



GUIDE TO LIVING AND WORKING IN

BEIJING

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Welcome to Beijing



Beijing– An Introduction

Beijing is the capital of China, the world's third most populous city proper, and most populous capital city. The city, located in northern China, is governed as a municipality under the direct administration of the central government with 16 urban, suburban, and rural districts. Beijing Municipality is surrounded by Hebei Province with the exception of neighboring Tianjin Municipality to the southeast; together, the three divisions form the Jingjinji metropolitan region and the national capital region of China.

Beijing is an important world capital and global power city, and one of the world's leading centers for politics, economy and business, finance, education, culture, innovation and technology, architecture, language, and diplomacy. A megacity, Beijing is the second largest Chinese city by urban population after Shanghai and is the nation's political, cultural, and educational center.

Combining both modern and traditional architecture, Beijing is one of the oldest cities in the world, with a rich history dating back three millennia. The city is renowned for its opulent palaces, temples, parks, gardens, tombs, walls and gates. It has seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites—the Forbidden City, Temple of Heaven, Summer Palace, Ming Tombs, Zhoukoudian, and parts of the Great Wall and the Grand Canal— all tourist locations. Siheyuans, the city's traditional housing style, and hutongs, the narrow alleys between siheyuans, are major tourist attractions and are common in urban Beijing.

Climate

Beijing has a monsoon-influenced humid continental climate, characterized by hot, humid summers due to the East Asian monsoon, and cold, windy, dry winters that reflect the influence of the vast Siberian anticyclone. Spring can bear witness to sandstorms blowing in from the Gobi Desert across the Mongolian steppe, accompanied by rapidly warming, but generally dry, conditions. Autumn, similar to spring, is a season of transition and minimal precipitation. The monthly daily average temperature in January is $-3.7\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ ($25.3\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$), while in July it is $26.2\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ ($79.2\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$). Rain averages around 570 mm (22 in) annually, with close to three-fourths of that total falling from June to August. With monthly percent possible sunshine ranging from 47% in July to 65% in January and February, the city receives 2,671 hours of bright sunshine annually.



Getting Around in Beijing

Beijing is a major hub for the national highway, expressway, railway, and high-speed rail networks. The Beijing Capital International Airport has been the second busiest in the world by passenger traffic since 2010, and, as of 2016, the city's subway network is the busiest and second longest in the world. The transport system, extending in all directions, provides people with convenient services. Travelers can enjoy fast transportation, the moment they arrive in Beijing.

As the capital of China, Beijing has an advanced train system. There are four commonly used train stations in the downtown area: Beijing Railway Station, Beijing West Railway Station, Beijing South Railway Station and Beijing North Railway Station. These railway stations offer cheap, safe and convenient trips, including domestic and international train routes.

Beijing owns dozens of long-distance bus stations. The city-buses can reach everywhere in Beijing. Generally, public buses run from 5:30 to 23:00 every day, but times may vary for different routes. The ticket is usually 1 RMB for a bus without air conditioning and 2 RMB for an air-conditioned bus. But during rush hour, when people come and go to work, buses can get crammed. Since September 2014, 34 night-bus lines have been operating and they run from 23:20 to 4:50. In addition, more than 20 different types of sightseeing buses help travelers to explore this great city.

Originally opened in 1971, the subway is the first choice for thousands of people to travel around in Beijing. It brings a cheap, fast and safe transport service. The subway system has been extended and improved over dozens of years and as of January 2017, there are 19 metro lines in operation. Also, several lines are still under construction. The subway reaches most areas of Beijing. Generally, the subway system runs from 5:00 to 23:26 every day, but times vary for the different metro lines. The lowest price is 3 RMB, while a longer distance trip will cost more. But the price of a ticket for the special Airport Express subway line is fixed at 25 RMB. Basically, to travel by metro is the most flexible and convenient way in Beijing.

Travel to and from Beijing

Beijing is home to three airports.

1. Beijing Capital International Airport (PEK) is one of the largest and busiest airports in the world and plays the main role in the air transportation of Beijing. It is located in Shunyi District, about 30 km northeast of the city center. There are international flights to major cities in other countries and domestic flights to every province in China. The flights to Tianjin were cancelled when the bullet trains came into use.



Tip: Airport shuttle buses run from Beijing Capital International Airport to Beijing Railway Station, Beijing West Railway Station, Xidan commercial district, Wangfujing shopping street, etc. The prices of the airport shuttle buses vary, depending on the place you get off, ranging from 20 to 30 RMB per person.

2. Nanyuan Airport (NAY) takes off some of the air transport pressure from Beijing Capital International Airport. It is the first airport in Fengtai District of Beijing. This airport is the base of China United Airlines Co. Ltd, with dozens of flights, for example to Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Chengdu, Chongqing, Sanya.



