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The mission of the Greater Akron Chamber is to drive economic development and prosperity for the people of the Greater Akron Region.

# GREATER AKRON CHAMBER CULTURAL IMMERSION TOUR

JULY 23-31, 2012

## CHINA SURVIVAL GUIDE



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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*Forbidden City Palace Museum*

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## NOTES:

### **Prior to Registering!**

1. Prior to registering we suggest you verify the expiration of your passport; it must be valid through at least January 26, 2013. Refer to Q/A #04. You may still register for the trip if your passport is soon going to expire, but please first speak with a Greater Akron Chamber China Team representative to discuss options.
2. Some travel insurance companies may not cover pre-existing medical conditions after you have already paid any money towards your trip. We suggest you inquire with an agency of your choice prior to paying the registration fee if this situation applies to you. We will discuss travel and cancellation insurance in Q/A #06.

### **Preparation:**

- Q01: How can I prepare for the China trip?
- A01: The best preparations you can do are to read ahead and learn some basics about the planned attractions and itinerary locations. Many utilize the internet; however for those who have only television, the Travel Channel™ and other documentaries are good. You may decide to purchase a book or, we highly recommend the public library to search for free videos and books about China, Beijing, Xi'an and Shanghai.

Post Travel Survey Results: The Greater Akron Chamber provides every passenger an anonymous survey within a few weeks after returning from each trip. All of our completed surveys clearly indicate that each traveler has a unique personal perspective and as well, all who have chosen to respond to a survey have expressed satisfaction and enjoyment. Most everyone has an individualized expectation or assumption of China, its citizens, and the tour. Even within the same bus group and for every person visiting the same attraction, comments clearly show that there will be a multitude of different genuine viewpoints. Though everyone will have seen the same thing at the same time and participate in the same events, the survey comments reflect valid diverse opinions. All comments equally balance out. Also keep in mind that in a sense, each trip kind of has its own personality. Please be flexible and open to new fun experiences with the diversity of an active, scripted and organized tour. Most importantly, for first time international travelers, have the mindset that you are leaving your daily American routine and for a short time will be immersed into a slightly different culture that in some aspects, has some customs that we are not used to. **We will be guests of China.**

## Communication, Paperwork, Official Documents:

- Q02: How will the Greater Akron Chamber account for my paperwork and documents?
- A02: Materials will be secured at the Akron Chamber offices 17th floor or the NuVu Traveler offices.
- Q03: How will you keep in touch with us between registration and trip departure?
- A03: Nearly all general communication, updates and paperwork will be transmitted via Email for those who have computer access; U.S. mail will be used for those who do not. You will also be contacted by telephone as necessary. Most correspondence will be available for download at our website: <http://www.greaterakronchamber.org>
- Q04: According to your registration, why must my passport be valid at least 6 months (01/26/13) beyond the final day of my trip?
- A04: This is a government requirement. For this tour, it is the sole responsibility of each passenger to obtain or update their own passport; the most valid source for information is the official United States (US) Department of State Web site at: [http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport\\_1738.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html) or their Frequently Asked Questions (F.A.Q.) at: [http://travel.state.gov/passport/guide/faq/faq\\_881.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/guide/faq/faq_881.html)
- Q05: Can you explain the Chinese Visa this trip requires?
- A05: A Chinese Visa is a permit required by law of the Republic of China concerning the administration of foreigners entering and leaving their country. Travel visas fall within eight classifications and are handled either through a consulate, embassy, or company such as our tour host NuVu Traveler Inc. **Please mark your calendar** to turn in your China Visa application for processing anytime between 05/15/2012 to 05/25/2012. The Akron Chamber China Team will pre-fill out most of the form for you and will assist along the way so that it is accurate. It is required that your passport accompanies your Chinese Visa application paperwork along with one passport style photo. Non U.S. Citizens must additionally submit a Permanent Resident Card (PRC) or (LPR) and, Chinese born passengers may be required to provide several additional documents for this process. Your passport, visa and PRC will be at the Chinese Embassy for approximately three weeks and will be returned to you as soon as the processing is complete; therefore we will have possession of your materials for approximately 3-4 weeks.

## GREATER AKRON CHAMBER CHINA TEAM

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*“China, a 5,000-year-old civilization, has always been one of the most exotic and intriguing destinations for travelers. Its rich cultural heritage – which includes the invention of moveable type, astronomy and spaghetti – has shaped world history. Today, China is an economic powerhouse that will continue to shape the world’s future. Its unique business systems are ever evolving; its influence on the global markets grows daily. Any true understanding of China must encompass both its cultural history and its contemporary position as a business leader.”*

*Mary Ethridge—Journalist*

So, what exactly is “everything”? Any items you purchased abroad and are now carrying with you whether for yourself or another person, even if you wore or used it on your trip. The good news is that just because you declare an item does not mean you’ll have to pay a duty, or import tax, on the item.

Each traveler is allowed an exemption range depending on the country visited, and according to the United States Customs and Border website, “US residents are normally entitled to a duty-free exemption of \$800 on items accompanying them.” This does not mean that you can only purchase \$800 worth of gifts or items. Please see the Customs Border Protection Web site at:

<http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg/>

**Traveling with medicines:** We suggest that IF it is possible, you travel with prescriptions or medications in the original containers and bring only the quantity needed; you may also verify your options on the appropriate Web sites listed below.

For details, specific policies and precise up-to-date information on declarations, medicines, food, duty, taxes and customs:

1. United States Customs:  
[www.customs.gov](http://www.customs.gov)
2. “Travel Warnings” at:  
[www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)
3. Airline Transportation Security:  
<http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/index.shtm>

On the four-page Chinese Visa Application form, there are only certain sections to complete and **no need to fill in the entire application**. With your application form you will need to supply one single **passport style photograph**. We will also collect the \$190.00 payment at the same time you submit your Chinese Visa documents between the dates of 05/15/2012—05/25/2012.

