



Motorbike Tour Chang Jiang 750

- 20 days sidecar tour through Xinjiang, Gansu & Shaanxi
- Explore ancient cities off the beaten tracks
- Visit famous sights along the Silk Road and Great Wall
- Gain an insight into China's many minorities, religions, societies and life styles



MOTORBIKE TOUR THROUGH XINJIANG, GANSU & SHAANXI

This tour will lead you from the westernmost province of China to the world-famous town of Xi'An and is specially designed for people, who want to have a unique experience in China. Ride your own sidecar (Chang Jiang 750) to visit ancient towns along the Silk Road and Great Wall and observe the different minorities' ways of life amidst impressive scenery. Explore hidden spots off the beaten tracks on this unusual, exciting adventure.

Note: Instead of driving a Chang Jiang 750 sidecar, we could also arrange all the necessary documents so you could get your own bike to China and drive it on this tour. Please contact us as early as possible because it might take several weeks to prepare all the documents needed to import a bike. Please note that spare parts for your bike might not be available in China.

- Best travel date: May - October
- Destinations: Urumqi, Turpan, Hami, Barkol, Liuyuan, Dunhuang, Anxi, Jiayuguan, Zhangye, Wuwei, Lanzhou, Pingliang, Baoji, Xi'An
- Duration: 20 days
- Starting in: Urumqi
- Ending in: Xi'An
- Group size: min. 6 pax, max. 20 pax

QUICK INTRODUCTION

The Chang Jiang 750 motorcycle is the Chinese clone of the Russian M72, who itself is the clone of the BMW R71. After the Russian copied the R71 and used it successfully during World War II, they sold a couple of M72s to the Chinese during the fifties. Then, in 1957, the Chinese started their own M72 production under the name of Chang Jiang 750. The early Chang Jiang 750 motorcycle production was made by the Guo Ying Gan Jiang Ji Xie Chang. The early production was using a lot of Russian M72 parts such as fenders, frames, wheels, ignition keys, switches, etc. Even some complete Russian made M72 were recalled Chang Jiang 750. Some had the Russian engine changed to a Chinese made one.

VEHICLE SPECIFICATIONS CHANG JIANG 750

Engine	2 cylinder
Engine position	middle/rear
Cubic capacity (ccm)	748
Nominal power (PS)	23
Car body	sheet steel



INFORMATION ABOUT XINJIANG, GANSU & SHAANXI

Lying in northwestern China, the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, also called Xin for short, was referred to as the Western Region in ancient times. It has an area of 1,66 million square kilometers, roughly about one-sixth of the total territory of China. Xinjiang is the largest and has the longest boundary line among China's provinces and autonomous regions. It shares 5,600 kilometers of frontier with Mongolia in the northeast; Russia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, and Tadzhikistan in the west; and Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India in the southwest. Xinjiang is divided into two basins by Mount Tianshan, Dzungarian Basin in the north and Tarim Basin in the south. The Karakorum highway links Islamabad, Pakistan with Kashgar over the Khunjerab Pass.

Xinjiang's lowest point is 155 meters below sea level (lowest point in China). Its highest peak is 8611 meters above sea level on the border with Kashmir. The Xinjiang-Kyrgyzstan border is marked by the Tian Shan mountain range. The Torugart Pass (3752 m) is located on this border.

In Xinjiang live 1,073,300 people from 46 ethnic minority groups, or 61.42 percent of the total population, and 6,601,000 Han people. Thirteen of the 47 ethnic groups – the Uygur, Han, Kazak, Hui, Mongolian, Kirgiz, Tajik, Xibe, Uzbek, Manchu, Daur, Tartar, and Russian – have lived there for generations.

Gansu is a province located in the northwest of the People's Republic of China. It lies between Qinghai, Inner Mongolia, and the Huangtu Plateaus, and borders Mongolia to the north. The Huang He River passes the southern part of the province. The capital of the province is Lanzhou, located in the southeast part of Gansu. Gansu province has an area of 454,000 km², and the majority of its land is above 1 km over sea level. The Huang He (Yellow) River passes through the southern part of the province. The Yellow River gets most of its water from Gansu province. The Yellow River also flows straight through Lanzhou. Part of the Gobi Desert is located in Gansu.

The landscape in Gansu is very mountainous in the south and flat in the north. The mountains in the south are part of the Qilian mountain range. At 5,547 meters high, Qilian Shan Mountain is Gansu's highest elevation.

