

From: Eak Chotkamonkul
To: [Mark Fitzgerald](#)
Subject: FW: Essential China Trip - Mark Fitzgerald - Booking number 1079723, Case number 00216882
Date: Thursday, 14 September 2017 2:49:08 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Dear Mark,

My name is Eak Chotkamonkul. I am in Customer Experience team here at G Adventures based in Thailand.

Firstly, I would truly like to thank you for your email and for taking the time to send this feedback after the post trip evaluation. I can see that you have put a considerable amount of time and effort into this and I really do appreciate it.

I secondly would like to say how sorry I am to read that your tour experience did not meet your expectations. I hope that you would receive my previous email to you responding upon the evaluation. I do want you to know that I hear you, and I have added the matters you raised in the email into the existent issue in your case. And, all the matters will be passed on to concerned departments at G Adventures, as well as appropriate Management Head Office. Thank you very much for helping us better at what we do, and enabling to fix this for future travelers.

Mark, again, I do apologize for any inconveniences you faced while with us on the tour, especially upon Don incident which we had continually been in touch with our Regional Operations Manager in China since Day 3 of the tour. I had an opportunity talking with Don in person upon his mobile while he had been hospitalized in Shanghai, about his condition, as well offering him my assistance. Thank you very much for your kind concern and for your kind support.

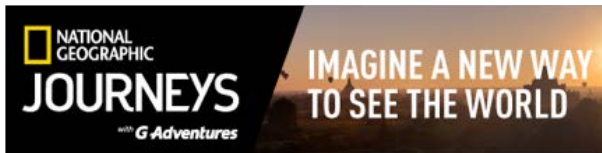
In the interest of making this right, I have processed a travel credit AUD400 with us. This travel credit can be used toward any future G Adventures tours booked prior to 30 September 2019. It is my hope this will yield a more positive and rewarding experience at future point.

If there is anything I, or G Adventures, can do to assist further, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Kind regards,

Satawat Chotkamonkul
Customer Service Investigator
Customer Service & Insights

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P.S. This email is a natural product of my thoughts. The slight variations in spelling and grammar are my gifts to you at no extra charge. I believe it enhances its individual character and uniqueness, and in no way are to be considered flaws or defects.

From: Customer Service <CustomerService@gadventures.com>
Date: Wednesday, September 13, 2017 at 8:12 PM
To: Eak Chotkamonkul <schotkamonkul@gadventures.com>
Subject: FW: Essential China Trip

From: Mark Fitzgerald <fitzy@aussiefitzy.com>
Date: Tuesday, September 12, 2017 at 6:36 PM
To: Customer Service <CustomerService@gadventures.com>
Cc: "michelle.jardine@escapetravel.com.au" <michelle.jardine@escapetravel.com.au>, "Lee (Zirui) Li" <zli@gceos.com>
Subject: Essential China Trip

To Whom It May Concern:

I recently participated in the Essential China offering during August 6th 2017 to August 26th 2017 and have cause raise a couple of points that may improve the experience for future travellers.

a. PRE-EXISTING MEDICAL CONDITONS:

The Essential China was my second G Adventures trip in as many months and for the second consecutive start of a trip, it was severely disrupted by a group members pre-existing medical condition. On meeting Don from Minnesota in the foyer of our hotel, it was obvious to see from his profuse sweating that he was struggling just at the initial Meet & Greet. I have no professional medical training other than first aid, but saw similar symptoms on two previous trips with diabetics. After the group meeting with our CEO Lee, I asked Don what type

of diabetes he had and did he have cardio or mild stroke issues. His response was the he was fine and had no issues. I pointed out to him that I could see his belt mounted insulin pump and was asking because if he had issues, then where was his epi pen and how to help if required. He informs me that he was a chronic Type 2 diabetic and has had previous issues with his heart. I asked if he had advised G Adventures via the web form or Lee directly. He said no, he's fine and has no issues.

The next day we assembled in the lobby to visit the Great Wall and Don was again sweating profusely. Upon arrival at the Wall, Don joined myself and Lee in taking the cable car to the summit, but it was plain to see that he was struggling with just getting to the cable car. I asked if he was OK and he said go on ahead. Around lunchtime we all met back at the restaurant area and it was plain to see that Don was severely affected by the walk – profuse sweating, vague responses, drowsiness and appearing to be out of it. He said the heat was knocking him around but he'll be OK after resting for a while. On the drive back to the hotel, he drifted in and out of sleep.