**Please refer to and thoroughly read the front and back side of the form “Chinese Visa Application Instructions”**

### **Cancellations and Travel Insurance:**

- Q06: Is travel insurance necessary?
- A06: Travel insurance is not absolutely required though it’s an option you should **strongly consider**. If a passenger chooses to buy trip cancellation or medical insurance, each person has the responsibility to inquire and to purchase their own plan, through the agency of their choice. Some underwriter’s will not cover pre-existing medical conditions if you pay a trip registration or any monies PRIOR to purchasing a travel insurance package; though you may purchase coverage at almost any time prior to departure. In other words if you pay any money towards the trip cost before buying your own insurance, certain pre-existing health conditions may not be covered under the plan you purchase, nevertheless this may not even apply to your health situation. The Akron Chamber does not get involved with travel insurance quotes though we do suggest contacting any travel group office local to your area. Again, the Akron Chamber China Team continues to recommend that each passenger speak to a representative from the insurance provider of their choice then consider all options in regards to purchasing a policy that best meets their individual or family needs.

Cancellations: It is important to note that beginning May 2, 2012 and thereafter, all final aspects of the trip will be locked in. **No monies are refunded by the Chamber after this date**. If you have purchased a travel insurance policy; your underwriter will contact us regarding documentation and they will provide a percentage reimbursement depending on the policy you’ve bought.

**Historically, the Greater Akron Chamber processes at least one cancellation per trip and all are due to unforeseen family circumstances or unexpected issues.**

**Refer to and thoroughly read the “China Tours Cancellation & Refunds Process” form.**

## Itineraries:

Q07: Can you explain the itinerary in more detail?  
A07: The initial flyer we distribute is the 9-day mainland plan with trip highlights. This document lays out which cities you will travel to and what attractions you will visit. You will receive a final itinerary in approximately late June. The final itinerary is the piece that will list your hotel names, their Web sites and phone numbers, plus available optional tours. Remember that this is an active and very scripted tour! **The final itinerary and E-tickets will be hard copy mailed to every household.**

Q08: Why does your flyer state that the “itinerary is subject to change”?  
Q08: The initial flyer or any advertisements that everyone receives in their trip packet prior to registration, lists sightseeing and activities that will take place while on the China tour. It is imperative to note that with travel, sometimes unforeseen things just happen and are completely unpredictable, there may be minor modifications. Nevertheless as mentioned in Q/A#07, every guest will also receive a finalized itinerary approximately one-month prior to the departure date. Again, with the finalized itinerary you’ll get the exact name of your hotels with contact information and Web site addresses. Once we arrive in China, the tour guides may switch around activities or days for a particular attraction in order to better accommodate the sightseeing cycle, weather, or time frame. Furthermore, though the finalized itinerary is a guideline of the tour for the group as a whole, passengers can ask the tour guides if there are alternative or additional activities available for those who wish to do some ‘on-your-own’ extra exploration, based upon the season and availability. Please know that each bus and each group can have a slightly different time schedule.

## Getting Started and Registered for a China Tour:

Q09: How do we **sign up** and what is the basic registration process?  
A09: To reserve seat(s), each person needs to fill out and submit the Registration Form plus a copy of their passport photo page, along with \$300 per person, no later than December 20, 2011.

Q10: How do we **finalize** our space on the tour?  
A10: Please mark your calendar that the final payment is due no later than May 1, 2012. The China team will utilize the time between first-half payment and final, to confirm airline space, assign rooms, bus numbers, and verify documents.

Q49: How do I pay for attractions, what monies are accepted, can I access my personal accounts?  
A49: Every sightseeing location on the itinerary is inclusive of your tour package price. Nevertheless, in China, if you feel you have time on your own and wish to inquire about additional attractions or sights, you would pay for those out of pocket, but first consult your tour guide. More often than not, on the economy you will pay in Chinese Yuan and not credit cards.

Airports, hotels and big city localities will have Automatic Teller Machines (ATM’s) but do not expect to find them as readily available as in the United States and especially in the outskirts listed on your itinerary. Once again, ATM money, in China, is of course dispersed in Chinese currency, not USD.

Q50: What about tips and gratuities?  
A50: In China, your personal tour guide will make a one-time announcement on your bus and ask each individual to provide a one-time \$35.00 tip. This covers all cities of the whole trip towards all basic service oriented functions involved with the operators. What is not covered are bellhop tips and services beyond what is listed on the itinerary. **You may personally decide to give an additional gratuity and that is each traveler’s choice, it is not required.**

## Clearing Borders, Medicines and Customs Declarations:

Q51: Can you tell me about gifts, souvenirs, customs and claims?  
A51: All persons arriving at a port-of-entry to the United States are subject to inspection by US Customs and Border Protection Officers. All persons traveling abroad and re-entering the United States have two things that must happen upon arrival at the first USA entry international airport which are: clearing Immigration and clearing Customs. The first step to clear immigration simply means to present your United States passport to prove your citizenship. Non U.S.A. citizens may be asked for their PRC/ Green Card.

Clearing Customs, the second step, means ‘to declare’ or put simply, if you did not start with it, you **MUST** declare it. On your return to the United States, you must state in writing everything you brought back that you did not have in your possession when you left the States. A customs declaration form will be available on your return flight.

We suggest you keep the mindset that these vendors are just people trying to make a living—no need to insult them. You will see a vast array of these types of street vendors selling everything imaginable from sunglasses, to watches, to handbags, chopsticks, hats, etceteras. Occasionally these items are some sort of knock-off, some you will find nowhere else, and many are actually great bargains **IF** you negotiate wisely. Nevertheless, you will have encounters with mosquitoes in certain localities and your tour guide will not be able to ‘watch over’ every American during every sale. **So**, the best tried and true advice is, if you do NOT wish to purchase an item from a street vendor: 1) do NOT in any way make eye contact 2) do NOT say anything 3) do NOT respond when they talk to you 4) just keep on walking. If you decide to buy off the streets, some recommend countering the initial offer by up to 75% less, then work to a compromise from that point. Buying ‘knock-off’ goods is entirely a personal choice and not advocated by the Chamber.

As you spend American dollars at places other than stores, it is best to use small denominations so you can pay in the smallest increments possible when you buy something from a vendor. Street vendors are not always capable of providing change for big bills and in some instances involving Yuan, will switch to another currency. We suggest carrying a bunch of \$1USD but nothing larger than \$5USD bills as you go out in the economy and buy small inexpensive items. Keep your \$10-\$20USD bills to exchange at the hotel currency desk or pay for perhaps souvenir books, the one-time overall \$35USD tip, or other things.