Gansu province is home to 26,033,400 people. Most of the population, 73%, is still rural. Gansu is 92% Han and also has Hui, Tibetan, Dingxiang, Tu, Manchu, Uyghur, Yugur, Bonan, Mongolian, Salar, and Kazakh minorities.

Shaanxi is a north-central province of the People's Republic of China, and includes portions of the Loess Plateau on the middle reaches of the Yellow River as well as the Qinling Mountains across the southern part of the province.

Shaanxi (and the city of Xi'An therein) are considered one of the cradles of Chinese civilization. Thirteen feudal dynasties established their capitals in this province during a span of more than 1100 years, from the Zhou dynasty to the Tang dynasty. It is also the starting point of the Silk Road which leads to Europe, Arabia and Africa.



During the Mongol rule in the 13th century, Shaanxi became a provincial unit. In the ensuing years, wars and famine had decimated and depopulated the province. As a result, large populations of Muslims, or Hui people, emerged, as evident today. Under the Ming dynasty, Shaanxi was incorporated into Gansu but was again separated in the Qing dynasty.

The northern part of Shaanxi is cold in the winter and very hot in summer with dry winter and spring. Its southern portion generally receives more rain. Annual mean temperature is roughly between 9°C and 16°C with January temperature ranging from -11°C to 3.5°C and July temperature ranging from 21°C to 28°C.

DAY 1 URUMQI

Our guide will meet you at the airport and drive you to the "World Plaza Hotel" (4*). In the afternoon you can relax from the flight and in the evening we will take you to a welcome dinner in a local restaurant and you will learn more about the details of your trip from the guide.

Urumqi is the capital of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China. With its population of about 1.6 million people, it is the largest city in the western half of China.

DAY 2 URUMQI

After the breakfast we will test our motorbikes and buy supplies for the tour. We have lunch in a local restaurant and visit the Historical Museum in Urumqi with its 3000-year-old mummies on display, where you will gain insight into the history of the most ancient states along the Silk Road – nowadays only ruins are left. Furthermore we will visit the Dongfeng Automobile manufacturing company and the Grand Bazaar of Urumqi. In the evening we enjoy a local dinner in the city.



DAY 3 URUMQI - TURPAN (200 KM)

After breakfast we start our motorbike tour. On the first day we drive from Urumqi to Turpan, which is a basin in the mountains of eastern Xinjiang and is also called “an oasis in the desert”. We will have lunch on the way from Urumqi to Turpan. You will explore the “Karez” System, an irrigation system of wells connected by underground channels, considered as one of the three great ancient projects in China, the other two being the Great Wall and the Grand Canal. The structure of the karez basically consists of wells, underground channels, ground canals and small reservoirs.



The next highlight will be Emin Minaret, which is the largest extant old tower in Xinjiang and the only Islamic tower among the hundred famous towers in China. Standing 2 km east of Turpan, Emin Minaret was built in 1777 in honor of the heroic Turpan general, Emin Khoja. He was an outstanding patriot who defended the unification of China throughout his life.

In the evening we join a Uyghur family for dinner. After the meal you will watch a Uyghur dancing performance. Get invited by the prettiest girls and most handsome boy dancers to join the merry crowd -- just relax and enjoy the cool summer night! You will stay overnight in the „Oasis Hotel“(3*).

DAY 4 TURPAN - HAMI (410 KM)

After breakfast at the hotel, we first drive to Gaochang and then on to Hami. Gaochang is situated at the foot of the Flaming Mountains, was founded in the first century B.C. and abandoned by the end of the 13th century.

Like Turpan, Hami is in a fault depression about 200 meters below sea level. Hami was called Kunmo in ancient times and Yiwulu in the Han Dynasty. Hami Prefecture has a population of 400,000 of which the Han nationality makes up 67 percent and other minority nationalities 33 percent. The city of Hami includes 24 nationalities in its population of 300,000. The Han nationality accounts for 66 percent, the Uyghur 26 percent, the Kazak 2.7 percent, the Hui 3.7 percent and the other 1.6 percent is made up of the Mongol, Manchu, Tibetan, Xibe, Uzbek and Kirgiz nationalities. As the hometown of the Hami melon, the prefecture has been known far and wide since the reign of the Qing Dynasty Emperor Kangxi, when the Islamic king of Hami began to use Hami melons as gifts to the Qing court. After dinner you will stay overnight at “Hami Hotel” (3*).

