

Language Immersion in Beijing, China

with Thomas Wong and Alicia Coffey

in partnership with EF Educational Tours

Dates of Travel: December 9-18, 2016

Travel Fee: \$3,900

Open to grades 9-12

COURSE DESCRIPTION

With 1.32 billion people in 3.7 million square miles, China is the world's largest country, its oldest civilization (the origin of gunpowder, porcelain, and noodles) and its fastest-growing economy. This twelve-day program, offered in conjunction with EF Educational Tours, will introduce you to ancient and contemporary China while teaching you the basics of Mandarin, one of the world's great languages. Our first two days are spent exploring the history, legends, and customs of Beijing and its environs: we will visit Tiananmen Square, attend a spectacular kung fu performance, walk a segment of the Great Wall and experience a traditional tea ceremony. Language instruction, led by native Mandarin speakers, is fully interactive: you'll acquire a vocabulary and learn pronunciation as you participate in a calligraphy lesson, visit a Tibetan Buddhist monastery, shop at a local food market, and try your hand at cooking traditional Chinese dishes. For the last full day of our trip we will travel south on one of China's famous bullet trains to Shanghai, the world's largest city. Our guided tour will take in everything from the World Financial Center to the Yu Yuan Garden to a dazzling performance of Chinese acrobatics.

There will be five days devoted to learning and practicing Mandarin: no previous experience is required.

Included in Tour:

Round-trip flights on major carriers; travel insurance; full-time Language Immersion Tour Director; air-conditioned motor coaches and internal transportation; 8 overnight stays in centrally-located hotels with private bathrooms; select authentic local meals; 15 hours of language learning at one of EF's International Language Schools; WeShare online project-based educational tool.

Expenses not included:

beverages and lunches; any applicable luggage fees imposed by airlines.

DAY 1: FLY OVERNIGHT TO CHINA

DAY 2: BEIJING

Welcome to Beijing, capital of the People's Republic of China. You're greeted at the airport by your specially trained Language Immersion Program Director, who will be with you throughout your tour. Transfer to your hotel to rest from your flight.

DAY 3: BEIJING

– Visit the Forbidden City, a Chinese imperial palace, then continue to Tiananmen Square, site of the student-led demonstrations in 1989.

DAY 4: BADALING | BEIJING

- Travel to Badaling this morning for a walk on the Great Wall of China. Construction of this 3,000-mile man-made marvel began over 2,300 years ago.
- Preparing and drinking tea is an important part of Chinese culture, in daily life and especially during festivals. Today, participate in a traditional tea ceremony while learning more about local customs.
- See “Legends of Kung Fu,” a show that tells the story of a young boy, Chun Yi (the pure one), who becomes a monk and learns kung fu in order to pursue spiritual and physical harmony. Chinese martial arts originated more than 4,000 years ago as a means of self- defense, hunting and military training. It slowly evolved into a way to a health practice.

DAY 5: BEIJING

Today's Theme: Chinese Art— China has many artistic traditions, such as calligraphy, pottery, painting and porcelain art. As you'll learn today, Chinese art has been heavily influenced throughout history by China's many dynasties and emperors.

- Master art-related terms while practicing your conversational Mandarin in an interactive language lesson.
- Visit the Yonghe Lamasery temple, home to Han Chinese and Tibetan artwork.
- Visit the 798 Dashanzi Modern Art Zone, a unique complex of galleries and boutiques housed in old factories.

DAY 6: BEIJING

Today's Theme: Chinese History and Heritage— From the Xia Dynasty over 4,000 years ago to the People's Republic of China today, many unique customs have evolved. Today, you will learn about the dynasties that have ruled China through periods of unity and upheaval, each leaving its own mark in China's vibrant and complex heritage.

- Visit the temples, gardens and lakes of the Summer Palace, former playground for emperors. While there, learn the basics of Taiji. Your Program Director will guide you through a gentle series of stretching exercises and teach you how Taiji is an internal martial art, meditation system and health practice.
- Learn about the dynasties that have ruled China and practice your conversational Mandarin in an interactive language lesson.
- Try your hand at traditional Chinese calligraphy. The Chinese name for calligraphy (*shufa*, 書法) translates to “the way of writing.” This is your chance to gain a deeper understanding of why calligraphy is an important and appreciated aspect of Chinese cultural arts.
- Enjoy a homemade dinner with a local Hutong family.

DAY 7: BEIJING

Today's Theme: Daily Life in China— With such a long history, it's inevitable that the Chinese developed a wide variety of hobbies that you'll see throughout your time in China. Most of these traditional activities and exercises, including Taiji, Chase the Ace, shuttlecock, and the dance of the bamboo pole, originated from day-to-day activities and are learned by most Chinese kids at a young age.

- Learn about daily life in China and practice your Mandarin.
- Visit the Temple of Heaven and play Chase the Ace, a traditional Chinese card game, alongside locals at this popular hangout spot.
- Work on your language skills with vendors at the famous Pearl Market.

DAY 8: BEIJING

Today's Theme: Chinese Culinary Traditions— China is a country with many diverse regions, each with its own culinary specialties. Ingredients, tastes, styles and ways of preparation may differ, but many of the traditional dishes include staple foods like rice, noodles, soybeans and vegetables. Today, you'll get a taste of China's culinary traditions.

- Rows of unfamiliar fruits and veggies line the countless food markets across Beijing. If you're brave enough, you can even try some local delicacies, including grasshoppers and sea snakes. This morning you'll interact with local vendors during a market challenge.
- Learn and practice food-related vocabulary in an interactive language lesson.
- Prepare your dinner at a cooking class led by a local Chinese chef.

DAY 9: BEIJING | SHANGHAI

- Travel to Shanghai in one of China's high-speed bullet trains.
- Visit the Shanghai World Financial Center.
- Enjoy free time on the Bund, a popular mile- long riverfront area.
- Witness thrilling aerial displays during a traditional Chinese acrobatics show. According to historical records, carvings and mural paintings in tombs and grottoes, the origins of Chinese acrobatics date back over 2,000 years. Modern acrobatics in China have pushed the limits of creative and technical skill beyond that of any other culture.

DAY 10: SHANGHAI

- Explore Shanghai on a guided tour, with stops at the Jade Buddha Temple and Yu Yuan Garden.
- Enjoy free time to visit local markets and practice your bargaining skills.

DAY 11: DEPART FOR HOME

Your tour may be coming to an end, but your lifelong love of Mandarin is only beginning.

