

EXPLORE!



Tokyo to Beijing
21 days

China, Japan, South Korea - Trip code JKC

Tokyo to Beijing

On this three week adventure we travel by road, rail and sea to discover modern and ancient Japan, the beautiful temples and countryside of South Korea, and the holiest mountain and world-famous sites of China. Explore Tokyo's lively neon-lit streets and the temples and Zen gardens of Kyoto. Discover South Korea's dynamic capital, Seoul, Gyeongbokgung Palace and the Demilitarised Zone. Experience the best of China, walking along the Great Wall at Mutianyu, climbing its holiest mountain - Taishan, and visiting the warrior statues of the Terracotta Army.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Japan** - Explore Tokyo's lively neon-lit streets and nearby Hakone National Park for a spectacular view of Mount Fuji. Travel by bullet train and see traditional Japan, with its stunning temples, immaculate Zen gardens and enigmatic geishas
- ★ **South Korea** - Discover South Korea's dynamic capital, Seoul, its Gyeongbokgung Palace and the Demilitarised Zone. Sleep in a monastery and learn about the monks' traditional lifestyle and visit Tongdosa Temple, Korea's largest, where the temple candle has been burning for 1,300 years
- ★ **China** - Walk along the Great Wall at Mutianyu, climb China's holiest mountain, Taishan, discover the warrior statues of the Terracotta Army and visit the house of Confucius

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:**Moderate**

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

GROUP SIZE:**10 - 16**

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Tokyo

Our journey starts in Tokyo, the exhilarating capital of Japan. After checking in to our hotel we will enjoy dinner with the rest of the group and our Explore Leader.



Accommodation: Hotel Sunroute Plaza Shinjuku (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Dinner

DAY 2 - Explore Tokyo's shrines and gardens on foot and by boat

Over a quarter of the Japanese population live within a 50 km radius of the centre of Tokyo, making it the most populous metropolitan area in the world. The result is a bustling and exciting city, and the economic powerhouse of Asia. However, scratching its neon-clad surface reveals a city bursting with history and tradition.

A morning stroll takes us through 'Thunder Gate' to Tokyo's oldest temple, Sensoji-ji in Asakusa, where we start to gain an insight into the city's unique culture. We continue our exploration by boat, with a short journey along the Sumida River. This gives us a totally different perspective of the city as we drift past high rise apartments, secluded gardens and busy warehouses. Arriving in the heart of the city near Hamarikyu Gardens, we visit the Meiji shrine, dedicated to Emperor Meiji and the Empress Shoken, and Shinjuku area, where the latest electronic gadgets dazzle from glowing shop-fronts.



Accommodation: Hotel Sunroute Plaza Shinjuku (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Take a boat ride on Lake Ashi and discover Hakone National Park

Today we explore the Hakone National Park, home to the towering and iconic Mount Fuji. Using a variety of forms of transport including bus, funicular rail and cable car, we make our way to the hot, bubbling sulphur springs at Owakudani. From here, on a clear day, there are magnificent views of the snow-capped mountain that is so synonymous with Japan. While at the springs you can follow the local tradition of eating an egg boiled in the sulphur pools - just one is reputed to increase life expectancy by seven years!

Our next stop is Lake Ashi, a magnificent lake created from the eruption of the Hakone Volcano over 3000 years ago. A short boat ride on the lake takes us to Moto Hakone. Here, you can relax in one of the waterside restaurants, or enjoy a one-hour walk along a section of the old Tokaido Highway, following in the footsteps of the shogun warriors. Passing through a stately avenue of ancient Japanese cedar trees lining the old route, we walk on some of the original paving stones. This ancient trail was mainly used by the nobility and shoguns as they travelled with huge retinues between the feudal court in Edo (Tokyo) and their own regional castles.

In Hakone, we are accommodated in a traditional inn, known as a ryokan, where we sleep on comfortable, folding futon mattresses. During our stay here, we learn about local etiquette, such as when to take off our shoes and the pleasures of taking a Japanese bath, all of which helps enhance our stay in this traditional establishment.



