



# Hidden Beijing

## Beijing, 4 Days

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# Guide Description



**AUTHOR NOTE:** Beijing is a city that caters for tourists extremely well, particularly since the Olympics in 2008. However, simply following the tour guides and arranged trips will never allow you to see the Beijing that locals and long-term expats see around them everyday. You have to look past the popular haunts and find the more obscure places. This guide is ideal for someone who has already been to Beijing and has seen the major sights – the second time to the city you want something different and to get an idea of the 'real' city life. Stay in more local surroundings, enjoy the truly local entertainment, eat food from all over China and be adventurous. For those looking for the real character of Beijing, this 4 day guide gives you all the information you need.

# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife

## Day 1 - Beijing

**DAY NOTE:** Staying somewhere like the Sihe Hotel might not be an obvious choice at first, but it is a clean, efficient and friendly hotel that is reasonably priced, meaning you can avoid being stuck with other tourists and also save money that you can use to spend on other things. Check out the local art at 798, then head to one of the lesser-known but equally impressive historic sites known as Gong Wangfu. Try some tasty Yunnanese food for dinner at No Name to round off the day before heading to D-22 Club for some local alternative music.

	<b>Beijing Sihe Hotel</b> Excellent service and amenities
	<b>798 Art Zone</b> Home of contemporary art and culture in Beijing
	<b>Prince Gong's Mansion (Gong Wang Fu)</b> Designed By A Prince
	<b>No Name Restaurant (Wu Ming Can Ting)</b>
	<b>D-22</b> Live Punk & Jazz Bar

## Day 2 - Beijing

**DAY NOTE:** See what the Chinese do on their weekends off by travelling out to the Shidu Scenic Spot. Enjoy the beautiful scenery, and then get involved in fun activities such as rafting, hiking and bungee jumping. This will take most of the day, so in the evening you can try something completely new if you dare. Go to Guolizhuang for a dining experience like no other – if you think you can stomach it. Shake off the extreme dining experience with a trip to the brilliant White Rabbit club – a look into the real Beijing DJ scene.

	<b>Shi Du Scenic Spot</b> Out-of-town activity area
	<b>Guolizhuang</b> Extreme dining

	<b>White Rabbit</b> All about the music
	<b>Beijing Sihe Hotel</b> Excellent service and amenities

## Day 3 - Beijing

**DAY NOTE:** Spend your third day at one of the obscure and relatively unknown parts of the Great Wall, although make sure you plan your visit carefully and consult a guide or expert before heading there. Spend the evening at the delightful Nanluoguxiang. This restored Hutong has traditional restaurants, funky craft shops and relaxing cafes and bars. Take your pick of the food and drink on offer or simply stroll around the area enjoying the scenery and atmosphere.

	<b>Great Wall at Huang Hua</b> Wilderness section of the Great Wall
	<b>Nanluoguxiang</b> Hutong chic, for shopping, cafes and adorable bars
	<b>Beijing Sihe Hotel</b> Excellent service and amenities

## Day 4 - Beijing

**DAY NOTE:** The Red Snail Temple maybe a fair trek from the centre of Beijing, but it is a unique and different historical landmark that few tourists bother to discover. It is certainly worth the visit and will leave you with a new perspective on the ancient history and mythology of China. Treat yourself to a delicious and spicy Sichuan meal for dinner, and then check out that most Asian of nightlife activities – KTV. Melody is one of the biggest chains, and is the best place to spend a fun evening eating, drinking and singing your heart out.

	<b>Red Snail Temple (Hong Luo Si)</b> Giant red snails
	<b>Serve The People (Wei Renmin Fuwu)</b> Impressive Fare

# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife



## **Melody**

Sing your heart out with 24hr karaoke



## **Beijing Sihe Hotel**

Excellent service and amenities

# Day 1 - Beijing

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**contact:**  
tel: +86 (0)10 5169 3555

## 1 Beijing Sihe Hotel

**location:**  
No. 5 Deng Cao Hu Tong,  
Dong Si South St  
Beijing 100010

**DESCRIPTION:** If you're looking to truly experience Beijing and don't need another night in a business hotel, this renovated courtyard home is the place for you. Conveniently located on the east side of Beijing, this charming hotel gets rave online reviews from past guests wanting a more authentic look at Beijing. The helpful staff can arrange tours to the Great Wall and other sites.



editor

**contact:**  
tel: 86(0)  
10-59789180/59789181  
[http://www.798space.com/index\\_en.asp](http://www.798space.com/index_en.asp)

## 798 Art Zone

**location:**  
No.4 Jiuxianqiao Road/  
Chaoyang District  
Beijing

**DESCRIPTION:** The 798 Art District at Dashanzi is a testament to the creativity of modern China. Originally a fairly desolate area of state-owned factories, since 2002 the area has been transformed into a lively art and culture community. The factories have been converted into large and exciting arts and performance spaces, allowing for a wide variety of artistic endeavours to take place. There is a 'Soho-esque' vibe to the area, yet it is still uniquely Chinese in nature. 798 Art District is an important hub for urban creativity and there are many galleries, workshops, performance areas and cafes to be explored in the area. © NileGuide



storyvillegirl

**contact:**  
tel: 010/6618-0573

## 2 Prince Gong's Mansion (Gong Wang Fu)

**location:**  
Liuyin Jie 17  
Beijing 100009

**hours:**  
7:30am-4:30pm

**DESCRIPTION:** This splendid imperial residence belonged to several people, including the sixth son of the Guangxu emperor (Prince Gong) who, at the age of 27, was left to sign the Convention of Peking in 1860, after the Qing royal family took an early summer holiday when British and French forces advanced on the capital. The convention (which ratified the ill-enforced Treaty of Tianjin) is reproduced in an exhibition hall. But other than one picture, there's little information concerning the original owner, Heshen (1750-1799), the infamously corrupt Manchu official. Thought to have been the Qianlong emperor's lover, he ruled China for his own gain when Qianlong abdicated in 1796, embezzling funds earmarked for suppressing the White Lotus rebellion. After Qianlong's death, his demise was swift. While he was mourning in the Forbidden City, officials were dispatched to this mansion. Though the extent of his



Photo courtesy of Prince Gong's Mansion (Gong Wang Fu)

graft was widely known, officials were shocked by the piles of gold and silver ingots uncovered. His remaining friends at court managed to persuade the Qianlong emperor's son to spare him from "death by a thousand cuts," but he was soon hanged. The labyrinthine combination of rockeries and pavilions here offers plenty to see, but you're only seeing half of the mansion and it's often overrun by tour groups. Short but sweet performances of opera and acrobatics are served up in the three-story "Grand Opera House." **Going, Going, Gong?** -- Beijing's most remarkable building, Heshen's opulent pleasure house (constructed entirely from precious nanmu) is found in the southern half of Prince Gong's Mansion. It should be a major tourist attraction, but the site is currently occupied by the China Arts Research Council and a high school. When ordinary Beijingers are served with an eviction notice, they often have as little as 24 hours to move out before the demolition crews arrive, but when government ministries are involved, the game is rather different. In the 1980s, offices occupying the site were allocated relocation funds and ordered to move. New headquarters were duly built, but 20 years on, the mandarins have yet to quit their imperial surroundings. They have now been instructed to "act in accordance with the Three Represents," and move out before 2008 to make way for a "Princes' Museum" (Wangfu Bowuguan). © Frommer's

