

BEI JING



CITY GUIDE



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Basic introduction to Beijing

Geography:

Beijing, with its 20 million citizens, is the eighth largest city in the world, and second largest in China. It has fourteen urban and suburban districts and is, for the most part, surrounded by Hebei Province. Beijing is situated east of the Bohai Sea and west of the Gobi Desert. The time zone in China is called Beijing Standard time and it is eight hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT +8).



Climate:

Beijing has four distinct seasons: temperate spring; somewhat rainy summer; clear autumn; and snowy winter. In spring the winds from Gobi Desert bring dry sandstorms that may last from a few hours to a few days. Summer, on the other hand is rainy with temperatures that rise well above 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 Celsius). Autumn is cool and clear however trees don't usually turn as picturesque as you might be imagining them. Beijing winter is dry and quite severe with temperatures dropping below 5 degrees Fahrenheit (-15 C). Autumn and spring are arguably the best times to be in Beijing with cool and clear nights and nice, warm days. The coldest and hottest months are respectively January and June. It is also important to note the atmosphere might be more polluted to what you are accustomed to. The Chinese government is actively trying to reduce the level of smog with increased regulations in factories. The pollution is 20% less compared to last year, and continuing to improve. However, smog is still a huge issue and it is recommended to check the smog levels before going outside. To protect your self from the smog one can wear smog masks. Allergy medicines also help with your cough if you start developing the Beijing cough. Smog is in particularly bad in the wintertime compared to the summer. There are also air purifiers you can install in your homes, which will allow you to breath good clean air.



Development:

Beijing is currently undergoing major development at a stunning rate. Not only are new skyscrapers and other building being built, but also the subway system is being extended. The wonderful restaurant or shop you found yesterday may easily disappear overnight and be replaced by a high-rise building. Sometimes whole neighborhoods will make place for new business districts in the name of progress. To put into perspective a new skyscraper project is being built every two days.



Currency:

The official and only currency in China is Renminbi (RMB), also known as Chinese Yuan. Money exchanges can be safely made at the branches of Bank of China. *Remember to keep your receipt with you in case you wish to exchange any amount of remaining RMB back into a foreign currency.* Credit and debit cards are acceptable for payment at hotels or tourist shops. However, credit cards will be difficult to use for cash withdrawals. There should be no such issues with debit cards however please do discuss this with your home bank beforehand. Look out for fake bills! Not every ATM will give you legitimate bills. The fake bills are usually in the form of 100's but sometimes there are fake 50's. Some fakes are significantly better than others. You can check the stitching or the watermark to see if it is false. In the event that an ATM spits out a fake bill you can report it to the bank. That being said, there is a lot bureaucracy involved to getting your money back and it's almost not even worth it. Though it is a bit immoral, you can slide your fake 100 with a bunch of other real 100's when paying for a meal or an item. Or you can just keep it as a memento to show your friends back home.



Holidays:

There are two long national holidays: Chinese Spring Festival, and the National Day of China. And four short holidays: Tomb-Sweeping day, Dragon Boat Day, Mid-Autumn Day, New Year Day. It is not a good idea to set off travelling during these times since

they are the peak travel times for Chinese people. Instead, you should take advantage of the celebrations and festivals occurring in and around Beijing and experience them 'first-hand'.



Food:

Over the past years, Beijing has seen growth in its foreign cuisine supply. European, American, Mexican food is easily accessible across the city. Locals however still prefer their dumplings and noodles, and they are a must for every new incomer. Other dishes that shouldn't be missed are the Peking Roast Duck, Sichuan Hotpot, and, altogether, the whole variety of local dishes. If one decides to try the local street foods it is recommended to bring Pepto and Imodium to settle and ease the stomach. When eating out with big groups sometimes it is not allowed to move tables closer together because of feng shui. If you go to a restaurant with no pictures or English menu, it is best to have what you want to eat written out already via screenshot or you can download the app Waygo that translates menu items into English.



