

China Tour FAQ – 2017 American Aviators VIP Tour of China

www.travelairetours.com/FAQs.html "Join us for an extraordinary experience!" -- "China Nina" and "Capt. Larry Sez"

To those who reserve space for this tour by sending in their deposit check and signed Reservation Form, you will have access to extensive additional tour tips and guidance in many areas beyond what you will find below on this page via a "Client Only" section on this web site that is accessible only after reserving space on the tour. I will E-mail you instructions for accessing this special area.

We also **strongly** recommend you consider purchasing travel insurance - either on your own or through us. At this point, we offer participation in the **Travel Safe Group Travel Insurance Policy** which has excellent coverage at a very affordable group price. You must purchase this either when you submit your deposit check or shortly thereafter (combined or separately made out to **TRAVEL AIRE**). A check for insurance must be deposited into the same **TRAVEL AIRE** escrow account within 15 days of depositing the tour deposit) in order to have pre-existing conditions also covered – the bank dates of deposit are what they use for confirmation should there be a claim submitted later:

----- Pre-Existing Condition Coverage

With all of the **TravelSafe Protect-A-Group Plans**, the policy exclusion for **Pre-Existing Conditions** is waived provided the traveler has paid his/her premium to the Group Leader or Organizer within 15 days of his/her first payment to join the group.

----- Bankruptcy or Default

The Comprehensive Plan provides coverage should a Trip have to be canceled or interrupted due to Bankruptcy or Default, as defined, of any airline, cruise line or tour operator occurring more than 14 days after the benefit effective date, provided the traveler has paid his/her premium to the Group Leader or Organizer within 15 days of his/her first payment to join the group.

The insurance company views the dates officially paid as the dates payments are deposited by us into our special travel agency escrow account – for both the initial deposit to reserve space on the tour and for the payment of the insurance premium.

Current policy premium is \$200 pp based on the normal tour total with no extras.

You can view the policy coverage synopsis by clicking [HERE](#).

To view the complete policy (generic - official ones will vary slightly by your state of residence) by clicking [HERE](#).

I cover more **specific** luggage, clothing, and packing information; guidance for the handling of Chinese currency, Travelers' Checks, credit cards and ATM cards; Internet availability during the tour; medications and medical issues; hotel and bus issues; and so many more areas of concern to make the tour experience go smoothly for you. **Latest updates effective as of 22 JAN 2017.**

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1. **CONNECTIONS to/from San Francisco and SINGLE SUPPLEMENT Charges**

(prices quoted are the current rate per person roundtrip and *do not include additional taxes and fees* imposed by the airlines, airports, etc. - and are subject to change without notice until tickets are issued in Feb./Mar. 2017)

Note: To qualify as "**CONNECTION**" flights, they **MUST** occur on the **same day** in **BOTH** directions as the day of the International departure and return flights between San Francisco and China and usually must arrive within 4 hours of the continuing connection flight. Exceptions can apply under certain circumstances.

If this doesn't work for you, and/or you wish to arrive a day or more early before continuing on to China (or etc.), then you must make your own roundtrip connecting flights to/from San Francisco International Airport. We are not certified to make any air travel arrangements other than what is permitted for the tour package by contract.

\$160 pp roundtrip for **Los Angeles** (LAX) or **San Diego** (SAN)

\$250 pp roundtrip for **Reno** (RNO), **Las Vegas** (LAS), **Palm Springs** (PSP), **Phoenix** (PHX), or **Tucson** (TUS)

\$280 pp roundtrip for **Portland** (PDX)

\$330 pp roundtrip for **Seattle** (SEA)

Add to the above **\$28 pp** US domestic Roundtrip Airport Tax & Security Fee [est. as of 1/7/17]

***** Call to get specifics for YOUR needs *****

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT for those traveling alone on the 17-Day tour: \$958 *please call for details*****

We do carry a list of those who have no traveling partner and wish to find a roommate. While we will not put people together ourselves, we will put you in touch (with permission) with any others in the same situation to allow you both to determine if you are compatible and are both willing to share a room throughout the tour so that you can both save this additional cost. It is always more fun to travel with someone and we also encourage singles to try to find their own choice of roommate. There is a possibility of offering a hybrid single supplement for a reduced fee whereby you share a cabin on the ship for 4 nights but have your own hotel room for the rest of the tour (before and after the cruise).

