



A woman and girl, around 1870 (Photograph by John Thomson. Image courtesy of Historical Photographs of China, University of Bristol (www.hpcbristol.net))

John Thomson in China

10 – 25 April 2021

2 nights in Guangzhou (Canton) – 3 nights Xiamen (Amoy)
– 3 nights Fuzhou (Foochow) – 3 nights Shanghai – 3 nights Beijing (Peking)



Jon Baines
tours



Tartar soldiers in Canton, around 1870 (Photograph by John Thomson. Image courtesy of Historical Photographs of China, University of Bristol (www.hpcbristol.net))

John Thomson was a pioneering Scottish photographer, geographer and traveller. He was one of the first photographers to travel to the Far East in the 1860s, documenting the people, landscapes and artefacts of modern-day Singapore, China, Vietnam and Cambodia in a series of extraordinary, high quality images. He was the first to instruct the Royal Geographic Society in the art of travel photography and he pioneered social reportage - his work, documenting the lives of the poorest street people in London, formed the basis for photojournalism. His photography encompassed a wide swathe of regions and people and he photographed both paupers and princes, charming his way in the homes of the aristocracy and royalty in both Asia and England. The great Isabella Bird followed in his footsteps.

This tour follows in the footsteps of Thomson from Canton (Guangzhou) and up the coast to Beijing (Peking). It visits the places he visited and seeks out the sights he photographed that remain to this day. You will travel through the streets of Shanghai and Beijing with local historic societies, learning about the society and history of Beijing and Shanghai in the period that Thomson was there.

This tour is led by the accomplished photographic historian, Deborah Ireland, who has lectured widely on Thomson and written about Isabella Bird's travels in China.

For more information on Thomson and to see some of his work, please visit:
www.hpcbristol.net/photographer/thomson-john

Tour Leader

Deborah Ireland FRGS is a freelance curator and author specialising in the history of photography, with a particular interest in travel photography. Her previous posts include assistant curator at The Royal Photographic Society and director of photography at AA Publishing. She has curated exhibitions and written for the Royal Geographical Society and Royal Photographic Society, including *Isabella Bird, a photographic Journal of travels through China 1894 – 1896*. A fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, she has been a judge on Travel Photographer of the Year since its inception in 2003.

Deborah Ireland will lead the tour with our national guide, Zhang Zhong Jiu (known as John), who has worked with Jon Baines since 1994, taking healthcare and cultural groups around China. Educated in Beijing and London and widely travelled, with familial links in Australia, John is extremely knowledgeable and

