

## **New York Teachers' Tour Review & Testimony**

**The following are letters and e-mails we received from NYC teachers, principal retired teachers and their relatives and friends who went our tour in past year. It can be served as our NY Teachers tour testimony.**

**Also, NY Teachers' Tour reference are available upon request. Please feel free to contact our reference. They are more than happy to share their tour experience with you.**

### **- Arlene & John: Retired NYC DOE Teachers**

We want to thank you for providing us with an incredible journey through China - one we will never forget!

The sights and sounds of 5 Chinese cities were just outstanding. The tour guides were wonderful, especially Fay. They taught us so much and prepared us so well for what we were going to do or see. Without them we would not really have known the importance of what we were experiencing.

The group of 17 was an ideal size and we had good times together! The weather was great - mostly sunshine, except for two days when it rained. There was only a little smog, mostly in Shanghai. The hotels were very comfortable and we enjoyed the buffet breakfasts. The 4 boat rides were very different from one another and the 2 shows were amazing!

Climbing the Great Wall was fantastic and seeing the Terra Cotta Warriors up close was unbelievable!

(John) As a designer, two highlights for me were meeting the 2 artists- 1 in Beijing old town and 1 in the farmers village. Being born in England, tea has always been my drink of choice so the Dragon Well Plantation and the tea tasting in Beijing were wonderful experiences.

(Arlene) As a teacher, I was really interested in visiting a Chinese school. I was very disappointed we were not able to do that because we arrived in Xian too late and then it was the weekend.

The other disappointment was The Peking Duck dinner. The duck was mostly scraps and barely enough for the 9 people at our table. We could not even get an extra plate. You might consider adding the Dumpling Banquet. Those of us who wanted to try it paid an extra \$15. and it was delicious.

We are still sorting our photos - over 4,000! We still talk about the fantastic trip we had to China and are so glad we were able to be part of the adventure.

Thank you for making it possible and affordable!

**- Melanie: NYC DOE Teacher**

Just a brief but heartfelt thank you. My China adventure was wonderful.

The guides were very knowledgeable with particular kudos to Fei (or Faye her English name) as she really took care in a particularly personal way. The cities and venues were well chosen. The tea plantations and terra cotta warriors as well as the Great Wall and all the artisans we were able to view first hand made it an education I will not soon forget. Being able to visit Suzhou and Xian as well as the formidable cities of Shanghai and Beijing gave us a good overview of life in China.

I am still revisiting it often in my mind and I am so glad I was able to make the trip with a dear friend as well.

Thank again!

**- Patricia: NYC DOE School Assistant Pricipal**

The China Tour (#2) was fantastic! Everything was extremely well organized. The participants were well prepared for the trip though the attention that your organization paid to the most minute detail eg, packing for the trip, checking in, weather, time difference, clothing and shoes, money exchange, phone calls, electricity, safe deposit boxes, credit cards etc.

The hotels were really 4 stars as was advertised!

The tour guides were knowledgeable and possessed good interpersonal skills. They were excellent, especially Macy, the one in Beijing. Because of time constraints, we were not able to say goodbye to the one in Shanghai. Please express thanks to her on our behalf.

It was a pleasure traveling with the people on this tour.

This tour met and exceeded my expectations. Thank you for providing the opportunity for me to experience something of China, it's people and culture.

I would not hesitate to travel with your company in the future and look forward to doing so in the Spring.

Thank you!

**- Edward: NYC DOE Special Education Teacher:**

I wanted to take a minute to thank you so much for all the time and energy you put in to creating such a wonderful experience. This was my first trip to China and I hope will only be an orientation to beginning to explore an incredible country it's people and culture. I think I spoke to you about a CD I found on one of my trips to Sunset Park "Shanghai Lounge Divas" I going to burn a copy of the set and put it in the mail to you this week. To and Doug will be in NYC the last weekend in June, hopefully we can all get together!

Again, many thanks!

**- Terry: NYC DOE Administrator:**

My family and I want to thank you for introducing us to China. We had a wonderful time and all the accommodations and sites were amazing. We especially loved our tour guides Jacob in Beijing and Steve in Xian. Both gentlemen were not only funny but helpful and understanding

Thank you, thank you, thank you. We had an amazing time and you were responsible for that.

**- Barbara & Mike: Retired Long Island School Teacher:**

I am sorry it has taken me so long to let you know how much we all enjoyed our trip with you. You were wonderful in your pre-trip communications, preparation, VISA information and the process, ticket distribution and willingness to answer our many questions. You delivered what you promised with excellent guides, great hotels and meals. The buses in Xian could have been a little more modern, but they were adequate and made enjoyable without any problems due to our wonderful guide. I have recommended you to others and look forward to traveling with you again.

