

China's Avatar Adventure: From Shanghai to the Floating Mountains

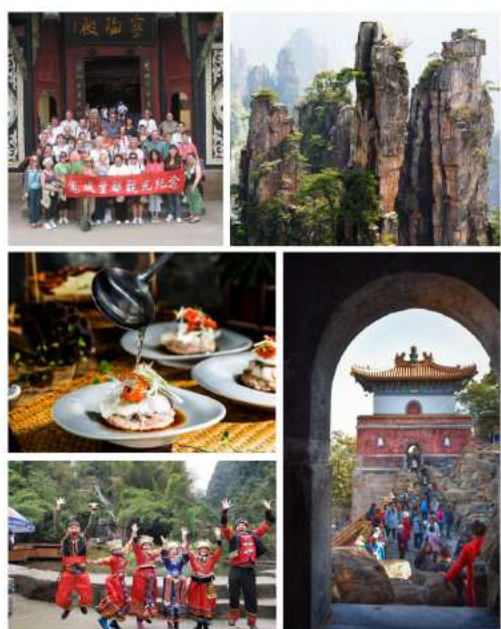
Unlock the Mysteries of Ancient Legends and Surreal Landscapes

Sept 14–24, 2026

Small Group

 Check Availability

Price is located at the bottom of the daily itinerary



Ready to step into another world? Our AFS China: Avatar Dream Adventure is more than a tour—it's your ticket to a land where ancient legends and jaw-dropping wonders collide, just as the new December release of the Avatar movie "Fire & Ice" ignites a fresh wave of wanderlust! This isn't your average guidebook trip; it's a once-in-a-lifetime journey through the wild, cinematic landscapes that inspired Pandora's floating mountains—and it's only for a lucky 24 travelers.

China brings the world of experiences, like no other destination with this history of civilization stretching back 4000 years. Today, it's pace of cutting-edge development is astounding. Visitors are flocking here now for the many wonders from ancient to modern. Each day, we cover the

best regions with new bullet trains, making this trip seamlessly easy.

We kick off in futuristic Shanghai with its famous skyline, a city that sizzles with energy and possibility, a city that never sleeps. Stroll the iconic Bund, lose yourself in the winding alleys of Old Shanghai, and taste the best of modern China, from buzzing night markets to serene Yu Gardens. Blink and you're on a bullet train, chasing the horizon into the heart of the country.

Next, board our sleek Victoria Cruises ship in Chongqing for the legendary Yangtze River. You'll love our ship, the Sabrina with its spacious cabins and many amenities. Four days of pure tranquility—sailing past the epic cliffs of the Three Gorges, exploring mystical temples, and soaking up scenes that belong in a storybook. These cruises are all the rage again, selling out fast, and for good reason: this is the soul of China, unveiled in style.

But the real showstopper is Zhangjiajie, the Avatar mountains themselves, for world-class thrills. Here, nature outdoes herself with dizzying sandstone pillars, emerald forests, and cloud-wrapped

peaks. Dare the glass bridge (the world's highest), ride the record-breaking cable car, or take the "Avenue to Heaven"—99 wild bends up the mountain. Follow us up 999 steps to Heaven's Gate or ride the open chairlifts above the mist. Past AFSers can't stop raving about taking the cliff-side "walk of faith" or wandering the glowing lanes of ancient Fenghuang.



Each day, we explore local villages, enjoy cultural performances and experience the natural beauty of regions people only dream about. It's a combination of natural wonders, cultural immersion and adventure, ideal for bands of film or nature enthusiasts. September is the best month to visit to enjoy the majestic scenery. Limited to 24 participants at a delightfully low price that cannot be matched with so much included.

This is an AFS journey through the real-life Pandora, with otherworldly landscapes and cultures. So many superlatives, you could call this "heaven in the clouds". Come unlock the mysteries deep inside China and fulfill your own epic Avatar dream with us in a land so surreal, you'll need to pinch yourself to believe you're really here. Go far from the ordinary on an ultimate brag-worthy escape. It's an Asian affair you'll never forget.



Our Glorious AFS Itinerary

[Make a Reservation](#) | [Check Availability](#)