DAY 5 HAMI - BARKOL (70 KM) - KAZAK PASTURE LAND

After breakfast we visit the Islamic King Tombs. Located two kilometers south of the Hami city proper, the tombs were built around 1840 for the burial of Islamic kings and their wives. Two of the tombs are well preserved. The one to the south consists of two magnificent pavilion-type buildings with upturned eaves, carved beams, painted rafters and round supporting columns. The other one is a twenty-five-meter high, dome-shaped building with a square base and a domed top. The building is covered with glazed bricks and has a spiral earthen flight of stairs leading to the top.

Opposite the tomb is a mosque, upon whose four walls are inscribed religious scriptures and colorful designs; its ceilings are painted with colored drawings and its beams carved with floral patterns. The mosque has a capacity of 3,000 persons.

We then drive to the Barkol pastureland and the White Stone scenic spot. You will have lunch on the way. Barkol is famous for its camel and horse breeding. The Barkol horse is famous throughout China. Also, due to the large number of camels, which is unparalleled in China, the county carries the nickname of the "county of ten thousand camels".

The area is called "White Stone Scenic Spot" because there are giant white stones standing out of the ground. It lies in the northern slope of Tianshan Mountains. You will have free time to visit Kazak yurts, gain an insight into their daily life and customs and enjoy the sunset. In the evening we will stay overnight in a Kazak yurt.

DAY 6	BARKOL - LIUYUAN	(400 KM)
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We will have breakfast in the yurt and then leave the province of Xinjiang, as we will drive to Liuyuan in the province of Gansu via Hami. We have lunch on the way and arrive at Liuyuan in the late afternoon. After lunch you will stay overnight at the "Liuyuan Hotel" (2*).

DAY 7	LIUYUAN - DUNHUANG	(130 KM)
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After breakfast we drive from Liuyuan to the city of Dunhuang. Dunhuang lies at the western end of the Gansu Corridor, called "Hexi Zoulang". The name Dunhuang originally meant "prospering, flourishing" -- a hint that Dunhuang must once have been an important city. Its position at the intersection of two trade routes was what made Dunhuang flourish. The coming and going of horse and camel caravans carried new thoughts, ideas, arts and sciences to the East and West. The rest of the day after lunch is at your free disposal, overnight at "Silk Road Dunhuang Hotel" (4*).

DAY 8	DUNHUANG
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Today you will visit the "Mogao" grottoes. It is said that in the fourth century a Buddhist monk had a vision of 1000 Buddhas, and began to carve grottoes into the sandstone cliff and fill them with Buddhist images. They were abandoned and forgotten in around the 11th century until archaeologists arrived to carry away huge quantities of manuscripts, textiles and other art objects. However Mogao remains a brilliant trove of statues and wall paintings from the 4th to 10th centuries.

After lunch you will visit Crescent Lake and Echoing-Sand Mountain (Mingsha Shan). Crescent Lake is a lake in the oasis near the city Dunhuang. Rumor has it that there is a lake monster living in this lake. These attractions are essentially part of the same area. The Crescent Lake is within the Sand-Mountain. This lake is apparently an oasis surrounded by the highly sandy area composed of high dunes. The Mingsha Shan is so named for the sound of the wind whipping off the dunes. Along the side of the Crescent Lake is a pagoda in traditional Han Chinese architecture. After dinner you will stay overnight at the "Silk Road Dunhuang Hotel" (4*).



DAY 9 DUNHUANG - ANXI (200 KM)

After breakfast at the hotel, we drive our motorbikes from Dunhuang to Anxi and have lunch on the way. We visit the Yu Ling Grottoes 70 km south of Anxi Town. Also called Wanfo Gorge, the Yuling Grottoes are located on the cliffs of the gorge. The grottoes which form a part of the grotto art of Dunhuang were first hewed in the year 400. Close to 1,000 sq. m of exquisite murals dating from 600 to 1300 are the most valuable artworks preserved in 41 caves. Dinner and accommodation at "Anxi Hotel" (2*).

DAY 10 ANXI - JIAYUGUAN (300 KM)

We have breakfast at the hotel and leave for Jiayuguan; home to Jiayuguan Pass, the largest and most intact pass, or entrance, of the Great Wall. Jiayuguan Pass was built in the late Ming dynasty, somewhere around the year 1372. It was built near an oasis that was then on the extreme western edge of China. Jiayuguan Pass was the first pass on the west end of the great wall so it earned the name "The First and Greatest Pass under Heaven." Legend goes that the official in charge asked the designer to calculate how many bricks would be used.

