

FACTS(ABOUT US)

1. Beijing is one of the oldest cities in the world.



The Forbidden City is one of the most important historical attractions in Beijing.

Beijing's history can be traced back **3,000 years**. It's about as old as London, six times older than New York, and ten times older than Sydney. The city retains **a wealth of historical sites**, such as the Great Wall and the Forbidden City.

Beijing is also one of **the oldest inhabited areas** in the world. Fossils indicate that Peking Man (*Homo erectus*) lived there from 770,000 to 230,000 years ago. The Peking Man World Heritage Site at Zhoukoudian is the place to see the fossils.

2. Beijing is a 6-times capital city.



The Tian'anmen Square

Beijing has been the capital to six notable Chinese governments. China has been ruled from Beijing for over 700 years, which is why there are so many historical sites to explore.

- 221 BC: Yan State Capital, Warring States Period
- 1271: first a national capital for the Yuan Dynasty
- 1402: Became Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) capital
- 1644: Qing Dynasty capital
- 1912: Republic of China capital
- October 1, 1949: People's Republic of China inaugurated by Mao Zedong

3. Beijing was not always called Beijing.

Before settling in on the name “Beijing” in 1403, the city had a series of names: Jicheng (‘City of Ji’), Yanjing (Capital of Yan’), Nanjing (‘Southern Capital’), Zhongdu (‘Central Capital’), Dadu (‘Great Capital’), Beiping (‘Central Peace’), etc. Beijing (‘Northern Capital’) was the 16th name given to the city.

See more on Beijing History.

4. Beijing is home to seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites



The Temple of Heaven

Beijing's long and rich history has left behind an abundant historic and cultural heritage, including seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites: the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, the Temple of Heaven, the Ming Tombs, Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian, and the Grand Canal.

Our Essence of Beijing tour covers four of them. Their magnificent and well-preserved architecture was constructed hundreds of years ago.

- The Great Wall is one of the greatest sights in the world - **the longest wall** in the world, an awe-inspiring feat of ancient defensive architecture.
- The Forbidden City is **the largest palace** in the world. It is also China's best-preserved imperial palace, and the essence and culmination of traditional Chinese architectural accomplishment.
- The Temple of Heaven is considered the most holy of Beijing's imperial temples.
- The Summer Palace is the **world's largest imperial garden**, where emperors spent their summers.

5. Beijing is a cultural hub of China.



A actress of Beijing opera is making up.

Thanks to its long history and deep cultural roots, Beijing has a **unique collection of architecture, arts, cuisine**, and other cultural facets.

A Beijing culture tour is not complete without imperial architecture, like the Forbidden City, and the narrow *hutong* lanes lined with traditional courtyard houses; performing arts like Beijing opera; and Beijing cuisine like roast duck. Glimpse the magnificence of Chinese culture through the lens of its capital.

6. Beijing is the second largest city in China.

Beijing Municipality has a population of almost 22.5 million (almost as many as Australia), in an area of 16,800 square kilometers (or 6,500 square miles). It is China's second largest city after Shanghai.

It's important to plan your time in Beijing well, as **the crowds and traffic congestion**, not to mention its sheer size, are big

challenges. A private tour can help make the most of your time and limit the hassle.

7. Beijing is the No. 1 China gateway city.

Beijing Capital International Airport is the **world's second busiest airport**, and it is most often used as the airport of entry to and exit from China.

The new 144-hour visa-free transit policy makes the city a more convenient travel destination. It allows travelers from 53 countries to enjoy a 6-day trip in Beijing without a visa.

From Beijing, it is easy to travel by plane or direct bullet train to most major China destinations. See more on [Beijing Transport](#).

8. The best times to visit are May or October.



Autumn in Beijing

Beijing is a city of extremes when it comes to its temperatures. The highest recorded temperature in Beijing is 42 °C (109 °F) while the lowest is -27 °C (-17 °F). This means the best times of the year to go are spring and fall. See [Beijing weather](#).

April, May, September, October and November are the most beautiful and comfortable months. If possible, try to [avoid national holidays](#) though, as tourist sights are very crowded on these days.

9. Beijing will be first to host both summer and winter Olympics.



The Bird's Nest

One of the biggest sights in the city is the Olympic Park, built for the Summer Olympics in 2008. China's National Stadium, or [The Bird's Nest](#), and National Aquatics Center, or The Water Cube, are outstanding engineering marvels. If you are interested in modern architecture, you should not miss them.

The city is currently preparing to host the Winter Olympics in 2022, with large investments in its many [skiing and winter sports resorts](#).

10. The air quality is getting better.

If you've only ever heard about Beijing's pollution on the news, you might be concerned about the air. However, the city has plenty of great air days, and the situation has improved a lot even in the last few years.

In fact, breathing Beijing's air for six average days is the equivalent of smoking just one cigarette: this is not bad for a large developing world city!

China Highlights will provide particulate masks if you do happen to stumble upon a bad air day. We are also flexible to change your itinerary, allowing you to go to the Great Wall when pollution in the city is bad, and see the Forbidden City when the air is better, for instance. See [What to Do on a Bad Air Quality Day in Beijing](#).



Discover Beijing at your own pace.

Discover Beijing with Local Experts

Due to Beijing's sheer size, if you've got time constraints, planning your trip well ahead of time is vital. We can [tailor your tour](#) to what you wish to see while you're in Beijing.

