

China

by Diana Ravnjak

We had a fantastic holiday - China is an amazing place: beautiful scenery, pumping cities, interesting culture, friendly people who try so hard to communicate in English and out of this world food (we never had the same meal twice!). And to top it off, the group consisted of myself and Dieter (yahoo a personal tour for the price of a group tour!). Everything went well with the tour:

- Excellent tour guide.
- Overall hotels were great – better than expected actually – except for a minor hiccup in Xian as they allocated us a lower grade room (ie 1 star and that's being generous!) and we only made a fuss on day 2 so on day 3 we were upgraded to the newer part of the hotel with the assistance of our tour guide and local operator (so lesson learnt to say something upfront!).
- Great flights – new aircraft (thankfully!) and on time (which we understand does not always happen).
- Super trains (our 2 overnight trips were great – very comfortable cabins with 4 bunks – clean and nice linen); a tip for anyone else travelling on the trains is that in each carriage they have boiling water so we found it handy to take our instant coffee onboard (with plastic cups of course!) and a lot of other travellers had instant noodles etc. Actually at the airports they also have these hot water stations and the locals were filling up their plastic bottles.
- Local guides in each location had good knowledge of English so no problem communicating.
- Local organised transport good (although on my feedback form I did mention 2 drivers who had used their mobile phones to talk/text and also one of them constantly drove over the centre line at speed – while there is a lot of dangerous driving in China, particularly in the cities, I still thought it important to mention these faults as I'm sure Intrepid pay a premium for these services). Dieter and I had a couple of hairy rides on taxis we'd organised ourselves – woah we were glad to get to our destinations!



Highlights were:

- walking on Great Wall
- seeing Terracotta Warriors
- getting up close and personal with a 2yr old panda (yes that is me in the green tshirt as opposed to a large panda playing dress up!)
- cycling in Yangshuo countryside and enjoying lunch with local farming family
- our 3 day cruise on the Yangzi River (and seeing 3 gorges dam and also chatting with locals who had been affected by its construction)
- and last but not least, flying Air NZ business class – wow what an experience and those lie-flat beds are incredibly comfortable (I suggested to Dieter that he get a 2nd job so we could always travel in style – surprisingly he just gave me the “look”!).

We definitely want to go back and explore - perhaps venturing out more into the countryside.

Thanks again for your assistance with booking this for us.

Cheers

Di