The designer gave him the number and when the project was finished, only one brick was left. It was put on the top of the pass as a symbol of commemoration. We will have lunch on the way and stay overnight at the "Great Wall Hotel" after a local-style dinner (3*).

DAY 11 JIAYUGUAN - ZHANGYE (240 KM)

Zhangye is located in the middle section of the Hexi Corridor. The city owes its historical significance to its geographical location and fertile oasis, which means that throughout the dynasties it has been the political, economic, cultural and diplomatic centre of Northwest China. The Italian traveler Marco Polo lived there for about one year. We have lunch on the way.

After arrival, we will explore this interesting city and visit the Giant Buddha Temple (Da Fo Si), which is the largest architectural relic in Gansu Province of the Western Xia (1038-1227) period. China's largest reclining Buddha is well preserved in this temple. The Zhangye Museum is also located here.

Legend has it that a chancellor named Wei Mie of the Western Xia period ordered workers to dig into the ground to 1 to 1.3 meters deep to carve a reclining Buddha to be covered with glazed color tiles. The Giant Buddha Temple was built in 1098 to house the Buddha. In its 900 years the temple was restored many times during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

After dinner you will stay overnight at the "Huacheng International Hotel" (3*).

DAY 12 ZHANGYE - WUWEI (255 KM)

After breakfast we drive to Wuwei. Wuwei City in central Gansu once occupied a strategic position on the famous Silk Road. In 1969 a farmer discovered a tomb dating from the Han Dynasty.

The tomb is situated in Leitai Park so called, as there was a temple built to honor the Chinese god Leishen on the ten-meter high earth platform that was erected during the middle Ming Dynasty. The



inscription on the tomb shows that it was constructed circa 186-219 B.C. for an officer from Zhangye. The tomb comprises three main chambers of brick construction placed one behind the other. Each room has a smaller annex on each of its sides. This has proved to be a very important find as the tomb contained some two hundred and thirty outstanding relics of gold, silver, copper and jade as well as pottery. The funerary artifacts included ninety-nine copper chariots complete with horses and soldiers.

You will stay at the „Tianma Hotel“ (3*) after dinner.

DAY 13	WUWEI - LANZHOU	(280 KM)
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We have breakfast at the hotel and then drive to Lanzhou, the capital of Gansu. Early settlement in this region could be dated to the Han Dynasty and has a history of over 2,000 years. The city used to be called the Golden City, when it was a major stop on the ancient Silk Road. To protect the city, the Great Wall of China was extended as far as Yumen. After the fall of the Han Dynasty, Lanzhou became the capital of a succession of tribal states. Mixed with different cultural heritages, the area at present-day Gansu province, from the 5th to the 11th century, became a center for Buddhist study. The city acquired its current name in 1656, during Qing Dynasty. We will again have lunch on the way to Lanzhou, dinner in the city and stay overnight at the “Hotel Savoy Muslim” (4*).

DAY 14	LANZHOU	(280 KM)
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We will do some sightseeing in Lanzhou today to relax from all the motorbike riding. You will visit the first bridge over the Yellow River, the Watermill Park, the sculpture of the Yellow River Mother and the White Pagoda Hill. Furthermore we will take a short boat trip on the Yellow River. Breakfast will be at the hotel, lunch and dinner in the city and you will stay overnight at the “Hotel Savoy Muslim” (4*).

Zhongshan Bridge, the first bridge over the Yellow River, was built in 1907 and completed in 1909 and was the old crossing point for travelers and merchants who were then to head north on the Silk Road. In 1928, to commemorate Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the bridge was renamed Zhongshan Bridge as Zhongshan is another name of Dr. Sun. The bridge is 250 meters long and 8 meters wide.

The White Pagoda Hill stands at the northern bank of the Yellow River. It is a nice place for strolling, with green forests, scattered pavilions, teahouses and, from its heights, some good views of both the river and the city beyond. The park was named after the White Pagoda Temple that crowns the summit of its steeply terraced slopes. This temple was first constructed in the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368 AD), allegedly under orders from Genghis Khan to commemorate a Tibetan lama. The temple was then rebuilt and expanded in the Ming (1368-1644 AD) and Qing (1644-1911 AD) Dynasties.