**While shopping at certain venues, Chinese store clerks will often follow a shopper while s/he is browsing; this is typical for some countries other than the USA and particularly in China; please do not be concerned if you experience this, it is only a policy and not intended to personally offend you.**

Theft: Thieves are common in any country and city, and have no regard for size, age, or culture. An unwary traveler is an inviting target to an experienced pickpocket, especially at populated tourist attractions. One suggestion to protect your valuables is to keep them zipped up in your lanyard pocket and around your neck.

When you arrive at Beijing Tiananmen Square and Shanghai Chinatown, if your tour guide does not give your group the “be careful of theft speech” – please be aware that these are highly populated areas!

Additionally, this time period is used to assist (if specifically asked to and where possible) those single traveler’s in matching a roommate; **the Chamber absolutely does NOT guarantee compatible roommate match-ups**, however we will help as much as possible. Refer to Q/A#39.

These six particulars **lock-in** a guest reservation:

#1 Registration Form

#2 \$300 non-refundable reservation fee

#3 Copy of passport photo page [b&w is fine]

#4 Release of Liability Disclaimer Form

#5 Pre-Tour Questionnaire Form

#6 Final payment(s)

**\*The \$2,799 price is the quoted double-occupancy cost for those who register by 12/20/2011. We will gladly accept registrations after this date and will do everything we are able to accommodate, where possible, on a case-by-case basis. Fuel surcharges may apply.**

#### **Health, Emergencies, Comfort:**

Q11: Are vaccinations and shots required?

A11: At the time of this publication, shots are NOT required, but consult your physician if you have concerns. Feel free to visit the Center for Disease Control or World Health Organization Web sites at:  
<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationChina.aspx>  
<http://www.who.int/countries/chn/en/>

Q12: What are family emergency procedures?

A12: Each passenger will receive a confirmed itinerary with a list of hotels and phone numbers approximately one month prior to departure. Travelers should **leave a copy of this information with a family member in the USA** and keep one copy of their itinerary on them during the trip. In case of a home emergency, the ideal means of contact should be for the USA family to first call the hotel in China and leave a direct message, and second to notify the Akron Chamber of the situation at 330-376-5550. For those who plan to pay for their personal wireless provider to arrange international cell phone coverage in China, we also recommend using this method for emergency communication.

On the China Tour ‘Pre-Tour Questionnaire’ **accepted anytime, but due no later than** May 1, 2012, the Chamber requires you to provide a point of contact name and phone number; we will only use this information in case of emergency.

Q13: What about personal injury to passengers, medical emergencies and hospital payment coverage while in China?

A13: Your personal tour guide is accountable for you and has the responsibility to arrange care or attention during your time in China; talk to them first. If at your hotel, contact the front desk for emergencies or concerns; each hotel has your tour guides name, location and phone number which in turn, there are procedures in place for how to handle your situation. Please refer to Q/A#12.

Q14: What is the weather in China like?

A14: Your best bet is to read travel materials for China. In general, Beijing is cooler and is typically subject to the weather patterns coming from the Northern Mongolian mountains; the climate can be a lot different than the southern areas of Xi'an and province of Shanghai, which is typically about 10 degrees warmer. In July, Beijing historically averages a weather range from lows of 70F to highs of 87F of dryer air. Xi'an averages a weather range from 71F to 90F and Shanghai with a weather range from lows of 76F to 89F but with more humidity. Remember these temperatures are historical averages; therefore, temperatures could be colder or warmer during your stay in China.

An online current forecast is at this Web site:

<http://www.intellicast.com/Local/Weather.aspx?>

Q15: What is the attire?

A15: Weekend casual clothing is fine for each day of your tour and blue jeans are the most commonly worn item; comfortable walking shoes and a jacket are recommended. Many suggest packing a second pair of shoes so you can rotate to avoid wearing the same shoes daily. Similar to the Midwest United States, April begins springtime and October begins autumn; seasons start to change at these times so use good judgment and pack accordingly. Once in a while, the daily forecast can change dramatically, just like in the USA. Do some homework and research prior to travel. Most importantly, **dress in layers** so you can easily adjust to region variations.

### **Getting To/From Cleveland-Hopkins Airport (CLE)**

Q16: How do I get To/From the CLE international airport?

A16: Each guest is responsible to arrange their own transportation to get to the airport for USA departure day of July 23, 2012 and to return home from this airport on USA arrival day July 31, 2012.

Q48: Can you provide specific details about shopping, where we will make purchases, and how much cash to bring?

A48: **Every international traveler will have a different budget, expectation, and anticipation of certain souvenirs to purchase.** Overall, everyone will have opportunities to shop or purchase each day of the trip! Some venues, such as Cloisonné and Pearl, provide a demonstration in the store to show how the material is produced as well as a souvenir shop inside the building.

There will be ample opportunities to purchase from factories, workshops, souvenir shops, vendors, and a bazaar. **Please do NOT feel obligated to purchase everything that is pitched to you, it is okay to say no.** Price negotiation is expected except at government owned outlets. You could be offered items on the street for as little as \$1USD, but at factories you may find merchandise at low prices as well as exceptionally beautiful authentic pieces costing thousands.

At some attractions if you decide to spend a considerable amount of money on beautiful gifts, we suggest using credit instead of cash. Credit cards are accepted at every government factory but not all factories are Chinese government owned. You may also use your credit card, ATM or debit card at an ATM in the hotel. In China, you will receive Chinese Yuan currency, you will NOT receive USD during a withdrawal. Some may use an ATM for a credit card cash advance, it is important that you know your credit card PIN number because it is usually different than your normal debit card or ATM card PIN number. If you plan to use your American credit card in China, it is very important that you notify your credit card company AHEAD of time, while you are still in the USA, prior to the trip!

