

Value World Tours

TIPS ON TRAVEL to CHINA

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Welcome to the **People's Republic of China!** We are delighted to have the opportunity to introduce this fascinating country, its culture and its people to you! We are excited about the changes that are taking place in China. Advances in economic policy and political ideology are contributing to rapid economic growth and a general enthusiasm among the people in China. Your involvement in this growth is not merely limited to the foreign capital you bring through tourism; you also take an active part in developing friendship between the people of the two countries. **The impression you leave will have an everlasting effect on future relations between the Chinese and the American people. Therefore it is important that we advise and prepare you for some of the cultural and social differences you will encounter.** The following Tour and Travel Tips have been designed to provide information and offer some helpful suggestions to ease your adjustment and help you get around any obstacles that may confront you.

BEING A GOOD CHINA GUEST

Your China visit will likely be one of the most exciting trips you will ever take. With China warmly welcoming overseas' visitors you will see firsthand the great economic strides the country has experienced in the recent past. **However, much still remains to be developed in many outlying areas.** The government and/or other Chinese Handling Agencies are earnestly working to improve and increase facilities and the quality of the service. In the meantime, you will enjoy your experience most fully if you take a flexible approach.

Being aware of and observing the customs of the people in whose country you are an honored guest will make your trip most rewarding. The Chinese people are inherently shy and modest, though they often surprise Westerners with their lack of self-consciousness. Other than shaking hands they refrain from touching each other - a convention you should respect.

- Punctuality; being on time, is expected for all activities. There is **no such thing** as being "*fashionably late*" in China.
- Please, never refer to the Chinese as "Chinamen", or to their country as "Red China", "Mainland China" or "Communist China". The name is "***The People's Republic of China***"
- Taiwan is **considered a province** and **should not** be referred to as "The Republic of China".
- The People's Republic of China is a Socialist Country now led by a Communist party.
- Leadership is traditionally accorded the highest respect in China; under no circumstances should a slighting remark be made about any official, Chinese or otherwise.

Social behavior in China is highly ethical, and the tourist custom of taking towels, ashtrays and other "souvenirs" from hotels, trains or other places is **NOT** acceptable. It will cause major embarrassment on exit and may also present a problem for guides/interpreters and room attendants, who could be held responsible. Please, **do not** take "*memorabilia*" unless you buy it.

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TRAVELLING WITHIN A GROUP: Most tour passengers once they arrive at the first point in China will become members of a group and will travel together with other passengers originating from the US or Canada. Group travel is still the preferred mode of travel in China. The benefits are many: personal attention from National Guides that accompany the group throughout the trip and handle all of the traveling details from one point to another, to priority accommodations and check-in formalities at hotels and airports, and so on. The minuses of group travel, especially in destinations such as China, are that certain *individual desires* must be subordinated to the overall well being of the group. Therefore, we ask that you observe some basic rules when traveling within a group in China.

A few courtesy reminders: *Make it your responsibility to be on time so as not to hold up the group. Be attentive and refrain from talking to your neighbor while the guide/s are speaking or providing information regarding the tour. Wait for all information to be given before asking questions. If traveling in a group, any special requests regarding group activities should be directed to the Tour Director/National Guide who is responsible for representing the interests of the whole group. Your local guides will refer all requests back to the tour director. Your cooperation in these matters will not only be greatly appreciated but will increase both the groups and your personal enjoyment of the tour.* XIE XIE! (Thank you)

TOUR AND CRUISE DOCUMENTS:

Vouchers: Since most of our travelers will be traveling within a group, individual travel vouchers will not be provided, *except* where deviations, pre/post tour extensions or individual travel alterations have been booked and prepaid in advance. If we do provide you with travel vouchers - **they will be marked on the Check-Off list provided with your final documents.**

Transfers: If you have purchased **our airfare** or have **prepaid** your arrival transfers through us, **please look for our Tour Guides holding your NAMES, or our yellow triangle Global Tours & Cruises (GTC) Signs after exiting the Customs Area of the various airports!**



NOTE: If you have purchased Land or Cruise only and are arranging for your own arrival and departure transportation, please refer to the Hotel & Contact List provided with your final document to find names & addresses of the hotels/vessels used specific to your particular departure date and travel itinerary!