Copy and paste to word doc for printable itinerary

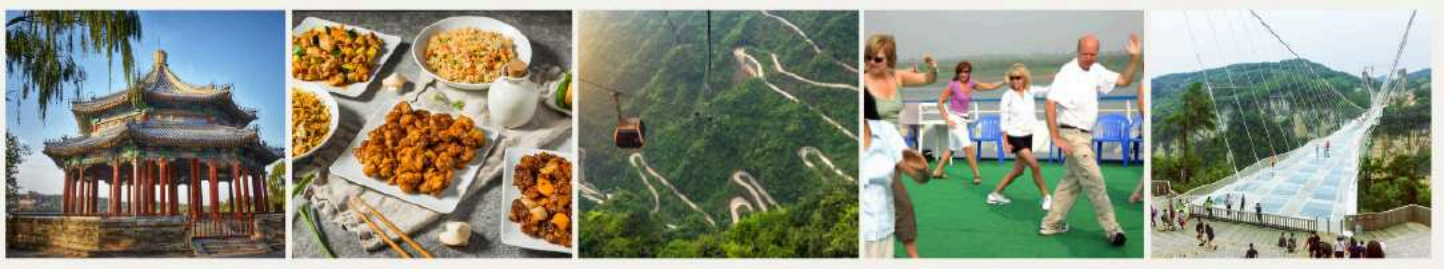
⚠ Web content is continuously updated, whereas PDF versions may contain outdated details due to their static nature.



SEPTEMBER 14 – FLY TO SHANGHAI

Wheels up! Grab your passport and board your international flight to Shanghai. Roundtrip air is easy round-trip USA to Shanghai with dozens of carriers to choose from. Why not add a stop over to break up your route route. Remember, crossing the dateline means you lose a calendar day en route, but you'll get it back on return. Details on flights and packing tips are in your pre-trip emails.

Shanghai is the countries biggest city and the heart is the iconic Bund, a waterfront promenade lined with colonial era buildings. Across Huangpu river rises the Pudong districts futuristic skyline with the spheres of Shanghai Tower and the Orient Pearl.



SEPTEMBER 16 – WELCOME TO SHANGHAI

Touch down in Shanghai, China's glimmering metropolis where ancient temples rub shoulders with neon-lit skyscrapers. After clearing customs, catch the hotel's complimentary shuttle for a quick ride to your home base.

Overnight: **Ramada Plaza by Wyndham Shanghai Pudong Airport 4*** (2 nights)

The rest of the day is yours. Stretch your legs, explore the city's electric energy, or just relax and shake off the jet lag. Snag some dumplings at a nearby eatery or stroll the bustling streets—Shanghai is racing toward the future right before your eyes. For evening free time, the Science and Technology museum is incredible or a ride up the Oriental Pearl Tower for drinks. Shop the bizarre open all night, take a dinner river cruise to view the wonderful city lights or attend the fabulous Shanghai Circus world, an acrobat show like no other.



SEPTEMBER 17 – SHANGHAI PRIVATE CITY TOUR

(B, L)

Breakfast at the hotel, then it's time to dive into Shanghai.

9:00 AM: Your guide sweeps you away for a tour of the city's icons.

- **The Bund:** Start with a riverside stroll where colonial-era grandeur faces off against a skyline of glass and steel. The Huangpu River sparkles, and photo ops are everywhere.
- **Nanjing Road:** Shopaholics, this is your paradise—China's most famous commercial street, alive with everything from luxury boutiques to snack carts hawking local treats.
- **Yu (Yuyuan) Garden:** Step back 400 years into a Ming Dynasty oasis. Peaceful ponds, ornate pavilions, and winding pathways make for a serene escape from the city's buzz.
- **Chen Huang Miao Bazaar:** Just outside the garden, this maze of shops and food stalls is perfect for souvenir hunting and people-watching.

Lunch is included—expect traditional flavors and a chance to sample Shanghai's famed cuisine.

Afterward, transfer back to your hotel. The evening is at your leisure: try a rooftop bar, a night market, or simply rest up for tomorrow's adventure.



SEPTEMBER 18 – SHANGHAI TO CHONGQING – EMBARK YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE (B)

Fuel up at breakfast buffet, then transfer to the airport for your flight to Chongqing (suggested: MU5429, 12:40-15:25, air schedules are not out yet.)

Land in Chongqing famous for its mountains, caves and hot pot cuisines. Meet your local guide, who'll escort you straight to the pier. The mighty Yangtze River awaits.

Board: [*Victoria Sabrina Cruise*](#) (5-star), superior cabin with private balcony (3 nights)

- **6:00 – 8:30 PM:** Embarkation at the dock
- **9:00 PM:** Cast off! The Yangtze flows beneath you as China's heartland drifts by.
- **9:15 PM:** Mandatory safety briefing—then pop out on deck and watch the city lights fade into starlit stillness.

SEPTEMBER 19 – YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE

(B, L, D)

- **6:30-7:00 AM:** Early Bird Coffee & Tea, plus sunrise Tai Chi on deck—channel your inner martial artist with the river as your backdrop.
- **7:30-8:30 AM:** Buffet breakfast
- **8:00-11:00 AM:** Shore Excursion – *Fengdu “ShuangGui Mt.”* Explore this mountain retreat with its ancient temples and mysterious legends.
- **9:30-11:30 AM:** Onboard activities (think calligraphy, dumpling-making, or local culture talks)
- **12:00-1:30 PM:** Buffet lunch
- **5:15-6:00 PM:** Captain’s Welcome Reception—cheers to new friends and new horizons
- **6:00-8:00 PM:** Dinner buffet



Evening: Find a quiet spot on your balcony or the observation lounge and watch the river glow under a canopy of stars.

