



Texas Center

# **Celebrating China's Cultures**

**Hong Kong | Chengdu | Xi'an | Hohhot**

**August 28 – September 8, 2017**

*Optional Shanghai Pre-trip: August 25 – 29, 2017*

*Optional Beijing Post-trip: September 8 – 11, 2017*

This custom designed journey for the Rice Alumni Traveling Owls and Asia Society Texas Center will start in Hong Kong, a modern, dynamic, and cosmopolitan city blessed with culture, history, and spectacular scenery. Next, you will travel to Chengdu, a city well-known for the Panda Base, as well as the birth place for Chinese Daoism, teahouses, brocade and “face-changing” performers. From there, you will visit Xi'an to discover the Terra Cotta Warriors and other historical sites. The last stop on your journey will be Hohhot, the center and capital of Inner Mongolia. This city boasts historical sites, temples and museums rich with ethnic minority treasures.

From pulsating modern cities thirsting for global prestige to remote rural areas where time slips by gently, you will experience how China is a beguiling and diverse land, while exploring a variety of Chinese cuisines, religions including Taoism, Islam and Buddhism, and Chinese minority cultures.

This unique 12-Day China trip will be led by Y. Ping Sun, Rice University Representative and Asia Society Texas Center Vice Chair, Board of Directors, and David W. Leebron, Rice University President. There is an optional pre-trip in Shanghai and post-trip in Beijing for those wishing to extend their exploration of China.

**Tour Operated by Houston's Own Easton Resource Development**  
[www.eastonresource.com](http://www.eastonresource.com)





**Day 1, Monday, August 28:**

**USA – Hong Kong (In-flight meals)**

International flight from home city to Hong Kong, the place where East meets West!

**Day 2, Tuesday, August 29:**

**Hong Kong**

Arrive in Hong Kong, check in to your hotel and enjoy the remainder of the day to settle into the hotel and explore the city independently. Those participating in the optional pre-tour of Shanghai will meet the group today. As guests' arrival times may vary greatly, there will be an optional welcome group meet up at the hotel bar.

**Day 3, Wednesday, August 30:**

**Hong Kong (B,R)**

Western culture coexists seamlessly with traditional philosophy and practices of the Orient offering unique experiences to all tourists here. You will begin the day with a group breakfast at the hotel. You will then explore the famous Victoria Park, Repulse Bay, Aberdeen and a Fishing Village. There will also be time to visit a famed jewelry factory. This evening, we will visit Asia Society Hong Kong Center for a welcome reception and private experience with local invited guests. The building received the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Honor Awards for

excellence in architecture, interior architecture, and urban design.

**Day 4, Thursday, August 31:**

**Hong Kong (B)**

Today will be a day for independent exploration of Hong Kong, one of the most culturally diverse cities in the whole world. With a population of seven million, spreading over Hong Kong Island, Kowloon Peninsula, New Territories and over 260 outlying islands, you will be able to explore the sights of interest to you. Your tour director and guides will be available to provide recommendations to help you make the most of your day.

**Day 5, Friday, September 1:**

**Hong Kong – Chengdu (B,L)**

This morning, we will fly to China's fifth largest city that is home to over ten million people. Chengdu rarely sees a moment where there isn't something happening. More than just a metropolis of business professionals, the city – which gave the world paper currency in 1023 – is surrounded by mountains and sits right on the doorstep of the Tibetan plateau. Near various UNESCO World Heritage sites and brimming with thousands of teahouses and pubs, Chengdu is the perfect jumping off point for a foray into the wonders of Sichuan. We will take a city tour before checking into our hotel where you will

enjoy the evening on your own. This evening you are encouraged to explore city on your own and try the famous Sichuan hot pot.

**Day 6, Saturday, September 2:**

**Chengdu (B,D)**

We'll start our day by visiting the Dujiangyan Irrigation, a great technological achievement of ancient China. For more than 2,300 years of irrigation, Dujiangyan has benefited the local people just as it prevents Min River basin from annual flooding and made the ancient Shu State a famed "land of abundance." This system still plays an indispensable function in the region's agriculture and survived the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake, a testament of superb engineering.

