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in cooperation with



8 Days Student Tour March and May 2008

- Ideal for youths between 14 and 19 years
- Explore Shanghai by foot and gain an insight into the daily life in China
- Visit a Chinese elite school and the famous Longjing Dragon Well Tea Plantation in Hangzhou
- Easy hike on the Great Wall of China at Mutianyu
- Visit several sports venues for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing



8 DAYS STUDENT TRIP THROUGH CHINA

- Travel Dates: 11.03.-18.03., 18.03.-25.03., 26.03.-03.04., 03.05.-10.05., 14.05.-21.05.
- Destinations: Shanghai, Wuzhen, Hangzhou, Beijing
- Duration: 8 days
- Starting in: Shanghai
- Ending in: Beijing
- Group Size: min. 12, max. 30

DAY 1 ARRIVAL IN SHANGHAI (D)

Arrival in Shanghai at around noon. Upon arrival, you will be picked up at the airport by our guide and take the Shanghai Transrapid Maglev Line - the world's first high-speed commercial commuting system using the state-of-the-art electromagnetic levitation technology - that reaches a top speed of 430 km per hour (267 miles per hour).

You will get a first impression of traditional China during your visit of the historic Old Town with its countless alleys and shops.

We will have dinner on board of the dragon boat „Dilong“ on Huangpu River.

DAY 2 SHANGHAI (B)

Today we will explore Shanghai on foot! We take the subway line 1 to the People's Square, the center of Shanghai City. First we visit the world-famous Shanghai Museum which has a collection of over



120,000 pieces, including bronze, ceramics, calligraphy, furniture, jades, ancient coins, paintings, seals, sculptures, minority art and foreign art. It has eleven galleries and three special temporary exhibition halls.

Then we go for a short stroll through downtown and visit Nanjing Road - Shanghai's main shopping street, famously named one of the World's Seven Great Roads in the 1930s. The road stretches from The Bund east towards Hongqiao, with Shanghai's center point People's Square in the middle.

Being one of Shanghai's top ten attractions, the Bund is a must-visit place and the most visible reminder of Shanghai's colonial heritage, attracting millions of visitors from home and abroad each year. From here we take the subway line 2 to Pudong, take a look at the impressive Oriental Pearl TV Tower and get on top of China's second largest skyscraper - the Jinmao Tower.

In the evening, enjoy the performance of the city's famous Acrobatics Show (optional).

DAY 3 **SHANGHAI - HANGZHOU** **(B/L)**

In the morning we drive to Hangzhou (180km) - the capital of Zhejiang province - famous for its natural beauty and historical and cultural heritages. En route we will also visit Wuzhen, an ancient water town with a history of 1'200 years. With ancient residences, bridges, alleys, workshops and stores still standing on the river banks, it retains an almost unchanged atmosphere of antiquity. We will arrive in Hangzhou in the late afternoon.

In the evening you can explore the night markets in Hangzhou. Your guide will give you information about the history of this beautiful and world famous site.

DAY 4 **HANGZHOU** **(B/L)**

The city of Hangzhou was founded about 2,200 years ago during the Qin Dynasty, is listed as one of the Seven Ancient Capitals of China and used to be the capital of the Wuyue Kingdom from 907 to 978.

In the morning we will take a boat ride on the scenic West Lake („Xihu“). After lunch we will visit the Old Town of Hangzhou with its traditional pharmacies and the flower market.

Around Hangzhou, one of China's most famous tea is grown - „Longjing“ Dragon Well Tea. We will visit one of the plantations where you will be treated to tea-tasting.

DAY 5 **HANGZHOU - BEIJING** **(B/L)**

After breakfast we will visit a Chinese elite school (key school). High schools are called “zhong xue” in Chinese and about 80 percent of Chinese students between 12 and 18 years of age visit one these schools after graduation from primary school. Some of these schools are classified as “key schools” by the Chinese Education Commission and are considered as elite schools with an even better reputation than private schools.

You will attend school for an hour and have lunch at the school's canteen. In the afternoon you can take part in a friendly match (basketball or soccer). In the evening we take train number Z10 (departure 18:27, soft sleeper, first class) from Hangzhou to Beijing.

DAY 6 **BEIJING** **(L)**

We will arrive in Beijing in the early morning and visit the Forbidden City (Palace Museum). "Forbidden" referred to the fact that nobody could enter or leave the palace without the emperor's permission. The Forbidden City was the Chinese imperial palace from the mid-Ming Dynasty to the end of the Qing Dynasty. Built from 1406 to 1420 by the 3rd Ming Emperor Yongle, the complex consists of 9999 rooms (one short of the heavenly number of 10000) and covers 720,000 square meters.