Many, but not all China locations accept USD. Some examples of those you might think would take American currency but do **NOT**: Restaurants, Kentucky Fried Chicken, McDonald's, Starbucks, Chinese airports, and most importantly the hotel lounges where many of our guests gather at night to chat, unwind, and purchase refreshments. (The hotel lounges do accept credit cards)

During the tour you **WILL** encounter beggars as well as **MANY** street vendors, also known as 'mosquitoes'. The mosquitoes memorize the tour routes of all foreigners that come into their regions and will always be waiting for travelers at the entrance, exit and parking lot of each attraction; they are not 'legally' permitted inside any sightseeing attraction.

Q47: How do we exchange currency?

A47: You are not required to have Chinese currency on hand when you first enter the country, it is a personal preference. Furthermore, please note that not every banking institution will exchange USD to RMB or RMB back to USD. Additionally, American banks that do provide an exchange service usually require early notification; a transaction fee for lower amounts; charge a higher fee if the transaction is not requested at the main branch office; and may only exchange for their own current account holders. The Akron Chamber cannot arrange nor be involved with setting up group currency exchange packages.

Bottom line is that it is the personal choice of each traveler whether to secure and exchange Chinese currency while in the United States, or to wait until leaving the country. We continue to recommend that everyone wait until arriving in China. The hotels we stay at will exchange your US dollars (USD) into Chinese (Yuan) usually at no cost to you. Banks will charge, the airport will charge and most others will charge a high fee; hotels will not.

It is very important to know that as you exchange USD for Yuan – **this applies only at the China hotels**- that your USD paper currency must not be torn, worn, crumpled, or have writing on it. Each hotel has a certain currency limit that they will exchange per person, each time you walk up to the exchange counter. This policy is at all hotels and applies to any currency from around the world, not just American money; **it does not apply to the condition of the currency you use to pay your tour guide or make purchases.**

Overall there is no need to exchange too much American money because there are many times during the tour that you will be able to purchase with your USD. A good starting point might be to exchange about \$30-\$50USD per person, per each visit to the hotel exchange desk, then work from that point if you need more.

It is wise to gauge how much you spend during your first day—get a feel for the economy and what type of souvenirs are offered, then work from there. You can always exchange more money in the evening when you return from the bus, or exchange the next morning, or at the next hotel.

Don't get too much Chinese money because you may not easily find a currency exchange, (can always use the airport), to put Yuan back into USD at the end of the trip without paying a big fee.

**\*Flights/Times will be provided as soon as the airlines release the itinerary to the tour group—we anticipate this time frame to be approximately April or May 2012 however, we will have the pre-requested flight info possibly as early as late January to early February. Ideally, all passengers should plan to arrive at the specific airlines departure counter at CLE airport, about 1-2 hours prior to the flight departure. On Monday, July 23, 2012.** At CLE, gather your luggage and go ahead to the check-in line at the correct ticket counter (TBD). Have your E-ticket and passport at-hand—the Chamber China Team will provide you two copies prior to departure day. Be aware that at the Cleveland airport, there will be a lot of people and many flights so things will be hectic—please expect this. A Greater Akron Chamber staff person –OR- a NuVu Traveler representative will be on site to assist and coordinate departure.

Out-of-state passengers should contact the Chamber China team at 330-376-5550 regarding flight variations or very specific alternative arrangements, as applicable. Any type of travel other than the group departure point at the Ohio Cleveland-Hopkins International Airport, is at your own expense. We strongly recommend that if you choose to fly to/from CLE airport from your home city, that you do not schedule your connecting flight time too close to the departure day and arrival day flight times!

Departure time on Monday, July 23, 2012 will be in the morning TBD, Cleveland Ohio eastern standard time. Please allow for and expect early boarding times prior to the flights and baggage claims after the flights. We will provide you the flight itinerary as soon as the airlines releases this to the Chamber, also please expect slight adjustments in the flight numbers and times—this is normal.

**Please be aware that first, with international travel once in a while, some things are unpredictable. Second, the Greater Akron Chamber has no control over any airline or any airport procedures. Third, the Greater Akron Chamber is not responsible for costs associated with missed domestic flights of passengers flying in/out of Cleveland from a point of origin other than what is on the tour tickets. Neither NuVu Travel nor the Akron Chamber are responsible for broken luggage, you must file a claim while inside an airport. (It helps to take photos of your bags prior to departure and while your luggage is unscathed) We welcome calls to the China team at 330-237-1250 if you have questions about this.**

**Estimated arrival into Beijing (PEK) will be China time: Tuesday, July 24, 2012 late afternoon to early evening.**

As of the date of this publication, we do not yet have any flight schedules though we anticipate a draft by early February; we will certainly match up flight times to the China itinerary. We strongly stress that you be flexible at airports and in regards to international flight unanticipated issues on the days of travel. **Once again**, a bit of advice about making your arrangements to return home if you have a ride waiting, or if you are not in Ohio and have to schedule a connecting flight back home: Please keep in mind that there is always the possibility that you may not exit the international/domestic flight arrival gate on time as anticipated. For example the flight from Shanghai (PVG) could be delayed; USA East coast weather could be bad; USA Customs and Immigration could have long security lines, or any unanticipated issue related to typical airport and high volume passenger travel.

The Akron Chamber does not coordinate or set-up group flights in/out of Cleveland for passengers who live outside of Ohio.

**Airports, the Flights, Tickets, Seating:**

- Q17: Does the airline carrier provide meals on the plane?  
A17: Yes, on the trip from the USA to China and it's return. You may wish to contact the specific airlines or their web site prior to departure, once we have the exact flight information.
- Q18: If we have special dietary meal requests, what options are we offered through the airlines on the overseas flights?  
A18: Our advice is to contact your itinerary airline toll-free number and ask a representative. We do not guarantee that they can assist if you have very special requirements, but you can at least ask. Typically flight carriers of any particular nationality will offer meals based upon their international origins and not necessarily something entirely American.
- Q19: Can you provide me online sites to read about our airports?  
Q19: Yes, below are those that we have, as of 11/2011 for CLE, PEK, XIY, PVG:  
<http://www.clevelandairport.com/>  
<http://en.bcia.com.cn>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xi%27an\\_Xianyang\\_International\\_Airport](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xi%27an_Xianyang_International_Airport)  
<http://www.shairport.com> (English web portion under construction)

Hotel Club Points: Travelers who have a Priority Rewards or specific hotel account must procure their club points through each applicable China hotel or ahead of time in the USA. The tour operator and Chamber do not coordinate hotel credit points.