Here are some popular Beijing tour ideas for your inspiration:

- [VIP Beijing Essential Tour with Greak Wall Hiking at Mutianyu](#)
- [4-Day Emperor's Tour of Beijing](#)
- [Three-Day Beijing Discovery Tour](#)

You Might Like to Read

- [15 Interesting Forbidden City Facts You Didn't Know](#)
- [Beijing History - Strategic Location, Historic Capital, Major City](#)
- [8 Reasons You Should Visit Beijing in 2020](#)
- [How to Visit the Forbidden City - for Discerning Travelers](#)
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TOURISM(LIFESTYLE)

17 Top-Rated Tourist Attractions in Beijing

Written by Bryan Dearsley

Updated Mar 9, 2021

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Beijing, only eclipsed by Shanghai in terms of size, is not only the political center of China - a position it has held for more than 800 years - it also plays an important role in the nation's cultural, economic, scientific, and academic life. Located in the northwest of the North China Plain, not far from the western slopes of the Yanshan mountains, Beijing - still sometimes referred to as Peking - is a great place from which to explore this dynamic country due to its dense network of road, rail, and airline connections with other major cities.

Beijing itself has no shortage of unique sightseeing opportunities . It is home to some of the [country's best-known tourist attractions](#), including a section of the famous **Great Wall of China** at **Badaling Pass**. Among the city's many historical and cultural points of interest are the Imperial Palace, Beihai Park, Coal Hill Park, and the Heavenly Temple, most of them within the well-preserved historic city center.

Other things to do include exploring the mammoth Tiananmen Square, numerous important temples, the new construction brought about by the city's increased prosperity and major events such as the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

When you've had your fill of sightseeing, enjoy the city's great shopping and dining.

Plan your trip to the Far East with our list of the top tourist attractions in Beijing, China.

See also: [Where to Stay in Beijing](#)

Note: Some businesses may be temporarily closed due to recent global health and safety issues.

1. The Palace Museum and the Forbidden City



The Palace Museum and the Forbidden City

The Imperial Palace, also known as the Forbidden City, is China's most significant attraction and can trace its origins back to the Yuan Dynasty of the 13th century. Its immense size is the result of enlargements made during the Ming Dynasty between 1406 and 1420, after the capital was transferred here from Nanking.

All told, this beautiful palace has been home to 24 Ming and Qing Emperors, earning its nickname of the Forbidden City due to the fact ordinary citizens weren't allowed access. The complex covers 720,000 square meters, all of it

surrounded by a 10-meter-high wall with towers in the four corners and a 50-meter-wide moat. It's divided into an area used for ceremonial and administrative purposes, as well as the private quarters once used by the Emperor and his concubines.

Highlights include the Meridian Gate, built in 1420; the Golden River Bridges, a network of five richly decorated white marble bridges; and the Hall of Preserving Harmony, which functioned as the Emperor's banquet hall.

Other places to visit include the Palace of Heavenly Purity, the largest hall in the Inner Court, and the Hall of Military Courage, a permanent residence and private audience hall for the emperors. The impressive 35-meter-high Hall of Supreme Harmony is notable as the country's largest surviving wooden building and for its splendidly decorated gilded imperial throne.

Located just a short walk away from The Palace Museum stands the historic **Imperial College** (Guozijian). Founded in 1287 by Kublai Khan and only closed in 1900, this beautiful structure served as the country's national university, and often saw the Emperors of old visit to further their education and knowledge. The complex covers more than 10,000 square meters, much of which can be explored.

Address: 4 Jingshan Front Street, Dongcheng, Beijing

Official site: <https://en.dpm.org.cn>

2. The Great Wall of China



The Great Wall of China

Beijing is only an hour away from what is undoubtedly one of the country's most famous historic structures: the Great Wall of China. Here at Badaling Pass, the first part of the Wall to be opened to tourists in the 1950s, you can enjoy a walk along an impressive section of the Great Wall dating from the 16th century and standing up to eight meters high.

Along the way, you'll be able to enjoy numerous towers and parapets offering superb views over the surrounding dramatic scenery. While a hilly walk, you can in fact take a pleasant cable-car ride up to the wall.

This much-visited section of the Great Wall can get busy, so if possible try to plan your trip for an early arrival. Better still, consider signing up for a tour. The [Great Wall of China at Badaling and Ming Tombs Day Tour](#) offers great insight into the history and is an extremely easy way to visit this site.

Another popular spot to experience the Great Wall is Mutianyu, parts of which date back to the 6th century. Rebuilt and expanded over the centuries, it is becoming increasingly popular for its magnificent views, which are particularly beautiful during spring and autumn.

3. Tiananmen Square



Tian'anmen Square

Tiananmen Square (the Square of Heavenly Peace) is the world's largest inner-city square. Designed to hold a million people, it was built to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Chinese Republic in 1958. Considered the center of communist China, the square's symbolic importance dates back to May 4th, 1919, when students demonstrated against the Chinese provisions of the Treaty of Versailles.

Highlights of a visit include the **Monument to the People's Heroes** (Rénmín Yíngxióng Jìniànbēi), a 38-meter tall obelisk consisting of 17,000 pieces of granite and marble, and the splendid **Tiananmen Gate**, known as the Gate of Heavenly Peace. It was completed in 1417 and was once the main entrance to the Imperial City.

Another important gateway is **Zhengyangmen**, or Qianmen, the southernmost gate into Tiananmen Square. Tracing its roots back to the early 15th century and restored in the early 1900s, this imposing structure is considered one of the most important landmarks in the city.

Other features of note are the **Museum of the Chinese Revolution** with its exhibits illustrating the various stages of the Chinese revolution from 1919 and the development of the Communist Party, and the **Mausoleum of Mao Zedong**, where the body of Mao rests in a crystal sarcophagus.

Address: Dongcheng, Beijing

4. Beihai Park



Beihai Park

Just a short distance from the **Imperial Palace**, Beihai Park is one of the oldest surviving imperial gardens in Beijing. Laid out at the beginning of the 10th century, this beautiful open space takes its name from nearby Lake Beihai (North Lake) and offers many good reasons to visit.