The Forbidden City is surrounded on three sides by imperial gardens. We will visit Jingshan Park in the north, also known as Coal Hill, an artificial hill created from the soil excavated to build the moat and from nearby lakes.

The Temple of Heaven „Tian Tan“ - the perfection of Ming architecture situated in southeastern Beijing in Xuanwu District - has come to symbolize Beijing. Construction of the complex began in 1420, and was thereafter visited by all subsequent emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties to pray for good harvests, seek divine clearance and atone for the sins of the people.



The northern end of the park is semicircular and the southern end is square – a pattern deriving from the ancient Chinese belief that heaven is round and earth is square. The Temple of Heaven is the grandest of the four great temples located in Beijing. The other prominent temples

include the Temple of Sun in the east, the Temple of Earth in the north, and the Temple of Moon in the west.



The main building of the whole complex is the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests, which is a magnificent piece mounted on a three-tiered marble terrace. It was built 1420 by the Emperor Zhu Di (Yongle), consumed by fire in 1889 and re-erected the following year. The wooden pillars support the 38m high ceiling without a single nail.

The octagonal Imperial Vault of Heaven is structured along the lines of the older Hall of Prayer of Good Harvests, though it is smaller. It used to contain tablets of the emperor's ancestors, which were used in the winter solstice ceremony. Surrounding the Imperial Vault of Heaven is the Echo Wall, where a whisper can travel clearly from one end to the other. The Three Echo Stones are just outside of the gate of the Imperial Vault of Heaven. If you speak facing the vault while standing on the first stone, you will hear one echo; standing on the second and then the third stone, you will hear two and three echoes respectively.

The 5m high Round Altar was constructed in 1530 and rebuilt in 1740. It is composed of white marble arrayed in three tiers, and its geometry revolves around the imperial number nine. Odd numbers were considered heavenly and 9 is the largest single-digit odd number. The top tier – thought to symbolize heaven – has nine rings of stones, each ring composed of multiples of nine stones, so that the ninth ring has 81 stones. The middle tier – earth – has the 10th to 18th rings and the bottom tier – man – has the 19th to 27th rings, ending with a total of 243 stones in the largest ring. The number of stairs and balustrades are also multiples of nine.



The 360m long and 30m broad Danbi-Bridge connects the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvest and the Imperial Vault of Heaven. The south end of the Bridge is lower than its north end. The emperors believed that they could go to heaven through this bridge, which is why it is also called “Sacred Way”. In the evening you can visit a Beijing opera performance (optional).

DAY 7	BEIJING	(B/L)
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On the last day of our trip we will go for a hike on the Great Wall at Mutianyu.

The Great Wall stretches from Shanhai Pass on the east coast to Jiayu Pass in the Gobi desert - an important link on the Silk Road. The "original" wall was begun 2000 years ago during the Qin dynasty (221-207), when China was unified under Emperor Qin Shihuang. Separate walls, built by independent kingdoms to keep out "barbarians" and nomads, were linked up. The construction required hundreds of thousands of workers and according to legends, one of the building materials apart from the estimated 180 million cubic meters of rammed earth was the bodies of deceased workers. The wall actually never performed its function as a defense line. However, it worked very well as a kind of highway, along which men and equipment could be transported across mountainous terrain. Its beacon tower system using smoke signals transmitted news of enemy movements quickly back to the capital.



In the afternoon we will visit the Summer Palace and go for a boat ride on the Kunming Lake.

The Summer Palace - declared by UNESCO as an "outstanding expression of the creative art of Chinese landscape garden design" is an immense park mainly dominated by Longevity Hill (60 meters high) and the Kunming Lake. This site had long been a royal garden and summer resort for the residents of the Forbidden City. It was enlarged by Emperor Qianlong (1735-1796) as a present for the 60th birthday of his mother. During his reign, Kunming Lake was expanded by extending an existing body of water to imitate the West Lake in Hangzhou and artisans reproduced the garden architecture styles of various palaces in China. Anglo-French troops damaged the buildings during the Second Opium War (1860). Empress Dowager Cixi diverted 30 million taels of silver, said to be originally designated for the Chinese navy (the immobile marble boat at the edge of the lake still reminds the visitor of this story), into the reconstruction and enlargement of the Summer Palace. In 1900 the palace




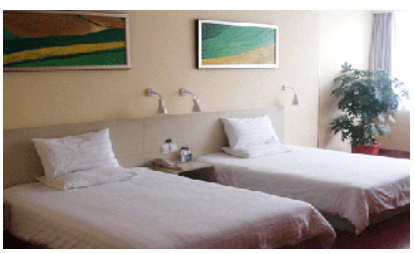
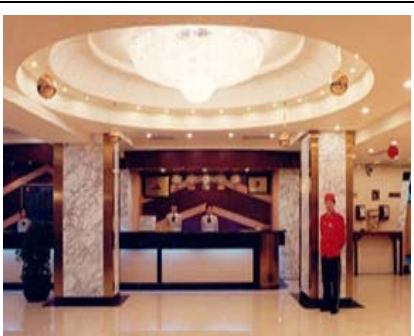
complex suffered another attack by foreign troops during the Boxer Rebellion and was once again badly damaged. Restorations took place a few years later and the Summer Palace was opened to the public in 1924.

