ST CATHERINE'S HOSPICE

China Trek FAQ's

Who accompanies us?

The trek is accompanied by local English-speaking guides who have an excellent knowledge of trekking in the region. The guides are first aid trained and will support you throughout your journey. You will also be supported by an excellent team of assistant staff, cooks and drivers, a St Catherine's representative and a Different Travel UK tour manager.

How tough is it?

The trek is rated **moderate to challenging** as the terrain is hilly and undulating with steep sections to contend with both on and off the Wall. The distance trekked each day is 5-12km over 4-8 hours. You will not trek on the wall the entire time, often you will walk next to it through the countryside so be prepared for a variety of terrain underfoot from grassy, dry terrain of the countryside to the stone steps of the Great Wall. The Great Wall has been restored in some sections so you will find smooth paved ground with steps built up the hillside. In the original sections the wall may be crumbling, with earth and stone rubble that shifts underfoot like scree, making it challenging to climb up it. **You are advised to train to a good fitness level before departure** to ensure fast recovery from each day's exertions. An ideal candidate for the trek would be someone who enjoys being out of their comfort zone and trying something new. Adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected so do not to expect standards to be the same as you are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable (be it because of group pace, weather conditions, local bureaucracy or other factors) and itineraries may be altered to allow for this. For you to get the most out of your challenge it is important that you are flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise. Suitable fitness preparation before departure forms part of this.

How should I prepare?

If you do not already regularly exercise it is crucial that you start training (including plenty of hills and stairs!) before departure to ensure your best chance of enjoyment on the trip. This could include speed walking, hill walking, swimming, running, cycling, gym workouts, team sports, boot camps, yoga etc. You can download a number of free apps, which will help you train and track your progress. E.g. iMapMyRide, C25K, MyFitnessPal etc. It is possible to complete the trek without training but it will be difficult and may hinder your experience, and the experience of your teammates. **Don't forget St Catherine's will help you train, making sure you're trek-ready.**

What is included?

Return flights from London (inc. airport taxes), all transfers and transport in China, accommodation in 3* hotel (2 nights), tents on trek (4 nights), all meals, local

expert English-speaking guides and support crew, trekking permits, a UK Different Travel tour manager and St Catherine's representative.

What isn't included?

Personal expenses (such as drinks, souvenirs, etc.), any vaccinations required, Chinese visa (current cost £175 for postal application), travel insurance, tips (approx. £25-£35 per person), personal trekking kit.

What about the weather?

Temperatures will be dependent upon the weather which is usually clear and sunny. Rain is unlikely but possible in May but this is a beautiful time of year to trek the great wall as the trees are all in blossom and the surrounding countryside is lush and green. Average temperature will range between 20°C to 25°C during the day and 4°C to 10°C at night. It's important to be prepared for all weather conditions and temperatures by packing non-cotton trek layers and waterproofs. It's better to have waterproofs and not need them, than to not have any when you need them!

What kind of food will we eat?

The trek day will start with a hearty breakfast of hot drinks fruit, noodles and porridge. You will take a packed lunch each day which will consist of sandwiches, fruit, biscuits, crackers, dried fruit and nuts etc. A freshly cooked traditional Chinese evening meal will be served at camp comprising of rice, noodles, meat, tofu and vegetable dishes. All cutlery, plates and mugs are provided for you. Please inform us in advance if you have any specific dietary requirements.

Where will we sleep?

At camp you will share a tent (two people per tent) which is provided for you. A sleeping mat is provided for you but you will need to bring your own sleeping bag with a comfort rating of around 5°C, depending how cold you tend to get.

What are the bathroom facilities like?

There will be basic toilet facilities available (a hole in the ground with a toilet seat frame over the top). You will need to bring your own toilet paper and will need to pack up any toilet paper you use to dispose of properly at camp. There will be no shower facilities available at camp so you are recommended to bring a pack of baby wipes for your general hygiene. Yes, it will be smelly but you'll all be in it together!

What about baggage?

The items you do not need for the trek will be left in a secure luggage room at the hotel in Beijing. During the trek you will only need to bring trek clothing, toiletries,

water bottle, camera, personal items etc. You should pack a lightweight duffle bag/holdall for trek items not needed during the day (transported by vehicle from camp to camp) and a daypack which you will carry yourself containing things you need access to during the day.

Health declaration

We require a medical form to be completed by everyone upon registering, and any pre-existing conditions, medications used and other medical issues must be noted and (if relevant) signed off by your GP. Any conditions that develop must be declared and a new medical form completed and signed.

What difference will my fundraising make?

By taking on our challenge, you'll help us to be there for local people when life comes full circle. People like Naomi and her husband Ken, who thought they would raise their family together until cancer stopped that. Naomi says: "St Catherine's made a huge difference to my whole family. As well as helping to make sure Ken wasn't in pain so he could really make the most of his time with us, they really took into account the impact that Ken's illness would have on me and my two boys - even helping him to make a memory box so that the boys could remember him".

How should I fundraise?

Once you've registered we will send a fundraising pack that's chock full of ideas, and hints and tips about how to hit your target. Most people find that this is far easier than they imagined, and we will give you as much support as you need to reach, and even exceed your target! Here are some suggestions for how you could raise your sponsorship. We will send you lots more ideas when you sign up.

- Cake sale at work £100
- Car boot sale £150
- Quiz night £250
- Bag packing at a busy supermarket £200
- Host a party and charge everyone £10 to attend £400