Accommodation: Fuji Hakone Guest House (or similar)



Simple Ryokan



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Travel on the Bullet train to Kyoto and explore the Geisha district

Leaving the mountains behind us, we take the world-famous 'bullet train', or Shinkansen, to Kyoto, travelling at speeds of up to 280 kmh. The cradle of all things uniquely Japanese, Kyoto was the imperial capital at the heart of events that shaped Japan's destiny for more than 1000 years. As the only major Japanese city to remain unscathed by World War II bombings, signs of the past remain in its grand temples and palaces, and also in the many quaint shops selling traditional wares. In the afternoon we head to the famous geisha district of Gion. Here, we hope to catch a glimpse of these enigmatic entertainers as they scuttle to work in the teahouses or high-class restaurants, and we'll take tea with one to learn a little about her life.



Accommodation: Kyoto Tower Hotel Annex (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 5 - Discover Kyoto's temples and Zen gardens

This morning we travel light, sending our main luggage on to Fukuoka and continuing our exploration of Kyoto. The city is Japan's loveliest, with more than 2000 temples and shrines, many set in manicured and landscaped gardens. We begin by visiting the famous Golden Pavilion, a three storey building with the top two tiers covered in gold leaf. Set in a lake, the building appears to float on the water and the reflections, coupled with the background of forest, make it worthy of its place on many Japanese postcards. There is also time to stroll Kyoto's charming streets and its tree-lined canal, simply soaking up the special atmosphere of the city.



Accommodation: Kyoto Tower Hotel Annex (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Reflect at Hiroshima Peace Park and take the ferry to South Korea

An early morning train takes us to Hiroshima, where we will spend the morning exploring this thought-provoking city. Completely destroyed on 6th August 1945, when it was the target of the first atomic bomb to be used in wartime, Hiroshima has literally risen from the ashes, and is now a thriving and friendly place.

We'll walk around Peace Memorial Park and visit the museum on the site of the 1945 A-bomb hypocentre. Whilst serving as poignant reminders of the nuclear holocaust, their over-whelming message is of hope that such horrors will never occur again.

In the afternoon we take the bullet train to Fukuoka where we board the ferry to South Korea. The journey across the Strait of Korea takes around 3 hours and we'll arrive in the Busan in the early evening.



Accommodation: Crown Harbor Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Explore Busan, visit the Tongdosa Temple and discover Gyeongju

This morning we start our exploration of South Korea with a tour of the port city of Busan, including the Haeundae Beach area and Jagalchi market. The largest seafood market in the country, it is a riot of noise, activity and colour, and a great place to try some of the seafood so loved by the Koreans. You can select fresh seafood from one of the stalls and take it to a nearby restaurant to be cooked or served as hoe - the Korean version of sushi.

Leaving Busan for Gyeongju, we stop at the Tongdosa Temple, a fascinating site founded over 1500 years ago when a monk returned from China with relics of the Buddha. They are said to be housed in the temple to this day. The temple's candle is believed to have been burning for an incredible 1,300 years, never once having been extinguished during that time.

We will spend the afternoon in Gyeongju. Once the capital of the ancient kingdom of Silla, the city ruled over much of the Korean Peninsula between the 7th and 9th centuries. In the city's green and beautiful Tumuli Park, we wander among impressive burial mounds dating from 1,500 to 2,000 years ago, and at nearby Cheomseongdae Observatory we see what is considered likely the world's oldest astronomical observatory. Our tour of the city concludes with Anapji Pond, which was once part of the ancient Donggung Palace, and the fascinating Gyeongju Museum. This houses an impressive array of artefacts from the Silla kingdom, and offers a fascinating insight in to an important period in Korea's history.



Accommodation: The Swiss Rosen (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Optional walk on Namsan Mountain and visit the Seokguram Grotto and Bulguksa Temple

This morning we visit Namsan Mountain which provides a beautiful natural setting for hundreds of temples and Buddha statues. There are hiking trails to enjoy, a boating lake, and cycles to hire.

In the afternoon we explore the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Seokguram Grotto and the Bulguksa Temple. Built in 774 and set in stunning natural surroundings on the slopes of Mount Tohamsan, the grotto overlooks the coast and an impressive statue of the Buddha gazes serenely out to sea. The temple, dating from the same time, is the head of the Jogye order of Zen Buddhism.