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PERSONAL TRAVEL DOCUMENTS: Before leaving home, be sure that you remember to take your valid **PASSPORT** (*must be valid 6 months beyond your date of return*) and any appropriate **VISA!** Based on our current information, tourist **visas are required** for American citizens travelling to China. If you are a citizen of another country, please contact the Consulate and/or Embassies for up to date information on **visas** and other travel restrictions. Requirements can and do change frequently and without warning - **and we cannot take any responsibilities for changes beyond our control.**

BAGGAGE: PLEASE PACK LIGHTLY! Make a list of everything you pack for the trip and leave a copy of the list at home. *It is also a good idea to tape a copy inside your luggage listing your name, home address and home phone.* Although we cannot assume responsibility for lost luggage, airlines and local ground handlers will make every effort to locate your luggage or offer reasonable compensation if you can itemize the suitcase contents. ***Purchasing Travel Insurance is strongly recommended!***

BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE: Baggage allowances differ for the United States, transpacific, inter-Orient and China sections of your tour. However, carrying a single suitcase weighing no more than 44 pounds will meet most requirements (please double check with your airline to be sure). Another good reason to travel light is that there may be times when you will have to *carry your own baggage*, especially in China. Specific baggage regulations for the various sections are **(subject to change)**

-US and non-stop transpacific - Two pieces of luggage, their combined measurements (sum of the three dimensions not exceeding 106 inches; no single piece may be larger than 62 inches). 50 lb max!

-Inter-Orient - Maximum weight allowance of 44 pounds.

-People's Republic of China - Baggage allowance within China is 44 pounds per person for travel by air and one piece of baggage per person to travel by train. Carryon luggage has to be checked in if heavier than 5kg (=11 lb).

-Hong Kong - U.S. - Carry-on Baggage allowance for carry-ons when departing from Hong Kong for the United States. One piece: size 22 x 14 x 9 inches (or 56cm x 36cm x 23cm)

OUR FINAL DOCUMENTS – TRAVEL PORTFOLIOS

-FREE ELECTRONIC DELIVERY: *Once final payment is received all paper documents including: day by day itinerary, travel tips, airline tickets, contacts and other related information will be sent to your electronically via email.* ***This service is free, provided we have your email address.***

PHYSICAL DELIVERY OF OUR PORTFOLIO OF GIFTS & PAPER DOCUMENTS:

*If you do not have email OR would prefer to receive paper documents along with our set of useful, travel related items as outlined below, **YOU MUST NOTIFY US AT THE TIME OF BOOKING** and prior to the **FINAL PAYMENT** deadline so that these items can be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to your departure via registered or overnight mail. The items are complimentary, you will only be billed the cost of delivery which is usually around \$20 per address.*

The cost of this service will be added to your invoice.

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1. LUGGAGE TAGS: Will be provided with your final documents, if you choose to receive paper documents. **Please use them, if you would like your luggage to take the same vacation you do!**

NOTE: *Our luggage tags have been designed to allow you to list up to 6 points of travel (hotel to ship, ship to hotel, etc).* **DO NOT DISCARD THEM!** Simply **cross out** your previous location and **write in your next destination (and room or cabin number if you know it)**. This will help our staff and luggage handlers tremendously in delivering your luggage to you in the shortest possible time!

2. BADGES: **If provided**, please **wear the badges** at all airports, transfer points, hotels, and at any time you are embarking/disembarking the ship. Not only does your badge assist us in providing adequate security on the vessel by identifying you as a group member to our guides, staff and security personnel, it also allows you to get to know your fellow passengers sooner! **NOTE:** Since people go by nicknames, our badges come *blank*. Please print your name the way you would like to be addressed and wear them at least for the first few days.

3. PENS & TRAVEL BAGS: Our unique pens and practical travel bags are not only “good looking” but superbly designed to hold everything from your documents to cameras to water bottles! People love them- and you will too! **These will be provided if you choose to receive paper documents.**

CLOTHING SUGGESTIONS: China has different climates - from the chilly North to the balmy South- so you need to bring a variety of clothes for all types of weather conditions. However, in principle, you should combine clothes that can be worn in layers! Our tour and cruise programs are designed with comfort in mind and are **INFORMAL!** Leave your formal evening clothes at home - they will not be needed! One tie and sport coat or jacket for gentlemen and one dress or dress pants for ladies is all you will need in terms of more elegant clothing for the Captain’s Farewell dinner, Cocktail party and a few other cultural or theater performances.

Otherwise, pack as lightly as possible combining a few shirts, tee shirts, multi-purpose turtle necks, a few wrinkle free slacks, shorts, a light jacket or wind breaker (*clothes that can be worn in layers!*) and you will be fine. In addition - **LEAVE YOUR JEWELRY AT HOME!** **Remember - you are going to see - not to be seen!** By keeping it simple you will have a worry free trip - to the benefit of all of us!!!

