



Volunteering in China with AV provides a fantastic opportunity to experience and understand the real China, whilst at the same time changing the lives of underprivileged children.

Our gap year projects and volunteering opportunities in China begin in Hangzhou, regarded as China's most beautiful city and located just 40 minutes from Shanghai by bullet train. After the orientation weekend, there is a one-month intensive Mandarin course. This will set you up nicely for the volunteering leg of the program, based in a school for very bright, but underprivileged children in the stunning Thousand Island Lake District, three hours from Hangzhou.

The people are friendly and they will welcome you with beaming smiles!

Project Summary

Departs: February / April / August

How long? 12/16 weeks

Accommodation: Hotel / Home-stay / School Apartment

Project Work: Mandarin, Teaching, Art, Drama, Music, Sport

Explore Further: The Great Wall, Yunnan, Tibet, Inner Mongolia

Project Overview



Orientation + Briefing (4 days)	Based in Hangzhou, and led by our on-the-ground Western and Chinese team, this is where we'll introduce you to the city and the other volunteers and make sure you're fully prepared for the start of the challenging program.
Mandarin Course (4 weeks)	Whilst living with a Chinese family in Hangzhou, you'll attend four hours of Mandarin classes Monday to Friday, at the end of which you'll take the internationally accredited HSK exam and have a usable level of Mandarin essential for the next stage of the program. In the afternoon you can earn up to £10/hour teaching English.
Project Work (8 weeks)	Based in a rural school three hours from Hangzhou you will make a real difference teaching English, sports and extra-mural subjects to underprivileged children. Your newly acquired Mandarin will help you to become immersed in the local community during your volunteer project. Together with fellow AVs you will live in an apartment near to the school, with a high level of independence. Spending significant time in one place lets you become fully involved and really feel part of the community.
Optional Independent	After heading down to Hong Kong to renew your visa, you can either join

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Travel
(+4 weeks)

our associated company's backpacker tour at a heavily discounted rate, or travel independently through the many fascinating destinations China has to offer using the confidence and local knowledge gained on your project to make the most of your travels.

Detailed Itinerary

ARRIVING IN CHINA

The group flight departs from London Heathrow and you will be seen off by one of the AV team. You will fly into Shanghai where you will be met by our China representative, and continue your journey on the World's fastest train to Hangzhou, said to be China's most beautiful city.

BRIEFING AND ORIENTATION

After settling into a three-star hotel next to West Lake you can enjoy a number of activities to help you get to know our staff, China and the other volunteers better, such as a welcome banquet, Karaoke night, boating on West Lake, and a trek through a stunning bamboo forest.

Over the four days we will cover:

- **Some of the cultural and historical background to the modern Chinese society.**
- **Ideas for teaching and practising English.**
- **Safety issues.**

It is a chance for you to ease yourself in to China, as at first, the pace of life here can be a little disorientating! Our Western and Chinese representatives will be on hand to help with everything, from getting registered at the police station and hospital to showing you all the places you'll need to know about in Hangzhou.

MANDARIN COURSE

After your orientation you'll move in with a local family and study Mandarin intensively for four weeks at the Pro-Mandarin Academy along side your fellow volunteers with no more than six pupils per class. There's an average of 4 hours of Mandarin tuition per day, 5 days a week, allowing you to grasp a usable level of spoken Chinese, which will be essential for your time spent volunteering.

The teaching style at the Pro-Mandarin academy is modern and progressive in its approach, with students being placed in practical situations to learn oral Mandarin, and classes often being moved outside the classroom to locations such as local food markets or the banks of West Lake. At the end of the month, you'll receive an internationally accredited certificate proving a competency in Mandarin (HSK certificate).

Outside of the classroom, you'll be offered free cultural experiences (e.g. Tai Chi and Kung Fu lessons), and will have plenty of time to see the other volunteers and new Chinese friends in the evenings and weekends. There'll even be time to earn £10/hour doing private English tuition if you want to earn some extra money for your travels during the program.

THE PROJECT

After the welcome period and month spent learning Mandarin, you will be sufficiently prepared to volunteer and head a little deeper into the real China, so next you'll move on to the Hope Primary School, located at Jiang Jia Zheng in the Thousand Island lake district, three hours from Hangzhou. The school provides accommodation and education for children who are extremely bright but poor. The school is located just 20 minutes from stunning Qiandao Lake, and only a 10-minute taxi ride from a small city with modern hospitals, supermarkets and bars.

Our gap year projects and volunteering opportunities in China give you the chance to teach English two hours/day, and you are also encouraged to get involved in other areas too, for example playing sport, and organising after school clubs for music, drama, etc. During your time volunteering, you'll stay in an apartment on the school grounds, and three meals a day will be provided by the school canteen.

