21-Day Tour of China with K&M Travel Departing September 7, 2016

Days 1 - 2: Fly to Beijing

Depart on your overnight flight from the US to China. Upon arrival in Beijing, we are welcomed by our local guide and transferred to our hotel.

Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China and the nation's most important center for economy, education and international trade. With its unequaled wealth of history, Beijing served as the center for the many different empires and cultures that ruled China and has been the heart of politics and society throughout its long history. The ancient monuments and the stories of days gone by make this dynamic and modern city a destination not to be missed.

Accommodation: Jiangxi Grand Hotel or Similar

Day 3: Beijing

This morning we will walk through the expanse of Tiananmen Square, where we will pass Chairman Mao's Mausoleum. Built on Mao Zedong's orders, Tiananmen Square is said to hold a capacity crowd of over one million.

Next we will walk through the outer gates of the Imperial Forbidden City, the sacred center of the Chinese empire for 500 years and home to both the Ming and Qing dynasties. We walk through this royal complex from the south gate at Tiananmen, named Gate of Heavenly Peace, through to the north gate at Shenwumen, named Gate of Divine Might. We can explore the outer courts, the courtyards and the private residences within the Forbidden City.

Later this afternoon we take a rickshaw ride through the old Hutong area, where our guide will explain the intricacy of traditional Chinese architecture, the influence of Feng Shui and the sense of community in the area. It was the Mongol rulers of Beijing that established this style of housing and Hutong was their word for the narrow alleyways between each house. In more recent times the Hutong suburbs were in jeopardy of disappearing, but a fierce debate between developers and those who fought to protect the architecture and the Hutong way of life diminished the threat.

This evening our dinner will include a sample of the most renowned local delicacy, Peking Duck.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Peking Duck Dinner
Day 4: Beijing

It is often quoted in Beijing that you have not been to China until you have climbed the Great Wall. Stretching from the Shanhaiguan Pass on the east coast to the Gobi Desert in the west, it is more than 4,000 miles long. Walk along the wall, admire the panoramic views and reflect on the immensity of the material and labor required for its construction.

After lunch, we will visit the Jade Factory and Showroom. From here we visit the 15th century Temple of Heaven, one of the more perfect examples of Ming architecture, set among a 660 acre park with four gates set at each point of a compass. Walking through the park we will see the many groups of local people that gather here every day to sing folk songs, practice tai chi and sword dancing, play chess or just come to sit and chat.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Jiangxi Grand Hotel or Similar

Day 5: Beijing

This morning we head to the Summer Palace, a retreat for emperors during the Ming and Qing dynasties, the most notorious of which is Empress Dowager Cixi. Popularly known as the dragon lady, the empress spent money reserved to commission a modern navy on embellishment of the royal garden. However, she did restore the large marble boat that sits at the edge of the beautiful Kunming Lake, which occupies three quarters of the park’s expanse.

Our evening entertainment tonight is an exciting Chinese acrobatics performance, where we will see gravity-defying acrobatics, contortionists, juggling, plate spinning acts and more.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Jiangxi Grand Hotel or Similar

Day 6: Beijing to Xian

This morning we will transfer to the airport for our flight to Xian. Upon arrival we will check into our hotel.

Xian, which means Western Peace, is located on the banks of the Yellow River and has a history dating back to 1000BC. It once rivaled great cities such as Constantinople and Rome in size, culture and development and was also the
starting point for the famous trade route, the Silk Road, a caravan passageway which carried not only silks, ceramics and spices but also led to an exchange of cultures, technologies and ideas. Buddhism brought from India during the Tang Dynasty (618-907AD) was perhaps one of the most influential of the religions to travel along this famed road into Xian.

We will then visit the renowned Shaanxi Provincial Museum, home to thousands of priceless cultural relics from past dynasties.