SHOES: **Do pack comfortable, “broken-in” shoes!** Most of our tours and cruises include extensive walking, especially during shore excursions and during visits ashore! Sneakers and rubber-soled shoes with firm arch supports are the best. You will need to be comfortable!!!

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES:

Please note that tours and cruises in **CHINA** require extensive walking. Services for the physically impaired are few and far between. Hotels are OK but buses and most of the sightseeing attractions are **not equipped** to handle **wheelchairs**. On stops at different ports while cruising the Yangtze, **steep stairs and pathways** must be navigated to get from the ship to the roads where tour buses can pick up passengers for sightseeing. Most of the sightseeing is on foot. **Therefore, regretfully, we do not recommend these tours and cruises to wheelchair bound passengers or to passengers with severe walking limitations or other severe physical disabilities.**

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CUSTOMS & ENTRY FORMALITIES:

You will need to obtain an **INDIVIDUAL VISAS** to visit China. **While we do not handle visa requirements we can recommend outside Visa Service companies.** You may also need to fill out a two part arrival/departure form and possible a health card before passing through customs. These forms are usually distributed by airline crews on airplanes before you arrive to your first point of entry.

TRAVELING WITHIN CHINA:

Traveling within China is exhilarating and exciting. However, please be prepared that sometimes some tour arrangements, due to reasons beyond our control (flight delays), may be adjusted. Please note there are only limited air services between cities. Rest assured, however, that our Chinese Handling Agents will make every effort to achieve the best possible alternate arrangements for you.

DOMESTIC AIR TRANSPORTATION:

When flying on domestic segments within China, please note the following information:

AIRCRAFT: Good news! Most of China's domestic carriers utilize modern western equipment including Airbuses, Boeing 757,737,767,707 and McDonnell Douglas 82.The "bad" news: Airports in smaller cities are sometimes congested, passenger service may seem confusing and seat pitches on planes are small - fortunately, most local flights are in the 2 hour range - *so grin and bear it!* **Example;**

Beijing-Xian =2 hrs, Xian-Wuhan -1:30h, Chongqing-Shanghai =2:30h, Shanghai-Hong Kong=3h

PASSPORT AND LOCAL FLIGHT NUMBERS: Please **KEEP YOUR PASSPORT AVAILABLE on your person throughout your trip. DO NOT PACK IT IN YOUR LUGGAGE!** You must show your passport at all domestic airports when passing through security control - **it is your identification!** Also, some of the airports can be quite chaotic! Although your guides will do most of the work - it is always good to "know the ropes". Therefore, **REMEMBER YOUR LOCAL FLIGHT NUMBER** - it is the main piece of information that will enable you to find the appropriate check in counters as well as the appropriate gates! And most important - once you have passed security you will be directed to a specific gate number - **BUT THIS MAY NOT BE WHERE YOU BOARD THE AIRCRAFT FROM!** Gates are customarily used as waiting areas - your final boarding gate may be different! **So keep your eyes and ears open - and if traveling as an individual without the benefit of group guides - do not be afraid to ask! Employees at information booths will be quite helpful.**

ARRIVALS/DEPARTURES/GROUND TRANSPORTATION & LUGGAGE:

Upon *passing customs and immigration* at your first point of entry, your local guide and transfer car or bus will be waiting for you to take you to your hotel. (*Please note that this applies only for those passengers who have booked their flight with us or have purchased their transfers through us!*). At most hotels, your bags will be sent to your room. Upon leaving the hotel, you will be instructed to put your baggage outside your door at a specific time. To ensure that your baggage is transported with the group's bags, **please adhere closely to the times given.** In the unlikely event that your bags arrive damaged, please let the Tour Director know immediately, so he or she may report it. The longer you wait the harder it is to get the hotel or CAAC to accept responsibility. For your convenience we suggest essential items (*medications, toiletries, jewelry, passport, plane tickets, currencies*) be stored in your **carry-on bag.**

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Be on time! No one likes to be known as the last to arrive. When traveling in a group, it is very important that every member be **punctual** for transfers and sightseeing services. **No request for refunds or make-up arrangements for late-comers will be considered.**

TIME ZONE: Although vast in size, China maintains a single time zone throughout, which is 16 hours ahead of Los Angeles and 13 hours ahead of New York. So when its noon in Beijing it is 6pm in Los Angeles and 9pm in New York **the previous day!** (*15 hours during time savings!*)

BUSES:

