



ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION of SMITH COLLEGE

China, Tibet & the Yangtze River

August 19-September 4, 2007

DETAILED PRELIMINARY ITINERARY

Day 1, Aug. 19 • Depart San Francisco

Our tour departs San Francisco for a non-stop flight to Beijing, an approximate flying time of 11 hours.

- Recommended air carrier: Air China

Day 2, Aug. 20 • Beijing

We arrive in Beijing at 5:00 p.m. Our tour director will meet us at the airport and transfer to hotel. (Meals aloft)

- Accommodations at Grand Hotel, located in the heart of Beijing next to the Forbidden City.

Day 3, Aug. 21 • Beijing

After breakfast, explore Beijing's picturesque Houhai district where many old courtyard homes are preserved amid narrow hutong alleys bordering tree-lined lakes. Tour the district by "pedicab" for a more lively experience of traditional Chinese life.

Later, divide into smaller groups and enjoy lunch at a local family's private home.

Afterwards, visit the Summer Palace. Explore the beautiful grounds, cruise the lovely Kunming Lake, and stroll through the royal gardens. Also, walk the Painted Gallery, the longest covered walkway in China famous for its exquisite landscape paintings.

This evening, enjoy a special Peking Duck banquet. (B,L,D)

Day 4, Aug. 22 • Beijing

Enjoy an optional early morning walk to Changpu Park to observe local Chinese practicing traditional health forms including taiji and qigong.

This morning, visit the Forbidden City, the abiding symbol of imperial China. Marvel at its expansive architecture, magnificent imperial gardens, and many museums of Chinese antiquities and treasures.

After lunch, visit the Temple of Heaven, one of the finest cultural expressions of the Ming Dynasty. The Temple of Heaven represents the most advanced principles architecture available at the time and serves as the ritual center of the imperial government.

Tonight is free. Dinner is on your own. After dinner, there will be a Peking Opera performance. (B,L)

Day 5, Aug. 23 • Beijing

Today is devoted to the justly famous Great Wall at Mutianyu, a rugged section of the Wall that is less crowded and with cable car available. Enjoy the astounding views of the Wall as it winds over the surrounding hills.

Tonight, we enjoy a special banquet at the Temple Kitchen Restaurant in the lovely White Pagoda Temple. (B,L,D)

Day 6, Aug. 24 • Lhasa

This morning, fly to Gongga Airport in Tibet, the highest airport in the world. Upon arrival, meet our Tibetan guide, drive to Lhasa and transfer to our hotel.

- Accommodations at the Lhasa Hotel.

After adjusting to the altitude, have a relaxing tea and take a short walk in the old town Lhasa. (B,L,D)

Day 7, Aug. 25 • Lhasa

This morning, enjoy a walk around Barkhor Street, the marketplace of old Lhasa and still amazingly evocative of old Tibet. The Barkhor is a pilgrim circuit where hundreds of pilgrims on any one day make their ritual circumambulations. It is also a thriving market; and traditional stone-block architecture forms the backdrop for the sale of prayer flags, prayer wheels, thanghas, sutras, jewelry, Tibetan knives, and so on. Lunch and dinner will be at the hotel.

Then, visit Jokhang Temple, Tibet's holiest shrine, filled with altars, halls, and galleries. The finest Tibetan art treasures are found here, though some originals were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. (B,L,D)

Day 8, Aug. 26 • Lhasa

A full day of sightseeing includes the Potala Palace, once the seat of government and the winter residence of the Dalai Lama. It yet remains today the abiding symbol of Tibetan Buddhism. The

complex comprises the White and Red Palaces situated in the center of Lhasa Valley at an altitude of 3700m. It rises over 13 stories and holds thousands of rooms.

Then, we take a short drive to Norbulingka, the Dalai Lama's former summer residence. Constructed in the 18th century, it is a masterpiece of Tibetan architecture and contains several palaces and chapels. (B,L,D)

Day 9, Aug. 27 • Lhasa

Traveling outside Lhasa, we visit Sera Monastery, one of the three great monasteries of the Gelugpa sect and founded in 1416 by a disciple of Tsongkhapa. The great ceremonial hall holds thousands of Tibetan sutras in cubicles along the wall.

Then, drive to Drepung Monastery, the largest monastic complex in Tibet. Hundreds of monks continue to practice the Buddhist dharma, including historic debating rituals.

We will also inspect a traditional Tibetan hospital and observe the treatment of patients with a combination of herbs and Tibetan Buddhist meditative techniques. (B,L,D)

Day 10, Aug. 28 • Chengdu

Fly to Chengdu and transit to our hotel.

- Accommodations at the Crown Plaza Hotel, in downtown Chengdu.

After lunch, visit the Chengdu Panda Breeding Center in a beautiful and spacious nature preserve outside Chengdu.

This evening is free. Dinner is on your own. (B,L)

Day 11, Aug. 29 • Dazu

After breakfast, we take the coach to Dazu, a religious and archaeological site important to Chinese history. Here we visit the Total Awakening Grotto, a spectacular Buddhist grotto with well-preserved sculpture that dates from the 9th to 13th centuries. We view the huge Sleeping Buddha at Baodingshan and enjoy the 12th-century carvings of the large Buddha Crescent. We also have a chance to visit a village and the school and experience how the farmers in the rural China carry on their traditional life and farming. We drive to Chongqing and arrive in the early evening. Check in at our hotel. The rest of the evening is free. Dinner is on your own.

- Accommodations at the Marriott Hotel in downtown. (B,L)

Day 12, Aug. 30 • Chongqing

Morning is free. After lunch we visit General Stilwell's Museum which documents the allied effort in China during WWII. Later, explore the lively art scene at the Chongqing Art Galleries.

Dinner is at Yangzi Island Restaurant. (B,L,D)

Following dinner we board Victoria, our Yangzi cruise ship.

Day 13-14, Aug. 31- Sept. 1 • Yangzi River Cruise

The main focus of the cruise is the extraordinary Three Gorges--the deep valleys and towering mountains carved by the Yangzi River. Each day join special side trips on shore, including a visit of the ancient village Shibaozhai and the breathtaking Lesser Gorge Daninghe. Tour the Three Gorges Dam construction site at Sandouping and sail through the new ship-locks.

Day 15, Sept. 2 • Yichang-Shanghai

Disembark the ship in Yichang after lunch. Fly to Shanghai in the late afternoon and transit to our hotel.

- Accommodations at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in downtown.

Evening is free. Dinner is on one's own. (B,L)

Day 16, Sept. 3 • Shanghai

We will spend the whole morning visiting Shanghai Museum and viewing its wonderful collection of Chinese bronzes, jade, pottery and ceramics, paintings and calligraphy, old coins, and furniture.

Then, enjoy a delicious vegetarian lunch at the Jade Buddha Temple.

In the afternoon, visit Yuyuan Garden in old Shanghai and absorb the Chinese traditional garden ambience.

This evening, enjoy a memorable farewell banquet at the Dingxiang Garden Restaurant, famous for Shanghai cuisine. After dinner, we'll stroll along the Bund, viewing the beautifully decorated colonial buildings along the Huangpu River. (B,D)

Day 17, Sept. 4 • Shanghai-San Francisco

After breakfast we depart for the airport. Our flight returns to San Francisco with a short stop in Beijing. The flight arrives at noon the same day.