**contact:**  
tel: 010/6618-6061

**location:**  
Da Jinsi Hutong 1  
Beijing

**hours:**  
Daily 11am-midnight (kitchen  
closes at 11pm)

## No Name Restaurant (Wu Ming Can Ting)

**DESCRIPTION:** The demolition of Bai Feng's much-loved No Name Bar is inevitable, but his charming new restaurant has some of its spirit. There are smart touches: Luminous inlaid stones, shimmering waterfalls, and maidenhair ferns create a soothing atmosphere. The minority-chic food is sublime; try the nongjia shao jian ji (spicy sautéed chicken fillet), which uses real bird's eye chile, or the delectable grilled lemon grass fish (daizu xiangmao cao kao yu), served wrapped in a lotus leaf. The finest dish is a juicy foil-wrapped beef marinated in mountain herbs (se shao niurou). A range of fresh juices nicely complement the spicy fare, and the bar still makes a mean gin and tonic. © Frommer's

**contact:**  
tel: 010/6265-3177  
www.d22beijing.com

**location:**  
13 Chengfu Lu  
Beijing 100084

**hours:**  
Mo to Su from 08:00 PM to  
02:00 AM

**3 D-22**

**DESCRIPTION:** It's a long way from the center of town, but this tight two-floor venue is the best place for experimental music acts. On certain weekdays, the club hosts art-house movie nights. © Frommer's



Photo courtesy of D-22

# Day 2 - Beijing

## QUICK NOTE

**DAY NOTE:** See what the Chinese do on their weekends off by travelling out to the Shidu Scenic Spot. Enjoy the beautiful scenery, and then get involved in fun activities such as rafting, hiking and bungee jumping. This will take most of the day, so in the evening you can try something completely new if you dare. Go to Guolizhuang for a dining experience like no other – if you think you can stomach it. Shake off the extreme dining experience with a trip to the brilliant White Rabbit club – a look into the real Beijing DJ scene.

**contact:**  
tel: +86 10 8936 0123 (Beijing  
Tourist Information Center)

## 1 Shi Du Scenic Spot

**location:**  
Shi Du Town  
Beijing Beijing 101411

**DESCRIPTION:** The scenic Shi Du region is located approximately 100 kilometers from Beijing city center. Covering 300 square kilometers, it features dramatic karst limestone formations, craggy mountains and winding gullies. The area is like a beautifully painted corridor; crystal clear rivers cut through the mountains, and water-pools can be found at the feet of the slopes. Historic sites and cultural relics are dotted amongst the natural scenery. Entertainment facilities have been added in recent years so tourists can enjoy bungee jumping, water-skiing and other outdoor activities. © wcities.com



editor

**contact:**  
tel: 86 10 6405 5698

## 2 Guolizhuang

**location:**  
1A Dongyan  
Beijing 100034

**DESCRIPTION:** Are you an adventurous person? If so you may be put to the test at this luxurious establishment that specializes in nothing other than penises. While this may sound inappropriate to foreign ears, it is quite the delicacy. From deer to donkey, Guolizhuang is fully stocked. It isn't cheap but it's worth a try since you will probably have a hard time finding it anywhere else. © wcities.com

**hours:**  
Daily 10am-10:30pm

**contact:**  
tel: +86 133 2112 3678

## 3 White Rabbit

**location:**  
29 Zaoying Lu  
Beijing 100022

**DESCRIPTION:** Unlike most clubs who try to dazzle their patrons with swanky bars, crazy lights, and ridiculous themes, White Rabbit is stripped bare for a warehouse feel. Instead, the focus is all about the music. DJs spin beats late into the night at this underground club with an excellent sound system. Dancing is the activity of the night, and with two full bars, its easy to find some liquid to cool down. © wcities.com

**hours:**  
Daily 6p

**contact:**  
tel: +86 (0)10 5169 3555

## 4 Beijing Sihe Hotel

**location:**  
No. 5 Deng Cao Hu Tong,  
Dong Si South St  
Beijing 100010

**DESCRIPTION:** If you're looking to truly experience Beijing and don't need another night in a business hotel, this renovated courtyard home is the place for you. Conveniently located on the east side of Beijing, this charming hotel gets rave online reviews from past guests wanting a more authentic look at



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Beijing. The helpful staff can arrange tours to the Great Wall and other sites.

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### contact:

tel: +86 10 8516 2288 (tourist information)

<http://www.thegreatwall.com.cn/en/>

### location:

75 kilometres north of Beijing  
Huai Rou County Beijing

## 1 Great Wall at Huang Hua

### OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Historian's favorite!

**DESCRIPTION:** Unspoilt and far from the maddening crowds, this wild section of China's greatest architectural feat curves in delightfully dilapidated fashion across a range of hills and valleys. A small restaurant serves Grilled Rainbow Trout fresh from the lake, and you can dine under the shadow of the Wall. Warning - this path is steep and in dire need of repair. Take good walking shoes, and do not climb if you doubt your ability or fitness. From Huai Rou city negotiate with a mini-van driver to take you to the Wall. © wcities.com



editor

### location:

Runs north to south between Jiugulou Dajie and Dianmen Dajie, respectively  
Beijing Beijing

## 2 Nanluoguxiang

**DESCRIPTION:** Nanluoguxiang is one of the best preserved historical areas of downtown Beijing, as well as being one of the most chic and trendy places to hang out in the afternoons and evenings. The 768-metre-long south-north central lane, with 16 hutong branching off the central lane, is full of interesting craft shops, relaxing cafes and trendy bars. The area has a history of over 700 years and is one of the oldest hutong neighborhoods in the city. Nanluoguxiang has been fully restored to its former glory, and is surrounded by other historic sites such as Houhai Lake and the Drum and Bell Towers. © NileGuide



Photo courtesy of Josh Steinitz

### contact:

tel: +86 (0)10 5169 3555

### location:

No. 5 Deng Cao Hu Tong,  
Dong Si South St  
Beijing 100010

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# Day 4 - Beijing

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**contact:**  
tel: +86 10 6068 1175

## 1 Red Snail Temple (Hong Luo Si)

**location:**  
Huai Rou County  
Beijing Beijing 101400

**DESCRIPTION:** An old legend holds that two giant red snails lived on the hill behind this temple. According to the legend the snails emitted strange lights at night and were thus worshipped by local villagers. Hence, the mountain was renamed Red Snail Hill and the temple, Red Snail Temple. Originally the temple was called Great Brightness Temple when it was built in 348 AD. Now, the temple has become a scenic spot open to the public. The scenery around the temple is breathtaking. © wcities.com

