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## GEEO ITINERARY

China with Bill Howe

### **Day 1: Beijing Arrive in Beijing at any time. Meet your group for a welcome meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m., and then go on an orientation walk in the area of Beijing near the hotel.**

You may arrive in Beijing at any time today. The main airport is **Beijing Capital International Airport (PEK)**. The city's secondary airport is **Beijing Daxing International Airport (PKX)**. Due to the potential for flight delays or cancellations, we recommend that you consider arriving in China at least a day in advance. This will also give you time to adjust to the time difference and overcome any jet lag. You might consider spending a few days in Hong Kong before the program begins, or just arriving early in Beijing to see more of the city. We can book extra hotel nights for you in Beijing before the program begins. **Hotel Check-in and Welcome Meeting** Please note that check-in at the hotel is usually around 2:00-3:00 p.m. There are no planned activities until an intro meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m., usually in the hotel lobby. Check for a sign or ask at the reception desk about the exact time and location of the group meeting. Please make every effort to arrive in time for this meeting. If you are delayed and will arrive late, please inform us. Your tour leader will then leave you a message at the front desk informing you of where and when to meet up tomorrow. After the welcome meeting, join your tour leader for an orientation walk near the hotel to get your bearings. They will show you restaurants, points of interest, supermarkets, ATMs, etc. Opt for a group dinner to get to know your tour leader and travel companions. **Joining Instructions** If you are arriving at Beijing Capital International Airport (PEK) or Beijing Daxing International Airport (PKX), you can pre-book an airport transfer with us at a rate of \$80 for a solo traveler, \$40/person for two travel companions arriving on the same flight, \$30/person for three people, or \$25/person for four people. If you do not pre-book an arrival transfer, you can make your way to the hotel by public transit (Airport Express Train) or taxi.

- **Airport Express Train:** After exiting the baggage area, follow signs for the underground Airport Express Line. The Airport Express Train ticket costs 25 yuan (~\$3.50 USD) from PEK or 35 yuan (~\$5 USD) from PKX. The journey takes about 20 minutes from Terminal 3 or Terminal 2 of PEK to Dongzhimen Station (or from PKX to Caoqiao Station), and trains run from 6:20 a.m. to 10:50 p.m. You can take a taxi from Dongzhimen Station/Caoqiao Station to your hotel, or continue by metro to Hufangqiao Station, which is a short walk to the hotel. (From Dongzhimen Station: Line 2 to Chongwenmen Station, then Line 5 to Ciqikou Station, then Line 7 to Hufangqiao Station. From Caoqiao Station: Line 10 to Shuangjing Station, then Line 7 to Hufangqiao Station. The cost for a metro ticket from either Dongzhimen Station or Caoqiao Station to Hufangqiao Station is 5 CNY (~\$0.70 USD).
- **Taxi:** The fastest and most direct/convenient option, but also more expensive. Upon exiting the baggage area, follow signs to the taxi ranks (clearly sign-posted), which have official attendants who will put you in a taxi. We recommend printing out the name of your hotel in Chinese to show the driver. A taxi ride will take around 45 mins-1 hour depending on traffic and should cost around 200-250 yuan for PEK and 250-300 yuan for PKX. *If anyone approaches you offering a metered taxi from the parking lot, ignore them—they will rip you off.*

**Accommodation:** Dongfang Hotel (or similar) \* *For the actual hotel your specific departure will be using, please check your voucher.*

### **Day 2: Beijing Visit the Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City, and then enjoy free time to explore more of the city.**

Explore bustling Beijing today, including the famous Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City in the heart of the city. At Tiananmen Square, explore one of the world's largest public squares and the symbolic center of Chinese power. It is a place of pilgrimage for the Chinese tourists who consider it the heart of their nation. The square is framed by the Gate of Heavenly Peace with its Mao portrait, Mao's Mausoleum, the Great Hall of the People, and the National Museum. At dawn and dusk, there are

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elaborate flag-raising and lowering ceremonies. For 500 years, the palace at the Forbidden City was only accessible to the emperors' attendants and officials by invitation only. During your visit, see the Clock Exhibition Hall, wander through the Three Great Halls, or stand in the shade of the cypress trees in the Imperial Garden. (Please note: Due to restrictions in China after the COVID-19 pandemic, the maximum daily capacity in the Forbidden City may be significantly limited. This limit on daily admission has had a major impact on availability for both individuals and group tours, especially during the busy summer season. Our local team works very hard to secure tickets, but if we are unable to secure tickets to the Forbidden City, we will visit the Summer Palace and the Temple of Heaven, places similar in architecture and of historical importance.) Use free time later in the day to explore Beijing's hutongs (traditional narrow alleyways and backstreets), or visit the Temple of Heaven, the Drum and Bell Tower, the Lama Temple, or the Summer Palace. Opt to have a Peking Duck meal with your group in the evening.