Buses may be of different quality and comfort level - from modern in major cities to old and “dinky” in some small and out of the way places (*especially along the Yangtze cruise route*). Please be assured that you are getting the best that is available - even though “best” may not be at the level you are accustomed to at home. Also, **please remember to rotate seats on buses** - everyone likes to sit by the window and up front. And, although smoking is still a mass habit in China, on all motor coaches, we maintain a smoke free environment. ***For those who smoke, frequent stops are made along the way.*** **Mutual understanding between smokers and non-smokers will be appreciated! In all, good will, a readiness to understand, basic courtesy and good manners will go a long way to making everyone’s trip most enjoyable!**

HOTELS:

Although the quality and standard of hotels throughout China still vary greatly, in major cities and tourist routes, the number of and the quality of hotels ranging from 3 to 5 star deluxe properties has been greatly improved in recent years. In most major cities, we utilize first class (4*) or 5* Deluxe hotels (*depending on your itinerary*). **Room assignments:** Rooms are assigned based on availability by the hotel management. While specific requests such as 4th floor etc., will be honored if possible, the hotel staff reserves the right to assign rooms at their discretion. As for the quality of the rooms, all the hotels we use at this time are equipped with **all modern creature comforts** including TV’s, direct dial telephones, mini-bars and toiletries in the bathrooms. Interesting features found in most Chinese hotels are *thermoses with hot water and pitchers with cold water* that are prepared daily for guests. Since we **DO NOT recommend drinking tap water** anywhere in China (*although 4* and international chain hotels purify their water supplies - so its OK*) - it is **perfectly safe** to use the water provided via these pitchers and thermoses as they have been boiled and are safe for consumption. All in all, the hotels used on all of our tour and cruise programs, are always carefully selected to provide the best **combination of location, comfort and value for money**. For the actual hotels used on your particular itinerary, please consult the **Hotel & Contact List sent with your final documents**.

WATER: As mentioned previously, outside of your hotels where the water provided in pitchers in your room is fine, **we do not recommend** drinking water anywhere while traveling. It is much safer to carry a bottle of water, which can be purchased at your hotels and at many local shops. During the cruise, water is OK to drink from pitchers provided in cabins with boiled water. **Bottled water is also available for purchase on board.**

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MEALS:

All of our tour and cruise programs always include either 2 or 3 meals a day (*or a combination of both - for instance 2 meals while in hotels and 3 while sailing on the Yangtze*). **Please check your itinerary!** The breakfasts in hotels are generally **self serve buffets** offering a combination of western and oriental cuisine. Lunches are usually held for all of the group members at a local restaurant or hotel as are the dinners. These will consist of either a self-serve buffet or a sit-down meal. The menus are pre-arranged and fixed for the group and will consist of Chinese delicacies and a limited choice of western foods. **If you like Chinese - you will be delighted! If you don't - bring plenty of snacks (just kidding)!** And do not believe the stories about how bad "real" Chinese food is compared to back home - *simply not true* as per the author of these tips who gained 4 pounds on his last 10-day visit! The meals are plentiful and tasty and the cuisine varies from region to region. In **Beijing**, the cuisine is the *Peking style* with lots of dumplings and noodles. In **Chongqing**, the cuisine is *Szechwan* - and if you like hot and spicy foods you have to try a "**Hot Pot**" - literally a big pot of boiling oil and spicy seasoning where you as the customer get to throw in raw pieces of meat, fish and vegetables and cook the food to your liking - but be warned, you better have a bucket of water nearby to cool-off! In **Shanghai** the cuisine is lighter with milder sauces - the accent is on fish and **dim-sum style foods** - but specialties such as snake are a delicacy! In any case, unless you have a very restrictive diet - you should be fine, especially since there are now an abundance of *McDonalds, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pizza Hut* outlets in all major metropolises- just in case you get "homesick"!

MEAL ETIQUETTE:

The sit down meals throughout China are served in a procession like buffet and always on small saucer sized plates. The meal begins when just one or two plates, representing appetizers, are put on the table.... **Do not be worried about the "small" quantity**, this is only the beginning! Usually, the host of the meal (*if you are eating with a Chinese person*) will offer the first portion to his guest or to the person on his right then will serve himself and will pass the plate on to the person on his left. Once this formality is completed, everyone can simply dig in! **In China, eating is a serious business!** There is very little time for intimate conversation or "romantic" interludes. The Chinese eat to get fed and that's it! Therefore, don't be shy - follow the leader and enjoy! What is especially interesting to the western eye is the lack of rice at the table - which is only brought at the end of the meal. The reason is that it is impolite to bring out the "cheapest" food first - therefore rice is always served last! But, if you would like rice with your meal - simply ask for it! Another interesting quirk is the fact that soup and desert are usually brought to the table half way through the meal! Yet again, the idea is to wash down the tastes of the previous food items and clean your palate with the soup, before you continue on with other delicacies! In any case - don't be shy; ask your server to bring out whatever you need - and as for what you are eating - sometimes it's better not to know! (*Just kidding!*)

