



From the Ancient to the Modern

TO RESERVE YOUR TRIP CALL 800-462-2848 OR SIGN UP ONLINE [HERE](#)



11 DAYS, 10 NIGHTS

Click [here](#) for departure dates and pricing details

IMPORTANT NOTE:

For this trip, you will need a valid passport and a single-entry tourist visa. Your Travel Planner will contain more information.

IN BUSINESS FOR 29 YEARS, BACKROADS IS RECOGNIZED YEAR IN AND YEAR OUT AS ONE OF THE WORLD'S TOP 10 TRAVEL COMPANIES BY TRAVEL + LEISURE

Venture deep within China to experience epic landscapes, ancient cultures and welcoming locals eager to share their traditions. Visiting the modern centers of Shanghai and Beijing, along with well-known icons like the Great Wall, you'll enjoy the kind of personal and intimate cultural encounters only Backroads can arrange. Meet a Taoist monk who helps you make offerings for a successful journey. Learn tai chi on Xian's old city wall. Visit a Tibetan village and drink yak-butter tea with a family. Sit down with a craftsman and learn to make prayer flags. And witness the fascinating dualism of a people holding tightly to ancient traditions while simultaneously riding the wave of modern development.

Day 1

Meet your Backroads Trip Leaders (the folks wearing Backroads T-shirts) at **8:30 a.m.** at the South Railway Station in Shanghai. The exact meeting location will be e-mailed to you 30 days prior to the trip. Remember, **you need a single-entry tourist visa to enter China.** See "Arriving & Departing" for additional logistics information.

High-Speed Train to Hangzhou 1½ Hours

West Lake Stroll

Optional Tour of Lingyin Temple

We meet in Shanghai, a city rapidly shedding its colonial past as it becomes one of the world's fastest-growing cities. China's financial, economic and commercial hub, Shanghai is undergoing modernization at a dizzying pace, and you're here to witness it. This population of 17 million—and counting—is watching as skyscrapers, highways, subways, luxury hotels and shopping centers pop up everywhere, transforming a landscape largely stagnant during communism.

After meeting our local guides, we depart Shanghai for Hangzhou on China's new high-speed trains, a seamless connection between one of the country's most dynamic cities and one of its most picturesque cities. It's no wonder Hangzhou, with an abundance of natural scenery, clean air and tea plantations, has inspired poets throughout the centuries. Marco Polo called it the world's finest and noblest city. Hangzhou's celebrated centerpiece is serene West Lake, whose shoreline houses some of the city's greatest cultural sites and pagodas, some 1,500 years old. This afternoon, we stroll along the lake, just as locals and visitors have done for centuries. It's where people come to relax with family and friends, practice tai chi, paint and fish. Interact with the locals or simply relish the view.

Later, you can tour Lingyin Temple ("Temple of the Soul's Retreat"), Hangzhou's oldest and largest temple. This Buddhist sanctuary, built in A.D. 326, at one time contained 9 buildings, 18 pavilions and 77 palaces housing 3,000 monks!

This evening, we settle in at the luxurious Shangri-La Hotel, on the banks of West Lake. (Please note that in China, "luxury hotel" is most often synonymous with "big hotel." As more small charming hotels become available, we will certainly take advantage of them. For now, we're happy to be able to offer "luxury" in whatever form it comes.)



**Our Accommodations:
PREMIERE INNS***

SHANGRI-LA HOTEL

(2 nights) Overlooking beautiful West Lake, this elegant 5-star hotel offers an indoor swimming pool, a hot tub, massage services, a fitness center, outdoor jogging path, restaurants and bars.

Hangzhou
phone: 86-(0)571-8797-7951
www.shangri-la.com/en/
property/hangzhou/shangri-la

THE PENINSULA BEIJING

(2 nights) The choice of foreign dignitaries, this luxurious 5-star hotel has scores of amenities, a business center and a great location in central Beijing. Features include an indoor swimming pool, spa and fitness center.

Beijing
phone: 86-(0)10-8516-2888
http://beijing.peninsula.com

HYATT REGENCY XIAN

(2 nights) A sleek hotel ideally situated within the ancient walls of historic Xian, with a fitness center, tennis court, beauty salon, spa, hot tub and swimming pool.

Xian
phone: 86-(0)29-8769-1234
www.xian.regency.hyatt.com

Continued on next page ...

**EACH YEAR,
3 OUT OF 4 OF OUR
GUESTS HAVE
PREVIOUSLY
TRAVELED WITH US OR
BEEN REFERRED BY
SOMEONE WHO HAS**

Hangzhou is known for innovative cuisine, and our dinner at one of the city's best restaurants introduces us to an array of Chinese delicacies. Hankering for something unique? You've come to the right place. Prefer something simple? Rest assured, they have plenty of great options.

