

Tour:

Oriental STEM Discovery – China

Destination:

Beijing, Xian, Hangzhou & Shanghai - China

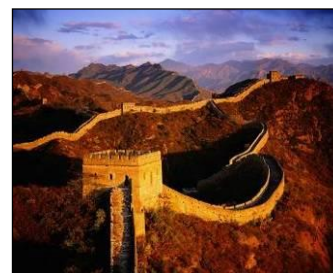
Specialization:

STEM, History, Arts & Culture

Itinerary:

13-days / 12-nights – total trip

ORIENTAL STEM DISCOVERY – Sample Itinerary				
Day	Morning	Afternoon		Evening
1	Overnight flight to China; meals in enroute			
2	Arrive Beijing; Transfer to Hotel			Dinner On Own
3	Temple of Heaven	Tai Chi Chuan Class	Tiananmen Square	The Forbidden City
4	The Great Wall	The Beijing Zoo & Panda Educational Program		Olympic Games Site
5	City Exhibition Centre	Pinggu Organic Vegetable & Fruit Farm - Agriculture Program		
6	<i>Fly to Xian</i>	Big Wild Goose Pagoda	Xi'an Museum & Educational Program	
7	Terra Cotta Warriors Tour		Xi'an City Wall	Free Time
8	Cloned Goat Research	NW Agriculture & Forestry Program		Farm Land Protection
9	<i>Fly to Hangzhou</i>		Free Time	West Lake
10	The Lingyin Temple	Longjing Tea Plantation	China National Rice Research Institute	
11	<i>Bullet Train to Shanghai</i>		Yu Garden	Acrobatic Show
12	The Bund	Shanghai Film Museum	Shanghai City Exhibition Centre	
13	Fly from Shanghai to Home			



Specialists in STEM Student Travel

As with all sample itineraries, please be advised that this is an 'example' of a schedule and that the activities and hotels shown may be variable dependent upon dates, weather, special requests and other factors. Itineraries will be confirmed prior to travel.

Day 1

Meals in Flight

Set off for your incredible journey! Group meals will be available on your air carrier.

Day 2

Breakfast in flight, lunch & dinner on own

Good morning Beijing! After landing and clearing Customs and Immigrations, we'll transfer to our Beijing hotel. Hotels available include 3 and 4-star properties sleeping two to three pupils per room. Schools will have the option of selecting the hotel class prior to travel. We will meet our bilingual local guide, have our Health & Safety Meeting, and get ready to explore this great city. We leave dinner 'on our own' as many groups are tired from travel, full from airline food, and just want to take it a bit easy without anything planned. If you want to go out though, our team will help make arrangements for you. We'll try to get to bed early this evening to get some needed rest to acclimate to the new time zone. Tomorrow we'll kick off our tour – full speed ahead! Welcome to China!

Note: Visas are required from all visitors entering China through the United Kingdom, the USA and Canada. These costs are **not** included in tour costs and are the responsibility of individual members of the traveling party. Please ensure party members have researched the most up-to-date requirements and applied for all necessary documentation. In the UK, please visit www.chinese-embassy.org.uk/eng; in the USA, please visit www.china-embassy.org/eng; in Canada, please visit <http://ca.china-embassy.org/eng>.

Beijing – Beijing, Jing for short, is the nation's political, economic, cultural and educational center as well as China's most important center for international trade and communications. Together with Xian, Luoyang, Kaifeng, Nanjing and Hangzhou, Beijing is one of the six ancient cities in China. It has been the heart and soul of politics and society throughout its long history and consequently, there is an unparalleled wealth of discovery to delight and intrigue travelers as they explore Beijing's ancient past and enjoy its exciting modern development. <http://wikitravel.org/en/Beijing>

As the capital of the People's Republic of China, Beijing is located in northern China, close to Tianjin Municipality and partially surrounded by Hebei Province. The city covers an area of more than 16,410 square kilometers (6,336 square miles) and has a population of 14.93 million people.

Beijing is a city with four distinct seasons. Its best is late spring and autumn. But autumn is considered the best tourist season of the year. The best months for a visit to Beijing are May, September, and October when people can enjoy bright sunshine and blue skies.

How can one city boast so many phenomenal places? Beijing's long and illustrious history started some 500,000 years ago. It is here that the ancestors of modern Homo sapiens, Peking men, lived in caves. Records show that Beijing has been an inhabited city for more than three thousand years and has endured invasions by warlords and foreign powers, devastating fires, the rise and fall of powerful imperial dynasties and has emerged each time as a strong and vibrant city. For more than 800 years, Beijing was a capital city - from the Yuan Dynasty (1271 - 1368) to the Ming (1368 - 1644) and Qing (1644 - 1911) dynasties. Thirty-four emperors have lived and ruled the nation in Beijing, and it has been an important trading city from its earliest days.



Although now Beijing is a modern and fashionable city complete with a full 21st Century vibe, you can experience authentic Beijing life and become acquainted with 'old Beijing' by exploring its many teahouses, temple fairs, Beijing's Hutong and Courtyard and enjoy the Peking Opera. Add any or all of these to your Beijing tour and you will leave with a feeling of special appreciation in your heart for this ancient city that has truly seen it all and tells its story with matchless grace, charm and vigor.

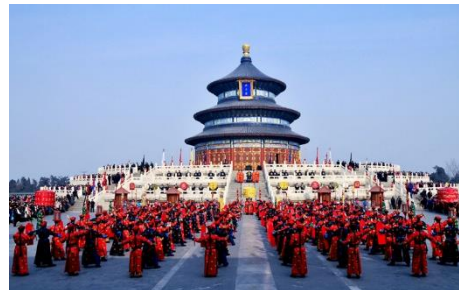
With Tiananmen Square - the biggest central square in the world, the Forbidden City - the largest and best-preserved imperial palace complex, a superbly preserved section of the Great Wall, and the Temple of Heaven - the largest sacrificial complex in the world, Beijing attracts both domestic and foreign visitors who all come to marvel at its century-old history and unique cultural relics.

