

TRAFALGAR
see the world from the inside



China, Japan & Vietnam

WITH TIBET, HONG KONG, CAMBODIA & BANGKOK

Know Before You Go

A step by step guide to your Trafalgar trip.

Your insider's journey begins...

Thank you for choosing Trafalgar to show you the insider's view of Asia. A wealth of experience has taught us that your journey begins well before you leave home. So we have compiled this guide to provide you with as much information as possible to help you prepare for your travels. We look forward to welcoming you on the trip of a lifetime!



Before you go...

Passports and Visas

All guests traveling in China, Tibet, Japan, Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand require a passport valid for 6 months beyond the conclusion of their trip, along with appropriate visas. Some itineraries may require multiple-entry visas for certain countries. All guests are strongly advised to obtain the necessary visas well in advance to avoid unnecessary charges to expedite the processing of visa applications. To support your Chinese visa application the consulate requires a reference letter supplied by Trafalgar. Bookings for Tibet entry permits are requested two months prior to departure, otherwise Tibet entry permits may not be guaranteed.

Please contact your travel agent or applicable government authorities to get necessary travel information. Each guest is fully responsible for obtaining and carrying the travel documents necessary for his or her itinerary. The Operators and/or their employees and their agents are not responsible for passport, visa, entry, health or other requirements of the countries visited or for any loss sustained by you for failing to comply with laws, regulations, orders and/or requirements of countries visited.

Passenger Information

Due to government-imposed security/immigration measures, passport and emergency contact information is required for all guests prior to the release of travel documents. Please ensure that you provide this information to your travel agent and/or Trafalgar immediately upon booking or as soon as possible thereafter.

In addition, certain foreign government and airline security regulations require that the name on your airline tickets must match your name exactly as it is shown on your passport. This applies to both international flights as well as the Asia domestic flights that are included in your itinerary, so be sure we have your name correct on your booking.

Travel Documents

A few weeks prior to your vacation you will receive your Trafalgar wallet with your travel documents and literature, and if applicable, your Cruise Companion guide from our sister company, Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection. These documents are valuable and contain a wealth of advice and essential information to make your vacation as enjoyable as possible. Please read them carefully before your departure.

Travel Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out a comprehensive travel insurance policy that covers you the entire time you are away from home. Your policy should cover the following:

- Trip cancellation or curtailment
- Loss or damage to property and baggage
- Loss of cash, traveler's checks, etc.
- Medical costs and personal accident

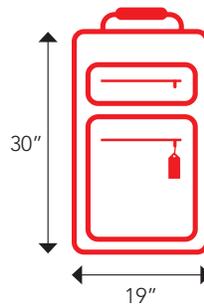
Please ensure you pack a copy of your policy, contact phone numbers and instructions on how to claim in the unlikely event that it is necessary.

Trafalgar's Express Check-In

Trafalgar's Express Check-In is an online check-in facility that allows you to provide all your essential details and preferences to Trafalgar, prior to your departure, so that you don't have to fill in any additional forms on the first day of your vacation. In order for your Travel Director to receive your information, we recommend that you complete Express Check-In at least 15 days prior to your departure date. If it is already less than 15 days before your departure, please complete the registration form, print it and hand it to your Travel Director on the first day of your guided vacation. Check-in takes 5-10 minutes. Visit www.trafalgar.com/express

Luggage

Luggage Allowance



This is restricted to one large suitcase per person with dimensions not exceeding 30x18x10" (75x45x25 cm) and a maximum weight of 50 lbs (23 kg). Portage of this luggage at hotels and China/Asia airports is included in your vacation price.

On itineraries with intra-China flights, luggage is restricted to one suitcase per person with dimensions as above but a maximum weight of 44 lbs (20 kg). Excess baggage charges may be imposed by the airline. See your Cruise Companion guide for further details.

On intra-Vietnam and intra-Asia flights, luggage is restricted to one suitcase per person with dimensions not exceeding 62 inches (157 cm) and a maximum weight of 44 lbs (20 kg). Excess baggage charges may be imposed by the airline. See your Cruise Companion guide for further details. Hand luggage is limited to 15 lbs (7kg). Airlines used for travel from your home country may have additional restrictions and may impose additional charges if you choose to check any baggage. Please contact your airline or refer to its website for detailed information regarding your airline's checked baggage policies.



Hand Luggage

Hand luggage is limited to one piece per person. It should not exceed 17x14x8" (43x35x20 cm) in dimension and should not weigh more than 10 lbs (4.5 kg).



There are no restrictions concerning the number of bags each person can bring with them onboard the ships. However, baggage storage space onboard is limited and for your comfort and safety we ask that you bring one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person.

Please note that no responsibility is accepted for loss of or damage to baggage or any of your belongings. Baggage insurance is recommended.

Packing

When traveling as a couple, pack each suitcase with day and evening clothing for each person, so that in the unlikely event one of your suitcases is mislaid on your flight, you'll still be able to manage.

Ensure that your personal and vacation details are written on a label inside each suitcase (including name, address, telephone number, departure and return flight details). Write only your name and destination address on outside labels.

Make sure that your luggage is in good secure condition, and when carrying fragile items, use a rigid style suitcase for protection.

Check in only your own suitcases. Do not carry items packed by other people. Never accept packages or articles from anyone unknown to you to carry on board the aircraft.

There are strict airport security regulations on items that may be carried on board aircraft such as liquids/gels and metal objects. Visit your local transportation authority's website for information on these and other restricted items and how they must be displayed at airport security checkpoints.

We suggest you pack only essential items in your carry-on baggage. For example, your camera, medicines, eyeglasses, anything that you use frequently or is particularly valuable. Expensive jewelry, clothing, etc. should be left at home for your peace of mind.

What to Bring

This will depend upon your personal preferences, where you are traveling to and the time of year you are traveling. We suggest you go online to www.weather.com for details on your destination's climate conditions that may affect what you pack. We generally recommend casual, lightweight, drip-dry clothing that requires little or no ironing. For evenings, we again recommend casual, cool attire, but ask that guests not wear shorts at dinner. A light pullover or jacket is useful for possible chilly nights in any destination. You will engage in a significant amount of walking over uneven terrain while sightseeing, so comfortable walking shoes with good ankle support are recommended.