We drive back to Beijing. En route we can visit several sports venues for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, like for example the „Bird's Nest“.

DAY 8	DEPARTURE	(B)
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Transfer to the airport. End of trip.

Hotels:

Cities	Hotels
	<p>Shanghai Shenxianju Hotel ★★★</p> <p>Add: Zhongxing Road 1032, Shanghai 200070 CHINA Tel: 0086-(0)21-56625001 Homepage: www.shengxianju.com</p> <p>The hotel is located in Zhongxing Road near Shanghai Main Railway Station about 3,5 km north-east of the city centre and Nanjing Road and approx. 4 km to Shanghai Bund. The hotel's restaurant offers 24 hours service. All rooms are modern and well-equipped (air-condition, shower, toilet, TV, telephone).</p>
	<p>Hangzhou Hanting Hotel ★★★</p> <p>Add: South Hushu Road 118, Hangzhou 310005 CHINA Tel: 0086-(0)571-88055656 Homepage: www.hantinghotels.com</p> <p>This modern hotel is located in a nice district near the Grand Canal not far from the city centre. It offers 24 hours service and has air-conditioned, well-equipped rooms with bath, toilet, TV and telephone.</p>
	<p>Beijing Yuexiu Hotel ★★★</p> <p>Add: Eastern Xuanwumen Allee 24, Peking 100051 CHINA Tel: 0086-(0)10-63014499 Homepage: www.yuexiuhotel.com</p> <p>Yuexiu Hotel, located in downtown Beijing, is a three-star hotel well equipped with modern facilities, adjacent to several places of historic interest, such as Tian An Men Square, the Palace Museum and Chairman Mao Memorial Hall, finance street and Xidan business district, and is easily accessible with the No. 1 and No. 2 subway and more than 20 buses passing by.</p>

For enquiries and bookings please contact Mr. Roman Lange:

Mobile: +86 13681292401
Phone: +86 (0)10 58570190 (China)
 +41 (0)44 5866635 (Switzerland)
Fax: +86 (0)10 58570190
Email: rlange@hiddenchina.net
MSN: rlange@hiddenchina.net
Skype: rl.hiddenchina
Yahoo: rl.hiddenchina
AIM: rl hiddenchina
GoogleTalk: roman.lange
ICQ: 121-904-061



RATES

RATES PER PERSON IN STANDARD TWIN ROOMS: EURO 420.00.-

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: ON REQUEST

INCLUDED:

- Transportation in comfortable, air-conditioned coach
- Costs for other means of transportation such as subway
- Accommodation in 3-star-hotels (standard twin rooms with Chinese breakfast, WC, TV, air-conditioning and shower)
- Half board in local Chinese restaurants (described as B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner)
- Train tickets Hangzhou - Beijing in soft sleeper compartment, 1st class
- Experienced tour guide for all days, English/Chinese-speaking
- Entrance fees to sightseeing spots mentioned in the itinerary
- Tips for tour guide and bus driver
- Chinese mobile phone card with new number
- Detailed information leaflet

NOT INCLUDED:

- Visa
- International flights to Shanghai und back from Beijing
- Personal expenses such as laundry, mini bar, etc.
- Drinks and all meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Optional excursions
- Expenses for medical care
- Insurances (travel insurance, travel cancellation insurance)
- Repatriation flights in case of emergencies

INSURANCE IS RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARTICIPANT!

HIDDENCHINA.NET GMBH RECOMMENDS THAT YOU PURCHASE TRAVEL CANCELLATION INSURANCE.