2. **How do I sign up for the tour?**

a) First click on: [General Conditions Disclosures](#) and read (also found elsewhere on this website).

b) Then click on: [Reservation Form](#) (also elsewhere on this website) - it is **now an interactive fill-in format which can be filled out online** - *call if you need help in with this method* - then **print** it out, **sign** and **date** it and **mail** it in to the address shown at the end of the form along with your \$300 pp deposit check in order to secure space on the tour -- **OR -- You can also print out a blank form and fill it out by hand**, then sign & date it and mail it in with your deposit check. ****IMPORTANT**** - Decide if you want to purchase **TRAVEL SAFE Group Travel Insurance** through us. Payment of the premium must be deposited by us into the escrow account within **15 days** of your tour reservation check being deposited to the same account. Call us for a quote of the cost based on your expected tour total.

c) Mail the completed reservation form and a check for **\$300 per person** to "**TRAVEL AIRE**" at the address on the form (**21133 Jimmerrall Lane, Groveland, CA 95321**).

3. **What are the estimated additional expenses I can expect for those things not covered by the basic tour price as well as any mandatory add-ons to the tour price sub-total - the following items refer to the FULL 17-day Tour**

[- a shorter 12-day tour version is being added and will have lower China domestic taxes of \$105 pp.]

We have been quoted the following by the airports, airlines, and etc. Items #1 through #3 are under the control of various government agencies and are subject to change without notice - and cannot be locked in until tickets are issued a few weeks prior to departure following the visa issuance. Items #4 and #5 should not be vulnerable to any further increases however.

\$636.00 US & China Int'l Departure Taxes, China Domestic Air Travel Taxes, Fuel Surcharges, and San Fran PFC Airport fee **all subject to change without prior notice**. [This figure will reduce to \$120 for those providing their own international flight arrangements.]

\$160.00 China visa fee -- includes all handling, processing, and secure return of passport to you (including tracking and insurance) when your final tour package is sent to you. **NOTE:** If you need special handling, **either earlier or later than the group handling**, you will be billed the exact cost of the extra shipment to you. [You may also opt to your visa yourself instead in which case we will not add this to your charges.] Call for **SPECIFIC** details. **For those who are in the US via a Green Card**, please check for possible new requirements for international travel from/to the US.

\$796.00 **TOTAL estimate** of additional fees and charges per person NOT including travel insurance or tips and personal expenses (**subject to change without notice**, but we try to advise ASAP of any - *current as of 1/7/2017*).

(For those connecting in from other airports, see Item #1 above for US domestic add-on fares and taxes.)

One other area of expense you should consider for your budget planning: **Tips** [see below]

FINAL PAYMENT DATE has been changed from 12 JAN to 19 JAN 2017.

Invoices will be E-mailed on or before 11 JAN 2017.

4. What about tipping on the tour?

We estimate the usual and normal tipping for the national, city and river guides, the bus drivers, and the Yangtze River boat crew will total **about \$160 per person for the entire 17-day tour**. We provide a chart to help you with this task each day of the tour for the city guides and the bus drivers, at the end of the cruise for the boat crew and river guides, and at the end of the entire tour for your specially assigned national guide. Note: China views "tips" as **expected** "thank-you's" at the minimum suggested levels.

5. Do you suggest travel insurance?

We currently offer **Travel Safe's Group Travel Policy** which has an excellent and less expensive group travel offering. See more details re: this near the top of this page. The expected cost of this is approximately **\$200 pp** for the normal tour total. We **STRONGLY** encourage everyone to obtain individual travel insurance which covers international travel if deciding not to participate in the group coverage. To be sure that any pre-existing coverages are included, the insurance payment must be deposited to our escrow account within 15 days of depositing the tour reservation deposit. You can view the basic coverage of this policy by clicking [HERE](#).