Day 3

Breakfast, lunch & dinner included

Rise and shine Beijing! After breakfast, we'll board our motorcoach and start our day of sightseeing. Lunch is included so don't worry about anything but soaking up the sights, sounds and mystique of China!

The Temple of Heaven – Our first stop is The Temple of Heaven, or more literally the **Altar of Heaven** (天坛; *Tiān Tán*), a temple of Chinese religion used for imperial ceremonies for five centuries. Its buildings are situated in their own large and tranquil park in southeast Beijing.



A Tai Chi class will be taught by a professional instructor before you start to tour this ancient royal temple.

Tai Chi (or Tai Chi Chuan) is generally classified as a form of traditional Chinese martial arts of the Neijia (soft or internal) branch. It is considered a soft style martial art — an art applied with internal power — to distinguish its theory and application from that of the hard-martial art styles.



Since the first widespread promotion of Tai Chi's health benefits by Yang Shaohou, Yang Chengfu, Wu Chien-ch'uan and Sun Lutang in the early twentieth century, it has developed a worldwide following among people with little or no interest in martial training for its benefit to health maintenance. Medical studies of Tai Chi support its effectiveness as an alternative exercise and a form of martial arts therapy.

In imperial China, the emperor was regarded as the Son of Heaven, the intermediary between Earth and Heaven. To be seen to be showing respect to the source of his authority in the form of sacrifices to heaven, was extremely important. The Temple of Heaven was built for these ceremonies.

The most important ceremony of the year took place on the winter solstice, when the emperor prayed for good harvests. After three days of fasting, the emperor and his entourage, wearing splendid robes, would make their way to the park on the day before the solstice. It was forbidden for the commoners to

catch a glimpse of the great annual procession; they had to bolt their windows and remain in silence indoors throughout the event.

Upon arrival at Tian Tan, the emperor meditated in the Imperial Vault, ritually conversing with the gods on the details of government. He then spent the night in the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests. The next day, the winter solstice, he performed sacrifices before the Throne of Heaven at the Round Altar. The rituals were planned to the smallest detail according to numerological theories. The ceremony had to be perfectly completed, for the smallest of mistakes would constitute a bad omen for the whole nation in the coming year.

The Hall of Prayer was destroyed by a lightning strike in 1889. The official explanation was that it was divine punishment meted out on a caterpillar that was about to crawl onto the golden ball of the hall's roof. For allowing this to happen, 32 court dignitaries were executed. The hall was then faithfully rebuilt according to the original Ming design.

The temple complex remained forbidden to all but the emperor and his retinues until the gates were thrown open to the people on the first Chinese National Day of the Republic in October 1912. On December 23, 1914, General Yuan Shikai performed the ancient ceremonies himself, as part of his attempt to be proclaimed emperor. That was the last time Tian Tan was used for ritual ceremonies and it has since been a museum open to the public. The site was registered on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1998.

Tiananmen Square – Tiananmen Square is located in the city center where you can see and visit Tiananmen Tower, the Monument to the People's Heroes, the Great Hall of the People, Mao Zedong Memorial Hall and also see the national flag raising ceremony. Thousands of people come to the Square every day.



At the north end of the Square is Tiananmen Tower. Initially built in 1417 during the Ming Dynasty (1368 AD - 1644 AD), the Square was the front door of the Forbidden City. The most important use of it in the past was to declare who became the emperor and who became the empress. Until 1911 when the last feudal kingdom was over, no one could enter the Tower except for the royal family and aristocrats.

The Forbidden City - Lying at the center of Beijing, the Forbidden City, called “Gu Gong” in Chinese, was the imperial palace during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Now known as the Palace Museum, it is to the north of Tiananmen Square. Rectangular in shape, it is the world's largest palace complex and covers 74 hectares. Surrounded by a six-meter deep moat and a ten-meter high wall are 9,999 rooms. Opposite the Tiananmen Gate, to the north is the Gate of Divine Might (Shenwumen), which faces Jingshan Park. There are unique and delicately structured towers on each of the four corners of the curtain wall that afford views over both the palace and the city outside.



The Forbidden City is divided into two parts. The southern section or the Outer Court, was where the emperor exercised his supreme power over the nation. The northern section or the Inner Court, was where he lived with his royal family. Until 1924 when the last emperor of China was driven from the Inner Court, fourteen emperors of the Ming dynasty and ten emperors of the Qing dynasty had reigned here. Having been the imperial palace for some five centuries, it houses numerous rare treasures and curiosities. Listed by UNESCO as a World Cultural Heritage Site in 1987, the Palace Museum is now one of the most popular tourist attractions worldwide.

After our tour, we'll enjoy dinner and then the evening is free to enjoy ourselves in this incredible city!

Day 4

Breakfast, lunch & dinner included

Good morning China! After our breakfast, we'll put on our climbing shoes and travel to The Great Wall.



The Great Wall - The Great Wall of China was built mainly to protect the Chinese Empire from the Mongolians and other invaders. It was first built in the 7th century BC when China was still divided into many small states. The construction of the Great Wall had never ceased for nearly all the Chinese feudal dynasties. The Great Wall of China extends 4,000 miles westward: from the China Sea town of Shanhaiguan to the Gansu province.

The majestic Great Wall was built with wisdom, dedication, blood, sweat and tears. It has been estimated that somewhere in the range of 2 to 3 million Chinese died as part of the centuries-long project of building the wall. As one of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in China, The Great Wall is not just a wall, but a symbol of bravery and wisdom of Chinese people. *"He who has not climbed the Great Wall is not a true man."* - Chairman Mao

After our tour to the Great Wall, we'll head to the Beijing Zoo!