***NOTE ON THE FAMOUS PEKING DUCK:** Since this is a **delicacy** that most of our travelers can't wait to taste - a few words of explanation. First, after a number of appetizers, the fully roasted duck is rolled out by the Chef who then painstakingly slices small **portions of the skin** off the duck - and before your astonished eyes rolls the meat away!!! As you can gather - the Chinese consider **the skin** of the duck to be the delicacy - the meat is used for soups and other broths. The skin is served to the tables along with thinly sliced onions and celery or cucumber along with thin round pancakes resembling soft tacos or tortillas, bean curd and other sauces. The idea is to place the skins, the onions and cucumbers in the tortilla - roll it up and enjoy it like a "**Chinese Duck Burrito**"!

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ON BOARD the M/S PRESIDENT 6 or PRESIDENT 8

For the Yangtze portion of your program you will be delighted with either one of our 2 modern vessels both featuring all 260 sq ft cabins with outside balconies! Both were built in 2013 and include all modern amenities including full bathrooms, TV's, 2 restaurant, vast public areas, and hold up to 460 passengers catered by a young and vivacious crew of 196! For detailed descriptions and photos please visit our web site at: www.rivercruises.net

SHIP RESTAURANTS/ GENERAL MEAL TIMES:

There is one restaurant featuring **one seating** for all passengers and an alternate VIP restaurant offering happy hour and additional a'la carte options. All cruises include **3 meals daily**. The times of meals vary, as they are coordinated with the port stops and shore excursions, but are generally held at:

BREAKFAST: 8:00-9:00, LUNCH: 12:30-14:00 DINNER: 19:00-20:30.

BREAKFASTS usually consist of a self-service buffet featuring both Chinese and Western cuisine (*eggs, bacon etc.*). Water, fruit juices, coffee and tea are provided at no extra cost. Additional beverages can be purchased for a nominal charge from the restaurant staff.

LUNCHESES are also served buffet style with a variety of Chinese dishes complemented with a limited number of Western choices (*such as salads, pizza, pasta, hot dogs, hamburgers*).

DINNERS are a sit down affair featuring a wide variety of Chinese dishes served all together at "Lazy Susan" style round tables and meant to be shared by all passengers at the table (family style).

SPECIAL DIETS: Vegetarian and other special diets will be attended to within reason and the capability of the restaurant staff. Please advise us at the time of booking and the Maître D' and your table waitress/waiter on the first day of arrival. If you have a very restrictive diet (*no sugar, fat, Jenny Craig, etc.*) we suggest you bring with you additional non-perishable snacks and specialized foods.

SEATING ASSIGNMENTS: Tables are assigned to passengers at the first meal function. **The tables are then kept by the passengers for the duration of the cruise.** Therefore, if you would like to share your table with friends, it is a good idea to go to the first meal together so that you may be seated together - later changes in seating assignments may not be possible due to limited space.

****On less than full sailings, free seating may be allowed.***

COMMUNICATION: Most hotels in China today feature direct dial phones in the rooms and business centers where faxes and emails can be sent back home. In remote areas where direct dial phones are not yet available, international phone calls can be arranged through local operators who will take your number and call you back when the connection is made. **ON VESSELS:** While most ships on the Yangtze are supplied with telephone/fax facilities, due to terrain, these can only be used while docked in certain (*not all*) ports. Most ships are equipped with internet which can be used for a fee.

VALUABLES: While safe deposit boxes are available at most hotels and on the vessels (*either in the rooms or via the reception*) we still strongly recommend that you leave items of value such as expensive jewelry at home - **you will not need them and you will "sleep" better without worrying about it!**

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LAUNDRY SERVICES: Are available at most hotels and on board vessels for a fee. Please note: the vessels do not offer dry-cleaning services.

ELECTRICITY: The electricity throughout China is 220V and 50 cycles. Our US electricity is 110v and 60 cycles. ***YOU WILL NEED TO BRING 2 THINGS***, if you plan on using appliances such as hairdryers, coffee heaters and video cameras; (*Some hotels may be equipped with both system. Bathroom on ships are 110 volts*).