Below is a list of items to consider packing for your Trafalgar vacation:

Clothing

Swimsuit	Undergarments
Sandals	Socks
Sun hat	Sleepwear
Shorts/skirts	Jeans/trousers
Lightweight jacket	Pullover/cardigan
Waterproof jacket	Shirts/blouses
Good walking shoes	

General Items

Spare batteries/charger	Camera/memory cards
Medications & prescriptions	Power plug adapters/converter
Toiletries	Collapsible umbrella
Insect repellent	Sunscreen lotion
Travel sewing kit	Pocket calculator
Plastic bags	Travel alarm clock
Water bottle (screw top lid)	Sunglasses
Sachets of washing powder	Money belt or holster

Essentials

Passport & Visas (where applicable)	Travel insurance policy
Traveler's Checks/Cash	Credit cards
Trafalgar documents	Airline tickets

NB Do not pack your passport or money in your suitcase.

Tip: Weed out your wallet prior to leaving. Only take the essential identifiers like your drivers license and just two credit cards - one to carry another to be locked in your hotel room safe. Do not carry your social security number on you.

Health

As health requirements change without notice, please check with your travel agent or public health service for current required or recommended inoculations.

It is always prudent to watch carefully what you eat and drink while on vacation, but please do not drink the tap water while traveling in Asia. All hotels provide complimentary bottled water and additional bottled water can be purchased throughout your itinerary. If prescription drugs are needed, make certain the supply will last the duration of the trip and longer. Carry prescription drugs in their original package to avoid customs questions. Don't pack needed medicines in checked baggage. Also, you may wish to bring an extra pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses in your carry-on luggage.

Although not a general problem, insect bites can be a concern for some travelers. Ask a doctor or pharmacist about insect repellent choices. Similarly, sun protection can be a concern in many destinations. A good-sized sun hat and sunscreen lotion are recommended.

Since Trafalgar's Asian trips are exciting and relatively active vacations, we recommend all guests be in good physical

condition. If you have any existing medical conditions, dietary requirements or disability that should be brought to our attention, it is essential that you inform us via your travel agent.

Make Friends Before You Go

When you travel with Trafalgar you will have the opportunity to meet new and interesting people from around the world. Visit the Trafalgar Community to connect with fellow travelers in our Forums, ask questions, share photos and meet your travel companions before your trip even starts in our Trip Groups. Visit www.trafalgar.com/community

Budgeting

Trafalgar itineraries include many features that will save you money on your trip – if you study your itinerary pages in the Trafalgar brochure you will see how many highlight visits and other sightseeing is included, as well as meals and entertainment. However, we recommend you budget for incidental expenses such as non-included meals, drinks, tips, shopping and especially optional excursions.

Money

Land itineraries

ATMs linked to major bank networks can be found throughout Asia. Most debit and major credit cards can be used for cash withdrawals ashore. All hotels have exchange facilities. Please note currency exchange transactions and ATM cash withdrawals always involve transaction fees. It is always best to inquire as to the fee before exchanging any money. Make certain the card is activated for international use.

You may choose to bring travelers checks, but please note that some banks in small towns may not have the capacity to change them. If the replacement of travelers checks is necessary due to loss or theft, the receipt must be provided as well as a list of checks used. Keep that information separate from unused checks.

Land and cruise itineraries

Your cruise ship features a 'cashless' environment, and all charges are billed directly to each guest's onboard account. In China, currency accepted onboard for settlement of final bills is either the US Dollar or RMB, or traveler's checks. In Vietnam and Cambodia, onboard bills can be paid only in US Dollars.

The major credit cards accepted are MasterCard, Visa, and American Express. While onboard, guests can sign for all purchases and pay their charges at the end of the cruise with their credit card. Limited currency exchange is available onboard for the exchange of cash only. Credit cards cannot be accepted for money exchange. The ships do not have ATMs on board.

Credit Cards

American Express, MasterCard and Visa are the most commonly accepted cards. Credit cards may not be accepted in smaller establishments, rural areas, etc. Some merchants may include a service charge (over and above the purchase price) for a credit card purchase.

If you make any purchases by credit card, you may be charged based on the exchange rate at the time the credit card company invoices your account and many banks charge an exchange fee. Please remember to keep a copy of your credit card details and emergency contact numbers in your suitcase in case of loss. The following offers some useful tips on using credit cards on your vacation:

- Call your credit card company to advise them you will be traveling, as some companies will block the credit card when they notice unusual charge activity.
- Ensure you memorize your Personal Identification Number (PIN); do not write it down.
- Ensure that your credit card is kept in view at all times when paying for goods and services.
- Retain all copies of sales vouchers until you have verified them against your statements.
- Make sure your credit card is carried on your person.
- Never leave your credit card unattended in your hotel room, stateroom, a vehicle or any other place.
- Report immediately the loss or theft of your credit card.

Mail

Prior to departing you should stop your mail or arrange for a neighbor to collect it. A full mailbox can be a treasure trove for hackers and identity thieves.

While you are traveling...

Your Travel Director

Throughout your Trafalgar guided vacation you will be accompanied by a professional Travel Director. Trafalgar Travel Directors are more than just guides. They are seasoned and experienced travelers, specially selected for their in-depth knowledge of the regions you will visit. They will enrich your experience with informative commentary on the history, culture and natural landscape of the region and reveal the hidden places that only an insider would know. They will also introduce you to your traveling companions and make you feel welcome.

Your Vacation

Trafalgar's philosophy is that it's your vacation and you should have the freedom to enjoy yourself as you wish. However, a great deal of planning goes into your itinerary to ensure you see all the main sights in the places visited. Trafalgar ensures you enjoy a full sightseeing experience in all major towns and cities visited on your itinerary. Local sightseeing is conducted by qualified Local Guides who are eager to share their vast knowledge and love of the local history and culture.

Optional Excursions

While we include many sightseeing activities in the price of your vacation, we also offer a range of optional excursions during your trip. Your Travel Director will advise you of these in comprehensive briefings held the day prior to the excursions taking place. Reservations for these excursions can be made directly with the Travel Director. Please note that we cannot accept cash payment for optional excursions. When cruising, charges will be added to your onboard account. On pre- and post-cruise extensions, payment will be made by credit card directly with your Local Host. Operation of optional excursions is subject to a minimum number of participants. No refunds are available for any optional excursions canceled by the guest within 24 hours of the start of the excursion, or if the excursion was pre-purchased. Please remember that all optional excursions are undertaken at your own risk.