Among the park's most important structures are the **Round Fort**, dating from the Yuan period of 1271-1368, and the spectacular **Hall of Enlightenment**. Built in 1690, the hall is home to a one-and-a-half-meter-tall Buddha carved from a single block of white jade, and a large black jade vase from the early 12th century.

Another notable feature is the opulent residence of Song Qingling in which the widow of the founder of the Republic, Sun Yat-sen, lived for 18 years until her death (it's now a museum). You'll also want to see the Living Quarters of Mei Lanfang (Mei Lanfang Guju), a famous male star of the Peking Opera who specialized in playing the role of a woman.

Also try to include the residence of Guo Moruo on your Beijing itinerary. It was here, in a home built in traditional Chinese courtyard style, that the famous writer and historian lived from 1963 until his death in 1978. Also include the beautiful 17th-century **White Pagoda** on the Island of **Exquisite Jade** on your list.

Address: 1 Wenjin St, Xicheng, Beijing

Official site: www.beihaipark.com.cn/english/index.html

5. The Temple of Heaven



The Temple of Heaven

The Temple of Heaven (Tiantán) dates back to 1420 and incorporates a group of some of Beijing's most sacred buildings. Surrounded by lush vegetation, these lovely old temples and shrines are set out in two sections - one rectangular; the other semi-circular - which together symbolize Heaven and Earth.

It was here that, on the day of the winter solstice, the Emperor would ascend the Heavenly Altar in solemn ceremony to pray for a good harvest and offer sacrifices in the brightly decorated Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests (Qinian Dian). Built in 1420, in customary Chinese fashion of wood and entirely without nails, the hall sits on a three-tier marble terrace with balustrades and a roof covered with 50,000 blue glazed tiles (a marble plaque on the floor represents the dragon and the phoenix stone, symbols of the emperor).

Another highlight is the Hall of the Vault of Heaven (Huangqiong Yu). Erected in 153, it boasts a blue-tiled conical roof and was used to store the ceremonial plaques of Heaven and the Officials. Be sure to also visit the temple's **Echo**

Wall, which echoes to even the quietest of voices, an effect exaggerated by three unusual echoing stones.

Address: 1 Tiantan E Road, Dongcheng Beijing

6. The Summer Palace



The Summer Palace

Located an easy 30-minute journey by car, bus, or taxi from the center of Beijing, the city's Summer Palace (Yíhé Yuán) is a must-visit. Dating back to the 12th century and more than 700 acres in size, it's a picture-perfect setting, which certainly befits its royal status, boasting a large 700-year-old man-made lake and beautiful gardens.

Often included on organized tours, top things to see here are the western-styled "Marble Ship" (Shifang), the Hall of Well-being and Longevity (Renshou Dian) with its elaborate throne, and the beautiful courtyard adjoining the Hall of Happiness and Longevity (Leshou Tang Hall). You'll also want to see the impressive 19th-century Great Theatre, where you can catch performances of traditional Chinese plays and music.

One of the more popular things to do, if time permits, is to take a ride aboard the small pleasure craft (kids love the dragon-themed vessels) that ferry tourists to one of the palace's temples, as well as a stroll past the traditional riverside shops on Suzhou Market Street.

Address: 19 Xinjiangongmen Road, Haidian District, Beijing

Official site: www.summerpalace-china.com/English/index.htm

7. Beijing National Stadium



Beijing National Stadium

Recognized the world over for its role in the spectacular Summer Olympics held in Beijing in 2008, the National Stadium (Guójia tiyùchǎng) - also affectionately nicknamed the Bird's Nest - is well worth a visit.

Built with a hefty price tag, this remarkable structure owes its unique design to the influences of traditional Chinese ceramics and has, since the Olympics, been used to host large cultural events and performances including opera, pop concerts, and football matches. In winter, it's turned into the world's largest manmade indoor ski slope. (English language and self-guided tours are available.)

Another nearby attraction is the **National Aquatics Center**. It's also known as the Water Cube for its attractive night-time display, which sees it lit up and looking like a giant ice-cube. In addition to being the site of Olympic swimming events, part of the building has been turned into the fun Watercube Waterpark.

Afterwards, be sure to stroll along the lovely Olympic Green. This pleasant parkland and green space will take you past many of the most significant buildings from the 2008 Olympics.

Address: 1 National Stadium S Road, Chaoyang

Official site: www.n-s.cn/enindex.jsp

8. The Lama Temple (Yonghe)



The Lama Temple

Also known as the Yonghe Temple, the Lama Temple is one of Beijing's most attractive and best-preserved temples. Completed in 1745, the building served a political purpose by giving Lamaism, the religion of the then just annexed Tibet, an official seat in the capital. It was built to generous proportions and equipped with many valuable works of art.

Its most important feature is the **Hall of the Kings of Heaven** (Tian Wang Dian) with its statue of Buddha surrounded by the four kings who are provided with symbolic objects (a toad, sword, snake, and shield). Also noteworthy is the statue of Weituo, the protector of Buddhism, holding an iron staff.