Lodging: Shangri-La Hotel

Day 2

Explore Tea Plantation

Leisure Time

After breakfast, we shuttle outside the city center to the village of Long Gin, which produces Longing tea, once reserved exclusively for members of the Imperial Court. According to lore, villagers here discovered a well of fresh spring water in A.D. 230 and decided to produce their own distinctive tea. Today Longing tea is world-renowned. Wander around and watch farmers tend the fields, as they've done for centuries. Harvesting Longing tea is a painstaking process, and we get an appreciation for how it's done. Afterward, a family welcomes us into their home for a tasting. Our charming 72-year-old host, who has lived on the farm since her early 20s, regales us with stories.

The afternoon is yours. Walk to a few lakeside temples or experience a street market, filled with livestock, fruits and vegetables. Visit a unique university, which offers 33 courses ranging from calligraphy to Beijing opera to English—all for senior citizens. Or, enjoy a massage (massage services are not included in the trip price) or take a dip in the pool. *Lodging: Shangri-La Hotel*

Day 3

Flight to Beijing 1 Hour

Shuttle to Hotel 45 Minutes

Hu Tong Stroll

Walking Tour of Forbidden City & Tiananmen Square

Leisure Time

Next stop ... Beijing! Steeped in imperial and communist history, massive 21st-century growth and 2008 Summer Olympic glory, Beijing retains many elements of its former splendor. We certainly benefit from its new cosmopolitan identity—not only are our accommodations luxurious, but the air here is cleaner than in many Chinese cities. (In preparation for the Olympics, Beijing began shutting down its coal plants and created more green parks.) We arrive just in time for lunch—a special family-style meal of *jiao-zie* (Beijing dumplings) and a sampling of other delicious regional fare.

Exploring the city, we connect the wonders of modern China with its impressive and turbulent past. Balancing the iconic with a glimpse of life as it's been for centuries, we walk through one of the ancient residential areas surrounding the Forbidden City. Some of these neighborhoods, known as *hu tong*, date back to the 1300s. The narrow streets lead to the Forbidden City, so named because for 500 years it was off-limits to anyone but the emperor and close members of his entourage. A self-contained world, the Forbidden City gave its inhabitants little reason to venture outside its walls, and many of them did so only when it was unavoidable. Only recently has the public been allowed a glimpse within its confines—not long ago the price of entering the compound would have been a swift execution. Next we visit Tiananmen Square, created by Chairman Mao Zedong during the Cultural Revolution. Long before the events that gripped the world's attention in 1989, the square was the scene of grandiose parades, sometimes involving as many as 1 million marching revelers. Today, the expansive area is a favorite place for children to fly decorated kites and adults to relax on park benches.



**Our Accommodations:
PREMIERE INNS***

...continued from last page

JIANNANCHUN HOTEL

(2 nights) This traditional, simpler hotel provides comfortable accommodations in the center of Old Town.

Lijiang

phone: 86-(0)888-510-2222

fax: 86-(0)888-510-2988

GYALTHANG DZONG HOTEL

(2 nights) In an idyllic setting, this impressive yet simple hotel was built in the Tibetan *dzong* (fortress) style and features guest rooms with authentic Tibetan décor.

Gyalthang

phone: 86-(0)887-822-3646

www.coloursofangsana.com/

gyalthang

**With four Casual Inn nights
at Jiannanchun Hotel
and Gyalthang Dzong Hotel*

The afternoon is yours to wander the local markets or relax at our hotel, the luxurious Peninsula Beijing. Enjoy a spa treatment or walk to the Peninsula Arcade, a mall of high-end retailers connected to the hotel. This evening, we dine at one of Beijing's most celebrated restaurants—try the traditional Peking duck. *Lodging: The Peninsula Beijing*

Day 4

Shuttle to Great Wall 4 Hours Round-Trip

Walk on Great Wall

Visit to Farmer's Compound

Getting an early start, we shuttle to the little town of Tai Ping Zai, near Huang Ya Pass, and arrive at the Great Wall of China. The drive outside Beijing is long (farther than most groups generally travel), but for good reason: we avoid the most touristed section around Badaling and see the wall in a far more natural and special setting. Not only do we have this remote part of the wall virtually to ourselves, but we also manage to take a real *walk* on it rather than simply dodging tourists. Keep in mind that the Great Wall could be compared to the world's most scenic Stair Master; there's hardly a flat section as it snakes up, down and around the rolling hills of northern China.