I am really interested in traveling to Thailand and Hong Kong in the winter or fall of 2013, if you have one scheduled. I can not make it in the summer and hope you will be having the trip when I am able to go. Please keep me informed of other opportunities to travel with you.

**- Juan: NYC DOE School Principal:**

I wanted to thank you for the trip you help put together for us. I wish that more people join you in the future, and enjoy the wonderful adventure that China offers. I am looking forward to your next options for 2013 already!

**- Roger: Teachers' Friend from VA:**

I have been waiting to give my follow-up comments about the spring tour and now I can. I thought everything about the tour was great. The airline trip was long, but expected. The choice of hotels was excellent and the 'American' style breakfast option was good since the other meals was traditional Chinese. I like Chinese food, but did get tired of it after a while. (Not a complaint) The selection of sites was excellent. We got to see most of the important sites in China and the trip to the school showed us what may be the image we expected to see in China. Getting to walk on the Great Wall, seeing the Terracotta Warriors and meeting the farmer that found them was high on the excitement list. I, for one, enjoyed one of the 'not so famous' activities, the Chinese Acrobatic Show. I have showed pictures and videos of my experience in China to several family members and many friends, and recently to a group of local leaders from Tajikistan, and they also are so impressed with the Chinese Acrobatic Show. My 86 yearsold Mom talks to others about watching that video and how talented they are. As you can see from my comments, I loved the trip and I hope I was accepted in the group being a non-teacher.

Now, as far as pre-trip arrangements, I couldn't ask for anything better. You welcomed me to apply late and I respected that and tried to do anything possible to make it a smooth situation. You did the same. And the cost of the entire trip was absolutely fantastic. I guessed the same trip had I booked the same hotels, flights, and sites, would have been well over \$5,000. I want to thank you for accepting me and I look forward to traveling with you again, very soon. Thanks!

**- Yesenia – NYC DOE School Phycologist**

I have to say I want to take this trip again...I love it... You have been so helpful all the way and I really appreciate it. Explanations were clear and well organized. You did an excellent job. The only thing that I can say is to spend less time in the factories (silk, pearl...) and more time in the sightseeing places. Also, I notice that some people (tourist) did not do their homework learning about China's government. They might have learned about its culture. So they did not have some things too clear...about politics and asked to many questions that might have been uncomfortable to answer... Also, they did not understand the reason of why we stopped in government factories to buy theirs products. I believe that all tours may be required by government to go to government factories... The above point is not your fault at all..

The bottom line that I had a wonderful time, I feel that you did a wonderful job. I loved the visit to the school. It is not easy to organize a tour this magnitude with three different stay lengths...

Georgina still want to go in your tour and in a near future We will take it. Once again thank you for your time...

**- Heather: NYC DOE Teacher**

I thoroughly enjoyed the tour and would not hesitate to go again. Celery was excellent. She was funny and she explained lots of things to us. She kept her group together and on time. Lisa and Sophie were very good also, and Joe was good for the one night we saw him. Everything was well planned and executed. The plane ride even though it was long was tolerable. The history of China is so interesting, unique and important to every nation in the world. The history, the treasures, the sightseeing was really important to me as I have longed to go to China for many years. The food was delicious. The Chinese Opera, the Acrobats everything was wonderful. I wish that we would have had more time to stroll in the Hutong area to sightsee and purchase goods from the local people. I enjoyed the silk factory and would have bought more items if we had more time. People who did not want to purchase comforters could have went upstairs and shopped in the silk store. Also, in the other factories - Jade, Pearl etc. I did not like the idea of people following you around and trying to get you to buy things that were overpriced. Some of the people on the tour needed to stick to the schedule. We had to rush to the airport in Xian. You said you were thinking about a trip to Japan. Please keep me informed. I also would like to go back to China next year. Thank you for all your planning, information and the hospitality you and the tour company gave us.

**-Pat: NYC DOE Nurse Supervisor**

The China trip was fantastic. Cant wait for the February Break tour to Hong Kong/Thailand. Many thanks for a memorable vacation.

**- Martin and Robina: NYC Retired Teacher:**

I wanted to drop you a line to say how great the tour was and how much my wife and I enjoyed China. Thank you for providing a once in a life time experience, we will never forget!!!

