

UGRA visits China 2019

Tony, our patient tour guide, herded twenty-seven of us - University of Guelph retirees



and their friends and family - from Shanghai, China to Beijing and back. Over the course of sixteen days in October, we covered the gamut of some of the most famous Chinese highlights.

We travelled by bus, train, boat and airplane. We did a four-day cruise on the Yangtze starting from the famous Three Gorges Dam and travelling upriver. We passed through the looming hills of Sichuan province periodically passing huge cities. Shore excursions included a boat ride up the Shennong Stream with its incredibly beautiful scenery and a challenging climb to visit the Ghost City of Fengdu with its fascinating depiction of the perils of the underworld.



Giant Budda



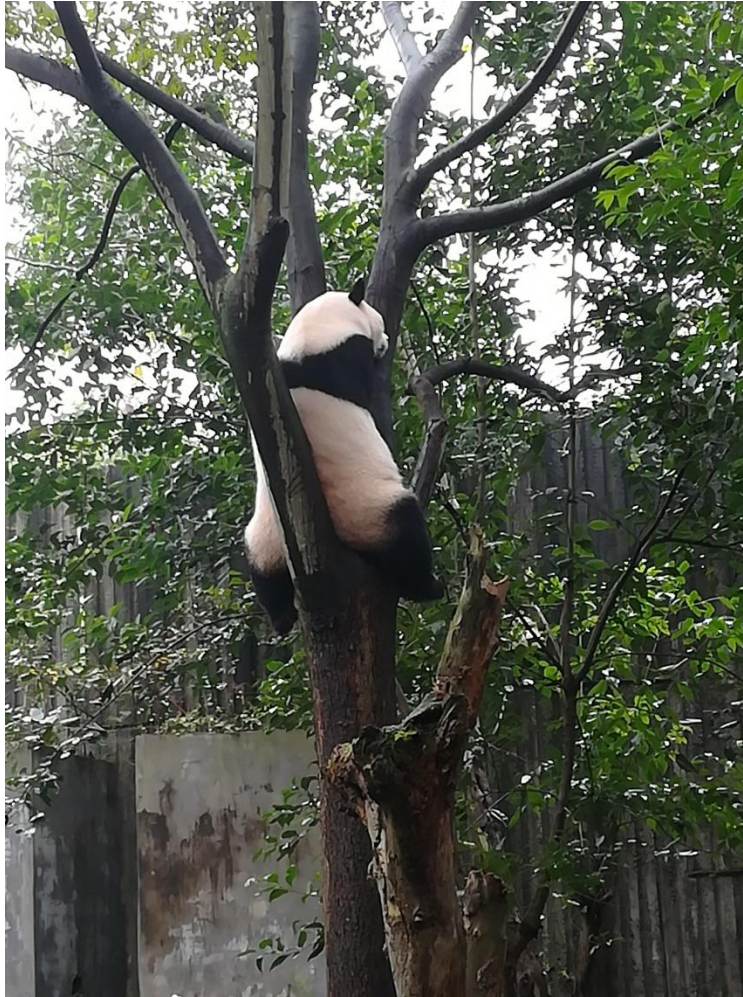
Three Gorges Dam

Twice we travelled by the very comfortable bullet train that can reach speeds of up to 350 km/hr. We passed through countryside of rolling hills and lush vegetation.

The five-star hotels did not disappoint. Every hotel offered its own unique touch - a German brewery, extensively landscaped grounds, beautifully appointed washrooms. Each provided us with wonderful breakfast choices - including western food if we so chose.

The food was delicious and some of us even mastered the chopsticks. We were exposed to the food specialities of some of the various provinces through which we travelled - the hot pot meal in Chengdu, the delicious dumplings from Xian.

And, of course, we saw the famous sights. We visited the Panda Research Station at Chengdu where we laughed at the pandas draped over the tree branches in the most languid poses and marvelled at the tiny babies in their incubators.



The Terra Cotta Warriors near Xian date back to over two thousand years. They are amazingly detailed and truly proportioned - simply awe-inspiring. Try to imagine the amount of work that went into the making of these more than eight thousand statues.



Twelve of our group were able to make the full trek along the Great Wall to the Twelfth Fortress where we were rewarded with a glorious view of the surrounding countryside.



Section of the Great Wall

We saw an incredible amount of sights on this trip all in a relatively short length of time. I haven't even mentioned Tiananmen Square or the Forbidden City, the tea plantation or the silk factory. China is a fascinating country with an ancient culture that is in the throes of major development as it rushes to overtake the progress of the western world. It is well worth the visit.