Tips: There are airport shuttle buses from every exit of Nanyuan Airport as well, with prices ranging from 15 to 24 RMB. Airport shuttle buses usually leave every 30 minutes, around the time when a flight arrives at the airport.

3. Beijing Daxing International Airport, the third airport, is being constructed and is scheduled to be completed in 2019. It will replace Nanyuan Airport.

Price conscious airlines currently flying into Beijing

- AirAsia(Asia, U.K., Middle East and Australia) www.airasia.com
- TigerAirway (Asia) www.fireflyz.co
- Scoot (Asia, Australia) www.flyscoot.com
- Air China (within China, Asia, Australia and the Pacific) www.airchina.com.cn
- Hainan Airlines (within China, Asia) www.hainanair.com

Shopping, Nightlife and Eating in Beijing

The metropolis of Beijing has several shopping districts offering a mind-boggling variety of goods. The traditional shopping districts have been always Wangfujing Street, Qianmen Street, Dongdan and Xidan Commercial Street but now it seems that Jianguomen Wai Street and Chaowai Street have risen to the top for the latest and most luxurious items. Shopping at outdoor markets remains not-to-be-missed experience for foreign travelers.

Cuisines from many different cultures and places assemble in Beijing, thus, thousands of restaurants with various dining choices are available in the capital city. And the best part is that you can splurge at a fancy restaurant or dine supremely well (any much more cheaply) at any of the smaller family-run operations located all over the city.

Although there are various cuisines in Beijing, the must-try food should be the Roast Duck, Imperial Cuisine Food and local street food. Visitors can go to Qianmen and Bianyifang to taste Peking Roast Duck and wander along the snack streets to try mouth-watering street food. Besides, they can also find a large number of great restaurants serving other Chinese cuisines and even foreign food.

Fancy street food and local snacks are a must in tasting the authentic flavor. These dishes emanate from many different cuisines, but the Chinese Muslim influence is the most apparent. There are probably 200 varieties of snacks and street food in Beijing. Most of them can be found at restaurants in the city, or in any of the night markets and snack streets, among which the Guojie Street, Wangfujing Snack Street, Guanganmen Food Street, Huguosi Hutong Snack Street, and Qianmen Food Streets are the most representative.

Beijing will not only ensure that you have a full and interesting day but will also present you with colorful choices for the nightlife. Traditional performances such as the Beijing Opera, acrobatic shows and dramatic performances in the teahouses are popular with the more mature visitors to the city, while the younger generation seems to favor the snack markets, pubs, clubs and cafes. For the stranger who wishes to become acquainted with the city, a stroll along Chang'an Street to Tian'anmen Square is highly recommended

For foreigners to experience Beijing nightlife, Tianqiao is a great choice! It's a place that cannot be omitted when considering the nightlife options for the old local people is the Tianqiao (Overbridge) Area. In actual fact it is not a bridge but a location popular for gathering to eat, drink and to enjoy the entertainments and amusements on offer there. Tianqiao has been a favorite venue for ordinary folk since the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). This area was also the cradle of Chinese folk culture and art where many original folk performances such as acrobatics and music were devised. The area has changed



somewhat over the centuries but the quality of the entertainment here continues to be of a high standard. Two of the most famous venues are the Tianqiao Theater and Tianqiaole Tea House (the name means Happy Overbridge) and it can be found at No.30 in Beiwei Rd, Xicheng District). The theatre specializes in modern song and dance performances while by contrast the teahouse offers the more traditional arts of Beijing Opera, Acrobatics, Martial Arts as well as folk songs. Visitors to China may be a little apprehensive about going to the opera but it is an experience not to be missed as the performances are really quite spectacular, including as they do music, dance, acrobatics and spectacular costumes.

Other places to explore Chinese folk culture include the Lao She Teahouse (3F, building 3, Xi Da Jie, Qianmen), where you can experience the famous Chinese tea culture and find a quiet place to relax and maybe do some reading. There is also the Liyuan Theater (inside Jianguo Hotel, Qianmen, at No. 175 in Yongan Lu) here there are nightly performances at 19:30 pm of genuine Beijing Opera and other folk performances. One need not be concerned about language difficulties with Chinese opera and drama as both make considerable use of mime. The opera often has subtitle boards displaying a translation. As a result they are quite easy to understand.

Chinese acrobatics have a long history and is one of the most popular art forms among Chinese people. Performers have achieved worldwide fame for their wonderful skills and marvelous acts. The Kung Fu shows, puppet shows, exotic ballet, opera, concert and modern drama are put on every day in this city.

We would highly recommend a leisurely stroll along the Chang'an Street to observe the scene as one of your nightlife choices. Maybe you would like to do this in style by hiring a rickshaw, what could be more in keeping with the ambiance than that? The street extends all the way to the Forbidden City and Tian'anmen Square. The palace complex in shadow has an ethereal beauty that is all its own and that is certain to evoke sentiments of the past glory, mystery and intrigue that was once Imperial China.

