Begin in Beijing, China’s capital since the Yuan dynasty (1,279-1,368 AD), and where past, present, and future mingle together in the crowded neighborhoods and streets. While Beijing has remained a hard-handed political power, it is also a thriving intellectual and artistic center, influencing China as a whole, as well as the rest of the world.

Continue to the old capital of Xi’an, where emperors ruled China for thousands of years. Bordering the Qinling Mountains and the banks of the Wei River, Xi’an has been the capital of some of the most important dynasties in China. Home of the treasured Terracotta Warriors and the eastern end of the Silk Road, Xi’an is a city filled with history. Between their famous jiaozi (dumpling) feasts, and history that stretches longer than the Great Wall, Xi’an epitomizes traditional Chinese culture.

Next visit Tibet, home to some of China’s most incredible natural scenery, including majestic mountains and sprawling grasslands. Dictated by an inextricable link between religion and politics and highlighted by a complicated history often riddled with conflict, Tibet is a compelling place to visit.

Finish in Chengdu, the capital city of Sichuan province. This city is Asia's first "UNESCO City of Gastronomy," and one of the world’s fastest growing and dynamic cities according to Forbes. It is also the gateway to Sichuan’s pandas and the site of one of the most important archaeological discoveries of the 21st century.

GROUP SIZE: 15 to 25 guests

PRICING: $9,495 per person, double occupancy / $1,995 single supplement

STUDY LEADER: ELIZABETH SHERWOOD-RANDALL is currently a senior fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. A Harvard College alum, she received her doctorate at Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar and has devoted her career to addressing the world’s most pressing global and domestic challenges. She has served in top leadership roles at the White House, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Energy. In the past eight years, she has participated in the highest levels of decision-making on national security and energy security, including as Deputy Secretary of Energy and as a Special Assistant to President Obama. Liz co-led a Presidential Trade Delegation to China and has played a key role in advancing clean energy cooperation with China and other Asian countries including Japan and South Korea. She has also led White House efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation and to ensure American military capabilities. On this program Liz will discuss the vital effort to address the North Korean threat to the region and beyond and she will share her broad and deep expertise discussing the opportunities and the challenges that we face in China’s rise.
**SCHEDULE BY DAY**

*B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner*

**SUNDAY, JUNE 24**
*INDEPENDENT FLIGHTS TO BEIJING*

Depart your home city on independent flights to Beijing, China.

**MONDAY, JUNE 25**
*BEIJING*

Welcome to Beijing! With the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square at its heart, Beijing is the political and cultural “middle” of the Middle Kingdom, despite being marooned in China’s arid northeast. Past and future collide in Beijing’s vibrant neighborhoods; and space-age retail developments abut the city’s gentrifying *hutong* alleyways which are increasingly home to craft beer bars, boutique hotels, contemporary art galleries, and fine dining.

Upon arrival, your Beijing guide and driver will meet you at the airport and transfer you to your hotel to spend the rest of your day at leisure.

Early arrivals might choose to take a walk to Shi Jia Hutong Museum or go to Wuyong Gallery, a small gallery featuring lovely collections of Chinese folk culture.

Tonight meet your fellow travels at orientation followed by a simple dinner at the hotel.

Overnight: *Waldorf Astoria Beijing (D)*

**TUESDAY, JUNE 26**
*BEIJING*

In the morning visit Tiananmen Square. With the iconic portrait of Mao Zedong looming over the Tiananmen gates, this public square is one of the largest in the world. It has been the site of numerous historical events in China but is usually now bustling with visitors, kite-flyers, and vendors.

Next, enter the Forbidden City, home to emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasty for more than 500 years. The over 800 buildings and 9,000 chambers of the Forbidden City were filled with only the elite officials and associates of the imperial family. The Palace Museum is now the best-preserved palace complex in China. Crowds of tourists are free to roam the courtyards, imagining a life far different from the one they lead now—where emperors ruled, empresses and concubines strolled in the gardens, and palace staff lived for centuries behind the towering red walls.

Here, have an exclusive visit to Qianlong Garden inside the Forbidden City with a local expert to get a close-up look at the treasures from the imperial family.

After lunch at a nearby restaurant, walk to Temple Restaurant Beijing and visit the gallery in this 600-year old temple. Meet one of the founders and learn how he turned this ruined ancient temple into an astonishing place with a French restaurant, a hotel, and an art gallery.

Then get ‘lost’ in Beijing’s antiquated and interwoven *hutongs* (alleys), which make up the fabric of Beijing’s past. Visit a traditional siheyuan home (courtyard house) to try your hand at local past times such as calligraphy, Chinese yo-yo, or knot-making.

In the evening celebrate at a welcome dinner at Duck de Chine, Beijing’s most stylish and innovative duck restaurant.

Before the dinner, join Ms. Sarah Jane Ho (HBS) for a talk about etiquette. Sarah is the founder and principal of Institute Sarita, China’s first high-end boutique finishing school based in Beijing.

