

PROPOSAL FOR 2008 TRAVEL

CLASSIC CHINA & THE YANGTZE

2008

**With an Optional Post-Tour Extension:
“Hong Kong – On Your Own”**

Itinerary and Accommodations

CCY: Updated September 2006

CLASSIC CHINA & THE YANGTZE

2008 Day-by-Day Itinerary

DAY 1: Depart North America for Beijing, China

Depart the U.S. this morning on your flight to Beijing.

DAY 2: Arrive Beijing

We arrive in the Chinese capital late this evening and transfer directly to our hotel.

Accommodations: Presidential Plaza

DAY 3: Beijing

This morning you have a chance to rest up after your long journey and late arrival. This afternoon you'll attend a briefing with your Odysseys Unlimited Tour Director and local guide; afterwards we visit a place of both fame and infamy: Tiananmen Square – the Gate of Heavenly Peace – in the very heart of the city. It's a vast area said by some to be the greatest public square on earth. It's also the site of infamous uprisings in China's 20th-century history, including the eight rallies that began the Cultural Revolution in 1966 and the student protests in 1989. Next we move on to the Forbidden City, which operated as the seat of power during five centuries of Chinese dynasties. Imperial and impressive, the Forbidden City boasts three great ceremonial halls and three principal palaces where the extravagant living quarters housed more than 34 successive emperors. Tonight we enjoy a traditional Peking Duck Dinner at a local restaurant.

Accommodations: Presidential Plaza

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 4: Beijing/Great Wall

Today's touring begins this morning at the Temple of Heaven, among China's most beautiful shrines, with two circular ceremonial buildings crowned with blue tile roofs. After a stop for lunch at a local restaurant, we visit the only manmade structure on earth that is visible from space: the Great Wall of China, which stretches some 2,480 miles across the country. It was also one of history's most time-consuming projects: construction began in the 5th century BC and finished in the 16th century AD. We'll be concentrating on Mu Tian Yu, a scenic and less crowded section of the Great Wall, where we take a cable car for the brief ride to the highest restored portion. It's a breathtaking sight, one you won't soon forget. Late this afternoon we return to our hotel, where tonight we enjoy a Western-style buffet dinner.

Accommodations: Presidential Plaza

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5: Beijing

First we enjoy a fascinating small group highlight: a tour of Beijing through the city's ancient back alleys called *hutongs*. We'll travel by rickshaw down these back streets and tiny alleyways to witness a way of life that is fast disappearing in modern-day China. As more and more modern apartment complexes are being built, the communal lifestyle that you'll see on today's tour is becoming obsolete – and may soon disappear entirely. Our visit with a Beijing family in their home here offers us a glimpse of this time-honored tradition. After lunch at a local restaurant we travel to the Summer Palace, the former royal retreat that is now one of the loveliest spots in Beijing, a park for both visitors and local citizens, with a large lake, imperial pavilions, and palaces. Dinner tonight is on your own.

Accommodations: Presidential Plaza

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 6: Beijing/Xian

Early this morning we depart for the airport for the 90-minute flight to Xian, home of the world-renowned Terra Cotta Army, arriving mid-morning. Once among the world's greatest ancient cities, Xian devolved into a provincial backwater until the accidental discovery in 1974 of the great army of hand-carved warriors that had been buried for centuries. Upon arrival in Xian we tour the impressive nine-mile city wall and moat dating from the early Ming period; after a traditional dumpling lunch we visit the Shanxi Provincial Museum housing art and artifacts from the Han and Tang dynasties. This evening we enjoy a Tang Dynasty dinner show.

Accommodations: Sheraton Xian

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7: Xian

Our day begins with a visit to the Wild Goose Pagoda, built in 652 AD and noted as a symbol of Xian, prized especially for its architectural beauty. After lunch at a local restaurant we venture to the site of the astounding Terra Cotta Warriors. Created to guard the tomb of Emperor Qin Shi Huang who ascended the throne in 246 BC, this is one of China's most memorable sights. Discovered by a fortuitous accident in 1974, the terra cotta soldiers rest in three massive vaults, the largest consisting of more than 1,000 figures in battle formation. The figures each stand about five feet tall; each head and face is different, and the mass-produced bodies are clad in knee-length battle tunics. The soldiers once carried actual weapons, including swords, spears, and crossbows that have long since been plundered. A smaller vault holds four groups including men with crossbows, charioteers, infantry, and cavalry in many positions, including one particularly striking figure of a cavalryman leading a horse. And in the final vault we see what appears to be battle headquarters, with an honor guard and animal bones indicating that the area was used for animal sacrifices. We view the open vaults from above while standing on a series of walkways then visit the remarkable museum nearby which houses the two famed bronze chariots unearthed in 1982 – and which we can see up close here. After returning to our hotel late this afternoon, we enjoy a Western-style buffet dinner there tonight.

