

## **THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO**

### **CHINA**

(Updated March 2017)

Dear Valued Customer,

Our experienced staff of China specialists take pride in providing you with the very best in service and planning. We offer the best quality and value in travel. We hope you will have a wonderful trip.

#### **PLEASE FIND ENCLOSED THE FOLLOWING TOUR DOCUMENTS:**

1. Day-by-day Itinerary with Hotel Information and Emergency Contact Phone Numbers
2. Your International and US Domestic flight schedule and e-ticket receipt (if applicable)  
(Note: some of your China domestic flight tickets may not be enclosed in this package. These may be issued locally and given to you by Ritz Tours representatives in China)
3. All China domestic air tickets are issued in China for Land only clients who join our scheduled series departure groups, and will be given to you by your tour guide
4. Vouchers (if applicable)
5. Ritz Tours Badge
6. Luggage Tag
7. A copy of "China Trips--Things to Know Before You Go"
8. Travel Insurance Policy (if applicable)

Upon arrival in China, please go through Customs and Immigration on your own. After exiting the Customs area, please look for a Ritz Tours representative who will be holding a Ritz Tours flag or a sign. Please make sure that you wear your Ritz Tours' badge for easy identification.

#### **AN IMPORTANT NOTE ON GRATUITIES & TIPPING**

Please note that gratuities are not included in your tour cost. They are customary, and their purpose is to encourage and reward quality service. Our tour conductors, local guides, drivers, hotel porters and other service personnel do their utmost to make your trip smooth and pleasant. Gratuities are a way of showing your appreciation and also constitute a large part of their monthly income. However, tips are NEVER mandatory.

Ritz Tours suggests tipping in the following manner (US dollars):

- \$10 per person per day (except free day) – to be distributed between drivers and guides
- Yangtze River Cruise – Tipping is separate from the above guidelines. For the recommended amount, please refer to the cruise company information sheet, available on board.

Again, thank you for choosing Ritz Tours as your Partner-in-Travel. We are confident that your trip will be happy and rewarding. If you need further information, please contact your travel agent or Ritz Tours. And please provide your invaluable comments at [www.ritztours.com/feedback](http://www.ritztours.com/feedback) after your trip.

*We wish you "yi lu shun feng," our way of saying Bon Voyage!*

## Travel Documentation

- ❖ Passports must be valid for at least 6 months from the return date of your trip.
- ❖ A visa is needed for all tourists entering China. Visa must be obtained prior to arrival in China.
- ❖ In order to obtain a China Visa, you need a valid passport, 1 passport photo, a copy of your flight schedule, a copy of your driver's license, day-by-day itinerary with hotel list, and a visa application, available at the Chinese Consulate or at your travel agency. Submit everything to the Consulate for processing. There is also a processing fee for this (which varies according to citizenship and any rush charges that may apply). Processing time is typically one week. Normally, a single entry visa is valid for 6 months from date of issue, and for one month stay from date of entry into China.
- ❖ Please note it is the responsibility of the traveler to obtain this visa in a timely manner. If you are going to another country after the trip and re-entering China afterwards, you will require a double or multiple entries.
- ❖ Tighter restrictions may apply to the entry of Tibet
- ❖ Hong Kong or Macau entry permit: United States citizens must have a valid passport, but no visa is required for a stay of up to 90 days.
- ❖ For detailed passport and entry requirements, all travelers are advised to check with their embassy or consulate.

## Health & Medical Matters

No vaccinations are required for your trip with the exception of anyone traveling from or via an infected area. Due to the length of the trip and local traveling conditions, it is advised that you consult your doctor for existing medical/dental conditions before departure. If you are taking prescription medicine, please pack in your hand luggage sufficient quantity for the duration of the trip and make sure it is fully labeled. It may also be useful to bring aspirin, over-the-counter medicine for flu, indigestion, motion sickness, etc. In case of illness during the trip, please immediately notify your tour conductor and local guide for assistance.

- Travelers to Tibet: make sure you are healthy before you start traveling. If you are going on a long trip, please consult your family doctor to make sure that you are physically ready to visit Tibet and ask for some medication advice before departure. If you wear glasses, take a spare pair

and your prescription.