Overnight: *Waldorf Astoria Beijing (B, L, D)*

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27**
*BEIJING*

In the morning, make your way to the iconic Great Wall. Starting at the sea and stretching more than one thousand miles to the desert frontiers of China’s west, the Great Wall is a lasting symbol of China’s imperial might; built over the course of two millennia, it is actually a series of defensive walls erected to protect
China’s heartland from invaders. Although it ultimately failed as a defensive structure, the Great Wall remains a monument to the ingenuity and determination of imperial China.

Two hours outside Beijing proper, the Mutianyu section of the Great Wall affords views of the stone structure snaking over precipitous mountain ridges on the horizon. For the more daring visitors, Mutianyu also offers a toboggan ride to the bottom of the wall. For a fast and fun route to the base, the toboggan ride won’t disappoint.

Have lunch at the School House restaurant, renovated from an abandoned primary school to an eco-restaurant with great western food and a beautiful view of the Wall.

In the afternoon, delve into the heart of Beijing’s contemporary art scene at the 798 Art District, based rather ironically within an abandoned industrial complex. Explore the various artist spaces and even try some hands-on work with a local artist.

Overnight: Waldorf Astoria Beijing (B, L, D)

THURSDAY, JUNE 28
BEIJING TO XI’AN

After an early breakfast head to the airport for your flight to Xi’an. Upon arrival, your Xi’an guide and driver will meet you at the airport with your private vehicle.

Once the world’s most cosmopolitan city, Tang Dynasty capital Xi’an (then known as Chang’an) was a multicultural metropolis of two million people, the terminus of the dusty Silk Road, and a melting pot of religion, philosophy, and technology. Today this prosperous city retains traces of its glorious past from its Ming-era city walls to its Buddhist pagodas and subterranean army of Terracotta Warriors protecting the tomb of China’s first emperor Qin Shi Huang. Thick with the aroma of char-grilled lamb, the narrow lanes of the Muslim Quarter remain a bustle of commerce and color, while foodies in Xi’an forage for hearty wheat noodles, roujiamo pork “hamburgers” and dumplings.

Your first visit in Xi’an is to the unflinching, eternally-stationed Terracotta Warriors Army. Unearthed in the suburbs of Xi’an, the Terracotta Warriors army comprises one of the most remarkable archeological discoveries of all time. Consisting of 8,000 life-size soldiers, 100 chariots and 600 horses, none of which are identical, the army was built to guard the remains of Emperor Qin Shihuang, housed in a massive mausoleum complex. This pivotal and controversial first emperor forged a handful of warring states into a unified China and began construction of the Great Wall. Despite drawing many curious visitors, this UNESCO World Heritage site exudes a charged silence. One might even expect a command to ring out urging the army to rouse itself from its 2,200-year slumber and march into battle.

After lunch at a local traditional Chinese restaurant, make a pilgrimage to the Great Mosque, the religious focal point of China’s Muslim populace.

Let the savory aroma wafting from the countless food stalls of Xi’an Muslim Quarter envelop you as you pass by stalls of Halal skewers, roast mutton, and persimmon cakes. You will be able to try some of the local snacks while we walk.

Tonight enjoy bite-sized pieces of heaven at a delicious dumpling dinner.

Overnight: Sofitel Legend Xi’an (B, L, D)

FRIDAY, JUNE 29
XI’AN

In the morning wander through the exhibition halls of the Shaanxi History Museum, which has been dubbed the “Treasure Chest of Ancient China.”

Gaze into the heart of Xi’an as you walk or bike along the Ancient City Wall enclosing the historical city center.

Next, pay homage to the Big Wild Goose Pagoda, whose fanciful name belies its status as one of the most famous Buddhist pagodas in China.

Enjoy a refreshing dinner at a vegetarian restaurant near the Big Goose Pagoda Square.

Overnight: Sofitel Legend Xi’an (B, L, D)
SATURDAY, JUNE 30
XI'AN TO LHASA
This morning transfer to the airport for your flight to Lhasa.
Upon arriving in Lhasa Gonggar airport (LXA) your Lhasa guide will meet you with your private chauffeur to transfer to your hotel.
Lhasa is around 10,500 feet above sea level, so the remainder of the day can be spent at leisure to allow you to acclimate to this higher altitude. If your energy permits, your guide will lead you along the Barkhor pilgrimage route.
Overnight: Shangri-La Lhasa (B, D)

SUNDAY, JULY 1
LHASA
Welcome to Lhasa! Huddled in a valley basin surrounded by the Himalayas, Lhasa is one of the world's highest cities at an average elevation of 11,480 feet. Meaning "place of the gods," Lhasa became Tibet's political, religious and economic center after the fifth Dalai Lama moved the capital here in 1642.
Today visit Jokhang Temple, a sacred site of Indian and Nepalese influences. A blend of Nepalese and Indian architecture, Jokhang Temple is the oldest and holiest Tibetan Buddhist site. Built in the 7th century by King Songtsen Gampo and his two foreign wives, the temple is famous not only for its beautiful architecture but also for the massive crowds of pilgrims who go daily to worship. They recite sacred mantras, kindle the continuously lit chömay, (butter lamps), and honor deities. The temple is also home to Tibet's most sacred relic: the Jowo Rinpoche, or Jowo Shakyamuni, a scripture done by Buddha at age twelve. The roof awards you with stunning views of Potala Palace against a backdrop of snowcapped mountains. If interested, you can rise early to join the pilgrims in the traditional kora.
Also visit the Potala Palace, Tibet's defining religious landmark. The palace was the residence of the Dalai Lama until the 14th Dalai Lama fled to India during the 1959 Tibetan uprising. It is now a museum and World Heritage site.
Additional stops include an Old Tibetan pharmacy and a traditional Tibetan medical expert. Also visit a local Tibetan Thangka painting workshop to appreciate up close how these intricate Buddhist paintings are made.
In the evening attend a welcome dinner at a restaurant overlooking the Potala Palace.
Overnight: Shangri-La Lhasa (B, D)

