

Hello! China

Yangtze River Cruise Guide Book



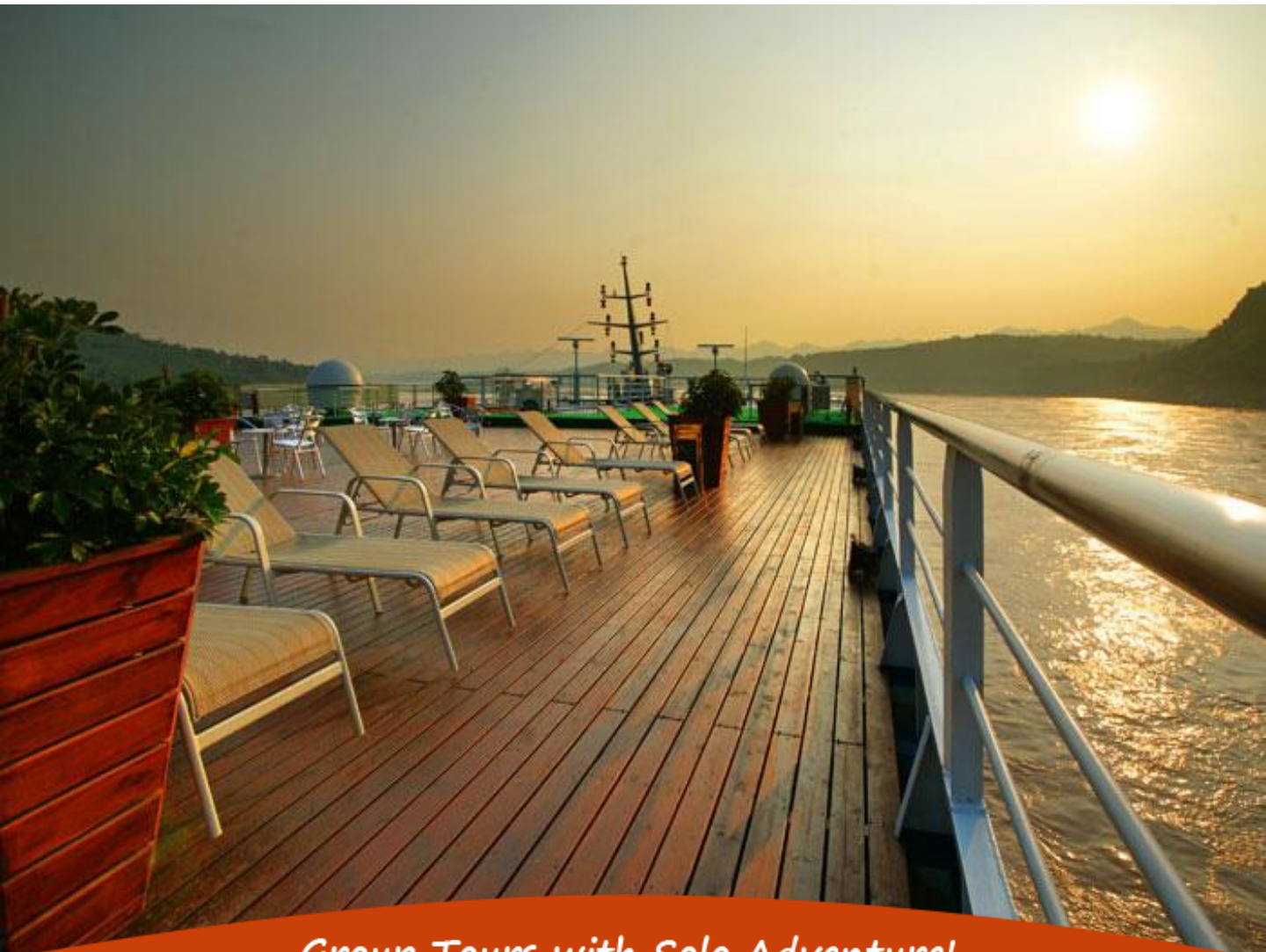
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The Yangtze River (长江) is the greatest river in China and is about 6,000 km long, behind only the Amazon and the Nile. For thousands of years this river has been a key transport route for the Chinese people and has been the cradle of Chinese civilization.

Several major cities, such as Chongqing, Wuhan, Nanjing and Shanghai, lie along the river as testament to its importance. It boasts a rich culture as well as the famous Three Gorges scenery, and taking a Yangtze River Cruise is regarded as the best way to enjoy both. As the only gorge available for cruising, this is a must-do for foreign travelers visiting China.