Entertainment:

The exceptionally modern city of Beijing offers a vast spectrum of different means of entertainment. During the day, one can visit temples, palaces, monuments, parks, or just a café or a restaurant. At night, there are performances available, such as theatre, ballet, musicals, and concerts. Still, as far as culture is concerned, the most popular attraction for foreigners remains the Peking Opera. After the performances, you can devote yourself to nightlife with endless bars, clubs, restaurants, and lounges.



Useful information:

It is fairly easy and cheap to hire a driver or a maid in Beijing. However keep in mind that during rush hours subway will be much more convenient than using your own transportation. Prepare for very tight spaces during rush hour.

Avoid black cabs and cabs with no clear markings. Drivers will often try to bargain the price. It is recommended that you only take taxis that use a meter at the dashboard.

Tipping is not customary and is officially discouraged.

Beijing subway stations have four exits each: A, B, C, and D. They are often used to give precise directions.

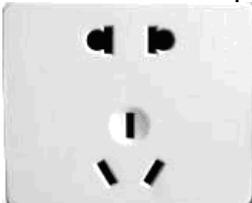
Look out for pickpockets on the subway.

The standard spoken Chinese is Mandarin (Putonghua). Hardly any Chinese people in the street will speak English so it would be helpful if you had a set of useful phrases on you at all times.

Take extra care when crossing streets. Beijing traffic is almost certainly much more intense than the one at your home. Just because the green man says cross, it doesn't mean go. Cars will continue to drive if they see empty space. It's best to cross with big groups. There is strength in numbers.

Avoid being involved in accidents, albeit as a helper. Being a foreigner, and especially not speaking Chinese, you might easily end up in the heart of the situation and you might even be accused of it.

Voltage in China is 220v~240v, 50Hz. The plug is like below. A simple European power adapter will fit for three pronged plugs.



Useful Vocabulary:

<i>Embassy</i>	dashiguan	大使馆
<i>Passport</i>	huzhao	护照
<i>Airport</i>	feijichang	飞机场
<i>North / South / East / West</i>	bei / nan / dong / xi	北 / 南 / 东 / 西

<i>Bar</i>	jiuba	酒吧
<i>Restaurant</i>	fandian	饭店
<i>Map</i>	ditu	地图
<i>Supermarket</i>	chaoshi	超市
<i>ATM</i>	qukuanji	取款机
<i>I would like to...</i>	woxiang	我想
<i>...exchange money</i>	huanqian	换钱
<i>Credit card</i>	xinyongka	信用卡

Numbers:

<i>One</i>	yi	一
<i>Two</i>	er	二
<i>Three</i>	san	三
<i>Four</i>	si	四
<i>Five</i>	wu	五
<i>Six</i>	liu	六
<i>Seven</i>	qi	七
<i>Eight</i>	ba	八
<i>Nine</i>	jiu	九
<i>Ten</i>	shi	十
<i>Eleven</i>	shi-yi	十一
<i>Twenty</i>	er-shi	二十
<i>Fifty-eight</i>	wu-shi ba	五十八
<i>One Hundred</i>	yi bai	一百
<i>Three hundred twnty-two</i>	san bai er-shi er	三百二十二
<i>One thousand</i>	yi qian	一千

Culture Shock:

Whenever you move to a new location, no matter how many times you have travelled before. It is inevitable that there will be some semblance of culture shock or homesickness. Culture shock is when things are done differently to your home country. The fact that things are done differently does not automatically mean that the way things are done in China is 'wrong'. Therefore it is important to take an open-minded mentality in order to make the most of your experience while here. Culture is like an ice-berg. There is, of course, the bits of culture that you can see are obvious, ie. Chopsticks, food, traditional clothes, money. However it's the reasoning behind why these things are done which creates the actual culture. It's the habits of the people, the way they do things, the reason they do things.



For instance, burping and farting in public is not seen as a big taboo, as it is viewed as 'expelling badness from the body.' It only becomes weird to them, if someone makes a big deal about it and then they get confused and wonder why there is a fuss being made about it.

Most Chinese meat dishes are made up of lots of small pieces of meat, and thus not much steak. This goes back to when there was famine and people were struggling to make ends meet, so they would not have much oil to cook with, or much coal to burn with. Thus, they would cut the meat into small pieces in order that it would cook faster, and thus require less coal and oil.