We know that some travelers may have specific dietary requests. Unfortunately, we are not able to guarantee your dietary requirements on our vacations. We make our best to accommodate your requests but not all hotels, cruise companies or local restaurants are able to manager your requirements.

## Chinese Customs Procedures

Foreign visitors are allowed to import, free of duty, one carton of cigarettes, and one 750ml bottle of alcohol. There are no restrictions on importing the following items for personal use: medicine, camera/camcorder, watches, personal jewelry and any amount of money. Professional recording equipment is not allowed without an import permit. Pornography, weapons, inflammable and explosive items, certain drugs are illegal and are not allowed to be taken into China. Merchandise labeled as "cultural relic" or "antique" may not be taken out of China without an official export license.

## Electrical Requirement

China's electrical system operates at 220 volts. The electrical outlets are either for fat round pins or for flat angled blades. Please bring you own voltage converter and adapter which could be found at most Target, Best Buy and Wal-Mart stores.

## Money Matters

Chinese currency is called Ren Min Bi (RMB) and is issued by the state bank, the People's Bank of China. We suggest you bring a combination of cash (some \$1's, \$5's and \$20's). US dollars in cash form are accepted at many places, but it is better to be converted into RMB first. As of Mar 2017, the exchange rate is :USD1.00= Yuan 6.90.

- ❖ Money exchange could be processed at hotel or local banks in China.
- ❖ There is no limit on the amount of foreign currencies you may bring into China.
- ❖ Keep the receipts when you exchange USD to RMB as receipts may be required when converting back to USD.
- ❖ Credit cards (Master card or Visa card) are widely accepted in China in major cities. International hotels, department stores and shops frequented by foreign tourists generally accept them. Cash advance by credit card is not common and is only

- possible at a few assigned banks.
- ❖ ATMs (Automated Teller Machine): ATMs are popular in big cities in Mainland of China and Hong Kong (i.e. Beijing and Shanghai). Cash advance service fee will be applied. Most ATMs in China can only be used for withdrawing RMB. The exchange rate on ATM withdrawals is similar to credit cards but there is a limited daily withdrawal amount.
- ❖ Personal Check: Personal checks are NOT acceptable in China

As of Oct . , 2016, the following exchange rates apply:  
1.00 USD = 6.72 RMB (Chinese Yuan Renminbi)  
(Subject to currency exchange rate fluctuations)

## Baggage

- ❖ Ritz Tours welcomes each passenger to bring one suitcase and one carry-on bag. Due to the limited capacity for luggage storage on the vehicle. Ritz Tours does not accept more than one suitcase per person in order to avoid any additional charges for excessive luggage.
- ❖ Baggage allowance for international flights may vary by airlines and is subject to change at any time. Additional baggage charges may apply. For up to date baggage information, please check online at [www.ritztours.com](http://www.ritztours.com) for the latest regulations.
- ❖ The standard free baggage allowance of Air China on international flights is two pieces per person for check-in baggage, up to 50lbs. Cathay Pacific on international flights is two pieces per person for check-in baggage, up to 50 lbs each. Carry-on baggage is limited to one piece up to 15 lbs. For other airlines, please verify online.
- ❖ Within China and Asia, the baggage limitation on all flights is restricted to one piece of check-in luggage, up to 44 lbs, and one carry - on bag with a combined total dimension not exceeding 45in. Checked luggage must have a lock (combination locks are recommended) and a luggage tag showing the name and contact information of the owner. **(Please use Ritz Tours tags for easy identification by our airport staff.)** Baggage without a lock may be refused for transport in China.
- ❖ Consider packing one change of clothing, one set of underwear and toiletry in your carry on bag to avoid inconvenience caused by delayed or lost luggage.
- ❖ DO NOT pack medicine, valuables, passport, and other personal necessities in checked luggage. Keep them in carry-on bag.

- ❖ Important note: Ritz Tours representatives cannot enter the luggage claim area. Luggage carts are available, free of charge, at all airports. Collect your luggage and exit, our local representatives will be waiting for you outside.
- ❖ Please consult [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov) for USA carryon restrictions.