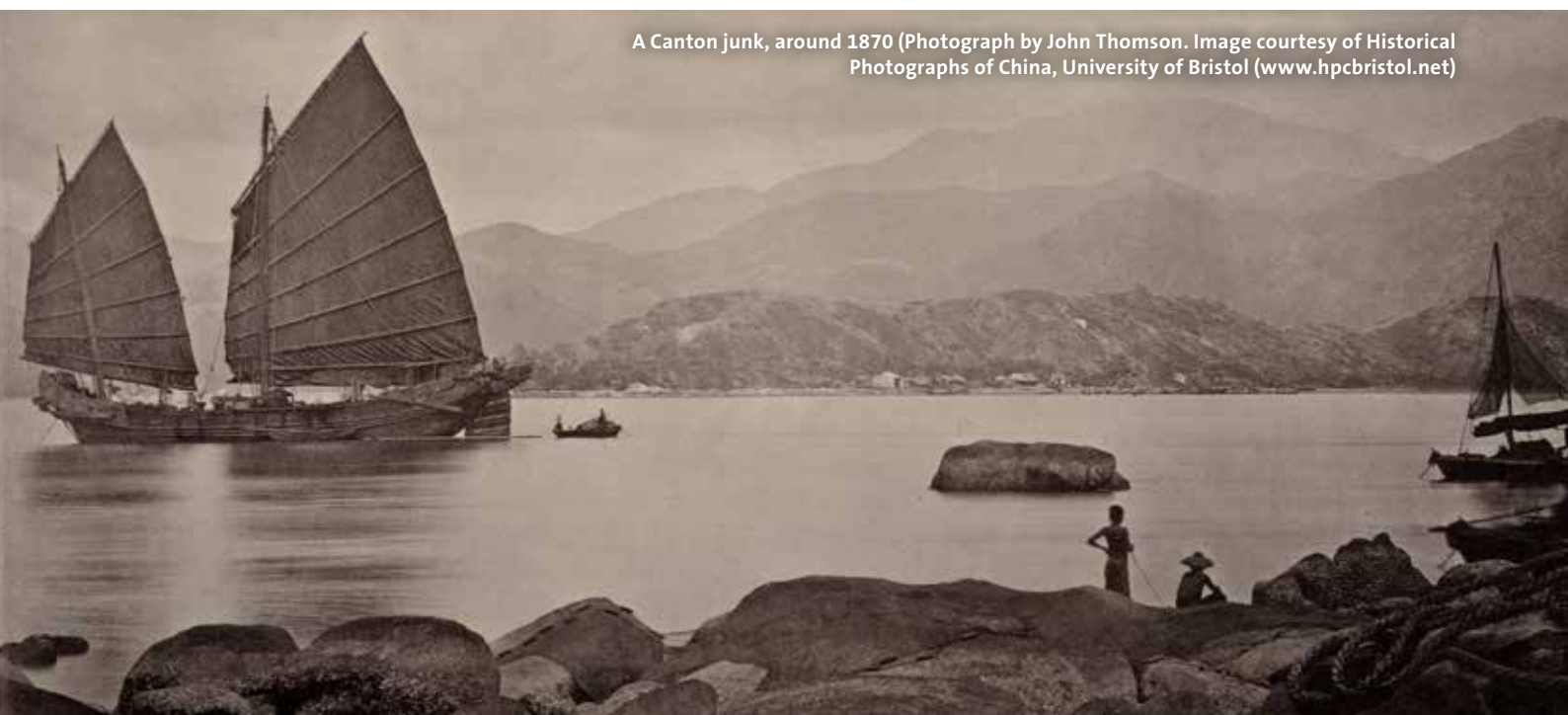


popular with our groups for his ability to bring China's history and society to life with personal anecdotes.

“Our national guide John was excellent in every way – friendly, well organised, very knowledgeable, experienced; cannot praise him highly enough.”

Colin Ridley, *Medicine in China*, October 2019

A Canton junk, around 1870 (Photograph by John Thomson. Image courtesy of Historical Photographs of China, University of Bristol (www.hpcbristol.net))



2 nights in Guangzhou (Canton) – 3 nights Xiamen (Amoy) – 3 nights Fuzhou (Foochow)
– 3 nights Shanghai – 3 nights Beijing



Day 1: Guangzhou (Sat, 10 April) **D**

Am: Arrive in Guangzhou, which was historic Canton. Visit Culture Park and the city museum. Take the ferry to Whampoa Island, which was the anchorage for Western ships in the 19th century, and see the Pearl River divers.

Day 2: Guangzhou (Sun, 11 April) **B D**

Am: Visit Old Canton, including Huaisheng Mosque and the old Muslim quarter, and wander down to the Pearl River. On the riverfront see the old Post Office and the old Customs House.

Pm: Visit historic Shamian Island, which was leased to the British. See the British-built consulate, dating from 1865, and explore the colonial era buildings, many now restored and operating as coffee bars, upmarket tea houses and antique shops.

Day 3: Guangzhou / Shantou / Xiamen (Mon, 12 April) **B D**

Am: Transfer to Shantou (historic Swatow).
Pm: Explore the historic quarter, dating from the 19th century, before continuing to Xiamen (historic Amoy). Arrive and transfer to the hotel.

Day 4: Xiamen (Tues, 13 April) **B D**

Am: Take the ferry to Gulangyu Island, the colonial heart of old Amoy, and the location of the international settlement.
Pm: Explore the settlement, including the US Consulate Building, the former Office of The Great Northern Telegraph Company (Denmark), the Foreigners' Football Field and the Christian Cemetery.