The Panda Zoo (The Beijing Zoo) – The Beijing Zoo is actually a natural garden with dense groves of trees, stretches of grassland, a small stream, lotus pools and small hills dotted with pavilions and halls. It was called Wan Sheng Garden in the Qing Dynasty (literally it means the Garden of 10,000 animals). After the Qing Dynasty was replaced by the Republic of China in 1912, this previous royal garden became an experiment for farming and animal husbandry. The Zoo was not open until 6 years after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1955 when the garden was officially opened to visitors. The Zoo is now the biggest zoo in China with the largest animal species and number.



The highlight of the Beijing Zoo is perhaps the hall of giant panda. The giant panda is only found in China and is recognized as China's national treasure and symbol. Due to the people's love for the panda and its endangered status, the giant pandas always receive the "VIP" treatment wherever they go. Many other halls also attract large number of tourists, among which, the hall of the giraffe, hall of the gorilla, and the hall of the elephant are the most recommendable.

Later, we will meet and interact with a professional animal caregiver and learn more about life of panda and other animals. Topics include:

- ✓ Their original habitats
- ✓ Their archenemy in the wild
- ✓ Their diets
- ✓ Their living habits
- ✓ The environmental challenges they face

Olympic Games Site – The “Bird’s Nest” and the “Water Cube” are two major competition venues in Beijing Olympic Park which were used for the 2008 Olympic Games. Today we’ll make a short photo stop to take some exterior pictures of these excellent venues.

Tonight, we’ll take our evening meal at a local restaurant.

Day 5

Breakfast, lunch & dinner included

Rise and shine Beijing! After our breakfast, we’ll start the day by checking out the City Planning Center.

Beijing City Planning Exhibition Center – The Beijing Planning Exhibition Hall is designed to introduce the long history of Beijing and the modern urban planning and development. The 16,000 square-meter floor space is distributed on four levels in the Hall with 8,000 square meters for exhibits.

After seeing the planning of the Beijing metropolitan area, we’re off to the Pinggu Organic Vegetable & Fruit Farm.

Pinggu Organic Vegetable & Fruit Farm – Sustainability is a vital issue for China as the growing population and increasing living standard put more pressure on the environment (in particular, the farming land). More and more local residents have become aware that healthy life depends on the harmonized and balanced relationship with the environment. This Farm is the product of a group of professionals who advocate using traditional farming techniques to grow crops, fruits and vegetables. In this Beijing suburb area, stroll through the orchards and fields and enjoy the scenery and natural surroundings. We will listen to a farm worker to share the origination of this farm and learn more about how the organic vegetables and fruits impact people’s daily lives and the local economy.

Later in the evening we’ll take our evening meal at a local restaurant and then the evening is ours to enjoy!

Day 6

Breakfast, lunch & dinner included

Good morning China! This morning we are set to travel! After breakfast we’ll go to the airport and take a short flight to Xi’an!

Xi'an - Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi Province, is situated in the central part of the Weihe Plain, bounded by the Weihe River in the north and the Qinling Ranges in the south. As one of China's seven ancient national capitals, it served as the capital for 12 dynasties spanning more than 2,000 years from 1,000 BC to 1,000 AD. Xi'an therefore, has a great number of precious relics and historical sites. More than 4,000 historical sites and tombs have been excavated and over 120,000 historical relics remain unearthed. Xi'an was the starting point of the Ancient Silk Road that extended from Asia to Europe and played an important role in cultural exchange between the East and West in ancient times. The Shaanxi Province has a continental climate with four distinctive seasons and boasts an area of 205,600 square kilometers and a population of 36 million people.



Upon arrival in Xi'an, we’ll board our motorcoach and head to the Big Wild Goose Pagoda.

Big Wild Goose Pagoda - Situated in the Da Ci'en Temple, the Big Wild Goose Pagoda is one of the most famous Buddhist pagodas in China. The Pagoda was built in the Tang Dynasty to collect Buddhist scriptures. Although it is worn by wind and rain, the architecture is well preserved.



Originally built in 589 AD in the Sui Dynasty, Da Ci'en temple was named Wu Lou Si Temple. It was not until 648 AD when Emperor Li Zhi, then still a crown prince, sponsored a repair project on the temple. This was a symbol of thanksgiving to his mother for her kindness after she had suffered an early death. The temple then assumed the present name, "Temple of Thanksgiving." The Emperor Gaozong was said to pay homage to the temple twice a day by looking in its direction from the Hanyuan Palace.

The temple, with 13 separate courtyards, contained 1,879 magnificent-looking rooms and was a place of grand extent in the Tang Dynasty. Unfortunately, it went into gradual decay after the downfall of the Tang Dynasty. The halls and rooms that have survived the ages are structures that were built in the Ming Dynasty. The Tang Regime gave orders to build a chamber for the translation of Buddhist scriptures in an effort to have the renowned Master Xuanzang agree to be the head of the temple.

The Wild Goose Pagoda was finished in 652 AD. Its five stories are 60 meters in height. The decay of the earth-cored pagoda caused the new construction of a 10-story pagoda from 701 to 704. However, the winds of war in the years to come reduced the pagoda almost to ruins, which in turn resulted in the construction of a 7-story, 64-meter-high structure we see today. The grand body of the pagoda with its solemn appearance, simple style and high structure is an excellent example of traditional Chinese architecture.

After we've explored the Pagoda, we'll take off to the Xi'an Museum to take a look into history!

Xi'an Museum – This afternoon, we will visit Xi'an Museum and wear white-gloves to handle some of the national treasures from the museum's collection. An expert from the Museum will help us understand the historic significance of those national treasures. With an exhibition area of about 1.2 acres, Xi'an Museum houses 130,000 pieces of historical relics created during the ancient dynasties. Centered on the Small Wild Goose Pagoda and the Jianfu Temple, the museum and the area around it have become a historical and cultural site that combines the grand museum, ancient pagoda and park.



This evening we'll take dinner in a local restaurant.

