

GREAT WALL OF CHINA CHALLENGE

Mt Si Ma Tai region

DATES TBC

9 day Challenge

5 days moderate trek

Walking for approximately 5-7 hours per day on average.

4 nights camping, 3 nights hotels

IMAGINE TREKKING along remote sections of the Great Wall of China; experiencing and camping at seldom visited villages, taking in sections of this icon that few others will ever see, surely this has to rank among one of the great challenges on this planet. During this specially tailored challenge you will be walking on several sections of this incredible architectural phenomenon, on the 15th Century Ming Dynasty hardrock wall, and then descending in the afternoons on local trails to quaint villages in Hebei Province to camp and meet the local people. This unique opportunity is offered to The Charity by World Expeditions, the pioneers of the Great Wall of China Challenge and specialists in remote-area travel in China. Let us take you to never seen sections of the 'Middle Kingdom's' national icon for a five day challenge which will involve exploration and cultural discovery. The challenge concludes with time to savour the highlights of Beijing - including the impressive Imperial Palace (Forbidden City).



**APPROX COST PER PERSON EX LONDON:
 £TBC, including £TBC airline taxes.**

This price is subject to a minimum of 1 group of 10 paying passengers travelling together, with the 16th passenger travelling Free of Charge.

This cost is subject to change due to fluctuations in currency exchange rates, operational cost increases, or airline tax increases.

The cost is subject to change without notice. This cost is subject to confirmation of flight costs.

Your tour cost includes:	Your tour cost does not include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ International flights London to Beijing with Air China ✓ Airline taxes (£TBC) ✓ All accommodation/camping in China on a twin-share basis. ✓ All meals in China (as per itinerary) ✓ All group transport. ✓ Services of Western tour leader & Chinese crew. ✓ Organised sightseeing as outlined in itinerary. ✓ Group camping gear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Items of a personal nature such as laundry and postage. × Alcoholic beverages, other than limited provision at evening meals. × Additional transport required due to any emergency situation. × Sleeping Bag, sleeping mat and personal kit. × Services of Western Doctor × Carbon Offset Full £XX Half £XX

THE CHALLENGE ITINERARY

DAY 1 Depart London Heathrow approximately TBC.

DAY 2 Arrive Beijing at approx TBC, transfer to hotel.

On arrival in Beijing the group will be met at the airport and transferred by bus to our hotel for a challenge briefing before dinner. During the afternoon you may choose to relax from your flight in preparation for the challenge ahead or (time permitting) there is free time to visit the Tiananmen district in central Beijing and nearby shopping district. Those who wish to explore should ask their guide for assistance and they will also advise the time to return to the hotel for a welcome dinner at a nearby restaurant. Accommodation is on twin-share basis.

DAY 3 Drive to Hebei Province and commence challenge. 4 hrs -5 hrs trekking

Breakfast is Chinese-style smorgasbord so eat up because you'll need your energy for the challenge! This morning the group will travel by private coach for the 3 hour transfer to the border of Hebei Province at the entrance to the Mt Si Ma Tai section of the Great Wall. After lunch in a local noodle bar, we make our way to the foot of the wall and commence the trekking portion of the Great

GENERAL INFORMATION

THE COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE

China never fails to conjure up myriad feelings, images and a sense of mystery. Its history cannot be summed up here in a few paragraphs and to fully appreciate the currents that have shaped the country and its people, you must take the time to read at least one of the many excellent books available.

Within the almost ten thousand square kilometres of China's vast territory live more than 1.2 billion people, which makes it the most populated nation on Earth. For centuries, outsiders have yearned to visit China and it's only since 1976 that tourism really started. Initially, foreign visitors were only allowed to see a fraction of what the country had to offer; however, today it is possible to visit as many as 60 different areas. An increasing number of historical sites are also being restored and opened up to viewing for foreign tourists.

As much as China is keen to display its stunning scenery, historical sites and impressive cities, it is also dedicated to conveying something about how their society works. Although its political system has set it apart from the West, China is now moving forward in leaps and bounds, especially in the areas of trade and commerce.