The Yellow River is referred to as the Mother River of China. Lanzhou is the only provincial capital city that the river runs through. As a tribute to their mother river, the people of Lanzhou have erected the statue of "Yellow River Mother". A baby lies on the bosom of his mother with a naive smile while the mother (unlike most of the mothers in Chinese arts who are old, weather-beaten, kindly but with a touch of sorrow) looks happy and affectionate.

In the Water Wheel Park, you can get an idea of the old irrigation tool. The waterwheel was introduced from southern Yunnan Province to Lanzhou by a local who had been an official in Yunnan. The first waterwheel was made successfully in 1556 on the north bank of the Yellow River. Up to 1952 there were altogether 252 waterwheels lining both banks of the River.

DAY 15	LANZHOU - PINGLIANG	(350 KM)
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After breakfast at the hotel we drive to Pingliang. Have lunch on the way and taste the famous roast chicken or the local pancake called "Guo Kui". On the way, around the Liupan Mountain, there is a building which was supposed to be the gathering place for the Red Army soldiers during the Liberation War in China. Overnight at the "Longdong Bright Pearl Hotel" (3*).



DAY 16	PINGLIANG - BAOJI	(210 KM)
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Pingliang is also famous for a local mountain range that includes Kongtong Mountain, a site sacred to Taoism and mythical meeting place of the Yellow Emperor and Guangchengzi, an immortal. We will visit this sacred mountain after breakfast and then leave the province of Gansu and enter the province of Shaanxi. We can either have lunch in Pingliang or on the way. After arrival at Baoji we have dinner and stay overnight at the "Wan Li Hotel" (3*). Surrounded on three sides by mountains, Baoji is located in a valley opening out to the east. Its location is strategic: it controls a pass along the Tsinling Mountains and between the Wei Valley and the upper Han River. Founded early in the Tang dynasty, it is now a large industrial centre. Railways first reached Baoji in 1937 and have been the key to its modern growth.



DAY 17	BAOJI - XI'AN	(170 KM)
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Today we will drive to the provincial capital of Shaanxi, the famous city of Xi'An. Known as one of the most important cities in Chinese history, Xi'An is listed as one of the Four Great Ancient Capitals of China because it has been the capital of 13 dynasties, including the Zhou, Qin, Han, and Tang. Xi'An is also the eastern end of the Silk Road. The city has more than 3,100 years of history. Xi'An is the largest and most developed city in the central to northwestern part of China and is ranked among the 10 largest cities in the nation. We have lunch on the way and after arrival you will visit the Ancient Bronze Museum. Have dinner in one of the many cozy restaurants in this fascinating town and stay overnight at the "Jianguo Hotel" (4*).

DAY 18 XI'AN

Today we have a look at the well-preserved city wall, the Big Wild Goose Pagoda, the Drum and Bell Tower and the Muslim district. You will have a dumpling dinner and join a Tang-dynasty song-and-dance show in the evening. Overnight at "Jianguo Hotel" (4*).

The Big Wild Goose Pagoda was built in 652 during the Tang Dynasty and back then had five stories. The pagoda was built to store sutras and figurines of Buddha, which were brought to China by the Buddhist translator and traveler Xuanzang. In the beginning of 8th century under the ruling of Empress Wu Zetian five more stories were added to the pagoda. Sadly wars on later times damaged the pagoda reducing its height to current seven stories. It stands 64 meters tall and from the top it offers great view over the city of Xi'An. Known as the symbol of Xi'An, the history of the Drum and Bell Tower can be traced back to the Ming dynasty. Each Ming city had a bell tower and a drum tower. The bell was sounded at dawn and the drum at dusk. The Bell Tower was originally set at the intersection of Xi Dajie (West Street) and Guangji Jie (Guangji Street) in the Yingxiang Temple, which was the center of the site of the old Tang Imperial City. It was removed to its present place in 1582 in the center of the southern section of the walled city and was restored several times.

The Great Mosque of Xian is located in the "Huaajue Xiang" district, inhabited mainly by the Muslims Hui minority. The 60,000 strong Muslim community that lives and works today in Xian traces its history to Arab and Persian merchants who, after traveling the Silk Road, became permanent residents of such cities as Guangzhou, Quanzhou, Hangzhou, Yangzhou, and Xi'An.