From there, we will visit Mt. Qingcheng, the ancient cradle of Daoism. The mountain has numerous Daoist temples and sites along the paths to its peak. The area is green year round and is known for its secluded tranquility. Surrounded by countless peaks and densely covered by ancient trees, the mountain was aptly named "Mt. Qingcheng" (Green Town in Chinese). Following an afternoon break, you will enjoy a group dinner and then finish the day with a cultural show for a



rousing evening of face-changing performers, thumping percussion and high-flying Chengdu acrobats.

**Day 7, Sunday, September 3:  
Chengdu – Xi'an (B,L)**

This morning, you will tour the Chengdu Research Base, home of the famed Giant Panda Breeding facility. The environment here is exquisitely designed – the air is refreshing with bamboo growing abundantly and flocks of wild birds flying around. The Giant Panda, a “living fossil,” is a rare animal native to China and one of the most primitive species in the world. Currently, there are only 1,864 giant pandas in existence, scattered primarily in the areas around Chengdu. This afternoon we will take a late flight to the ancient capital – Xi'an. Upon arrival, we will check into the hotel and you will have time for dinner on your own.

**Day 8, Monday, September 4:  
Xi'an (B,L,D)**

Xi'an is reputed as one of the most famous historical cities in the world. Our first visit is the Terra-Cotta Archaeological Museum where you will see three vaults containing over 8,000 terra-cotta warriors and horses excavated from the tomb of the first emperor of Qin Dynasty, approximately 2,200 years ago. From there you will visit the Big Wild Goose Pagoda, built in the Tang Dynasty

approximately 1,300 years ago to house the Buddhist scriptures and statues brought back from India. Not far from the pagoda, you visit one of the top museums in China – the Shaanxi Provincial History Museum – to gain further insight into Chinese history and culture through the large collection of historical items. In the evening, you will enjoy the most well-known and splendid cultural performance, the Tang Dynasty show, after enjoying a group dinner.

**Day 9, Tuesday, September 5:  
Xi'an (B,L)**

Your day will begin with a visit to the City Wall, which was initially built as a military defense system over 600 years ago. Ascending the City Wall, you can appreciate the magnificent ancient constructions, admire the surrounding urban landscape and watch the locals going about their daily lives. There will be a guided tour of the Great Mosque in Xi'an – one of the oldest, largest and best-preserved Islamic mosques in China – which blends traditional Chinese construction into Islamic culture.

Muslim Street (Huimin Jie) is adjacent to the Mosque and is an old street paved with bluestone plate, both sides of which stand a row of Muslim restaurants decorated in Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) Dynasty styles. You will have time to explore this street on your own.

**Day 10, Wednesday, September 6:  
Xi'an – Hohhot (B,D)**

This morning, you will fly to Hohhot, the capital of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. Located on the Inner Mongolian plateau northwest of Beijing, Hohhot borders the Daping Mountains to the north and faces the Dahei River in the south. Hohhot has a northwestern continental climate, with relatively temperate winters and summers. You will visit the Mongolia Provincial Museum where you will gain an understanding of northern China's culture, understanding of northern China's culture, history and customs. You will enjoy a city tour before enjoying a group dinner to experience local Mongolian delicacies.

Meals, as indicated in the daily itinerary, are included:

B: Breakfast | L: Lunch

D: Dinner | R: Reception

Additional lectures and visits may be arranged and added to the itinerary as appropriate. The final itinerary will be included in your departure documents that will be mailed approximately one month prior to departure.