I am also writing to ask a favor. While I was in China, I got sick and had to be taken to the hospital in Hangzhou. "David" our tour guide, asked the night manager of the hotel we were staying in at the time to escort us to the hospital since it was late at night. He did and it all worked out thankfully but we were unable to leave the manager a tip and note of appreciation for his help in my time of need. His name was "Alan". I don't know his Chinese name.

I already know the address of the hotel which I pasted below. I want to know from you what would be the safest way to send money to "Alan", personal check, international money order, etc...Also I wanted to see if you had 5 minutes if you could call the hotel to ask for Alan's real Chinese name so I can make sure he is able to receive the money I will be sending him?

Thank you for your time in this matter. I plan to send anyone and everyone that wants to go to China to your tour so they can have a great time like I did.

#### **-Shirley: NYC DOE Teachers' Relative**

I had a wonderful wonderful time in China. We did and saw a lot. Our tour guides were very friendly and very knowledgeable. Here are my comments:

**Food:** If possible, please have a table for vegetarians and please inform restaurant that a complete vegetarian menu must be provided for that table. When we were in China, a few place had a table for vegetarians and it felt as if the restaurant was prepared for us. The food was delicious! In other restaurants, there were times were meat was presented to us mixed in with vegetables and/or soups. So we had to very closely inspect our food. Some restaurants just eliminated the meat dish but did not replace it with a vegetable dish. So we had less food and less variety. If possible, it would be a great experience to eat at local non-touristy restaurants. For example, we ate at a small Bed & Breakfast and the food was delicious.

**Shopping:** If possible, please allow time for shopping. We travel so far and wanted to bring back lots of souvenirs, but shopping time was very limited.

**Site/Activities:** Next visit to China, I would like to have another tea tasting - - like at a traditional tea house. And visit an herbalist who may suggest teas/herbs for whatever. I'd like to visit the markets - to sample different spices, fruit and vegetables; and watch as people enjoy different foods. Also, if possible, I'd like to visit a martial arts school and take a beginner's class. I'd like to try Tia Chi every morning before breakfast too. If there are Yoga classes and/or Meditation classes I'd like to participate.

**Other countries:** I'd like to travel to Cambodia and tour the caves, Tibet to visit the monasteries and Burma to see the Temples.

#### **- Bette and Tony Retiree from NC:**

My husband and thoroughly enjoyed our two weeks in China. You did a fantastic job with everything you planned for us. Thank you.

You said you are planning a Hong Kong/Thailand next winter, and we are interested in the itinerary. Please keep us in mind as you plan this tour and let us know when the itinerary is completed.

Again, thank you for a wonderful experience.

**-Carolyn: NYC Retiree:**

I sent off an e-mail to you a few weeks ago telling you how much I appreciated your hard work in getting off the wonderful trip to China this Spring. However, I don't think it reached you. It was amazing how much we saw of China in those 14 days. I was in the A group. Our guides were very good. Especially David the one who took us around the central Eastern cities, but all were quite capable. Our hotels were A-1...so clean, comfortable and well-appointed. It was nice seeing four different shows during the course of the trip.

The food left much to be desired. Lunch and dinner were all the same. I found myself losing weight. The restaurants were good and pleasant to be in, but the food there was not. The breakfasts in the splendid hotels were good because we had choices that included western food.

Again, thanks for the superb job that you did organizing the trip,

**-George Boyce Teacher's Friend/Insurance Agent:**

So, it has been about 2 weeks since we have been back and I am still gloating from my trip to China. The trip was absolutely amazing and I truly appreciated all that you did to make the experience a very memorable one. I know putting it all together was no easy task so I wanted to personally say thanks for really taking care of the group and namely me on the trip. I look forward to future trips with you and hope that you will extend your business to take on trips all over the world you have what it takes to make that possible. Thanks again and please do keep me in the loop on all upcoming trips yours and others that you may hear about.

**-Christine: NYC DOE School Social Worker:**

I just wanted to say thank you for a fabulous trip to China. It was a truly remarkable experience. Thank you for all the time and work you put in to planning this trip. My sister Suzanne & I had a wonderful time.

**- Dr. Johnson- Hutchinson: NYC Teacher:**

THIS VERY ORGANIZED, SAFE, STRESS FREE and COST-EFFECTIVE TOUR was indeed a pleasure and a worthwhile experience that I will never forget. I have shared my thoughts and pictures in China, with friends, relatives and associates.

Observations....

-A visit to the school should not be scheduled for a Saturday. We needed to meet our colleagues in the teaching professions and students.

-We only need to visit one place that sells TEA.

-Have our name written in Chinese language, we will buy it

Thanks for a great tour and I will be in touch to benefit from another great experience of parts of China.