Your Accommodations

River Cruise Ships

Onboard your luxurious river cruise ship you will stay in beautifully appointed staterooms featuring deluxe amenities with private bathroom and individually controlled air-conditioning. Onboard dining, relaxation and entertainment areas envelope you in comfort and elegance. Depending on your itinerary, your ship may also feature a boutique, spa, lap pool and fitness center.

Hotels

At Trafalgar, we pride ourselves on our superior hotel selection. Our hotels are centrally located, close to major attractions and each features luxurious accommodations, superb cuisine, excellent amenities and impeccable service.

Each room contains a private bathroom with toilet, shower and/or bath and vanity, as well as television and air-conditioning. Rooms may also contain tea and coffee making facilities, mini-bar, room service, STD/ISD phone, radio and in-house movies. Wherever possible, we select establishments that offer additional facilities such as swimming pool, fitness center, bars and restaurants. Please refer to the itinerary in your travel wallet for further information regarding your hotel accommodations.

Hotel Check-in & Check-out

Arrangements are made to ensure that check-in and check-out at hotels run smoothly, and your Travel Director will advise you in advance of the procedure before arriving at each hotel. On departing the hotel, always remember to return your room key to reception before leaving!

Personal Hotel Expenses

Any additional costs incurred during your stay at the hotels (for example, laundry, telephone calls and bar bills) are your responsibility. Please ensure that your account is settled on the evening before you leave to ensure a smooth and timely departure the following morning.

Laundry Facilities

Laundry service is available for a fee in all hotels and onboard the ships. Self-service laundry facilities are not available in hotels or on the ships in Asia.

Smoking

Your cruise ships enjoy a non-smoking environment in all public areas and in the staterooms. Smoking is allowed only on the upper Sun Deck. Non-smoking rooms are requested in all hotels. For those passengers who smoke, we can request a smoking room in hotels with advance notice.

Land transportation

During land-based sightseeing excursions, you will travel on modern air-conditioned motor coaches. Smoking is not allowed while on the motor coach, and many historical venues now request that visitors not smoke anywhere on site. We ask all our guests who smoke not to do so while on excursions/sightseeing tours. Rest stops are provided throughout the course of the excursion, as the motor coaches used for excursions will not have onboard restrooms.

Meals

All breakfasts are buffet style. Most other meals onshore will be held at local restaurants featuring local cuisine. Please notify Trafalgar immediately if there are any special dietary concerns or considerations that need to be taken into account while traveling with us. We will do our best to ensure your request is accommodated but cannot guarantee this will happen in all cases. Wine can be purchased in most restaurants. When not specified on an included meal, drinks are always at your own expense.

Water

Please do not drink or brush your teeth with the tap water while onboard or onshore. The ship's water supply comes from the river after passing through a sterilization plant. This water is suitable for washing but should not be consumed. Complimentary bottled water for drinking is provided onboard, and additional bottled water will be made available free of charge on excursions. All hotels also provide complimentary in-room bottled water.

Tipping

Gratuities are customary expressions of appreciation for a job well done, and it is our goal to ensure that the service you receive is as wonderful as the sites you visit. The amount of the gratuity you choose to give is entirely subject to your satisfaction with your travel experience. To assist you in determining the amount of your gratuities, we recommend the following as a guideline:

- Cruise/Travel Director: US\$5-\$7 per guest, per day (given in cash on the last day of the cruise/vacation before departure)
- Local Guides: US\$3 per guest, per day (given at the end of each city's stay)
- Coach Drivers: US\$2 per guest, per excursion (given at the end of each city's stay)
- Onboard River Guides: US\$3 per guest, per day (given directly to the guide)
- Land Excursions: US\$1 per guest for the local guide and boatmen (per excursion)
- Yangtze cruise ship: US\$10 per guest, per day to be shared among all staff and crew (added to onboard account and can be paid with credit card)
- Mekong cruise ship: US\$5 per guest, per day to be shared among all staff and crew (given in cash on the last day of the cruise before disembarking the ship)

The above is solely a guideline. The amount you give should depend upon your personal experience and level of satisfaction. Onshore gratuities cannot be paid with a credit card, so please ensure that you have cash on hand (in bills of small denominations) for this expense.

Shopping

Time for shopping is usually but not always allowed for within the framework of most of the sightseeing programs. The actual amount of time available for shopping may be limited due to itinerary constraints. Your Travel Director can offer shopping recommendations. Larger stores will accept most major credit cards, while market vendors and small stores will usually accept the local currency only. It is a good idea to take a small amount of cash to use for on-the-spot gratuities and the purchasing of souvenirs or sundries.

Photography

Bring extra batteries and memory cards. Depending on the destination, use re-sealable plastic bags to protect camera equipment from dampness. Never leave a camera in a hotel room, stateroom or elsewhere unattended.

Staying In Touch

Phoning home from hotels can be very expensive since all hotels add a service charge to the cost of any phone calls you make from your room and this charge can be very high. It is always cheaper for you to use public telephones (pay phones). Alternatively, you could use an eKIT phonecard.

What is eKIT?

eKIT is your global phone card and web communication service designed to keep you in touch with family and friends while you're traveling.

eKIT provides:

- Low cost international calls
- Send and receive voice mails
- Free email service
- Send SMS text messages from the web
- An online travel vault for secure storage of important documents (e.g. passport number)
- 24-hour customer service.

For more information check out the Trafalgar eKIT phone card in your travel wallet or go to www.Trafalgar.eKit.com

How do I join?

Use your credit card to set up an account at www.Trafalgar.eKit.com or call 24-hour customer service. Join before you go and receive a Trafalgar eKIT joining bonus!

How do I use it?

Your account number and PIN gives you access to all the phone and web based services. To make a call, simply use the toll-free access numbers for the country you are in, which you will find listed on your eKIT card, or at www.Trafalgar.eKit.com

How long does it last?

eKIT is a rechargeable service – simply recharge your account using your credit card at www.Trafalgar.eKIT.com or call their 24-hour customer service. Ask about the monthly recharge bonus.