6. What are the passport requirements for this tour?

Your passport needs to be valid through at least the 15th of September 2017 (*Chinese Embassy now requires validity for a full 6 mos. following departure date*) and have at least **TWO blank visa pages** remaining (do not confuse these with the last two pages in your passport which are only for endorsements). If you do not yet have a passport or yours has expired, just enter "applying" or "renewing" in the space provided on the Reservation Form and then advise us when you have received it. You will need to have a valid passport in your possession before the end of January 2017.

Many US Post Offices are now able to offer passport services, including passport photo taking at some. If you are either applying for a new passport or renewing an expired or soon-to-be-expired passport, obtain **2 sets of official passport photos** as you will also need one additional photo to provide with your China visa application. Many stores and businesses such as AAA, Costco, Walmart, Walgreens, photo shops or etc.). **Do NOT** submit your own photos taken by your digital camera, etc., as the parameters for such are VERY specific and your own are likely to be refused - which could cause a critical delay during the last phase.

The US Dept. of State offers the following web site with all the information you need for either applying for or renewing a passport: <http://www.travel.state.gov/>

Those with foreign (non-US) passports will need to **provide your actual "Green Card"** when you submit your passport to us when it is time to apply for the China visa stamp in your passport (currently estimated to be around Feb. 1, 2017).

7. How is the China visa handled?

I will be E-mailing out a China visa application form (*and instructions on how to complete it, plus a sample filled out*) to each tour participant when it is time to submit your passports to us for processing through the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco. These items are also available in the special TOUR SUPPORT area I will send you a link for in early JAN. These items (passport + completed China visa form with official-type passport photo), should be received by us in **early February 2016 (date to be announced when determined)** for submission by our tour operator to the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco. You can also access a blank form for yourself by going to the following web site (*it is in Adobe .pdf format*) where it can be printed out and typed – hand-printed is no longer accepted (type in **all CAPS**) and then signed and dated - **or** - filled out online and then printed out for signature and date. NOTE: There are new jurisdiction limits that require special instructions in you do NOT live in Northern California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, or Alaska – PLEASE contact me for options. You can also obtain your visa through a number of other avenues - but in any case, **you will need to follow our provided instructions for proper completion** of the Tourist type "L" visa, Form V.2013. **NEW requirement – must now also provide photocopies of your driver's license and open main front page of your passport.**

To view and/or download our COMPLETE 2-page China visa INSTRUCTIONS, click [HERE](#).

To access the new 4-page China visa application Form V.2013, go to :

<http://www.china-embassy.org/chn/lszj/bgxz/P020130830121570742708.pdf>

As of 1/7/2017, the **INTERNET EXPLORER** browser works best but **CHROME** is also OK in supporting the ability to fill out the form on your computer before printing it out to sign, date, and add the photo - the fill-in-format does not function in **Firefox** at this time.

To fill out the form online, first press your **CAPS lock** since it must be completed in **all capital letters**. Then click on "**Highlight Fields**" at the top right to toggle that option on and off. To clear the form and enter data for a second person, click on "**Reset Form**" just above the space for the photo (near top right). Be sure to **PRINT your name on the back of the photo as it appears in your passport** before affixing it to the too-small space by using a glue-stick, two-sided tape or stapling it there - align it to the left and bottom lines of the space indicated.