At weekends you could arrange sports or English language events for the children. We also encourage you to travel to the surrounding areas. Popular weekend destinations include, the Hot Springs in the mountains just outside Ningbo, the water town of Shaoxing, said to be the Venice of the East, and of course Shanghai, one of the World's most cosmopolitan and exciting cities.

To find out what a typical day on project might be like take a look at our '[Day in the life of an AV](#)' feature, written by AVs who have been there and done it themselves!

Food + Accommodation

IN HANGZHOU

During the induction period, you will stay in a very comfortable hotel next to West Lake in Hangzhou. During this time, all your meals will be included; our team will take you to a wide variety of restaurants to show you how much tasty and affordable food is on offer in Hangzhou.

Whilst learning Mandarin in Hangzhou, you will stay with a local family. You will have your own bedroom with shared bathroom, and the family will provide breakfast and dinner for you. However, it is likely you will eat the majority of your meals with friends in Hangzhou's many restaurants. You will be able to purchase lunch from a restaurant local to the Academy.

IN JIANG JIA ZHENG

When volunteering at the Hope Primary School, you will stay with the other volunteers in an AV apartment on the school campus. An important part of the AV experience is living in local accommodation, shopping at the local markets, being invited to fellow teachers' houses as well as entertaining the teachers or fellow AVs in the evenings. Accommodation will be basic, usually with shared bedrooms, a communal area, a shared bathroom with running water and an Asian toilet. You will also have access to the Internet. Three meals a day will be provided in the school's canteen - a great chance to get to know people and gain the best possible understanding of living there – you are not a bystander watching from afar.

24/7 AV REPRESENTATIVE SUPPORT

Whilst not living with you full time, the AV representative is never far away and there whenever you need them. They can be contacted by phone 24/7 and will visit you during your project. You will also have an English speaking contact working at the school for more local support.

Optional Independent Travel

As your project comes to an end AV offers you the chance to stay on for an additional 4 weeks of independent travel time, to ensure a good balance of volunteer work and travel. From our experience, travelling is often when problems occur, from lost passports to getting ill – that’s why we have the motto, ‘Once an AV, always an AV’ - we’ll still be there to help you, even though your project has finished.

You’ll have the chance to explore the many fascinating parts of China that the outside world is only just beginning to discover. You can either travel independently, when our on the ground team will be on hand to provide assistance with route planning and buying tickets. Some volunteers choose to head East to Tibet and Mount Everest Base Camp, South to stunning Yunnan province on the border with Vietnam, or North to the grasslands of Inner Mongolia. There is no shortage of things to do and see and the only rule is that you travel with at least one other person.

Alternatively, you can join AV’s associated company’s all-encompassing backpacker tour of China. Having volunteered for eight weeks, you’ll have access to the heavily discounted price of £798 for the 25 day trip which includes hiking and camping on a private part of The Great Wall, the World’s Highest bungee jump in Macau, spotting wild pandas on a farm in the Qingling mountains surrounded by seven waterfalls and rafting down the Li River in Yangshuo.

Dates + Costs

For current AV departure dates + costs please visit the website – www.aventure.co.uk

AV PROJECT COSTS INCLUDE:

Before departure:

- Pre-departure information, support and advice
- A nominated member of the UK volunteer support team
- One-to-one face to face briefing for UK applicants
- Telephone briefing for non-UK applicants
- References taken up
- Comprehensive online health check
- Advice on group flight booking or individual flight arrangements
- Briefing for group departure from London airport

In-country:

- In-country representative
- 24/7 in-country backup
- Meet and greet at airport (if arriving with the group)
- Airport transfer (if arriving with group)
- In-country induction course with all meals

- Mandarin course (4 hour/day, Monday to Friday, 4 weeks) with breakfast and evening meal provided
- HSK Examination entry
- Transfer from induction course to Mandarin course
- Transfer from Mandarin course to school/project
- Accommodation (except during independent travel)
- 3 meals per day during 8 week project at school (except during independent travel)
- Management of emergencies, including lost passport, illness, etc. whilst in-country

Upon returning home:

- Returning home advice
- Full telephone debriefing

AV PROJECT COSTS DO NOT INCLUDE

- Flights
- Travel Insurance
- Country visas
- Meeting of non-group arrivals
- Accommodation for early/late arrivals
- Medical expenses, e.g. inoculations, malaria prophylactics
- In-country medical expenses
- Drinks
- Tips/gratuities - No tips/gratuities for AV staff are necessary or expected
- Spending money
- Extra activities that you choose to do
- Bus/taxi fare to and from the Pro-Mandarin Academy
- Lunch whilst at the Pro-Mandarin Academy
- Food, transport and accommodation on independent travel

Still got questions? We're here to answer them and remember if you want to talk to an AV volunteer who has been there and done it just let us know and we'd be happy to put you in touch! Contact the AV office on +44(0)1380 729009 or info@aventure.co.uk