PANDA CONSERVATION IN YA’AN, CHENGDU

The Giant Panda is among the world's most adored and loved animals. There are only 1,600 left. They are listed as the most endangered species in the world, making this experience a true once in a lifetime opportunity.

Play an important part in ensuring their survival by giving your time to caring for and researching these magnificent gentle giants as they go about their daily lives.

You'll work in the largest Panda base in China, where the focus is on protecting and building a safe environment in which to begin the possible reintroduction of Giant Pandas into the wild. It is located in the beautiful mountainous area of the Woolong Nature Reserve and near the UNESCO World Heritage site of the Leshan Giant Buddha.

Thank you for your interest in volunteering on this Project. Below is a description of what you can do and expect. You can volunteer whether you're taking a gap year, on a career break, retired, or on a holiday with a purpose. No matter what your age or experience, we look forward to welcoming you to the team!

SELF-DEVELOPMENT:
- New skills, more confidence, a greater understanding of a different culture, invaluable personal and professional development.
- The enormous satisfaction of helping an endangered species
- An entry on your CV or résumé that will put you head and shoulders above most others in the job market.

SAFETY AND SECURITY
- Your safety is our top priority. We risk-assess all destination countries, projects, accommodation and more to ensure that they are stable and safe.
- We have experienced local staff with 24/7 back-up and support who are there to assist you and look after you, starting with an in-depth induction on your arrival.

AN ADVENTURE!
- An exciting, never-to-be-forgotten adventure into the Orient and the fascinating Chinese culture, and best of all ... an unforgettable experience!

WHAT DO YOU GET?
**SUMMARY**

**Prices:** £995 for 1 week. Excluding flights.

See our [Full Price List Online](#).

**Duration:** Projects are in 1-week segments.

**Start Dates:** Programmes start every other week throughout the year. Please see start dates on our website.

**Requirements:** Minimum age 17. No qualifications necessary but you should be an enthusiastic person who loves animals.

**What’s Included:**
- Arranging your Programme,
- Payment Protection insurance
- Food
- Meeting you at the nearest airport
- Transport to and from your project
- 24-hr emergency support.

**What Not Included:** Flights, Insurance, Cost of Visas (if a visa is required), Return transfer to airport.

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**PROJECT OVERVIEW**

**WORK CONTENT:**

You'll be joining us at the Bifengxia Giant Panda base, a branch of the China Conservation & Research Center for the Giant Panda and one of the largest of its kind. It started working in 2003 and suddenly grew in 2008 when Pandas were relocated here from Wolong Panda base, which was devastated in an earthquake that year.

But since this move, the panda population here has more than doubled - which is an amazing achievement. A big share of pandas which you see anywhere in the world has originally come from this panda reserve! The panda base is now looking to releasing the panda into the wild, fulfilling its long term ambition.

You’ll be getting up close and personal, with both baby pandas who weigh only 100 grams at birth and gradually develop to 60lbs in their second year of life and their far larger parents that weigh a massive 250-350 lbs.

Your duties may vary depending on what is required of you at the time, so flexibility is essential. You will be involved in working about 4-6 hours a day side by side with panda caretakers by preparing food for the pandas such as apples, panda bread, carrots – and of course their favourite – bamboo, providing them with food you have put together, cleaning their enclosures and ensuring they are secure in their environment.

The keepers usually feed the Panda twice in the afternoon. However, this would depend on the individual condition of each Giant Panda and also other circumstances. We cannot guarantee the feeding times and also cannot ensure that every participant would be able to feed a Panda. Feeding tasks are assigned exclusively by the keepers.

Occasionally, you might also be asked to conduct some research of the panda’s habits and medical health so that we may extend our knowledge and experience in caring for this highly endangered species.

You’ll be able to see the panda nursery (approx. July to September), animal rescue, educational facilities, and much more.
Additional cultural activities: It's important to remember that Pandas are wild animals and naturally lazy and and will need some time to relax on their own! That's why we offer plenty of Chinese lessons & cultural activities during their resting times, which you can take part in at your leisure. Some activities that you may take part in are:

- Chinese language lessons (Daily 16:00-18:00 upon request)
- Mahjong (Chinese chess)
- Chinese calligraphy
- Papercraft
- Dumpling making
- And more!

A typical programme is as follows, but this will vary from week to week and season to season.

Schedule

Sunday:
You will be collected from Chengdu airport and transferred to the city where you will stay for two nights.

Monday:
Breakfast
Visit Chengdu’s Panda Breeding Center
Lunch
A walking tour through the Chengdu City, visit the Tianfu Square, People’s park and the famous ancient pedestrian street of Kuan-zhai Alley
Welcome Dinner at a local hotpot restaurant.