April, May and September are considered to be the best seasons to travel to Yangtze River due to its high-water level. These periods are also the high season of Yangtze River tours and the prices will be higher than that of low seasons in March, June, July, August and November.

During the high season, the average temperature is about 12°C—20°C, which is comfortable for traveling. However, winter is also a good option in regard with taking the Yangtze River, since the travelers are less and the scenery is breathtaking thanks to the lower water level.



Traveling on a the Yangtze River cruise has been popular for about 20 years, and although during these years some new attractions have been added as land excursions, and different cruise lines and cruise ships stop at different places, the essence remains the same. **Amazing scenery** is the main reason for most travelers visiting there.

Whenever you board a Yangtze cruise, **you will not want to miss** [Qutang Gorge](#), [Wu Gorge](#) and [Xiling Gorge](#), and the chance to visit [Fengdu Ghost City](#), [Shibaozhai](#), and [Baidicheng](#) (white Emperor City), as well as the [Three Gorges Dam](#) and Shennong Stream.

Besides its picturesque landscape, **Yangtze River culture** is attractive to many visitors. Hanging coffins, ancient plank walks on the cliff and boat trackers are highlights of Yangtze River Culture.



Best Way to Travel– Taking a Yangtze Cruise



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Itineraries of Yangtze Cruises

The trip between Chongqing and Shanghai takes seven days downstream, and nine days upstream. It visits Wuhan, Huangshan and Nanjing, which are popular among older people. The cruise ships running between Chongqing and Yichang take four days for downstream, and five days upstream.

The upstream trip will take one or two days more because the current when calling at the same the same spots, whereas **the downstream trip** will give guests a feeling of sailing downward with the current. Thus we would recommend that our customers take the cruise ship between Chongqing and Yichang for the downstream.

How to Choose a Yangtze Cruise

Regarding cruise liners and cruise ships, different liners have their pros and cons. **Century Cruises have refurbished their ships and two new cruise ships** were launched in 2013 with modern designs and advanced equipment. They are the Century Legend and the Century Paragon.

If you are looking for a **cruise liner with good quality of service**, Victoria Cruises will not let you down. This line is managed by an American company, which means they understand the needs of Western guests very well.

For guests wishing to **experience both sides of the coin**, the President 1, the President 7 and the President 8 would be the perfect candidates; these are the most economical while the equipment and service are not inferior to other more expensive ships.



Recommended Cruise Ships

The five most economical cruise ships are the President 7, the President 8, the President Prime, the Century Star and the Victoria Jenna.

The four most popular cruise ships with European and American guests are the Victoria Katarina, the President Prime, the Century Sky and the Victoria Sophia. The three most luxurious cruise ships are the Yangtze Explorer, the Victoria Jenna and the Century Paragon.



Accommodation on the Cruise Ship

A [Yangtze Cruise](#) ship is very much like a big hotel and is constructed based on the standards of a hotel. It consists of several floors for different functions such as rooms, the main hall, an entertainment center and the dining halls. Rooms are also similar to those in a hotel and include standard cabins, junior suites, executive suites and the presidential suite.

Standard cabins are a room with two beds and a bathroom. The junior suite has a room with a double bed (1.5 m × 1.9 m), a parlor and a bathroom with a bathtub. The presidential suite is equipped with a parlor, a room with a queen bed (1.8 m × 2.0 m), a bathroom with a bathtub and a bar counter.



Dining on the Cruise Ship

The cruise ship provides breakfast, lunch and dinner in specialized dining halls. On some ships they even offer a 24-hour buffet meal. Western food and Chinese food are both offered. When having meals, ten people share a table according to their nationalities, cultural background or the travel agents they booked with.

Generally, **the meal will be served on the second floor at a fixed time.** Breakfast time is from 6:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., lunch will be served between 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., and dinner from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. A bottle of soft drink is included with lunch and dinner.

A Yangtze Cruise will always visit Hubei Province and Chongqing, thus **Chinese food provided onboard is mainly Hubei cuisine and Sichuan dishes, which are the main cuisines in China.** In total, there are more than 20 dishes for western buffets at lunch and dinner.



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Shopping on the Cruise Ship

On the cruise shopping centers are offered. The choices vary from Chinese paintings, fans, writing materials, panda dolls, root carving and lacquer wares. The price may be a bit expensive there. If you have time, it is suggested to shop in Chongqing City for souvenirs and other gifts.