DAY 19 XI'AN

One of China's most famous cultural and historic sites is on today's program. The Terracotta army is probably one of the world's most stunning UNESCO world heritage sites. Even though everybody



knows how the Terracotta Warriors look like, you will be more than impressed by the size of the whole site. Additionally, we will visit the site of the yet unopened grave of the Yellow Emperor Qin Shihuang. Qin Shi Huang was king of the Chinese State of Qin from 247 BCE to 221 BCE, and then the first emperor of a unified China from 221 BC to 210 BC, ruling under the name First Emperor. Having unified China, he passed a series of major reforms aimed at cementing the unification, and they undertook some Herculean construction

projects, most notably the precursor version of the current Great Wall of China. Therefore he is still regarded by many today as the founding father in Chinese history.

The Terracotta Army is a collection of 8,099 life-size terra cotta figures of warriors and horses located near the Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor, which were buried with him after his death.

We have dinner in the city and stay overnight at "Jian Guo Hotel" (4*).

DAY 20 XI'AN

Transfer to the airport for your flight back home. End of trip.

[Contact us](#) per mail for a tailor-made itinerary.

Our other motorbike tours in China:

[11 days motorbike adventure tour through Sichuan](#)

RATES

Group Size	Rate per person
	Euro
6-9	3'950
10-15	3'690
16-20	3'450
Other group size	Please contact us for detailed information.

INCLUDED SERVICES:

- experienced tour leader and local tour guides for all days, English/Chinese-speaking
- mechanics and spare parts for the motorbikes
- motorbikes Chang Jiang 750
- Chinese driver's license
- accommodation in selected hotels in double rooms as mentioned in the itinerary
- outside the cities accommodation in basic, but clean guest houses in double rooms
- full board except on free afternoons/evenings
- entrance fees to sightseeing spots mentioned in the itinerary
- all transfers mentioned in the itinerary

NOT INCLUDED:

- flight tickets to Urumqi and from Xi'An
- personal expenses such as laundry, tips etc.
- transports not mentioned in the itinerary (such as taxis in the evening, etc.)
- drinks and all meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- import license and fees if you want to bring your own bike to China for this tour
- expenses for medical care
- insurances (travel insurance, travel cancellation insurance)
- repatriation flights in case of emergencies

INSURANCE IS RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARTICIPANT!

IMPORTANT NOTE

Traveling in China, especially off the beaten tracks and in rural areas, can be adventurous and carries also a certain amount of surprises and risks. HiddenChina.net ensures that in every situation we and our guides are trying to get out a maximum of comfort for our clients. All our guides are carefully chosen and selected by their abilities and experience. Nevertheless, there might be surprises. We hereby express that a voyage in China needs patience, adaptation and tolerance. In addition due to lack of infrastructure, in rural areas in China there is often a lack of western sanitary standards. Clients of hiddenChina.net accept - upon signing a contract - to be aware of these circumstances, and accept changes which may occur in order to keep security and comfort of the clients according to the circumstances to a maximum during the trip.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR CHINA TRAVELERS

Traveling in China is always an adventure. Quality of service can range from “top” in selected 5* Hotels in the big cities to “very poor”. While traveling in China, even with an organized tour, the clients have to be ready for unexpected changes (e.g. due to natural disasters such as landslides or flooding) or other surprises. In hotels by example, it can happen that you will get phone calls in the middle of the night, offering you a special massage service. The following chapters will tell you more about what you should consider when traveling in China.

FACE

You may have heard it before and for the experienced China traveler it's a “must know”: In China, everything is about “giving and losing face”. Chinese people are very proud of their culture, food and traditions. Respect this fact and try not to bring a Chinese into an embarrassing situation, as he or she might lose his face in front of coworkers, friends, family members or even the authorities. Try to be polite, smile and - especially to English speaking Chinese - always praise their language skills. Chinese can be considered as reactive people. If you treat Chinese people in an arrogant and harsh way, you will be treated the same way. When you feel cheated, try to solve the situation in a gentle and charming way. You will achieve your goal much faster. Also try to react calmly in stress situations and stay friendly. For every problem in China there is a solution. It's up to you how effective you will get to this solution. Being angry and aggressive is contra productive in the most cases.

SECURITY

Especially large cities in China are extremely safe. Chinese people have to fear severe punishment when being caught by the authorities in illegal matters when foreigners are involved. However, be aware that pick pocketing happens everywhere, so keep an eye on your belongings and never leave your luggage unattended. When going out at night, China's large cities are much safer than practically all European cities. A single woman has nothing to fear when walking in a dark alley even at 4 o'clock in the morning.