**contact:**  
tel: 010/8454-4580

## 2 Serve The People (Wei Renmin Fuwu)

**location:**  
San Li Tun Xi Wu Jie 1  
Beijing 100027

**DESCRIPTION:** It's a sign of the times that Mao's best-known slogan can be used so frivolously by this chic Thai eatery. In the heart of the San Li Tun diplomatic quarter, you'll find Beijing's finest Thai food at very reasonable prices. The grilled beef salad and green chicken curry are highly recommended, and the pad thai (rice noodles with seafood in peanut sauce) is done to perfection. The small but interesting wine list has a limited by-the-glass selection. The temptation to use inappropriate local ingredients (such as cabbage!) plagues other Thai restaurants in the capital, but here the people are given their due. © Frommer's



editor

**hours:**  
Daily 10:30am-10:30pm

**contact:**  
tel: 10 6551 0808

## 3 Melody

**location:**  
77 Chao Yang Men Wai  
Avenue  
Beijing 100020

**DESCRIPTION:** Centrally perched Melody is a favorite destination of local karaoke-goers, and also plays host to an increasing number of Westerners keen to experience this Asian phenomenon in its full glory. In the well-lit, pastel-pink rooms on the second floor customers can peruse up-to-date Chinese, Korean, Japanese and English song selections, but be warned, there is a lot of teen-pop. Book ahead to avoid the queue, at weekends it can take up to two hours to make it out of the waiting area. © wcities.com



editor

**hours:**  
24 hours daily

**contact:**

tel: +86 (0)10 5169 3555

**location:**

No. 5 Deng Cao Hu Tong,  
Dong Si South St  
Beijing 100010

4 **Beijing Sihe Hotel**

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# Beijing Snapshot

## Local Info

To the first-time visitor, Beijing seems a vast and sprawling city. Characterized by long, wide boulevards and a labyrinthine network of overpasses and freeways, the place can be quite bewildering.

Fortunately, there is order in the chaos. At the heart of Beijing lies the Forbidden City, around which run five concentric ring roads. The first of these is barely worth mention, but the second and third are essential for navigating around town. Finally, the fourth and fifth is useful for commuting to the airport and outlying suburbs. These ring roads are broken down logically according to points of the compass, so "East Third Ring Road North Road" means the northernmost stretch of the eastern section of the Third Ring Road. Easy!

There are 10 districts and eight counties in Beijing municipality proper, with each district containing distinctive "areas". Most areas of interest are in the eastern Chao Yang and central Dong Cheng and Xi Cheng districts, which make up downtown. The following are highlights:

### Chao Yang District

As the most concentrated commercial and residential area in Beijing, Chao Yang offers many areas of interest for the visitor. Within this district are Chao Yang Park, the San Li Tun nightlife area, and the Jian Guo Men and Ri Tan business and embassy districts. Chao Yang is also home to Beijing's pulsing artistic community, Da Shan Zi, which grew out of an old abandoned factory.

#### Jian Guo Men Wai and Ri Tan

You will always see a wide mix of international faces here: tourists, businesspeople and local Chinese. The main street, Jian Guo Men Wai Avenue, is a mad hustle of people, cars and vendors selling everything from pirated CDs to rickshaw rides. There are many major hotels and office buildings in the area, including the massive China World Hotel, where the fabulous restaurant and wine bar Aria is located. Tourists can try their hand at bargaining at the ever-crowded Silk Alley. Just a few blocks away, however, one can find peace and quiet in the graceful tree-lined streets of the embassy area and in serene Ri Tan Park where you can sit by

the lake with a cup of coffee at the famous Stone Boat Cafe.

#### San Li Tun

This is a loosely designated area of bars and pubs with San Li Tun North and South Streets at its heart. These are Beijing's premier people-watching spots. On a sunny day, this is the place to chill-out over drinks on the sidewalk patios and watch life go by. Besides the ubiquitous cafes and bars, you will also find numerous funky shops selling everything from framed prints to Tibetan handicrafts and clothes. The nearby San Li Tun Market is a good place for bargains on designer goods. The fourth floor is outfitted with tailors ready to whip up any clothing item you desire, made to order at bargain prices and in a very agreeable amount of time. Nighttime always reveals the decadent side of San Li Tun. Bar and club goers can start out the night at Q Bar for top notch cocktails, and then head to Den and Vogue.

#### Chao Yang Park

The expansive Chao Yang Park is being touted as the next people-watching hang-out to rival San Li Tun. Upscale bars, pubs, restaurants and shops have recently located here, catering to Beijing's ever growing expat community which centers itself near the park. Cap off the day by heading over to the Big Easy for some spicy Cajun cooking and live blues. Afterwards party the night away at one of Beijing's hottest clubs, World of Suzie Wong Club.

#### Da Shan Zi

Created with the help of East German specialists in the 1950's (from which the Bauhaus-inspired architecture can be attributed) the factories and workshops of Da Shan Zi that once produced the audio equipment for the Workers' Stadium and Tiananmen Square now house tinkering sculptors, paint-smudged artists and lots of space to display the energies of Beijing's Avant-garde artistic community. By a stroke of fate, in the mid-1990s artists evicted from subsidized housing within the Old Summer Palace grounds looking for cheap space and the managers of the defunct factory were able to fit each others' needs. Word of mouth drew more artists to the factory campus and by 2002 a full fledged artist community was up and running. Central

to the Da Shan Zi community is the 798 Space where events, fashion shows, and exhibitions are often held. If you are in Beijing in October, they also host the most outstanding Halloween party in town. The former factory grounds are open to the public free of charge and offer a campus-like feeling of quiet tree lined paths, creative whimsy and plenty of opportunities to purchase a bit of artistic history in the making.

### Chong Wen District

Located in the south of the city, this is a long-established commercial area, selling everything from eyeglasses to sporting goods. Check out the Qian Men Shopping Area for some of Beijing's oldest stores. The area is also worth visiting to see the beautiful Temple of Heaven and the Hong Qiao Market, a treasure-trove of objects both banal and bizarre. The open markets still capture some of the Old Beijing atmosphere and are fun for browsing even if you are not shopping.

### Dong Cheng District

With Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, and Mao's Mausoleum, this district is Tourist Central. Not surprisingly, major hotels abound here—such as the Beijing Hotel. If you are tired of sightseeing, you can always indulge in a serious shopping spree in the Wang Fu Jing Shopping District.

#### Wang Fu Jing

This is Beijing's premier shopping street. It is partially closed to cars and is crowded at all times of the day with shopaholics and tourists alike. Recently unveiled to the public after months of renovation, this wide, sprawling street is a showcase of Beijing's economic progress. Stop off at the Beijing Foreign Language Bookstore to pick up a Chinese dictionary or the latest John Grisham potboiler. Go shopping at the Sun Dong An Plaza, Beijing's mammoth shopping mall. Feeling peckish? Then dine on deep-fried scorpion among other culinary delights at the Wang Fu Jing Night Market. If the idea of chomping on insects does not appeal, try upscale dining at one of several four- and five-star hotels in the area.

### Feng Tai District

## Beijing Snapshot continued

This southwest district Beijing will house the Yangtai Sports Center where the Olympic softball tournament will be held. Mainly an industrial area, there are several cultural and historical sites worth visiting, such as the China Space Museum, Feng Tai Park and Marco Polo Bridge.