Is it competitive?

Yes – you may find cheaper phone cards in major cities – but you can only use them in the country of purchase and may not be in a language you understand.

The advantages of eKIT:

- It can be used from 70+ countries.
- You can call over 200 countries.
- You can recharge the card as you travel.
- You can use any balance remaining once you get home.

Emailing Home

Internet access is available in all hotels. The hotel will charge approximately US\$15-\$20 per day, and possibly more, for this service. Onboard ship in China, complimentary Wi-Fi is available in the Executive Lounge to passengers who bring their own laptops or other devices with Internet connectivity. Internet service may not be available at all times, especially while cruising through the Three Gorges.

On the Mekong, wireless Internet is not available onboard. However, there is a wireless signal while docked in Phnom Penh that passengers may access free of charge using their own electronic device.

Tip: Be careful with hotel computers. Do not access financial data on hotel or public computers or on public wi-fi networks.

Doctor

There is a clinic with a doctor on the Century Cruises' ship on the Yangtze River. There is also a clinic with a doctor very near most of the hotels used elsewhere in Asia, but the Operator does not employ staff nurses or doctors onboard the River Orchid in Cambodia. Medical care will be at local facilities, and medical expenses are the guest's own responsibility. Guests should bring their medications with them. Trafalgar is not responsible for any costs incurred as a result of medical service, or for the quality of medical care received. A travel insurance policy covering medical expenses is highly recommended.

Security

In the countries in which we operate, tourists are rarely targets of theft, but in today's world, security is an important consideration while traveling. By using common sense, most unpleasant situations can be avoided. We recommend that you:

- Carry copies of all your important documents in your hand luggage. Include a copy of your passport, credit card numbers and Traveler's Checks, as well as airline tickets and other documents.
- Never accept packages or articles from anyone unknown to you to carry on board an aircraft.
- We recommend you use the safe provided in your hotel room or stateroom for valuables, passports, money, etc. as no responsibility will be accepted for these items left in your room.
- Please be aware of pickpockets when ashore.
- When in port, a 24-hour watch is kept on the gangplank in order to control access to the ship, but please keep your stateroom door locked when it is not in use and at night.
- Never leave your luggage and other personal items unattended when in public places such as airports, hotel lobbies and restaurants.
- Carry your valuables in a special money belt or in a bag that you can carry strapped across your front.
- Upon arriving at each hotel, locate the nearest fire exit, directions to which must be posted in each guest room.
- If you need to make cash withdrawals, ATMs in bank lobbies are less vulnerable to devices that capture your credit card information - as they generally have camera surveillance.

These recommendations will help you make your Trafalgar vacation as hassle-free as possible. If you are unsure about security while on vacation, your Travel Director will provide you with the best advice.

Your Feedback

Your feedback is always welcomed. Towards the end of your trip, your Travel Director will hand out a feedback questionnaire. We ask that you answer the questions, make any relevant comments and hand it back to your Travel Director. The questionnaires are sealed and returned to our Head Office. Every survey is read and a summary of each vacation is given to management, and where necessary, appropriate action is taken to rectify any problems.

China

Capital: Beijing
Largest City: Shanghai
Land Area: 3,704,427 mi²
Population: 1.34 billion
Currency: Renminbi (RMB)
Language: Standard Chinese

Average Temperatures

	Average Low/High (F)								
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Beijing	28/41	41/54	43/70	54/82	63/89	69/90	67/88	56/81	43/69
Shanghai	40-47	47/57	49/68	59/78	66/84	74/92	74/92	67/84	56/76
Xi'an	37/46	46/59	46/72	44/81	64/91	70/93	68/90	58/79	47/69
Guilin	44/53	51/62	58/74	66/83	72/89	75/89	74/93	70/89	61/80
Hong Kong	55/61	61/68	68/79	74/84	74/84	78/88	79/90	79/90	77/89

Electrical Current

Voltage is 220v/50Hz in all hotels and onboard the ship. Electrical plug adapters and a voltage converter may be required if you wish to use appliances brought from your home country where the voltage/plugs may differ. Please note that on Victoria ships, hairdryers are not supplied in the staterooms and you will need to contact the front desk to have one brought to your room (supplies are limited). On Century ships, hairdryers are available in every stateroom.

Local Currency

Currency in China is the Chinese Yuan, or locally known as the Renminbi (RMB). The RMB comes in banknote denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 50, and 100. One RMB is divided into 100 cents and coin denominations are 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents or RMB 1 and RMB 2.

Beijing

Ming dynasty emperors, Chairman Mao and 17 million residents have made modern-day Beijing a capital of exciting contrasts. With its gleaming skyscrapers, labyrinthine hutongs and enigmatic Forbidden City, Beijing is at once a product of China's rapid progress and its rich imperial history. Look beyond the sheer size of the city and you'll find it's the little local sights that stay in your memory – like graceful tai chi moves in the parks or spicy food stalls on a lantern-lit street. Step past the huge Chairman Mao portrait overlooking Tiananmen Square and back to an age of Ming dynasty emperors roaming the Forbidden City – off limits to the public for 500 years. While its art treasures, opera, temples and palaces have long made it the epicenter of tradition in China, Beijing is also home to a booming nightlife and a flourishing entrepreneurial spirit.

Xi'an

Surrounded by rich farmland, Xi'an was the historical home to the ruling houses of the Qin, Han, Sui, and Tang dynasties, when it was known as Chang'an. The city reached a peak during the Tang dynasty, when it was the military and trading base for the Silk Routes. Chang'an soon swelled to two million inhabitants to become the largest, most cosmopolitan settlement in the world. Today, as part of the economic revival of interior China, the city has re-emerged as an important cultural, industrial and educational center of the central-northwest region with facilities for scientific research and China's space exploration program. For visitors, Xi'an's biggest attraction is the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang and his Terracotta Army. Xi'an also contains some 800 royal mausoleums and tombs from the Han Dynasty, with some of them yielding hundreds of sculpted clay soldiers, and remains of sacrificial temples from the Han era.



Great Wall, China

China continued...