The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Hahoe is our last stop of the day. Here we find the Hahoe Folk Village and its mask museum. Wandering along the ancient streets of this early Joseon Dynasty village with its centuries-old homes, we may get a sense of how the village was located to provide physical and spiritual nourishment, in line with ancient Confucian principles. Many of the residents still maintain the old Confucian traditions to this day. The village's fascinating mask museum reflects the local culture of using masks in dance and drama, and houses a remarkable collection from the vicinity and the rest of the country.



Accommodation: Andong Park Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 9 - Discover the beautiful Buseoksa Temple. Enjoy a traditional tea ceremony and spend the night at Samwhasa Temple

This morning we head for one of Korea's most beautiful temples. Hidden amongst the wooded slopes of Bonghwangsan, Buseoksa Temple dates back to the latter years of the 7th century and differs from many other temples in Korea because of its huge size.

In the afternoon we drive to Samwhasa Temple where we have an opportunity to join in a traditional tea ceremony. Spending the night at the temple to experience the life of the monks, learning how to bow properly and about the 108 bows, a meditative practice that encourages reflection and focus. Please note that the sleeping arrangements at the monastery will be up to four people per room and there is a mixture of en suite and shared shower facilities.



Accommodation: Samwhasa Temple (or similar)



Simple Monastery



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 10 - Walk in Mount Seorak National Park

For early risers there is a chance to watch the monks perform their morning prayer rituals before we leave our temple home.

After breakfast we drive to Mount Seorak National Park, a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve on the eastern edge of the Korean Peninsula. Set amongst the granite landscapes of the Taebaek Mountain range, Mount Seorak is the third highest peak in the country at just over 1,700m, and we have the chance to enjoy some activities around the park. There are a number of walking trails that lead to temples and waterfalls, including Sinheungsa Temple which dates from 652 AD and Biryongpkpo Waterfall which is reached by walking through a pretty forest that will be resplendent with Autumn colours. You can also take a cable car to the mountain's summit for spectacular views of the surrounding area.



Accommodation: Ramada Gangwon Sokcho (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 11 - Explore Seoul and the Gyeongbokgung Palace

We drive to Seoul today and take an orientation tour around the centre of the city, walking through the Myeongdong shopping district and to the market at Namdaemun. This is the largest market in the country with hundreds of stalls. The food section is a particular highlight and offers a great chance to try some local fare such as Sujebi (dough and shellfish soup), kalguksu noodles or bibimbap (mixed rice, meat and vegetables). Leaving the market, we head past the City Hall to the Gyeongbokgung Palace. The largest of five great palaces built by the Joseon Dynasty, Gyeongbokgung still remains the grandest and we pay a visit before moving on to the National Folk Museum. Later we walk through the Insadong area, famed for its antiques and handicrafts.



Accommodation: Ibis Styles Ambassador Seoul Myeongdong (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 12 - Visit the Demilitarised Zone

Today we visit one of the last frontiers of the Cold War - the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) that separates North and South Korea. The area has over a million soldiers on high alert on either side. The Korean war technically has never ended and this geo-political fault line is still raw for the people of Korea. We are escorted by the military right into the DMZ and stand at the very edge - both sides literally staring at each other just metres apart. Whilst in the area you must be respectfully dressed, no jeans or sandals are allowed, and you cannot you make any arm or hand gestures as visitors are closely monitored (and photographed) by the North Koreans for propaganda purposes. Next we venture underground to explore a tunnel built by the North to breach the border; it was found by accident and a further 3 were later discovered. The tunnels are wide enough for 2000 troops an hour to pass through. Military clearance is obtained for all visitors and you will be in a larger group, please be aware that due to the nature of the area visited this excursion may be cancelled at short notice (although unlikely) depending on the security situation.



Accommodation: Ibis Styles Ambassador Seoul Myeongdong (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 13 - Free time in Seoul and overnight ferry to China

This morning is left free for you to explore more of Seoul before taking the overnight ferry across the Yellow Sea to China. We'll arrive at the port in the early afternoon to check in for our journey and we'll leave Korea just before dusk. After waking up and taking our breakfast on board we'll be able to see the coast of China on the horizon as we edge closer. The sleeping arrangements on the ferry consist of 2 tier bunkbeds with shared bathrooms, and privacy is achieved with a curtain separating the beds from the aisle.