Personal space is another instance where there may be differences. Especially during peak hour of weekdays 7-9am, and 4:30-7pm it can be very hectic. It is very common to have to squeeze tightly onto public transport and to be standing shoulder to shoulder with everyone around you.

The best way to acclimate yourself to the new city is to try and understand the reasons behind the actions. Even if it may make no sense to you, it makes perfect sense to them and it is the way they have grown up and lived for generations.

The tap water in Beijing is not drinkable. However it is fine to use for doing the dishes, and washing your clothes. The easiest way to get a water supply is to buy a water cooler (kind of has the dispenser on a stand and there is an 18L bottle placed on top).

The water bottles will cost around 30yuan and will be delivered to your house when you make an order. The bottles are reused so when they deliver a new one to your house they will take the old one away. You can use the tap water to brush your teeth as long as you don't swallow it. Perhaps for children it would be recommended to use drinking water in case they swallow some.

When purchasing food items it is important to note, that the factories will write down the 'made on date' or 'produce/packaged on date' as opposed to the best before date. This is in order to show you how fresh the food is. Chinese people are more likely to buy their food on a daily basis to ensure freshness as opposed to buying for the week ahead. There is milk available in China, however it is most often sold in the form of long life milk, and on occasion fresh milk will be available. It is more reliable to purchase the long life.

Fresh fruit is more than safe to eat. Just be careful to peel the skins of apples or any fruit and to not eat the outside peels. For fruit like grapes or vegetables like lettuce it is recommended to soak in apple vinegar in order to kill any germs that may be present. (just rinse off the vinegar with drinking water after you've soaked them or you may end up with a weird taste!)



Bathrooms in Beijing don't always have toilet paper in the stalls. Carry tissue paper with you. Oftentimes in newer shopping malls, restaurants, and stores, there will be a western toilet. It's usually at the end and is sometimes marked "handicapped." Inside the stalls, be careful where you step. If your pants are long, roll them up a bit. Move carefully. Toilet stalls also rarely have hooks to place possessions on. Either hold on tight or give to a friend for safekeeping. It is generally expected that you don't throw your used toilet paper down the toilet (much plumbing in China has not been designed to handle paper – especially in older buildings). There is a small trash basket in the stall to put it in. If you are lost OR need to find someone who speaks English OR you need a clean bathroom...find a Starbucks or a large hotel!!! The people who work there usually speak English, and there should always be a clean toilet. Keep in mind that it is thought to be disgusting and unsanitary to touch a toilet (this includes, in particular, sitting on them). So, even if you find a Western toilet, take a quick look for footprints and splash age.

Spare Time

Getting around:

Taxis are generally a convenient and cheap way to get around town. Keep in mind that drivers are legally required to use the meter at the dashboard so should they refuse to do so, simply flag down another cab. If you wish to file a complaint against a driver, you can do so by simply taking his license number and calling the hotline. This information can be found on the driver's license in front of the passenger's seat.

Buses are generally unreliable at long distances. Fares vary depend on the distance and tickets are usually sold by the conductor rather than the driver. It is recommended to pay with a subway card since it is a lot easier, especially when the bus is crowded. Just make sure you have a subway card with credit on it to pay bus fare. Also be sure to scan your card out or you will get charged for the whole trip. You can acquire a subway card with a 50 RMD deposit at the subway stations.

The subway, although immensely crowded at times, is still the most reliable way to travel around Beijing. The etiquette in the underground differs a lot to the conventional one you might be used to but sooner rather than later you will be fluent in riding the metro. A single journey costs vary between RMB 3-7, and for your convenience, you can purchase a multi-ride card. There are always four exits at the stations: A, B, C, and D. Make sure you know which one to take prior to arriving at the station.

