

# **WINCO ECLIPSE TOURS, INC.**

## **ECLIPSE EXPEDITION 2009 + LUXURY YANGTZE CRUISE**

**JULY 6 - JULY 24, 2009**

**18 DAYS & 17 NIGHTS IN CHINA**

**TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE – JULY 22, 2009**

**HIGHLIGHTS – BEIJING, XI'AN, GUILIN (CRUISE LI RIVER), CHENGDU (PANDAS), DAZU (GROTTOES: BUDDHIST CARVINGS, ART & SCULPTURES), CHONGQING, YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE (MS EXPLORER – MOST ELEGANT SHIP ON YANGTZE), HANGZHOU, COASTAL VILLAGES, NEARLY 6 MINUTES TOTALITY, SHANGHAI**

### **MONDAY, JULY 6, 2009**

Depart USA for Beijing. Individual flights include meals aloft and in-flight entertainment.

### **TUESDAY, JULY 7, 2009 – ARRIVE BEIJING – D**

Clear customs and transfer to Beijing International Hotel in the Embassy District. (3 nights). Welcome Dinner. Brief Orientation.

### **WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 2009 – BEIJING – B, L, D**

Early Breakfast at Hotel. Morning excursion to Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City, the center of power of Imperial China from the 15<sup>th</sup> Century onward. Lunch at a local noodle restaurant. Afternoon visit to the ancient astronomical observatory Gu Guanziangtai in Beijing. This was originally built by Kublai Khan in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century atop a watchtower in what is now downtown Beijing. Today, the remains of the observatory include an outdoor display of eight bronze astronomical instruments. These were developed from European designs and date back to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Ming Dynasty. Special Peking Duck Dinner.

### **THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2009 – BEIJING – B, L, D**

Early Breakfast at Hotel. Visit the Summer Palace, one of the largest and most beautiful imperial gardens in China, en route to the Great Wall, one of the few man-made sights visible from space. We also pass through some of Beijing's extensive "green belt" forests, designed to prevent the western deserts from encroaching toward the city. We will visit the Mutianyu section of China's Great Wall. Built in 1368, about 90 miles north of Beijing, upon foundations of the wall built during the Northern Qi (AD 550-77), this section is in a dramatic and hilly setting that finds fewer tourists than other sections of the Great Wall. At Mutianyu, ride a cable car to the ridge top where the Great Wall is situated. Lunch. Stroll along the Great Wall, and learn about the history of this edifice, in so many ways emblematic of China's Middle Kingdom. Return to Beijing for special Dinner.

### **FRIDAY, JULY 10, 2009 – BEIJING TO XI'AN – B, L, D**

Early Breakfast at Hotel. Morning flight to Xi'an. Lunch. Afternoon introduction to Xi'an including a visit to the old wall and Muslim section of the city. Xi'an Sheraton Hotel (2 nights). Special Dinner.

## **SATURDAY, JULY 11, 2009 – XI'AN – TERRA COTTA WARRIORS – B, L, D**

Early Breakfast at Hotel. Morning visit to Xi'an's museum of Terra Cotta Warriors and horses from the Qin Dynasty, more than 2000 years ago. Most of these thousands of objects are displayed in situ. The most compelling have been relocated to a museum on site. Discovered in 1974, in an underground vault of earth and timber, here are more than 6000 amazingly well-preserved life-sized warriors and horses, in a battlefield formation. Each figure has its own facial expression and features; no two are alike. One of the great archeological "finds" of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One of the most impressive Highlights of our Tour!

Later we'll venture into the countryside for a picnic lunch, or eat in a local restaurant. In the afternoon, enjoy the ambiance of rural China, meet farm families and learn about their lives. Dinner and cultural program.

## **SUNDAY, JULY 12, 2009 – XI'AN TO GUILIN - B, L, D**

Early Breakfast at hotel. Morning visit to Banpo Warriors in Xi'an and to a new Museum recently opened in 2008. After lunch, we fly to Guilin, and transfer to our hotel. Special Dinner. (2 nights).

## **MONDAY, JULY 13, 2009 – GUILIN & YANGSHUO & LI RIVER CRUISE – B, L, D**

Early Breakfast. Enjoy a day trip to Yangshuo. We will cruise along the Li River, amongst some of the most spectacular scenery in the world. Iconic monoliths, these architectural masterworks appear as if on a familiar silk scroll. We will be surrounded by karst hills and landforms, the surreal-looking peaks and colorful protrusions that exist in abundance here as nowhere else. Intriguing shapes are interspersed among small villages and bamboo groves. We'll pass villagers engaged in their daily lives along the shores of the shallow river that meanders through this most unforgettable scenery. This fantasy of Nature will linger in your memories forever. Another of our amazing Highlights.