Accommodation: Overnight ferry from Seoul to Qingdao (or similar)



Standard Boat



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 14 - Dock in Qingdong, China and Drive to Zibo. Explore the old Zhoucun area

Arriving in China mid-morning, we drive to Zibo, a journey of 4 to 5 hours. Considered to be one of the birthplaces of the Han Chinese - now the largest ethnic group in the world, the city is the capital of the ancient state of Qi and has a long and rich history. It was one of the early centres of silk making that led to the formation of the famous Silk Road and was recognised by FIFA in 2004 as the birthplace of football! We'll wander around the old Zhoucun area, visiting the Thousand Buddha Temple, and admiring the old stone streets and buildings of the area, often adorned with Chinese lanterns; their traditional shop fronts selling an eclectic mix of wares, with silk and silver being particular specialities.



Accommodation: Wan Hao Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 15 - Ascend China's holiest mountain, Tai Shan

Our destination today is Tai'an and the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Mount Tai (Taishan), China's most sacred mountain. In 219 BC, Qin Shi Huang, the founder of the Qin Dynasty, held a ceremony on the summit to announce to the gods that he had successfully unified China. There are around 6,000 steps up to this point but the reward is stunning views of the surrounding mountains and hills, and a cable car is available from around half way. For most people, walking all the way to the top takes around 3 to 4 hours and taking the cable car means a 1 to 1.5 hour walk.

The mountain has been continuously worshipped for at least 3,000 years and there are thousands of inscribed stone tablets set on its slopes declaring its significance. One informs us that the mountain is 'the most revered of the five sacred mountains' and another marks the spot where Confucius looked out from and stated 'the world is small'.

There are also 22 temples, the most important being the Temple to the God of Taishan. It contains a spectacular 1,000 year old Taoist painting entitled 'The God of Taishan Making a Journey' which we can see before making our way to the top.



Accommodation: Tai Shan Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 16 - Explore the temple complex and home of Confucius

Nearby Qufu is the location of the home and temple of Confucius, another UNESCO World Heritage Site and a large sprawling complex with some 460 rooms, second only in size to the Forbidden City in Beijing. The great sage's home was consecrated as a temple just two years after his death in 479 BC, but many additions and rebuilds have taken place over the years with fire damaging the complex on two occasions. The most recent renovation took place in 1499 and the majority of the buildings we'll see are from this time. We spend the whole day at the site exploring the temple, the family home and the cemetery, and learning about one of the great thinkers of history and the enormous impact he had on Chinese culture.



Accommodation: Que Li Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available

DAY 17 - Take the bullet train to Xian and visit the Muslim quarter

This morning we board the super-modern bullet train to Xian, departing just after 07:00 and arriving early afternoon. Our exploration of this incredible city reveals the extraordinary continuity of Chinese civilisation. Xian (Changan) served 11 dynasties and was the starting point of the famous Silk Road between Central Asia and Europe. We'll explore the Muslim quarter with its labyrinth-like alleys and great wooden mosque - the largest mosque in China originally built over a thousand years ago.



Accommodation: Union Alliance Atravis Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available

DAY 18 - See the magnificent Terracotta Army

Today we visit one of the highlights of any visit to China - the magnificent Terracotta Warriors and Horses who guard the Qin Shi Huangdi Tomb. There are thousands of life size warriors, dating from 200 BC, and each one is unique, leading some to theorise that they were based on real people. This dramatic find of the 1970s is considered one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of the last century. We will have time to stop at the on-site factory to see how the warriors are made today.

In the afternoon we also visit the Big Wild Goose Pagoda, a 64 metre high structure which dates from the year 652 and provides superb views of the city.

In the evening we take an overnight train to Beijing. We will be travelling in soft sleeper compartments, which have 4 berths per carriage and shared washing facilities.