## Shopping

Although Ritz Tours' guides will be happy to assist you with any shopping requirements, Ritz Tours does not assume responsibility for any items purchased at shops while on tour. You are never required to purchase any items while on tour and thus must be responsible for your own purchases. Any after sales correspondence must be between the passenger and the shop in question.

## Food and Drinks

- ❖ Fine meals are included in China as specified in the itinerary. For Hong Kong portion and free days of your trip, only breakfast is included.
- ❖ For your enjoyment and comfort, we provide a variety of Chinese meals and also Western style food. Most meals are served as a set menu with 10 people per table. One glass of local beer or soft drinks or mineral water is included with lunch and dinner. Unlimited amount of tea is included with all meals. Additional drinks are available for purchase. Please verify cost before ordering. Tap water is not potable in China. Hotel stores generally carry a variety of soft drinks and bottled water.
- ❖ One bottled water is provided free of charge on our buses in China.

## Language

- ❖ China has 28 provinces and 28 major dialects; the official language is Mandarin.
- ❖ To make your trip more interesting and rewarding, we have included a list of the most useful phrases in Mandarin.

## Clothing

- ❖ We suggest you bring comfortable, casual clothing and good walking shoes for the trip.
- ❖ Check online for weather conditions before you go, and pack accordingly.
- ❖ It is not necessary to bring formal clothing.

However, modest attire is strongly recommended in Islamic western China.

- ❖ Do not over-pack, you can buy everything you need cheaply in China.

### **Time Differentials**

Beijing is 12 hours ahead of New York, and 15 hours ahead of San Francisco and Los Angeles (PST). All time within China is based on Beijing time; there are no adjustments for seasons or longitude.

### **Telephone Call**

#### **Calling North America from Mainland China**

Dial 00 (international access code) + 1 (North America country code) + local number  
Example: 00-1-973-254-5365

#### **Calling China from North America**

Dial 011 (international access code) + 86 (China country code, or 852 for Hong Kong regional code) + China area code (minus initial zero) + local number  
Example: 011-86-21-943-1998

### **Cell Phones**

- ❖ Smart phones can roam to China with fees. Check with your phone company for international roaming plan.
- ❖ You may buy a SIM card in China to use on your tri-band unlocked cell phone. The cards are prepaid and cheaper than hotel international call service.

### **Internet**

Internet access is available at most of our hotels on your Ritz Tour's trip. Many hotels offer free internet access at hotel lobby. Wi-Fi in room will be charged from \$12 - \$20 per day at some hotels. Fees are applied on Yangtze River Cruise.

\*\*\* Please visit [www.victoriacruises.com](http://www.victoriacruises.com) for all pertinent information regarding to your cruise of the Yangtze River (if applicable)

### **National Holidays and Festivals**

#### **National Holidays:**

- \* January 1      New Year
- \* May 1          Labor Day
- \* October 1      National Day

#### **National Festivals:**

- \* Chinese Lunar New Year and Spring Festival -

- First day of the first lunar month
- \* Mid-Autumn Festival (Moon Festival) -  
The 15<sup>th</sup> day of the eighth lunar month

### **Climate**

China's climate can be compared to that of the United States in that there are four seasons, a primarily temperate climate, and conditions that vary widely from region to region.

**North-Central China** (Beijing, Xian) is similar in climate to Nebraska and Kansas, with less snow and rain during the winter. Late winter and early spring bring regular dust storms and haze.

**South-Central China** (Shanghai, Suzhou, Yangtze River) is comparable to the Gulf Coast states, though winter storms do not occur as often. Summer is hot and humid with frequent rain. Winter is shorter, cooler, and often overcast with drizzle.

**Northwest China** (Urumqi, Turpan) experiences severe climatic conditions with dramatic daily temperature swings. Summer can get very hot during the day, but generally cools off at night. Similarly, winter temperatures warm up during the day but plummet at night.

**Tibet** (Lhasa, Shigatse) also sees marked changes. When the sun shines, temperatures reach the mid-80s in the summer and the mid-60s in the winter. At night or when it rains or snows, temperatures drop significantly. Precipitation is minimal in the winter; summer showers are more common but occur mainly at night.