Day 5: Xiamen (Wed, 14 April) **B D**

Am: Visit the south of Xiamen Island to see South Putuo Temple.

Pm: Drive out to the Wanshi Hills east of Xiamen, with its forests, lakes and oddly shaped rocks, and visit the White Deer Grotto.

Day 6: Xiamen / Fuzhou (Thurs, 15 April) B D

Am: Drive via Anxi to visit the famous Oolong Tea plantations.

Pm: Travel to Fuzhou (historic Foochow).

Day 7: Fuzhou (Fri, 16 April) B D

Am: Explore the old European and Chinese quarters of Fuzhou.

Pm: Travel out into Drum Hill and visit Yongquan Monastery.

Day 8: Fuzhou (Sat, 17 April) B D

Am: Take a cruise along the Min River before driving into the interior. Continue to see Jinshan Monastery, perched on an island in the river.

Pm: Return to Fuzhou and at leisure.

Eve: Visit the night market.

Day 9: Fuzhou / Shanghai (Sun, 18 April) B D

Am: Take the high-speed train to Shanghai.

Pm: Transfer to the hotel on the north Bund.

Day 10: Shanghai (Mon, 19 April) B D

Am: Explore the historic heart of Shanghai, including the Bund and the French Concession. Take a walking tour of historic Shanghai, looking at the Shanghai of the 1870s.

Pm: See Longhua Pagoda and temple in south Shanghai.

Eve: Dinner on the Bund.

Day 11: Shanghai (Optional Ningpo Day) (Tues, 20 April) B D

Am: Full day at leisure or the option to take a day trip to Mount Putuo.

Fruits of China, around 1870 (Photograph by John Thomson. Image courtesy of Historical Photographs of China, University of Bristol (www.hpcbristol.net))





Tea tasting in Canton, around 1870 (Photograph by John Thomson. Image courtesy of Historical Photographs of China, University of Bristol (www.hpcbristol.net))

Day 12: Shanghai /Beijing (Wed, 21 April) B D

- Am: Take the high-speed train to Beijing.
- Pm: Arrive at your hotel and walk to see the Temple of Heaven.

Day 13: Beijing (Thurs, 22 April) B D

- Am: Visit Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City.

- Pm: Visit Prince Gong's mansion and the hutongs of old Beijing. Visit the Courtyard Institute and hear a talk on: *"Thomson in Beijing"*. Take a walking tour looking at the Beijing of the 1870s.

Day 14: Beijing (Fri, 23 April) B D

- Am: Visit the Summer Palace.
- Pm: Visit the Great Wall at Jinshanling and The Ming Tombs.

Day 15: Beijing (Sat, 24 April) B D

- Am: Visit Peking Observatory.
- Pm: At leisure.
- Eve: Farewell dinner of traditional Peking Roast Duck.

Day 16: Beijing (Sun, 25 April) B

- Am: Depart Beijing.
- Pm: Depart Shanghai or take an optional extension to stunning Guangxi Province, or extend in Shanghai.

NB: All itineraries are subject to change according to local conditions.



Peking street scene, around 1870 (Photograph by John Thomson. Image courtesy of Historical Photographs of China, University of Bristol (www.hpcbristol.net))

John Thomson and Isabella Bird

John Thomson was born in Edinburgh in 1837, one of four children and the son of a tobacconist. After his schooling, he was apprenticed to a local optical and scientific instrument manufacturer, where he learned the principles of photography and completed his apprenticeship around 1858. He set off for Asia in 1862 and over the next ten years he undertook numerous journeys photographing countries in Asia including Siam, Cambodia, Vietnam and many areas in China. The photographs of these journeys form one of the most extensive records of any region taken in the 19th century. The range, depth and aesthetic quality of John Thomson's photographic vision mark him out as one of the most important travel photographers.