For those who are in the US via a Green Card, please check for possible new requirements for international travel from/to the US. The current information is that you need to submit your actual **GREEN CARD** along with your foreign passport and visa

application form. **This subject is also covered in more depth on the main page of the special Tour Support area.**

8. What shots are required for travel to China?

There are no shots required for travel to China. We are on an organized tour going to places checked and approved by China's official Bureau of Tourism. We only dine at facilities also approved by them and approved for the Western digestive system. The following suggestions have nothing in particular to do with traveling to China but are wise steps to take in general for good health maintenance. Have your Tetanus shot up to date and obtain the current flu shot if possible. Another option that is wise to consider whether traveling or not is the fairly new Hepatitis A & B shots - it takes 3 shots and 6 to 8 mos. for full coverage. If you are prone to infections involving the lungs, ask your physician about the pneumonia shot (my doctor made me get one because of frequent bronchitis and it worked!). A contagious infections specialty nurse recently told me that the typhoid shot can offer protection from salmonella! **You can also visit the following website for complete information about travel inoculations at www.cdc.gov though it addresses travel throughout China and into remote areas.** The most important advice is to consult your own physician and then be **well** and **well-rested** in preparation for the tour.

9. Why do you always go to China in mid- to late March?

Having been to China nearly every month of the year while flying for United Airlines, we can attest to the very long cold winters and the very long hot and humid summers. China experiences a very short spring and a very short fall during which a little bit of anything can happen - but nothing extreme. The crowds are greater and the prices higher in the fall. The good weather, the smaller crowds, and the better bargain prices are all available in mid-March, so that is why we continue to select it and find it works best overall for the wide area we cover in China. Even though hotels, buses, museums and the like can be air-conditioned or heated, most of the sightseeing occurs outside where you cannot find relief from the oppressive heat and humidity or the bitter cold during most of their year's weather.

10. How is the weather in late March and in early April?

It is pretty much like March is in the US - a little bit of anything and everything can happen - but nothing severe in any direction. China's long cold winter and long hot and humid summer are broken up by a VERY BRIEF spring and fall during which a little of anything can happen as part of the transition -- but nothing extreme. We begin the tour in Shanghai on purpose and head west and then south to take advantage of the best weather in the middle of March before we start heading north to Xi'an and then to Beijing, the northernmost destination. By the time we get to Beijing, it is nearly April and the weather is usually quite good there. It won't take long before it starts getting uncomfortably hot and humid, though - but we are already home by then.

11. How does one dress for a range of unknown weather?

That's easy - just layer! Make comfortable shoes your most important item and then be able to add and subtract a sweater and a light to medium jacket as needed. But I will be providing a lot more information on this later and include packing tips and more baggage information as well.

12. How is the shopping in China?

In a word fantastic! The things you can expect to find include SILK [scarves, bedding, clothing, carpets and embroidery], jade, artwork, pearls, cloisonné©, lacquerware, snuff bottles with miniature paintings on the inside, special paper cuttings, and so much more. The craftsmanship is phenomenal and the prices remarkable. We will visit a number of places where you can learn about how things are made, as well. Those who have had their purchases appraised upon return to the US have been surprised and amazed at the difference between the purchase price in China and the MUCH HIGHER appraised value in the US.

13. I have visited other countries recently where I found hostility towards Americans. What can I expect in China?

The people of China seem to love Americans as they move closer and closer to our Western ways. We have found the Chinese people in general to be warm, friendly, and very hospitable towards Americans. Our tour participants always come away with a wonderful warm feeling towards the Chinese and their magnificent culture. Personally, we find these folks to be especially service oriented, kind, gentle and peace loving and incredibly hard working and industrious.

14. Do you offer any other tours besides this one to China?

Not at this time. We were already taking friends to China on our own when we discovered the excellent tour Mr. KC Ma offered back in 2001. We decided to form an agency so we could lead official tours through his operation but with our own special touch added to it (Aviation in China, WW II history and the Flying Tigers in particular). Our only motivation for becoming certified as a "Seller of Travel" in California was to give legitimacy to our tour by being able to give assurance that deposits and payments were properly handled and passed to the tour operator and to be able to offer the comfort level of the Restitution Fund in California. This certification by the state in no way represents an endorsement by the state but does lay out rules by which we must abide for your protection.