Accommodation: Overnight Train from Xian to Beijing



Simple Overnight Train

DAY 19 - Discover the sights of Beijing including the Forbidden City and the Hutongs

Beijing is China's capital and its political and cultural centre. The city has been the capital since Kublai Khan put it at the heart of his mighty Asian Empire in the late 1200s. All clocks in this vast country are set by Beijing time despite the westernmost regions being some 5000 kilometres away. Today we'll visit the Forbidden City, the one-time home of the Ming and the Manchu (Qing) emperors and a treasure trove of eastern wares. We will walk around the infamous Tiananmen Square, which contains the Monument to the People's Heroes and the Mausoleum of Mao Zedong. We'll visit the Hutongs - narrow streets and alleys that have a timeless feel, they are the real heartbeat of the city. Walking around them we'll feel as if we are a world away from the gleaming skyscrapers of

modern China.



Accommodation: Xiao Xiang Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 20 - Walk along the iconic Great Wall of China

This morning we drive out to a renovated part of the Great Wall at Mutianyu, situated north of the city. Work on the wall began in the 3rd century BC by Shi Huangdi, thousands of conscripted workers laboured on it and many lie buried in its brick and stone ramparts. It is incredible to think that this wall spans the entire country! Here there is a 2km section to walk along with watchtowers and views of the surrounding countryside. En route we may also get to visit a cloisonné workshop where you can see examples of this ancient metal-working technique.

There will be some free time in the afternoon and you may like to visit the Summer Palace, an old and very extensive imperial garden complex with a large boating lake and impressive palace buildings. There is also the possibility of seeing a Beijing opera in the evening, considered to be the best in China, or perhaps an acrobatic performance.



Accommodation: Xiao Xiang Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 21 - Trip ends in Beijing

Our trip ends after breakfast in Beijing.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

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Why book this trip

Covering three countries in three weeks, this trip gives us a deep and fascinating insight in to the region. The route is epic, taking us through much of Japan, where we'll experience both the modern and ancient culture of the country. We take the ferry across the Korea Strait to travel the length of South Korea, through fabulous countryside and stopping at ancient temples. Crossing the Yellow Sea on the overnight ferry we explore China, discovering with some lesser visited sites before moving on to Xian and Beijing.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 20
Lunch: 1
Dinner: 3



Transport

Bus
Boat
Train



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader(s)
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

1 nights standard boat
16 nights standard hotel
1 nights simple monastery
1 nights simple overnight train
1 nights simple ryokan

Trip information

Country information

China

Climate

China has primarily a temperate climate, with a wide spectrum of extremes due to its huge area. Summer months are hot and rainy though in the south the climate is tropical and we can experience rain at any time of the year, often falling in sharp tropical rain-storms which are heavy but short lived. Winter is colder and drier, temperatures in Beijing can be as low as -12c.

Time difference to GMT

+8

Plugs

3 Pin Flat

Religion

Mainly Buddhist

Language

Mandarin

Japan

Climate

Japan's climate is mostly temperate, with five distinct seasons. Summer is from June to September with temperatures reaching 30°C, although it can vary from warm to very hot. After mid-July, July and August can be humid. Spring and Autumn are mild throughout Japan. Winter, October to April, is cold with snowfall. The main rainy season is June. Japan can be prone to short, tropical cyclones in August to October. October/November although cooler is a great time to see the Autumn colours.

Time difference to GMT

+9

Plugs

2 Pin Flat

Religion

Buddhism, Christian and Shinto

Language

Japanese

South Korea

Climate

South Korea has four distinct seasons: long, cold winters; short summers which tend to be hot and humid; autumn and spring offer pleasant weather but tend to pass quickly. Jeju Island tends to have a warmer climate due to its southern location, temperatures usually reach up to 25 degrees during the summer months. Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at <http://www.explore.co.uk/weather>. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up-to-date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page.

Time difference to GMT

+9

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Buddhist, Christian

Language

Korean

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Mount Tai - Cable Car at Mount Tai - 100 Yuan each way

Seoul - Changdeok Palace \$3, Changgyeong Palace \$1, Bukchon Hanok Village - free

Beijing - Summer Palace, £4 (entrance only); Opera, £15. Acrobat show, £24.

Clothing

You will need warm clothing as temperatures during the evenings and nighttimes can be quite low. A water proof jacket is also recommended as there may be some rain during the trip.

Footwear

Comfortable shoes or trainers for day to day wear and for walking.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack. Please note: that for logistical reasons your main luggage will be forwarded from Tokyo to Kyoto and from Kyoto to the ferry port at Fukuoka. Your daysac should therefore have sufficient space for one overnight in Kyoto.