Stretching some 4,500 miles, the Great Wall stands alongside the Pyramids of Egypt as one of the world's greatest human-made monuments. The building began more than 2,000 years ago during the Qin Dynasty as a barrier to barbarian invaders and, although it never served its original purpose, it represents a triumph of engineering. The sight of the wall winding across the hilltops and disappearing into the distance is unforgettable. We enjoy a picnic lunch from a restaurant and then accompany a local crabapple farmer on a walk through his village and to his house, where we meet his family. It's a unique opportunity to find out how life in this rural area differs from the city. We finish in the small community of Xiao Qian Gan Cun, and return via bus to Beijing.

Take it easy after today's long drive—indulge in a massage, relax in your room, or wander the shopping avenues, just the place to see and be seen. *Lodging: The Peninsula Beijing*

Day 5

Shuttle to Beijing Airport 45 Minutes

Flight to Xian 1½ Hours

Shuttle to Old Xian 30 Minutes

Walking Tour of Ming Wall & Muslim Quarter

Visit to Calligrapher's Home

Today, while your Backroads Trip Leaders facilitate your passage through the airports to make the experience as smooth as possible, there will still be some waiting. Make the most of this mundane part of traveling by seeing each moment as part of your journey. (One past Backroads guest, while waiting to board a plane, engaged a group of giggling elderly women by getting them to teach him to count to ten in Mandarin.) You may surprise yourself by finding that you *can* communicate with the locals, even though you share not a single common word (okay... they'll probably know "Michael Jordan" or "Leonardo DiCaprio"). The true joy of travel comes from making bonds with others, regardless of language and cultural barriers.

We touch down in Xian, one of China's most historically rich cities. Perched atop the remains of ancient kingdoms and surrounded by fertile farmland, Xian served as the imperial capital for 12 dynasties between 1000 B.C. and A.D. 1000. During the 3rd century B.C., the Qin Dynasty, which united China under one empire, was founded north of here in the Wei Valley. We shuttle from the airport into the city before setting out to see one of Xian's most famous sites, the



Top Reasons Why you should take this trip

Traveling with Backroads is about getting inside and making connections: with places and people, history and culture, fellow travelers—perhaps you'll even discover something new about yourself.

You'll stay in the area's finest hotels, each carefully selected based on our rigorous quality standards.

You'll enjoy the best of the region's cuisine, as well as Backroads' trademark grand picnics.

Our Trip Leaders have undergone hundreds of hours of training and are the best in the industry.

Ming wall. During the Ming Dynasty, Chinese cities were surrounded by high walls, most of which were destroyed over time (especially during the Cultural Revolution). The well-preserved 40-foot-high Ming wall encloses Xian within its 8-mile perimeter and offers a bird's-eye city view. As we stand on this ancient fortification overlooking Xian's modern high-rises and construction cranes, we're reminded that we're indeed in a city of contrasts.

From the wall, we head to Xian's small Muslim quarter for a stroll through the city's historic mosque and an outdoor market—a great place to rub elbows with the locals. A historian and regionally famed calligrapher invites us into his home for tea and tales of his personal experiences through the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution. He also takes time to teach us basic calligraphy techniques. Tonight we're guests at the Xian Hyatt, a modern hotel located within the city walls. *Lodging: Hyatt Regency Xian*

Day 6

Tai Chi Lessons on Ming Wall

Shuttle to Mausoleum of Terra-Cotta Warriors 1½ Hours Round-Trip

Mausoleum Visit

This morning, we learn the fluid, slow-motion martial art of tai chi, with the incredible Ming wall as our stage. Then we shuttle to the World Heritage site of Qin Shi Huang's mausoleum. We explore the enormous complex—a facsimile of the Qin capital, Xianyan—and learn about its fascinating history. Construction of the mausoleum began in 246 B.C. and is believed to have taken 700,000 workers and 40 years to complete. Discovered by peasants in 1974, this archaeological site contains the tomb of Qin (the first unifier of China, buried in 210 B.C.) and is home to his terra-cotta army, which guards the tomb. More than 1,000 (of an estimated 6,000) terra-cotta warriors have been excavated. The life-size figures stand at eternal attention in full battle dress, each a masterpiece with unique features, expressions, clothing, headgear and emblems of rank. The complex's immensity and the sheer number of terra-cotta figures is truly awe-inspiring.

