

Pre-tour Shanghai 1-2pax/September, 2007

CHINA

A land of contrasts, China is a country of timeless mysticism and beauty undergoing dynamic developments. The unspoiled countryside, which time seems to have left behind somewhere along the way during 5,000 years of civilization, is juxtaposed against the towering skylines of some of the most modern cities in Asia.

With approximately one fifth of the world's population in an area slightly larger than the United States, China is the world's most populous nation.



Everything in China seems larger than life, and perceptions of the country must be adjusted to its enormous scale. China is the most populous nation on earth with 1,300,000,000 (1.3 billion) residents, 22% of the earth's population, two-thirds of which are younger than 35. Its vast area of more than 3,690,000 square miles is the third largest in the world, after Russia and Canada, and extends 3,400 miles from North to South and 3,100 miles from East to West.

The Himalayas along China's southwestern frontier with India are the world's tallest mountains. China's greatest river, the Yangtze, is the world's fourth longest. The Taklimakan Desert, in western Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous region, is one of the driest spots on Earth. The area of loessic soil (fine, silt like soil created by wind action in dry regions) in Shaanxi and Shanxi Provinces is probably more extensive than in any other place.

China has the longest continuous tradition of national identity of any nation on earth. For over 2,000 years, the great Chinese Empire dominated East and Southeast Asia. The overthrow of the Qing Dynasty in 1911 marked the end of imperial tradition. For the next 38 years, China suffered under the rule of various competing warlords and occupying foreign powers. China was unified in 1949 under the leadership of Mao Zedong. In that year, after the conclusion of the war with Japan and a long civil war, the communists proclaimed the People's Republic of China. Years of turmoil and adjustment followed. Friendly relations were established with the USA in 1972 after President Nixon's visit and the ping-pong games. Thereafter, diplomatic relations followed in 1979.

The effect of the new economic policies of the '90s, based on international cooperation and modernization, are apparent everywhere...as can be seen by the construction cranes, satellite dishes and traffic jams. There is a movement toward a free market economy and a freedom to advance one's living standards.

Indeed, the future is not what it used to be!

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SHANGHAI



Shanghai is a bustling port with a pronounced European flavor that lingers from its heyday earlier this century as one of the world's great maritime crossroads. A walk through Shanghai's neighborhoods reveals a surprising

mix of European architecture and old Chinese facades.

Located on the coast of the East China Sea, 14 miles from the Yangtze River, Shanghai is the largest city in China with a population of over 14 million. It is one of the few municipalities under the direct control of the central government.

Shanghai began as a tiny fishing village in the 10th century. By the middle of the 13th century a town was established. This developed into a flourishing port, as Shanghai became the largest export center in China, thriving on silk, tea and opium. In the 19th century, Shanghai lured the world's great houses of finance; international entrepreneurs descended on the city, erecting grand palaces of plenty and creating communities resembling the grand capitals of Europe.

In 1842, after the Opium War, Shanghai was forced to open as a free port by foreign colonialism. The town was partitioned into British, French and later Japanese Concessions, still reflected in its downtown architecture. Shanghai was reduced to "a paradise for adventurers." The city became known as the whore of the East, Paris of China and Queen of the Orient with its mixture of gamblers, dandies, tycoons, pimps, missionaries, drug runners and adventurers. The character of Shanghai underwent a major change after the founding of the People's Republic of China. Over the years the negative traits were eliminated - a tremendous achievement. Since 1990 the central government has channeled large-scale investments into Shanghai's burgeoning economy. The changes have been quite staggering, particularly noticeable in the monumental modern building projects.

Some highlights are: The Bund (Embankment), where 240 banks flourished in style between the mid-19th and mid-20th centuries. The Yu Yuan Gardens and Old Town are among Shanghai's premier sights; Pudong New Area, larger than Shanghai itself, with its bustling economic activity; Frenchtown, the former French Concession, is a shopper's paradise ... a glittering alternative to the somewhat worn Nanjing Road. The Jade Buddha Temple, one of Shanghai's few Buddhist temples, is built around a six-foot high white jade Buddha. A river trip on the Huangpu River, offers some remarkable views of the Bund and riverfront activity.

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Day 1 September 2nd

Arrival Day (Transfer on own)

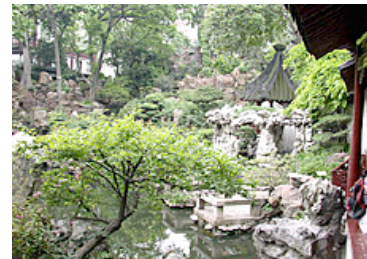
Day 2 September 3rd

Morning visit Yu Garden, tea ceremony and shopping at Old Town

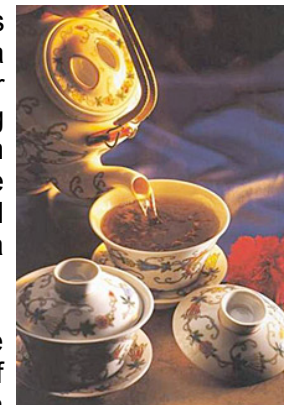
Yu Yuan Garden & Shanghai Old Town

Before entering Yu Yuan, the group will stop for a 20 minute Tea Ceremony in the Oldest Tea House in Shanghai. As with Tai Chi, Calligraphy & Feng Shui, in China most traditional activities have a place, an order and a purpose. The ancient tradition of serving tea is no different. Such is its importance that on the day of ones Wedding, it is customary to serve tea to all the senior members of the bride and bridegrooms family (in hierarchical order) as a mark of respect. A cycle that is not and should not be broken-up as it reflects the holistic concept of much of Chinese culture. With a number of young ladies who can perform and explain the history and purpose of the ceremony in English, this experience is one that should not be missed. As much as 'Chi Fan' (eating rice), it is a tradition that is very much at the center of the fabric of Chinese life and culture.