**Day 11, Thursday, September 7:**

**Hohhot (B,L,D)**

After breakfast, you will visit the Xilamuren Grassland. Here you will be greeted for a welcome toast and visit Aobao Hill and a herdsman's family. You will enjoy Mongolian finger mutton at lunch before making your way back to the city. There, you will visit Dazhao Temple, also called the Silver Buddha Temple, the oldest and largest Buddhist temple in Hohhot which was constructed in 1579 during the Ming Dynasty. This temple has a silver statue of Shakyamuni enshrined there with lively carved dragons on the golden pillars and a vivid fresco on the walls of the halls. Your last stop will be the Inner Mongolia Museum. As the first and the oldest museum in an area inhabited by minority nationalities, Inner Mongolia Museum was established in May 1957. It is a must-visit destination for both domestic and international tourists who crave to learn about the history of Inner Mongolia and grassland culture. This evening, we will conclude our final night together with a farewell dinner that will include local cultural performances.

**Day 12, Friday, September 8**

**Hohhot – USA (B)**

After breakfast and checking out from the hotel, you will tour the Zhaojun Tomb. Covered by green grass, Zhaojun Tomb is also called the Green Tomb. It is one of the largest tombs of Han Dynasty with a history of over 2,000 years. As one of the four beauties in ancient China, Zhaojun was married to Hun's Khan in return for a 60-year's peaceful friendship between Han nationality and Hun nationality. Once you conclude your visit, you will transfer to the airport for afternoon flights back to USA – or to Beijing if you are participating on the optional post-trip.

# Optional Pre-Trip: Shanghai

August 25 – 29, 2017



**Day 1, Friday, August 25:**

**USA Departure (In-flight meals)**

International flight from your home city to Shanghai – China’s most splendid and modern city. This city has served as the financial Center of Far East since the 1920s.

**Day 2, Saturday, August 26:**

**Shanghai**

Arrive in Shanghai, check in to your hotel, and enjoy the remainder of the day to settle into your hotel and explore the city independently. There will be an optional meet up at the hotel bar for anyone wanting to connect before the first day of exploration.



**Day 3, Sunday, August 27:**

**Shanghai (B,L,D)**

After breakfast, you will tour the famous Bund area, Shanghai’s economic hub at the turn of the last century. Then you will take a privately arranged tour to the Shanghai Hongkou Ghetto where Jewish refugees lived and prayed during WWII. After your visit there, you will go to the Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Center to learn how Shanghai developed from a small fishing village into a major metropolis of the world. From here, you will visit the Shanghai Museum, the largest museum in China, before visiting a Shanghai Silk factory for a demonstration of silk manufacturing and learn how silk is



created from invisible threads out of silk cocoons. This evening, you will enjoy a group dinner.

**Day 4, Monday, August 28:**

**Shanghai (B)**

Following breakfast, you will head to the Jade Garden, the 16<sup>th</sup> century garden famous for its zigzag bridges, for a guided tour. This area is a 400-year old classical Chinese garden in the Old Town of Shanghai. You will learn how Pan Yunduan spent twenty years and all of his savings building this garden to please his parents in their old age. From here, you will take a walking tour of Old Shanghai and the Chenghuang Temple district and market area, Xin Tian Di. Here you will have time to enjoy the cafes, restaurants and shops. This area is a unique place because of its intricate blend of old and new architecture. It retains the antique walls, tiles and exterior of the Shikumen housing of old Shanghai. However, its interior embodies a totally different world of international gallery, bars, cafes, boutiques and restaurants. When you walk into Xin Tian Di, you will get the taste of both Shanghai in the 1920s and the sonic modern lifestyle of urbanites of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Day 5, Tuesday, August 29:**

**Shanghai – Hong Kong (B)**

After breakfast, the bus will take you to the airport where you will fly to Hong Kong to join the group for the rest of the main tour.

# Optional Post-Trip: Beijing

September 8 – 11, 2017



## Day 1, Friday, September 8:

### Hohhot – Beijing (In-flight meals)

Arrive in Beijing, check in to your hotel, and enjoy the remainder of the day to settle into the hotel and explore the city independently.