Given that his journeys took him through difficult terrain, sometimes to regions where a white man was rarely seen before, it is all the more remarkable that Thomson was able



Medical bottles in the English Presbyterian Medical Mission of Swatow (Photograph by Isabella Bird, 1895)



Physic Street, Canton, around 1870 (Photograph by John Thomson. Image courtesy of Historical Photographs of China, University of Bristol (www.hpcbristol.net))

to make photographs of such beauty and sensitivity. He captured the land, the people and their daily lives in very a natural way, achieving what we call today a 'photo-journalistic' style. Unlike most photographers working in the Far East at that time, Thomson was not a government official, nor a missionary. He was a professional photographer who was fascinated by Asia and its people. Thomson possessed an open mind and was sensitive to the lives and surroundings of his subjects.

Isabella Lucy Bird was one of the most remarkable and high-profile travellers of the Victorian age, with a reputation for curiosity and tenacity, in spite of her lifelong illness. Her travels commenced in 1854, taking her to many countries including Hawaii, Japan, Kurdistan, Malaysia, Morocco, Persia, Tibet and China. She was already a popular travel writer at the time she took up photography, later in life. It became an overriding passion of hers and her prints are valued for their aesthetic quality and for the careful and sensitive way she approached her subjects. Alongside Thomson's work – of whom Isabella was a photography student - her images and writing provide one of the earliest photojournalistic accounts of China at the end of the nineteenth century.

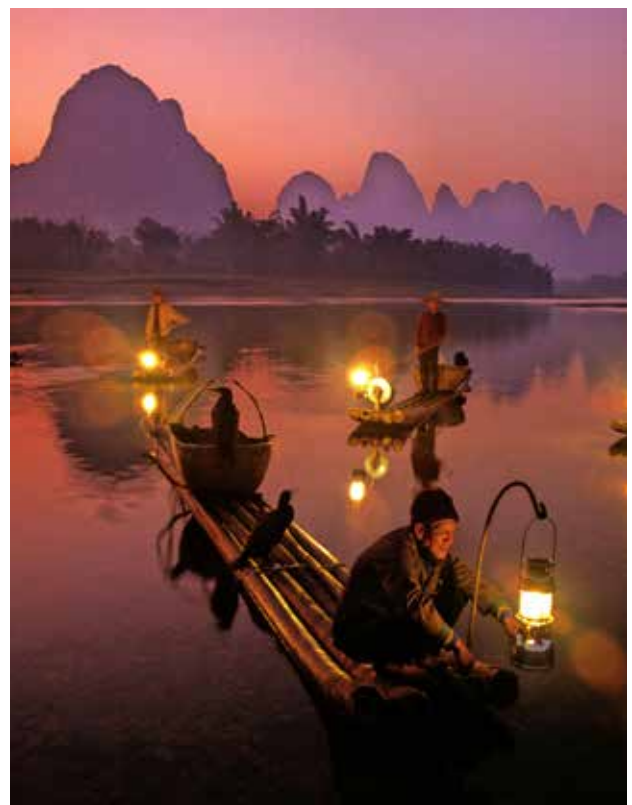


Li River winding through Guangxi Province

Optional Extensions

Guangxi Province

Guangxi Province has been a favourite of Chinese artists throughout the ages due to its spectacularly beautiful landscapes. Fly from Shanghai to Guilin and spend the afternoon enjoying the river front area and the city's many excellent galleries. Next morning take a scenic cruise along the stunning Li River to the cobblestone town of Yangshuo. Spend the rest of your day at leisure to enjoy the charms of the town and its lovely surroundings. There is the option to learn how to cook mouth-watering and highly spiced Sichuan cuisine, as well as taking a cycle or buggy ride through the local villages or exploring the local surroundings. In the evening there is the option to see a spectacular son et *lumière* show. Extension ends in Guilin. Price available on request.



Night fisherman on the Li River

Xi'an

Visit the ancient Silk Road hub of Xi'an, which was probably the first truly multicultural city in the world. Walk along its vast medieval city walls and visit atmospheric Calligraphy Street Market. See traditional Tang Dynasty Theatre, with its graceful, colourful performances, and visit the old Muslim quarter, which comes to vibrant life in the evening as the locals throng its many restaurants and food stalls. The high point of any visit to Xi'an is, of course, seeing the extraordinary necropolis of the Terracotta Warriors, which depict the armies of Qin Shi Huang, the first Emperor of China. These life size statues – with individual expressions and details on each one - were buried with the emperor in 210–209 BCE to protect the emperor in his afterlife.