Day 7

Breakfast, lunch & dinner included

Rise and shine Xi'an! After a breakfast we'll board our motorcoach for a morning excursion to the Terra Cotta Warriors.

Terra Cotta Warriors - The Terra Cotta Warriors and Horses are the most significant archaeological excavations of the 20th century. Work is on-going at this site, which is around 1.5 kilometers east of

Emperor Qin Shi Huang's Mausoleum, in Lintong County, Shaanxi Province. It is a sight not to be missed by any visitor to China!



Upon ascending the throne at the age of 13 (in 246 BC), Qin Shi Huang, later the first Emperor to rule all of China, had begun work for his mausoleum. It took 11 years to finish. It is speculated that many buried treasures and sacrificial objects had accompanied the emperor in his afterlife. A group of peasants uncovered some pottery while digging for a well near the royal tomb in 1974. It caught the attention of archaeologists immediately. They came to Xi'an in droves to study and extend the digs. They had established, beyond doubt, that these artifacts were associated with the Qin Dynasty (211-206 BC).

Life size terracotta figures of warriors and horses arranged in battle formations are the star features at the museum. They are replicas of what the imperial guard would have looked like in those days of pomp and vigor. Altogether over 7,000 pottery soldiers, horses, chariots, and even weapons have been unearthed from these pits; most of them having been restored to their former grandeur. The Terra Cotta Warriors and Horses is the sensational archaeological find of all times. It has put Xi'an on the map for tourists and was listed by UNESCO in 1987 as one of the world cultural heritage sites.

Xi'an City Wall - The first landmark visitors will encounter in Xi'an is the ancient city wall, which stretches around the old city. The northern side runs parallel to the railway. Xi'an was originally a walled city, and even today the wall is considered a landmark dividing the city into the inner part and the outer part. The city wall is massive - tall, long and thick. The South Gate and North Gate are the two main entrances to the inner city and the city itself is neatly arranged along the city wall.



Xi'an City Wall was erected in the 14th century Ming Dynasty, under the regime of Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang. When Zhu Yuanzhang captured Huizhou, long before the establishment of the Ming Dynasty, he was admonished by a hermit named Zhu Sheng who told him to "build high walls, store abundant provisions and take your time in proclaiming yourself emperor." This advice Zhu Yuanzhang heeded. Once the whole country was unified, he sent orders to the local governments to build city walls on a large scale. Zhu assured that "out of all the mountains and rivers in the world, the area of Central Qin is the most strongly fortified and strategically impregnable."

Dinner will be taken and then the evening is ours for exploration of Xi'an!

Day 8

Breakfast, lunch & dinner included

Today's tour will bring us to Yangling, the sole National Agriculture-science District in the country.



Cloned Goat Research Base – Visit the clone research base where the world's first cloned goat was produced. We will listen to the experts and learn more about the development of clone technology and the life of these cloned goats.

The Northwest University in Yangling began animal embryo research in the 1970s. The first two goats cloned from fresh embryo were born at the university in 1980. The university built its embryos laboratory in 1984 and then in 1995, the world's largest group of cloned goats, numbered at 45, were born one after another at the university, due to the work of a research group led by professor Zhang Yong. The world's first batch of goats cloned from cells from an adult goat; the goats, named Yangyang and Yuanyuan, were born at the university in June 2000.

Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University - A&F was the first high level institution for modern agricultural education in northwest China. In addition to its 18 departments, the university also includes the Institute of Soil and Water Conservation, and the Department of Physical Education. During our visit, students will participate in a specialized agriculture project. The Master Class contents include:

- ✓ The local farming history
- ✓ The current agricultural environment
- ✓ The new technologies that help cultivate crops suitable with local environment

Afterwards, we will participate in a special lecture at the University on **Farm Land Protection**.

We'll drive back to the city area in the late afternoon for dinner.

Day 9

Breakfast, lunch & dinner included

Good morning China! After breakfast, we'll pack our bags and head for the airport. This morning, we're flying to Hangzhou!

Hangzhou - Hangzhou is the capital of the Zhejiang province and its political, economic and cultural center. Hangzhou is famous for its natural beauty and cultural heritage.



The city is located on the lower reaches of the Qiantang River in southeast China and only 180 kilometers from Shanghai. Hangzhou has a subtropical monsoon type climate with four distinct seasons. It is neither too hot in summer, nor too cold in winter, making it a great year-round destination.

The West Lake is undoubtedly the most renowned feature of Hangzhou, noted for its scenic beauty that blends naturally with many famous historical and cultural sites. In this scenic area, Solitary Hill, the Mausoleum of General Yue Fei, the Six Harmonies Pagoda and the Ling Yin Temple are some of the most frequently visited attractions.

A number of national museums can be found in Hangzhou and are representative of Chinese culture. These include the **National Silk Museum and Tea Museum**, which, along with other museums in Hangzhou, provide a fascinating insight into the history of Chinese traditional products.

One of the most important parts of traveling is to taste the local delicacies. Hangzhou dishes are noted for their elaborate preparation, sophisticated cooking and refreshing taste. Many local specialties will be sure to make your trip a cultural experience. We recommend that you try Beggar's Chicken (a chicken baked in clay), **West Lake Fish in Sweet & Sour Sauce** (vinegar coated fresh fish caught from the lake), **Dongpo Pork** (braised pork) and **Fried Shrimp with Longjing Tea**.

The shopping environment in Hangzhou is exciting and convenient. Travelers like to go to Qing He Fang Street, one of the most famous and historic streets in the city and reflecting many of the features of the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279). Shoppers will admire the antique buildings while purchasing items such as silks, tea or maybe even a silk parasol, brocade or a beautiful Hangzhou fan.

While much of the ancient city was destroyed during the Taiping Rebellion in the mid-nineteenth century, today's Hangzhou is a modern and vibrant economical center. Thanks to its unique setting by the West Lake, it continues to enjoy the many benefits of the natural surroundings that have delighted visitors for centuries. Not only was it much vaunted in his writings by the 13th century explorer **Marco Polo**, but the Lake and its environs have inspired poets of great renown such as Bai Juyi and Su Dongpo down the ages.