HEALTH

It is also recommended to visit your house doctor before you go on a China trip and make all the necessary vaccinations. Your doctor will inform you what you will need. For travelers going to south China, it is also recommended to carry a supply of Malaria remedies. As the avian influenza is getting more and more a serious issue in Asia and a pandemic outbreak will happen sooner or later, the traveler should also consider buying a box of “Tamiflu” before the trip begins.

When traveling in China and especially when eating a lot of local food, a supply of remedies for stomach problems is highly recommended. We will always take care of taking you to clean restaurants with high quality standards. However, your body will have to deal with a wide range of unknown food, spices and other ingredients in China and also with different bacteria and viruses than in Europe’s clean environment. When being on a 3 week China trip, you have to reckon with stomach problems at least once. To cure them it is recommended to take pharmaceuticals, which are rich in salt and minerals and give you back the elements you will lose during a diarrhea. From our longtime China experience, one of the best remedies is to eat well-boiled Chinese mushrooms and bananas as well as to drink tomato juice. On many of our private trips, this helped much better than the Western medication like e.g. Imodium. Always take toilet paper with you, as you won’t find any in public toilets! Travelers going to high altitude areas such as Tibet are also recommended to take a supply of Diamox in case of altitude sickness. Please get advice from your doctor.

CLIMATE

China has several different climatic zones. From high-altitude to sub-tropic and desert climate, there is everything. Depending on your date of arrival in China, you might be traveling in the rainy season. E.g. in southern China, this time mostly starts late May / early June and lasts until August. This year, in the provinces of Guangxi and Guizhou heavy flooding took the life of several hundred local people. However, we will adapt the trip according to your travel time and avoid the areas with heavy rain.

LUGGAGE

Most airlines allow you to check-in 20 kg of luggage (economy class). It is not allowed to take nutrition products (cheese, meat) as well as pornographic material. Please ensure that your “Swiss army knife” and other “dangerous products” are checked in with your luggage and not in the hand luggage.

China offers you a wide range of shopping possibilities. So if you plan to go for extensive shopping, take a minimum of luggage to China. However, whenever you forgot something, don’t worry, more or less everything you need in daily life, can be bought much cheaper in China (see chapter below). Be aware that many customs authorities like the ones in Paris and Milan can fine you heavily when finding out that you try to import faked products from China such as Yves St Laurent bags, Gucci items or Prada clothes.

SHOPPING

Except for imported luxury goods and high-end electrical equipment such as beamers or imported laptops, more or less everything is cheaper in China than in Western Europe. Especially clothes can be bought at a very low price. Many shopping areas offer faked products (sometimes in extremely good quality). However, in many places where no prices are indicated you have to bargain about the price (see chapter below). Please note that when buying a faked product, especially at the airport in Paris, you can get into trouble. The fight against faked products is now at a point, that authorities can or will take away your purchase and will heavily fine you. For the golf lovers, there is a wide range of possibilities to buy whole golf sets at a ridiculously low price. Have your suits tailor-made, buy ties, silk products, pearls etc. at a very low price. For most Europeans, DVD's are of special interest. For a DVD you pay between 8 and 10 RMB (about 1 EURO) and most of the movies are available even before they are shown in European cinemas. The advantage is that DVD's take away only little space and weight. But be aware that in many cases you are buying illegally copied and distributed products.

Credit cards are only accepted in major stores, 3* hotels and upwards and western restaurants. Money can be withdrawn at ATM's at the Bank of China. Please note that these are hard to find in remote areas. Money can be changed at major branches of the Bank of China or in western hotels. Please note that you need to show your passport for changing money.

BARGAINING

As mentioned in the "shopping" chapter, in many places you have to bargain for your price. Western tourists are mostly looked at as "big dollar signs" and accordingly the price will be set 400 – 500% above the price the vendor is ready to sell his or her merchandise. The first rule is to go below the first offered price. So when the vendor asks for 100 RMB, you can set your offer to 20-25 RMB. Then it depends on your bargaining skills at what price you will get it. A simple trick is, when it seems too expensive for you, to walk away from the vendor. If he or she doesn't follow you, you know that your bid was too low. Please also note, always stay friendly and smile when bargaining. Once you agreed for a price, you have to buy the product. Otherwise you and the vendor will lose face.

LANGUAGE AND BEHAVIOR

Even in big cities like Beijing and Shanghai, it is most unlikely that you find English speaking taxi drivers or personnel in the shops. Therefore it is recommended to take a phrase book with you, where you can show what you need.