MONDAY, JULY 2
LHASA
Today make your way past imposing granite outcrops to Pabongka Monastery, where local legend claims that the surrounding land was home to two divine tortoises. Pabongka, meaning "giant stone palace" was also built by King Songtsen Gampo in the 7th century, even earlier than Jokhang Temple.
After the monastery, take a 30-minute hike to Chupzang Nunnery. Part of the Gelug sect of Tibetan Buddhism, Chupzang Nunnery is tucked away in an area of emerald fields and houses 80 red-robed nuns. Rather than a traditional nunnery, Chupzang is more of a communal living place for nuns.
Enjoy a refreshing lunch at a restaurant close to Sera Monastery, one of the “great three” Gelug university monasteries of Tibet. If time and availability allows, you might be able to make your own prayer flag at Sera's printing center and witness monks debate age-old scripts in the courtyard.
Overnight: Shangri-La Lhasa (B, D)

TUESDAY, JULY 3
LHASA TO CHENGDU
After breakfast, drive about 3 to 4 hours to holy Yamdrok Tso Lake (14,725 feet) in order to enjoy a picnic lunch surrounded by snowpeaks. You may take a leisurely hike through the beautiful scenery.
In the afternoon transfer to the airport for your flight to Chengdu (approximately 2 hours).

Welcome to Chengdu! Sichuan is one of China’s most distinctive provinces, known for its spicy food, dynamic population, and China’s “national treasure”—the giant panda. Sichuan boasts stunning natural beauty, with the mountain forests and fantastic aquamarine lakes of Jiuzhaigou in the north and gorgeous mountain scenery at Minya Gongga in the province’s west. The capital city of Chengdu is a modern metropolis set on the west end of the fertile Sichuan Basin, a region commonly fought over during ancient times. Aside from spicy Sichuan food, the prevalence of Buddhism is undeniable. Chengdu’s Wenshu Monastery, the holy mountain of Emei Shan, and world’s largest stone-carved Buddha are some of the most interesting travel destinations in China.

Upon arriving in Chengdu, your local guide will meet you and transfer you to your hotel. This afternoon experience a Chinese long-spouted gongfu tea ceremony. A local tea master will perform a private gongfu tea ceremony. “Gongfu tea” literally translates to “making tea with effort,” which is a common tea ceremony practice in China. However, Chengdu’s tea ceremony is unique for its long-spouted teapots and rhythmic dance movements that turn the traditional tea ceremony into a spectacle.

Then explore the lively alleyways of Kuanzhaixiangzi, literally translated to “broad narrow alleys.” If you feel adventurous, try eating local Chengdunese snacks!

Overnight: Ritz Carlton Chengdu (B, L, D)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 4
CHENGDU

In the morning, drive 1.5 hours to Dujiangyan Panda Research Center for a panda adventure within its forested grounds. Get ready for a day of exploration at Dujiangyan Panda Research Center. First, take off from your hotel along scenic countryside roads that cut through villages and farm fields. The first panda sighting in Dujiangyan was in 1953 and since then, several pandas more have surfaced. The center’s primary goal is to increase the population of wild pandas in the area, thus the grounds are designed to fit their natural habitat so to get them accustomed to wildlife in the future. Enjoy adventuring through the bamboo-covered hills to seek out pandas like they were in the wild.

In the evening back in Chengdu, marvel at the rapid skill of “face-changing” at a Sichuanese opera show in the evening.

Overnight: Ritz Carlton Chengdu (B, L, D)

THURSDAY, JULY 5
CHENGDU

After an early start this morning, drive about 1.5 hours to visit the Sanxingdui Museum. The Sanxingdui were contemporaneous with the Shang Dynasty (1600–1046 BC) but had a distinct culture. The first jade relics were unearthed by a local farmer in 1929 but no major archaeological discoveries were made until 1986. The collection, featuring masks characterized by protruding features and other intricately carved artifacts and statues, represents one of modern China’s most significant archeological discoveries. With their striking features these masks are unique to the world of art history, and provide a fascinating glimpse into China’s diverse cultural roots.

Outside of the museum, a capital city wall larger than Zhengzhou, the capital of China at the time, suggests that a very advanced civilization inhabited this area.

In the afternoon transfer to the airport for your return flights.

Overnight: N/A (B, L)