Tuesday:
Breakfast
Transfer to the Panda reserve (approx. 3 hours by public bus)
Lunch at the Panda Reserve Hostel
Orientation: Meet the team of the Panda Reserve and introduce yourself. Understand the rules and regulations, Read and sign the security agreements, watch a safety training video. Get the working manuals and assignments as well as information about the tasks you will carry out during the next days. Registration is followed by the issue of uniforms, participant card etc. You'll form working groups. Each group will then elect a ‘Group Leader’.
Dinner
Chinese lesson (optional)

Wednesday – Panda Reserve:
08:00: Breakfast
08:40- 12:00: Meet at the Gate of the Panda base at 8:40. A staff member will lead your group to your respective places of work. You should finish your tasks under the Panda keepers' guidance, such as cleaning the Panda house and feeding the Panda. Tasks are decided on by the Panda keepers. During the break, you should fill in the form “My Panda and I”.
12:00 - 14:00: After completing the morning tasks, meet at the participant service center. At 12:20 staff will lead you to the Canteen for Lunch. After Lunch, you will return to the participant service center. You can take a rest or choose to watch a documentary about the Giant Panda.
14:00 – 15:00: Split into groups and make Panda cake in turns. Panda cake is a form of food for Pandas prepared from fresh ingredients.
15:00 – 16:00: Free time, you can proceed to complete the assignments if any or assist the staff if required.
16:00: Finish your tasks for the day and have free time
17:00 – 18:00: Free time or join in to making dumplings. Learn the secret behind tasty Chinese dumplings.
18:00: Dinner
19:00: Free time. Optionally you can watch some “Panda Videos” or take a rest.

Thursday – Panda Reserve:
08:00: Breakfast
09:00-12:00: If there are 10 or more volunteers: Support the Panda reserve staff in simple research activities. These vary depending on need. If there are less than 10 participants: Prepare food for the Pandas and feed them.
12:00-13:30: A short break, then meet at the participant service center. At 12:20 staff will lead you to the canteen for lunch. Post Lunch, return to the service center and choose to take rest or continue to watch a documentary about the Giant Panda.
13:30-16:00: Return to where you worked the day before and feed the Panda under the keepers’ guidance. During the break you'll complete the “My Panda and I” form and any other related assignments.
16:00: Complete your tasks for the day
17:00 – 18:00: Free time or join our Chinese Calligraphy lessons. Learn the technique of drawing beautiful Chinese characters on paper.
18:00: Dinner
19:00: Free time or you can spend your evening learning how to play Mahjong and have fun challenging your opponents. There is no doubt that once you get hooked on Mahjong it’s difficult to let go of it!

Friday – Panda Reserve:
09:00-12:00: If there are 10 or more volunteers: The Giant Pandas eats between 10 and 20 kilos of bamboo per day. Support the staff to plant more of it to ensure there’s enough food. If there are less than 10 volunteers: Prepare food for the Pandas and feed them.
12:00-13:30: A short break, then meet at the participant service center. At 12:20 staff will lead you to the canteen for lunch. Post lunch, return to the service center and choose to take rest or continue to watch a documentary about the Giant Panda.
13:30-15:00: Return to where you worked the day before and feed the Panda under the keepers’ guidance.
15:00 – 16:00: Your time at the Panda base is over. Return your work uniform, participant card and gloves and also submit the "My panda and I" form.

Summary meeting: Share your work experience with the others. Thereafter, the staff will issue certificates to everybody. Later, you can leave a message on the “Love wall”. All the participants and staff take a photo in front of the service center. Later the photo will be sent to you by email.
17:00: Free time. Optionally we arrange a visit to a local temple (Bifeng Temple). If you need to return to Chengdu early, e.g. for catching your flight on Saturday morning, now is the time. Our coordinator can help arrange your bus and a hostel in Chengdu.
18:00: Dinner
19:00: You can choose to end your last day of stay at the Panda Base with a taste of Chinese cinema, watch a Chinese movie together at the activity room. Or you can choose to pack your things and get enough rest before your return journey.

Saturday – Chengdu:
After breakfast around 8:30 you will be transferred to Chengdu city or airport. You'll arrive at the airport around noon.
If this is the last week of your program (around Chengdu), it’s time for you to say goodbye. Otherwise, you'll stay in Chengdu to connect to your next program.

ABOUT THE PANDA CONSERVATION CENTRE

Volunteering at the Panda Reserve offers you the unique opportunity to get up close and personal with the Giant Panda - both the baby pandas and the grown-ups! This is the largest Panda base in China, and the care you provide will genuinely help the Panda Reserve to protect these animals from extinction.