DETAILS OF SERVICES (AND ANY OFFERS) PROVIDED ONLINE ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Traveling in China, especially off the beaten tracks and in rural areas, can be adventurous and also carries a certain amount of surprises and risks. Hiddenchina.net ensures that in every situation we and our guides arrange for a maximum of comfort for our clients. All Hiddenchina.net guides are carefully chosen and selected for their real-world abilities and experience; this allows us to manage the unexpected that is encountered along our tours. We hereby state that a voyage in China requires a degree of patience, adaptation and tolerance. Additionally, due to lack of infrastructure in the rural areas there is often a lack of western sanitary standards. Clients of Hiddenchina.net accept – upon contract signing - that they are aware of these circumstances in China, and accept that in order to keep the client(s) security and comfort at a maximum during the trip, incidental changes may occur.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR CHINA TRAVELERS

Traveling in vastness of China is always an adventure. Quality of service can range from the international standards of 5-star hotels in the big cities, to “very poor” in remote villages. While traveling in China, even with an organized tour, clients have to be ready for the unexpected (e.g. due to natural disasters such as landslides, flooding, and weather) or other surprises. In hotels for 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 be aware of 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 a 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 and you will achieve your goal much faster. Also try to react calmly in stress situations and stay friendly. Be reassured that for every problem in China there is a solution, it is up to you how effective you will get to this solution. Being angry and aggressive is counterproductive, in most cases.

SECURITY

Large cities in China are extremely safe! Chinese people have to fear severe punishment when being caught by the authorities in illegal matters especially 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, you will find that China's large cities are much safer than practically all European and North American cities. A single woman has nothing to fear when walking even at 4 o'clock in the morning.

HEALTH

It is also recommended to visit your house doctor or general practitioner before you go on a China trip and take the necessary vaccinations. Your doctor will inform you what you will need; you may also want to consult your country's national health authority. For travelers going to south China, it is also recommended to carry a supply of malaria remedies. The avian influenza is a serious issue in Asia and has been the focus of the World Health Organization (WHO) for several years. As a traveler should also consider taking appropriate medicines under the advice of their physician and buy some common incidental remedies (e.g. Tamiflu, appropriate cold medicines) before the trip begins.

We at HiddenChina.net will always take particular care to introduce you to clean restaurants with high quality standards. However, when traveling in China and especially when eating a lot of local food, carrying a supply of remedies for stomach problems is highly recommended. Your body will have to deal with a wide range of new foods, spices and other ingredients in China and also adjust to different bacteria (micro flora) than found in Europe's and North America's clean environments. When going on a China trip of a few weeks, you may have to reckon with stomach problems at least once. It is recommended that you take appropriate pharmaceuticals which are rich in salt and minerals and give you back the elements you may lose during a bout of diarrhea or intestinal discomfort. 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, e.g. Imodium, Pepto-Bismol. Always carry convenient packets of tissues and toilet paper with you, as you will not 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. In all instances of traveling to China, we recommend getting specific, up-to-date advice from your doctor on appropriate vaccinations and medications.

CLIMATE

China has several different climatic zones. From high altitude, to sub-tropic, and desert, China has every environment. Depending on your date of arrival in China, you might be traveling in the rainy season. In southern China this season usually begins late May or early June and lasts into August. This is a serious problem in China and this year alone in the provinces of Guangxi and Guizhou heavy flooding took the life of several hundred local people. However, we will adapt your tour according to the season and avoid the areas with heavy rain, or other such weather related problems.

LUGGAGE

Most airlines allow you to check baggage of 20 kg (economy class); please refer to your airline for specific allowances. The Chinese Border Control does not allow certain food products such as cheeses, meats, pornographic, or political material. Please ensure that your "Swiss army knife" and other "dangerous products" are checked with your luggage and not in your hand luggage/carry-on luggage.

China offers you a wide range of shopping possibilities. If you plan to go for extensive shopping, take a minimum of belongings. However, do not worry if you forget something, almost everything you need for daily life, can be bought much cheaper in China (see chapter below). Please be aware that many customs authorities, like the ones in Paris and Milan, can fine you heavily if they discover fake, brand name products from China in your luggage. Copied brand name products such as Yves St Laurent, Gucci, Prada, etc. are openly available in most major cities.

SHOPPING

Except for imported luxury goods more or less everything is cheaper in China than in Europe and North America; clothes especially can be bought at very low prices. Many shopping areas offer fake/copy products (sometimes of extremely good quality), however, prices are not always indicated and you will have to bargain about the price (see chapter below). Please note that when buying a fake/copy product, you can get into trouble in Customs especially at major airports such as Paris, London, or Milan. The campaign against fake/copy products is now at a point which authorities can or will take away your purchase and possibly fine you heavily. For golf lovers, there is a wide range of possibilities to buy high-quality whole golf sets at a ridiculously low price. Similarly, you can have your suits tailor-made, buy ties, silk products, pearls, etc. all at very low prices. For most Europeans and North Americans, DVD's are of special interest. For a DVD in China you pay between ¥8-10 (about 1 EURO) and ironically most of the movies are available here even before they are shown in European and American cinemas. The advantage of DVD's is that they take only a little space and weight in your luggage, but be aware that in most cases you are buying illegally copied and distributed products.