After arriving and getting settled into our hotel, we'll get to enjoy stunning West Lake!

West Lake – Whenever talking about Hangzhou, the famous West Lake can never be far from one's thoughts. Held on three sides in the embrace of hilly peaks, this water wonderland has been an attraction for centuries and it is small wonder that it was a favorite imperial retreat. The lake and its environs have all the elements of a traditional Chinese garden but on a grand scale. The natural setting of strangely shaped peaks, serene forests and springs, dense foliage and a myriad of blossoms are enhanced by a treasury of sculpture and architectural features.

**"Ripping water shimmering on sunny day, Misty mountains shrouded the rain;
Plain or gaily decked out like Xizi; West Lake is always alluring."**

These are the words composed by the famous Song Dynasty poet Su Dongpo (960-1127) when he compared the West Lake to Xi Zi, the most beautiful woman in ancient China. These poetic sentiments leave one in no doubt of the glory of the scenery that inspired them.

Originally a shallow sea inlet, due to the laying down of silt, this 5.68 square kilometer area (about 1,404 acres) of water became the famous West Lake. With an average depth of just five feet the lake comprises five distinct sections.

Tonight, our evening meal will be taken at a local restaurant.

Day 10

Breakfast, lunch & dinner included

Rise and shine Hangzhou! We're going to have an exciting day today as we visit the Lingyin Temple and the Tea Village!





The Lingyin Temple – Lingyin Temple is one of the best-known Buddhist monasteries in China, built in 326 AD at the foot of the Lingyin Mountain in Hangzhou. The temple is without doubt a premier showpiece in West Lake and is notable as one of the ten most famous Buddhist temples of China. In 1961, the temple was listed for protection as a key provincial historical and cultural site and is considered a leading center for research relative to Chinese Buddhist culture.

The presence of a temple on this site can be traced back to the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317 – 420 AD) when, according to local legend, Huili - an Indian monk, came to the area where he was inspired by the spiritual nature of the scenery. In his mind this had to be a dwelling of “the Immortals” and so he gave the temple the name “Ling Yin” (Temple of the Soul's Retreat).

The temple increased in importance during the Five Dynasties (907-960 AD) when the King of the Wu Yue State initiated a large-scale development as a sign of his devotion to Buddha. In its heyday, the temple comprised nine buildings, eighteen pavilions, seventy-seven palaces and halls with over thirteen hundred rooms providing accommodation for around three thousand monks. A monastery on this scale is difficult to imagine and over the centuries, it has been subjected to many changes of fortune due to wars, religious repression and other calamities. The main temple that can be seen today is a result of the restoration that was carried out in 1974 following the ten-year Chinese Cultural Revolution.

In addition to prized art works, the Temple also contains an important collection of Buddhist literature and is a great center of information for those who wish to study aspects of Chinese Buddhism in detail. The palaces, pavilions and halls together with their many figures of Buddhist deities represent a splendid and unique collection of architectural and artistic cultural relics. The various buildings and pagodas date from the Southern Song, Ming and Tang Dynasties. Among the ancient writings are scriptures written on patra leaves, the Diamond Sutra copied by Dong Qichang in the Ming Dynasty and a wood-cut edition published during the Qing Dynasty.

Longjing Tea Village – Hidden away in the southwest corner of the lake is the Longjing Tea Plantation. Longjing actually means “Dragon Well” and according to legend, the Dragon Well was discovered in about 230 AD. This fresh spring water encouraged the people of Hangzhou to develop their own quality tea, and thus, Longjing Tea was born. Whether it be drinking, picking, smelling or buying, tea is the main attraction in Longjing. Tea terraces rise up on either side of the village; it’s an interesting area to walk and intriguing to watch the locals at work. Here you can taste tea in the village.

Longjing is the word on the lips of all people of culture who visit Hangzhou. It has the same ring as Champagne and Bordeaux and is the name of the region that produces China's finest and most popular green tea. Longjing's tea received imperial approval when the Emperor Qianlong passed through on one of his long inspections of the realm - a true connoisseur of teas. Qianlong recognized the fine subtleties of the Longjing brew and stamped it as the 'Imperial tea,' securing its reputation forever. Longjing tea is enjoyed throughout the country and over the world at large, but it is in Hangzhou itself that the most authentic and choicest blends are available, right on the roadsides where the farmers themselves are stirring their favorite leaves over the roasters with their bare hands.



To describe Longjing Tea Village as picturesque would be an understatement. There, on the slopes of the mountain, Longjing's wealth has seen its village become just as pretty in its prosperity as it has been throughout the centuries. Now, modern townhouses and double-storied homes with elegant balconies receive tourists for calm afternoons spent over bottomless glasses of deep green tea, as visitors and locals pass each other on the pavement stones beneath, the clacking of their heels echoing off into the fields of tea climbing the mountainsides beyond, framing the village with pastoral grace. The immediate impression as you enter the long, winding street towards the creek at the end of the village is that this is such an idyllic place, without a trace of litter, and with pristine fresh air.

After lunch at a local restaurant, we'll visit the China National Rice Research Institute.

China National Rice Research Institute & Master Class - CNRRI is a multidisciplinary, comprehensive, state-level institute devoted mainly to research on rice. It was established in October 1989 in Hangzhou and is the biggest investment in agriculture research in China. CNRRI focuses on applied basic research to solve the most important technological obstacles in rice production. Its research areas cover all levels of rice - namely rice colony, individual, tissue, cell and molecule. www.chinariceinfo.com/en



To ensure the sustainable development of rice production and to provide strategic store for the future, the Ministry of Agriculture initiated the program called "Research on Breeding the Supper Rice of China" in 1996. Since then, tremendous progress has been made on the research of super rice. Four super-hybrid varieties cultivated by CNRRI are now widely used in rice production. Currently, rice breeding experts are working hard to attain the yield target of 13.5 t/ha, preparing ground for the third great leap in rice yield.