The Pandas were relocated here from Wolong Panda base, Xinjing which was devastated in an earthquake in China in 2008. Since the move the panda population (in care) has more than doubled, not least thanks to the efforts of volunteers, and the Panda Base is at last in a position to think about fulfilling the ambition of releasing them back to the wild. Experiments to this end are at an early stage.

“I had three amazing weeks at the panda base... an incredible experience. You were able to get to know the different personalities of the pandas you were working with and had access to the whole panda reserve”.

Lisa, Norway
“This week has been amazing!! I love the pandas - they are so cute. I can't believe how fast the week has gone though, everybody’s so friendly and the pandas can be so funny. It’s a once in a lifetime experience I will never forget”.

Fiona, Scotland

ACCOMMODATION

ACCOMMODATION:

Accommodation at Chengdu:
When you arrive, your accommodation for the first two nights will be at Chengdu. Here you’ll stay in a hostel room with between 4 and 6 other people. It has a shared bathroom.

At the Panda Base:
You’ll then be transferred to the Panda Base. The Greenway Centre in the Ya’an Panda base has been chosen to give you a special environment for your visit to China. It is located 1,100 metres above sea-level with an average temperature of 15 degrees. It is perfect for the pandas – and for you!

The Centre is in a pleasant, cosy, recently renovated hostel. Accommodation is in twin rooms with TV, 24-hour hot water and toilets. If you prefer, upgrade options are available (please contact us for further details).

Laundry facilities are available for a small charge (roughly 20 CNY each time). Other facilities include; free Wi-Fi and a book cabinet with a few books in different languages. There’s also a small shop where you are able to buy the basics like drinks and snacks.

FOOD:
At the Greenway Centre you will be provided with three meals a day - breakfast, lunch and dinner. These will be Chinese dishes typical of the local area, comprising mainly rice, noodles and vegetables with some meat.

WHY TRAVELLERS WORLDWIDE?

- Over 20 years’ experience of sending thousands of participants overseas, plus the largest variety of flexible projects that are value for money!
- Accredited projects helps appeal to future employers
- Excellent support!
- Your own dedicated Project Co-ordinator to answer all questions before, during and after your trip of a lifetime!
- Detailed information on your project and country and suggestions, safety guide, tips and checklists, via our EXTRANET, available from anywhere, 24/7.
- 24/7 emergency helpline for you and your family
- Free pick up from the nearest airport.
HOW YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE:

By joining a Travellers Program you enable us to keep donating money to worthwhile projects around the world: from clothing and feeding school children, building playgrounds or funding vital conservation research - your participation makes these donations possible.

Donations to Bridge The Gap Foundation. This Foundation was set up by us to donate directly to particularly worthwhile and necessary projects for children and animals around the world, and partners with other NGO’s to raise match-funding for worthy projects.

The price of this project is a reflection of the following costs:

- Accommodation
- Food
- Meeting you at the airport
- Transport to and from your project
- Local in-country team support and backup
- 24hr emergency helpline
- Donations to worthwhile projects
- Full pre-departure support
- UK administration
- Marketing (brochures, website design and maintenance, attending careers fairs, advertising, website listings and presentations)
- Project Research/Site Inspection
- Staff Training/Equipment

“"My placement was an unbelievable experience and I had an amazing time - thank you for helping me to have such a great experience! Travellers were very helpful, whenever something was asked or wanted it was provided to the best level...”

Ruairudh Couston

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

WHY IS THE GIANT PANDA ENDANGERED?

Giant Pandas are naturally solitary creatures that move freely from area to area seeking out fresh bamboo (their staple diet), creating avenues in order to come together in spring and mate.

This magnificent creature that is known to have survive the ice age, has over the years been faced with great challenges, such as their natural habitat decreasing significantly due to the expansion of humans: the development of new roads, towns and power lines resulting in the need for more logging and thus haltering the natural migration and contributing to the lack of bamboo. (Bamboo requires shade in order to grow.)

This has resulted in Giants Pandas being unable to find new food and thus preventing male and female Giant Pandas from finding one another and being able to mate and increase their numbers in the wild.

The 2008 earthquake in China also had a devastating effect on the Giant Pandas’ natural habitat and food sources, thus further decreasing the number of Giant Pandas found in the wild.

Got any questions? Please email us: info@travellersworldwide.com

Once you have applied for a placement, we’ll contact you and send you our Welcome Pack. You’ll also receive Log-on details and password for our Volunteer Extranet where you’ll have access to all the documentation and information which we’ve put together to facilitate preparations for your adventure!
Your Project Co-ordinator for your country will liaise with you throughout the arrangements process, as well as while you’re on your placement and on your return home. The documents you’ll have access to also include a Country Fact file, Safety Guide and any manuals that may assist you on your particular programme (for example, Teaching Guide, Sports Manuals, Enrichment Suggestions for Animal Care, etc.). We do all we can to make your stay one that you’ll never forget.