Equipment

Bring a water bottle to save on purchase of plastic bottles. Hairdryers are provided at the majority of the hotels.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

In this region, tipping is a recognised part of life across the service industry. Local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided.

To assist with this your Explore Leader may organise a group tips kitty for included activities and meals, they will then account for kitty use throughout the tour.

The following amounts will be collected in each country towards the kitty

South Korea - £20 per person

India - £20 per person

For all non-included services and meals on your trip please tip independently at your discretion.

Country Information

China

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£5

Dinner price

£6.00 - 10.00

Beer price

£2

Water price

£1.5

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Renminbi/Yuan

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Either EUR, USD or GBP.

Where To Exchange

In all towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival. When changing money ask for a receipt so you can change Yuan back into your own currency when leaving China.

ATM Availability

All major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

Most major restaurants and stores.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques can be changed in Hong Kong and at the Bank of China in all major cities but only during bank opening hours. Please note this is very time consuming and is not recommended.

Japan

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£8

Dinner price

£15-20

Beer price

£4

Water price

£1.00 - 2.00

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Yen.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

It is preferable to take money in Yen or traveller's cheques.

Where To Exchange

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

All post offices have international ATMs. Some other ATMs do not accept Western bank/credit cards. Your tour leader will advise you locally.

Credit Card Acceptance

In major restaurants and stores.

Travellers Cheques

It should be noted that outside of the major cities it is difficult to change traveller's cheques. Where available it takes 30-45 minutes, the best places to exchange them is at the airport on arrival.

South Korea

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£10

Dinner price

£15

Beer price

£4

Water price

£1

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Won

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Either EUR, USD or GBP.

Where To Exchange

In all towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

All major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

Most major restaurants and stores.

Travellers Cheques

We do not recommend to take travellers cheques as these can be difficult to exchange.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Boat, Train

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

On the ferry from South Korea to China the sleeping arrangements consist of bunk style beds either side of an aisle. Each bed has a curtain that can be drawn to ensure privacy. The washing facilities are shared.

The accommodation in China is usually relatively modern, spacious and comfortable, albeit rather generic. Most hotels are large and purpose built and though rarely characterful, you can generally rely on good facilities. In major cities the hotels that we use are of international style generally with business facilities, restaurants and bars and all mod cons, though few have pools. In other cities and large towns the standard is similar although on a lesser scale. In small towns or villages where tourism is less prevalent, the hotels we use are smaller and facilities are more limited, though we generally stay in the best place in town. Rooms will still be en suite but can be basic. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be somewhat erratic and although the welcome is warm, service levels may be less efficient than you might expect. Please be aware that the beds in China are often quite firm and may take a few nights for you to get used to.

Aboard the overnight sleeper train, berths are usually in 1st class 'soft sleeper' lockable compartments for 4 which have 2 sets of bunks with clean bedding provided. WC and washbasins are provided for shared use at the end of each carriage. Hot meals and snacks are usually sold to your berth on overnight journeys. In times of large demand we may have to travel in 2nd class 'hard sleeper' which consists of sectioned off compartments for 6, leading off an open plan carriage. The majority of hotels in China offer check in from 12noon. On days where we will arrive on a sleeper train the Tour Leader will try and arrange an early check in for the group, however this may not be possible.

Essential Information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check

requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

Japan: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom. Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

China

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, infectious hepatitis, typhoid, tetanus and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Travellers may wish to take immunisation against Japanese Encephalitis. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Japan

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory. We recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, infectious hepatitis and polio. The use or possession of Vicks inhalers and some other common prescription and over-the-counter medicines (e.g. for allergies and sinus problems or even certain mild painkillers, such as those containing certain levels of codeine) are banned under Japan's strictly enforced anti-stimulant drugs law. Customs officials may not be sympathetic if you claim ignorance about these medicines. If in any doubt about customs procedures for such items, you should check with the nearest Japanese Embassy before visiting Japan. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

South Korea

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, infectious hepatitis, typhoid, tetanus and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Travellers may wish to take immunisation against Japanese Encephalitis. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.