Afterward, we take time for a lunch of thick chewy noodles, prepared by hand while we wait. Then, wander the nearby crafts villages, where replicas of the terra-cotta warriors are sold. This evening after dinner, perhaps take in a performance of traditional Chang'an music and dance—a style that originated during the Tang Dynasty more than 1,000 years ago. *Lodging: Hyatt Regency Xian*

Day 7

Flight to Lijiang (Plane Change in Kunming) 7 Hours

Shuttle to Lijiang City Center 40 Minutes

Walking Tour of Old Town

Today is a big travel day, as we fly southeast to Lijiang, with a stopover in Kunming. In the late afternoon, we reach our destination city, set on a high plateau amid stunning mountain peaks in China's Yunnan province. Lijiang was once an important town on the southern Silk Road and the lesser-known Tea and Horse Caravan Road of the Tang and Song Dynasties. In 1996, an earthquake just about leveled the New Town and damaged many structures in the Old Town northern section. Amazingly, many of the old houses with stone foundations, slanted tiled roofs and whitewashed brick walls survived fairly intact, while many of the modern concrete buildings were destroyed. So what makes Lijiang special? It has arguably China's best-preserved Old Town, and it's a scenically and culturally dynamic city that showcases both ancient China and rapid modern growth. And, its Chinese architecture provides a tremendous contrast to the Tibetan-influenced architecture we're about to see.

WHEN YOU SIGN UP
FOR A TRIP, YOU'LL
RECEIVE A
COMPREHENSIVE
TRAVEL PLANNER
WITH ALL THE
INFORMATION YOU
NEED TO PLAN
AND PREPARE



Note

While the information presented here details this trip's planned routes, activities, accommodations, meeting and departing times, we are constantly seeking new opportunities to enhance this itinerary and your experience. Naturally, we will keep you up to date on any changes that may affect your arrival, departure or lodging.

After landing, we shuttle to the city center for a walk in the Old Town, a World Heritage site. Our Tibetan guide (many locals are Tibetan) leads us through a delightful maze of cobblestone streets and along a network of canals, crossing several large and small bridges, and passing tiny shops, cafés, markets and squares. You'll want to have your camera handy. The architecture is traditional: mostly brick, stone and wood with tiled rooftops and lots of color. Behind solid wooden gates are Naxi (one of 22 minority groups living in or near Lijiang) homes, two-story houses built around a central courtyard, with eaves and screens carved with mythological figures and fish, representing good luck. At night, lanterns light up homes, and Naxi families relax outside, singing traditional songs.

A short climb brings us to Lion Hill and a Lijiang landmark, the five-story Wan Gou Lou Pagoda, said to be China's tallest wooden building. Our hotel, the Jiannanchun, is simpler than our other hotels, but superbly located in the heart of the Old Town. Dinner is at a restaurant specializing in Naxi cuisine. *Lodging: Jiannanchun Hotel*

Day 8

Walk to Black Dragon Pool Park

Optional Hike to Elephant Hill

Shuttle to Shuhe 30 Minutes

Walking Tour of Shuhe

Leisure Time

Begin your day with a walk to beautiful Black Dragon Pool Park, where Naxi women often do their morning exercises. On a clear day, the reflection of the Jade Dragon Snow Mountains is breathtaking. The park has several historic structures, including the Dragon God Temple, the Five Phoenix Hall and the Moon Embracing Pavillion, each set against scenic backdrops of water or gardens. Nearby is a Naxi research center, which provides insight into this interesting culture. For a more strenuous hike that's well worth the effort, head up Elephant Hill—a long series of steps and pathways leading to a ridgeline and ultimately to a small pavilion with an excellent view of Lijiang.

Later, we visit Shuhe, which makes up a portion of Lijiang's World Heritage site area. In its heyday, the village was Lijiang's ancient city center and an important trading post for caravans plying their trade between Tibet, China and the Red Sea. Shuhe is growing quickly and now has a modern shopping area that draws busloads of tourists. Our destination, however, is its scenic old section, described as a "living fossil," with traditional tiled roofs, stone tile and cobblestone streets, canals with crystal-clear water, a profusion of flowers, traditionally dressed women in colorful aprons and head ornaments, and horses carrying people and goods as they've done for centuries.

Cap off the afternoon with a stroll through crafts stalls or simply relax. Tonight we dine in the Old Town, where stores stay open for evening shopping, local salons offer massages, and spontaneous folkloric singing and dancing often fill the public squares. *Lodging: Jiannanchun Hotel*

Day 9

Visit to Puji Monastery & Family Home

Shuttle to Gyalthang 4 Hours

Visit to Tiger Leaping Gorge

Before leaving Lijiang, we take a short walk among pine forests and fruit orchards to the tranquil Puji Buddhist Monastery, located on a hilltop northwest of the city. At the bottom of the hill lives a family that chats with us about life here. At the top, beautiful gnarled magnolia, lychee

ASK FOR REFERENCES
FROM PAST GUESTS
WHO HAVE TAKEN
THE TRIP THAT
INTERESTS YOU

and eucalyptus trees surround the small 200-year-old monastery. Inside, a monk explains the significance of the paintings, costumes, statues and meditation tools we see. If you're interested, he'll also help you make an offering.