Other Service on the Cruise Ship

Onboard staff can speak fluent English and provide professional service. On average, every two staff will serve three guests, ensuring they take care of every passenger's needs. **Generally, a guest will tip the staff 150 yuan for a trip between Chongqing and Yichang, while 300 yuan is suggested for a cruise trip between Chongqing and Shanghai.**

Internet access is available at appointed network locations on most ships. Victoria Cruise requires that passengers pay 150 yuan for the whole cruise trip, and other cruise liners charge from 20 yuan to 60 yuan per hour. One great feature is that all guests on the President Prime, President 7 and President 8 can connect to the Internet in their rooms.

In 2013, **Wi-Fi became available in four new cruise ships.** The President 7 and President 8 charge a 50 yuan per hour or 300 yuan for the whole trip. Guests on the Century Legend and Century Paragon need to pay 200 yuan for the whole trip.



Yangtze Transport

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In Chongqing

All Yangtze Cruise ships depart from Chongqing dock in Chaotianmen Port(朝天门码头) However, note that there are different piers for different cruise ships in this large port.

Chongqing Jiangbei Airport is around 27 km away from the port, and it takes about 40 minutes by taxi at a cost of 60 yuan in the daytime (6:00 a.m.–10 p.m.), and 80–100 yuan at night (10 p.m.–6 a.m.).

Chongqingbei Railway Station (Longtousi, Yubei District (重庆北火车站) is the most important railway station. A ride from the rail station to the port by taxi takes about 30 minutes.

In Yichang

If you take the Yangtze Cruise from Yichang to Chongqing, there are two main docks in the city. One is Taohuacun Dock ,serving ships from Changjiang Cruise Overseas Travel CO. ,such as the M.S. Yangtze 1 and the M.S. Blue Whale. The other is New Century Dock for most Yangtze Cruise ships from different cruise liners such as New Century Cruises and Victoria Cruises. These two docks are 5 km of each other. Most of our customers go to these two docks from Yichang airport, which is called Sanxia Airport (三峡机场) .The airport is 35.7 km from Taohuacun Dock. It takes 40 minutes by tax and costs 100 yuan (not metered). The shuttle bus (20 yuan per person) pass Qingjiang Building (清江大厦) with 50 minutes, and then you can take a taxi at 30 yuan to get to Taohuacun Dock.

It is about 38 km from the airport to New Century Dock. It costs 150 yuan and takes 45 minutes by taxi from the airport to the dock. The other choice is taking the shuttle bus in the airport to the city center (Qingjiang Building) at 20 yuan for a trip of about 50 minutes. Then transfer to New Century Dock at a cost of 35 yuan.

The airport is 40 km from the city center, a journey which will cost you 150 yuan by taxi, taking about 45 minutes. Or simply take a shuttle bus at 25 yuan for 50 minutes.

Maps of Attractions along the Way



Attractions along the Yangtze River





Xiling Gorge

The third gorge is the [Xiling Gorge](#) (西陵峡), which forms the major part of the Three Gorges with a length of 66 km between Zigui and the Nanjin Pass. It is also the furthest downstream. It is known for its various rapids and strong currents. The gorge is so long that it can be conveniently cut into four smaller ones: the Precious Sword, Horse Lung and Ox Liver, Soundless Bell and Shadow Play Gorges.



Wu Gorge

Continuing to sail, you will soon arrive at the [Wu Gorge](#) (巫峡) at the downstream end of the Qutang Gorge, which stretches 45 km between Wushan and Guandukou (Badong). Archives show that the gorge has had this name since the Three Kingdom Period and became famous because of a classical poem, "Passing Wu Gorge" (过巫峡) by the Tang Dynasty poet Yang Jiong. Interestingly, the mountains on either side of the river passing Wu Gorge are called the Wu Mountains (巫山).





Qutang Gorge

[Qutang Gorge](#) (瞿塘峡) is the first gorge and also the grandest of the Three Gorges, but with the shortest length (8 km) between Baidicheng and Daxi. The point that the river passes between the mountains of this section is known as the Kuimen Gate (夔门), from which point starts the exploration of the Qutang Gorge. Moreover, you will jump into the backdrop of a 10 yuan banknote. The Kuimen Gate is considered the most beautiful among the three gorges. You will even witness ancient paths cut into the mountainside and hanging coffins on the cliff dating back thousands of years.