As with all our destinations, the culture and heritage is different to what you’re used to … which, although one of the most exciting aspects of travelling, should be borne in mind. Self-reliance and independence are highly appreciated in all our destinations and will help you to make the most of this wonderful opportunity!

**ARRIVAL AND TRANSPORT TO YOUR PROJECT**

Please note that this will vary from week to week and season to season. You’ll fly into Chengdu airport on a Sunday where you will be collected by one of our coordinators. You will then travel to Chengdu City which is approx. 30-40 minutes away where you will spend your first day, giving you time to relax and rest. Monday will be spent touring the city of Chengdu including the local markets, parks and later you will be invited to a welcome dinner.

The following morning you will be transferred to the Panda base which is approx. 3 hours away, where you will have lunch at the panda base with a briefing and introduction to your work content in the afternoon. Registration will also take place, where you will receive your uniform and volunteer card before you will receive a guided tour before dinner.

**REQUIREMENTS AND NOTES:**

China is still a developing country in a period of transition. The living standard falls short of what we are used to in the West. The Chinese culture and heritage is totally different to Anglo-Saxon or Western cultures. However, the people are very friendly. China is a non-English speaking environment and it would benefit you to try to learn a few basic Chinese words before starting your programme. This will help you to get involved in the daily life of the local people.

*The Panda base is in the middle of nature reserve, thus surrounded by tranquility and peacefulness, with the loudest noises often only being the male pandas’ chatter and birds singing in the trees.*

Often after completing your duties there is a fair amount of free time, as Pandas do also want their own space to be wild animals. So during this time there is a range of activities for you to be able to take part in:

- Full access to the Panda reserve and volunteer centre
- The Chinese favourite sports, including: Table tennis, Mah-jong, and Chinese chess
- Free Chinese language lessons from 4pm -6pm daily
- You will also have access to the Volunteer Centre – this is a general area where most volunteers will take time to relax, chat or eat ice cream.

On the weekends, you will have time to further explore this beautiful country, with options like:

- The many walking routes in the reserve. (Guided tours are available around nearby waterfalls)
- Fishing.
- Visit the hot springs that are approx. 1 hour away from the Panda base.
- Explore the city of Ya’an for shopping and general sight seeing
- Visit the local zoo (10 minutes from the reserve).
- Visit sites like the Sichuan opera, Jinli night fair or the Tibetan quarter in Chengdu city.
- Hike to the Emei mountain or mount Oingchent to see the giant Buddha

Your project Coordinator will be able to suggest more options depending on your budget and interests.
In our opinion, some of the highlights of the rest of China are:

The Army of Terracotta Warriors outside Xi’an - 6000 soldiers and horses that were originally designed to guard the tomb of an ancient Emperor. 2000 years old, these warriors were discovered by accident in the 1970s by peasants digging a well! Every figure differs in facial features and expression, and they make for an amazing sight!

Tropical Xishuangbanna - China’s very own South-East Asia complete with sunshine, Thai style temples, Dai minority dancing and water splashing festivals! Here you can explore tribal villages on the border with Burma, or trek through the rainforest.

Northern China, along the path of the ruins of the Great wall, also has many sights, and a slightly rough-around-the-edges charm. Here, you can visit the Gobi desert & climb enormous sand dunes in Gansu Province or explore ancient grottoes and caverns full of religious art & Buddha statues at Dunhuang or Datong. You can even spend a night camping out under the stars in a yurt on the epic grasslands of Inner Mongolia. Here you might find yourself taking part in traditional Mongolian wrestling or drinking the local spirit (hopefully not at the same time!)

China’s big cities - The economic and cultural and centres of this blossoming nation can be found in its 3 big cities - Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong. These cities are practically alive with energy and each deserve a visit during your time in China. They represent the glitz and glamour of China’s future and everything that’s hip in China’s new youth, with the rich history of Chinese culture running strongly through them.

The far North-West - Xinjiang Province in the far North-West of China next to the borders with Mongolia & Kazakhstan is a multicultural melting pot of Han Chinese, Uyghurs (the local Muslim people) and Kazakhs. Here you can visit Tian Chi, a lake halfway up a mountain inhabited by nomadic Kazakh people or take part in local grape making in the desert around Turpan.

HOW TO BOOK

TWO EASY WAYS …

Complete a booking form online.

Telephone 01903 502595 (UK) or 1-603-574-4935 (USA)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN OUR PROGRAMME!

We hope you’ll join us!
Don’t hesitate to contact us with any questions.
We’re happy to help you plan your exciting adventure!

www.travellersworldwide.com
www.travelersworldwide.org

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