Although we have traveled many places throughout the world, we would not be comfortable leading a group anywhere where we

have not developed the same level of expertise that we feel we have gained in China. Several years ago, we did devote two months in the UK and Europe exploring putting together a WW II nostalgia tour through England and the D-Day beaches of Normandy, France. We have made that pilgrimage ourselves numerous times and have learned where the best museums and old airfields are in both countries. However, the US dollar is not faring well against the British pound or the Euro nor can we negotiate decent discounts for a reasonable package price as a small agency with small volume. China remains (so far) the best travel value available, in our opinion. That did change a little following the 2008 Summer Olympics being held in Beijing as the rest of the world discovered today's China in earnest.

15. **What airline do we fly between San Francisco and China?**

This tour package is offered by **Air China** (do NOT confuse "Air China" - code "CA" - which is the flag carrier for mainland China - with "China Air" - code CI - which is based out of Taiwan) and by various entities in China. Therefore we use Air China and their Boeing 747-800 equipment as the main choice (a small segment of the tour group may be placed roundtrip on United Airlines if our size warrants it). You can view Air China's web site at: <https://www.airchina-us/US/GB/Home>

16. **Can I get an early seat assignment?**

No airline grants advance seat assignments for any group travel in Economy/Coach Class until the actual ticket has been issued. I will advise all when you may call the airline to request your round-trip seat assignments for the international flights only. I also pass along requests made by those with special needs. I will address this more in future mailings.

17. **Since Air China is part of the Star Alliance with United Airlines, can I use my Mileage Plus to upgrade to Business Class?**

No, for many years now, they have not honored that for this low-priced tour package. You need to check with them directly to reaffirm this since agreements change without notice - and also to determine the latest information on what is required by United to show proof of your flight in both directions **if** they ever resume honoring this. They had been requiring that you retain your boarding passes, among other pieces of evidence. ALSO, no airline allows you to count the miles on a reduced fare ticket towards your mileage program - and this is a greatly reduced group air fare negotiated.

18. **Can I pay to upgrade to Business or First Class on Air China?**

Yes, but it is very expensive. Air China is finished renovating both their Business and First Class and the new appointments have caused the price to increase substantially as a result. To upgrade from the Coach/Economy Class GROUP very low airfare, the latest quote is an additional \$3500 pp for **Business Class** on Air China per person roundtrip for the over-water flights only. (Other airlines are charging even more pp for the same upgrades.) **I will check frequently with them in case they offer any temporary special bargain rates for this - but BOOK EARLY to get a chance at a much better rate** (*which they have offered for limited seats per flight and early only in the past*).

19. **Can I provide my own airline travel to and from China?**

Yes, this is possible and a small credit is given to reduce your tour price, but it does contain certain problems. Please call for the particular details.

20. **Where can I find a source for purchasing travel gear such as electrical converters, travel clothing and other gear?**

I use and recommend the following sources for a wide range of travel products (*can order a catalogue*):

Magellan's	(800) 962-4943	www.magellans.com
TravelSmith	(800) 950-1600	www.travelsmith.com
Packing Light	(800) 349-0525	www.packinglight.net

21. **How much luggage are we allowed?**

***(*the following will need to be updated again as we get closer to the departure date as changes can continue to occur.*)**

The rules for this category continue to change and become more restrictive because of the continuing increase in fuel costs. Most international flights now only permit ONE checked bag, so the outbound maximum weight is actually restricted by the limits on the four jet flights within China (which only permit ONE lighter checked bag per person) until your flight home from China which will then allow the full 50 lbs. for your one free checked bag.

For the international flight **to China** (and for all four flights within China), plan to **check only one bag** at the maximum weight of 44 lbs. and maximum size of 62 linear inches - add length, width and height together to get the total linear inches of a bag. This will ensure your checked bag will meet the more restrictive rules for the upcoming four domestic jet flights within China.

For the international flight **from China** back to the US at the end of the tour, you may now **only check ONE bag** BUT now at the maximum weight of 50 lbs. and a maximum size of 62 linear inches for each bag.