In the evening we enjoy a performance of music and dance dating back to the Tang Dynasty while feasting on a sumptuous Shui Jiao dumpling dinner, a specialty of the region.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Shui Jiao Dumpling Dinner
Accommodation: Golden Flower Hotel or Similar

Day 7: Xian

We start our day with a visit to the famous UNESCO World Heritage listed Terracotta Warriors and Horses. One of the most significant archaeological discoveries of the 20th century, this unearthed terracotta army is comprised of over 7,000 soldiers, horses and chariots. The army was built in life-sized form by thousands of workers and designed by the self-proclaimed Emperor Qin Shi Huang to defend himself in his afterlife. The word China derived from his name and he is acclaimed by Chinese historians to have unified the rival lands of China into a single empire after defeating his enemy states and standardizing the systems of currency, writing and measurement.

On our return to Xian we stop at the Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition where replicas of the warriors are made before visiting the Ancient City Wall, a 500-year-old barricade built to protect the city. Standing the test of time, it is one of the only walls in China to remain intact.

Later we will stroll through the lively Muslim Quarter, exploring the many narrow laneways of the interesting Islamic food markets.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Golden Flower Hotel or Similar

Day 8: Xian to Wuhan – Yangtze River Cruise

This morning we visit the Little Wild Goose Pagoda before we are transferred to Xian airport to board our flight to Wuhan. Upon arrival in Wuhan, we transfer by
coach (4-5 hour drive) to the city of Yichang, where we will board our Yangtze River cruise vessel.

We will be taking an amazing journey along China's Yangtze River, which is undeniably one of the world's great and legendary waterways. This 3,900 mile river has its origins high up in the snow covered mountain of Tanggula Shan in the south western Qinghai Tibet Plateau and runs into the ocean at Shanghai. It is estimated that this river has more than 10 percent of the world's population living along its banks.

NOTE: Shore excursions are subject to change depending on local conditions.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Five-star Yangtze Cruise Ship

**Day 9: Yangtze River Cruise**

Over the next three days, relax as we explore the wondrous landscape and life along the Yangtze River. This morning we will visit the site of the Three Gorges Dam. Commenced in 1994 and completed in 2009, the Three Gorges Dam is the largest water conservancy project ever undertaken. The Dam is located near Sandouping, which is in the middle of the Xiling Gorge, the longest of the Three Gorges. The Three Gorges Dam is 7,660 feet long, 600 feet high, 60 feet wide on the top and 430 feet wide at the bottom. The dam has raised the river to a level of 575 feet above sea level, creating a 372 mile long reservoir, with 1.5 million people relocated. The building of this huge dam was for the purpose of flood control, electricity, navigation and irrigation.

Later today, we will pass through the Xiling Gorge, once the most treacherous stretch of the Yangtze which has now been tamed by the new dam. Further upstream we reach the larger Wu Gorge, before we finally sail through the narrow and dramatic Qutang Gorge.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Five-star Yangtze Cruise Ship

**Day 10: Yangtze River Cruise**

Today's program may include shore excursions to Shennong Stream. From Badong we sail through Wu Gorge, at a length of 24 miles, with cliffs so sheer the sun barely penetrates to the river below.

At the Lesser Three Gorges, higher water levels mean we can travel further upstream to unspoiled villages or if the river levels allow, we will hop into small
pea pod boats at Shennong Stream. Here we can see the cut stone of the trackers path high on the sheer walls. Gain knowledge about the history of the trackers, the men who while walking along those paths, dragged enormous junk ships along the Yangtze for centuries.

When we return to the cruise vessel, continue cruising through the shortest, but the most dramatic of the Three Gorges, Qutang Gorge.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Five-star Yangtze Cruise Ship

**Day 11: Yangtze River Cruise**

Today’s program may include a shore excursion to Fengdu, an ancient ghost city on the banks of the Yangtze River. Fengdu is the original and supposedly haunted ghost town themed on numerous legends and folktales. Here we visit the temples dedicated to the underworld and heaven. We can also participate in several tests and tasks to help predict our future, fidelity and fortune.

Upon returning to the cruise vessel, continue cruising overnight.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Five-star Yangtze Cruise Ship

**Day 12: Disembark Cruise - Chongqing to Chengdu**

We disembark from our cruise this morning in Chongqing, a city perched on the steep hills overlooking the confluence of the Jialing and the Yangtze rivers. Chongqing is the chief industrial center of south western China, producing approximately one fifth of Sichuan’s industrial output. The city has been reshaped by the Three Gorges Dam Project, which now allows larger sea-going vessels to sail all the way upriver to China's most famous waterfront mountain city.