**-Sylvia: NYC DOE School Principal:**

The China trip was the greatest. Thanks. Please let me know what other trips you have available.

**- Suzanne: NYC DOE Teacher**

I just want to thank you for a wonderful trip. I am definitely looking forward to more trips with China Comfort Travel. I found the accommodations, food, and tour guides to be excellent. My only complaint was that we spent a little too much time shopping. But I found when I tired of spending money, I was able to take a walk and see other things so it was not too bad in the end.

I am interested in more Asia travel. I am planning on taking the Hong Kong/Thailand tour in February. I am also interested in visiting Vietnam and Laos if you could arrange that. But in the meantime, I have been recommending your China tour to everyone I know. I had an excellent vacation at a moderate price. Thank you!

**-Bonnie: NYC Retired Teacher**

Just wanted to say thank you for arranging every detail of this trip. It took me time to get over the jet lag and the experience in China. So much for so little money. Wow.

China is an interesting place. I loved the old city. Wish we could live so easily again. I was amazed that the traffic while crowded, very very orderly. I now understand why my Chinese students are so respectful and obedient. The school visit saddened me to see the children learning in the cold classroom with outdated materials and a concrete yard for a gymnasium. I plan to get Lillie's address from you because I promised the second grade class double dutch ropes and instructions. Our children here need to see that sometimes less is more. The children come in to my gym and complain when one window is open. They don't know what learning in the cold really is. I was fascinated by the art studio and the teacher who continues to give back to that same school. The Buddhist temple on the holy day amazed me. I wondered why we strangers were allowed there during this time. I hope the adults from this country will take this knowledge back to their schools, if not.....you know that you tried. Thanks again. The flight was loooooooooooooong.....but well worth the trip. Have a good last two months and enjoy your summer.

**- Phyllis: NYC DOE Retired Teacher**

Wow, wow, and wow! I don't have the words to express how fabulous this experience was for us, not the least of which was that we never expected the China we saw.

Of course, Adam and I are slowly readjusting to the jet lag and rigorous schedule we followed, a given if one wants to experience countries on the other side of the world such as China. I don't know how you make the visits there as often as you do!

Please keep me informed of future excursions as I would be most interested. You, and China Comfort Travel, lived up to and beyond our expectations.

Again, WOW!

**-Nadine: NYC DOE Assistant Principal:**

The honorable Professor Wu, the champion, master planner of one of the best tours I've been on since Trafalgar tours. Outstanding tour, fun people, and funny people, who knew how to laugh and sit up and take note. Thank you!! Thank you, did I say thank you. I showed my pictures, playing cards with pictures of China on them, I showed our group picture, and gave away gifts. I think I have convinced some others to join us next year. I am sleepy, but well. Stay well until .....Nadine Hudson-Monger  
P.S. My roommate was a good choice!

**-Loretta: NYC DOE Teacher**

Just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the trip to China. It was everything you promised and more. I hope you will let me know of future trips that you are planning. I would not hesitate to recommend the same trip to others and/or if you are heading elsewhere perhaps I would join as well. Wishing you well. Thank you!

**-Joan: NYC DOE Teacher**

Let me express my thanks and gratitude to you and your team for putting together this wonderful trip which I thoroughly enjoyed. China is amazing in all areas of human endeavor. I learned a lot. I'm still jet lagged, but I plan to share my experience in China with others including my students, and looking forward to learning of any other trips into Asia.

**-Elizabeth NYC Hospital Nurse:**

I want you to know how much I enjoyed the recent trip to China that you organized.

I was on trip #2 that stopped in Xian, Beijing and Shanghai. The tour guides were knowledgeable, the sights were terrific and the trip itself was well planned and executed.

Thank you very much for such an enjoyable experience. I learned so much about China, food and culture. I have 2 adopted adult children, 1 from South Korea and 1 from the Philippines. They asked if you organize sightseeing trips to China that include these countries as they would be interested.

Thank you again and I would be very interested in future trips so please let me know by e mail when they become available as I am not a teacher and do not get access to these trips from Board of Ed sights.

**-Damon: NYC DOE Teacher:**

I would just like to say thank you for a great trip. Please keep me posted on any other trips that you are doing.

Thank you.

**-Helene: NYC Retiree**

We just wanted to thank you for coordinating a wonderful, most memorable trip. Phil and I and my friends, Phyllis Baskin, her son Adam and Toby Gross are still talking about it to anyone who will listen. Actually, everyone is fascinated to hear all about our adventures in China! It definitely was the trip of a lifetime!!

Keep us informed of trips to other places.

Thank you so much!!

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