Shanghai

Once a fishing and textiles town, Shanghai grew in importance in the 19th century due to its favorable port location and was one of the cities opened to foreign trade by the 1842 Treaty of Nanking. The city then flourished as a center of commerce between east and west, and became the undisputed financial hub of the Asia Pacific in the 1930s. However, with the Communist Party takeover of the mainland in 1949, the city's international influence declined. In the 1990s, the economic reforms introduced by Deng Xiaoping resulted in an intense re-development of the city, aiding the return of finance and foreign investment to the city.

Shanghai is renowned for its historical landmarks such as The Bund, City God Temple and Yuyuan Garden, as well as the extensive and growing Pudong skyline. It has been described as the 'showpiece' of the booming economy of mainland China.

Suzhou

Once known as the 'Venice of the East' due to its interlocking canals, Suzhou also boasts an unparalleled collection of classical gardens, and a thriving embroidery and silk industry that are remnants of a cultural center that dominated China's artistic scene for long periods during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Rapid modernization in recent years has seen the city grow to just over 5 million inhabitants, yet it remains the silk capital of China. Located about an hour's drive northwest of Shanghai, it forms part of the Yangtze River Delta area with its World Heritage listed gardens a popular attraction for visitors. Amid its rich history spanning over 2,500 years, Suzhou is the home of Sun Zi, and the setting for his Art of War.

Yangtze River and the Three Gorges

The mighty Yangtze is the third-longest river in the world, and your cruise will show you some of its most beautiful sights. Your luxury ship provides the perfect setting for soaking up the breathtaking views of mist-shrouded mountains and jagged limestone cliffs that surround you as you make your way down the river. You'll also see bucolic hillside rice paddies, village fishermen at work with their nets, and historic cliff-side carvings.

Your journey will take you through the Three Gorges—Quatang, Wu, and Xiling—whose spectacular scenery is justly celebrated as some of the most beautiful in all of China. Passing through Xiling Gorge, the longest and deepest of the Three Gorges, with cliffs towering around you up to 4,000 feet (1,219 m), you'll experience the man-made excitement of the Three Gorges Dam—the largest in the world—and the engineering marvel of its five-stage ship locks.

Hangzhou

Seven hundred years ago, Marco Polo pronounced Hangzhou 'the finest, most splendid city in the world...where so many pleasures may be found that one fancies oneself to be in Paradise.' With Hangzhou's famous West Lake, surrounded on three sides by lush green hills, many would agree with the city's claim to Paradise on Earth. The islets and temples, pavilions and gardens, causeways and arched bridges of this small lake have constituted the supreme example of lakeside beauty in China ever since the Tang Dynasty when the Grand Canal was completed. The capital of Zhejiang province in southeastern China, Hangzhou has other attractions too, including Solitary Island, which is home to a pretty park, the Mausoleum of General Yue Fei, the Lei Feng Buddhist Pagoda, the 600-year-old Temple of the Soul's Retreat with its giant gilded Buddha, the fascinating China Silk Museum, and the Chinese Tea Museum.

Guilin

One of the most-visited Chinese cities, Guilin, located in the northeastern part of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, has long been famous for its distinctive limestone karst hills. Formed more than 200 million years ago when the oceans receded from this area, the stone towers rise from a patchwork of paddy fields and flowing streams, creating a magical, dreamy landscape that leaves few souls untouched. This masterpiece of nature's handiwork is so other-worldly that the makers of "Star Wars" decided to film the scenes of Chewbacca's home world among the karst columns. It's easy to see why the Li River from Guilin to Yangshou has remained an inspiration to poets and painters for centuries.



China continued...

Chengdu

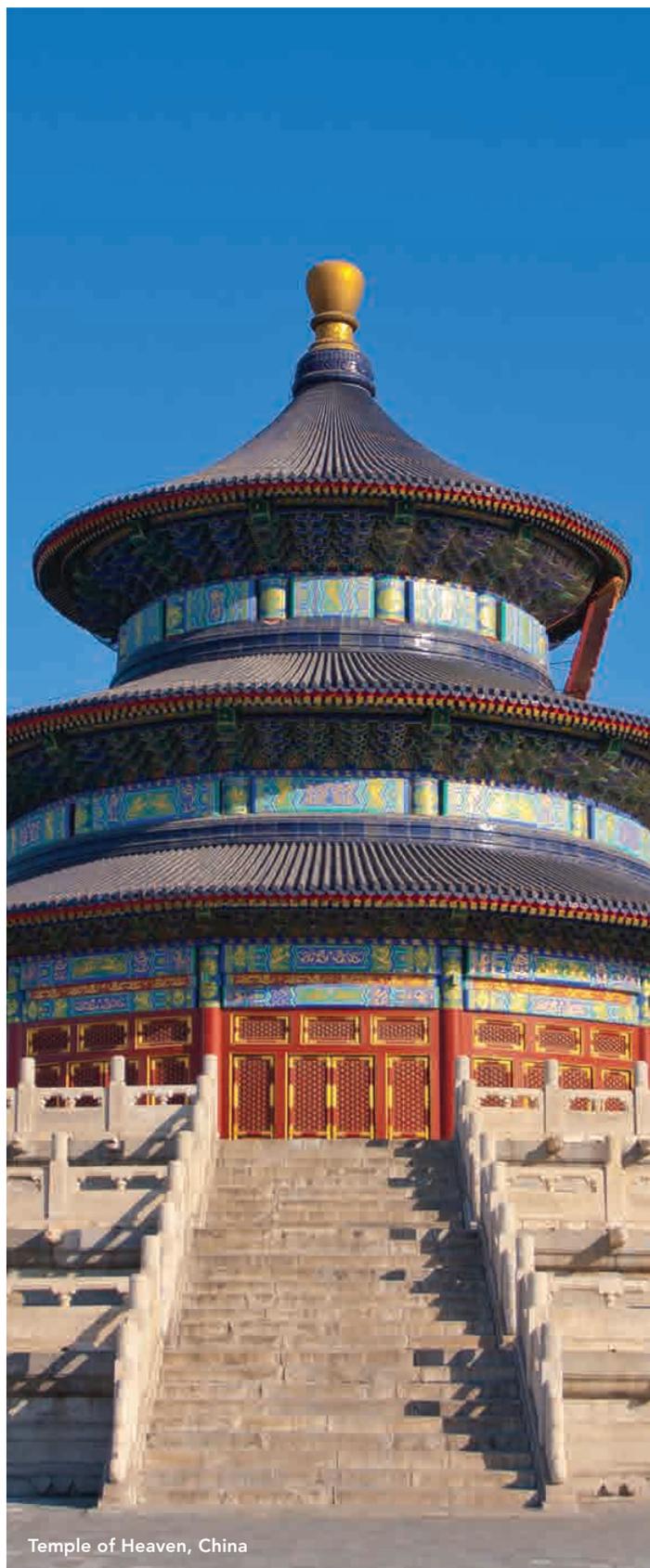
Chengdu is the capital of Sichuan Province, which is known as the "Heavenly State." The natural habitat of giant pandas, Chengdu Panda Breeding and Research Center supports the world's only giant panda breeding and research base. The history of Chengdu can be traced back 2,400 years when the first emperor built his capital here and named the city. Since the Han (206BC-220) and Tang (618-907) Dynasties when its handicraft industry flourished, the city has been famous for its brocades and embroideries. In addition to its profound historical and cultural attractions such as the Wenshu Monastery, which houses hundreds of bronze, wooden and stone statues and Buddhist relics, no visit to Chengdu is complete without witnessing the famous changing faces of the Sichuan Opera, visiting one of its renowned teahouses, or sampling the delights of Sichuan cuisine.