Later in the evening, we'll take our evening meal and then we are free to explore the city!

Day 11

Breakfast, lunch & dinner included

Good morning Hangzhou! Following breakfast, we'll pack our bags and head to the train station to take the Bullet Train to Shanghai.

The Bullet Train – The Bullet Train is the latest model in the country's China Railway High-Speed (CRH) Series. This marks where China joined an elite world club after Japan, France and Germany to become the fourth country capable of turning out such high-speed trains. This train, by comparison, has excelled in its air tightness, driving force and smoothness of travel. With an average time interval of 1.5-hours, the train starts out from Hangzhou and will arrive in Shanghai in less than 75-minutes!

The new bullet trains, or *dong he du* in Chinese, use multiple engine-powered carriages alongside non-powered units to raise travel speeds. Theoretically, the trains are capable of traveling at speeds up to 250 km/h, although they are restricted to a maximum speed of 160 km/h. New trains will travel between Shanghai and Nanjing, capital of Jiangsu Province, as well as Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang Province. The cities are already well connected, but the bullet trains will bring these cities even closer to their regional hub.



Shanghai - In China there is a saying that 'Xi'an has witnessed 2,000 years of history, Beijing has witnessed 1,000 years of history while Shanghai bears witness to the last 100 years.' For anyone who is



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interested in the history of modern China, Shanghai serves as an ideal starting point. Regarded as the 'Oriental Pearl' the city has a unique and important place in modern China and its rich heritage is worthy of exploration!



Shanghai is situated on the estuary of Yangtze River, a position that led to frequently unwelcome intervention from foreigners seeking to impose their exports on the Empire during the nineteenth century. In the 1920s and the 1930s, Shanghai became an important international trade center. With its advantageous natural conditions, rapid development and splendid oriental culture, Shanghai was famed as the 'Oriental Paris' and attracted many entrepreneurs and established businesses. In addition, many foreign scientists, literary figures and artists chose to live, give lectures or just experience the Chinese charm in Shanghai. They included Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell, Bernard Shaw and the poet Rabindranath Tagore, to name but a few.

Now, over 300 of the world's top 500 enterprises have opened branches in Shanghai, while many have their research and development centers or headquarters here. Pudong New Area was developed in just five years, and Lujiazui in Pudong has become one of the foremost world class financial and trade zones in Asia. Skyscrapers such as Jinmao Tower and the Shanghai Global Financial Center dominate the skyline, while landmark construction like the Oriental Pearl TV Tower, Pudong International Airport and Shanghai International Convention Center offer the finest and best of modern facilities.



Hundreds of thousands of tourists from all over the world flock to Shanghai to savor its blend of Eastern and Western cultures. In the eyes of westerners, Shanghai has special oriental charm; while in the eyes of Chinese, Shanghai has a fresh western style. The old say that Shanghai is modern and fashionable, while the young say that Shanghai is old and reminiscent. Shanghai is also a shopper's paradise! There are various bustling commercial streets and shopping centers waiting for you.

After lunch at a local restaurant in Shanghai, we'll visit the Yu Garden and Old Shanghai.

Yu Garden - Yuyuan Garden is a famous classical garden located in Anren Jie, Shanghai. The garden was finished in 1577 by a government officer of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) named Pan Yunduan. Yu in Chinese means pleasing and satisfying, and this garden was specially built for Pan's parents as a place for them to enjoy a tranquil and happy time in their old age. Over forty spots, divided by dragon walls, wound corridors and beautiful flowers form a unique picture featuring "one step, one beauty; every step, every beauty." **It is reputed to be the most beautiful garden in the world.**



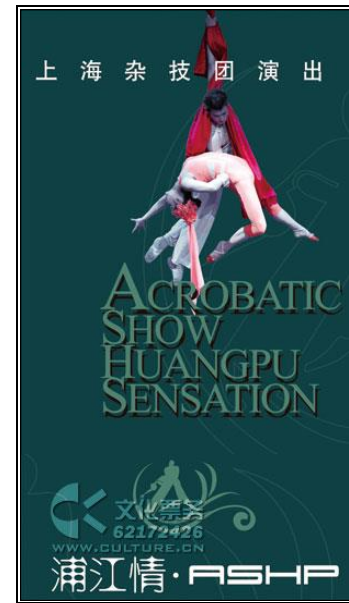
In the 400 years of its existence, Yuyuan Garden had undergone many changes. The Yuyuan Garden you see today is the result of a five year restoration project which began in 1956. The garden was open to the public in September 1961. Wandering in the area of Yule Pavilion and Wanhua Chamber, you will find pavilions, corridors, streams,

courtyards as well as many other natural features. One maidenhair tree is said to be planted by the host of the garden 400 years ago.

This evening, we're off to an acrobatic show!

Acrobatics Show at the Shanghai Acrobatic Theatre – Acrobatics is an interactive art form dominant in China. Everyone, young and old, educated or not, can easily appreciate it while watching or seeing the acrobats perform. There is no language barrier and borders of culture do not limit it.

In China, acrobats are revered much as prima ballerinas or opera singers are revered in the West and it takes years of rigorous training to achieve the excellence demanded by this ancient art form. Children hoping to become acrobats begin their training as young as four or five years old. Specific training with an acrobat troupe may begin by the age of eight. The basics - balancing, tumbling, dancing, flexibility, and strength are taught in the first two years, and students spend the next three to five years perfecting specific acts. Eventually, they will do their first performances when they reach the age of sixteen or seventeen.



The art of Chinese acrobatics combines both physical strength and spirituality. Coupled with an acrobat's immense athletic ability and impeccable balance and timing is **Chi Kung** - the Asian philosophy of inner strength which focuses the body and mind to work in perfect harmony. Each individual acrobat's physical and philosophical strength combines with that of the fellow members of his or her troupe in magnificent displays of balancing, juggling, dance, comedy and magic.