- Q42: How do we handle hotel check-in?  
A42: This is often handled by your tour guide. Before arriving at each hotel, you may be required to temporarily hand over your passport to the guide. Your documents are returned to you either the same night or the next morning
- Q43: How do we handle hotel check-out?  
A43: Everyone checks out individually plus settles extra charges if you bought anything from the room or an additional hotel service.

**Electricity and Small Appliances:**

- Q44: What are the voltage requirements in China?  
A44: Electricity is a 220 volt system and not 110 as in the USA. The hotel outlets will provide a 220 China voltage, and 'may' provide a 110 USA voltage, though NOT always a dual receptacle. We continue to recommend bringing an electric transformer with it's adaptors — just in case. If you choose to purchase your own transformer and adaptor kit, prices can range from \$19.<sup>00</sup> and up. The China bus drivers do not offer a vehicle adaptor to plug in camera equipment. \*Note that you may plan to utilize camera, cell phone, or laptop chargers. Detailed conversion and compatibility information is at these two Web sites:  
<http://www.friendlyplanet.com/facts/electricity.html>  
<http://kropla.com/electric2.htm>
- Q45: What about using my cell phone while overseas?  
A45: This is solely based upon the available options of your own wireless carrier and the parameters of your device. Whether or not you have an international option and your cell phone will function in China should be discussed with your wireless provider.

**Monetary Issues, Spending, Purchases, Shopping, Gratuities**

- Q46: What is the currency for China?  
A46: The national currency is the Yuan, or commonly written as (RMB) Renminbi. As of 11/18/2011, one US dollar is worth approximately **6.35527** Yuan and we assume it will stay around 6. Here is one of many possible exchange rate information Web sites:  
<http://x-rates.com/d/CNY/table.html>

Commodes: Some hotel room commodes have a two flush button system; press one button for liquid and both buttons for solids.

Beds: On the form titled “China Tour Pre-Trip Questionnaire”, due not later than May 1, 2012, you will be able to choose which style of bed you prefer. For those accustomed to a western style queen size mattress, be aware that in your China hotels, a queen bed is probably closer to what Americans consider a full size. Also, the Chinese style beds are typically firmer and sometimes do not utilize a box spring below the mattress. If three family members plan to share one room, a roll-a-way may be provided.

Internet: Some hotels offer a Business Center with computers for guests to access. Once you receive your final itinerary that lists our hotels, feel free to go online and view accommodation amenities information for each location. The Business Centers are NOT usually open 24 hours so please inquire with the front desk at each hotel if you plan to be on the internet. The rates for internet access in the Business Center’s seem reasonable. You will have to inquire at each hotel regarding hotel room wireless access availability and rates if you’re going to bring a laptop.

Phones: The international dialing code to reach China from the USA is:

International Operator+Country Code+City Code+Local Phone

For **EXAMPLE**: 011 + 86 + 10 + 66768866

Hair Dryers: The hotels typically provide a room with a hair dryer, but not always. If available, dryers may not always be located directly on the bathroom countertop; some are affixed to the wall and some dryers are placed inside a desk drawer.

Bathroom outlets typically provide a 110 USA voltage and a 220 China voltage, but not always. We continue to recommend bringing an electric transformer with the adaptor plugs - just in case.

Electric: For Electrical outlet information Refer to Q/A#44.

Room lighting: Hotel room lights are activated and remain on only when your door swipe card key is placed directly in the receptacle holder of your room. You will typically see this at eye-level, right as you enter your room.

Exercising: Some hotels offer an exercise facility and/or a swimming pool. Some may charge a usage fee and some not. Please check the hotel amenities online prior to the trip.

Q20: What is the passenger capacity of the overseas airplane?

A20: A wide body aircraft seats at least 300 passengers. The overseas flight times can run from approximately 12 hours to 13 hours and 45 minutes air time, depending.

**The Greater Akron Chamber does not control airline policies or regulations.**

Q21: How are airline tickets provided? What about seating?

A21: Approximately one month prior to departure, the Chamber will receive a **random** alpha list of names with flight numbers; this is your **group style** E-ticket. We will then provide you this very same piece of paper; it is a group format and not an individual style as many are used to seeing, thus **do not be alarmed**. We assure you that at the airport terminal, the paper you receive is what the ticket counter will use to get you onto the plane and transfer your actual final hard copy boarding pass into your hands.

**Your flight seating and personal E-ticket have nothing to do with those whom you wish to travel with; neither affects your China tour bus assignment. On the bus you will still be riding with those whom you have requested even if your E-ticket does not have your travel mate’s name right next to yours.**

**Aircraft seating is NOT pre-assigned nor are passengers provided a specific seat number ahead of time. The Akron group will be in the same section of the aircraft and you will be assigned a seat once you check-in at the airport terminal. WE INVITE YOU TO PERSONALLY CONTACT the carrier yourself to request a specific seat(s).**

Q22: What luggage can I bring? Is there a baggage fee?

A22: Baggage regulations are set by each individual airline, not the tour operator nor the Chamber; the policies can be very confusing. Please call the Chamber at 330-237-1250 if you would like more clarification. In the summer of 2011, all airlines initiated a policy to adopt a one (1) bag check-in piece per passenger; this applies to not only domestic but also most international travelers as of the date of this publication. Also, as of this publication date we cannot confirm every airline, HOWEVER most are adopting the first piece free and then implementing a \$70 charge for a second check-in piece. Therefore, at this time, each passenger can check-in (1) one-piece and carry on one (1) piece. The free check-in luggage bag measurements at the time of this publication is 62 linear inches and 50 pounds maximum for domestic USA travel.

**HOWEVER** from PEK to Xi'an (XIY) travel is considered a China domestic flight and the free-baggage weight **CHANGES** to one (1) check-in at only 44 pounds! This means from PEK to XIY and XIY to PVG. On your return to the USA from Shanghai PVG, you may again have up to 50 pounds in your check-in.