### Hai Dian District

This northwestern part of the city is also known as the university district. Along with Beijing University and Qinghua University, who compete to be China's top school, are ten other major universities. Owing to the young student population, this area has a reputation for being rather hip and arty. Hai Dian district is also designated a high-technology zone, so this is where you will find the aspiring start-up. Along with cheap restaurants and casual bars that cater specifically to the student crowd—Solutions, for example, are more upscale tastes and bookstores for the academically minded. Check out the old map section in O2 Sun Bookstore, or get a healthy desert at Cafe Yogur Berry. The Summer Palace, a World Heritage site, and Ruins of the Old Summer Palace, or Yuan Ming Yuan are also in Hai Dian.

### Xi Dan and Xuan Wu

Like Wang Fu Jing, these areas are known largely for their shopping. While the former is a place to be seen, local Chinese people shop in Xi Dan and Xuan Wu. In imperial times Xuan Wu was reserved for the lower classes. After the republic was established several minorities moved in to the district and up to Beijing's preparations for the Olympics the district was known as "Little Lanzhou" with a large Hui ethnic minority population. Browse the small shops and stalls for bargains on clothing, shoes and CDs. Shopping centers here include Parksons and the Xi Dan Department Store.

### Xicheng District

Known as the west city district, Xicheng covers a great deal of the old city. It is just west of the Forbidden City and epitomizes the blending of an old and new China. Once the home of wealthy merchants prior to communism it is now an important part of the city and is often considered the cultural, historical, business, financial, and political district of Beijing. The street of finance, Jinrongjie, is located here as is the commercial district. If you are looking

for nature look no farther than Jing Shan Park and the Beijing Zoo. For the ultimate experience of old Beijing visit Beihai Park, Beijing's oldest park dating back to the 10th century. The Hou Hai area offers entertainment and dining (Beijing punk made its early debut here) and is also the gateway to Beijing's famous hutongs, an architect's delight. For good drinks and music visit the East Shore Live Jazz Cafe or the Buddha Bar.

©

## History

Beijing has a long and tumultuous past. Archaeological evidence unearthed at nearby Zhoukoudian introduced the world to Peking Man, a hominid who inhabited the area half a million years ago. More recently, the city has seen imperial dynasties come and go and along with wars, rebellions, foreign invasions and revolution. Since the 13th Century Beijing has dominated as the capitol of China under the Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties, and serves as capitol today for the People's Republic of China.

The earliest records of human settlement in Beijing date back to 1000 BC. During the Warring States Period(453-221 BC) the town of Ji served as a trade outpost for Mongols, Koreans and other northerners. Ji became Yanjing, or the capital of the Kingdom of Yan, and its strategic position led to struggles for control between Mongols and Manchurians.

In 1215 AD, the city fell to the Mongolian empire builder Genghis Khan. By 1267 it became Khanbaliq(Khan's Town) or Dadu(Chinese for Great Capital),and capitol of the Yuan Dynasty(1271-1368), from which Genghis' grandson Kublai would rule one of four Mongolian khanates, Beijing served as capitol to most of South and East Asia. It is believed that the outer wall of the city at the time ran along the canals near Xueyuan Lu near Qinghua and Beijing Universities.

In 1368 mendicant monk Zhu Yuanzhang led an uprising against the Yuan Dynasty and seized the Khan's great city. Thus began the Ming Dynasty(1368-1644). Under Zhu's control, the city changed its name to Beiping(Northern Peace) and was replaced as imperial capital by Nanjing(Southern Capital) in the Jiangsu Province. In the early 1400s, the third ruler

and usurper to the throne Yong Le(reign 1403-1425), fearing the ghosts of his recently executed political rivals in Nanjing, returned to his base of power in the north and renamed it Beijing(Northern Capital). Because the Mongolian capitol had been completely wasted at the end of the Yuan, it was at this time that the foundations for the Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven, and the Bell Tower were laid.

The Sinicized northern Manchu tribe put an end to the Ming in 1644, establishing the Qing Dynasty(1644-1911). Under the Qing, Beijing was further expanded and modernized with the construction of the Old Summer Palace and the(new) Summer Palace. The popularity of Chinese tea and silk in Europe brought prosperity to China during the Qing, but the court was unable to adjust to western style trade and diplomacy, which served to destabilize the Confucian social order. By the end of the 19th century, wars, foreign occupation, and rebellions had weakened the Qing court, then ruled by the Emperess Dowager Cixi(1835-1908). The Qing Dynasty finally collapsed in 1911. With the leadership of Sun Yat-sen, the Kuomintang(Nationalist Party) rose to power and the Republic of China was founded. Warlord power and foreign influence limited the control of the Nationalist government and encouraged corruption. Modernizers and intellectuals flirted with new ideas, such as democracy, Marxism, and modern science. The blending of nationalism and education culminated in the May Fourth Movement of 1919, based at Beijing University, and writers such as Lu Xun encouraged the updating of the Chinese written style to more accurately reflect life in modern China. Meanwhile, the Chinese Communist Party was founded in Shanghai in 1921. During the war with Japan, the Kuomintang under Chiang Kai-shek, allied with the Communists to seize control from the warlords and foreigners to reunify China. The alliance was never whole hearted and World War II lead to civil war. Defeated, Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists fled to Taiwan, and on 1 October, 1949, the People's Republic of China was formally declared by Mao Zedong(1893-1976) from Tiananmen Gate.

Under Mao's leadership, China struggled to create social equity and collectivity, erase the effects of feudalism and build a new nation. Progress met with hiccups

## Beijing Snapshot continued

of power struggle such as the Great Leap Forward(1958-1960) and the Cultural Revolution(1966-1976), both of which led to disastrous results for Beijing and the country. In an attempt to eradicate all capitalist or exploitative influences, the youth-led Red Guards destroyed temples, monuments and works of art, and persecuted intellectuals and writers. Political infighting and power struggles within the Party further contributed to the chaos, which remained until Mao's death in 1976.

In 1979, Party leader Deng Xiaoping(1904-1997) launched the four modernizations which began the shift to market socialism. The effects were felt politically in Beijing and the creation of the Democracy Wall in Xi Cheng was representative of the student- and worker-lead Democracy movement that abruptly ended in July 1989 in the Tiananmen Square Incident. At the turn of the 21st Century, Beijing is once again being revitalized as a new center of culture. The fireworks that accompanied the announcement of World Trade Organization membership in 2001 and preparation for the Olympics in 2008 have encouraged the massive updating of infrastructure and reinterpretation of cultural importance for post-Mao China.

©

### Hotel Insights

For easy access to all of Beijing's attractions, shops, and restaurants, consider staying in the city's eastern district, Chao Yang, or central district, Dong Cheng. On the other hand, hotels in the northeast of the city, near the airport, are best for those with early flights or for those wishing to avoid the chaotic Beijing traffic.

#### Northeast Third Ring Road

You will find a number of four- and five-star hotels here owing to the area's proximity to downtown, the airport and accessible transportation. Mainly geared for the affluent business traveler, the hotels are comfortable although a little pricey. The Kempinski Hotel, the Great Wall Sheraton and the Hilton are perennial favorites.

#### Hai Dian

Located near the university district and hi tech district, this district offers an

abundance of small and modest Chinese hotels and guesthouses. A major exception to this trend is the impressive Shangri-La Hotel—an oasis of five-star luxury, catering to the employees of China's silicon valley.

