

# FAMILY... BIG ADVENTURES

## DISCOVERING CHINA

Save China for teenagers. Few places are as safe, surreal and completely surprising at every turn, so even they can't fail to be impressed.

Bookmark a trip with strategic stops at three big hitters – Beijing, Xi'an, Shanghai – followed by time to unwind in the forests of Moganshan.

The must-see landmarks in Beijing are, of course, Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City and the Great Wall, all of which go way beyond expectations, especially the latter, a 8,850km-long structure that snakes into the distance and renders everyone into awe-struck silence. But the less obvious sights are just as memorable. Take a private tour of artists' studios in the 798 art district, sign up for t'ai chi in the Temple of Heaven Park with Master Liu (he can reduce strapping teens to a heap on the floor with just his little finger): one group waves swords about in slow motion, another practises jianzi (kicking shuttlecocks) as a form of exercise. Next, fly to Xi'an to see the burial home of the Terracotta Warriors: it's extraordinary in scale and ambition, much like the vast city itself. The brilliant concierge at the former People's Hotel, now the Sofitel, will have you off pedalling tandems along the city walls and slurping the best speciality noodles. But nowhere is transforming at more breakneck speed than Shanghai, where futuristic skyscrapers crowd next to incense-filled temples. Haggle at market stalls and zoom around the French Quarter in a 1950s motorcycle sidecar, waving at giggling locals as you pass. After all that high-octane action, retreat to Le Passage in Moganshan, which almost feels more like rural France than China, with its Provençal furniture, excellent wine cellar and cooking school. It's just the breathtaking tea-plantation views and the hundreds of pictures of Buddhas on your 16-year-old's Instagram account that give it away.

**JOURNEY TIME** An 11-hour flight to Beijing

**TIME DIFFERENCE** +8 hours



**INSIDER TIP** Bespoke Beijing ([www.bespoke-beijing.com](http://www.bespoke-beijing.com)) can organise everything from a local guide who knows the first emperor's armour size to the best street-stall-snack tours.

**BOOK IT** Cleveland Collection (+44 20 7843 3531; [www.clevelandcollection.co.uk](http://www.clevelandcollection.co.uk)) offers a nine-night trip from £2,579 per adult and £1,139 per child based on a family of four, including three nights each at The St Regis Beijing, Shangri-La Hotel, Xian and Sofitel Shanghai Hyland, all with breakfast, flights and transfers.