Chinese people are mostly friendly and curious towards foreigners. However, Chinese are also very proud of their country and culture and some behavior will be strange for travelers who come to China for the first time. In many places (even sometimes in public buses) people smoke a lot and for the non-smoker, China can be a terrible place. You also often see Chinese people spitting accompanied by strange noises. The best way to get around it is to ignore it and live with it. For the smoker on the other hand China is a paradise, as it is more or less everywhere allowed to smoke and cigarettes are extremely cheap, although some foreign brands might be faked. Please also note that you might be invited to test your drinking skills. The easiest way to avoid it without losing face is to tell your hosts that due to liver problems you're not allowed to drink.

TIPPING

Although China is - especially away from the big cities - a very poor country, tipping only exists in the 5* surroundings of the big cities. In restaurants or taxis and hotels (except 5* hotels) tipping is a no-no. However, tour guides and drivers of organized tours should be tipped. Most guides and drivers are roughly paid with 10 Euro per day and rely on additional income. With Chinese tour groups (which often go shopping) the guides always get a commission in the shops, where they make most of their salary. As European groups usually do not visit as many shops as Chinese tourists, guides and drivers have to rely on tips.

Generally a tip of RMB 30 per person and day is reasonable. When you are in a tour group it is recommended that the group collects the tips and hands it to the guides and drivers in an envelope. It is also very helpful to take some souvenirs with you, like for example watches or picture postcards from your home country.

SMALL TALK AND CONVERSATION

Small talk in China is a bit different than in Europe, but there are also topics which should be avoided and topics which are perfect for small talk.

One of the most common greetings in China is “Ni chi fan le ma?” which literally means “Have you eaten yet?” This emphasizes the importance of eating in China, and it is much more a social event than in the West, therefore food is always a welcomed topic.

In some cases you also might be confronted with rather private questions such as about your marital status and about family. The Chinese are very family oriented, so don't feel embarrassed when people ask you rather private questions, it's just small talk. Sometimes, especially in business surroundings, people also might ask you about your salary, which is quite normal in China. Here you can escape (if you don't want to tell the truth) by telling some fictional figure, or when telling the truth and your counterpart's eyebrows rise, you explain how expensive the life in Europe is.

Topics which should be avoided at all costs are all political related such as the Cultural Revolution, critics against the system or chairman Mao, the Tibet and Taiwan question, human rights or how to treat animals. If you want to have answers to these questions you might do it through your guide. Do not overload your guide with too many hard questions in the beginning though. Tactically it is wise to hide these questions in some compliments and be as subtle as possible (see also the chapter about “face”). Please note that young Chinese (below 30) are more open to discuss critical topics than people above 30.

Please also note that Chinese people tend to touch you, which is not a sign of homosexuality but just a sign of sympathy. In such a situation, when you feel uncomfortable, don't react in a rude or harsh way; just try to escape the contact by elegant means. Mostly a hearty fit of coughing does the trick (SARS is still in Chinese people's mind).

TRAFFIC AND TAXI

The public transport system in China is basically quite convenient. Every major city has an airport; there are many train routes (even though there is mostly only one train per day between two destinations) and public buses. Public buses are very cheap although the comfort is sometimes a bit poor.

In the cities, the most convenient public transport is the taxi. You can, compared to Europe, basically take a taxi anytime and everywhere at a very low price. Be careful that on major tourist sites there are also drivers trying to make extra money. When a taxi has no taximeter (make sure that the driver in taxis with a taximeter always puts it on), negotiate the rate before you get into the vehicle. However, some drivers will still try to make you pay an extra fee at the end. Just tell him that you pay the negotiated price, nothing more, and nothing less. Please also note that most drivers don't speak English. So take a bilingual map, a taxi card or a guidebook with you. Tell the reception in the hotel to write down the addresses for you so you can show it to the driver. Please note that highway fares have to be paid by the customer and not the driver (for example, in Beijing the fee for the airport expressway is 10 Yuan for passenger cars). This fee will be added to the amount shown on the taximeter.

USEFUL THINGS TO TAKE ON A CHINA TRIP

Several Swiss army knives, a compass, pharmaceuticals (see health chapter), a first-aid kit, tape, watches (not too expensive), money clip, camera (films can be bought and developed on spot for a very reasonable price), deodorant (rarely available in China), sunglasses, altimeter (for Tibet and Himalaya tours), GPS, safety belt for money, literature, guidebooks, credit-/bank card and a lot of patience.

For ladies: tampons are rarely available in China.