Hong Kong

A city-state situated on China's south coast and enclosed by the Pearl River Delta and South China Sea, Hong Kong is renowned for its expansive skyline and deep natural harbor. Claimed by Britain in 1842 following the First Opium War, it returned to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, but the long period of British rule profoundly influenced the Hong Kong culture. Today, neon-lit skyscrapers and mirrored towers line its waterfront, but there's plenty of variety with traditional Chinese pharmacies just a short ferry ride away from a decadent afternoon tea at The Peninsula Hotel. From the serenity of Big Buddha statue at Po Lin Monastery to the bustle of vibrant Temple Street Night Market, you can find your own pace here. Enjoy panoramic views 1,200 feet up on Victoria Peak, explore glittering department stores in Causeway Bay or find the city's spiritual side in Wong Tai Sin Temple, where locals light smoky incense coils and learn their fortune.

Lhasa, Tibet

Lhasa means "holy land," and indeed, this ancient, sky-high city embodies the culture of Tibetan Buddhism. In existence since the seventh century and ruled by the Dalai Lamas from the early 1600s to 1959, Tibet has long been associated with peace and spirituality. Marvel at Lhasa's unique architecture—from gilt-roofed temples and intricately decorated monasteries to homes that face south and have flat roofs for energy efficiency—and enjoy an inner calm as you wander through its tranquil gardens.



Temple of Heaven, China

Japan

Capital: Tokyo
Largest City: Tokyo
Land Area: 145,925 mi²
Population: 126.7 million
Currency: Yen
Language: Japanese

Average Temperatures

Average Low/High (F)						
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Tokyo	51/65	59/73	66/77	73/84	76/87	69/80
Takayama	37/63	48/72	58/78	66/85	67/87	60/79
Kyoto	48/68	57/76	66/82	73/89	75/92	68/84
Osaka	51/67	60/76	68/81	75/89	77/91	70/84

Electrical Current

Voltage in Japan is 100v/50Hz. Electrical plug adapters and a voltage converter may be required if you wish to use appliances brought from your home country where the voltage/plugs may differ.

Local Currency

Japan's main unit of currency is the Yen (¥). The low denominations are represented by coins: ¥1, ¥5, ¥10, ¥50, ¥100, and ¥500. Coins increase in size and weight with value. Higher denominations are represented by banknotes. The following notes are in general circulation: ¥1,000, ¥5,000, and ¥10,000. Japanese bills are the same width, but differ in color and length.



Mt Fuji, Japan

Tokyo

Tokyo is Japan's capital and the world's most populous metropolis. The Izu and Ogasawara Islands are also part of Tokyo. Prior to 1868, Tokyo was a castle town known as Edo which had been Japan's political center since the 17th century, when Tokugawa Ieyasu established his feudal government there. A few decades later, Edo had grown into one of the world's most populous cities. With the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the emperor and capital moved from Kyoto to Edo, which was renamed Tokyo ('Eastern Capital'). Large parts of Tokyo were destroyed in the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 and in the air raids of 1945. Today, Tokyo offers a seemingly unlimited choice of shopping, entertainment, culture and dining to its visitors. The city's history can be appreciated in districts such as Asakusa, and in many excellent museums, historic temples and gardens.

Lake Suwa

Lake Suwa is a popular recreational spot for strolling along the lakeshore, boating, fishing and scenic cruises. The lake has a natural hot spring under the surface, fueling Japan's largest geyser, which erupts in a tower of hot water as high as 50 meters about once every hour. In winter, the lake freezes over and is a major site for Japanese ice skating competition. One of Japan's major fireworks shows is held here every August and another in early September, providing two stunning displays of sound and light to add to the resort's attractions.

Takayama

Takayama is most famous for the Sanno-machi Historic District and the biannual Takayama Festival, one of Japan's most beautiful festivals attended by thousands of visitors from all over Japan and the world. Here, the atmosphere is evocative of the Edo Period 400 years ago, with old-style shops lining the streets and rickshaws running through the

Japan continued...

town. At the Hida no Sato (folk village), an outdoor museum displays traditional architecture and thatched-roof houses, some of which have been relocated from the nearby UNESCO World Heritage Site Shirakawago. Demonstrations of various traditional craftworks are also staged here for visitors. Every morning a farmer's market is held along the Miya River and in front of the historic government building Takayama Jinya, where local farmers and craftsmen sell everything from vegetables and pickles to carvings and clothes.

Kanazawa

During the Edo Period, Kanazawa served as the seat of the Maeda Clan, the second most powerful feudal clan after the Tokugawa in terms of rice production and fief size. Accordingly, Kanazawa grew to become a town of great cultural achievements, rivaling Kyoto and Edo (Tokyo). During World War II, Kanazawa was Japan's second largest city (after Kyoto) to escape destruction by air raids. Consequently, parts of the old castle town, such as the Nagamachi samurai district and chaya entertainment districts, have survived in good condition. Today, Kanazawa remains an important city in its region and boasts many historical attractions such as restored homes as well as modern museums. But Kanazawa's undisputed main attraction is Kenrokuen, one of Japan's 'three best landscape gardens', considered by many the most beautiful of them all.