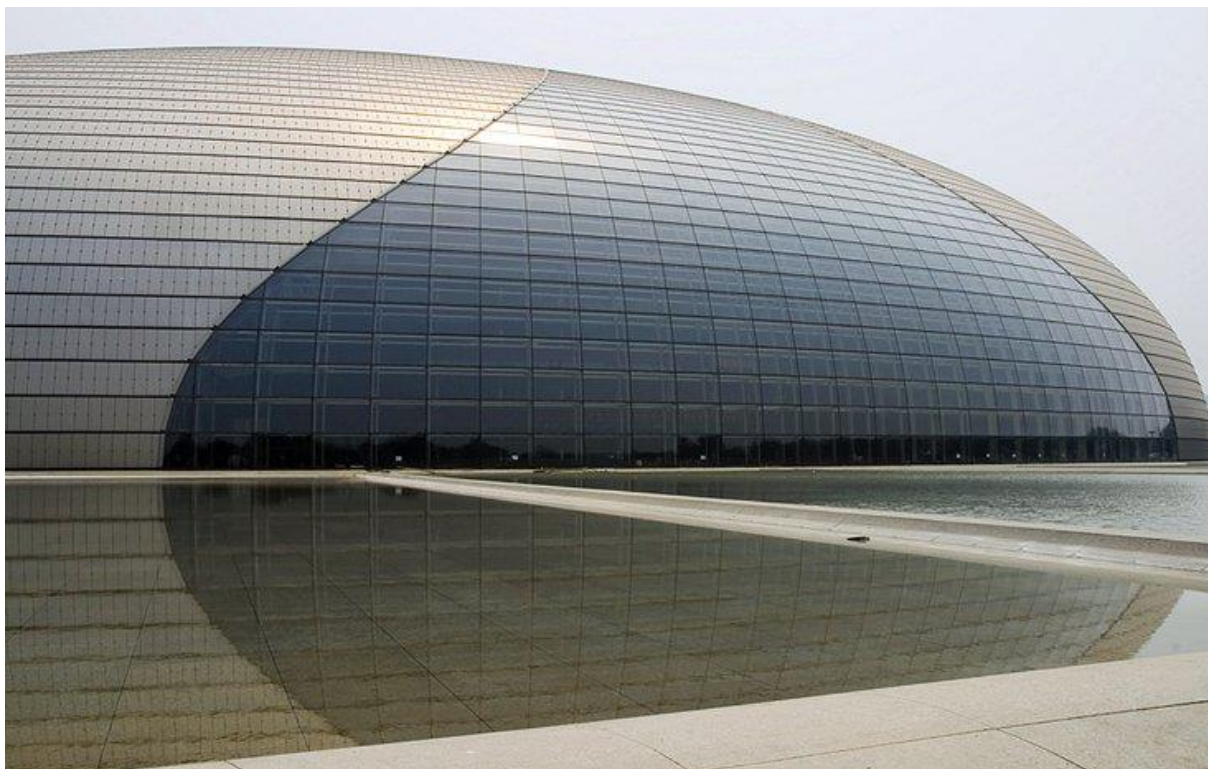
Other important buildings include the **Pavilion of the Four-tongued Stele** (Yubi Ting), which houses a stele dating back to 1792 that contains the history of the Lama religion written in Chinese, Manchurian, Tibetan, and

Mongolian; and the **Hall of the Buddhist Wheel** (Falun Dian), the teaching and assembly hall of the monastery, its interior dominated by a six-meter-tall statue, two thrones, and numerous sacred manuscripts.

Be sure to also see the largest building at the Lama Temple, the **Pavilion of Four Thousand Fortunes** (Wangfu Ge), with its enormous 18-meter-high sandalwood statue.

Address: 12 Yonghegong Street, Dongcheng, Beijing

9. Beijing Capital Museum & the National Centre for the Performing Arts



The National Centre for the Performing Arts

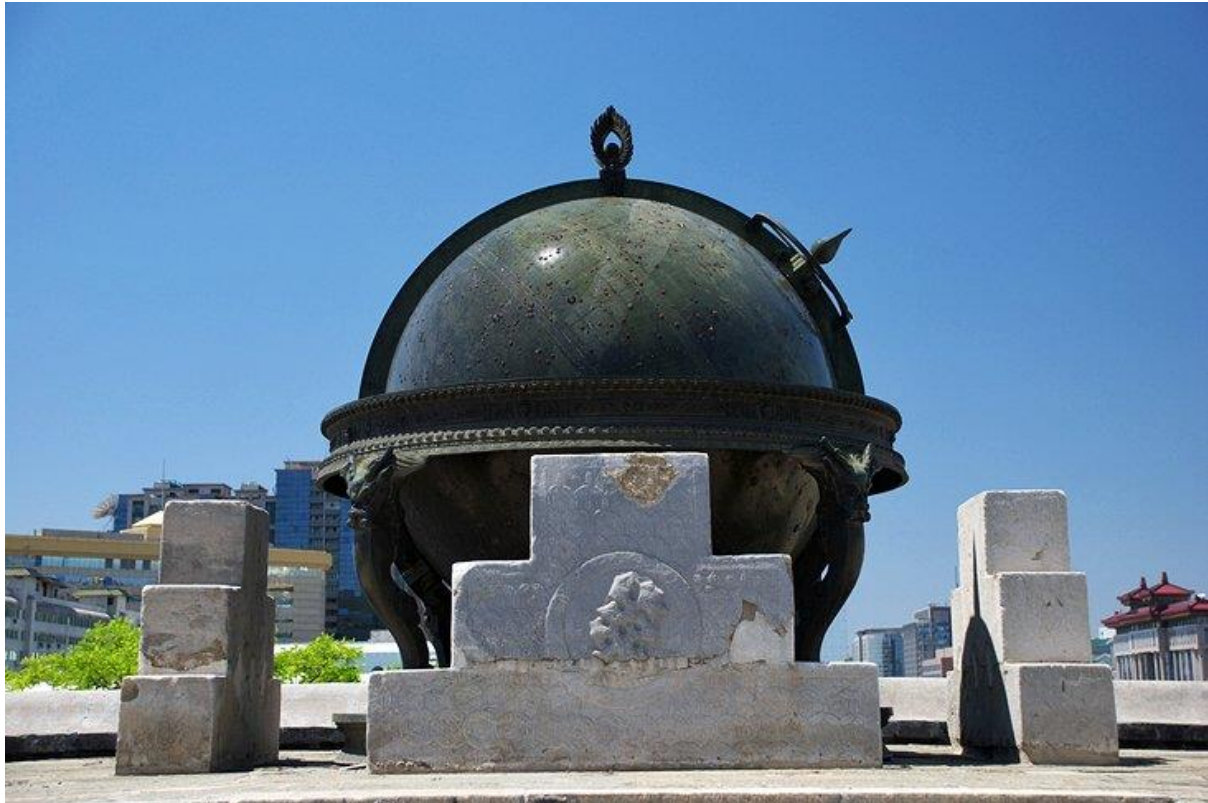
Arts and culture buffs are extremely well catered to in Beijing. Of particular interest is the excellent Beijing Capital Museum, one of the country's leading art museums. Opened in 1981, the museum boasts a vast collection of artifacts, including ancient items of porcelain and bronze, traditional calligraphy and artwork, along with many fine statues from Chinese and other Asian cultures.