#### Jian Guo Men Wai/Ri Tan

Not surprisingly, there are many hotels located close to the embassy and commercial areas of this district. Many are business hotels with the massive China World Hotel dominating the skyline. More than just a hotel, the China World is like a self-contained city in its own right, offering almost every convenience imaginable. There are office towers, residential high-rises, a shopping mall and an ice-skating rink. Alternatively, those craving VIP pampering, might prefer to check into the exclusive St. Regis boutique hotel. Backpackers will be happy to find a number of clean and friendly hutong hostels near Hou Hai that offer an inspiring stay in an old style courtyard, including Beijing Hutong Inn and Sleepy Inn Downtown Lakeside Beijing.

#### Wang Fu Jing

The upscale traveler and anyone looking for a little self-indulgence will enjoy the luxury hotels in this area. The five-star Palace Hotel has tres chic shopping mall, which includes Chanel, Christian Dior and Salvatore Ferragamo. Being close to the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square, many hotels in the area also cater to the tourist trade—such as the slightly more affordable Crowne Plaza Beijing and the Peace Hotel.

#### Near the Airport

The Holiday Inn Lido is a popular choice for vacationing families. This expatriate enclave is much more than a mere hotel. You will find a bank, business center, European bakery and delicatessen, a Western-style supermarket and drugstore, plus a Starbucks cafe. Child-friendly, the Lido also offers Sunday brunch fun-time activities for the kids. With all these amenities at hand, some would argue there is really no need to venture into the city!

©

### Restaurants Insights

As a world class city Beijing offers a staggering supply of places to eat, drink and be merry, and the number only continues to grow. As capitol, the

cosmopolitan flavors available should not be shocking except to those who remember the days when choices were limited to incredibly sumptuous Peking duck banquets or greasy attempts to Western cookery. How times have changed.

Chinese cuisine is a regional affair. Southwestern Sichuanese food is notoriously spicy, Cantonese food includes dishes familiar to the west but are best known for unusual ingredients combined in absolutely inspirational fashion. Northern Chinese food includes Mongolian hotpot and plenty of lamb. Beijing Specialties include the infamous Peking roast duck and lots of snacks. If you are ready for a different flavor, there is not shortage of international cuisine from any part of the globe, including a number of cozy Western comfort food stops of increasing quality.

You will find most of the city's restaurants in east and central Beijing, in the Chao Yang and Dong Cheng districts, respectively. Due to the wealth on offer, it is not possible to cover them all here. However, the places in the following areas are highly recommended.

#### Chao Yang District

This district is a foodie's haven housing a majority of Beijing's most talked about restaurants. Anything you want is here. For Chinese try Green T. House, with its devotion to taking the culinary history of China to a new level. Craving Peking roast duck? Beijing Da Dong Roast Duck Restaurant, with its long standing popularity, will surely provide you with the experience you crave. Chinese dumplings reach their height at Bao Yuan Jiaozi Wu. What about Japanese? Try Hatsune with its plethora of fresh sashimi and delectable rolls. There is also Brasserie Flo, the famous French restaurant which is as close to Paris as you can get in Beijing. An evening at Lan will not soon be forgotten with its scrumptious cuisine and decadent decor. Vegetarians will be delighted by the Lotus in Moonlight.

#### Chao Yang Park

This once humble park is rapidly becoming one of the hippest spots for dining and drinking. For spicy, finger-licking Cajun and live blues, try the Big Easy. Enjoy its authentic atmosphere—a beautiful pink building, seemingly transplanted straight from New Orleans! Beijing's favorite Italian

## Beijing Snapshot continued

restaurant, Annie's, can also be found here. For new interpretations on Chinese classics give the cozy Andie Anniang a try. If you prefer to watch the Olympic action from a pub stool the Goose 'n'Duck Pub, can't be beat.

### San Li Tun

It starts at Alameda the swank Brazilian restaurant that has won restaurant of the year on several occasions. With a delicious fixed menu and a wonderful wine selection to go with it, you can't go wrong. The cozy cafe in The Bookworm, offers delicious dining and excellent atmosphere for conversataion. Down the street from there you will find the intimate Golden Elephant, which serves well-prepared Indian and Thai food. If you want old school pub grub in a comfortable spot with booths and the occasional Hawaiian Theme night, try Brown's, out for size. For something more sophisticated try the award winning Morel's where you can get some of the best Belgian food and beer in town. If you are looking for upscale Thai cuisine try Purple Haze, the much talked about restaurant and bar that has received honorable mention from several different Beijing city guides. A late night pizza carving will meet its match at the Kro's Nest. Any place on San Li Tun Bar Street is good for a drink, but for those who want more ambience with their beer, Havana Cafe is alive with Cuban rhythms and beats. Q Bar, the bar sporting Beijing's best cocktails, can also be found here. With so much to choose from picking the perfect drink is a difficult task so don't limit yourself to one.

### Jian Guo Men Wai and Ri Tan

From fast food to fine dining, this area has it all. Naturally, you will find the standard Pizza Hut, McDonald's and Starbucks franchises. For those who want more variety, Mexican Wave, an expat favorite, serves decent Tex-Mex. For Chinese food at affordable prices and in a romantic courtyard atmosphere, the Xi He Ya Ju Restaurant near Ri Tan Park is an excellent choice. Also located near the park is the fabulous Schindler's Tankstelle, a which serves delicious cold beers and tasty German food you won't get anywhere else. If you are craving wood-fired pizza, then Adria is the spot to provide that Italian fix.

### Northeast Third Ring Road

This area is renowned for its plentiful restaurants. The place to go for authentic Thai food in an elegant, modern setting is Red Basil. For those who crave Thai but are on a budget, the Asian Star is a good bet. You can also sample a variety of Chinese, Indian and Malaysian dishes here. As a longstanding city favorite, San Si Lang offers Japanese dishes and fresh sushi at very reasonable prices. For American food with hearty servings, the Hard Rock Cafe and T.G.I.Fridays are hard to beat. For something out of the ordinary try Whale Inside for a meal in the dark!

### Dong Cheng District

With many different styles of restaurants from east to west, this part of town is yet another of Beijing's culinary treasures. For classic and delicious Chinese fare order yourself a hot pot at Ding Ding Xiang. Their sesame sauce will be hard to forget. Looking for a place to take a date? Head over to the famed Court Yard Restaurant, for exotic cuisine and romantic ambiance. Rain Club offers fresh cuisine straight from their own garden made to order while Waiting for Godot is a cafe and meeting ground only possible in Beijing. For dinner accompanied by Beijing style live theater head to East in Red for a musical supper.

### Xi Dan and Xuan Wu

For Beijing Duck, you cannot go wrong at any one of the Quan Ju De Roast Duck Restaurant branches in the city. But for sheer opulence, try the flagship branch on Qian Men Avenue. For a total tea experience accompanied by healthy organic food try out Geng Xiang Shi Fu. Jin Yang Restaurant offers a unique dining experience as the restaurant is over 100 years old, an elegant rarity in Beijing.