## Day 2, Saturday, September 9:

### Beijing (B,L,D)

After breakfast, you will head to the Great Wall, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. You will have a private guided tour of the wall which took over ten years and one million laborers to construct. From here, you will visit a cloisonné factory for a guided tour before a specially arranged "Pedicab" ride to visit the ancient city compound of Hutong. Here, you will visit 19<sup>th</sup> century homes with graceful four-walled courtyards and meet with the local residents to learn about Chinese daily life. Upon conclusion of this visit, you will have the time on your own for independent exploration before a Peking Duck group dinner.



## Day 3, Sunday, September 10:

### Beijing (B,L,R)

Your tour starts from Tiananmen Square. You will also visit the Forbidden City and the Temple of Heaven. After these tours, you will head to the Imperial Tea House where you will learn about the profound Chinese tea culture. On your last night in Beijing, there will be a farewell reception to celebrate your journey together before heading home the next morning.

## Day 4, Monday, September 11:

### Beijing – USA (In-flight meals)

International flight from Beijing to the United States.

# Pricing

<b>Main Tour</b> <i>(land only, per person based on double occupancy)</i>	<b>\$6,455</b>
Single supplement	\$1,895
<b>Optional Pre Tour</b> <i>(including air from Shanghai – Hong Kong, per person based on double occupancy)</i>	<b>\$1,650</b>
Single supplement	\$635
<b>Optional Post Tour</b> <i>(including air from Hohhot – Beijing, per person based on double occupancy)</i>	<b>\$1,395</b>
Single supplement	\$725

## 5-STAR HOTEL ACCOMODATIONS DURING THE TRIP:

- **Hong Kong** Sheraton Hong Kong Hotel & Towers
- **Chengdu** Jinjiang Hotel
- **Xi'an** Hilton Hotel Xian
- **Hohhot** Wan Da Wenhua Hotel
- **Shanghai** Shanghai Grand Central Hotel
- **Beijing** Grand Hyatt Beijing

*Although not expected, Easton Resource Development reserves the right to substitute hotels of same or better quality, and alter the itinerary, withdraw any tour and make any desirable alteration for the convenience of the operation of tours.*

## TOUR PRICE INCLUDES:

- Deluxe 5 star hotel accommodations
- All meals listed at fine Chinese restaurants specializing in regional cuisines
- Gratuities for all local guides, national tour director, servers, hotel porters, and all drivers
- Admission to attractions listed in itinerary
- All ground and air transportation within China
- English-speaking international tour director and local guides
- Medical Evacuation coverage (details provided in your confirmation materials)
- Preparatory materials

**TOUR PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:**

- Domestic U.S. and International airfares
- Chinese Visa Service Fee (approximately \$170.00 per passport)
- Any personal charges such as excess baggage charges, phone bills, postage, laundry, alcoholic drinks, insurance premiums, or charges arising from deviation
- Meals not included in itinerary or arranged by the local tour escort
- Any other charges levied by local, state or federal government agency

**BOOKING & PAYMENT**

- If the booking is made less than 90 days before departure, the entire cost must be paid upon booking
- Credit cards may be used for the deposit. Please note only personal/company checks are accepted for the final payment/balance due.





# Important Notices

## **REGISTRATION DEADLINE**

The registration deadline is Wednesday, February 15, 2017. Those who register after this deadline will be put on a waiting list and will be informed about their registration status by early March.

## **RECOMMENDED AGE**

This travel experience is designed for ages 50 and older, although all ages are encouraged to participate.

## **CANCELLATION & CHARGES**

No cancellation is valid until it is received in writing by the Office of Alumni Relations at Rice University. Penalties will be based on the date of receipt of written notice. Trip cancellations fees (not including a \$250 non-refundable service fee from deposit): 91 or more days prior to departure \$700 per person forfeited; 90-46 days prior to departure, \$1,500 per person forfeited; 45-31 days prior to departure, \$2,500 per person forfeited; 30-0 days prior to departure, no refund is made.