Other highlights of its collection of more than 200,000 important cultural artifacts - many originating from in and around Beijing - include the huge stele of Emperor Qian Long, weighing more than 40 tons, standing nearly seven meters in height, and containing ancient scripts and writings.

Another modern Beijing landmark worth visiting is the **National Centre for the Performing Arts** (Guójia dà jùyuàn), also nicknamed the Giant Egg. Considered one of the best opera houses in Asia, the building opened in 2001 and has since hosted many of the world's leading operatic performers (it's particularly worth visiting if you're able to take in a performance).

Address: 16 Fuxingmen Outer St, Xicheng, Beijing

10. Beijing Ancient Observatory



Beijing Ancient Observatory

Completed in 1442, the fortress-like Beijing Ancient Observatory (Beijing Gu Guanxiàngtái) lies in the east of the city near the station quarter and was continuously in use right up until 1929. It is widely considered one of the oldest such observatories in the world.

Among the 10,000-square-meter facility's many fascinating old pre-telescopic instruments are a celestial globe dating from 1673 and an 18th-century armillary globe depicting the planets (at least those that were known at the time), along with a number of large bronze instruments designed by the Jesuit missionary Ferdinand Verbiest. Once part of the old city walls, this tall brick tower serves as a museum offering a glimpse into the surprising amount of knowledge of the stars and planets that existed at the time.

Address: 2 Dongbiaobei Hutong, Jian Wai Da Jie, Dongcheng, Beijing

11. The Fayuan Temple



The Fayuan Temple

Fayuan Temple (Fayuán Sì) - also known as the Source of Law Temple - dates back to the year AD 645 and consists of several halls where many ancient stone inscriptions are kept, the oldest dating from the 7th century. The temple has witnessed many of Beijing's most important historic events, including serving as a prison for Emperor Huizong in the 12th century, a place of examination for the highest offices of state, as well as a botanical gardens.

Today, the temple is a place of worship and the seat of the **Buddhist Academy**, the most important educational establishment in China. Other highlights include the bell and drum towers in the first courtyard; the **Hall of the Kings of Heaven** with its fine statues; the **Mahavira Hall** housing Buddhas of the present, past, and future represented in 18 Luohan figures; and, one of the temple's most precious objects, a Han Dynasty (AD 25-220) ceramic statue in the Dabianjue Tang Hall.

Another Buddhist site worth visiting is the **Zhihua Temple**. Dating from 1444, it's one of the most important original Ming period complexes in Beijing's old town. Of particular note is the two-story Tathagata Hall (Rulai Dian), named after its statue of the transcendental Buddha (it's also known as 10,000 Buddha Hall for the many small Buddha figurines adorning the walls).

Address: 7 Fayuansi Front St, Xicheng, Beijing

12. Coal Hill Park (Jingshan)



View from Coal Hill Park

Located directly opposite the North Gate of the Imperial Palace, Coal Hill Park (Jingshan) offers some of the best views in Beijing, particularly over **Beihai Park Lake** and the **Forbidden Palace**. Taking its name from the coal that was once stored here for the Ming Emperors, this largely man-made hill - one of just a handful in Beijing - was started around 1416 during the construction of the Imperial Palace.

After years of receiving rubble from the old city wall and large quantities of soil from excavation of the moat surrounding the palace, the once-low natural mound soared to its current height. A highlight of a visit, in addition to the many splendid gardens and walkways, is an old acacia tree from which the last Ming emperor was supposed to have hung himself in 1644.

Address: 44 Jingshan W St, Xicheng District, Beijing

13. The Beijing Temple of Confucius



The Beijing Temple of Confucius

A short walk from the **Lama Temple** in a pleasant side alley spanned by ornamental gates is the Beijing Temple of Confucius. Built in 1302, it's dedicated to the great philosopher and teacher, Confucius, whose teachings dominated public and private life for centuries.

One of China's best-known Confucius temples, the Beijing Temple once hosted many elaborate ceremonies honoring its namesake under the leadership of the emperor. The forecourt harbors 198 steles with inscriptions naming all 51,624 Confucian scholars who, after 1416, successfully passed the highest examinations of the state until abolished in 1904.

A highlight is the Hall of Great Achievements (Dacheng Dian). It's home to numerous shrines dedicated to Confucius, his students, and other Confucian philosophers, as well as many old musical instruments and other ritual items used in the celebrations, which take place on the large terrace in front of the hall.

Another religious site worth a visit for its fine exterior (non-Muslims aren't permitted to enter) is **Niu Jie Qingzhen Si Mosque**, built in AD 995. Beijing's oldest and largest mosque, it's in the Muslim quarter and includes a minaret, a six-cornered moon observatory tower, and two pavilions featuring numerous steles with Chinese and Arabic inscriptions.

Address: 15 Guozijian Street, Dongcheng, Beijing

14. Beijing Zoo



Pandas at the Beijing Zoo

Located in the northwest area of the city, the Beijing Zoo (Bei jing dòng wù yuán) covers an area of more than 220 acres and was established in 1906, making it one of the oldest zoos in China.