- a) **UNIVERSAL TRANSFORMER:** or converter. An apparatus you plug into the wall outlets before plugging your appliances in. The best is a 50/1600 converter which should enable you to use laptops on the 50 cycle and hairdryers on the 1600 cycle. These are available at Radio Shack or any appliance store. They cost about \$40-\$50 but are worth it for all your future travels. **Note:** some newer cameras and computers will automatically convert currents between 110 and 240 volts. **Check you individual item to see if this is true.**
- b) **WALL ADAPTOR PLUGS:** While most people remember transformers - most forget that the plugs in the wall outlets are also different. Again, the best is to buy a set of 5 world plugs available at any travel or appliance store, which would cover most destinations in the world.

NOTE TO VIDEO CAMERA OPERATORS: China operates on a different system than in the United States. So, please bring plenty of spare tapes and additional batteries. And if buying local tapes - make sure they are filmed in the **NTSC format (US standard)** or the cost of transferring them when you get back home may cost more than you paid for them in the first place! **Important:** Asian DVDs are encoded differently from US DVD (Region Code 1). Therefore, please remember if you purchase a DVD in China, you may only be able to play it in laptop computers but not your DVD players!

CURRENCY: The Chinese currency is the **RMB (Renminbi)** or more commonly called the **YUAN**. The rate of exchange at the time of printing was about **\$1=6.7 RMB**. When figuring out marked prices in shops, the easiest is to **divide the Chinese rate by 6**. Exchange offices are available at most major hotels, airports and to a reasonable extent via the reception desks on the ships. There is no limit to how much foreign currency you may bring into China. **CREDIT CARDS:** Are gaining wider acceptance in China and can be used in most hotels and on board the vessels to pay for your incidentals at the end of the cruise. However, in shops and especially with souvenir vendors – *Cash is still “king”!*

TIPPING: **Tipping today has become commonplace.** Salaries are small, so tips do represent a substantial income, especially for the people in the tourism and service industries. Unlike the West, however, tips are **NOT** obligatory and are subject to your satisfaction – ***but your generosity will sincerely be appreciated.***

TIPPING

While tips are discretionary, since we get asked for advice here are some suggestions:

- In restaurants, taxis etc. you should leave a 15% tip rounded off to the highest round figure.
- For porters at hotels a tip of \$1 per suitcase
- For chambermaids a tip of \$2 per day
- **For Local Guides in cities that host half-day tours: \$3-\$4 guide (for group tours) or \$6-\$8 (for private or small group tours) , \$2 per person for driver.**

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ON CRUISES: The so called “standard” tip is **\$10** per person per day (**\$50 for a 5 day cruise**) - dropped off in the TIP BOX usually located near the reception areas OR collected by the group leader and given to the Purser or Cruise Director. **These tips are shared amongst all the cruise staff.**

RIVER GUIDES: Most ships employ an additional person called the “River Guide”. These guides are not members of the ship’s crew but are hired separately for their knowledge of English and their knowledge of local port stops, traditions and customs. They are the ones that will hold lectures on board about the passing countryside and will oversee all of the shore excursions. They should be tipped separately and the “customary” tip is \$1 or \$2 per day or **\$5 or \$10 per person for the cruise.**

NATIONAL GUIDES: *If traveling with a group of 15 or more, we will add our own, specially selected, English speaking hosts who will escort you from the day you arrive to the day you depart. They will be on hand to guide you, educate you, entertain you and if needed “scold” you! They will reconfirm all of your travel arrangements, they will handle and take care of your luggage, they will interpret, advise and “psychoanalyze” if need be - but we are sure that you will find their help indispensable! Therefore, if you are satisfied with their work, we recommend \$7-10 per person/per day, to be given to them individually or collected by the group leader and handed to them on the day of your departure. (\$100-\$150 per person for a two-week program)* **SUMMARY: If this is all confusing - set aside roughly \$250 per person for all your tipping needs - and you’ll be covered!**

CAUTIONS FOR EXPORTING:

NO-ART/ANTIQUES: No duty is charged for items of a personal nature and basic souvenirs, but exporting of art and antiques older than 100 years is not allowed without prior permission from the Ministry of Culture. If not sure, inquire with your Tour Guide **PRIOR** to purchasing any items of great value.