Accommodations: Sheraton Xian

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8: Xian/Chongqing

This morning we transfer to the airport for the one-hour flight to Chongqing. Called the Mountain City, Chongqing is surrounded by hills in a most scenic setting. Time permitting we'll visit Erling Park for a bird's-eye view of the city; the Stilwell Museum, home and headquarters of American General Joseph Stilwell who trained Chinese soldiers before and during World War II; and the Chongqing Zoo, where we see the beloved pandas. We board our Victoria Cruises premier ship after dinner in a local restaurant. Tonight we set sail down river – for good luck, as the Chinese do.

Accommodations: Victoria Cruises Premier Ship

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 9: Yangtze Cruising – Shibaozhai/Qutang Gorge

It's one of the world's classic voyages: sailing the fabled Yangtze River. The river's source is in the mountains above Tibet, and it receives some 700 tributaries during its 3,600-mile course through China. The third longest river in the world, the Yangtze continues to serve as a major waterway for boats, barges, and fisherman, as it has for more than 1,000 years. Early this morning we disembark in Shibaozhai for the 20-minute walk to visit the Red Pagoda. Considered a gem of Chinese architecture, the 12-story pagoda built in 1816 simply rests against the rocks behind it – it is not secured in any way. After returning to the ship mid-morning, we continue cruising downstream. Late this afternoon we traverse the first of the Yangtze's fabled Three Gorges, Qutang, known for the sheer, dramatic precipices lining either side of the five-mile long passageway.

Accommodations: Victoria Cruises Premier Ship

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 10: Yangtze Cruising – Daning River/Lesser Gorges/Wu Gorge/Xiling Gorge/Three Gorges Dam

Our ship docks this morning in Wushan, where we disembark and board a smaller ferry boat for an excursion along the Daning River, a Yangtze tributary that is home to the stunning Lesser Gorges. Here we can see rock walls up close, along with monkeys playing in the treetops, and ancient coffins and calligraphy etched into the rocks. We return to our Victoria Cruises ship for lunch and resume cruising; early this afternoon we enter 25-mile Wu Gorge. With precipitous peaks often enshrouded in clouds and rich vegetation clinging to the slopes that flank the water, Wu Gorge is considered the most beautiful of the Three Gorges. Late afternoon we reach the western section of 47-mile Xiling Gorge, known for its swift rapids and churning whirlpools. Partway through our voyage through Xiling Gorge we approach the locks of the Three Gorges Dam; once the lockmaster determines our entry time, we commence our three-hour transit of the world's largest hydroelectric dam.

Accommodations: Victoria Cruises Premier Ship

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11: Yangtze Cruising – Three Gorges Dam Site/Xiling Gorge/Disembark Wuhan

Early this morning we disembark to tour Sandouping, site of the immense Three Gorges Dam currently under construction. We see and learn about this incredible project from an observatory overlooking the site. The idea for this massive (and controversial) dam was born nearly a century ago, though it is only now coming to fruition and will not be complete until 2009. Some five times larger than Hoover Dam, the Three Gorges dam will be the largest of its kind, with walls reaching more than 600 feet high and 6,500 feet in length. Once completed, it will create a lake that will be the world's largest reservoir, stretching all the way to Chongqing and providing as much as 10 percent of China's hydroelectric power. At the same time, it will completely flood this spectacular region, changing the landscape and submerging centuries-old villages. For now, however, you've had the opportunity to see this fabled landscape as we cruised, the majestic vertical cliffs reaching toward the sky, a land steeped in mystery and legend. It's an extraordinary opportunity to look to China's past and future and know that you've been here at a crossroads in its history.

Following our tour we return to the ship mid-morning and resume cruising through the eastern section of Xiling Gorge. After lunch we arrive in Yichang, where we disembark and board a motorcoach for the drive to Wuhan. We reach our hotel late this afternoon and dine there tonight.

