



Celebrations International Travel, Inc.



China's Culinary Delights

Day 1 Arrive Beijing

On arrival you will be met by our local guide and transferred to your hotel.

Beijing, the nation's capital, is a gastronome's delight, with many national and international cuisines available. The area has always had, and continues to have, its own particular cuisine. From about 1000 A.D. onwards, the imperial presence in Beijing demanded suitably elaborate foods, with thousands of dishes prepared for state dinners and private banquets. Bear's paws, camel's humps, and bird's nests were just a few of the exotica gracing the emperor's tables. The Beijing cuisine of today is called *lao Beijing cai*, ('old Beijing food') and, being classic northern food, is nowhere near as exotic as the imperial cuisine of old. Roasted mutton and chicken are common in *lao Beijing* restaurants, as well as salty vegetable dishes.

Accommodation: New Otani Changfugong (4 nights)

Day 2 Beijing

BLD

Tiananmen Square

Beijing has long been China's political and cultural center. In the morning, we will bring you to explore some of Beijing's greatest sights: first to the massive Tiananmen Square, where Chairman Mao declared the founding of People's Republic of China before 3 million onlookers in 1949.

Forbidden City

Next, stroll through the magnificent Forbidden City- the grandest integral imperial palace with a history of around 600 years.

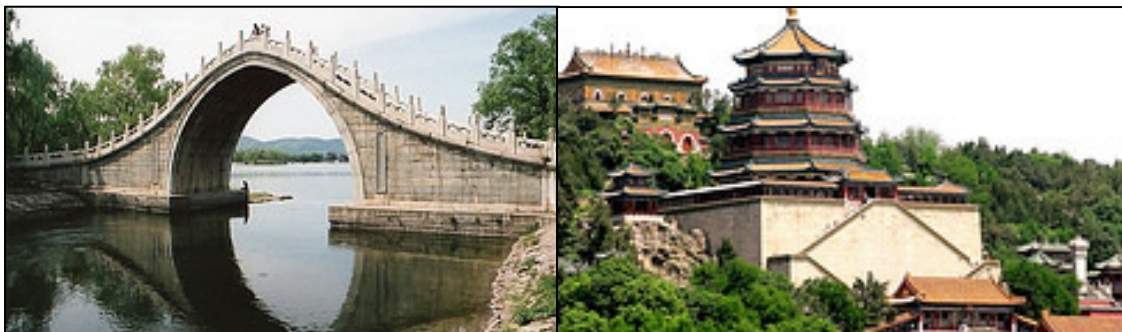


Cooking School

Visit Jinsong Cooking School, from which most famous Chinese chefs graduated. Travelers will have the chance to learn how to cook Cantonese style dishes. Sample your culinary skills for lunch today.

Summer Palace

In the afternoon you will visit the breathtaking Summer Palace. The Summer Palace is the largest and best-preserved imperial garden in China. Its Chinese name, Yi He Yuan, translates as “Garden of Nurtured Harmony” or “Garden for Maintaining Health and Harmony”.



Tai Chi Lesson at the Summer Palace

The Chinese characters for Tai Chi Chuan can be translated as the 'Supreme Ultimate Force'. You will follow a Tai Chi Master to practice Tai Chi with background Tai Chi music.

Dinner is at Meimeizhen Restaurant where an imperial style dinner is served.

Day 3 Hutong Tour with Dumpling Demonstration

BLD

Enjoy a Hutong Tour at Houhai. The Houhai area is famous for the Shi Cha Lake and the clean courtyards there. You will enjoy a cooking lesson on flavourful home style dishes in a private "hutong" kitchen.

Continue your Hutong Tour. This includes a rickshaw ride to see the small lanes in the old part of Beijing and a chance to mingle with local families.



Afternoon Tea Ceremony

This afternoon, you will have the chance to participate in a traditional Chinese Tea Ceremony. For centuries, the ritual of preparing and serving tea has held a special place in the hearts and minds of Chinese aristocracy, court officials, intellectuals and poets. The Chinese tea ceremony emphasizes the tea, rather than the ceremony -- what the tea tastes like, smells like, and how one tea tastes compared to the previous tea, or in successive rounds of drinking.

Evening Peking Duck Dinner

Certainly one of the most elegant and famous Chinese dishes, both in China and abroad, comes from Beijing— Peking duck. Classic Beijing duck meals are three courses, with almost every part of the duck used. First, a meticulously raised duck is glazed and roasted. The first course is crispy duck skin, wrapped in thin pancakes with scallions and dipped in a black bean sauce. In the second course, the duck meat is stir-fried; in the third, the bones are used to make soup.

Enjoy your feast, and as each course is served your guide will provide detailed information on the event and its significance.