For carry-on on the international portion to/from China, you may also take with you an "unlimited" number of pieces of hand baggage (for under the forward passenger seat and/or in the storage bin above the seat) - the sum of the length, width and height of all pieces must not exceed **43 inches or 11 lbs. total weight for all**. Most luggage pieces you purchase will tell you if it meets the carry-on size limits but this is a new and much more restrictive allotment. Note that the 11 lb. max. weight for carry-on **has not yet been enforced**.

Additional FREE carry-on items which are also allowed include such things as a lady's handbag, an overcoat, wrap or blanket, an umbrella or walking stick, a reasonable amount of reading matter for the flight, a small camera, a pair of binoculars, or a pair of crutches and/or braces or other prosthetic device for the passenger's use provided that the passenger is dependent upon them.

You do **not** want to go over the weight, size or ONE checked piece permitted free per person as the additional charges for each category exceeded are now VERY expensive! Dry cleaning and laundry services are available at all the hotels and laundry is available daily on the ship.

You can check Air China's website for the most current information re: their checked and carry-on baggage rules for INTERNATIONAL flights by clicking on: <https://www.airchina.us/US/GB/info/>.

Call 1-800-882-8122 for seat assignments after the eTickets are issued and I can give you the record locator for that. I will advise when that happens.

The good news is that you can enjoy great shopping on your last full day in China - in Shanghai - on your free day there. Don't forget the maximum of 62 linear inches total for your one free checked bag which may now weigh 50 lbs. for the return International flight.

For those connecting on to flights out of San Francisco to another home destination, you should be permitted the same checked luggage size and weight allowance all the way home since you are connecting in from an international flight.

[This may not apply if your "connecting" flight to your home airport is not on the same day as your arrival from China -- **both flights must be on the same day to qualify as a connection** -- check with the airline you are using to/from SFO.]

22. **How can I convert between kilograms and pounds, etc.?**

The following is a website that offers easy conversions of all types: <http://www.onlineconversion.com/>

23. **How can I convert between US Dollars and Chinese currency?**

The following websites offer easy currency conversions in either direction and for most currencies of the world. For Chinese currency, you will find it under "**China Yuan Renminbi - CNY**" - in China it is referred to as "**Yuan**" and as "**RMB.**" (kind of like our Dollars and Bucks).

Here is a sample of the conversion information you will get:

Live mid-market rates: 2017-01-08 05:13 UTC

1.00 USD

6.91820 CNY

US Dollar

= China Yuan Renminbi (RMB)

1 USD = 6.91820 CNY

1 CNY = 0.144546 USD

24. **How large is the tour group?**

The total size of the tour group varies from year to year but always offers each person our special VIP treatment. The total group is divided into busloads of only 25 to 30 people on each 45-48 passenger bus as a result of our VIP status (unlike normal tour groups which will fill the buses to capacity). Each busload has its OWN National Guide for the entire tour, along with its own City Guides. You will bond with this sub-group as you travel, tour and dine with them throughout the tour. Larry and I, as your "fearless" tour leaders, will try to rotate individually among all the buses as able.

On occasion, when our group size permits, we prefer to book the majority of capacity of the entire boat for the Yangtze River cruise so that all aboard are only from our group. This gives us special privileges and perks (I run WW II documentaries & movies on the ship's in-room TV system and have WW II music played when possible) and it also allows us to intermingle and enjoy meeting the folks from all the bus groups during the leisurely 4-night 5-star cruise on the Yangtze. If we limited our tour group to a smaller total size, you would find that we would see other busloads of strangers all doing what we are doing at about the same time throughout the entire tour. In other words, they would all be on the same general tour but not associated with us since the boat capacity is the delimiting factor on the total number traveling at the same time. What I prefer to do is to fill the buses with OUR folks. We will be rotating the order of the buses each day so that the staggering of each bus group will give everyone an equal experience.