Boasting an impressive collection of close to 15,000 animals from 1,000 species - the largest in the country - the zoo includes many rare native species such as South China tigers, snow leopards, golden snub-nosed monkeys, and pandas, along with some not so rare, such as the red-crowned crane and Pere David's deer.

Species from across the world are also well represented and include elephants, lions, and jaguars, all spread around grounds that closely resemble classical Chinese gardens, complete with dense woods, meadows, rivers, streams, and ponds, along with a number of pleasant gazebos and terraces. The zoo also has a well-stocked aquarium.

Address: 137 Xizhimen Outer St, Xicheng, Beijing

15. The Old Summer Palace at Yuanmingyuan Park



The Old Summer Palace

Although now mostly just ruins, the Old Summer Palace (Yuanmingyuan) is located in Yuanmingyuan Park in northwestern Beijing and is well worth a visit. Once the imperial residence of the Qianlong Emperor, it was considered one of the most spectacular achievements of Chinese architecture and garden design when constructed in the 1700s, and was for a time known as the "Garden of Gardens."

Looted and destroyed by the British and French during the Second Opium War in 1860 - the palace was home to a vast and important collection of art and antiquities - it took hundreds of troops three days to burn and demolish the site.

These days, the grounds serve as a popular public park, and the old ruins are a delight to explore. To gain a picture of just how spectacular the old palace once was, be sure to pop into the small on-site museum with its reconstructions and models.

Official site: www.yuanmingyuanpark.cn/sy/english/PON/

16. 798 Art Zone



798 Art Zone

Also known as Dashanzi Art District, 798 Art Zone is a unique art community, and one of the more unusual things to do in Beijing. It grew up in and around a former military manufacturing complex in Beijing. Now dedicated entirely to more peaceful pursuits, these interesting old factories and warehouses are home to everything from galleries to studios and exhibition spaces hosting events dedicated to the arts.

It's a delightful area to explore, with at every turn some interesting (and sometimes challenging) art on display (or performed) by artists from across China and from around the world. While still very much a hub of artistic endeavors, in recent years 798 Art Zone has also become increasingly gentrified, and is now as much a draw for its hip shopping opportunities - there's everything here from book stores and galleries to designer fashion boutiques - along with great cafés and restaurants.

Address: 2 Jiuxianqiao Road, Chaoyang, Beijing

17. National Museum of China



National Museum of China

Occupying a large chunk of the east section of Tiananmen Square, the impressive National Museum of China is the second most visited art museum in the world after the [Louvre in Paris](#) (and also one of the largest).

Opened in 2003 and completely renovated in 2011, the museum serves as a place of education regarding the country's rich history, with a particular focus on exhibits related to culture and art. Expect to spend many an hour here as there is so much to see in each of the museum's 48 exhibition halls.

Particularly interesting among the museum's more than one million artifacts is the huge Simuwu Ding, the world's heaviest ancient bronzeware, as well as collections of rare gold, jade, and ceramic artifacts from various dynasties through the ages. Other interesting exhibits deal with the first human settlements in the country, as well as the founding of the communist state.

If you're planning a lengthy visit, note there's a café and teahouse serving refreshments. Also, a strict "no-selfie stick" policy is in place, so if you have one, be prepared to leave it back at your hotel or at the coat check.

Address: 16 E Chang'an Ave, Dongcheng, Beijing

Official site: <http://en.chnmuseum.cn>

Where to Stay in Beijing for Sightseeing

Luxury Hotels:

- For those unconcerned about price, you can't do much better than to book a stay at the luxurious [Four Seasons Hotel Beijing](#). This elegant five-star luxury hotel offers a variety of well-appointed rooms and suites boasting stylish decor, as well as amenities including multiple restaurants and a deluxe spa.
- Another well-regarded luxury option is the exquisite [Waldorf Astoria Beijing](#), popular for its central location, sizable bedrooms, and even larger suites, along with amenities including a fitness center, hot-tub, and indoor swimming pool.
- Also worthy of consideration is the all-suite [The Peninsula Beijing](#), a five-star hotel boasting spacious accommodations with separate living and sleeping areas, all decorated with delightful Chinese themes.

Mid-Range Hotels:

- The [Renaissance Beijing Capital Hotel](#) is a popular mid-range high-rise hotel, which features a pleasant contemporary design, rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows, along with multiple restaurants, an indoor pool, and a sauna.
- [Shichahai Shadow Art Performance Hotel](#) is another great option in this price category and features pleasant Chinese-themed public spaces; a variety of room sizes, from cozy singles to spacious family suites; and many amenities, including a café and concierge service (and yes, free shadow puppet shows, too).
- If you're looking for a great place to stay near the historic Huguosi Hutong area, the [Sofu Hotel](#) is an excellent choice and comes with modern, comfortable rooms and lounges all just a short stroll from great shopping and dining.

Budget Hotels:

- The wonderfully named [Double Happiness Beijing Courtyard Hotel](#) is a pleasant three-star affair, which boasts outstanding staff and an authentic Chinese feel, along with traditional-styled furniture in its rooms, some of which overlook a leafy courtyard.
- Also popular in the budget hotel category, the [Nostalgia Hotel Beijing Xidan](#) is just a short walk from the city's metro and, as its name suggests, comes with a fun nostalgic feel and vintage décor.
- A great option for younger couples and friends traveling together is the [Beijing Downtown Travelotel](#), which offers clean, comfortable accommodations along with a variety of tour options, all just steps away from the Imperial City.

Tips and Tours: How to Make the Most of Your Visit to Beijing

Beijing in a Day:

If you're only able to allocate a day to exploring Beijing's top attractions, you may wish to secure the services of a qualified professional to take care of all the planning and show you around. [Private custom tours including the best of Beijing](#) are a great option, and can get you around such must-see sights as the Imperial Palace and Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, and - perhaps the most important part of your adventure - a visit to the Great Wall of China. Expect a busy eight-hour day, but your private English-speaking guide can easily adapt the tour to take in the things you most want to see. (Includes hotel pickup and drop-off.)