**Accommodation:** Dongfang Hotel (or similar)

### **Day 3: Beijing Travel north to the Great Wall, one of the most iconic sights in all of China. Opt for a Peking duck dinner in the evening with your group.**

Travel to the Great Wall of China by private vehicle and see one of the most iconic sights in the entire world. Spend the better part of the day exploring and soaking in the atmosphere. There will be approximately 5 km of walking at the site, which will take 2-3 hours depending on your level of fitness. Travel through the rolling hills of Huairou County at Mutianyu, one of the best-preserved sections of the Great Wall. Take in the scenic views from any of the 22 towers as the wall winds along mountain ridges. The Great Wall is an incredible feat of engineering, stretching over 13,000 miles across the mountain ridges north of Beijing. It was originally constructed to protect Chinese dynasties from the nomadic northern tribes. Even though it failed to keep out the Mongols, it is still one of the country's most remarkable achievements and an iconic destination. The Mutianyu section of the Great Wall is located about 80 km from the Beijing city center. If you don't want to conquer the wall on foot, opt to ride a cable car up to Watchtower 14. You can get a round-trip ticket for the enclosed cable car, or take the cable car up and ride the "toboggan" down (individual cars on tracks). In the evening, opt to join your group for a Peking duck dinner at Quanjudu Beijing Roast Duck Restaurant. **Approximate travel time:** 4-5 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Dongfang Hotel (or similar)

### **Day 4: Beijing/Xi'an Catch a bullet train from Beijing to Xi'an and go on an orientation walk.**

In the morning, take a bullet train from Beijing to vibrant Xi'an. After settling in at your hotel, go on an orientation walk with your tour leader and visit points of interest around the city, like the bustling Muslim Quarter, one of Xi'an's most fascinating areas. You will pass the lovely and unique Great Mosque (admission not included) and have an opportunity to try out the food stalls with some of the best street eats in China—the spicy beef and lamb kebabs are particularly popular. **Approximate travel time:** 4.5 hrs by bullet train **Accommodation:** HNA Hotel (or similar)

### **Day 5: Xi'an Visit one of China's greatest archaeological treasures—the Terracotta Warriors. Opt to cycle along the Xi'an city walls and enjoy a dumpling banquet with your group.**

Take a guided tour of the Terracotta Warriors, where more than 8,000 clay soldiers and hundreds of replica horses and chariots stand in three pits. Learn why Emperor Qin Shihuang commissioned the statues to serve as his army in the afterlife and how they were discovered. Spend a half-day exploring this archaeological wonder. Enjoy an included lunch at a restaurant run by a local family out of their own home near the Terracotta Museum. Options include home-cooked noodles, stir-fried dishes, and seasonal fruits from the garden. Explore Xi'an in the afternoon. Opt to rent a bike and cycle the Xi'an city walls with your fellow travelers. The walls, built for protection in the Tang Dynasty and expanded in the Ming dynasty, are a great way to absorb local history. Hop off your bike to admire the views along the 39-ft-wide wall, which takes about two hours to cycle around. In the evening, opt to enjoy a dumpling banquet with your group during the Tang Dynasty Music and Dance Show. The performances showcase China's cultural heritage with ancient music, inspiring dances to various Chinese instruments, and interesting

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historical stories. Before the show, there will be a traditional banquet featuring Chinese dumplings called *jiaozi* (vegetarian options available). **Approximate travel time:** 2 hrs by private vehicle  
**Accommodation:** HNA Hotel (or similar) **Meals included:** Lunch

**Day 6: Xi'an/Chengdu Spend a free morning in Xi'an before traveling to Chengdu. In the evening, enjoy a hotpot dinner with the group.**

