Imperial China
Day 1 Flight
Overnight flight • Your adventure begins as you fly through the night to China.

Day 2 Beijing
Arrival in Beijing • Touch down in Beijing. It was in this city that Chairman Mao proclaimed the People's Republic of China in 1949. Meet your bilingual tour director, who will remain with you throughout your stay; then transfer to your hotel.

Day 3 Beijing
Guided sightseeing of Beijing • An expert local guide introduces you to the Chinese capital, a treasure chest of imperial monuments. This ancient city first received its modern name when it became the capital for the second time in Chinese history in 1402 (“Beijing” means “Northern Capital”). See Tiananmen Square (the Gate of Heavenly Peace), the largest public square in the world. Visit the Forbidden City (Gugong), accessible only to members of the imperial court until as late as 1949. Get a close-up look at the golden-roofed Imperial Palace, one of the world’s greatest architectural achievements. Hundreds of thousands of workers labored on the construction of this palatial complex during the Ming Dynasty (1403-1424). It was renovated during the 18th century (Qing Dynasty). Although situated in the very heart of Beijing, the Forbidden City is surrounded by both a moat and a protective wall. The emperors who once resided here often spent their entire lives within the complex.

Lunch with local students (except during Chinese holidays and exam time) • Learn what school life is like in China while you eat lunch with a group of Chinese students. Of course, they’ll be curious about American schools too, so be prepared to answer a lot of questions!

Peking Duck Dinner • Tonight, you’ll be treated to northern China’s most famous dish: Peking duck! During this special feast, learn about the ritual preparation and savory side dishes that accompany this regional specialty.

Day 4 Beijing
Excursion to Badaling and the Great Wall of China • Travel north to Badaling to view one of the wonders of the world: the Great Wall of China. Its construction began in the 5th century B.C. as a defense against the Mongols: 300,000 people (many of whom are buried in the wall) labored on it over several centuries. Extending across mountains and valleys for more than 3,000 miles—perhaps only a tenth of its former length—the wall is said to be visible from outer space!
Rikshaw tour of hutongs • A hutong is an ancient city alley or lane typical in Beijing. Hutongs were common in ancient Beijing. Today, although the city is becoming an international metropolis, its small lanes and alleyways still provide access to dwellings for half the total urban population.

Experiential learning: Cultural immersion (except during Chinese holidays) • Peek into the daily life of a typical Chinese family. Learn (and enjoy?) the art of Chinese cooking during a visit to a local household.

Day 5 Beijing • Xi’an
Morning Tai Chi Chuan exercises • Start your day as the locals do: with a gentle series of stretching exercises in a local park led by an experienced practitioner.

Temple of Heaven Park • See Tiantan, or Temple of Heaven Park, a huge outdoor complex adorned with Ming and Qing relics.

Flight to Xi’an • Transfer to the airport for your flight to Xi’an (pronounced Shi-ahn), one of China’s most extraordinary cities. Xi’an was once the largest city in the world and the capital of 11 dynasties.

Day 6 Xi’an
Guided sightseeing of Xi’an • Follow in the footsteps of Marco Polo during guided sightseeing. (Xi’an was located at the eastern end of the Silk Road, the route the famous traveler followed.) See the 7th-century Big Wild Goose Pagoda (built upon the orders of Xuan Zang, the monk who introduced Buddhism to China), the city walls, the 118-foot-high Bell Tower, and the Great Mosque (one of China’s oldest Moslem temples).

Visit to the Shaanxi Provincial Museum • See artifacts from the Han and Tang dynasties at the Shaanxi Provincial Museum, which was built on the site of a former Confucian temple.

Visit to the Museum of the Terracotta Army • Visit the intriguing Museum of the Terracotta Army, which exhibits the amazing collection of figures discovered by peasants digging for water in 1974. The army’s 6,000 painstakingly modeled, life-size warriors and horses—of which no two are alike—were sculpted to protect the tomb of Emperor Qin Shi Huangdi, founder of the Qin Dynasty (221–206 B.C.) and the first ruler to unify China.

IMAX Theater • On the 3D IMAX screen, view a fascinating film depicting the excavation process of the Terracotta Army.

Optional Tang Dynasty Show and Dinner • Experience the splendor of the Tang Dynasty at this world-class theater restaurant featuring famous Cantonese cuisine. Since its opening in 1988, the complex has accommodated over 2.5 million guests from around the world.

Day 7 Xi’an • Shanghai
Flight to Shanghai • Fly to Shanghai, China’s largest and most cosmopolitan city. Shanghai (meaning “up from the sea”) has been an important port for centuries. China’s Communist Party—and later the Cultural Revolution—originated in Shanghai.

Experiential learning: Cultural immersion (except during Chinese holidays) • Visit a local hospital to learn about Chinese medicine and acupuncture.

Optional Huangpu River Cruise • Climb aboard for an exciting two-hour cruise down the bustling Huangpu River. You’ll start in Taihu Lake in the Jiangsu province, head towards Shanghai to where the Huangpu joins the mighty Yangtze.

Day 8 Shanghai
Guided sightseeing of Shanghai • Guided sightseeing begins in the heart of the city with a visit to the Bund (once considered the “Wall Street of the East”), a beautifully landscaped promenade overlooking the waterfront. You’ll also view the Jade Buddha Temple; the extraordinary Buddhas you see here (each sculpted from a single piece of white jade) were brought from Burma by a Chinese monk in the last century. One portrays Buddha experiencing Enlightenment, the other his transcendence into Nirvana. Continue on to the glorious Yu Garden, a showplace of classical Chinese landscaping dating back to 1537. The Chinese consider gardening a complex art form in which the challenge is to construct an entire world in miniature, using minerals, plants, and animals in a limited space.

Nanjing Lu • Spend time admiring the crafts and delicacies in the interesting shops that line colorful Nanjing Road.

Jin Mao Tower • Enjoy spectacular views from the Jin Mao Tower, China’s tallest building and the fifth-tallest building in the world.

Acrobatics show • Witness a thrilling display by talented performers during today’s show of traditional Chinese acrobatics.

The oldest section of the Great Wall of China was constructed in 500 B.C. by the Kingdom of Qi.
Tau Heritage Trail, homeland of the Tang Clan, and visit Tai Fu Tai, an opulent home built in 1865.

**Day 11 Hong Kong**

**Free time in Hong Kong** • Spend your time exploring the many neighborhoods of this vibrant city.

**Optional Top of the Town Dinner and Night Cruise** • Opt to check out Hong Kong from 62 stories above—at the Revolving 66 restaurant. You’ll enjoy a superb four-course Western dinner. Afterwards, meander through the night markets of Temple Street before ending the evening with a spectacular harbor cruise with the lights of the city in the background.

**Day 12 Home**

**Return home** • Transfer to the airport, where you’ll check in for your return flight home.

For complete financial and registration details, please refer to the Booking Conditions.