Accommodations: Shangri-La Wuhan

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 12: Wuhan/Shanghai

This morning we visit Yellow Crane Tower, a local landmark whose origins date to 223 A.D. (though the current tower is a contemporary reconstruction). Yellow tiles and red pillars adorn the five-story tower atop Snake Hill, with overlapping ridges and interlocking eaves that create a fanciful sight. We have lunch at a local restaurant then transfer to the airport for the 90-minute flight to Shanghai. After checking in at our hotel late this afternoon you are free for dinner on your own in this most cosmopolitan of Chinese mainland cities.

Accommodations: Hilton Shanghai

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 13: Shanghai

Shanghai gained notoriety in the 20th century as the "Paris of the East," the stronghold of European life in Mainland China; a bustling modern metropolis where economics ruled. But after the rise of communism and the expulsion of foreigners, Shanghai slowed down considerably. Now, however, it is thriving once again, and is again among China's, indeed Asia's, fastest growing cities. Today we tour the city, including the Bund, Shanghai's bustling riverfront boulevard that once was the center of European influence in the Far East. We also visit the Children's Palace, where local children study traditional dance, theater and music after school. This afternoon we tour beloved Yu Yuan Gardens, a 400-year-old Ming-influenced complex whose six sections comprise a harmonious whole. After dinner tonight at a local restaurant we enjoy a show of traditional Chinese acrobatics.

Accommodations: Hilton Shanghai

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 14: Shanghai

This morning we tour the acclaimed Shanghai Museum of ancient Chinese art, known especially for its collections of bronzes, ceramics, paintings, and calligraphy. The afternoon is at leisure to explore on your own or for last-minute shopping; your tour director will be happy to offer suggestions. Tonight we enjoy a farewell dinner together at our hotel.

Accommodations: Hilton Shanghai

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 15: Depart for U.S.

You'll depart for the U.S. today, arriving on the West Coast then connecting with your flight home.

Meals: Breakfast

Please Note

This trip involves full days of sightseeing and significant amounts of walking on uneven terrain, with as much as two to three miles altogether on touring days. Be prepared for many stairs; ramps are not common in China.

We will do our best to adhere to our printed itinerary. Occasionally, though, unexpected obstacles, and opportunities, may arise that will force us to deviate from the itinerary as written. We would ask you to be open-minded and flexible should we vary the itinerary slightly. In addition, please note that airline schedules are subject to change. We will provide you with updated flight information closer to your departure.

For Land Only Guests

When you purchase a tour as "land only," airport transfers and luggage handling at the arrival and departure airports at the beginning and end of the tour are not included. However, should you be at the arrival airport concurrent with the group of arriving Odysseys Unlimited travelers and see the signs for our motorcoach transfer, you are welcome to transfer with the group at no charge, providing additional seating is available. However, please note that the motorcoach cannot wait for you; you must be aboard when the coach is leaving. Similarly, when departing from the last hotel for your flight home, you are also welcome to take advantage of the group transfer, provided there is room and you are on board when the coach is leaving.

It is important to note, however, that a motorcoach may not be used for transfers in all cases. Depending upon the number of guests arriving or departing, we may utilize taxis or smaller vans. At such times, space restrictions will preclude your joining the group transfer and you will be responsible for your own transportation to or from the airport.

**For Guests Taking Odysseys Unlimited's
"HONG KONG – ON YOUR OWN"
OPTIONAL POST-TOUR EXTENSION**

DAY 15: Shanghai/Hong Kong

This morning you'll take an included transfer to the airport for the 2 1/2 -hour flight to Hong Kong. Upon arrival in Hong Kong, **please exit the Customs area via Exit B** where you will be met by an Odysseys Unlimited representative for the included transfer to your hotel. The remainder of your stay is at leisure in this vibrant, dynamic city. Tonight get your first taste of this city's fabled cuisine – you'll find restaurants offering virtually every ethnic food imaginable.