### Hai Dian District

To fit the student budget, there are many cheap "hole-in-the-wall" style establishments that serve some of the best Chinese food in town. Wu Dao Kou, known as Korea Town, has many small, authentic Korean restaurants catering to the large, Korean student population. If you want to eat like the locals and love Korean barbecue, Han Na Shan is an absolute must. For those seeking an exciting and non-traditionalist dining affair, a trip to Blu Lobster is in order. The cook's innovative style will have you eating combinations you have never tried before including hot rice

with cold ice cream. Vegetarians can eat to their hearts content at Buddhist-run Still Thoughts. To try unique regional cuisine from Shandong head to Feng Ze Yuan Fanzhuang. For an extra treat reserve one of their 17 private rooms for a party. ©

## Nightlife Insights

### Art

Beijing has a flourishing art scene. Contemporary painting enjoys a certain popularity in the city's art galleries but collections are still not as extensive as in other major world cities. For current exhibitions, try the Court Yard Gallery and the China Art Gallery. The Dashanzi art district hosting such big names as 798 Space and the 798 Red T Space is a must for art lovers. Internationally recognized Ullens Center for Contemporary Art has regular exhibitions. Photography buffs should check out the Three Shadows Art Centre, the first gallery in China exclusively devoted to photography. You will also find traditional art, such as landscape painting and calligraphy, but this work often tends to be overlooked in favor of more modern styles. If you are visiting Beijing during September be sure not to miss the annual art events Art Beijing and the Dashanzi International Art Festival where you can see the works of cutting edge artists from all over the world. Dangdai International Art Festival is also held in the fall and features a new theme each year. Closer to the center of town are BANG Beijing Art Now Gallery and Red Gate Gallery. For a pleasant day trip visit the Song Zhuang Art Community's Artists Village Gallery.

### Cinema

Designed to expose foreigners to Chinese cinema, Cherry Lane Movies features Chinese films subtitled in English. Alternatively, why not join an eclectic audience at the Sculpting In Time café and catch a subtitled foreign film on movie nights. If you are willing to stray from the city center then you can also visit the China National Film Museum. This enormous 63 acre museum is truly a film buffs fantasy, featuring 20 permanent collections and 1500 films.

### Dance

## Beijing Snapshot continued

The city of Beijing has played host to various international dance troupes such as the Joffrey Ballet. The Central Ballet is the premier ballet company of China and gives annual performances of Western classics such as Swan Lake. Venues for these performances include the Poly Plaza International Theater and the brand new National Center for the Performing Arts.

### Museums

Beijing offers a full quota and wide diversity of museums—just like any capital city worth its salt! Some museums are educational, such as the Beijing Museum of Natural History (infamous for its pickled human specimens!) and the high-tech China Space Museum. For those eager to learn more about Chinese history and culture, why not visit historical museums such as the Confucian Temple and the Former Residence of Soong Ching Ling? For the ultimate history lesson, though, venture over to the Forbidden City where the Palace Museum resides. Once the home of the emperors, this gigantic museum is the largest in China featuring a collection so vast that it cannot all be seen in one day. The National Museum of Modern Chinese Literature houses folios, manuscripts and photographs in a variety of languages and holds regular exhibitions. The Beijing World Art Museum houses a fantastic technology old and new collection and some black and white Picasso prints.

### Music

Classical music concerts are held at various locations in Beijing. The most impressive auditorium is the Beijing Concert Hall which seats up to 1,000 people. The upscale Century Theater is another major venue for a classical music fix. Various hotels across the city, such as the Palace Hotel and Jianguo Hotel also host soothing musical performances. For a flavor of local culture, try the San Wei Bookstore and enjoy traditional Chinese music played with such instruments as theerhu and pipa.

### Rock/Pop/Jazz Music

Music is everywhere in Beijing. Big international names often perform at the MAO Livehouse and Workers' Stadium. For those interested in alternative music, D-22 hosts both national and international acts by both popular and up and coming artists.

### Nightclubs

The city has a burgeoning nightclub scene that caters for all tastes. Most clubs are concentrated in the downtown area but you will find a few in the Hai Dian student district, such as 180. Downtown clubs are naturally more expensive but they have a slicker atmosphere. Vogue is for the serious club goer, playing techno and house music late into the night, whereas the Nightman Disco and Destination cater to an underground gay scene. The Kai Club hosts music for a young hip crowd playing indie and electronic music. For those who want to groove to South American sounds, drop in to Havana Cafe has a live band and offers salsa dance lessons. For the seedier side, check out the infamous Maggie's which is open all night. Conversely, the chic and trendy Loft, Lan, and the incredible World of Suzie Wong Club have raised nighttime decadence to new heights!

### Beijing Opera

Characterized by vivid costuming, face make-up and a vocal pitch akin to caterwauling, this traditional form of performance art dates back to the 16th century. Beijing Opera proves extremely popular with tourists and is performed in various tea houses and theaters such as Lao She Tea House and Liyuan Theater. ©

## Things to Do Insights

Touring this ancient city is one way to transport back in time as well as experience the transformation of modern Beijing.

### The Great Wall

Without a doubt, the Great Wall is one of the most amazing structures ever built. Seen from a distance, the Wall is an awesome spectacle, snaking across the hills of northern China seemingly without end. The Wall stretches from Shan Hai Guan Pass on the east coast to the Jia Yu Guan Pass in the Gobi Desert, far to the west. Originally built 2,000 years ago during the Qin Dynasty (221-207 BC), the Wall was designed to keep out foreign invaders—in which capacity it succeeded at times and failed at others. Constructed with beacon towers, it also served as an enemy alert system by using smoke systems to warn of approaching enemies.

In peacetime, the Wall has proved useful as a highway, transporting people and supplies over large distances. Most stretches of the Wall close to Beijing were rebuilt or fortified during the Ming Dynasty. Of the eight sites of the Great Wall, there are four sections near Beijing open to tourists: Badaling, Mutianyu, Huanghuacheng and Simatai. The majority of visitors see Badaling, which at 70 kilometers (44 miles) is relatively close to the city. Restored in 1957, Badaling is the most commercial section of the Wall and comes with such modern conveniences as restaurants and a cinema. Here you can also visit the Great Wall Museum to acquaint yourself more with this historical marvel. Mutianyu, 90 kilometers (55 miles) from Beijing, is the second site of the wall open to tourists and is also fairly commercial. For those who want to see the Great Wall in an unspoiled state, Simatai is the place to go. You can spend an enjoyable day hiking there and the site is quieter and less crowded than Badaling or Mutianyu. Although both peaceful and beautiful, Simatai is also a physical challenge. Some parts of the wall are very steep and can be dangerous so it is best not to go alone. Wear sturdy shoes and keep your hands free.