Day 4 Morning Tour to the Great Wall

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The Great Wall of China is a series of stone and earthen fortifications in China, built, rebuilt, and maintained between the 5th century BC and the 16th century to protect the northern borders of the Chinese Empire during the rule of successive dynasties.



After you have spent the morning exploring this amazing structure, continue to a local Sichuan restaurant, where the chef will demonstrate how to cook Sichuan dishes such as Ma Po Dou Fu.

While many Chinese-American ‘Szechuan’ restaurants serve some version of Sichuan food, it is generally a pale imitation of the real thing. Common Sichuanese spices include cassia bark, cumin, cinnamon, various peppercorns, star anise, and dried tangerine peel, among others. As in the region as a whole, red chili peppers are extremely common in Sichuanese food. It is by no means always spicy, however. One classic Sichuan dish is *ma po dou fu*, soft tofu cubes in a ‘numbing-spicy’ ground pork and chili sauce.

The unusual ‘numbing’ flavor, called *ma la* in Chinese, comes from the Sichuan red peppercorn which, when eaten, makes the tongue and mouth numb and tingly. The Chinese believe *ma la* dishes are good for the health in cold, wet weather.

Optional Night Time Beijing Gastro Walking Tour

Hias Gourmet's fascinating night market food safari provides the opportunity for visitors to learn about and experience one of Beijing's most fascinating street food market, Donghuamen Night Market and Ghost Street.

This tour spends the first one hour in Donghuamen Night Market, a street market that formally opened in 1984. This market, now a magnet for tourists from all over China as well as the world, offers over 100 different delicacies from candied strawberry-on-a-stick to barbequed lamb skewers. For the more adventurous eaters, this market offers exotic bites, including scorpions, silk worms, beetles, starfish and much more!

The second half of the tour takes us away from the tourist trail 20 minutes away to one of Beijing's favorite local eat street, Guijie or Ghost Street, as it is known in English. More a feeling than a place, we will be dining at one most the most alive places in the city. Extending over one kilometer, this is the only road in Beijing that actually truly never sleeps. With 200 restaurants lining Ghost Street, it is truly a 24-hour bustling carnival of Chinese cuisine, as hungry Beijingers arrive anytime from noon to 3am to eat on the street where some of Beijing's best loved specialties were created.



Day 5 Fly Beijing to Xian

BLD

Farmer Painters' Village Tour

You will be transferred to the airport and on arrival begin your tour.

This morning, visit a farmer painters' village to see a particular kind of Chinese painting found in the Xian area, called by some “modern folk painting” and by others “farmers’ paintings”. In the late 50’s the government gave professional artists the task of teaching farmers the art of painting and there are now 40 such art colonies throughout the country with the village near Xian having the largest and most significant colony. The paintings are instantly recognizable by their bold, exaggerated forms and excessive use of color. Every inch of the canvas is filled with scenes from daily rural life.

The village will prepare a special “local” lunch during your tour, and after lunch they will perform a special Dragon Dance for you.

Evening Tang Dynasty Show and Dinner

The Tang Dynasty Music and Dance Show is a full replay of the lives and social customs of the people in the Tang Dynasty. The cultural performance is recreated according to the historical records.

For the chefs in the Tang Dynasty Theatre Restaurant, the preparation of a meal is in itself an art form. The sumptuous menu is a fusion of East and West, synonymous with the influence of Silk Road traders. Although based on the ever-popular subtleties of Cantonese cuisine, the spices inherited from those early traders provide a unique blend with traditional dishes to enliven the taste buds of every guest. Among the favorites are the dumpling banquet and, of course, the famous Cantonese dim-sum, not too heavy, but enough to quell those hunger pangs.



Accommodation: Grand Park Hotel (2 nights)

Day 6 Terra Cotta Warriors

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The Terra Cotta Warriors and Horses are the most significant archeological excavations of the 20th century. Work is ongoing at this site, which is around 1.5 kilometers east of Emperor Qin Shi Huang's Mausoleum, Lintong County, Shaanxi province. It is a sight not to be missed by any visitor to China.

Wheat was once a major crop in Shaanxi province (centre: Xi'an). The legacy of flour lives on in Xi'an, where pancakes, noodles and dumplings are staples. Gua mian ("Chinese pasta") comes from here - dough rolled on a polished stick and air-dried to form hollow tubes. At the restaurant adjoining the Terra Cotta Warriors Museum, you can watch chefs chipping slices off a solid block of dough into a steaming cauldron to make flat noodles (a technique from Shanxi, a province west of Xi'an). Stretch noodles, fashioned from a cat's-cradle of dough slung between outstretched hands, are also made visibly here.



Learn how to stretch the noodles yourself after watching the chef demonstrate, and enjoy lunch at the restaurant.

Dinner is on your own tonight. We recommend Wen Hao Za Liang Shi Fu serving authentic Xian style food. Reservations are required.