Kyoto

Kyoto served as Japan's capital and the emperor's residence from 794 until 1868. Today, it is a metropolis of almost 1.5 million people and ranked as 11th of the world's most livable cities. As home to some 20% of Japan's National Treasures, Kyoto boasts some of Japan's most important works of art, its richest culture and most refined cuisine. Over the centuries, Kyoto was destroyed by many wars and fires, but due to its historic value, the city was dropped from the list of target cities for the atomic bomb and spared from air raids during World War II. Countless temples, shrines and other historically priceless structures survive in the city today, including numerous UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Mt. Koya

Mt. Koya is the center of Shingon Buddhism, an important Buddhist sect introduced to Japan in 805 by Kobo Daishi. A small, secluded temple town has developed around the sect's headquarters that Kobo Daishi built on the town's wooded mountaintop. Mt. Koya is also one of the best places to experience an overnight stay at a temple lodging where you can get a taste of a monk's lifestyle, eating vegetarian monk's cuisine and attending morning prayers.

Hiroshima

When the first atomic bomb was dropped over Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, the city became known worldwide for this unenviable distinction. The destructive power of the bomb was tremendous and obliterated nearly everything within a two kilometer radius. After the war, great efforts were taken to rebuild the city. Predictions that the city would be uninhabitable proved false and the city's historical monuments like Hiroshima Castle and Shukkeien Garden were reconstructed. In the center of the city a large park was built and named Peace Memorial Park to reflect the aspirations of the re-born city.

Osaka

With a population of 2.5 million, Osaka is Japan's third largest and second most important city. It has been the economic powerhouse of the Kansai region for many centuries. Before the Nara Period, when the capital used to be moved with the reign of each new emperor, Osaka was for a time Japan's capital city, the first one ever known. In the 16th century, Toyotomi Hideyoshi chose Osaka as the location for his castle, and the city may have become Japan's capital if Tokugawa Ieyasu had not terminated the Toyotomi lineage after Hideyoshi's death and moved his government to distant Edo (Tokyo). Osaka used to be referred to as the 'nation's kitchen' in the feudal Edo period because it was the center of trading for rice, creating the first modern futures exchange market in the world. Today, food is still a passion for Osakans, along with shopping in stores that number in the tens of thousands!



Sacred Spring Garden Bridge, Japan

Vietnam

Capital: Hanoi
Largest City: Ho Chi Minh City
Land Area: 128,565 mi²
Population: 90.5 million
Currency: Dong
Language: Vietnamese

Average Temperatures

Average Low/High (F)									
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Sep	Oct	Nov
Hanoi	57/67	59/68	64/73	71/80	77/87	80/90	77/87	67/88	65/77
Ho Chi Minh	70/89	73/91	76/93	79/93	79/92	77/89	76/88	76/88	73/88

Electrical Current

Voltage is 220v/50Hz in all hotels and onboard the ship. Electrical plug adapters and a voltage converter may be required if you wish to use appliances brought from your home country where the voltage/plugs may differ.

Local Currency

Currency in Vietnam is the Dong. The Dong currently ranks as the least valuable currency in terms of exchange rate. It comes in denominations of 200, 500, 1,000, 2,000 and 5,000 Dong coins and banknotes of 10-, 20-, 50-, 100-, 200- and 500-thousand Dong.



Ha Long Bay Cruising, Vietnam

Hanoi

Hanoi ranks among the world’s most attractive and interesting cities. It features a rich history tracing back more than a thousand years and this heritage is displayed in well-preserved centuries-old architecture, giving the city a gracious, almost regal atmosphere. Hanoi is Vietnam’s cultural center, offering puppetry, music, and dance performances that are well worth seeing. The Old Quarter is the quintessential Hanoi neighborhood – a maze of streets dating back to the 13th century. The Old Quarter’s Communal Houses were set up by guilds as small temples to honor a local god, the White Horse, who represents the city itself. Another highlight is the Temple of Literature, a sanctuary of Confucianism and Vietnam’s seat of learning for almost a thousand years.

Ha Long Bay

Ha Long Bay, meaning ‘descending dragon bay,’ is a UNESCO World Heritage Site featuring thousands of limestone monoliths and isles in various sizes and shapes that rise from the emerald waters of the Gulf of Tonkin. The formation of these dramatic karsts has taken 20 million years under the impact of the tropical wet climate. As well as forming dozens of scenic grottoes throughout the area, the geo-diversity of the environment has created biodiversity both above and below the waters of the bay. Ha Long Bay is home to 14 endemic floral species and 60 endemic faunal species.

Hoi An

Hoi An possessed the largest harbor in Southeast Asia in the 1st century and between the seventh and 10th centuries its people controlled the strategic spice trade, bringing tremendous wealth. In the 16th and 17th centuries it continued to be an important Vietnamese trading center, where Chinese, Japanese, Dutch and Indians settled. During this period the Japanese built a unique covered bridge to connect with their settlement, which has gained renown as the only covered bridge with a Buddhist pagoda attached to one side. Hoi An’s importance waned sharply at the end of

Vietnam continued...

the 18th century because of the collapse of Nguyen rule and the nearby port town of Danang became the new center of trade. As a result, Hoi An remained almost untouched by the changes to Vietnam over the next 200 years. In 1999, the old town was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO for its historic buildings' unique blend of local and foreign architecture.

Hue

Hue originally rose to prominence as the capital of the Nguyen Lords, a feudal dynasty that dominated much of southern Vietnam from the 17th to the 19th century. In 1802, the Nguyen ruler succeeded in establishing his control over the whole of Vietnam, thereby making Hue the national capital. It remained so until 1945. The city's royal heritage has continued to have an impact on the people of Vietnam until today. The design of the modern-day Ao Dai, a Vietnamese national costume, evolved from an outfit worn at the court of the Nguyen Lords at Hue in the 18th century. Violet-colored Ao Dai are especially common in Hue, the color having a special connection to the city's imperial past. Hue is well known for its historic monuments, which have earned it a place in UNESCO's World Heritage Sites. The seat of the Nguyen emperors was the Citadel, which occupies a large, walled area on the north side of the Perfume River. Also notable is the Thien Mu Pagoda, the largest pagoda in Hue and the official symbol of the city.