### Forbidden City (Gu Gong)

Home to two dynasties, the Ming and the Qing, the Forbidden City was constructed in the 15th century, and was home to about 24 emperors. Under the reign of Yong Le of the Ming Dynasty, the construction of the Imperial Palace complex required the effort of a million laborers. Most of the buildings have been rebuilt or restored as the originals were destroyed during the tumultuous events of recent Chinese history. Many people choose to join the tours that start at Tiananmen Gate. Others sign up for the self guided audio tour. Located inside is the Palace Museum, where you will see various grand temples and halls but the main highlights are the Three Great Halls and the Hall of Supreme Harmony. The latter hall was traditionally the most important structure used for imperial ceremonies such as the Emperor's birthday. Immediately surrounding the outer

## Beijing Snapshot continued

walls of the Forbidden city to the north and west are two ancient parks. Zhong Shan Park to the west offers paddle boats for hire, which make a fun way to view the outer walls of the palace from its former moat. Behind the palace is Jing Shan Park and Bei Hai Park. Jing Shan was created as a quarry for stone during the construction of the palace and now serves as a peaceful outdoor retreat for Beijingers. It is also the site where the Ming Dynasty came to an end. Bei Hai holds some incredible traditional gardens and the Mao Ying White Stupa, constructed in part by Genghis Khan's tolerance for many faiths. On an island within the park is the famous Fangshan Restaurant, where Empress Dowager Ci Xi once enjoyed 112 course meals. Mere mortals and tourists can try out imperial style cuisine in the opulent halls if they make reservations. Continuing through Bei Hai Park it is possible to walk to Hou Hai lake district's Lotus Lane. Or, if you have not yet gotten a sense of Old Beijing, head to the Beijing Museum of Ancient Architecture, which elaborates on the achievements of the tradition of unique Chinese architecture. Highly recommended is a visit to the beautiful Courtyard Restaurant, within view of the palace's east entrance. The Wang Fu Jing Shopping District is a short walk up Riverside Street from here.

### Tiananmen Square

Directly in front of Tiananmen Gate, the traditional entrance to the Forbidden City, symbol of China's ancient past, is Tiananmen Square, a more fitting symbol to China's recent history. It was from the Tiananmen Gate the Mao Ze Dong declared the founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949. The square was designed as a military parade ground, similar to Red Square in Moscow. In the center of the square is the Monument to the People's Heroes, with representations of the workers, laborers, soldiers and farmers who participated in the revolution. To the east of the square is the Great Hall of the People where the Communist Party Politburo meets. Mao's Mausoleum is also located within the square, where the Great Helmsman's

body lays on display, dimly lit in a crystal coffin. Directly behind the Mausoleum is the ancient Zheng Yang Men Gate and across the street is Qian Men. These two gates were the original entrance to the now gone cloistered warren that surrounded the Forbidden City, filled with servants to the court. Continue walking passed the recently renovated Qian Men and enter Beijing's oldest shopping district, Qian Men Walking Street, which received a face lift shortly before the 2008 Olympics. Some of Beijing's oldest shops and well reputed restaurants are found here. Particularly of note are the tea shops.

### Temple of Heaven(Tian Tan)

The Temple of Heaven was built during the Ming Dynasty and was considered sacred until the end of the dynastic era. The Emperor would perform ceremonial rites to the gods here to ensure a good harvest. This place is also remarkable for its outstanding architecture and is located within the grounds of the Beijing Museum of Ancient Architecture and the Beijing Museum of Natural History. The upper parts of the temples are circular while the bases are square(reflecting the traditional Chinese belief that heaven is round and the earth square). Next venture to the most significant Tibetan Buddhist temple outside Tibet itself, is the Lama Temple, a beautiful structure containing a massive statue of Buddha carved from sandalwood(the largest such statue in the world). This temple has a rich and turbulent history, having survived wars, uprisings and rebellions. Declared as a historical relic in 1949, the building escaped the Cultural Revolution without a scratch. There are five "must see" halls in total: Lokapala, Yong He Dian, Yong You Dian, the Hall of the Wheel of Law, and Wan Fu Pavilion. After walking through the temple complex, head over to Vineyard Cafe to enjoy their courtyard dining room and their wood fired pizza. If you are still in the mood to stretch your legs, head over to Di Tan Park, a less visited park created around the alter the emperor of China once used to pray for good harvests and especially pleasant in the late afternoon.

### Beijing's Hutongs

Districts of historical architecture were preserved in the preparations for Beijing's 2008 Olympics. Located at the city center, these intricate alleyways wind around classic courtyard houses, called siheyuan. The most visited of these neighborhoods lies between Hou Hai and the Lama Temple. While exploring on foot can lead to exciting discoveries, bicycle rickshaw tours are also available. The Former Residences of Soong Ching Ling, wife of Sun Yat-sen, Twentieth Century writers Mao Dun and Lao She have all been preserved for visitors. The former residence of Mei Lanfang, most recognized Peking Opera singer in the West, has been turned into the decadent restaurant Mei Mansion. Tiny shops, beautiful embellishments at gates and many other surprises await the traveler to these tiny lanes too small to fit a car through. The street facing Qian Hai is called Lotus Lane. Several bars and restaurants are located here and the nightlife is vibrant. Walk along here, then pass over a foot bridge at Xiao Shi Bei and walk along the narrow ancient street Yan Dai Xie to find some revolution era souvenirs and plenty to point your camera at. From Yan Dai Xie turn left onto Di'an Men Wai Street and walk up to the Drum Tower and its nearby companion the Bell Tower. Around sunset the swallows that were once ubiquitous around Beijing can be seen flying up to nest here. After all that walking, hop in a cab and head to the Pass By Bar to treat yourself to a lovely courtyard meal.

Scenic cruises throughout Beijing will leave you wishing your visit was longer. With so much to see and do, try one of the various tour companies to fulfill your stay in Beijing.

### Bus Tours

Beijing Join In Bus Tour( +86 10 51660915 25/<http://www.beijingimpression.com/bus.html/>)

Beijing eTours Travel Service( +0 086 10 67160201/[http://beijing.etours.cn/tours/beijing\\_bus\\_tours/](http://beijing.etours.cn/tours/beijing_bus_tours/))

### Boat Tours

## Beijing Snapshot continued

Tour Beijing( +00 86 10 6716 0201/<http://www.tour-beijing.com/>)

Sinoway Travel( +1 415 287 0878/<http://www.chinadiscover.net/china-tour/beijingguide/beijing-boattour.html/>)

### Train Tours

Travel China Guide( +86 29 8523 6688/<http://www.travelchinaguide.com/package/beijing.html/>)

China Highlights( +1 800 268 2918/<http://www.chinahighlights.com/tour/cht-29a/>)

### Culinary Tour

Beijing Culinary Tour( +1 800 773 0862/[http://www.chinaodysseytours.com/tour\\_beijing.html/](http://www.chinaodysseytours.com/tour_beijing.html/))

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## Travel Tips

### Getting There

Beijing is China's vibrant cultural center. In order to see everything it has to offer, you'll need to spend a lot of time commuting. This guide provides an overview of the city's various transportation options.