So, a checked pieces falls within 'free baggage allowance' on the domestic in-country China domestic flights as long as #1) It's total weight is no more than 44 lbs and #2) It's dimensions are not more 62 inches. To get this measurement, add together the outside dimensions of the bag by width + height + depth. Again, maximum dimensions of any piece should not exceed 62 linear inches. The single carry-on baggage weight is 11 lbs maximum and dimensions of 21x15x7. We invite you to research baggage details on your specific Airlines Web site since policies are frequently modified.

You are responsible to move your own luggage through Baggage Claims and Customs; **Greater Akron Chamber staff is not responsible to carry or move guest luggage during the trip.**

Also see the Transportation Authority Web site for carry-on: <http://www.tsa.gov/311/index.shtm>.

These Web sites contain useful information:  
<http://www.customs.gov>  
<http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/index.shtm>

Q23: How do I get my check-in luggage on/off of the flights?  
A23: For out-of-state guests who have purchased a connection flight inbound to Cleveland: Passengers flying into CLE should physically retrieve their baggage from their originating air carrier, in order to get it placed on your specific China itinerary flight. That is, if you have a connecting flight we strongly suggest you have your bags in your hands, until you relinquish them to the ticket counter/conveyor belt, so that you **see** your items transfer to the proper USA international hub flight or boarding pass representative -VERSUS- having your check-in bags routed straight through, if this is offered.

For All Passengers: On return to USA day, the flight from Shanghai will load your check-in luggage to arrive straight into your USA arrival hub (not CLE). All overseas travelers are not permitted a baggage 'check-through' past this international arrival and re-entry airport of the United States.

Rooms are normally set up for two but a third person is permitted at no additional charge; in this case, a roll-a-way may be used if requested. Once the China traveler list is finalized and turned in to the tour company, roommates will not change and are locked in at all hotels. Those who share the same rooms are automatically put on the same tour bus.

**For single travelers who ask to be paired up, the Chamber can assist to match up a roommate; nevertheless, this is NOT a guarantee that there will be someone else. Again, in the event there is a single occupant room, the one-person rate stated in Q/A#38 will apply. IF A DOUBLE ROOM BECOMES A SINGLE —due to a cancellation— THE SINGLE ROOM RATE ADDITIONAL \$450 CHARGE WILL APPLY TO THE REMAINING GUEST.**

Q40: Are the hotels ratings the same as in the USA?  
A40: Not necessarily. Many who have completed these trips agree that the hotel accommodations are slightly more upscale. You will have reservations in three different hotels (one in each province) over the seven total nights in China. In reality, this tour is purposely designed with a fun, active and full schedule so that you may be exposed to as much culture and sightseeing as possible. Therefore keep in mind that the schedule will utilize much of your available time and your hotel room is basically the place where you sleep and clean up rather than the location where you will spend most of your premium hours.

Q41: What do I need to know about my overnight stay, what do I bring?  
A41: We recommend reading up on the cities of your itinerary or peruse the Internet for 'hotel stay' information you would want to be advised of. The hotels have modern amenities and services, plus some include a room safe.

As mentioned in Q/A#07, the Greater Akron Chamber will provide every guest the hotel Web sites, addresses, and phone numbers on the final confirmed itinerary. If you have specific questions about personal needs or specific amenities provided at a hotel, we invite you to email or call that particular hotel.

Every person on the same bus will stay in the same hotel.

Water: Policy is to NOT drink tap water at any location, nor rinse your mouth in the shower. Utilize bottled water to drink and brush your teeth. All rooms provide a few free water bottles and mini-hygiene kit.

The Chamber is not aware of diabetic preference menus in Chinese restaurants, yet all travelers who have completed the Akron China trips have stated that they have been accommodated in some way or have made personal adjustments.

The lunch and dinner meals are served with a limited number of bottles of beer, soda pop and water to each table of 8 (this number is not per person). Anything beyond this must be purchased.

We continue to suggest bringing some sort of snacks to China. These can help tie you over on some of the bus trips or if there is a late lunch. Unlike American hotels, China hotel kitchens are not always open to serve food during non meal hours, though some may be. Typically your tour-guide will tell you the nearest Kentucky Fried Chicken or Pizza Hut if you wish to step out in the evening. For the brave at heart, if you decide to venture out and purchase food from an outdoor street kitchen or kiosk, eating that style of food is at your own risk.

Q37: What else should I know about rest facilities, visiting some of the smaller localities, and outskirts attractions?

A37: Follow the instructions of your tour guide and be flexible. The republic of China has come a long way towards what we call 'westernizing' due to the 2008 Olympics and 2010 world Expo. As China tourism expands, more westernized relief facilities are being constructed. That said, at many of the landmarks, you will see the standard squat flat toilet in most stalls, nevertheless there is always an option for a western style commode plus the mandatory throne in the wheelchair accessible location. We continue to recommend having a small bottle of Purell® or baby wipes in your pocket and **ALWAYS-ALWAYS** carry some sort of tissue with you. Typically, there will be a centrally located wash station for both male and female patrons outside of the water closets.

#### **Accommodations, Hotels, Procedures:**

Q38: The tour package price lists all rooms at a double-occupancy, what is the cost to have my own room?

A38: The single-occupancy room is an additional charge of \$450.00 USD. In the event there is a single occupant, a one-person rate equally applies.

Q39: In my double-occupancy room, who decides my roommate and will this change at a different hotel?

A39: Basically, each passenger predetermines who they will travel with.

After clearing Customs and Immigration points at your international arrival hub, you will take your baggage to deposit it on the domestic flight to Cleveland. If you are a passenger whose final destination is not in Ohio and have pre-arranged to return to your own home airport at your own expense, you will have to transport your luggage to your next airline and possibly another terminal. NOTE: All travelers entering or re-entering the USA are subject to a Customs baggage check if deemed necessary.

Q24: In detail, can you explain what we need to do at the airports?

A24: A very important aspect of international travel is group accountability. Travel within the CLE airport is fairly straightforward. Departure: 1) Passengers report to the appropriate boarding pass counter on departure day and meet up with a NuVu Traveler tour operator representative or a Greater Akron Chamber staffer. 2) Each passenger receives their official boarding pass and seat assignment [we recommend each family goes up to the counter together]. 3) Load up your baggage. 4) Proceed to the departure gate. Arrival: 1) Retrieve all luggage 2) Exit the concourse 3) Leave the airport. Refer to Q/A # 16.