SEPTEMBER 20 – YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE

(B, L, D)

- **6:30-7:45 AM:** Breakfast buffet
- **8:00-9:00 AM:** Tai Chi (try it if you missed yesterday)
- **10:45 AM:** Sail through Qutang Gorge—sheer cliffs rise dramatically on either side, cloaked in mist and legend.
- **9:00-10:30 AM:** More onboard activities or simply soak in the views
- **12:45 PM:** Glide through Wu Gorge—this is the scenery that inspired poets and painters for centuries.
- **12:00-1:00 PM:** Lunch (Buffet)
- **5:15-6:15 PM:** Captain’s Farewell Banquet—bring your appetite!
- **6:30-11:00 PM:** Settle accounts, then enjoy the Crew Cabaret (21:00-21:45)—a colorful display of traditional costumes, music, and dance.

SEPTEMBER 21 – THREE GORGES DAM, TRAIN TO ZHANGJIAJIE

(B)

- **8:00-10:45 AM:** Disembark for a guided tour of the monumental *Three Gorges Dam*—an epic feat of modern engineering.
- Private transfer to Yichang railway station
- Board the only new train between Yichang and Zhangjiajie (K4627, 12:58-17:39). Settle into your 6-berth sleeper—this is classic China rail travel.
- Arrive in Zhangjiajie, the gateway to the legendary mountains of Avatar.

Check in: [Qinghe Jinjiang International Hotel](#), superior room (2 nights). It’s a great hotel with a full spa, indoor pool, yoga classes and lush gardens.

SEPTEMBER 22 – ZHANGJIAJIE: AVATAR MOUNTAINS (B, L)

After breakfast, step into the scenery that inspired James Cameron's Pandora. Set in Zhangjiajie National Forest, this UNESCO heritage site is famous for its towering sandstone pillars. Set in the Hunan province, it's often called the "Bonsai Fairyland" or Hallelujah mountains" and one of China's top five must visit destinations



Wulingyuan Scenic Area: A UNESCO World Heritage site, this is where 3,000 sandstone pillars, deep ravines, and swirling mists create an alien, almost dreamlike landscape. See the aptly named “Avatar Hallelujah Mountain”—the spire that started it all.

- *Tianzi Mountain:* Take in panoramic vistas from natural platforms, with clouds of mist swirling around jagged peaks. Snap photos worthy of a sci-fi epic.
- *Cable Car:* Glide above the treetops to the canyon summit for jaw-dropping views.
- *Bailong Elevator:* Descend China's legendary “Hundred Dragons Elevator”—the world's tallest outdoor lift—straight down a cliff face to the valley below.

Lunch is included. The evening is free: wander the local markets, try spicy Hunan cuisine, or simply marvel at the peaks from your hotel.



SEPTEMBER 23 – ZHANGJIAJIE: TIANMEN MOUNTAIN & GLASS BRIDGE – FLIGHT TO SHANGHAI (B, L)

Breakfast, then pack up for another blockbuster day.

- *Tianmen Mountain:* Ride the world's longest cable car to the summit of this “Heavenly Gate.” Peer through the massive natural arch—the legendary gateway to the skies.
- *Zhangjiajie Grand Canyon:* Explore hidden caves, narrow gorges, waterfalls, and scenic lookouts—a natural museum of stone and water.
- *Glass Bridge:* Test your nerve on the world's highest and longest glass bridge, suspended 300 meters above the canyon floor. The views (and the thrills) are unforgettable.

Lunch included. In the evening, transfer to the airport for your flight back to Shanghai (suggested: FM 9344, 8:35–10:40 PM). Upon arrival, grab the shuttle back to your Shanghai hotel and settle in for

one last night.

Stay: **Ramada Plaza by Wyndham Shanghai Pudong Airport 4*** (1 night)



SEPTEMBER 24 – FAREWELL FROM SHANGHAI (B)

Breakfast at the hotel, then take the complimentary shuttle to the airport for your flight home. If you're not ready to say goodbye, consider extending your adventure—link up with fellow travelers on our Facebook group or tack on a stopover in another Asian gem.



Safe travels, and may your memories be as epic as the landscapes you explored!

Price: \$2895 per person in twin room plus 2 internal air flights TBA.

Prices based on a minimum of 20 participants. If under, cost may rise. Space was deposited on 10 twins +2 singles. Single supplement cost is additional \$960.

Have you read the Trip Tips yet? Scroll to the top of the page and click the link.

Itineraries are written a year in advance, and though unlikely, can change. All rooms are run of house.

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