Afterward, we shuttle 4 hours to Gyalthang (also known as Zongdian), stopping along the way for lunch at Tiger Leaping Gorge. One of the world's deepest canyons, Tiger Leaping Gorge stretches 9 miles and rises nearly 13,000 feet from the Yangtze River (called the Jinsha River here) to the tops of the surrounding Haba and Jade Dragon Snow Mountains.

We continue on to Gyalthang, tucked in a wide valley at nearly 11,000 feet and sheltered by snowcapped peaks. Gyalthang and the surrounding Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture have officially been renamed "Shangri La," a reflection of their similarity to the mythic land described in James Hilton's 1933 novel *Lost Horizon*—set in a calm valley surrounded by high peaks with a nearby monastery. Due to its remoteness, Gyalthang faces challenges common in a developing area: poverty, trash and systems (ATMs, airports, etc.) that don't work as efficiently as you might be used to. This means that enjoying this dynamic culture sometimes requires taking a deep breath and realizing just how gloriously diverse our world is. During our time here, we're accompanied by our local guide, Gonpo. A Tibetan who twice a year practices the ancient nomadic tradition of trekking to visit his family in the mountains, Gonpo also maintains a thriving tourism business in Gyalthang.

We settle in at the Gyalthang Dzong Hotel, a charming yet simple Tibetan-style hotel, decorated with vibrant colors and woven Tibetan rugs, and located at the base of two holy mountains. *Lodging: Gyalthang Dzong Hotel*

Day 10

Tour of Songzhaling Monastery

Visit to Villagers' Home

Today's pace is leisurely, which will help you adjust to the high elevation. We begin with a tour of the Songzhaling, a Yellow Hat Tibetan sect monastery and the largest Lamaist monastery in the Yunnan province. Designed as a smaller version of the Potala Palace in Lhasa, it was founded in the 17th century by the fifth Dalai Lama. Partially destroyed in the 1950s and '60s, this special place is once again a working monastery and home to approximately 600 monks. Gonpo introduces you to Tibetan Buddhism's cast of characters through his explanation of some of the beautiful wall paintings and historical *thankas*.

From the monastery, we shuttle through the countryside, passing fields of barley, rapeseed and potatoes. The drive offers an up-close look at local farming practices, villages, homes and dress, and highlights the area's botanical richness (namely wildflowers and medicinal plants), which lures botanists from around the world. From a ridgeline, we see Napa Lake and the valley below, teeming with irises, larkspur, edelweiss, holly, bluebells and roses. Gyalthang is also a haven for wild animals, including red deer, donkeys, blue sheep, bears, rare snub-nose monkeys, wolves, foxes, leopards and otters, not to mention 170 species of birds.

Our destination is a series of small Tibetan villages, where the typical farmhouse is big, housing multiple families and their animals. There is space for the animals on the first floor, living quarters on the second, and storage space on the third. We're invited to talk with a family over snacks and yak-butter tea at one of these farmhouses, a truly special experience. Often, a new home, made from pounded mud, is being built in the village, and we can observe the process firsthand. This afternoon, a local craftsman shows us how to make prayer flags. Then, we sit down with Gonpo and Helena at a café to talk about the issues of Tibet in the Yunnan province. Why is the Yunnan province more culturally Tibetan than modern-day Tibet? What opportunities and threats does the culture face?

Later, get a massage at the Angsana spa or walk the streets of old Gyalthang in search of ethnic snacks and religious shops, which sell prayer flags and Buddha statues. This evening we venture into Shangri La's recently restored Old Town, filled with cobblestone streets, Tibetan architecture and lively cafés. Dinner is at a restaurant that serves a mixture of Indian, Chinese and Western dishes. Regional specialties such as yak meat are available, as are vegetarian curries and soups. *Lodging: Gyalthang Dzong Hotel*

Day II

Visit to Tibetan Market

Flight to Kunming 1 Hour

On our last morning together in China, we join Gonpo for a visit to a colorful local market—a spectacle of fresh seasonal fruit and vegetables, combined with the diverse ethnic dress of the Tibetan, Naxi and Lisu residents. We purchase food, then walk to a monastery to find monks in search for alms. Our food will be given to the monks in exchange for a blessing. Later this morning, we shuttle to the Gyalthang airport for our flight to Kunming, where our trip ends. Please see “Arriving & Departing” for end-of-trip logistics.