**Overall**, you may be hosted by one Chamber staff **or** one NuVu Traveler representative during your nine-day travel plus have a tour-guide assigned to your specific bus group. Nevertheless, there will be two situations at the PEK & PVG International Airports where it will become almost impossible to remain together as a group. The Beijing airport is huge and covers miles; during these times if you lose sight of your host(s), you will have to rely on your boarding pass, gate number, and signage. It is inevitable that at both the front and back end of the trip -as a large group- we will spread out while moving through the airport check points. Specifically this means:

1) First situation on China arrival day: Once we arrive at Beijing International, over 300 passengers will want to exit our plane. Everyone moves at a different pace; everyone has a different size carry-on to gather up; some will take longer at welcome and security points; stairs and escalators will be involved and all 300 people cannot get on the same rail tram. The primary task is to proceed to the international arrival baggage claim area. It will take about 25 minutes to get to the baggage claim area from the plane because we go through several checkpoints, screening camera areas, and arrival documentation processing. Furthermore, the baggage claim (as of October 2011) is not in the same terminal as our arrival; we will have to travel by tram to another terminal.

Signage is in Chinese and English and some with pictures - keep in mind that your goal is to continue to the baggage claim area and you will be fine, nobody is going leave the airport without everyone accounted for. Each Akron guest retrieves their own luggage from the carousel and can go through green lane baggage exit doors to wait in the lobby and meet our Chinese tour guides. Guides will be waiting in the lobby for us since non-ticket holders aren't permitted in the secured baggage section. Each will have an "**AK**" (AK=Akron) sign that lists your bus number. On departure day, the Chamber will provide you a free lanyard tag that will have your full name, trip date, and bus number.

2) Second situation on China departure day: Our departure from Shanghai Pudong International airport will also be a time that due to the same processes as arrival day, every passenger will not be able to move through all the checkpoints at the same exact time, in other words many will arrive at the final departure gate at slightly different times. As well, we will all have had an active travel week, be a little tired, and ready to get home. Just keep in mind during this time that you will need to rely upon the gate number listed on your boarding pass to know where to go if you lose site of the group leader, staff or your chaperone; again, follow the departure gate signs for your specific airline flight to return to your USA international hub.

Q25: Can I get air mileage credit?

A25: You must request air miles through an airline belonging to a Star Alliance partnership. **The Chamber does NOT coordinate air miles credit, each passenger is responsible to create their own account and secure their own flight miles.** Once the Chamber provides you your group style E-ticket (approximately 30 days before departure day), we suggest that you contact the airlines toll free 1-800 number to ask how to apply your frequent flyer miles. Again, talk to a representative ahead of your flight date to inquire of their procedure for how to procure the air miles.

Q26: What is the airline cost of a ticket upgrade?

A26: An upgrade may be available from Standard Coach Economy to Business Class. These costs change daily and are handled on a case-by-case basis, the average additional starting cost is about \$6,000 per seat and subject to increase.

NOTE: The pre-planned airline route for your flight may be either over top of the North Pole or another route. Nevertheless the flight path is the decision of the airline not the Chamber.

Lunches and Dinners will almost always involve 8 people at a large round table. For most meals, servers will bring out bowls of food and place them in the middle of a lazy-susan; on a few occasions the lunches will be served buffet style where you choose what you want. Furthermore, lunches and dinners will have 7-9 courses with plenty of foods to choose from.

On the tour (excludes flight meals) where there is no meal listed on the itinerary, the guide will provide the Akron group with several alternatives locations to purchase your own meal. Those who do not wish to stray too far from the American fast-food menu, will be happy to know that KFC, Pizza-Hut, McDonalds and Starbucks are very popular all over China.

All-in-all, tourists do better off at buffets because the food choices are easy to see and the prices tend to be more affordable than deciphering a menu and ordering a Chinese meal.

Specialty Dinner's will be offered on two different evenings, that is, one in Beijing and one in the Xi'an province. Specially prepared meals will highlight the local flavor or something distinctive to the area.

**PLEASE BE AWARE THAT MOST LUNCHESES AND ALL DINNERS WILL ALWAYS BE CHINESE CUISINE WHILE YOU ARE IN CHINA!**

In general, foundational foods we will see in China include, but are not limited to fish, pork, chicken, noodles, rice, vegetables, tofu, broths, soup, desserts and all the variants you can imagine to create a wide variety of tastes. Because there are so many courses at each meal, most will typically have a very full stomach when finished. If you do not recognize a particular dish, first ask the server what it is (some will not speak English), so when necessary ask your tour guide.

Vegetarian preference guests can choose particular dishes, and there are many vegetable and noodle based foods along with soup.

Vegan preference guests will be responsible to either choose specific dishes or personally ask the China tour-guide **IF** accommodations are possible or can be made for specially required dishes. There is no guarantee.

One of the many benefits of this trip is that all guests do not wait in long lines to enter major sightseeing excursions; for example, in Tiananmen Square where the visitor lines can be a mile long and four persons wide, our group follows the tour guide and is escorted straight to the group entry gate.

**NOTE: Wheelchairs are available in some locations while in-country; please notify the Chamber prior to your final payment if you feel you might wish to utilize one. Nevertheless, if you use a wheelchair, you MUST either pre-assign someone traveling with you to handle and push your chair –OR– hire a Chinese National to help you accommodate.**

Q36: How do the meals work?