### Air

Beijing's main airport, (PEK; BJS) the Beijing Capital International Airport(+010 6456 3220/ <http://www.bcia.com.cn/en/index.jsp>), is operated by the Civil Aviation Administration of China. BCIA is located 20 kilometers (12.4 miles) from the city center in the Shun Yi district. The airport consists of three terminals and houses the following airlines: Air China(+86 10 6601 6667/ <http://www.airchina.com.cn>) Air France(+86 10 6588 1388/ <http://www.airfrance.com/>) All Nippon Airways(+86 10 6590 9191/ <http://www.ana.co.jp>) British Airways(+86 10 6512 4070/ <http://www.british-airways.com/>) China Southern Airlines(+1 86 10 6601 7596/<http://www.cs-air.com/en>) Dragon Airway(+86 10 6518 2533/ <http://www.dragonair.com>) Finnair(+86 10 6512 7180/ <http://www.finnair.com>) Japan Airlines(+86 10 6513 0888/ <http://www.jal.co.jp>) Korean Air(+86 10 6505 0088/ <http://www.koreanair.com/>) Lufthansa(+86 10 6465 4488/ <http://www.lufthansa.com/>) Northwest(+86 10 6505 3505/ <http://www.nwa.com>) Qantas Airways(+86 10 6467 4794/ <http://www.qantas.com.au>) Thai Airways(+86

10 6460 8899/ <http://www.thaiair.com/>) United(+86 10 6463 8551/ <http://www.ual.com>)

### From the Airport

Bus: There are a number of services that provide transportation from Beijing Capital International Airport to destinations in and around Beijing. The Airport Shuttle bus(+86 10 6459 4375) offers three bus lines to points along the Xidan, Gongzhufen, and Zhongguancun routes.

Taxi: Metered taxis are available outside the airport, but it is advisable for travelers to have their destination written in Chinese.

Car Rental: Having access to a car is the easiest way to travel to rural areas outside Beijing but beware of the city's hectic traffic. Rental car companies in Beijing include: Avis(<http://www.avischina.com>) 5i5 Cars(<http://zwey.com/>) Beijing Veteran Car Rental Company(<http://www.bjlbzc.com/>) Beijing TOP-A Car Service Co(<http://www.expatlife.com/>)

### Train

Beijing is accessible by Chinese Railways([www.chinamor.cn.net](http://www.chinamor.cn.net)). The Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation(<http://www.kcrc.com>) offers transportation to Hong Kong. Beijing is also situated along the Trans-Siberian Railway, which offers service to London via the Trans-Mongolian and Trans-Manchurian routes. Domestic destinations include Tianjin, Shanghai, Qinghuangdao, Harbin. Beijing Train Station(Beijing Zhan), the central station, is located at Jian Guo Men within the Second Ring Road. The Beijing Subway has a Train Station stop and buses to several parts of the city leave from the west part of the station(follow the signs). Beijing West Train Station(Beijing Xi Ke Zhan)(10-9510-5105) is in the Feng Tai district and is not immediately accessible by subway at this time. It is the biggest train station in Asia and 300,000 passengers go through its doors daily. Trains to China's west and south are available here, including direct trains to Lhasa, which can be booked up to ten days in advance. Typically, train tickets to any destination in China can be purchased at any train station three days in advance. During crowded times such as major holidays, assistance through CITS may make your travel plans easier. Other stations in Beijing include Beijing North Train Station(Tel: 10-6563 6122; 10-6563

6223) and Beijing South Train Station(Tel: 6563 5222)

### Bus

The five major bus stations offering citywide and national service: Dongzhimen(10-6204-7095) near the Lama Temple with a stop on Metro line 2, Muxiyuan(10- 67267149) in Feng Tai District, Lian Huan Chi(10-6346-4027) near Liu Li Qiao on the Third Ring Road Liu Li Qiao(10-6386-1262) in Feng Tai District Zhao Song Kou(10-6722-9491) on South Third Ring Road

### Getting Around

#### Subway

Beijing has an extensive subway system that is currently being renovated. All of the signs in the stations are written in both Chinese and English. Tickets can be purchased at any subway station, with fares varying according to line. The average cost is RMB2. If you will be using the subway often, the best idea is to purchase a Public Transportation Card, called a Yikatong. The minimum deposit for a Yikatong card is RMB20, and it can be refilled as needed at select subway stations. The Beijing subway is comprised of five main lines: Line 1, Line 2, Line 5, Line 13 and the Batong Line. Line 1 runs in a straight line from east to west, through Tiananmen Square and other major commercial areas. Line 2 runs in a loop following the old city walls, with stops at each of the gates, most major tourist attractions and the Beijing Railway Station. Line 5 runs in a straight line from north to south and also stops at various tourist attractions. Line 13 runs through the northern end of the city. The Batong Line runs from the eastern end of Line 1 to the suburbs. The plans to expand the subway include three new lines to be ready for the 2008 Olympics. Line 8, also known as the Olympic Branch Line, will run south to north from the National Art Museum through the main Olympic areas, including Olympic Park. Line 10 will run along a larger loop around Line 2. The Airport Line will run from the center of the city to Beijing Capital International Airport.

### Bus

Understanding how the bus system operates can be confusing since there are hundreds of different routes. A first-time tourist may want to use the subway or take a taxi. If you have a comfortable

## Beijing Snapshot continued

understanding of the bus lines, however, you'll be able to navigate your way around the city quickly and affordably. Lines 1 through 199 are used for day transportation in the inner city. Lines 200 through 299 are used for night transportation in the inner city. Lines 300 through 399 are used throughout the outer city and suburbs. Lines 400 through 599 travel from the inner city to the outer city. There are also 24 lines that link Olympic venues to other transportation sources and will only operate on competition days. Buses numbered below 200 charge RMB1. Buses between 300 and 599 charge RMB1 for the first 12 kilometers and an extra RMB0.5 for every 5 kilometers after that. Please visit <http://www.bjbus.com/> for more information.

### Taxi

Beijing is one of the easiest cities to get a cab in. A licensed cab always displays the driver's license with photograph and official seal just above the meter on the dashboard. A sticker in the back window tells you the rate of the cab, usually varying between 1.6 and 2RMB. The larger and more luxurious the cab, the higher the rate. Cab drivers in Beijing often do not speak

English so having your destination written out in Chinese or on a map is very useful. Having the card of your hotel will also make getting home by cab trouble free. Most cab drivers have a personal business card and cell phone. If you particularly enjoy a cab ride or want to take a longer trip outside the city, these can be arranged in advance with a driver. Day fares, depending on destination, typically start around 500RMB. ©

### Fun Facts

1. Fact: Beijing is the capital of China, though this wasn't always so. 'jing' means capital, 'bei' means north. The southern capital was Nanjing, 'nan' meaning south.
2. Interesting fact: After Shanghai, Beijing is China's second largest city.
3. Trivia fact: the China Rose is Beijing's city flower.
4. Fun fact: the guard towers around the Forbidden City are said to be modeled after cricket cages.
5. Fact: Beijing dialect is the basis for the entire Mandarin standard language.

6. Interesting fact: basketball and football are the two top sports in China, and especially so in Beijing where you can see them played at major parks around the city.
7. Fun fact: McDonald's is the city's most popular fast food restaurant.
8. Food fact: Beijing is famous for its Peking Duck, which is a roast duck sliced a specific way and served with specific side dishes.
9. Weird fact: Beijing's most popular surname is Wang, with an estimated 11% of the city sharing the name.
10. Fact: 800 buildings make up the Forbidden City, one of Beijing's hottest tourists spots. There is also a Starbucks inside the city now.
11. Odd fact: The Beijing zoo was once called the 'Ten Thousand Animal Zoo.'
12. Interesting fact: Beijing Opera is an important part of local culture, locals practice their opera singing at parks around the city as well as frequent the opera houses.

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