Arriving & Departing

Please note that meeting and departing times provided here were current at the time of printing, but are subject to change. PLEASE DO NOT BOOK YOUR FLIGHTS UNTIL YOU ARE CONFIRMED ON YOUR VACATION AND HAVE VERIFIED THE DETAILS OF ARRIVING & DEPARTING WITH YOUR TRIP CONSULTANT.

***** A valid passport and a single-entry tourist visa are required for this trip. The “Essential Information” section of your Travel Planner (included in your Pre-Departure Packet after trip sign-up) contains more details. *****

MEETING TIME AND LOCATION

On the first day of the trip, we meet at **8:30 a.m.** at the South Railway Station in Shanghai. The exact meeting location will be e-mailed to you 30 days prior to the trip. Please look for your Backroads Trip Leaders (the folks wearing Backroads T-shirts). **Remember, you need a single-entry tourist visa to enter China.** See “Essential Information” for more information.

CONCLUSION OF THE TRIP

On the last day of the trip, Backroads provides transportation to the Kunming Wujiaaba International Airport (airport code: KMG), arriving at about 2 p.m. If you plan to fly back to Shanghai, or to another destination in China, please schedule your flight for after 4 p.m.

FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

This Backroads China trip begins in Shanghai and ends in Kunming. Several airlines, including Air China, American Airlines, United Airlines, Air Canada and Northwest Airlines, fly from North America to Shanghai's Pudong International Airport (airport code: PVG).

Please note that the Kunming airport does not offer flights back to North America. Therefore, you will need to buy a round-trip ticket to Shanghai, as well as a one-way ticket from Kunming back to Shanghai for the end of your trip. However, if you're planning to extend your trip in China, you can fly from Kunming to other destinations, including Chengdu (1 hour), Beijing (2½ hours) and Hong Kong (2½ hours).

Hotel Room Rate Guide	
(U.S. dollars per night)	
Up to \$100	◆
\$101–200	◆◆
\$201–300	◆◆◆
\$301–500	◆◆◆◆
\$501 and up	◆◆◆◆◆

For help arranging air transportation to and from your Backroads trip, please work with your own travel agent, the airline directly or an online travel site. For assistance locating a travel agent, please visit www.backroads.com/gettingthere. (Note that most travel agents and online travel sites charge a fee for their consulting services.)

China is 12 hours ahead of U.S. Eastern time and 15 hours ahead of Pacific time. Because jet lag may prevent you from fully enjoying the beginning of your Backroads trip, **we highly recommend arriving in Shanghai at least one full day prior to the start of the trip**, to give yourself time to adjust.

TRANSPORTATION FROM SHANGHAI AIRPORT TO DOWNTOWN

Downtown Shanghai is located about 30 miles west of Shanghai’s Pudong International Airport. The taxi ride to downtown takes about an hour, with traffic, and costs about \$25.

TRANSPORTATION FROM DOWNTOWN SHANGHAI TO TRAIN STATION

On the first day of the trip, we meet at Shanghai’s South Railway Station, the world’s first round train station. Located at No. 289 of Old Humin Road in the southern Xuhui district, the station is situated at the intersection of subway lines 1 and 3, and can be easily reached by subway and many local buses.

Where to Stay Before & After Your Trip

For help arranging pre- or post-trip hotels in conjunction with your Backroads trip, please work with your travel agent or the hotels directly. For assistance locating a travel agent please visit www.backroads.com/gettingthere. (Note that most travel agents charge a fee for their consulting services.)

Of course, we also recommend extending your stay at any of the hotels that we visit on this trip; see the sidebar above for details.

Please refer to the Hotel Room Rate Guide in the sidebar for starting double-occupancy rates. Note that the chart reflects the Internet and/or Best Available rates, which were accurate at the time of printing, but hotel rates are always subject to change.