Sights:

Tiananmen Square – 天安门



This square is probably the most famous tourist destination within Beijing. It is surrounded by other points of interest such as the *Great Hall of People*, where political ceremonial activities take place, and *National Museum of China*. At the very square, one can also visit the *Chairman Mao Memorial Hall*, where the Great Helmsman himself lies. To enter the memorial, you will need to have your passport. When arriving

in Beijing, it is inevitable that as part of your sightseeing, you will end up visiting Mao's mausoleum. In the west it is often automatically assumed that Mao was a bad leader due to the immense loss of life during the famine leading up to 1963. There is wide-spread acceptance that Mao did make some mistakes, however he is viewed with a 70-30 principle. That is that Mao was 70% right and 30% wrong. Mao's time in power saw life expectancy within China jump from 35 to 70 years old, however the literacy rate fell from 90% to below 10%. Mao brought together the people of China together as a whole nation, since before he came to power, there were 3 main political groups in constant strife; there were the Chiangkaihek, nationalists and communists. Mao brought the people together as a whole and built unity. His main goal was that he wanted to create a better lifestyle for the people and to bridge the gap between the extremely poor and the extremely rich, so that there was equality among the people. His writings are still referred to now and taught in schools. Not far from Tiananmen is also the *National Centre of Performing Arts*.



Forbidden City – 故宫

The imperial palace lies in the very middle of Beijing. For nearly five centuries it served as a home to the Emperor and his family. Nowadays, it houses the *Palace Museum*. The prices of admission vary from 40-60 RMB.



798 Art Zone – 798 艺术区

This is a great place to visit, especially if you are an avid lover of art. Factory 798, as it is also known, has been around for about a decade and hosts many of the cities modern art galleries, studios, and cafes. It is free to visit but unfortunately it closes rather early: at 7:30 pm.



Temple of Heaven – 天坛

A Taoist temple situated in Southeast Beijing, the Altar of Heaven was annually visited by numerous emperors for ceremonial purposes. The complex consists of many beautiful buildings with traditional Chinese architectural features as well as a beautiful peaceful park you can walk

around and enjoy.



Summer Palace – 颐和园

This was the summer getaway of the Emperor and his family. It is also included on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Its natural hills and open water, combined with the artificial features constitute a fantastic recreational spot you can use to escape the intensity of Beijing.



Lama Temple – 雍和宫

One of Beijing's most famous temples features five halls and five gardens with beautiful decoration. The Buddhist and Tibetan art, as well as the nearby neighborhoods help you experience the 'classic' China you had imagined before you came to Beijing.

Modern Architecture:

For those interested in modern buildings, Beijing is a great destination. Here, one can enjoy monuments of the human genius such as the China World Trade Centre Tower 3, CCTV Headquarters, National Aquatics Centre, and, of course, the famous Bird's Nest. Located not too far from one another, they challenge even the boldest imagination with their shapes and lightworks.



Parks and Lakes:

Beijing, along with its polluted air of development, hosts numerous beautiful parks and lakes where one can enjoy nature daily. Some of the most famous ones include

Chaoyang Park, Beijing Olympic Forest Park, Xiang Shan Park (aka Fragrant Hill), Houhai Lake, Beihai Lake, and Purple Bamboo Park. Most of them are free for visitors. They are all a great place to escape the stresses of everyday intensity in Beijing.



Basic Vocabulary:

<i>Turn left</i>	zuozhuan	左 转
<i>Turn right</i>	youzhuan	右 转
<i>Go straight</i>	yizhizou	一 直 走
<i>We are there</i>	daole	到 了
<i>Stop</i>	ting	停
<i>Make a U-turn</i>	diaotou	掉 头
<i>I want to go to...</i>	woyaoqu	我 要 去
<i>Driver</i>	shifu	师 傅
<i>Use meter, please</i>	qingdabiao	请 打 表
<i>Traffic light</i>	hongludeng	红 绿 灯
<i>Where is...?</i>	...zai nar?	在 哪 ？
<i>One ticket</i>	yizhang	一 张
<i>Subway station</i>	ditiezhàn	地 铁 站
<i>Taxi</i>	chuzuche	出 租 车

Emergencies

Police: 110

Ambulance: 120

Fire Brigade: 119

We know that your safety and the one of your family are the top priority on your list. This is why we are eager to provide you with useful intelligence about the easiest ways to seek help in case you need it. We sincerely hope you never give this page a second glance.