## **INSURANCE**

Rice University, the Association of Rice Alumni, Asia Society Texas Center and Easton Resource Development, Inc. (ERD) cannot be responsible or liable for loss, damage or theft of personal luggage and belongings, nor can we be liable for personal injury, accident or illness. We strongly urge you to check with your insurance agent to make sure you are adequately covered for any eventualities. You can purchase additional insurance to cover luggage, personal effects, accident and health. Upon booking, you will be emailed information about travel insurance offered by the preferred partner of the Rice Alumni Traveling Owls. We strongly recommend the purchase of "trip cancellation" insurance.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The liability of Rice University, the Association of Rice Alumni, Asia Society Texas Center and ERD as tour operator is strictly limited. We serve only as agents for independent suppliers in securing tour arrangements, and therefore will not accept responsibility for wrongful, negligent, or arbitrary acts or omissions of these independent contractors, their employees or representatives. Rice University, Asia Society Texas Center and ERD are not liable for injury, damage, loss, accident, or delay that may be caused by events not within our control, including without limitation, acts of terrorism, war, strikes, defect of any vehicle, or negligence or default of any third party. All tickets issued are subject to the terms and conditions specified by air carriers, cruise line and other suppliers. We make every effort to operate our tours as planned, but reserve the right to make itinerary changes as necessary.

ERD, Rice University, and Asia Society Texas Center reserve the right to change the trip itinerary at any time and for any reason. Schedules, hours, sightseeing events, special programs, lectures, and hosts are subject to change. Given the unpredictable nature of schedules and availability, travelers are reminded that hosts and/or group escorts may be substituted if necessary and in the unlikely event of this happening, it would not alter the above stated cancellation penalties should travelers wish to withdraw their participation in the event of host and/or group escort changes. ERD reserves the right to substitute hotels of same or better quality, and alter the itinerary, withdraw any tour and make any desirable alteration for the convenience of the operation of tours. If with unforeseen circumstances ERD reserves the right to cancel the tour prior to departure. Rice University, Asia Society Texas Center, and ERD have no liability for personal international air arrangements on event tour is cancelled. Liability for such cancellation is limited to full refund of money received by ERD and this will constitute full settlement with the tour members.



# Reservation Form

Passenger 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Check One:  Traveling Owls  Asia Society  
(please print your name as it appears on passport)

Passenger 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Check One:  Traveling Owls  Asia Society  
(please print your name as it appears on passport)

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Business Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address(es) \_\_\_\_\_

- Land-Only Rate (includes all domestic air and ground transportation in China): **\$6,455** (per person, double occupancy)
- Single supplement: **\$1,895**
- Optional Pre-Tour (including air from Shanghai to Hong Kong): **\$1,650** (per person, double occupancy)
- Single supplement (for optional pre-tour): **\$635**
- Optional Post-Tour (including air from Hohhot to Beijing): **\$1,395** (per person, double occupancy)
- Single supplement (for optional post-tour): **\$725**

## Room Preferences:

- Smoking     Non-Smoking Rooms     Twin Beds (standard)     Double Beds (when available)

I will share a room with \_\_\_\_\_

*(I agree that this person will send their reservation form separately. Should their reservation not be received, I agree to pay single supplement.)*

## Deposit Payment (please check your method of deposit):

Enclosed is a check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ (**\$800 per person deposit**) for \_\_\_\_\_ person/people on which includes \$250 non-refundable fee per person. Please make checks to "**Easton Resource Development Inc.**"

MasterCard     American Express     Discover     Visa

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ CVV Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (as printed on card): \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address (if different from above): \_\_\_\_\_

**I/we understand that final payment is due by June 2, 2017. Final payment must be made by personal/business check. I/we acknowledge the trip itinerary and agree to the terms and conditions.**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please fax or mail this reservation form with your deposit to:**

RICE ALUMNI TRAVELING OWLS – MS 520

Office of Alumni Relations

Houston, TX 77251-1892

Fax: 713-348-5210

Phone: 713-34-TRIPS

Email: [travelingowls@rice.edu](mailto:travelingowls@rice.edu)