Spend a free morning exploring more of Xi'an. In the afternoon, board a bullet train to Chengdu. After getting settled at the hotel, go on an orientation walk with your tour leader, and then sit down for a hotpot dinner with the group in the evening. Hotpot is a traditional communal dining experience that brings together friends and family around a bubbling pot of richly flavored broth. The centerpiece of the meal is the hotpot itself, usually split into two sections: one containing a fiery red broth infused with Sichuan peppercorns and chilies, and the other a milder, savory broth for those who prefer a less intense heat. As the pot simmers in the middle of the table, diners select from an array of fresh ingredients (tofu, noodles, vegetables, meats, and seafood) laid out on platters and add them to the pot to cook. The table also has an array of dipping sauces, herbs and spices, and other condiments to create your perfect flavor combination. The spiciness of the Sichuan broth can cause a pleasant numbing sensation on the lips and tongue, a hallmark of Chengdu's renowned cuisine. To cool down, sip on a cold beer or enjoy local herbal teas that balance the heat of the meal. **Approximate travel time:** 3.5-4 hrs by bullet train **Accommodation:** Boya Celebrity Miramar Hotel (or similar) **Meals included:** Dinner

**Day 7: Chengdu Visit the Chengdu Panda Base and witness the conservation efforts being made to save this endearing species. Later, visit People's Park for an orientation walk ending in Tianfu Square.**

Enjoy a morning visit to the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding and see some pandas. Learn about the conservation efforts being made to preserve this threatened bear species endemic to China, as well as the species's life cycle and habitat. The research base has a number of other rare species, including the red panda. Later, take time for lunch on your own before joining your group on an orientation walk from People's Park to Tianfu Square, located in the center of Chengdu. People's Park was the first public park in Chengdu and features an artificial lake, gardens, and teahouses. It is a popular place for locals to enjoy the outdoors. Take the metro back to the hotel before an optional group dinner in the evening. **Accommodation:** Boya Celebrity Miramar Hotel (or similar)

**Day 8: Chengdu/Emei Shan Travel from Chengdu to Leshan and visit the Giant Buddha. Later, drive to the foot of Mt. E'mei.**

Travel by private vehicle from Chengdu to Leshan, where you can grab lunch on your own before visiting the Dafo (meaning "Great Buddha"). It took thousands of workers over 90 years (from 713 to 803) during the Tang dynasty to carve the monument out of a cliff face. The 233-foot-tall statue is the largest and tallest stone Buddha statue in the world. Explore carvings and temples near the statue's head before climbing down the path to its enormous toes. Opt to board a boat and head out on the Mingjiang River to get a broader view of the statue. Then, drive to the foot of Mt. E'mei, located southwest of the Sichuan Basin. The evening is yours to explore the area around Mt. E'Mei and learn more about the region. **Approximate travel time:** 3.5 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Chanlin Inn (or similar)

**Day 9: Emei Shan Enjoy a day of hiking around Emei Shan. Enjoy some free time before an optional group dinner in the evening.**

Take the shuttle bus to the Wannian Temple parking area where today's hike will begin. Spend a full day exploring the temples/monasteries and taking in the stunning vistas of Mt. Emei, one of Buddhism's holiest sites. The hike takes 6-10 hours. Stops will include Qingyin Pavilion, Guangfu Temple, Zhongfeng Temple, Shenshui Pavilion, Chunyang Palace, and Leiyin Temple, before ending at Wuxiangang parking area. From there, hikers can take the shuttle to Baoguo Temple or choose to keep hiking to Huyu Bridge, Fuhu Monastery, and Baoguo Temple on foot. There will be free time before an optional group dinner in the evening. **Accommodation:** Chanlin Inn (or similar)

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## **Day 10: Emei Shan/Yangshuo Travel to Yangshuo and go on an orientation walk upon arrival.**

Travel by private vehicle to Leshan train station and catch a bullet train to Yangshuo. Upon arrival, transfer to the hotel, get settled, and then enjoy an orientation walk before an optional group dinner. **Approximate travel time:** 45 mins by private vehicle, 5.5 hrs by bullet train **Accommodation:** New West Street Hotel (or similar)