Three Gorges Dam

[Three Gorges Dam](#) (三峡大坝) has been the largest water conservancy project undertaken by human beings in the world since it was completed in 2009. Though it was a controversial issue before construction, it does help the locals and has now become a grand sightseeing spot for visitors taking Yangtze Cruises. The dam is 1.983 kilometers long, 185 meters high, and 18 meters wide on the top and 130 meters wide at the bottom. The best place to get a full view of the huge dam is at Tanziling (坛子岭).



Qutang Gorge Baidi City (White Emperor City)

[Baidicheng](#) (White Emperor City 白帝城) was an ancient city located in the Qutang Gorge area with a notable history. It is also the perfect point to get the best view of the Kuimen Gate. Standing there, the view in front of you may inspire you to sing beautiful songs or recite poems just as numerous famous poets in ancient China once did. They set foot in the city and wrote many beautiful poems about it. You can even walk around the area where Liube died, the first emperor of the Kingdom of Shu during the Three Kingdoms.



Shennong Stream

Shennong Stream (神农溪) is a left tributary of the river with stunning scenery on both banks. Besides the scenery and hanging cliff coffins, half-naked boatmen navigating small boats in rapids highlight the area. Humans discovered the area since the Han Dynasty and started to make a living there. You will pass through the site of a famous naval battle between Liubei, an emperor of the Three Kingdoms Dynasty, and Narshall of the Wu Kingdom in the lower part of Shennong Stream.





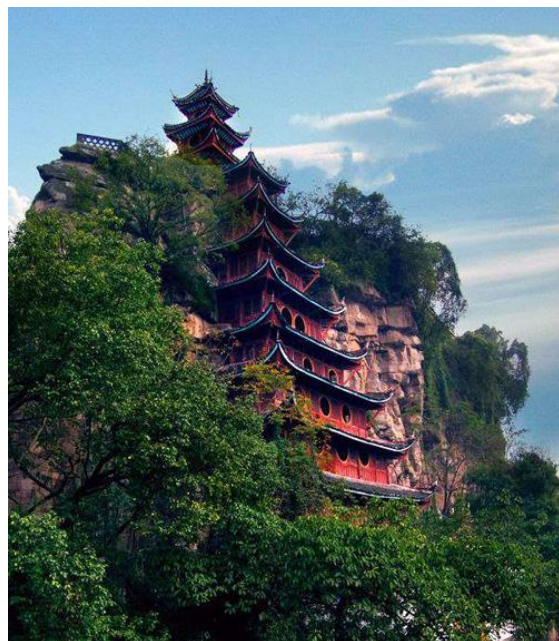
Fengdu Ghost City

[Fengdu Ghost City](#) (丰都鬼城) is in Fengdu County, which is a big name along the Yangtze River. Many ghost stories about the place and tombs from the Han Dynasty add to the atmosphere. Listen carefully to your guides telling you about the incredible stories and stand firm if you do not want to go to heaven too early, as according to legend there were two men of the Han Dynasty who ascended to the heavens in the daytime to become supernatural beings because of their actions.



