

China

A Different World



China isn't just a country. It's a completely different world. It's the place where you can speed down alleyways on your Beijing bicycle, slurp steaming noodles in the shadows of the skyscrapers in Shanghai, shop until you drop in the bustling street markets of Hong Kong or try your luck at the Las Vegas of the East in Macau.

Travellers dream of visiting the Forbidden City, which is neither Forbidden nor a City but a World Heritage listed collection of 980 palaces, buildings and museums dating back to the early 1400's. Another not-to-miss site in China is the most significant archaeological excavation of the 20th century, the Terracotta Warriors. In the 1970's local farmers uncovered the breathtaking collection of The Terracotta Army. The life-sized figures dating back as far as 210BC vary in height, according to the roles that they played in society. Current estimates are that there are over 8000 soldiers, 130 chariots with 520 horses and 150 cavalry horses, the majority of which are still buried deep underground in the pits. The Great Wall originally built to protect China, winds up and down across deserts and mountains and stretches more than 8,800 kms from East to West. With a history of more than 2000 years it remains one of the most popular attractions in China.

The food in China is something to experience. A morning spent in the local markets will uncover delicacies such as fish bladder, scorpions, and jellyfish but no trip to China is complete without a traditional serving of the national dish, Peking Duck where the crispy skin duck is carved at the table and served with freshly steamed pancakes, spring onions and a sweet bean sauce. Every meal is accompanied by Chinese Tea.

In fact in Chinese culture, tea is consumed for a variety of reasons; for good health, to celebrate, to apologize, as a mark of respect and to connect with family at large family gatherings. It is bad luck and extremely offensive to refuse tea if it is offered to you.

With a population of more than 1.3 billion...Yes billion! China is a fascinating country home to more than 56 ethnic groups and hundreds of dialects but with a history that dates back thousands of years it remains one of the more popular destinations for travellers from Australia.

Interesting facts about China

- Ice cream was invented in China around 2000BC
- In the Chinese calendar, each year is represented by an animal. According to readings, Buddha named these years after the twelve animals that visited him before he left earth. The Chinese believe that you have some of the characteristics of the animal representing the year in which you were born
- Red is lucky colour in Chinese culture. Banners, clothing and lucky money envelopes are all red. A wealthy (and lucky) bride may also choose red for her wedding gown.

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