The new day saw us visiting Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City. In the walk from the hotel to the train station around the corner, Don was again sweating profusely and lagging behind everyone. The walk around the Square saw Don slowing to a stop on numerous occasions, which saw us taking nearly 90 minute to walk the length of the square. Once inside the Forbidden City, we were playing a game of leap frog in which Don would sit in the shade, the rest of the group would get the next attraction and then Lee would go and collect Don. About ½ way through the Forbidden City, I went back to collect Don and as we were about to come down a set of stairs I noticed him grabbing at a young pre-teen boy and in the process of collapsing. I grabbed Don before he and the boy went headfirst down the stairs. I placed the now unconscious Don on the ground, checked his vitals and placed him in the recovery position and spotted Lee rushing back to me, upon her arrival I asked that she get an ambulance. We got Don into the ambulance and obviously Lee had to accompany him to seek urgent professional medical attention, so we were instructed to walk through the Forbidden City and catch either a bus or taxi back to the hotel – which is another story in itself.

We didn't hear from or see Lee until the following morning when we met to take the Bullet Train to Shanghai. Somehow Don had convinced the doctors and G Adventures that he was fit to continue - as yesterday's emergency was caused by the heat. Whilst in the hotel foyer, I see that Don is again sweating profusely. During the train trip, Don gets up and heads for the toilet and collapses in the aisle, nearly cleaning up another passenger. I get his somewhat unresponsive and semi-delirious 150 kilogram frame back into his seat at which time a passenger (who is a cardiologist) and half the train staff come to check him out. During this period, I spoke with Lee's manager on the phone and mentioned that he should have someone meet us in Shanghai to take Don to the hospital, which would allow Lee to look after the rest of the group. The manager agreed with me then spoke with Lee again.

Upon arrival in Shanghai, Lee placed Don, myself and herself in one cab and the remainder of the group in another for the 30 minute ride to the hotel. Upon exiting the taxi, Don again loses consciousness and collapses, which sees Lee again heading off to the hospital and again the group is seemingly abandoned. In effect, as a group we lost Lee for the best part of 3 days as she was left dealing with Don and with what appeared to little support from her management.

Apologies for the long background detail, but my point being that if G Adventures had a strict policy that states "should any tour participant require emergency medical assistance - then they need to produce a medical clearance in order to continue. Any subsequent reoccurrence would automatically exclude them from continuing."

The events experienced by the group should also serve as a catalyst for an immediate review G Adventures policies and procedures, regarding travellers not reporting pre-existing medical conditions

b. TRANSPORTATION:

Spending 12, 14 or 17 hours on a train when Bullet trains are available is a complete waste of time. Based on the tour costs and actual train ticket pricing, it feels like you're "touching up" the tour participants in the name of profit. Most travellers I know would rather spend time exploring than being uncomfortable on train with little amenities or comfortable seating. To further add to the bum numbing 17 hour train ride – who was the Einstein that thought another 5 hours in a cramped clapped our mini-van was what people wanted to experience.

The 3 days Yangtze River boat ride sounded all well and good on paper, in reality it felt more like a cattle cruise in which unless you paid exorbitant prices for 2 hour "optional activities", you were marooned on the metal float that was in need of a good maintenance program. Of a evening, you could not even enjoy sitting on your cabin balcony as another boat was parked beside you.

G Adventures needs to implement a policy regarding drivers using mobile phones while the vehicle they are trying to operate is in motion. Every single driver we had would constantly be on the phone, which on several occasions actually put us at risk. On at least 4 occasions we had Lee instruct the driver to either stop/pull over or use hands free as we were concerned for our wellbeing.

c. CEO:

Lee was a great person to hang around with and did a great job with the challenges of this trip, least of which being the aforementioned Don. Having many such trips such as this one it was clear to see that Lee would take a tremendous amount of practical knowledge out of CEO mentoring from the likes of Frey or Gabo from my previous Portugal/Spain G Adventure, who were two of the best CEO's – in particular in the areas of group management, orientation walks and activity/attraction knowledge .

One of the major issues and disappointments of my trip were the two German girls who were dominating Lee's time and resources for their own effect, as they quite clearly stated to us from the outset that they wanted nothing to do with anyone else other than themselves or their own agenda.

d. CONCLUSION:

Had a wonderful time interacting with Lee as she is great peoples. My rating of this trip as a 5 on "Would I recommend to family and friends" is based on the fact that it seemed more like a glorified backpackers trip that didn't represent good value for money. We seemed to spend more time getting to places than actually exploring those places. I was also miffed that G Adventures management did not take control of Don's situation and allow Lee to actually do her job. In the end, it was 4 days our my trip that I'll never get back.

Mark Fitzgerald

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Life's journey is not to arrive at the grave in a well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, totally worn out, screaming ".....hooly dooly.....what a ride!!!"