I make a special effort to get to know all who sign up for our tour during the months leading up to departure so that I can put together good sub-groups for each bus. Of course, I make sure that friends and family members are assigned to the same bus group. It is not uncommon to have a whole group (from a flying club or aviation group, or a group of retired airline or military folks, or a group from a special interest club, etc.) sign up together for the tour and have their own bus.

To manage a large group successfully and painlessly, we arrange to have hotel and boat room assignments done before arrival at each place so that your room keys can be handed out on the bus on the way there. This way we are able to avoid the congestion, commotion and confusion at the lobby check-in desks experienced by non-VIP groups. And your checked piece of luggage is always delivered to your room to be waiting there for you, just as it is collected, transported and checked in for you at the airports for all four in- country flights.

For those years when we have had a large group, I always query folks following our tour to see if they ever felt overwhelmed by being part of a large tour group and have never had anyone feel that way. Each bus group, since it bonds as its own sub-group, is able to have that more intimate small group feeling. In fact I have been delighted to learn that folks from each bus group have usually felt that they were on the "best" bus with the "best" co-travelers and had the "best" National Guide, etc. And we have always felt so lucky to have always had the "best" folks on our tours!

25. What is the expected flight schedule for the Air China flights between San Francisco and China?

Currently, check-in for departure will begin at 11 AM on March 15, 2017 at the Air China counter (3rd row of counters, past United Airlines) in the SFO International Terminal. (Please note that the line may start forming even earlier by folks wishing to improve on seat assignments already awarded). UPDATE - VERY EARLY ARRIVAL IS ENCOURAGED due to new stricter policy re: no advanced seat assignments.

The departure flight schedule for March 2017 is similar to all the past years and currently (as of 1/7/17) shows a scheduled departure time from San Francisco's International Terminal on **March 15, 2017** on Air China Flight # CA 986 (now the NEW B747-800 wide body) departing at **2:50 PM** (we go back on Pacific Daylight Savings Time (PDST) on 03/12/17) and arriving Beijing at **5:55 PM** on **March 16**. You lose a day as you cross the International Dateline during the flight).

Most folks will be flying on Air China, the flag carrier for the People's Republic of China (mainland China). Please do not confuse Air China (airline code "**CA**") with China Air (airline code "**CI**"), the airline from the island of Taiwan. Air China is part of the Star Alliance with United Airlines and has an excellent record with a more spacious economy class seating arrangement than on most of our USA carriers, including United.

For the 17-DAY Tour return flight: The latest (as of 7/1/16) return flight schedule currently shows departing Shanghai in the morning on **March 31, 2017** at **8:55 AM** (arriving PEK at 11:15 AM) and connecting to the nonstop flight home at **3:40 PM** on Air China Flight # CA 985 (again on the NEW B747-800 wide-body) and arriving San Francisco at **12:20 PM** on the same day & DATE - MARCH 31st, (No, you do not fly backwards -- you gain back the day you lost crossing the International Dateline on the way over.)

I will be providing more specific flight information as it gets closer to tour time as airline flight schedules are always subject to change. You can check for yourself if you like using a Multi-city search (departure San Francisco to Shanghai/Pudong - SFO to PVG - and return Beijing to San Francisco - PEK to SFO) as opposed to one-way or roundtrip:

<https://www.airchina.us/US/GB/info>. Also, click on "Information & Services" near the top middle for information on aircraft configurations, baggage information, etc.

26. Any suggestions for a hotel choice near the SFO airport for before and/or after the tour?

For those who are flying in from elsewhere to connect with the group departure on March 15, 2017, I recommend the nearby **Red Roof Inn** (which was recently remodeled but which also resulted in a substantial increase in their pricing). See their contact information at the BOTTOM of this FAQ page in the salmon-colored box. **They now offer a Park and Fly package for those driving from home.** They share a large shuttle bus with several other hotels (all far more expensive) in the same area which normally runs every 30 min. to/from the airport, and they have a great little 24/7 restaurant on site. This is a low-end but decent 5-story motel with outside room access (not inside halls), but everything close to SFO is now quite expensive and this appears to be among the only ones at the lower end of expensive. It is what we ourselves use.