If interested in either extension, please contact the Melbourne or London office for more details.



Xi'an city walls



The Terracotta Warriors

Then and Now

The Bund in Shanghai



The Temple of Heaven

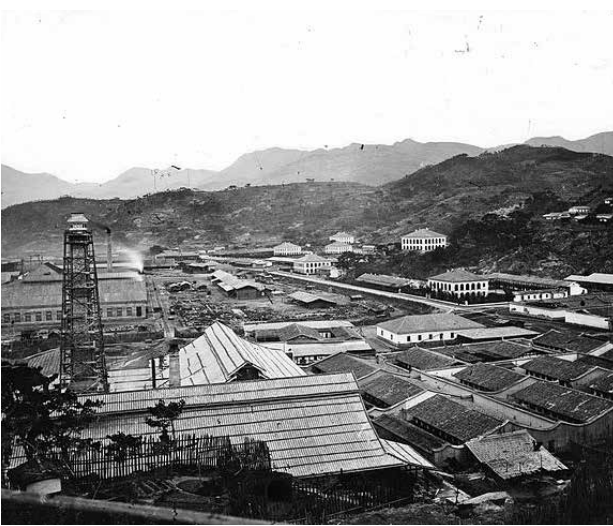


Peking/Beijing Observatory



Summer Palace





Canton boat girls (top); Houses in Foochow, 1870; Prince Gong; Portrait of woman labourer (above) (Photographs by John Thomson. Images courtesy of Historical Photographs of China, University of Bristol (www.hpcbristol.net))

The ground only cost of the tour is USD \$3,618 per person sharing (excluding international flights and transfers)

The cost includes:

- The services of a specialist tour leader (Deborah Ireland)
- Seven nights' accommodation in twin-bedded rooms with private facilities in medium grade and first-class hotels*
- Three nights on a 5-star river cruise ship

The single room supplement is USD \$641

- Breakfast and lunch or dinner daily on the tour
- An allowance of soft drinks, tea and beer with meals on the tour
- All meals on the cruise
- All admission fees
- Services of a specialist English speaking national guide (Zhang Zhong Jiu)
- All transport services and taxes in China
- All tips

The cost excludes:

- Meals not mentioned
- All optional excursions, tours and visits
- Travel insurance
- Visa

* Hotels will be all be good medium grade or first-class hotels in a convenient location with good amenities.

“Hotels all well located and very well equipped. Exceeded expectations. Very comfortable. Very happy with hotel choices.”

Jeremy and Angela Meates, Medicine in China, October 2019

Flights

If you require help booking flights to China, please contact the London office on +44 (0)207 223 9485 or the Melbourne office on +61 (0)3 9343 6367.

NB: Some of Thomson's photographs have been slightly altered from their original proportions in this brochure.

About Us

To travel with us is to dig below the surface, revealing the deeper destination. Of course, you will visit the great historical sites; marvel at the wonders of architecture and engineering; be moved by the riches of culture and art; and experience the most spectacular landscapes in the world. What we also do is make sure that you see the country as it is today, giving you privileged access that independent travel and other tour companies rarely get close to. We give you a variety of experiences, from the sublime to the humble, in the company of intelligent, curious, like-minded people. And while we can be worthy, we also make sure that you have a lot of fun.

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Jon Baines Tours (London)
Hyde Park House, 5 Manfred Road,
London, SW15 2RS
Tel: +44 (0) 207 223 9485 / 5618
Email: info@jonbainestours.co.uk
www.jonbainestours.co.uk

Jon Baines Tours (Melbourne)
PO Box 68, South Brunswick,
Victoria 3055
Tel: +61 (0) 3 9343 6367
Fax: +61 (0) 3 9012 4228
Email: info@jonbainestours.com.au
www.jonbainestours.com

USA and Canada:
(Toll Free) 1-8777-398-764



Great Wall (top); Forbidden City rooftops; Traditional Chinese Medicine pharmacy; Shanghai skyline by night (above)



Jon Baines
tours