As in the days of Marco Polo, travellers are still regarded as honoured guests and the locals delight in watching you watching them. Within the relatively short time that China's doors have been open to the West, few tourists have the opportunity to visit and camp in the rural parts of the country. Covering a land area approximately the same size as Belgium and home to nine million inhabitants, Beijing is the focal point for the rest of the nation. Even cities as far away as Urumqi and Kashgar run on Beijing time and the city is able to provide the best of everything Chinese. Its monuments are massive and startlingly impressive and although deceptively appearing sprawling and chaotic, it is actually very orderly in its design and fairly easy for a visitor. The heart of the city is laid out in a checkerboard design of cross streets as it was once within walls. The Forbidden City, so called because it was off limits for 500 years, is the largest and best-preserved complex of ancient buildings in China. Beijing is also the cultural Mecca of China and home to the famous Chinese acrobats and Opera.

CLIMATE

Beijing and Hebei provinces experience a rather broad temperature range throughout the year. In late spring (May) the weather is mild to warm with the possibility of some showers. In late summer, early autumn trips (August to September) expect warm to hot days with temperatures up to 25-30C (77-86F) and a slight chance of rain.

During October the days are mild and dry, from 15-20C (59-68F), and nights are cooler. After mid-October there is increasingly a cooler (but not cold) westerly wind, which lowers temperatures, particularly at night. The days, however, remain mild. Sometimes, in October, a cold wave from Siberia may cause overnight temperatures to plunge below freezing for a day or so, but the days are mild. In Beijing in late summer the days may be hot, up to 30C (86F)

but it is more likely to be quite pleasant. Rain can occur at any time but is more likely in spring (March-May). You must pack a waterproof jacket with hood for all departures.

CHALLENGE ROUTINE

In Miyun County of Beijing the Si Ma Tai section of the Great Wall is on a series of ridges. The challenge from Si Ma Tai to Gu Bei Kou makes a gradual ascent to the apex of this 40km-long ridge system and then descends gradually to Gu Bei Kou Pass. The walk along this section is framed by distant 3,000m mountains.

Tents and all camping equipment are provided and this gear is transported on each section by a local family, meeting the group each evening at the camping areas. The only thing you need to carry is your day pack with all the things you will need for the day. The pace is steady and on the first section we make a very steep ascent to the summit of Mt Si Ma Tai. At the Jin Shan Ling section we ascend gradually a reconstructed section of Wall to gain rolling ridges and then proceed along the original Wall. The trekking is challenging with frequent sections of uneven steps on steep inclines and descents.

On all sections there is flexibility in movement, and progress can be adjusted to satisfy consensus (if the group wishes to stop to inspect something, or spend longer at a nearby community, such can be achieved within the schedule). In the late afternoon the Chinese guides and local family will set up camp at a village. They will cook all meals and attend to general camp duties (mornings and on arrival at camp after trekking you will be provided with a bowl of warm water for washing). A dining tent with a long table and stools will become the meeting and eating area for the group. The sleeping tents are two-person, supplied by World Expeditions. For sleeping, you will need to provide a sleeping bag and mat (foam closed-cell / Thermarest). A long-drop toilet tent is provided for the evening camps.

At the end of the challenge the party will be met by bus for the transfer back to Beijing. Your main clothing and other items for the city should be left at our Beijing hotel, if you have brought extra luggage. Please ensure your luggage can be locked and is clearly labelled. These items will be available on return to our hotel.

On trekking days you will carry a day pack (should be minimum 35 litres with a comfortable harness so that a majority of the weight rests on your hips rather than shoulders) in order to carry your waterproofs, appropriate warm clothes, packed lunch, small first aid kit, drink-powder and water bottles, sunglasses, hat, toilet paper, camera gear, and other personal items (surplus to be carried by local family in vehicles). We recommend that you reduce your luggage to one small duffel bag or rucksack, and a daypack for trekking. Most people would find a light bushwalking boot or rugged trail shoe/boot suitable footwear.