Day 7 Fly Xian to Guilin

BLD

You will be transferred to the airport for your flight to Guilin, and on arrival our local guide will meet you to assist with hotel check in before your tour.

Afternoon tour of the Reed Flute Caves

Situated in a completely concealed spot on Guangming Hill, 3.2 miles northwest of the town, Reed Flute Cave is Guilin's largest and most impressive cave. Its name is explained by the fact that reeds for making flutes and pipes have been grown in this region since ancient times. This dripstone cave is 790 feet deep, and a visitor will walk for some 550 yards through a zigzagging sea of stalactites and stalagmites in dazzling colors.



Dinner at Taste Made Restaurant

Taste Made Restaurant is an avant-courier of creating a new concept of cuisine in Guilin. Located at riverside, it is decorated in modern style, preparing the meals that are as pleasing the palate as the eye. It customizes for customers' taste by uniting Chinese and Western cookery, which will leave you a fantastic memory of dining.

Accommodation: Lijiang Waterfall Hotel (2 nights)

Day 8 Li River Cruise

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The Li River cruise from Guilin to Yangshuo is the centerpiece of any trip to northeastern Guangxi Province. Gorgeous Karst peaks give you surprises at each bend of the limpid river under the blue sky. Water buffalo patrol the fields, peasants reap rice paddies, school kids and fisherman float by on bamboo rafts. With its breathtaking scenery and taste of a life far removed from the concrete metropolis, the scenery along the Li River become one of China's top tourist destinations.



Dinner this evening is on your own. We recommend a walk along Zheng Yang walking street to choose from the many restaurants represented there, or your guide can make a recommendation and a reservation for you.

Day 9 Fly Guilin to Shanghai

BLD

Visit Local Minority Village - Dragon Bone Rice Terraces

On this tour in Guilin, you will not only enjoy the wonderful view of terraced rice paddies --the most famous section is called "Longji", lush bamboo groves and small villages on the hillside along the way, but also be amazed by the rich culture of the Zhuang and Yao people. Yao women are believed to have the longest hair in the world.

Your tour will end at the airport for your late afternoon flight to Shanghai.

Late afternoon flight to Shanghai

Upon arrival, you will be met by our local guide and transferred to your hotel.

Accommodation: Salvo Hotel (3 nights)

Dinner this evening is at a local Shanghai restaurant.



Day 10 Shanghai

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Today you will visit the lovely old Yuyuan Garden which is a traditional Chinese park complete with beautiful pavilions, miniature lakes, bridges and rock formations, followed by the the Shanghai World Financial Center, and the Jade Buddha Temple. In the afternoon, you can have a relaxing walk through the Bund to enjoy the beautiful sceneries.

Lunch will include a lesson on how to make the city's tastiest xiaolongbao. Xiaolongbao? They're miraculous little pillows of soup where incredible thin little wrappers precariously drape a spoonful of piping hot soup.

Eastern Chinese cuisine, found in the cities of Shanghai and Hangzhou as well as the surrounding provinces, is primarily a cuisine of sweetness. This school uses sugar, wines, and vinegars to provide sweet tastes and create subtlety of flavor. Like the north, eastern cooks favor oily dishes, although these are more subtle than in those in the north. Seafood is abundant, as the Yangtze River drains into the ocean near Shanghai. The lakes and river tributaries provide abundant fish and shellfish to this region. Pork and poultry are used as well.

Soups and soupy dishes are very popular. Shanghai is known for its unusual ‘soup inject,’ dishes, which are meatballs, dumplings, or buns filled with a gelatin and stock mixture and cooked until the inside is soup. Because of the French and British presence there in the 19th and 20th centuries, Shanghai cooking incorporates some European influence. There are Shanghai-style *zakuski* (Russian cold appetizers) in fancy restaurants, and French-style cakes and pastries in the sidewalk cafés.

Dinner is on your own tonight. We recommend the Jade Garden restaurant serving new style Shanghai food based on old style Shanghai flavor.

Day 11 Suzhou Day Trip by Train

BLD

Enjoy calligraphy class with the locals while they entertain you with folk singing inside the Yipu Garden. You will be served a special local “snack” lunch called Gao Tuan. It is mainly made from sticky rice, mashed beans, dates, mint, sugar etc. The special dish is made into all shapes, colors and flavors. All natural ingredients are used.

Continue on a walking tour of the old town before returning to Shanghai.

Evening Shanghai Acrobats Show with Dinner

In the evening you will enjoy gravity-defying contortionism, juggling, unicycle, chair-stacking, and plate-spinning acts at Shangcheng Acrobatics.



Day 12 Fly Home from Shanghai

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Transfer to the airport for your journey home.

Tour Offered Exclusively By:



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For more information on Culinary Tours, visit www.celebrationsinternationaltravel.com