We'll take our evening meal at a local restaurant tonight.

Day 12

Breakfast, lunch & dinner included

After breakfast this morning we have a full day with visits to the Bund, the Shanghai Film Institute for a Technology Master Class and then the Shanghai City Planning Exhibition Center!

The Bund – The Bund is called the birthplace of Shanghai. Also called the Zhongshan Road, The Bund is a famous waterfront regarded as the symbol of Shanghai for hundreds of years. Cruise boats meander eastward along the golden waterway to the intriguing “three-layer waters” at the Wusong Mouth. The Waibaidu Bridge, the long embankment along the Hungpu River and the imposing array of tall buildings are known as “an international exhibition” and together form a symbol of the East. The Bund has always been closely linked with the development of Shanghai.



Shanghai Film Museum & Technology Master Class – The Shanghai Film Museum shares the story of Shanghai filmmaking from its magical beginning in 1896 until present day's 3D blockbusters. Located in a former film studio in Shanghai's downtown Xujiahui, the new museum boasts 4 floors, over 70 interactive installations and a collection of 3,000 historic exhibits. As the first film museum in the city, the museum has a leading role in maintaining the international position of Shanghai film and raising awareness for the industry's value on a national level.



Be it by dubbing classical films in a real sound studio, walking through a lifelike film set on Shanghai's famous Nanjing Road or by becoming a star on the 'Carpet of Lights', where virtual fans and photographers flash their camera's trying to capture the 'celebrity' that just passed by; in the Shanghai Film Museum the visitor becomes a part of film and is invited to actively participate in it. This key concept of inclusion in the world of film is the red thread through the Shanghai Film Museum, which seamlessly integrates historical relics in an interactive environment, in a new cultural hotspot of international allure.

The museum is not only a 'temple of history'; it makes a conscious and clear link to the present and future of filmmaking by integrating fully equipped real-time production studios, in which groups will participate in the craft of filmmaking. A mixture of professional studios for Animation, Post-Production, Sound and Live Broadcasting enables pupils to see first-hand how film professionals use traditional craft as well as modern digital technology to create features for the silver screen. Connecting past, present and future, the museum is a vivid and 'living' environment, and a meeting place where an audience of professionals and students can interact and exchange knowledge and inspiration.

Shanghai City Planning Exhibition Center – The Shanghai City Planning Exhibition condenses the yesterday, today and tomorrow of city planning and construction of the Shanghai Metropolis based on the exhibiting theme of "City, Human Being, Environment & Development." Emphasis is laid on the development planning for the upcoming twenty-year period.

The Exhibition Hall is a 6-story building, with two basement levels, which display Shanghai's urban planning and development. Exhibitions include models of planned and recent developments, as well as Shanghai's history. The centerpiece of the exhibition is a huge scale model of the city of Shanghai, showing all existing and approved buildings. Visitors can view the model at "ground level", or ascend a gallery running around it for views from above.



Since its opening, the hall has received many visitors from home and abroad, including Chinese leaders. Through years of development, it has become a base for national science education, patriotism education and environment protection education, and also a profession training base. Due to its multiple functions, it is regarded as a window for

Shanghai to communicate with the outside world.

This evening we'll have our farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 13

Breakfast at hotel, lunch on own, dinner during flight

After breakfast this morning, we'll start to pack our bags and head for the airport as we begin to say goodbye to this wonderful land! We'll take our fond memories and hope that one day, we shall come back again!

ORIENTAL STEM DISCOVERY

Minimum Booking Numbers:

15 students

What's Included:

Round-trip international flights with a scheduled carrier
Internal Flights to Xi'an and Hangzhou
Bullet Train to Shanghai
11-nights' accommodation in destination
Breakfasts, Lunches & Dinners as shown in Itinerary
Transportation for programmed activities
Excursion to the Temple of Heaven
Tai Chi Chuan Class
Excursion to Tiananmen Square
Excursion to the Forbidden City
Excursion to the Great Wall – Beijing & Xi'an
Excursion to the Beijing Zoo + Educational Master Class
Excursion to the City Planning Exhibition Centers – Beijing & Shanghai
Excursion to Pinggu Organic Vegetable & Fruit Farm + Educational Master Class
Excursion to the Wild Goose Pagoda
Excursion to the Xi'an Museum + Educational Master Class
Excursion to Cloned Goat Research Center + Educational Master Class
Excursion to NW Agriculture & Forestry + Educational Master Class + Farm Land Protection Lecture
Excursion to the Terracotta Warriors
Excursion to West Lake
Excursion to the Lingyin Temple
Excursion to the Tea Village
Excursion to Chinese National Rice Research Institute + Educational Master Class
Excursion to Yu Garden & Old Shanghai
Excursion to the Shanghai Acrobatic Theatre
Excursion to the Bund
Excursion to Shanghai Film Museum + Technology Master Class
Full Bilingual Tour Ambassador Service
24-hour emergency cover

What's Not Included:

Fully comprehensive insurance (mandatory)
Coach transfers to/from home airport
Lunches on Days 1, 2 and 13; Dinners on Days 2 and 13
Other meals not indicated in itinerary
Cost of visas, full or collective passports
Cost of inoculations or medication required for travel
Additional sightseeing & entertainment options
Hotel incidental bills – meals, mini-bar items, recreation, purchases, etc
Personal expenditures
Any gratuities – coach / shuttle drivers, maid / bellman services, tour representatives, specialty guides...