Each day at the end of the challenge we have time to explore the villages near the campsites, located near the wall, chat with other members of the group or catch up on your reading or postcard writing. There will be plenty of time for us to browse through villages and mix as much as possible with the locals and host families. A Chinese buffet style dinner is served at approximately 7:00.

We will also have the opportunity at Gu Bei Kou for random visits to markets and the town - a veritable feast of culture, education, relaxation and physical challenge. During the stay in Beijing we will have the opportunity to see the main sights of this huge capital city. If you want to explore parts of the city independently during free time you are absolutely free to do so. There will also be the opportunity for some shopping and leisure time. Please be aware of the fact, however, that Beijing is a major tourist area and the guides and scheduling in this portion of the program is a little more regimented. The order of our activities is dependent on the arrangements made by our hosts and may differ from those outlined in the itinerary.

FITNESS

The theme behind most of our challenges is the fitter you are, the more easily you will adjust and enjoy yourself. Resistance to cold and illness is also increased. On a trekking challenge such as this you need to be in general good health and moderately fit. The grading overall would be reasonably "strenuous" activity. Before departure aerobic-type exercise, which increases your breathing, is essential and swimming is a great way to improve all your muscle tone. Fitness is a total concept of good health and must be planned and maintained and we recommend that for about four to five months prior to departure you try to exercise most days for 45-60 minutes of aerobic type activity.

SUGGESTED EXTENSIONS

If you wish to extend your time in China before or after your challenge we have a range of options including short customised itineraries and group departures. Ask our office for details.

- Terracotta Warriors and Xian
- Yangtze River Cruise
- Panda Sanctuary Chengdu

Since the Great Wall of China Challenge is based around group flights we kindly ask that you contact World Expeditions as early as possible to allow sufficient time to coordinate all aspects without penalty (which the airline may apply if splitting from group flights).

ADVENTURE TRAVEL CHALLENGES

By its very nature an adventure travel challenge involves an element of the unexpected. In remote and developing countries do not expect standards you are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable and itineraries may be altered. To get the most from your adventure it is important to be flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

The environments we travel through are fragile. It is our responsibility as visitors to minimise the impact of our presence.

World Expeditions were the proud recipients of the inaugural Australian National Travel Industry's Environmental Achievement Award for our Responsible Travel Guidebook in September 2001. This award-winning detailed guide to responsible and sustainable travel is provided to all World Expeditions clients

before they travel. You may like to download a copy from our website www.worldexpeditions.com

CARBON OFFSET OPTION

With more people flying more often, travellers around the world must take responsibility for the impact we are having on the planet. If you are committed to environmentally responsible travel, like we are at World Expeditions, we strongly encourage you to neutralise your air travel, as we do for all of our staff travel.

We have engaged respected carbon neutral service provider Climate Friendly and use their air travel calculator based on factors from the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Greenhouse Gas Protocol. Air travel emissions are complex calculations and values vary between providers. We believe that Climate Friendly's calculator is the most accurate available and reflects the current scientific consensus.

Climate Friendly supports renewable energy projects like wind and solar energy that *directly address the root cause of global warming* through immediately replacing fossil fuels with clean energy production. So you can be assured that when you choose to neutralise your flights booked through World Expeditions that you're going a step beyond cancelling your emissions – you're accelerating the transition to a clean energy future and contributing to the long-term solutions of climate change. It is Climate Friendly's policy to only support projects that contribute towards sustainable development and have proven benefits to the local community and as such the projects we will support are in transitional countries such as China, India and Turkey.

Please let us know if you wish to offset your flights in full, or even by half. The cost for this can be found in the 'your tour cost does not include' section in these notes.

Important Note:

These trip notes represent the most current information available for this itinerary. In remote and developing countries do not expect standards you are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable and itineraries may be altered. To get the most out of your adventure it is important that you are flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise.

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