YES: It is OK to buy souvenirs and arts & crafts including silk, jade and other items not considered a national treasure. **For further details on items and quantities allowed, contact your nearest Chinese Consulate or consult your Tour Director.**

SHOPPING: Although most of your tour activities have been pre-arranged, there will be some time for shopping. We recommend shopping at department stores, wholesale factories and the “friendship” stores. These shops cater to foreign groups, so some of the staff usually speaks some English and the choice and quality of goods are better. Among the most popular purchases are **rugs, silk, cashmere sweaters, jade and a wide variety of antiques, arts and crafts**. The prices are usually fixed by the state - so bargaining is not necessary. When buying from street vendors, the costs will be lower, the quality of goods will be lower, and **bargaining is expected!** So bring along plenty of small denomination bills!

PHOTOGRAPHY: Please **DO NOT** photograph people without asking their permission first. Also, refrain from taking photos of restricted areas such as airports and military installations.

Although camera film is readily available at most major hotels - it is still a good idea to bring plenty of film, digital memory, and batteries for your cameras with you! **Please also note that museums may charge fees for film or video photography - or may not allow them at all.**

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CRUISING ON THE YANGTZE

CHINESE RIVER VESSELS: While there are a growing number of passenger vessels plying the Yangtze of varying quality and degree of service, the vessels used in conjunction with **our cruise and tour programs are all new 5* DELUXE** ships designed to cater to foreign clientele. While there are differences in the interior decoration, cabin placement and the style of these vessels, there are also **similarities**, which we will briefly outline here. *For specific ship descriptions and deck plans, please see our current China brochure – or log on to our web site- www.RiverCruises.Net*

SIZE/CAPACITY: All ships were specifically designed to cruise the Yangtze River. For the most part they were built in Chongqing or Wuhan. They can accommodate up to 460 passengers supported by a crew of about 200. They feature 5 passenger decks connected by elevator.

CABINS: Cabins are all **outside facing, most with balconies**, and feature lower twin beds, T.V. sets and telephones, air conditioning and private bathrooms with toilets and showers.

GIFT SHOPS: There is a gift shop on all vessels featuring post cards, souvenirs and a variety of other goods.

PUBLIC AREAS: Topmost is deck space with deck chairs available. The viewing lounges feature fully stocked bars and are used by day for lectures and river viewing and in the evening for shows and entertainment put on by the crew and/or local entertainers. *(For specific details on each ship please see our most current brochures or our web site).*

ADDITIONAL FEATURES: Include business centers, conference rooms, saunas, beauty and massage parlors, gyms and libraries – and in some instances, **indoor pools!** For more specific details and deck plans on the vessels please refer to our cruise brochure or web site!

SMOKING: Smoking is still a mass habit in China, but on the vessels, specific smoking areas are designated **while most parts of the ships are non-smoking!** **Please check with the reception staff.**

MEDICAL FACILITIES: All ships have a qualified physician aboard. Customary charges are made for all medical care and services. However, please **note** that the personnel and medical facilities are equipped to provide **only BASIC** medical care! They cannot handle passengers requiring specialized expertise and equipment. *Passengers with such conditions, or in the event of an emergency, may be evacuated to the nearest medical facility ashore - at the passengers' own expense.* Value World Tours, the ship's owners and operators will not be held liable for any act or omission of the physician and/or nurses. If you require special medicines, it is **essential that you bring them with you** from home as only a limited range of medicines are available!

DAILY INFORMATION: Information on activities and the next day's functions are provided a day in advance, via printed flyers distributed to the cabins during dinner the previous day. Updates and last minute changes are posted on information boards located at the reception or near the restaurant. **It is a good idea to check these boards whenever going to meals.** The PA system is used for wake-up calls and for commentary about the passing countryside - but make sure your radio is on as the information comes through the radio speakers!

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We hope we have been able to provide answers to the most frequently asked questions. For additional detailed information, please check out some guides and books available that we would highly recommend you read before going on your trip! If there is something we missed - by all means - give us a call! If all is OK - then get ready for a trip of a lifetime!

WEATHER CHART: (Average daily temperatures in Fahrenheit)

| CITY | APRIL | MAY | JUNE | JULY | AUG | SEPT | OCT | NOV |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | H/L | H/L | H/L | H/L | H/L | H/L | H/L | H/L |
| Beijing | 66/44 | 72/54 | 85/64 | 87/70 | 84/67 | 78/56 | 65/44 | 50/32 |
| Xian | 69/48 | 58/78 | 88/65 | 90/70 | 88/72 | 76/60 | 68/50 | 54/37 |
| Wuhan | 70/54 | 78/63 | 86/72 | 91/77 | 90/76 | 82/66 | 74/56 | 62/44 |
| Chongqing | 72/52 | 80/65 | 88/75 | 94/78 | 92/77 | 85/67 | 76/54 | 60/42 |
| Shanghai | 66/51 | 73/60 | 81/69 | 88/72 | 87/76 | 80/62 | 72/58 | 62/45 |
| Hong Kong | 78/58 | 84/68 | 88/70 | 90/72 | 89/76 | 84/68 | 76/65 | 72/60 |