Health Information:

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/china>

As always, our staff are always available to you to answer any questions you may have regarding programming. If we may serve you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Oriental STEM Discovery FAQ's

1. What type of inner-city transport is used to get around?
 - a. Schools will use motorcoach services; primarily 22 to 51 seats per vehicle.
2. What type of bedding and hotels will our group use?
 - a. All group members sleep in individual beds. Most rooms hold two or three single beds. 3 and 4-star hotel class properties are available; 4-star is recommended.
3. Do we need to bring an interpreter?
 - a. No. Each group is partnered with a Chinese National Guide fluent in both Chinese as well as English. This guide is with you upon your arrival in China and stays with you until your departure.
4. Will our group get to meet any specialists on culture or history?
 - a. Yes. Within each region, specialty guides are partnered with your school to give instruction on history and culture. The Guides are with you for brief periods when visiting specific sites.
5. What happens in the event of an emergency? Is there a local establishment that will help us?
 - a. VIE works with an accredited, accountable agency within China which is a leading specialist. All precautions and emergency procedures are set well in advance of travel. Emergency protocols are established and 24-hour ground service is available in the event of any emergency.
6. How much spending money should my students bring?
 - a. Group members should bring spending money for souvenirs, evening activities, gratuities and extra incidentals. Group members should bring enough money to cover their meals on Days 1, 2 and 13 as not all airlines include complimentary meals. A suggested minimum amount is \$300/£200 per pupil.
7. What types of evening activities are available for my students?
 - a. Evening activities can include a variety of events up to and including a Kung Fu Show, the Peking Opera Show, Tang Dynasty Show, West Lake Impressions as well as others. Your local China guide will discuss possibilities with you upon arrival within China. All extra activities may be booked at that time.
8. What is the currency used in China?
 - a. The official currency in mainland China is the Renminbi (RMB) or "People's currency." The basic unit is the yuan (also known as 'Kuai'), which equals 10 jiao (or 'mao'), which is then divided into 10 fen. Paper currency comes in 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 yuan notes, paper jiao comes in denominations of 1, 2 and 5. There are also 1 and 2 fen notes, but these are rarely used as their purchasing power is almost zero. As for coins, there are 1 yuan, 1 and 5 jiao, and 1, 2 and 5 fen (again, the fen coins are basically useless).
9. What are standard gratuities for trips to China?
 - a. RMB 20 – 35 per person, per day to the national guide

- b. RMB 13 – 20 per person, per day for local guides
 - c. RMB 7 – 13 per person, per day for coach drivers
 - d. RMB 5 – 10 per person for hotel bell staff
 - e. Gratuities are expected, however as all gratuities, they are not mandated and are based upon the level of service you feel you receive. Tips to hotel bell staff are not required if groups carry their own luggage.
- 10. How will we get acquainted with China from a safety perspective?
 - a. As with all VIE tours, upon arrival your National Guide will present a full Welcome & Safety Meeting which will include cultural, and health and safety information.
- 11. Of the locations we visit, are extra fees needed for any of them?
 - a. **Forbidden City** – The entrance fee is included, but it does not include some Collections such as Ceramics, Painting, Seals, Stone, Clocks and Watches. These exhibition halls cost approximately RMB 14 per person.
 - b. **Great Wall** - Normally we arrange to visit the Juyongguan Section. If schools prefer to visit the Badaling Section or the Mutianyu Section, the entrance fee is included however the Cable Car is not and is approximately RMB 68 per person.
 - c. **Panda Zoo** - Panda's House in the Zoo is included, but if you want to visit other animals' houses, extra fees will be charged of approximately RMB 25 per person.
 - d. **Olympic Games Site** - we will only have a photo stop there, but if you want to enter it, there is extra entrance fee: Water Cube – RMB 35 per person; Bird Nest – RMB 55 per person.
 - e. **Wild Goose Pagoda** – Your tour includes only the entrance of the area but doesn't include the "climb" onto the Pagoda. If your group would like to climb, please budget approximately RMB 25 per person.
- 12. What is the current exchange rate?
 - a. For up-to-date exchange rates, please visit www.xe.com.
- 13. Are Visas required for entry to China?
 - a. Visas are required from all visitors entering China through the United Kingdom, the USA and Canada. Please refer to Page 2 for Embassy links. These costs are not included in tour costs and are the responsibility of individual members of the traveling party. Please ensure party members have researched the most up-to-date requirements and applied for all necessary documentation.
- 14. Are immunizations required to visit China?
 - a. No immunizations are required to visit China at the time of this writing, however we suggest you speak to your own physician about any recommendations they may suggest. Please visit <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/china>.
- 15. Is it safe to drink the water?
 - a. **Drinking Water – Hotels:** Hotels will provide guests with bottled water (free) for drinking and brushing teeth. In larger hotels there may be a little sign in the bathroom that reads something along the lines of "tap water not potable," but don't take the absence of this notice as an indication that tap water is safe to drink. Nowhere in China is it advisable to drink tap water without boiling it first. Please enquire with your tour guide if you have any questions.
 - b. **Drinking Water – Restaurants:** Most restaurants will have bottled water on the menu.

- c. **How to Order Drinking Water in Restaurants:** You needn't worry, in most cases, the water is coming from bottled Chinese drinking water:
 - i. *bing shui*, pronounced "bing shway", is water with ice
 - ii. *kai shui*, pronounced "kye shway", is boiled water and it will be served hot
 - iii. *he shui*, pronounced "huh shway", is drinking water and it will likely be served hot or warm as Chinese believe it is unhealthy to drink cold water
 - d. **Drinking Water – Out & About:** You won't have to go far to find bottled water that is safe to drink. In China there are convenience stores everywhere and if you can't find one, there are drink stalls on many street corners no matter how small the city. In convenience stores you may be able to find Evian or imported brands, but the cheapest options are Chinese bottled waters. Even some of these will look familiar as Coca-Cola and other international companies have operations bottling water in China. Always make sure the cap seal is intact when purchasing water from vendors.
16. Are beverages included with meals?
- a. One cup of a soft drink is available at selected local restaurants, please use extra funds for additional purchases. Additionally, all travelers are provided with two complimentary bottles of distilled water daily.