Credit cards in China are only accepted in major stores, 3-star hotels and upwards, and western restaurants. Cash can be withdrawn conveniently at ATM's at the Bank of China. Please note that these are hard to find in remote areas. Money can be changed most reliably at major branches of the Bank of China or in western hotels; you will 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 viewed as "big dollar signs" and accordingly the first price given by many shop keepers will be set 400–500% above the final price they will sell his or her merchandise. So when the vendor asks for ¥100, you can set your offer to ¥20-25. Then it depends on your bargaining skills as to what price you will finally pay. A simple trick is, when an item seems too expensive for you, walk away from the vendor. If he or she doesn't follow you, you know that your bid was too low. Please also keep in mind that staying friendly and smiling when bargaining is the best approach. Once you have agreed for a price, you have to buy the product, otherwise you and the vendor will lose face. Note: the Chinese Yuan (¥), is also called RMB within China.

LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

Even in big cities like Beijing and Shanghai, it is most unlikely that you find English-speaking taxi drivers or shop assistants. We recommended that you take a phrase book with you, so that you can show what you need to express. Chinese people are mostly friendly and curious towards foreigners

and they are also very proud of their country and culture. However, some of their 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 difficult place. You also often see Chinese people spitting accompanied by rather obvious throat-clearing noises. The best way to get around these differences in social graces is to ignore them and accept it as part of the culture; for even in China they also say “Ru Xiang Sui Su!”, when in Rome, do as the Romans do. On the other hand for the smoker, China is a paradise, as it is more or less acceptable everywhere to smoke and cigarettes are extremely cheap. Social drinking in China is also noteworthy as you might be invited to test your skills. Even modest social contact can include unexpected rounds of drinks, as the Chinese find this is an opportunity to be more indulgent than most European or North Americans. The easiest way to avoid unwanted drinking without losing face is to tell your hosts that due to “health” 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 5-star surroundings of the big cities. In restaurants, taxis, and smaller inns and hotels tipping is a “no-no” (except in 5-star hotels). However, the other exception is for tour guides and drivers of organized tours, these individuals should be tipped. Most guides and drivers are roughly paid 10 Euro per day and rely on the additional tip income. This is acceptable because with Chinese tour groups (which often go shopping) the guides and drivers usually get a commission from the shops. European tour groups usually do not visit as many shops as Chinese tourists, for European tour groups then the 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 inexpensive souvenirs with you from your home country, for example watches or picture postcards.

SMALL TALK AND CONVERSATION

Small talk in China is a bit different than in Europe and North America, but similarly there are 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, job, and about family. The Chinese are very family oriented, so don’t feel embarrassed when people ask you rather private questions, it is 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 an awkward direct question (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 can explain how expensive life in Europe is.

Topics which should be avoided at all costs are all political-related discussions such as the Cultural Revolution, criticism of the system or Chairman Mao, the “Tibet” and “Taiwan” questions, human rights, and the treatment of 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. For the sake of social tact, it is wise to hide these questions in compliments and be as subtle as possible (see also the chapter about “Face”). Please note that young Chinese (below 30) are much more open to discuss critical and inflammatory topics than people above 30.

Please also note that Chinese people may tend to physically touch you, which should not be taken as 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 polite means –to feign a hearty fit of coughing does the trick (SARS is still in Chinese people's mind).

TRAFFIC, TAXI AND SUBWAY

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. Subways are the most convenient way to get around town as you will not get stuck in traffic jams. In Beijing, tickets for lines 1 and 2 cost 2 Yuan for however far you are going. All signs and announcements in the subway system are in Chinese and English.

In the cities, taxis are quite convenient as well. You can, compared to Europe, basically take a taxi anytime and everywhere at a very low price. Be wary of taxis found at major tourist sites as there are also unofficial drivers trying to make extra money. We at HiddenChina.net recommend that you always take a licensed taxi, however, if you take a taxi that has no meter (make sure that the driver in taxis with a taximeter always puts it on), be sure to negotiate the rate before you get into the vehicle. Even in taking this precaution, some drivers will still try to make you pay an extra fee at the end of your ride. 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 it is a good habit to take a bilingual map, a taxi card, or a guidebook with you. A convenient method is to tell the reception staff in the hotel to write down the addresses for you so you can show it to the driver. Please note that highway toll fees/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 (RMB) 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 (rolls of film can be bought and developed on the 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. Ladies please note: tampons and similar hygiene products are rarely available in China outside of the major cities.