Traffic accidents:

The most common circumstances under which foreigners in the People's Republic of China seek assistance from the police forces are traffic accidents. In the unlikely event of one happening to you, remain calm and dial **110**, and **120** for first aid if needed. After the police arrive, you must provide your ID and describe what happened. Should there be a language barrier, it is *their responsibility* to seek out interpreters. However, it is always helpful to have your embassy's contact details in hand, in case the officer fails to provide translation services. In all cases of emergency, please do not hesitate to contact your embassy: it is their duty to assist you.

Medical emergencies:

Beijing is a vast city. As such, it provides excellent medical care for all foreigners living here. There is an abundance of Western-style facilities with English-speaking staff. Many of these doctors also speak a third language, such as Portuguese, Spanish, German, French, etc. Furthermore, many local hospitals have VIP wards with adequate equipment and English-speaking doctors. The prices in all of the above-mentioned facilities are rather high to Chinese standards however they seem very reasonable to Western people, especially to American citizens.

Below, you will find the addresses and contact details of some of the most highly regarded international hospitals in Beijing.

Beijing International SOS Clinic

Suite 105, Wing 1, Kunsha Building, No.16 Xinyuanli, Chaoyang District
Tel: 6462 9112

Beijing Vista Clinic

Kerry Centre Shopping Mall 3rd floor, Guanghua Road, Chaoyang District
Tel: 8529 6618

Oasis Hospital

No 9 Jiuxianqiao North Road, Chaoyang District,

Tel: 400 876 2747

United Family Hospital and Clinic
No 2 Jiangtai Lu, Chaoyang District
Tel: 5927 7000

Banks

Domestic Banks:

In Beijing, the expatriates could apply for the bank card (debit card) via the domestic bank like Bank of China, ICBC (Industrial & Commercial Bank of China), CCB (China Construction Bank) Etc. Please kindly check with your company the bank name if you need to open the bank account which the company will pay you salary with.



International Banks:

There also has different international banks could provide the personal service for the expatriate clients. The international banks are like HSBC, CitiBank, BEA, etc. The branches of the international banks are less than domestic banks, you could inform our consultant to assist for the visiting in advance.



Schools & Kindergartens

There is an abundance of quality international schools in Beijing to choose from:

Yew Chung International School of Beijing

Chinese name: 北京耀中国际学校

Address: Honglingjin Park, 5
Houbalizhuang

后八里庄5号红领巾公园

Tel: (8610) 8583 3731

<http://www.ycis-bj.com/en/admissions/school-fees>

Daystar Academy

Chinese Name: 启明星双语学校

Address: 2 Shunbai Lu
顺白路2号

Tel: (8610) 5603 9446

<http://www.daystarchina.cn/>

Hope International School

Address: 4 Xiedao Lüyou Dujiacun, 1
Xiedao Lu

蟹岛路1号蟹岛旅游度假村4号

Tel: (8610) 5225 3711 ext. 242

<http://www.hopeintlschool.org/>

House of Knowledge International Kindergarten

Address: Victoria Gardens, 15
Chaoyang Gongyuan Xilu

朝阳公园西路15号

Tel: (8610) 400 650 7747

<http://www.hokschoools.com/>

KindyROO International Early Development

Chinese name: 好思之家国际学校

Address: North gate of Quanfa Gardens, 18
Maquanying

亮马桥路21号枫花园汽车电影院内

Tel: (8610) 8457 4397

<http://hokschoools.com/contact-us/>

Western Academy of Beijing

Chinese name: 北京京西学校

Address: 10 Laiguangying Dongl
来广营东路10号

Tel: (8610) 5986 5588

<http://www.wab.edu/>

Beijing Collegiate Academy

Address: 10 Upper East Dongfeng Nanlu
东风南路上东10号

Tel: (8610) 5681-2555

<http://www.ccaschoools.cn/>

Saint Paul American School

18 Guan'aoyuan, Qinghe
清河宝盛里观澳园18号

Tel: (8610) 8070 3429

<http://www.stpaulamerican.org/>

Red Yellow Blue Kindergarten

Bldg 7 Zifang Yuan, Fangzhuang
Shidai
方庄时代紫芳园 7 号楼
Tel: (8610) 8764 3053
<http://www.ryb-baby.com/>

