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Classic Journeys Taps China As Newest Foray Into Far East

12-day walking tour illuminates 2,000+ years of history and culture

October 1, 2008 – La Jolla, CA – Modern cities, rustic villages and a mystical mountain retreat share top billing on a sweeping exploration of China created by Classic Journeys, provider of cultural walking adventures, culinary tours and family journeys to more than 65 destinations worldwide.

The company's 12-day China—Shanghai to Shangri-La Cultural Walking Adventure steps behind the Bamboo Curtain to reveal a country that's a study in contrasts. One day finds guests amid the teeming streets of Beijing, including Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City, while another finds them face-to-face with the past at the burial site of the terra cotta warriors of Xian.

“Our goal is to show our guests a side of China they won't see on any other tour,” explains Edward Piegza, president and co-founder of Classic Journeys. “Whether it's devoting an entire day to hiking and picnicking along a lesser traveled portion of the Great Wall or learning the fine points of Tai Chi from a local master, we make the kind of historical and cultural connections that our guests will never forget.”

At each stop on a unique itinerary that includes Beijing, Xian, Guilin, Yangshuo, Shangri-La and Shanghai, guests encounter stunning scenery—like the soaring limestone pinnacles known as “dragon's teeth” looming over the Li River—and an intriguing cast of characters, ranging from delicate folk dancers to robust yak herders on horseback who appear to have stepped out of an ancient scroll painting.

Named a World's Best Tour Operator by Travel + Leisure Magazine

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A two-day stay in rural Yangshuo is typical of Classic Journeys' focus on cultural discovery. Guests trek along dirt paths through lush fields and bamboo forests, pedal past rice paddies where farmers work their water buffalo, and board a bamboo raft for a relaxing interlude on a gentle river.

Hand-picked native guides serve as indispensable companions, from interpreting local customs and recommending indigenous cuisine to facilitating interactions with China's fascinating mix of ethnic minorities.

The *pièce de résistance* of luxurious accommodations awaits Classic Journeys guests in Shangri-La, the Tibetan mountaintop romanticized by James Hilton in *Lost Horizon*. During a three-day stay at the Banyan Tree Ringha, a five-star boutique hotel and spa fashioned from traditional Tibetan farmhouses, guests meander through wildflower meadows in the shadow of snowcapped peaks and pay a call on the chanting monks of an 18th-century monastery.

In Shanghai, shoppers explore the retail mecca of the Nanjing Shopping Road and stroll the waterfront promenade known as the Bund. On one side of the Huangpu lie the banks and trading houses of 19th-century colonialists, while across the water, some of the world's tallest skyscrapers symbolize China's 21st-century economic power.

Classic Journeys makes the most of this multi-faceted country—at its best in spring and fall—with departures in April, May, September and October. Tour price is \$5995 per person, double occupancy (land-only). Internal air fare of approximately \$1200 per person is extra.

An optional 5-day, 4-night Cruise Extension highlighting the Three Gorges stretch of the Yangtze River (soon to be altered forever by construction of a hydroelectric dam) is available at tour's end for \$1595 per person.

For a detailed daily itinerary and departure dates, or for more information on our new trips to Zambia, Panama and the Tuscan Coast in 2009, visit www.ClassicJourneys.com or consult with a Classic Journeys Guest Services Coordinator at (800) 200-3887.

About Classic Journeys:

Classic Journeys offers cultural walking adventures, culinary tours and family journeys in North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa, Asia and the South Pacific. Guests enjoy luxury accommodations and gourmet meals that reflect the best of each region, coupled with soft adventure activities, daily interactions with locals, and native guides who make countries and cultures come alive. Tours are six to 12 days long with two to four hours of easy-going walking per day. Land-only tour prices range from \$2395 to \$6995 per person (with discounts for small groups and children traveling with parents). Average tour size is 10, limited to a maximum of 18 guests per departure. Full details and links to itineraries are available at www.ClassicJourneys.com.