A36: Your tour package provides the following meals per day while in China:

(B)	Breakfast	7
(L)	Lunch	4
(D)	Dinner	3
(SD)	Specialty Dinner	2

Breakfast is served in the hotel that you are staying and is a buffet style where you choose what you wish to eat. Morning breakfast will be your largest, most diverse choice. Coffee is typically served only at breakfast and artificial sweeteners are sometimes not available. Again, this is the most diverse menu with a bit of American and Asian set-up combined; typically the restaurant will open for all hotel guests anywhere between 6:00am to 6:45am. Depending on your daily schedule of events and bus departure time, you can determine what time you wish to leave your room to eat. You will have options from eggs to fish, cereals to yogurt, fruit, soups and much more. You have the choice to attend breakfast or not, and the tour guide does not arrive on-site until about 15-minutes prior to the group leaving for the day. It is best to arrive to breakfast early because there are many guests in the hotel, and typically, most Americans on the tour prefer cooked-to-order eggs, therefore the chef may have a waiting line at the grill if a lot of people arrive at the same time. All other items in the buffet have no wait time, you pick and choose what you wish, then return to your table. The tables are not 8 person family style seats like the restaurants we will frequent, but very much like we have in America where 2 to 4 people sit. Many people grab a few things from the breakfast buffet and place them in their day packs as a tie over until lunch. Per the itinerary, a breakfast will be offered every day of the 7 mornings in China.

### Guest Assignments, Tour Guides and Tour Buses:

Q27: How do I get assigned together with my family and friends?

A27: It is imperative that you fill out and turn in all appropriate forms as provided by the Chamber. We have placed due dates at the top right corner of the forms we require to be filled out and returned. The sheet titled ‘Pre-Trip Questionnaire’ -**due no later than 05/01/2012**- asks who you wish to travel with during each day.

Q28: How will we know who else is going on this trip or if we know anybody?

A28: Most travelers spread China tour information by word of mouth and tell their family, friends or colleagues; primarily this is how you will be aware of who will go and decide those you wish to travel with while in-country. However, the Chamber can assist by providing courtesy –*name only*– list of those who have registered, and only to guests who specifically ask about it. The Chamber China Team respects the privacy of each guest and will not divulge any personal information.

Q29: What is the tour guide role and how are they assigned with us?

A29: Your English speaking guide is both responsible and accountable for every individual under their care. While you visit sites within China, you will be assigned in groups and on a particular charter bus during the entire in-country tour. We base your assignment on the Pre-Tour Questionnaire that is due no later than May 1, 2012. The entire Akron Chamber group may have one on-the-ground USA staff throughout the entire trip, plus each group will have one personal tour guide assigned to each particular bus. You will not be permitted to switch back and forth on buses. Please note that for Beijing and its local attractions you will have one personal tour guide. About 567 straight-line miles to the South in Xi’an, you will be escorted by another local expert. For Shanghai and its localities – approximately 720 straight-line miles southeast, you will have another personal tour guide. Thus, the guide you are assigned with has equal accountability for the group and for you at all times. Refer to Q/A#13

Q30: On our tour, will we be mixed together with other tour groups or other Chambers?

A30: No. Each tour date and each bus is its own group. Additionally, every passenger is assigned to a bus and will basically sightsee with the same (Greater Akron Chamber) guests and stay on the same bus throughout the domestic tours in China.

The tour guides will not allow guests to switch across different pre-assigned tour buses, however while in restaurants and public sites it is common to see and talk with other groups and tourists. When you make your meal stops, your guides will direct you to your reserved tables specifically assigned to the Akron group.

Q31: What are the in-country tour buses like and how will the daily sightseeing trips work?

A31: The Chinese charter buses have different size capacities and we will assign guests based upon the total number of passengers –bus seats are not assigned. We will place no more than 50 passengers per bus.

For your daily travel on the China tour bus, there is no need to carry everything with you when you step off and visit an attraction; the buses are safe and are either locked or the driver waits with the bus – your items are secure and most travelers take only their day pack, cameras, or video cams off the bus while walking and sightseeing.

The English-speaking guides use a microphone system while the bus is driving. Questions and interaction are always welcomed, nevertheless all passengers will benefit from the courtesy of the entire bus allowing the tour-guide to ‘have the floor’ while talking. If requested, each bus can have a cooler with plastic bottled waters that you may purchase if you want more than what the hotel has provided free in your room.

All of our tour bus trips - in China, transport us from attraction to attraction, to and from lunch or dinner, plus the hotels and airports. All of these bus rides, depending on the vicinity of each sightseeing location, generally range from 10 minutes to 90 minutes...BUT it always depends upon traffic. All sightseeing attractions have public toilet facilities since the charter buses do not.

### **Customs, Courtesies and Culture:**

Q32: What are some particular customs and courtesies?

A32: The best answer for this is to personally read up on China, do your homework to check about practices and customs outside the United States. Refer to Q/A#01

**It is very important to remember that as a traveler, each of us is a guest of the People’s Republic of China whether in a restaurant, the hotels, on the buses, or the airplanes. As Americans, we represent our country to those who live abroad; please be aware of your etiquette and manners as you travel on the tour.**

Q33: Are smoking regulations in China generally the same as the USA?

A33: No. Smoking restrictions are not as strictly enforced within China and laws are continually being revised to limit where smoking is/is not permitted. Your hotel room will be automatically reserved as Non-Smoking.

Q34: What is the time difference between Akron and China?

A34: For your trip month, China has the same time throughout all provinces which is 12 hours ahead of Ohio. 8:00am July 23 in Akron is 8:00pm July 23 in Beijing; 8:00pm July 23 in Akron is 8:00am July 24 in Beijing, and so forth.

### **Routine, Daily Activities, Meals:**

Q35: What is a typical day like?

A35: Be flexible since your particular schedule and bus times may vary based upon your guide’s instructions to you, nevertheless an average day would be: wake-up call around 6:00am, breakfast, board tour bus around 7:30am and go! On some of the days, expect to not arrive back at your hotel until approximately at least 8:00-9:00pm in the evening.

Even if the hotel offers a wake-up call service, we recommend packing your personal alarm clock as a back-up. Each day has a very full itinerary and prescheduled times may be adjusted. As a courtesy to other passengers and your tour guide, please be on time for departures.

Typically, the tour guide initiates each attraction with an explanation of the sight and continues to walk the group through the tour. Also, at each locality the tour guide allows some free time for travelers to roam around the area on their own and take pictures.

**This tour contains a lot of walking** yet there is equal sitting time when you take into context the whole day. Some will prefer to not climb the hundreds of steps up the great wall and wait in the courtyard or café. Some will prefer to sit near the souvenir shops rather than traversing the entire path of the tombs. Others will look forward to participating in every activity to their fullest physical capabilities.