In Shanghai's 'Old Town' district are the **Yu Yuan Gardens**, the cities most famous example of the traditional garden's kept by wealthy families in the Ming & Qing Dynasties. This traditional Garden is a masterpiece of beautiful pavilions, miniature lakes, bridges and rock formations. So much so that during it's construction, the emperor Wan Li of the Ming Dynasty, personally visited the site to ensure that the Garden did not better his own. This small park is located in the heart of Shanghai's old Chinese quarter. Built in 1559, in the Suzhou style by a high official in honor of his father, the garden has maintained its classic beauty over centuries. The Pavilion of Spring in the northeast section of the park is famous for being the headquarters of the anti-imperialist "Little Sword Society", who in 1853 led an uprising against the Qing dynasty rulers and occupied Shanghai for 17 months. Weapons, coins and other objects used by the society are now housed in an exhibition hall.



Imperial Teahouse in Shanghai Old Town: As with Tai Chi, Calligraphy & Feng Shui, in China most traditional activities have a place, an order and a purpose. The ancient tradition of serving tea is no different. Such is its importance that on the day of ones wedding, it is customary to serve tea to all the senior members of the bride and bridegrooms family (in hierarchical order) as a mark of respect.



After investigating the Garden's spend time wandering through the markets and bazaar's of Shanghai's **Old Town**. This are has been recreated to remind travelers both national and international about the character of Shanghai prior to the Concession era of the late 1800's and early 1900's. A great opportunity to get your souvenir shopping done while soaking in the atmosphere of old Shanghai.

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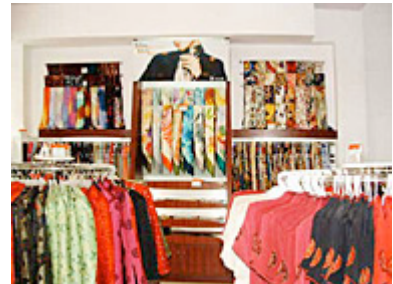
Dim Sum Lunch at Lu Bo Lang restaurant

Green Wave Restaurant Adorning the walls of this recreation of a Ming Dynasty style building are photo's of all the famous people who have dined here from Zhu Rong Ji & Jiang Ze Min to Bill Clinton & Queen Elizabeth II (the Queen of England). The food here is traditional Shanghainese cuisine prepared and served as it has been for decades. The location is also ideal, overlooking the zigzag bridge in the Old City God Temple in the center of the bustling Old Town area.



Afternoon shopping at Silk Factory and local market

Silk Factory: Participants will see the process of silk manufacturing beginning with retrieving the silk from cocoons to weaving the fabric. Guests may see a fashion show and then spend time in the Institute's shop that sells fabrics, duvets and other items.



Dinner on own

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Day 3 September 4th

Morning visit Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Center and Shanghai Museum, walk along People's Square

Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Hall- where people can get a vision of the city's exciting future and to see the plans of the World Expo in Shanghai in 2010 and further developments up to 2020.



This museum was opened in February 2000. Five floors detail the ambitious plans of Shanghai's urban planners. Visitors are provided with a glimpse of how Shanghai will look like in a couple of decades. The centerpiece on the third floor is a huge model of the city as it is now. Check out the map on the first half floor, where the districts scheduled to be cleared for new constructions and green areas are marked. In the basement, old Shanghai is rebuilt with house entrances, cobble stone ways and operating shops and



teahouses.

Opened in 1994, the **new Shanghai Museum** houses a spectacular collection of Chinese relics. A wander through the exhibit reveals tastefully illuminated artifacts dating from the Neolithic Age to the Qing Dynasty and contemporary times. Bronze, ceramics, calligraphy, painting, sculpture, seal, jade, furniture, coins, and minority nationality art are displayed on multi-levels. An audio tour provides commentary on many of the items. The Shanghai Museum Shop offers quality replicas at reasonable prices.



The People's Square is located in centre downtown Shanghai. Before liberation, it was a race course. Now, you will find here the Municipal City Hall, Shanghai Museum, Shanghai Grand Theater, the underground shopping street etc. In the middle of the square is a 320-sq.m. round fountain and a landscaped lawn of 80,000 square meter's. On holidays and at weekends the square is crowded with people, enjoying the peaceful and pleasant scene on the square.

The first activity for everyone this morning will be to try their hand at flying kites in People's Park. Go to anywhere in China and you will find people flying kites. It is one of the favorite pastimes for both young and old. A fun way to be part of the local atmosphere and remind yourself you are still young at heart. Keep the kite as a souvenir of the afternoon's fun.

Lunch at Mongolian Barbecue Barbecue Restaurant

Afternoon transfer to the Le Meridien She Shan Shanghai

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