## **TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2009 – GUILIN TO CHENGDU – B, L, D**

Early Breakfast at hotel. Morning flight to Chengdu, capital of Sichuan. Chengdu is a modern city, fairly compact in size, and its roots go back to the Three Kingdoms (AD 221). After Lunch in Chengdu, we will visit the beautiful temple of Zhu Geliang or the garden that marks the one-time residence of the Tan Dynasty poet Du Fu, beloved by practically all Chinese. We will also visit the new Sichuan Provincial Museum. Dinner in Chengdu. This evening, we will enjoy a performance of Sichuan Folk Opera. Garden City Hotel (1 Night).

## **WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2009 – SICHUAN PANDAS & DAZU – B, L, D**

Early Breakfast. Morning departure for the Chengdu Panda Base, a breeding center for the Giant Panda, located on the outskirts of Chengdu. This facility has been very successful; it produces several baby pandas each year, with a goal to eventually restore pandas to the wild. Both Red Pandas and Giant Pandas are here. At the Panda Base, we can learn about the ecology of these cherished herbivores and about methods for breeding in captivity. For a contribution, you can have your photo taken next to a young panda. Giant pandas spend an inordinate amount of time eating bamboo, then sleep to conserve their energy. We will visit early in the day, before the lethargy of the mid-day heat ends their laughable antics and playful activity. The Pandas are among our lively Highlights!

Late morning departure for Dazu. We will have lunch in a local restaurant on the outskirts of Chengdu. There may be time to visit a farming village on the way to Dazu. Arrive Dazu late afternoon. Dinner. Dazu Hotel (1 Night).

## **THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2009 – DAZU; CHONGQING; MS YANGZI EXPLORER – B, L, D**

Early Breakfast. Then, a morning exploration of the Buddhist stone grottoes of Dazu. Dozens of grottoes, carved into the pink sandstone more than one thousand years ago, contain hundreds of figures whose demeanor ranges from wrathful to whimsical to serene. Here are unique examples of various philosophies and religions and they vary greatly in style. The grottoes include carvings, art and statues representing people and symbols ranging from royalty to villagers. We'll spend the morning enjoying this calm and beautifully secluded place situated at the source of a village stream. Lunch in Dazu. Afternoon drive to Chongqing. We board the Sanctuary "Explorer" in time for a sumptuous dinner.

### **MS YANGZI EXPLORER – Downstream - 3 Nights, 4 days.**

The 62-cabin MS Yangzi Explorer is the smallest and most exclusive cruise boat plying the waters of the stunning Three Gorges regions of China. This elegant yacht features luxury suites and cabins plus other luxury features such as a Spa, Viewing Lounge, Observation Deck, Library, and a Theatre area, plus an International Restaurant offering a wide array of menu options. Its first cruises on the Yangtze River are in May 2008. The history of the Three Gorges Region is tied to China's cultural evolution. The total length of this cruise is 660 kilometers (402 miles) and is considered by most Chinese to represent the single most scenic areas in all of China.

## **FRIDAY, JULY 17, 2009 – YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE – B, L, D on MS EXPLORER**

Today we disembark for a shore excursion in Fengdu, a charming river village known as "Ghost City," noted for its elaborate Daoist temple and bustling markets. We will explore inland to one of the major tributaries – the Dragon River, with its impressive karst formation cave, containing stalagmites and stalactites. Perhaps we will visit a relocated family or a local market and a supermarket, to gain insight into real life in rural China.

## **SATURDAY, JULY 18, 2009 – YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE – B, L, D on MS EXPLORER**

Early today, we will enter Qutang Gorge through the majestic Kui Men cliffs, resembling travel into an otherworldly destination. The river banks are guarded by steep cliffs while the river water gushes forward towards the western extremity of the gorge. Our travel through the treacherous course of the Gorges region brings us within some of the most famous geographic sights in China. Artists and poets have for centuries shared their visions of this most scenic of landscapes. A memorable Highlight!

The Wu Gorge is noted for the sheer, looming appearance of the numerous peaks which mark this portion of the river. After we clear the Wu Gorge, we will arrive at Badong, a thriving River port that lies near the confluence of the Yangtze and one of its tributaries, the Shennong Xi. We will disembark and travel on local longboats poled by Tujia boatmen, traditional mariners of the great junks. We will pass through amazing scenery: crystalline waters, rich forest and towering rock formations. We hope to glimpse some endangered flora and fauna, including the elusive Golden Hair Monkey. We will beach on a bend in the river and explore the shore before returning to its confluence with the Yangtze.

After we return to the Explorer, the ship will begin its passage through the majestic Xiling Gorge, then pass through the Three Gorges Dam. Our evening passage through the ship locks of the Three Gorges Dam Project takes approximately 3-4 hours. Another unforgettable Highlight.