A Great Day at the Great Wall:

- If you're in Beijing long enough to be able to explore the city's many attractions at a more leisurely pace, be sure to allocate time for a trip to the [Great Wall of China at Badaling and the Ming Tombs](#). A full-day tour accompanied by a guide will enable you to get the most from your time spent climbing the most-visited section of the Wall at the beautiful Badaling Pass, while learning a great deal of its history along the way. The amazing Ming Tombs are also included, the most dramatic being the beautiful Chang Ling Tomb. Other features of this day-long adventure: a traditional Chinese lunch, transportation, and hotel pickup and drop-off.
- If you've only got time for the Great Wall part of the journey, you may want to consider a [Mutianyu Tour](#). The oldest part of the Great Wall, this section dates back to the 6th century and is home to some of the most dramatic scenery. In addition to the services of an English-speaking guide, you'll enjoy an authentic lunch, transportation, and hotel pickup and drop-off.

Natural Sites Heritages

7 not-to-be-missed UNESCO sites in Beijing



UNESCO World Heritage Centre annually selects places of special cultural or physical significance with universal value to humanity by putting them on the World Heritage List aimed at protecting them for future generations to see, touch and appreciate.

Beijing is a city with a total of 7 heritage sites listed in the UNESCO List. This is evidence of Beijing's splendid culture and long history, an important part of the total 55 UNESCO sites in China, making Beijing one of the most visited destinations in China.

Planning your [Beijing tour](#)? Interested in knowing which are the 7 UNESCO sites in Beijing? Here is the list of the 7 UNESCO sites in Beijing.

1.Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian 周口店北京猿人遗址

Located 42 km south-west of Beijing, Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian is home to the remains of *Sinanthropus pekinensis*, who lived in the Middle Pleistocene and remains of *Homo sapiens sapiens* dating back to 18,000–11,000 B.C along with various objects.

The site is an essential reminder of the prehistorical human societies of the Asian continent, an testament to the process of evolution. It was added to the UNESCO List in 1987.



Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian

The site was discovered and explored in 1921 by the Swedish geologist J. G. Anderson. In 1926, a cave of hominid teeth and a whole skull were explored by the Chinese archaeologist Pei Wen Zhong.

Later Some 100,000 objects, including rough chipped stone tools, heat-affected stones, burnt bones, ash deposits, etc., as well as fossilized grains, were found.

Admission:	30			Yuan
Add:	Zhoukoudian,	Fangshan	District,	Beijing
Opening	hours:	8:30	a.m	– 4:40 p.m.(all year round)
Beijing	Day	Tour	with Peking	Man Site
How	to			get there

Public bus: Take Bus 917 from Tianqiao Bus Terminal and get off at Fangshan (房山), then change for the local bus 38 and alight at the site of Peking Men.

2. Great Wall of China 长城

The original section of the Great Wall of China goes back as early as 220 B.C., under China's first Emperor Qin Shi Huang, who ordered the construction of the sections of earlier fortifications.

Later the fortifications were joined together to form a united defence project against invasions from the nomadic north. The Construction went on till the Ming dynasty (1368–1644).

The total 22,000 km long Great Wall of China was included as the site of UNESO Cultural Heritage in 1987 for its superb military architecture, technology and art of ancient China. Check out [How to Visit Great Wall of China](#).



Great Wall of China

The Great Wall around Beijing is an essential part of the Great Wall of China, mostly built in the Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644), and The most powerful Yuan Dynasty (1271 A.D – 1368 A.D) and the last Qing Dynasty (1644 A.D – 1911 A.D) did nothing about the building of the Great Wall since they were “barbarians” against whom the Great Wall of China had been built, supposed to keep them from invading and looting.

Now having a Great Wall Tour has become a must for visitors coming to Beijing for the first time. If you visit the Great Wall for the first time, basically you need to plan ahead to know when to visit, which section to visit and how to visit. You can either travel independently doing all the researching on your own or turn to a local travel agency.

3. Forbidden City 故宫

Located in the heart of Beijing, the north of Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City was the Chinese imperial palace from the Ming dynasty to the end of the Qing dynasty (1368 – 1911), home to 14 Ming and 10 Qing emperors over the following 505 years.

The Forbidden City, now known as the Palace Museum has about 1000 rooms and landscaped gardens, a priceless testament to Chinese civilization during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

It was declared UNESCO Heritage site in 1987 for its masterpieces in the development of imperial palace architecture in China.



Forbidden City

Note: Monday is still open during Chinese Public Holidays
April 1st – October 31 (8:30 – 17:00) Admission: 6 Yuan
Last Entry at 16:10

Tickets sold until 16:00

November 1st – March 31 (8:30 – 16:30) Admission: 40 yuan
Last Entry at 15:40

Tickets sold until 15:30

By Subway (to south gate): Take Line 1 and get off at Tian'an men East or Tian'an men West
Check [Forbidden City Travel Tips for more information](#).

4. Summer Palace 颐和园

Located 10km in the northwest of Beijing, Summer Palace was once the largest imperial garden in Beijing. It is a vast expanse of lakes, gardens and palaces dominated by Longevity Hill and the Kunming Lake.

It was originally built in 1750, largely destroyed in the war of 1860 and restored on its original foundations in 1886.

It was inscribed as UNESCO Heritage site in 1998 for its masterpiece of Chinese landscape garden design, a harmonious ensemble of outstanding aesthetic value.
Check [How to Visit Summer Palace for more information](#).



