7 May 25

Dear Oasis Traveller,

First of all many thanks for booking your upcoming China adventure with Oasis Overland, I hope you are looking forward to the journey!   This update covers the following:

* Passports
* China visa & Tibet permit
* Accommodation and upgrades
* Personal luggage
* Dietary Requirements
* Useful phone apps

But first…

**What to expect!**

Your trip from Kashgar to Beijing is the final section of our Istanbul to Beijing Trans Asia expedition. Some of your fellow travellers will have started in Istanbul, Ashgabat or Bishkek, travelling on our overland truck as far as Kyrgyzstan. For the China section, the whole trip will be carried out using local transport (trains, sleeper trains, coaches etc.) and budget hotels/hostels. So, there won’t be camping, but you should still expect some pretty simple and basic accommodation at times, especially in remote areas.

The nature of our trips and the places we’re travelling in means that all our itineraries are somewhat flexible and there may be changes to the website itinerary at some point on the route. For example, some train journeys cannot be booked until closer to departure and can sell out very quickly which means we may need to make amendments to work around this.

Some of your journeys may be long and tiring but you should also expect numerous amazing moments, meeting local people, exploring stunning scenery and seeing some of China’s most iconic sites. All in all this is going to be a really special trip.

**Passports**

Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months AFTER your trip finishes. This is a general requirement for all of the countries we travel to on our trips.

As a guideline, you will need at least 1 blank page in your passport after you have obtained the relevant visa before your trip commences.

**China visa**

Some nationalities, including The Netherlands and Australia do not currently require a visa for China, for stays of up to 30 days. Other nationalities or those whose stay is longer than 30 days, will need to apply online and then in person (in order have finger prints and a photo taken) through their nearest Chinese Visa Application Service Centre. Our local operator will provide a Letter of Invitation and Travel Plan to support your application (included in the cost of your trip).

**If you haven’t already, please send us a colour scanned copy of your passport. This is required by our China operator in order to produce the above documents.**

Different nationalities are issued with visas of varying duration. The Chinese Visa Application Service Centres in the UK issue a 2 year visa to British passport holders. Most US citizens will be issued a 10 year visa, whereas France issue a 3 month visa. As you will be arriving in China within 3 months, you can apply for any visa duration now.

It is recommended to apply in your home country as most people need to go in person to a visa centre or embassy to provide finger prints. Additionally, if you apply somewhere where you are not resident, it’s not always possible to know in advance how long your visa will be valid for, as their rules regarding this frequently change. If you will not be in your home country or will not have enough time before the trip starts, we suggest you investigate which Embassy or Consulate you will be able to apply at and what their requirements are.

If you already have this visa from a previous visit, please send us a colour scan/photo. If it is in an old passport that you’re not using for travelling, please also send a colour scan of the old passport. ***You must bring this old passport with you on the trip.***

**Tibet permit**

Following the recommendation of our Chinese partners, we will be applying for our Tibet entry permits AFTER we have already obtained our China visas. We have done this in this order before too. So, do not be alarmed when you receive your Travel Plan from us and it does not show Tibet on the route.

When you have received your China visa, please email us a colour scanned copy. We will forward this to our China operator who need this to apply for the Tibet permits.

**Accommodation and Upgrades**

As you will have seen on our website, you will be staying in a mix of hostels, basic hotels and the occasional guesthouse. In some of these you will sleep in dorms. We always aim for same sex dorms but sometimes this is not possible and you will be sleeping in a mixed dorm.

If you want to upgrade from shared rooms to a private room (for singles or couples), you can do that when you arrive at each location, based on availability at the time. Your Tour Leader is not going to be able to pre-book various private rooms in advance.

If you do upgrade and you are staying in the same place as the rest of the group, then you will be able to use the amount we have paid for your original room or bed, towards your upgraded room **IF** the property allows us to do that. Sometimes they will but sometimes they won’t, and this is not something we can control. If you stay somewhere else completely, away from the main group, then you will need to cover all your costs for that.

**Personal luggage**

Please remember that during the trip you will be carrying your own luggage between hotels, train stations, transfer vehicles etc. So, you need to make sure you only bring what you are comfortable carrying yourself for a walk of say 20mins at the most. You may need to stand with your backpack on whilst on public transport and metros can take time and are crowded. Make sure that you bring your gear in a traditional soft sided 70 - 90L rucksack or holdall - suitcases are not suitable.Remember baggage is limited to 20kg per person plus one day bag.

**Dietary Requirements** (eg.Vegetarians / Vegans / Coeliacs / Gluten & Lactose intolerance etc.)

We will do our best to help facilitate dietary requirements or intolerances whenever possible, but also within reason.

If there is anything in particular you require in your diet or because of an allergy or would miss from home, it would be best to bring these with you, due to the high cost and scarcity of these specialised and often imported foods. Additionally, you may be able to find items like this when we get to big towns or cities.

Remember when eating out in local restaurants and hotels that vegetarianism or food allergies / intolerances, are still not widely known about or understood by local people in some areas. Most large towns and cities, or areas used to tourists, will often have more choice but please be aware that it may not be as varied as you are used to when eating out at home.

A lot of meals in China are cooked using nut oil. If you are allergic to nuts, it is a good idea to bring with you some small cards with information about your allergy written in the local language. These can be easily sourced and purchased online.

**Useful Phone apps**

You may wish to download the following apps to your phone. These can be very helpful while you are travelling, and it is often easier to set them up before you leave home. Do ask a friend or family member for assistance if this is not a familiar process:

* DiDi - ride sharing in China
* WeChat – messaging in China (WhatsApp does not work in China unless you use a VPN)
* Alipay for making payments in China
* VPN – there are various free and paid VPN apps available. These will provide you with a secure internet connection and allow you to change your phone’s internet location setting (useful when in China to let other Apps work when they otherwise may not).

**Payments in China:** it’s good to have both WeChat and Alipay set up to make payments. Cash is becoming hard to use in some places as most locals pay with their phones. Some shops will not accept cash or won’t have change to give you. We suggest downloading an app such as Wechat Cash or Alipay (TourCard). Both are available for foreigners to use. Many stores don't have card readers and so won't accept physical card payments or payments via international phone apps like Apple Pay.

We hope that all this information proves helpful.

Best wishes,

The Oasis Overland team