### **Emergency Contacts**

#### **Ritz Tours:**

1-888-345-7489 (M - F 9am-5:30 pm PST)  
626-592-8448 (Emergency contact after business hours and holidays)

#### **Air China North America Call Center:**

1-800-882-8122

#### **Cathay Pacific North America Call Center:**

1-800-233-2742

**AVERAGE TEMPERATURES IN MAJOR CITIES °F**

City	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Beijing	28	32	40	56	69	76	79	76	67	55	39	36
Baotou	24	32	46	62	75	83	85	81	72	60	41	41
Chongqing	45	50	58	67	73	80	85	90	80	70	60	51
Dali	46	49	55	60	65	67	67	68	66	62	54	48
Dunhuang	15	25	40	54	65	73	76	74	63	48	32	19
Guangzhou	58	60	64	71	78	81	83	83	81	75	67	57
Guilin	47	48	56	65	74	79	83	82	78	69	59	50
Hangzhou	39	41	48	60	69	75	83	83	75	64	54	43
Hong Kong	60	61	65	72	79	82	84	83	82	77	71	64
Hottot	10	19	34	48	61	71	73	70	59	45	28	16
Jiuzhaigou	42	45	53	62	70	74	77	77	70	62	53	45
Lhasa	29	34	41	46	54	60	61	60	57	48	39	32
Lijiang	49	54	61	66	70	70	73	72	67	62	55	49
Kunming	50	52	56	62	67	67	68	67	64	59	53	50
Nanjing	35	38	47	59	68	76	83	82	73	62	51	39
Shanghai	40	42	47	57	66	74	82	82	75	64	55	42
Suzhou	38	40	48	58	67	74	83	83	74	64	54	43
Turpan	16	30	50	63	75	86	90	86	73	55	37	23
Urumqi	5	10	32	50	66	74	78	74	64	47	28	10
Wuhan	37	41	50	61	70	78	84	83	74	64	52	42
Xian	32	38	50	56	72	80	78	76	60	52	40	30
Zhangjiajie	33	34	42	53	61	67	74	72	64	57	48	38

**Temperatures Conversion**

Celsius to Fahrenheit:  $(C \times 9) / 5 + 32$

Fahrenheit to Celsius:  $((F - 32) \times 5) / 9$

32°F = 0°C    50°F = 10°C    68°F = 20°C    77°F = 25°C    86°F = 30°C    95°F = 35°C

*Useful Phrases in Mandarin*

English	Mandarin Pronunciation	Chinese
Hello	Ni Hao	你好
How are you?	Ni Hao Ma?	你好嗎？
Please	Qing	請
Thank you	Xie Xie	謝謝
Yes	Yao	要
No	Bu Yao	不要
You're welcome	Bu Ke Qi	不客氣
Sorry	Dui Bu Qi	對不起
I can't understand	Wo Bu Dong	我不懂
Good morning	Zao Shang Hao	早上好
Good afternoon	Xia Wu Hao	下午好
Good evening	Wan Shang Hao	晚上好
Good night	Wan An	晚安
Goodbye	Zai Jian	再見
See you tomorrow	Min Tian Jian	明天見
You are nice	Ni Hen Hao	你很好
American	Mei Guo Ren	美國人
May I ask your name?	Qing Wen Gui Xin?	請問貴姓？
My name is	Wo Jiao	我叫
How much?	Duo Shao Qian?	多少錢？
Where is the restroom?	Che Suo Zai Na Li?	廁所在哪裡？
Where is the telephone?	Dian Hua Zai Na Li?	電話在哪裡？
What time?	Ji Dian?	幾點？
The food was delicious	Hen Hao Chi	很好吃
Cheers! / Bottoms up!	Gan Bei!	乾杯！
Excellent!	Hen Hao!	很好
Coffee	Ka Fei	咖啡
Tea	Cha	茶
Beer	Pi Jiu	啤酒
Mineral water	Kuang Quan Shui	礦泉水
Ice cubes	Bin Kuai	冰塊

**A LAST REMINDER**

PLEASE BE SURE YOU HAVE ALL THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTS & MONEY  
BEFORE LEAVING FOR THE AIRPORT!!