming tombs in the peaceful Tianshan Mountain Valley are near the city. (The Qing tombs are 80 miles to the northeast, and there are no Yuan tombs because its Mongul rulers had no burial rites.) You pass through the numerous gates of honor along the Soul Path lined with figures depicting civil and military officials. Thirteen of the 16 Ming emperors lie here.

Returning to Beijing this afternoon, you will dine in one of the local restaurants for a Chinese banquet, complete with Peking duck. (B,L,D)

Day 17

BEIJING

After breakfast today, you visit the Summer Palace, which was the residence of the Empress Dowager Cixi, last of the Qing dynasty rulers. It is a most pleasant place to walk; as in every classical Chinese garden, water and mountains (represented by rocks) are the focal point. You see the Hill of Longevity on the shore of the large Kunming Lake, the Pagoda of the Incense of Buddha, the particularly beautiful Garden of Joy and Harmony, and the Marble Boat.

In the afternoon, you tour old Beijing, going along ancient walkways (*hutongs*) originally used by residents several centuries ago. Each *hutong* is named; many indicate professions of the people who lived beside them: Cloth Lane, Hat Lane, Bowstring Makers Lane. You also see Drum Tower and Bell Tower; they once marked the northern edge of the city. The Drum Tower held 24 giant drums that were struck to mark the closing of the city gates. You can get a very good view of the traditional courtyard houses from the top of the 108-foot tower. Nearby there is a labyrinth of shops selling antiques, gems, and other Chinese goodies.

This evening you join your travel

companions for a festive farewell dinner at one of the several excellent restaurants in the hotel - Cantonese, German, Chiu Chow, Italian, or International – none of the menus will disappoint. (B,L,D)

Day 18

BEIJING - USA

Your journey comes to an end today as you are escorted to the airport for your return flight to the States. (B)

D A T E S

Depart-SAT (from USA)	Return-TUE
Oct 11	Oct 28
2004 Dates:	
Apr 10	Apr 27
Oct 09	Oct 26

C O S T P E R P E R S O N

Land Portion (Double occupancy)	\$ 6,595
Single supplement	\$ 1,980
Domestic Airfare	\$ 725
International Airfare (West Coast)	\$ 1,250

All airfares are subject to availability and to change by the airlines. Cancellation penalties and surcharges may apply. Fares from other U.S. cities, as well as First and Business Class rates, are also available.