In Chongqing we visit the old district of Ciqikou, an authentic historical area containing traditional buildings dating back to the Ming and Qing dynasties. Here we will have some free time to walk around and soak up the atmosphere of traditional China. Explore the narrow laneways and paved pedestrian streets scattered with local shops selling porcelain, artwork, embroidery and local souvenirs. We may even stumble across the local sweets and candy being produced by pounding ingredients using large wooden hammers, or simply sit back and watch the locals going about their day. From here, we continue to Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province.
As the capital of one of the most affluent rural areas in China, Chengdu has developed into a large and modern city, yet within its crooked backstreets we will still find all the charms of old China. Wander among the traditional wooden houses and bustling street markets, through the aromas of Sichuan spices cooking and the chatter of old men walking with their caged birds.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Chengdu Tianfu Sunshine Hotel or Similar

Day 13: Chengdu – Leshan

Enjoy a day trip to one of the most spectacular and memorable sights of Sichuan, the Grand Buddha of Leshan. We drive past the town of Leshan where we reach the confluence of the Minjiang, Dadu and Qingyi rivers and the site of the tallest Buddha statue in the world sitting on the mountainside.

Local history tells us that the river here was once treacherous with a whirlpool that overturned so many boats and drowned so many fishermen that they suspected a demon lurked under the water where the rivers met. The locals carved an enormous statue of Buddha at this point on the river to pray to him to placate the whirlpool below. Whether it was due to Buddha's pleasure or the fact that the locals threw tons of rock into the riverbed as they carved away at the mountain, the river is now calm allowing us to take a ferry ride to view this remarkable site.

On our return to Chengdu we will visit the ancient town of Huanglongxi. We will have some time to explore the town's ancient alleyways which date back 1,700 years to the Qing Dynasty and have been restored with modern touches, yet still retain their rustic charm. Among the attractions of the small town include the Zhenjiang, Chaoyin and Gulong temples. Later this afternoon we will return to our hotel in Chengdu and this evening we will enjoy sumptuous Sichuan cuisine for dinner.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Sichuan Cuisine Dinner
Accommodation: Chengdu Tianfu Sunshine Hotel or Similar

Day 14: Chengdu to Guilin

Sightseeing today begins with a visit to the famous Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding. Opened to the public in 1995, the reserve has a museum, research facility and a protected wilderness and breeding area. The panda has become one of the most adored animals in China and noted as the cute and memorable mascot for the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). We explore the
grounds with a chance to see some of the animals up close and learn more about this region’s endangered species.

Afterwards we will transfer to the airport and fly to Guilin, one of China’s most stunning and panoramic cities. Founded in the Qin Dynasty, it is renowned for the unique beauty of the mountains that fringe it. Guilin developed as a trading town due to the building of the Ling Canal which links the important Pearl and Yangtze River systems. Upon arrival into this picturesque town we will transfer to our hotel.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Lijiang Waterfall Hotel or Similar

Day 15: Guilin to Yangshuo

Cruise along the Li River passing tranquil farming scenes. Disembark in Yangshuo and explore the colorful Today we take a cruise along the beautiful Li River to Yangshuo, passing tranquil farming and fishing scenes and picturesque villages. The main attraction is the stunning limestone karsts that tower above the river creating a magical landscape of mountains and water. The unique and natural beauty of this region has for centuries been an inspiration to Chinese artists and poets alike. Don’t forget your camera on this occasion as this is one place where it will be working overtime!

After we disembark in Yangshuo, we take a short walk to our hotel. Set amid limestone peaks, lush green rice paddies and surrounded by meandering river ways, Yangshuo provides an interesting contrast to the big Chinese cities.

This afternoon wander through the bustling local market and through residential areas, taking in Yangshuo’s captivating atmosphere.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Elite Garden Hotel or Similar

Day 16: Yangshuo

This morning we will explore the beautiful rural countryside around Yangshuo, taking a leisurely stroll to discover the lifestyle of the villagers and witness how the locals farm. This afternoon we will have time to walk around the cobblestone streets and enjoy this charming town at our own leisure.