The Children's House

Address: 1/F, China World
Apartments North Lodge, 1
Jianguomenwai Dajie
建国门外大街 1 号国贸北公寓一
层
Tel: (8610) 6505 3869
<http://www.montessoribeijing.com>

Beijing City International School

Address: 11 Dongbai Jie
东柏街 11 号
Tel: (8610) 6770 0766
<http://www.bcis.cn/ecc>

The British School of Beijing

Chinese name: 北京英国学校
Address: 9 Anhua Jie Nanlu
安华街南路 9 号
Tel: (8610) 8047 3558
<http://www.britishschool.org.cn/>

Churches

While China is not a religious country, the government has allowed foreigners to hold church services under strict regulations. In Beijing there are 16 different church services that you could pick from. bicf.org (Beijing International Christian Fellowship) has plenty of information on them all. The Sunrise service or Celebration service, both held at the 21st Century Theatre, Lower Auditorium are a great place to start if you desire to attend a church. The services are non-denominational and are run mostly by volunteers. Passports are checked upon arrival in order to follow the rules of the government license. The services are welcoming and full of people from every nationality.



Shopping

Groceries

In Beijing, you can easily to buy the import food from supermarkets like Carrefour, Wal-Mart, BHG Market Place, foreign grocery stores like City Shop, Jenny Lou's, Jenny Wang, April Gourmet, Olive, Schindler's German Food Center. Jing Ke Long is the most famous Beijing supermarket chain with many locations throughout the city, patrons are primarily local Beijingers, you can find the more local food by cheaper price.



Local Market

The most famous local market is San Yuan Li Market, you can buy the fresh vegetable, fruits, sea food and all kinds of seasonings.



Specialty Shops

Besides the other shopping malls, there are also some specialty shops, like flower market (Lai Tai Flower Market), carpet shops (Ritan park), furniture markets (Lily's Antiques, IKEA), clothing market (Silk Market, Yashow Market), Hong Qiao "Pearl" Market, Pan Jia Yuan, electronics & Home Appliances shops (Dazhong, Gome, Sundan, Sunning). Please note, in some of the markets above, the bargaining is an absolute must.

You also can buy the items and other appliances from internet, like, www.taobao.com, www.jd.com.

Telecommunications

There are two common mobile phone providers in China which are China Mobile and China Unicom. China Mobile is said to be the best for coverage all over China. China Unicom has better 3G service.

China Mobile

There are three types of plan for China Mobile, the details is like below:

Plan	Flat Fee (Monthly Minimum)	Call Fee Local	Notes
Donggan Didai (M-Zone)	Minimum RMB 11/month, includes text plan	RMB 0.12-0.25 per min	Most popular pay-as-you go phone service in China. Very customizable and plan can be adjusted month-to-month
Shenzhouxing (Easy Own)	None	RMB 0.60/Min	RMB 3 eliminates roaming fees. RMB 10 gets 500min of incoming calls. RMB 20 gets unlimited incoming calls and local rates of RMB 0.25 per min.
Quanqitong (Go Tone)	RMB 50	RMB 0.40 per min	Monthly package of RMB 99-299 include local minutes, lower long-distance rates, and GPRS.

China Unicom

China Unicom also has different types of the plans, but most of the clients prefer to use the 3G packages in stead

Plan	Flat Fee (Monthly Minimum)	Call Fee Local	Notes
Xin Shikong (CDMA)	None	RMB 0.20-0.54 per min	
Shijie Feng (GSM/CDMA)	RMB 1.48 per day + RMB 10 per month	RMB 0.40 per min	Users can switch between CDMA and GSM
UP Xin Shili (GSM)	RMB 15-50 (includes 250-1,000 SMS)	RMB 0.25 per min	
Ruyi Tong (GSM)	Pay as you go; or RMB 80 or 200	400min (RMB 0.2/min) or 600min (RMB 0.13/min)	Pay as you go (with no flat fee): RMB 0.54 per min