

China: 14 days

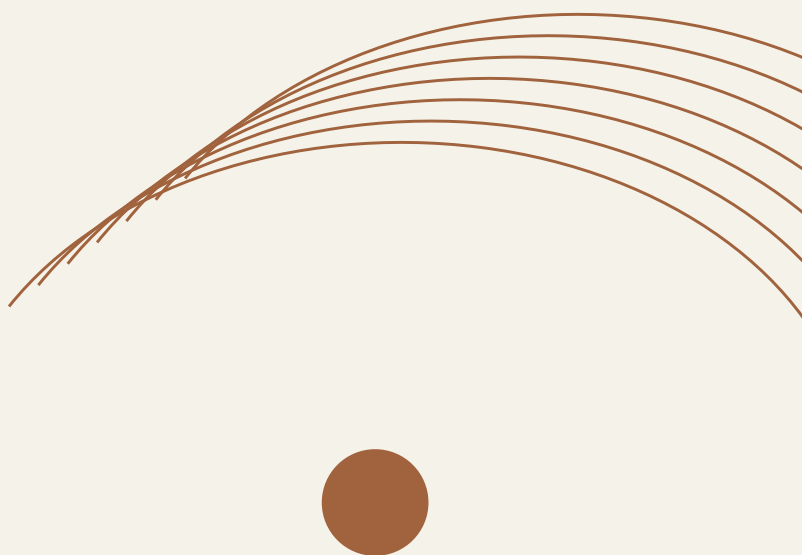
Your first China, in 14 days

Beijing - Xi'an - Shanghai, with travel days that count

Independent routes. Practical decisions. Space to explore.

Inside: a usable plan, transport decisions, budget worksheet, Chinese search names and official source links.

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A route you can actually use

Who this route fits

Choose this route for a first trip combining imperial Beijing, archaeology in Xi'an and urban Shanghai. It uses three accommodation bases rather than changing hotels every night. The route is an editorial planning recommendation, not a package or a claim that any transport or admission is available.

The 14-day allocation

Days 1-5: Beijing, including arrival and one Great Wall day. Day 6: travel to Xi'an. Days 7-9: Xi'an and the Terracotta Army. Day 10: travel to Shanghai. Days 11-13: Shanghai. Day 14: departure. Travel blocks are deliberately treated as days rather than hidden between sightseeing activities.

Reverse it if flights make more sense

Shanghai - Xi'an - Beijing is equally valid. Compare the total cost and transfer complexity of open-jaw international flights with a return to the same gateway. Do not purchase domestic links until the international entry and departure plan is clear.

What to leave out

Do not add Guilin, Chengdu and Yunnan to this route without increasing the trip length. You would be replacing local time with long transfers. For a shorter trip, use two cities and keep the arrival/departure buffers. This is a city-and-culture route, not a complete survey of China.

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Days 1-5 | Beijing

Day 1: arrival is enough

Transfer to the hotel, check in, eat nearby and save the accommodation address offline. Confirm the next day's entry booking. A short local walk is optional. If the flight arrives late, resist the urge to start the itinerary at the airport.

Day 2: palace axis

Use the Forbidden City as the main visit after securing entry. Follow it with lunch and a shorter Jingshan Park visit if comfortable. If admission is unavailable, swap with day 3 or choose another confirmed cultural site. Do not let a palace ticket dictate a risky flight connection.

Day 3: hutongs and lakes

Choose the Bell and Drum Tower surroundings and a short Shichahai walk. Keep residential spaces private. This day works as a recovery buffer and should not become a circuit of every shopping lane.

Day 4: one Great Wall section

Choose Mutianyu or Badaling, arrange complete return transport and check current access. Leave the evening free. The route deliberately gives this excursion a full day so weather and traffic have somewhere to go.

Day 5: your interest day

Choose one museum, garden or contemporary art area with checked opening and entry. Use the afternoon to pack, do laundry or return to a favourite neighbourhood. Save the exact departure station or airport for day 6.