For this evening’s entertainment we are taken to the Li River to watch a traditional method of fishing in China, where trained cormorants are used to catch fish. Using bamboo rafts and a pole to move through the water, the
fishermen hang strong lights over the water to attract the fish. The cormorants then dive into the water on a fisherman’s command and catch them, emptying the fish onto the raft for all the fishermen to take to their families. Although the cormorants have string tied around the base of their necks to stop the fish from being swallowed, these are removed afterwards so that they can eat, with the reward being a fish they have caught!

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Elite Garden Hotel or Similar

**Day 17: Yangshuo – Guilin to Suzhou**

This morning we drive back to Guilin, visiting the Reed Flute Caves, named so because of the clumps of slender reed once commonly found at the entrance to the caves. Afterwards we transfer to the airport for our flight to Shanghai. From here we transfer to the charming city of Suzhou. Known as the Venice of the East, Suzhou is acclaimed throughout Chinese history as one of the most cultured. Famous for its silk production and weaving, ancient gardens and canals, Suzhou’s picturesque landscape make this a must see destination.

The classical garden architecture is the gem of this city. The exquisite landscaped gardens have been included on the UNESCO World Heritage list and the Humble Administrators Garden is the representative of all others. We will visit this fine oriental garden tomorrow, with twelve acres of streams, ponds, bridges and islands of bamboo, as well as the Master of the Nets Garden, which contains an inner garden holding the Master’s Study.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Garden Hotel or Similar

**Day 18: Suzhou to Shanghai**

This morning we visit the Humble Administrator’s Garden, with 12 acres of streams, ponds, bridges and islands of bamboo, as well as the Master of the Nets Garden, which contains an inner garden holding the Master’s Study with Ming dynasty style furnishings and architecture. Afterwards we cruise the 1,000-year-old Grand Canal and visit a traditional silk mill and showroom to observe the delicate art of silk spinning.

This afternoon we will return to Shanghai. Once known as the Paris of the East, Shanghai has emerged, yet again, as one of Asia’s most influential cities. Prior to communist arrival in 1949, Shanghai was a city with European-style mansions and was the most important trading port in Asia. Today it presents a blend of the
modern and traditional cultures. Modern skyscrapers intermingle with 1920s shikumen buildings. This combination is what attracts millions of visitors each year.

This evening, we enjoy dinner of traditional Shanghai cuisine.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Shanghai Cuisine Dinner
Accommodation: Regal Shanghai East Asia Hotel or Similar

**Day 19: Shanghai**

Sightseeing today starts in the Old Town (Yuan Bazaar) of Shanghai, where cobbled streets are lined with traditional shops selling herbal medicines, handicrafts, Chinese tea and a variety of tantalizing snacks. We take a relaxing walk through moon gates and latticed pavilions in the peaceful Yu Gardens, the inspiration for willow patterned china.

We continue touring to the historical riverfront area known as the Bund. Recognized as Shanghai’s former Wall Street, the Bund is home to an impressive collection of buildings from the early trade houses of the 1850s to the glamorous Art Deco modernism of the 1920s.

This afternoon we view the superb antiquities and fine arts at the Shanghai Museum and wander the surrounds of the neighboring People's Square.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Regal Shanghai East Asia Hotel or Similar

**Day 20: Shanghai**

This morning, in order to fully appreciate the growth and modernization that Shanghai is undertaking, we head across the great Nanpu Bridge to the Pudong District, a region that was put aside in 1990 for redevelopment to entice foreign investment to modernize and drive the city into the 21st century. With forward planning, the city avoided infrastructure and transport problems that other Asian cities have faced.

We will also explore Xintiandi. This area was once a dilapidated strip of shikumen buildings, a mixture of English-styled terraces and traditional Chinese courtyard houses. This style of housing is unique to Shanghai, and was originally designed for the many Chinese workers that flooded the city in the early 1900s. The area was later purchased by film star Jackie Chan who restored the buildings.
In the evening we will enjoy a cruise on the spectacular Huangpu River to view the picturesque nightscape of this exciting city.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Regal Shanghai East Asia Hotel or Similar

**Day 21: Depart Shanghai**

Today our China tour arrangements end. We will transfer to the airport and board our flight back to the USA.

Included Meal: Breakfast