SHANGHAI

Four Seasons Hotel

On the outside, this 37-story Four Seasons is sleek and modern; step inside, and the feel is warm and inviting, a sanctuary from Shanghai’s busy pace. With its impeccable service, luxe décor and a prime location in the heart of downtown, it’s no wonder *Travel + Leisure* readers rated the Four Seasons among Asia’s top 25 hotels. Guest rooms are adorned in rich gold, mahogany and ruby hues, with marble bathrooms featuring a deep soaking tub and separate shower. Amenities include four restaurants, a fitness center, a lovely indoor swimming pool, a whirlpool tub and spa services (including Balinese massages). 500 Weihai Road; Phone: 86-(21)-6256-8888; www.fourseasons.com/shanghai; 439 rooms and suites. Rates: ◆◆◆◆

JW Marriott Hotel

Once again securing its rightful spot on *Condé Nast Traveler’s* Gold List, the 60-story JW Marriott reigns proudly over the downtown skyline. The hotel—whose lobby is on the 38th floor—sits atop commercial and residential space in Tomorrow Square and offers stunning 360-degree views. Where else can you take in the view of downtown from the privacy of your glass-walled shower? And there’s plenty to keep you busy: three restaurants, an indoor and outdoor swimming pool, hot tubs and a full-service day spa. 399 Nanjing West Road; Phone: 86-(21)-5359-4969; www.marriott.com; 342 rooms and suites. Rates: ◆◆◆

Hotel Room Rate Guide
(U.S. dollars per night)

Up to \$100	◆
\$101–200	◆◆
\$201–300	◆◆◆
\$301–500	◆◆◆◆
\$501 and up	◆◆◆◆◆

St. Regis Hotel

The St. Regis Hotel makes service its priority, and it shows. Personal butlers can do everything from unpack your luggage and make dinner reservations to arrange your excursions and run errands. Featured on *Travel + Leisure's* top 500 list and rated by its readers as one of Asia's top 50 hotels, the St. Regis is located in the Pudong financial district, within 15 minutes of downtown. Standard guests rooms look anything but: Modern furnishings in neutral tones create a peaceful ambience, while spacious, luxurious bathrooms delight with a separate tub and "rain forest" shower, perfect for soothing muscles after a day on the go. Amenities include three restaurants, two bars, an indoor swimming pool, whirlpool tub, fitness center, day spa and in-room massages. 889 Dong Fang Road; Phone: 86-(21)-5050-4567; www.stregis.com/shanghai; 328 rooms and suites. Rates: ◆◆◆

Westin Bund Center

With its shining crowned top, this waterfront hotel rises high over the Bund, Shanghai's luxury shopping mecca. Bold art deco design and fun artistic touches throughout the hotel contrast with the tranquil, subdued colors of guest rooms. Take a dip in the indoor swimming pool or whirlpool tub, relax in the sauna and steam rooms, and try out one or more of the seven restaurants and bars. Indulge in a treatment at the day spa, or grab a jogging map, designed by *Runner's World*, and head out on a 3-mile or 5-mile jaunt right from the hotel. 88 Henan Central Road; Phone: 86-(21)-6335-1888; www.westin.com; 570 rooms and suites. Rates: ◆◆◆

KUNMING

Grand Park Hotel

The luxurious, 21-story Harbour Plaza hotel is located near picturesque Green Lake Park, within walking distance of the city center. Amenities include a swimming pool, fitness center, sauna, massage services and four restaurants. The airport is about 15 to 20 minutes away. 20 Hong Hua Qiao; Phone: 86-(0)871-538-6688; www.parkhotelgroup.com; 300 rooms and suites. Rates: ◆◆

Kunming Hotel

Kunming's first four-star hotel, this property offers access to tennis courts, a bowling alley, billiards, restaurants, a sauna, night club, karaoke bar and massage services. It is conveniently located in Kunming's commercial district, just a few miles from the airport. 52 Don Feng Dong Road; Phone: 86-(0)871-316-2063; www.kmhotel.com; 303 rooms and suites. Rates: ◆◆

HONG KONG

The Peninsula Hong Kong

Truly "one of the world's legendary grand hotels," the Peninsula is considered by many to be the "only" place to stay in Hong Kong. Praised by *Condé Nast Traveler*, Andrew Harper and *Travel + Leisure*, this Leading Hotels of the World member enjoys a prime location in Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon's chic shopping district, opposite the Cultural Center and Museum of Art. With impeccable service, outstanding views of the twinkling skyline, elegantly adorned guest rooms and a world-class pool and spa, you'll never want to leave. To top off the extravagant surroundings, a 30-story tower was added to the original structure and now houses one of the city's hottest restaurants on the two top floors. Designed by Philippe Starck, the rooftop Felix restaurant features exquisite Pacific Rim cuisine. Salisbury Road Kowloon; Phone: 852-292-02888; www.hongkong.peninsula.com; 246 rooms. Rates: ◆◆◆◆

Hotel Room Rate Guide
(U.S. dollars per night)

