



This spread, clockwise from top left: Chef Paul Pairet of Jade on 36; located on the 36th floor of the Shangri-La Hotel, Jade on 36 offers spectacular views of the city; an example of the exquisite "molecular" cuisine available at Jade on 36; traditional Chinese architecture in the city of Suzhou; prawns at the Whampoa Club, prepared by master chef Jerome Leung; the 1930s-style interior of the Whampoa Club.

IM Pei museum and its traditional Chinese gardens. Hangzhou, on the other hand, is famous for its silk and tea, its beautiful temples and its setting on the West lake. You'll experience a personal tea-tasting ceremony in the surrounding hills, which are strewn with tea plantations. Here, the food reflects the sweet and savoury dishes of old China, with not a hint of fusion in sight.

**BEIJING**

From there, the journey takes you to Beijing, to experience the city at its best during its Olympic year, and to end the trip at the Great Wall of China. Stay in a private, luxury boutique hotel in the style of a traditional Chinese courtyard home, discreetly hidden in atmospheric Old Beijing.

**GETTING THERE**

This spectacular trip, which takes place from 8 to 18 November 2008, is a bespoke gourmet tour for a maximum of ten readers at a cost of R65 000 each, including airport transfers, three meals daily, transport, city tours and a guide and a translator. Smaller groups are welcome, but the rates shall be revised accordingly. No airfares are included and bookings must be confirmed by 15 September 2008. For further details and bookings, visit [www.justtheplanet.com](http://www.justtheplanet.com) (Gourmet Travel section), e-mail Michelle Snaddon on [michelle@justtheplanet.com](mailto:michelle@justtheplanet.com) or tel: 083 463 4435.

The tour is hosted by Luxury Concierge China, a specialist concierge company based in Shanghai. It provides bespoke packages and concierge services for the discerning traveller. So whether you require a complete tailor-made itinerary or simply need recommendations and bookings, or assistance with a special event, its will create the ultimate Shanghai experience. **W**

the quaint French Concession – where lanes are lined with graceful colonial villas, elegant boutiques and cafés – before taking in more of the city's architectural gems.

Day two takes you to the heart of China's food culture. Visit the "wet markets", home to the city's seafood traders and fresh-produce stalls, before heading to the 1930s-style Whampoa Club for your first dim-sum cookery course. A perfect view of the city will then accompany a degustation lunch prepared by one of Asia's youngest master chefs, Jerome Leung (often referred to as "the whizz kid"). You'll also meet the tea sommelier, who will guide you through no fewer than 50 specialist infusions.

Shanghai's gourmet guides will have you tasting everything from the northern, dry-spiced, highly peppered, creative *yam-cha* dim sum to the extraordinary French-Asian *cuisine de voyage* menus at Jade on 36, the jaw-dropping 36th-floor restaurant of the Shangri-La Hotel. Jade's chef is internationally acclaimed Frenchman Paul Pairet, whose "molecular" cuisine is frequently compared to that of the famous El Bulli's Ferran Adrià.

This is simply a sampling of the tailored gourmet experiences in store. There will also be time to take in some of the city's numerous art galleries, as well as designer fashion boutiques and a visit to the most exclusive tailor in town, before heading out to the country.

**SUZHOU AND HANGZHOU**

Day trips to Shanghai's neighbouring towns combine the best of both worlds: the thrills of the big city contrast with the peaceful gardenscapes of the nearby "water towns". Centuries old, and preserving a simpler local rhythm and ambience in their teahouses and canals, Suzhou and Hangzhou are two of China's most scenic cities. The former is known for the recently opened, modern



For many years, the "Paris of the East" played second fiddle to Beijing, but today Shanghai is a dynamic metropolis with world-class restaurants and sophisticated clubs. The chic city's vibrant food scene reflects its extraordinarily cosmopolitan history, but a peek into some of Shanghai's most exciting restaurants reveals that, for the people of Shanghai, eating is more than just a passion – it's a lifestyle choice and one they do in high style. Thriving on its frenetic pace and new global status as it transforms at high speed, it epitomises the contrasts and contradictions of 21st-century China, while showcasing all the regional cuisines of the nation. Here's a taste of what's in store...

**SHANGHAI HIGHLIGHTS**

The tour starts with a gentle walk down Shanghai's Bund, the former haunt of opium traders and now a glamorous, early-20th-century riverfront esplanade. It moves on to

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In celebration of all things eastern, we've put together this once-in-a-lifetime, super-luxury tour to Shanghai and Beijing, which takes in the vast array of gastronomic offerings presented by these remarkable cities

# GOURMET CHINA

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