Ho Chi Minh City

Ho Chi Minh City is the largest city in Vietnam and arguably Asia's most dynamic metropolis. Under the name Saigon, it was the capital of the French colony of Cochinchina and later of the independent state of South Vietnam from 1955 to 1975. In 1976, Saigon was officially renamed Ho Chi Minh City after the former North Vietnam president.

The influence of the 17th century French colonial occupation is reflected in a number of classical Western-style buildings and French villas in the city. Today, the city's core is still adorned with wide elegant boulevards and historic French colonial buildings. Some of the historic hotels are renowned as former hangouts for American officers and war correspondents in the 1960s and 70s.

As well as numerous museums and art galleries, Ho Chi Minh hosts a thriving dramatic arts community, boasting hundreds of cinemas and theaters. Visitors will also find intriguing attractions like Ben Thanh Market, sandy beaches and Art Deco cafes.



Vietnam

Cambodia

Capital: Phnom Penh **Population:** 14.8 million
Largest City: Phnom Penh **Currency:** Riel (US Dollar)
Land Area: 69,898 mi² **Language:** Khmer

Average Temperatures

Average Low/High (F)						
	Feb	Mar	Jun	Sep	Oct	Nov
Phnom Penh	72/91	74/93	70/90	76/88	76/87	74/86
Siem Reap	69/92	79/94	76/88	76/90	75/88	72/87

Electrical Current

Voltage is 220v/50Hz in all hotels and onboard the ship. Electrical plug adapters and a voltage converter may be required if you wish to use appliances brought from your home country where the voltage/plugs may differ.

Local Currency

In Cambodia the US Dollar is widely accepted, as is the Cambodian Riel, although the locals mainly use the Riel banknotes for fractional dollar amounts as US coins are not in circulation. The Riel notes come in 1-, 2-, 5-, 10-, 20-, 50- and 100-thousand denominations.



Angkor Wat, Cambodia

Phnom Penh

Located on the banks of the Mekong River, Phnom Penh has been the national capital since the French colonized Cambodia, and has grown to become the nation’s center of economic and industrial activities, as well as the center of security, politics, economics, cultural heritage and diplomacy.

Once known as the ‘Pearl of Asia,’ it was considered one of the loveliest French-built cities in Indochina in the 1920s. Phnom Penh, along with Siem Reap and Sihanoukville, are significant global and domestic tourist destinations for Cambodia. Founded in 1434, the city is noted for its beautiful and historical architecture and attractions. There is a number of surviving French colonial buildings scattered along the grand boulevards.

Siem Reap

The name Siem Reap literally means ‘Siam Defeated’ and refers to the 16th-century victory that cemented the Khmer kingdom. These days, the town is best known as the gateway to the Angkor Archaeological Park. The ruins of the ancient city of Angkor are one of the world’s greatest marvels, boasting some of the largest religious monuments ever constructed.

Once a quiet little town serving the temples of Angkor, Siem Reap now supports a host of large five-star hotels and resorts, as well as numerous restaurants, shops, galleries and spas. The town’s markets have become a great stop for souvenirs as well as more traditional fresh produce.

Thailand

Capital: Bangkok
Largest City: Bangkok
Land Area: 198,115 mi²
Population: 66.7 million
Currency: Baht
Language: Thai

Average Temperatures

Average Low/High (F)								
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Jun	Sep	Oct	Nov
Bangkok	71/89	75/90	78/92	80/94	80/91	77/89	77/89	74/88

Electrical Current

Thailand's voltage is 220-240v/50Hz and its outlets/plugs are not standardized. With at least three different types in use, a universal plug adapter is highly recommended along with a voltage converter if you wish to use appliances brought from your home country where the voltage/plugs may differ.

Local Currency

The official currency of Thailand is the Baht. One baht is divided into 100 satang. Coins come in denominations of 1, 2, 5 and 10 baht, as well as (relatively rare) 1, 5, 10, 25 and 50 satang. (You may get some 25 or 50 satang coins in change at a supermarket.) Banknotes come in denominations of: 20, 50, 100, 500 and 1,000 baht. The most commonly used coin is the 10 baht and the most commonly used note is the 100 baht.

Thailand

Officially the Kingdom of Thailand, formerly known as Siam, is a country located at the center of the Indochina peninsula in Southeast Asia. The country is a constitutional monarchy, headed by King Rama IX, the ninth king of the House of Chakri, who, having reigned since 1946, is the world's longest-serving head of state and the longest-reigning monarch in Thai history. The primary religion is Buddhism, which is practiced by around 95% of the population. Thailand experienced rapid economic growth between 1985 and 1996, and is presently a newly industrialized country and a major exporter of Thai rice, textiles and footwear, fishery products, rubber, jewelry, cars, computers and electrical appliances. Tourism also contributes significantly to the Thai economy.

Thai culture has been shaped by many influences, including Indian, Lao, Burmese, Cambodian, and Chinese. Thailand's national religion Theravada Buddhism is important to modern Thai identity. Like most Asian cultures, respect towards ancestors is an essential part of Thai spiritual practice. Thais have a strong sense of hospitality and generosity, but also a strong sense of social hierarchy. Taboos in Thailand include touching someone's head or pointing with the feet, as the head is considered the most sacred and the foot the dirtiest part of the body.

Bangkok

Bangkok is the capital city of Thailand and comprises the largest urban area in the country supporting a dense population of 12 million people. Its origins date from the 15th century when it was a small trading post near the mouth of the Chao Phraya River. Due to its strategic location in Southeast Asia, Thailand acted as a buffer-state between French and British colonial powers and Bangkok gained a reputation as an independent, dynamic, and influential city. Today, the city remains a major regional force in finance and business. Bangkok's many cultural landmarks and attractions, in addition to its notorious red light district, has made it synonymous with exoticism. The historic Grand Palace, Wat Arun, and Temple of the Reclining Buddha are popular destinations for visitors to the capital. In combination with being the main gateway to Laos, Burma, and Cambodia, it is second only to London in terms of tourist visits per year.



Wat Arun, Thailand