## **Day 11: Yangshuo Float the Li River on a bamboo raft. Visit Dabeicun Village and the Jia Community Restaurant.**

Drive to Xingping pier and navigate the most beautiful portion of the stunning Li River on a local boat (called a bamboo raft). After the float, take the local ferry across the river to Dabeicun Village and set off on a short walking tour. End the walk at the Jia Community Restaurant, where you will enjoy a traditional Chinese meal served by rural women working to create new opportunities for their families. With the migration of men to urban centers being common in rural regions, women and children have created places to gather and learn together at Community Corners, established by the Rural Women's Development Foundation. Your meal helps support women who are developing new work skills to become self-reliant. This initiative helps to create meaningful employment alternatives to agriculture as a source of income. Spend free time this afternoon to explore Yangshuo on your own. Optional activities in Yangshuo included a Tai Chi class, a market tour and cooking class, and the outdoor Impression Sanjie Liu light show on the Li River. **Meals included:** Lunch **Accommodation:** New West Street Hotel (or similar)

## **Day 12: Yangshuo Enjoy a free day in Yangshuo. Opt to see the Impression Liu Sanjie light show in the evening.**

Enjoy free time today to explore this beautiful area. Feel free to relax, or try optional activities like a traditional massage or a guided cycle tour past rice paddies and water buffalo (including lunch at the house of a local family). If you want more hiking, check out Moon Hill, one of Yangshuo's most popular attractions. After sunset, opt to see the Impression Liu Sanjie light show on the Li River. The show features 600 actors, colorful lights, and special-effect smoke systems. **Accommodation:** New West Street Hotel (or similar)

## **Day 13: Yangshuo/Shanghai Fly to Shanghai, arriving in the late afternoon. Go on an orientation walk.**

Catch a flight from Yangshuo to Shanghai and arrive in the late afternoon. After arriving, take an orientation walk down one of the city's most famous streets, Nanjing Road, and visit the Bund, a famous waterfront area on the west bank of Huangpu River that offers a great view of the city's skyline. Shanghai has some of the best Art Deco architecture of anywhere in the world, having spread to China in the 1930s. **Approximate travel time:** 1-1.5 hrs by private vehicle, 2.5 hrs by plane **Accommodation:** Zhen Yue Hotel (or similar)

## **Day 14: Shanghai Visit the Shanghai Museum, and then take the metro to Yuyuan Gardens for an optional walk around the grounds. The rest of the day is free, with an optional Chinese acrobatic show and group farewell dinner in the evening.**

Spend some time immersed in Shanghai today, starting with a visit to the Shanghai Museum, home to a world-class collection of ancient Chinese art. The galleries contain sculptures, bronze artifacts, ceramics, jade, coins, Ming and Qing Dynasty furniture, paintings, and calligraphy. Later, take the metro to Yuyuan Gardens for an optional visit and walk around the 400-year-old, five-acre grounds. Climb to the top of the Rockery to see the green space from above. Check out the Jade Rock and watch the swarms of goldfish swim around in the ponds. Opt to visit the bustling market located outside the gardens and hone your

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bargaining skills. The remainder of the afternoon is free for optional activities, including a Chinese acrobatic show with tumbling, balancing, plate-spinning, and amazing contortionists. There will be an optional group farewell dinner in the evening. **Accommodation:** Zhen Yue Hotel (or similar)

### **Day 15: Shanghai Depart Shanghai at any time.**

There are no planned activities today, so you may depart Shanghai at any time. The main airport is **Shanghai Pudong International Airport (PVG)**. The city's secondary airport is Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport (SHA), mainly serving domestic and regional flights. If you wish to extend your stay in Shanghai, consider booking post-tour accommodation with us. Please note that check-out time from the hotel is usually mid-morning, but luggage storage services are available at the reception desk. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEEO programs in the same school year and receive a discount! GEEO will give you 10% off the lesser-value program(s) (up to three programs per year). If you would like to extend your time abroad but don't see another GEEO program that interests you, [let us know](#). We can help you find a trip from our partner tour's much larger catalog. Their tours are open to the general public and not designed specifically for educators, but we can still offer you and your travel companions a discounted educator price on any of their tours, and you would still receive GEEO's fast and attentive customer service.

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*\***Itinerary Disclaimer:** While it is our intention to adhere to the routes described on our website, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable, to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The information on our website is a general guide to the tour and region, and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.*