Up to \$100	◆
\$101–200	◆◆
\$201–300	◆◆◆
\$301–500	◆◆◆◆
\$501 and up	◆◆◆◆◆

Island Shangri-La

Hong Kong's tallest hotel greets guests with a light-filled lobby boasting the world's largest Chinese silk painting. Given the extreme height of the building, every room has an excellent view of either Victoria Harbor or the city. Petrus, the hotel's top restaurant, features fine French cuisine. Worth noting is the resourcefulness of the concierge, who can secure even the hardest-to-obtain reservations. Pacific Place, Supreme Court Road, Central; Phone: 852-2877-3838; www.shangri-la.com; 565 rooms. Rates: ◆◆◆◆

Grand Hyatt Hong Kong

Recipient of *Travel+Leisure's* "World's Best" award, this glamorous hotel has a polished and highly stylized décor with every high-tech amenity you could possibly desire. If you want to stay fully informed while vacationing halfway across the world, you will appreciate access to interactive television, the Internet, e-mail, movies, games and faxes from the comfort of your own room. Equally convenient are the state-of-the-art fitness facilities, including a golf driving range, rooftop tennis courts, jogging track and fully equipped health club. I Harbour Road; Phone: 852-2588-1234; www.hongkong.hyatt.com; 556 rooms. Rates: ◆◆◆◆

Intercontinental Hong Kong

A *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Travel+Leisure* and Andrew Harper favorite, this superb hotel has a premier location in the Tsim Sha Tsui shopping district of Kowloon, just steps from the Space Center and Museum of Art. Each guest room is embellished with exquisite silks, Asian art, Italian marble bathrooms and private terraces with spa pools upon request. To experience two of Hong Kong's most famous and exclusive restaurants you need not leave the hotel: Yan Toh Heen and SPOON by Alain Ducasse have permanent homes here. 18 Salisbury Road; Phone: 852-2721-1211; www.hongkong-ic.intercontinental.com; 514 rooms. Rates: ◆◆◆

Regal Airport Hotel

If you have an early flight or need quick access to the airport, you couldn't ask for a more convenient deluxe hotel to call home for the night. Joined by a covered walkway to the Hong Kong International Airport, this world-class property allows you to easily reach the passenger terminal in no time and eliminates the preliminary stresses of air travel. 9 Cheong Tat Road, Chek Lap Kok; Phone: 852-2286-8888; www.regal-hotels.com; 1,100 rooms. Rates: ◆◆◆

BEIJING

The Peninsula Beijing (our hotel on Days 3 & 4)

Ideally situated in the heart of Beijing, the Palace Hotel welcomes travelers with spacious and superbly appointed guest rooms. Unwind at the health and fitness club, which features a swimming pool, massage service, aerobics classes, weight training and fitness equipment, a steam room and a sauna. On-site restaurants are Jing, which features contemporary Western cuisine with Asian influences (we eat here one night of the Backroads trip) and Fortune Garden Restaurant, which serves delicious Cantonese dishes. 8 Goldfish Lane; Phone: 86-(0)10-8516-2888 or toll-free in China at 10-800-852-0492; www.beijing.peninsula.com; 530 rooms. Rates: ◆◆◆◆

St. Regis Beijing

The recipient of multiple Condé Nast Traveler accolades, this hotel is a favorite among seasoned and first-time Beijing visitors alike. Guest rooms are detailed with sumptuous fabrics and refined furnishings. You'll find a first-rate fitness facility and a wide assortment of dining options including brasserie-style fare at Danieli's, sushi and teppanyaki bars at the Japanese Restaurant and Chinese specialties at Celestial Court. 21 JianGuomenwai Dajie; Phone: 86-(0)10-6460-6688; www.starwood.com/stregis; 273 rooms. Rates: ◆◆◆

Hotel Room Rate Guide	
(U.S. dollars per night)	
Up to \$100	◆
\$101–200	◆◆
\$201–300	◆◆◆
\$301–500	◆◆◆◆
\$501 and up	◆◆◆◆◆

Grand Hotel

Overlooking the Forbidden City and Palace, this opulent hotel exudes Chinese tradition, from the fine collection of Chinese art and antiques that grace the stunning third-floor atrium to the dramatically decorated deluxe suites featuring “Chinese baroque in full spate.” Finding outstanding cuisine in Beijing is not difficult, and the Grand Hotel makes your search even easier with the western-influenced Red Wall Café, award-winning Rong Yuan Restaurant and the popular Ming Yuan Restaurant. 35 East Chang An Avenue; Phone: 86-(0)10-651-37788; www.lhw.com; 218 rooms. Rates: ◆◆◆

We hope you've found this information useful, but nothing substitutes for speaking with one of our experienced Trip Consultants. Please call 800-462-2848 Monday-Sunday, between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. Pacific time.