Shibaozhai

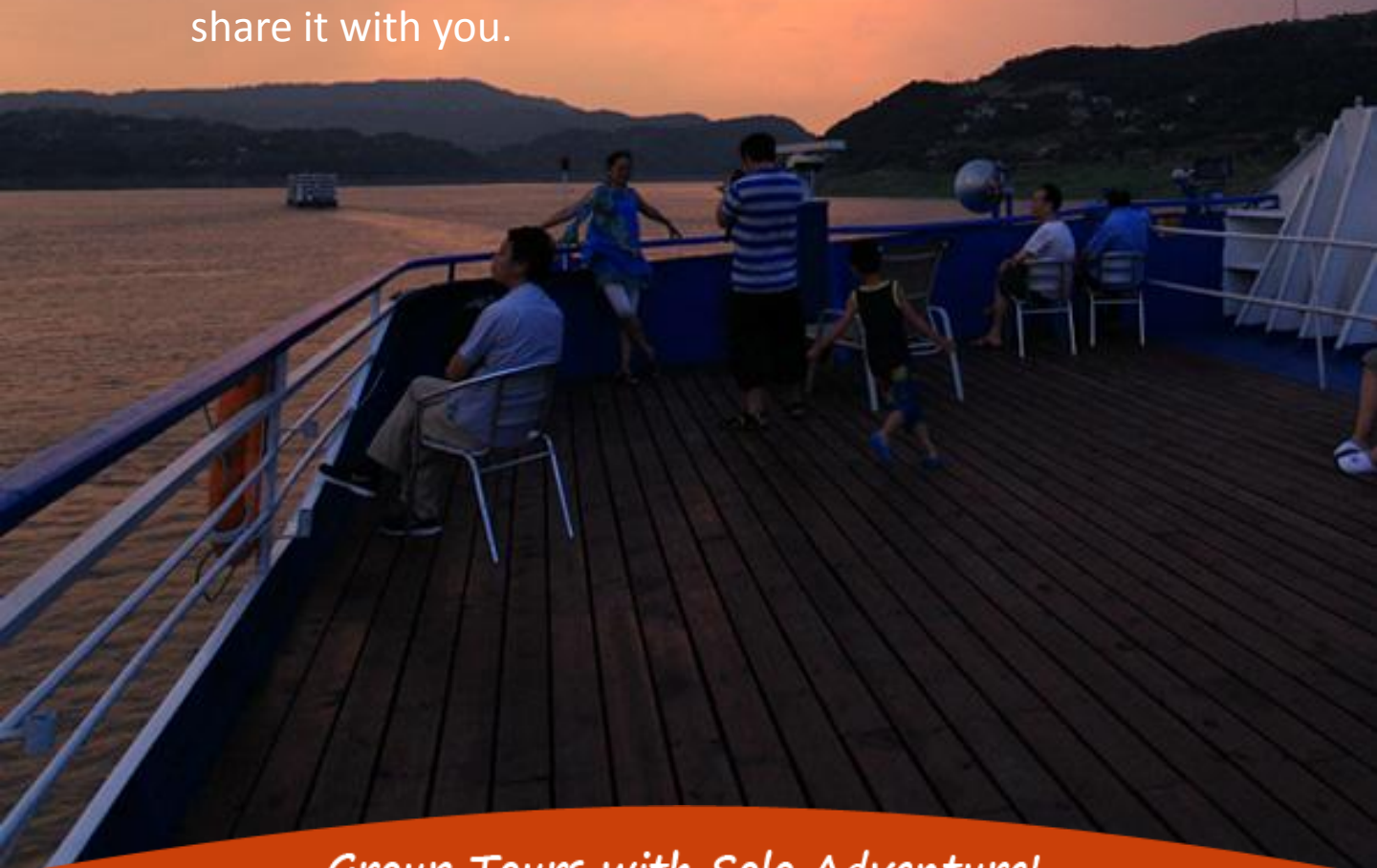
[Shibaozhai](#) (石宝寨), literally meaning "precious stone fortress", is a hill on the north bank of the Yangtze River and on the hillside facing the river there was originally a nine-story pavilion leaning against the hill during the Ming Dynasty. The nine stories is a reference to nine heavens in the sky. Later, in 1956, another three stories were built on the top of the pavilion, making the whole building 56 meters tall. Interesting stories about the Three Kingdoms are vividly represented by three sets of statues in the temple.



Travel Story:

4-day Yangtze River Cruise on President 7

I have never been on a cruise before so I was more than excited to go on the Yangtze River Cruise on President 7. From the moment I stepped foot on the ship I was mesmerized. This cruise ship is absolutely beautiful! All of the luxuries of daily life were all in one place. I have to say convenience was a large concern of mine; however once I saw everything that was aboard the ship my worries were put to rest. Typically I do not talk about my travels and experiences but this one was so amazing I just have to share it with you.





The Yangtze River and What to See

First let me break down and share all of the beautiful things there are to see along the Yangtze River. I had no idea I would see such breathtaking beauty. The Chongqing Jinyun Mountain was my favorite site along the river to see. I loved the white clouds that looked kind of like smoke that hung over the mountains. While in the cruise I found out that this mountain actually has nine peaks. Something else I saw while going along the Yangtze River was the Yunyang Zhangfei Temple. I loved the architecture and structure of the building. It was also pretty cool listening to the history behind this famous temple. In general it has a very unique style with wood carving and cool paintings. You don't see things like that every day.

Before I forget I have to mention one more very beautiful site along the Yangtze River; the Red Cliff. You can see the effects of battle on the cliff which makes it pretty unique. I must say it is no shock that I saw so many lovely sites along the Yangtze River considering it is the longest river in Asia. I am just as happy to have learned about the culture and history of these sites as we went along as well!