Also for those who will be driving or car-pooling to/from SFO, I can also recommend you contact the **Best Western's El Rancho** located near SFO and inquire about their special "Park and Fly" rate (qualified AAA & AARP Seniors receive a discount off the regular park and fly rate). They are located at 1100 El Camino Real Millbrae, California and you can call them direct at 650-588-8500 or click on the following link direct to their specific web site property page:

https://www.bestwestern.com/content/best-western/en_US/booking-path/hotel-details.05244.html?%20propertyCode=05244&disablenav=false#null

You can GOOGLE to find other choices with and without a Fly/Drive package near SFO.

27. How much walking is there on the tour?

Of course, walking will be required in order to tour and visit the many sights of interest. But I can personally attest to the fact that it is not TOO difficult, although there will be instances of long walking and stairs are indeed everywhere in China. The worst of the walking will actually occur in the various airports throughout China, not unlike the rest of the world. Call me with specific issues if you need more detail. ***However, you should be in reasonably good physical condition and able to walk at a***

reasonable pace and manage flights of stairs so as not to delay your bus group.

28. This is labeled as the "American Aviators VIP Tour to China." Does that mean that only pilots go on this tour?

Absolutely not! In order to earn VIP status and all its perks, we have indeed established this theme to appeal to our fellow pilots and WW II history buffs. But the majority of the tour devotes itself to touring the main sights of China to explore its marvelous ancient history and see its phenomenal modern growth -- which appeals to everyone. We have added a number of special aviation and WW II history extras which include a visit to Stilwell's WW II Museum and the Flying Tigers Museum & Gallery (both in Chongqing), the Flying Tigers former airfield and HQ cave site with its huge new Flying Tigers Museum (outside Guilin) and the huge Aviation Museum outside Beijing. Indeed, to date, only about half our group each year is aviation or WW II connected - and those folks enjoy all the hangar flying and story sharing that time will permit. Many of those folks have spouses accompanying them on the tour who find their own separate areas of interest to share with one another. I do try to arrange each bus group to have folks of similar interests together and, of course, always make sure that friends and family and any sub-groups are grouped together to enhance the whole experience.

29. If the tour is filled, will you carry a "wait list" in case of future cancellations?

Absolutely! However, the best way to be added to the wait list is to call or E-mail us and advise us that you are mailing ASAP your signed reservation form and your check for the \$300 per person deposit required. I will hold the deposit check and call you first if you clear the wait list before depositing it to be sure your plans have not changed in the interim. Then if you choose to not join us at that point, I will either destroy or return the check based on your preference.

I will be amending or adding to the FAQ pages periodically. Please check back from time to time and check the currency date of this page. If you note something you would like to see addressed, please let us know.

*****HOTEL DISCOUNT NOTICE*****

Check to see if there is a special **discount** at the **Red Roof Inn** in Burlingame, CA [property #228] located near the San Francisco Airport on any given date(s) and compare with other special discounts that may be offered (AAA, AARP, Seniors, etc.). Any discount is applied before any taxes or local fees, etc.

To book space at the San Francisco Airport location, click on www.redroof.com and enter property # **228** for Burlingame, CA (California).

Then enter **Travel Aire's "VP+"** number of **605433** in the " **VP+ / ID#** " box before proceeding with your booking. You can also call their toll-free # of **800-733-7663** and book by phone, but be sure to give them our VP+ number to get the discount - **if ANY**. You may benefit from additional special rates if you are a member of their Redicard program. I have not found our "discount" gives you any better rate than AAA, AARP, or SENIORS - and there is NO discount for their **PARK and FLY** program which covers two weeks and then adds additional days on a *per diem* basis.

PLEASE give your own address, phone number, and credit card for guarantee when make a reservation - otherwise it could be canceled.

You can GOOGLE "San Francisco Airport hotels" or etc., to shop around. We still usually stay here because of the convenient airport shuttle running every 20 min. and the 24-hour restaurant on the premises.