## **SUNDAY, JULY 19, 2009 – YICHANG TO WUHAN & HANGZHOU - B, L, D**

After Breakfast, we will disembark from the Explorer in Yichang for our shore excursion to the site of the Three Gorges Dam Project, an excellent opportunity to view this massive structure, which is currently the world's largest engineering project. We will travel by bus to Wuhan. Lunch in Wuhan.

We will fly Wuhan to Hangzhou late afternoon, with a brief tour prior to dinner. Hangzhou, reputedly Marco Polo's favorite Chinese city, is situated next to a lake encircled by mountains. It is considered to have some of the best feng shui of any city in China. Special Dinner. Hangzhou Hotel (1 Night).

### **MONDAY, JULY 20, 2009 – HANGZHOU – B, L, D**

Early Breakfast at hotel. Morning visit to historical and scenic sites around the shore of Hangzhou's Xihu, or West Lake, likely China's most revered body of water, one of the scenic wonders of China. We will visit the Zhejiang Provincial Museum (small but worthwhile) on Gushan Island, accessible by a pedestrian causeway from the mainland. Lunch at a traditional restaurant near West Lake, followed by an afternoon visit to Liuhe Pagoda, on a hill overlooking the Qiantang River. Depending on the tide tables, we might see the huge tidal bore that occurs near the mouth of the Qiantang River near the time of the full moon. Then, we will drive towards our eclipse viewing location nearer to Jiazing or Jinshanwei. Dinner along the way. Hotel (2 Nights).

### **TUESDAY, JULY 21, 2009 – COASTAL VILLAGES - LOCAL TOURING – B, L, D**

Early Breakfast. Morning to enjoy the festivity of China as people go about their day to day business. We will explore shops and learn more about the community. Visit some of the local cultural sites, including old houses and temples. Lunch in local restaurant. Preview our eclipse viewing site in advance of next-day early morning First Contact. Eclipse preparations. Lecture by Peter R. Leavitt.

### **WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2009 – TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE - B, L, D**

Very Early Breakfast in Hotel. Very early a.m. departure for our eclipse-viewing site. First contact will occur at 8:23 a.m., with the sun at an elevation of 40 degrees over the horizon. Totality at our eclipse-viewing location will begin at 9:36 a.m., with the sun at an altitude of 57 degrees over the horizon – a perfect setting for gorgeous photography, or just to gaze in amazement. Fourth contact will be at 11:02 a.m. – another successful Eclipse Expedition! We will enjoy a full 5 minutes and 55 seconds of Totality, nearly the maximum duration possible for any Total Solar Eclipse.

We will be located near to the open ocean, which will help to dispel any clouds which may occur as the temperature drops during the initial phases. The cooler temperature flowing off the ocean will help to suppress the formation of clouds which develop as the moon continues its march across the face of the sun. We expect a sunnier climate and relief from the high humidity typical of inland regions along the eclipse path. Our expectations are for the best weather prospects (i.e. clear skies) at our eclipse viewing location of any site along the entire eclipse path.

Following the end of Fourth Contact, we will have lunch. Then, an afternoon drive to Shanghai. Some touring of Shanghai, depending on arrival time. Shanghai Hotel (2 Nights).

### **THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2009 – SHANGHAI – B, L, D**

Early Breakfast at Hotel. Full day touring Shanghai and environs. Shanghai is a beautiful city, a combination of modern practicality and ancient interesting sites. Visit the Exquisite Shanghai Museum, Bund, and other sites of great interest. Special celebratory Dinner.

### **FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2009 – SHANGHAI TO HOME - B**

Early Breakfast. Perhaps some time for last minute touring or shopping. Depart Hotel with adequate time to arrive at airport for flights home or other onward destination. Dinner on board plane.

Note: This Daily Itinerary is a guide only and is subject to change in the best interests of all group members should circumstances dictate. The leaders will brief you on daily schedule.

Price – US \$4,745.00 per person double occupancy + US \$795.00 in-China flights + International Air (to be announced Fall 2008) No Smoking. Group limited to 20 participants.

(Price subject to change if new 2009 rates are announced. In case of currency fluctuation of more than 3% or changes in local government taxes, we will adjust pricing accordingly up until final payment).

Please include US \$1,000.00, non-refundable, per person deposit for each reservation.

Trip cancellation insurance is available and is strongly recommended.

Members may participate in scientific experiments. Previous experience not required.

Price includes: all transfers, transport, touring, meals, and entry fees to sites mentioned above; deluxe air conditioned motor coach with the services of a licensed English speaking tour escort; guides for local culture and history; expert commentary on solar eclipses, climate, weather and agronomy; special eclipse viewing filters; comprehensive China Eclipse Expedition preparation and planning.

Not included: International air transportation, Domestic USA air.

Special fares available for group traveling together on International flights.

International Air – Special Fare package – information available Fall 2008.

Please see “Terms and Conditions” for further details.