Dining Onboard

I was a bit nervous about dining onboard since I am a picky eater. What if I didn't like the food? It's not as if I could have just jumped in my car and went somewhere to eat right? Luckily for me the food was amazing! The breakfast and lunches consisted of both Western foods as well as Chinese foods.

Dinner was always a Chinese dish. I would smell the food and my mouth would begin to automatically water with delight. Clearly the food was prepared by 5 star chefs. That really isn't a shock though considering this is a 5 star luxury ship. Expect nothing less than the best when it comes to the food. I often took advantage of the Chinese buffets while on the trip but a few times I did order some exquisite Chinese dinners. I can honestly say I was never disappointed when it came to the food.

On Board Activities

I knew cruise ships had a variety of things you can do onboard besides just sightseeing; however I had no idea exactly what I was in for. I would say my favorite onboard activity would be the beauty salon and sauna. I went to the gym a few times for a heavy workout and let me tell you it was great to relax in the sauna afterwards. My body felt so relaxed! In addition the ship has a massage room. I bet that would be great after a workout or just as a treat. I did not get to experience the massage room myself though. Oh, and there were tons of shops to browse for those who have the itch to shop. Here is a list of the other onboard activities available:

- Nightly shows
- Full size golf course
- Huge indoor heated pool
- Full bar
- Internet café
- Library
- Large luxury cinema
- Play rooms for kids

No matter what you are in the mood to do, chances are you will find it on this cruise ship. I really enjoyed getting some books from the library and reading on my private balcony while enjoying the weather.



Shore Excursions

Even though there were so many luxuries and things to do and see while on the ship I am glad we had time to enjoy some shore excursions. The first excursion was to Fengdu Ghost City. This is an optional excursion and I decided to check it out. Talk about a place full of culture! My eyes were wide the entire time! I tried to make the most of this excursion by checking out the Tianzi Hall, Ancestral Temple, the Naihe Bridge, and the national forest park.

Later on that afternoon we went on another excursion. We visited the Shibaozhai Temple. The first thing it reminded me of was an older action movie set. It is a 100 foot high pagoda that is beautiful to look at from far away. My legs were already a little sore from walking around Fengdu Ghost City so I decided to take the exit route that was inside the pagoda. The stairs were bigger and less steep as the one's outside.

The third day I went on the optional White Emperor City excursion. Keep in mind this excursion will depend on the river conditions. Throughout the city I saw many poems and carvings that blew my mind. I also loved seeing all the historical temples.

For those who love to be in the water you will certainly enjoy the Shennong Stream excursion. Visitors will hop into a boat and take a tour through the waters while taking in all of the beautiful views. It is very relaxing to just sit and float down the river looking at beautiful mountains.

The last excursion I want to talk about is the Three Gorges Dam. It was only a one hour excursion but still enjoyable. This dam is the world's largest water conservancy project. I don't know much about that kind of thing so seeing this dam was actually educational for me.

And I have a few tips about this trip. First is to do research prior to the cruise so you understand exactly what you are experiencing. Knowing the history of the places makes the experience much more pleasurable. Also, try and rest prior to the excursions as they involve a great deal of walking. If possible check your e-mail right before the cruise in case there have been any changes in the stops.

Other Services

If you have any kind of special diet restrictions please let the cruise line or ship receptionist know ahead of time so that proper arrangements can be made. Keep in mind that alcoholic beverages can be expensive and typically only soft drinks and beer are free with your meals; wine is extra. It is very important that I mention the service available if you need an adapter. It is best if you just bring the proper charger from home since not all ships will carry all adapters. If you do not bring one you can check with the front desk but be advised it is not guaranteed that there will be an adapter available for use.

Other services onboard include medical services, elevators, and internet services. Oh, and not every room will have a hair dryer so bring your own if possible. If not then you may be able to borrow one from the front desk.

Tips for the Staff

Another thing to keep in mind is that a ship tip will be required; plan your budget accordingly to avoid any confusion or inconvenience. When it comes to tipping please understand that the staff works very hard to make sure you have a stellar experience. While some of the services you may not typically tip for while not on a cruise you should leave a tip on the trip. Tip anyone who makes your trip comfortable and do not forget the tour guides. The average fee is 150 Yuan/person.

This was an amazing experience and I highly recommend a Yangtze Cruise tour to anyone looking to relax, explore, and get a taste of real culture and history.