EMERGENCY CONTACTS:

For the hotel names and addresses used for your specific departure - please consult the *CONTACT SHEET* supplied with your final documents. In addition, the following two addresses may be useful;

Beijing

Embassy of the United States of America

No 55 An Jia Lou Lu

Beijing 100600, China

Tel.: 86-10-8531-4000 Emergency number

Fax: 86-10-8531 3300

Shanghai

Consulate General of the United States of America

1038 West Nanjing Road, 8th floor, Shanghai, China

Tel.: 86-21-3217-4650

Fax: 86-21-6217-2071

“XIE, XIE” - THANK YOU! & BON VOYAGE!

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HELPFUL PHRASES FOR TRAVELERS

ENGLISH

HANYU PINYIN (Chinese pronunciation)

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| • Hello, how are you? | Ni hao; ni hao ma |
| • Good morning | zao; zao an |
| • Good evening | wan an |
| • Goodbye | zai jian |
| • I don't understand | wo bu dong |
| • Please | qing |
| • Thank you; many thanks! | Xie xie; duo xie! |
| • Don't mention it | bu ke qi |
| • I'm sorry | dui bu qi |
| • My name is | wo de ming zi shi |

TRAVEL:

- | | |
|-------------|-----------|
| • Hotel | lu guan |
| • Room | fang jian |
| • Key | yao chi |
| • Telephone | dian hua |
| • Toilet | ce suo |
| • Water | shui |

SUGGESTED READING BEFORE YOU GO!!

NAME OF BOOK

AUTHOR/PUBLISHER

NON-FICTION:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • CHINA GUIDE (<i>Great!</i>) | Ruth Lor Malloy/Open Road Publishing |
| • CHINA | Gunter Nelles/NELLES GUIDES |
| • The YANGZI RIVER | Judy Bonavia/Odyssey Guidebooks Hong Kong |
| • SAILING THROUGH CHINA | Paul Theroux/Houghton Mifflin Co. |
| • RIVER TOWN: Two Years on the Yangtze | Peter Hessler (great book on his Peace Corps time) |

FICTION:

- | | |
|---|---|
| • The LAST EMPEROR (<i>good movie!</i>) | Edward Behr/General Paperbacks, Toronto |
| • A SINGLE PEBBLE | John Hersey/Alfred Knopf Publishing |
| • The GOOD EARTH | Pearl S. Buck |
| • The JOY LUCK CLUB (<i>also a good movie!</i>) | Amy Tan |

Value World Tours

PACKING TIPS & SUGGESTIONS

Items You May Wish to Bring Along:

- Facial tissues, washcloths and shower caps, as they are not supplied on board.
- **Skin cream and other cosmetics for sun protection.**
- Insect repellent.
- Spare set of eyeglasses for emergencies. If you wear contact lenses, bring a pair of eyeglasses for occasions when contacts are bothersome to wear, such as in strong wind or dust.
- **Medications**, which are vital to your health. A letter should accompany these from your doctor (signed and dated), certifying that such medications are vital to your health. Dosage should be indicated. Always pack any personal medications in you carry on luggage, not in your checked baggage.
- Common remedies such as laxatives, indigestion tablets, aspirin and travel sickness pills (*However, the latter will probably not be needed while in the protected waters of the inland rivers and waterways of the Yangtze*).
- **Sunglasses.**
- **Bring plenty of film, flash bulbs and blank videocassettes.**
- Sewing, cosmetic, shoe shine, first aid kits, and paper towels
- Laundry soap packets and flat sink stopper.
- *Diet sweeteners if you do not take sugar.*
- *Instant coffee especially if you prefer decaffeinated!*
- Binoculars (excellent for viewing scenes from the Rivers).
- **Batteries for cameras, shaver etc.**
- Electrical Extension Cord (not available on most ships)
- **Transformer and plug adapters (purchased at K-Mart, Thrifty, appliance stores)**

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE YOUR TRAVEL AGENT OR CONTACT

VALUE WORLD TOURS, INC.

17220 NEWHOPE ST. #203

Fountain Valley, CA, 92708

Tel: (714) 556-8258, Fax: (714) 513-1777,

Email: travel@valuecruises.net

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