Accommodations: InterContinental Grand Stanford

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 16-17: Hong Kong

An intriguing mix of British and Chinese culture, the city comprises the small island of Hong Kong and Kowloon on the mainland. Touring and sightseeing options about: ride the historic Star Ferry to the British summer colony of Victoria Peak for a ride on the steep tram; shop Nathan Road's "Golden Mile" for bargains on jewelry, photography equipment, sunglasses, luxurious silk, or traditional "chops" carved with your initials in Chinese. Visit the wonderfully exotic Bird Market or Jade Market. And if you want to encounter the ancient Chinese culture that permeates Hong Kong, visit the Man Mo Temple, where hundreds of coils of incense hang from the ceiling.

Accommodations: InterContinental Grand Stanford

Meals: Breakfast daily

DAY 18: Hong Kong/Depart for U.S.

After breakfast you take an included transfer transfer to the airport for your return flight to the United States via Shanghai.

Meals: Breakfast

CLASSIC CHINA & THE YANGTZE 2008 Accommodations

Presidential Plaza

9 Fuchengmenwai Road
Xicheng District
Beijing, China 100037
Phone: 011-86-10-5858-5588
Fax: 011-86-10-6800-1792
www.presidentialplaza.com

This modern hotel welcomes guests with a four-story atrium lounge, along with several restaurants and bars, indoor pool, fitness center with steam room and sauna, massage services, elevator service, hair salon, and gift shop. Guest rooms have private bath, Internet access, TV, and phone.

Sheraton Xian

262 Feng Hao East Road
Shaanxi Province
Xian, China 710077
Phone: 011-86-29-8426-1888
Fax: 011-86-29-8426-2188
www.starwoodhotels.com/sheraton

This high-rise hotel is located close to the city's major attractions. Air-conditioned rooms feature private bath with hair dryer, mini-bar, coffee maker, phone, radio, in-room safe and TV. In the hotel you'll find several restaurants and lounges, and a health club with indoor pool, sauna, and Jacuzzi.

Victoria Cruises Premier Ships

www.victoriacruises.com

With the largest fleet to ply the Yangtze, Victoria Cruises is the leader in Yangtze River cruising. All premier ships that we use are air-conditioned and carry 193 to 308 passengers. Please note there are no elevators aboard. All cabins are outside, non-smoking, and 205 square feet with private bathroom with tub and shower, balcony, and satellite TV with HBO. Hair dryers are available upon request. The ships offer breakfast and lunch buffets and classic Chinese dinner banquets, reading room, fitness area, gift shop, and beauty salon. On-board activities include lectures on Chinese history and culture, Tai Chi lessons, calligraphy demonstrations, and traditional entertainment in the evening. Victoria Cruises offers a comprehensive Yangtze experience, with multi-lingual cruise directors and informative river guides.

Wuhan: Shangri La

700 Jian She Avenue,
Hankou, Wuhan,
430015, China
Phone: 011-86-27-8580-6868
Fax: 011-86-27-8577-6868
www.shangri-la.com

This 448-room hotel sits amidst a landscaped garden and offers several restaurants and lounges, and a fully equipped health club with Jacuzzi, sauna, and steam room. Guest rooms have private bath, tea- and coffee-making facilities, in-room safe, mini-bar, TV, and telephone.

Hilton Shanghai

250 Hua Shan Road
Shanghai, China 200040
Phone: 011-86-21-6248-0000
Fax: 011-86-21-6248-3868
www.hilton.com

This 43-story hotel in Shanghai's commercial district offers a variety of amenities, including laundry/valet service, barbershop and beauty salon, gift shop, elevators, several restaurants and lounges, and safety deposit boxes. The hotel also has a Health Club with fitness center, indoor pool, spa, sauna, steam bath, and massage service. Air-conditioned guest rooms have private bath with hair dryer, sitting area, TV, phone, and refrigerator with mini bar.

**Optional Post-Tour Extension
“HONG KONG – ON YOUR OWN”
Accommodations 2008**

InterContinental Grand Stanford

70 Mody Road
Tsimshatsui East
Kowloon, Hong Kong, China
Phone: 011-852-2721-5161
Fax: 011-852-2732-2233
www.ichotelsgroup.com

A contemporary hotel overlooking historic Victoria Harbour, the Inter-Continental Grand Stanford is well located near several shopping, commercial, and entertainment areas. Guest rooms have private bath with hair dryer, air conditioning, TV, phone, personal safe, and mini-bar. The hotel features several restaurants and lounges, swimming pool and Health Club, laundry and valet service, and complimentary shuttle bus service to the Star Ferry.