Summer Palace

High Season (From April 1 to Oct. 31) Admission: 30 Yuan
Open: 6:30
Tickets stop selling at 18:00;
Close: 20:00

Low Season (From Nov. 1 to Mar. 31 next year) Admission: 20 Yuan
Open: 7:00
Tickets stop selling at 17:00;
Close: 19 : 00

How to get to Summer Palace by subway

1. Subway Line 4:
Take subway line 4 to the northwest direction and get off at the last but one of Beigongmen (北宫门) and exit from Exit D and walk to the west, soon you will see the north gate (Beigongmen Gate) to Summer Palace 颐和园 (entrance fee:RMB30) on your left side.

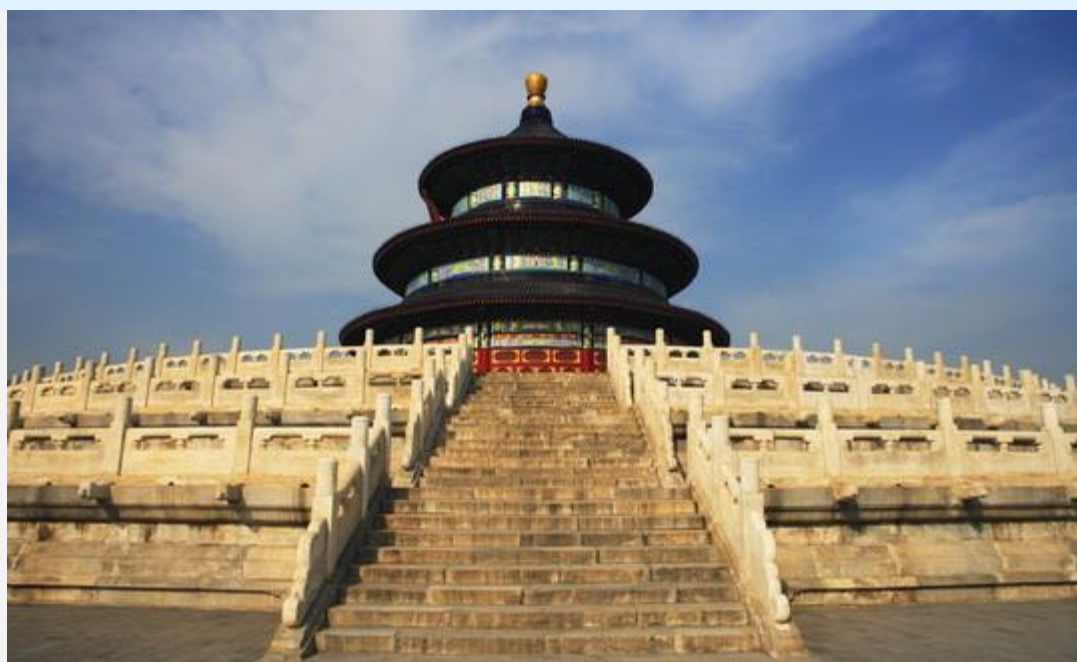
2. Subway Line 10
Take subway line 10 to Bagou station at the end of Line 10, and then get a taxi from outside the station to the New Palace Gate (新建宫门). Or you may just walk for about 1.5km from Bagou Station to the New Palace Gate.

Get off Bagou Station, follow your nose, you will meet a river, then turn right and walk along the river bank till the New Palace Gate of Summer Palace. If confused upon which way to go upon leaving the subway, just follow the crowd.

5. Temple of Heaven 天坛

The Temple of Heaven (Tiantan) is located in the southeast of central Beijing. It was an imperial Sacrificial Altar in Beijing visited by the emperors in Ming and Qing dynasties for praying for good harvest annually.

It was originally built from 1406 to 1420 during the reign of the Yongle Emperor, who had the construction of the Forbidden City in Beijing. Check [How to Visit Temple of Heaven for more information](#).



Temple of Heaven

It is an ensemble of religious buildings and landscape gardens. The Temple of Heaven was listed as UNESCO World Heritage in 1998 for its masterpiece of architecture and landscape design which simply and graphically illustrates a cosmogony of great importance for the evolution of one of the world's great civilizations.

Gate : 6 : 00-22 : 00

The	main	buildings	inside	the	park
From	March	1	to	June	30 : 8 : 00 - 17 : 30
From	July	1	to	October	31 : 8 : - 18 : 00
From	November	1	to	February	28 : 8 : 00 - 17 : 00
Entrance	Fee:	15 yuan	(high season)	and	15 yuan (low season)

Kindly reminder: Through tickets selling is stopped at 16:00

Get to Temple of Heaven by subway: Take subway line 5 and get off at East Temple of Heaven Station (Tiantan Dongmen Station) and take exit A. The East Gate entrance is right there. For the public buses to the east gate, you may try bus 6, 35, 36, 39, 41, 43.

6. Ming Tombs 明十三陵

Located around 43km northwest of central Beijing, the Ming tombs are a group of mausoleums built in Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644). The Ming Tombs in Beijing are collectively known as the Thirteen Tombs of the Ming Dynasty since there are totally thirteen Ming emperors buried here.



Dingling (One of the Mng Tombs)

After the construction of the Imperial Palace (Forbidden City) in 1420, the Yongle Emperor, the third emperor in Ming Dynasty started to chooset his burial site and built his own mausoleum.

His successive emperors had their tombs in the same place. The site of Ming Tombs is added to UNESCO World Heritage in 2003 for their cultural and architectural tradition and their integration into the natural environment. Check out [How to Visit the Ming Tombs](#) for more information.

Entrance	Fees:
Changling Tomb: RMB 30 (November.01 – March. 31); RMB 45 (April. 01 – October. 31)	Dingling Tomb: RMB 40 (November.01 – March. 31); RMB 60 (April. 01 – October. 31)
Zhaoling Tombe: RMB 20 (November.01 – Machr. 31); RMB 30 (April. 01 – Oct. 31)	
Sacred Way:	RMB 20/30)

Opening Hours:
Changling Tomb: 08:30 – 17:30 Dingling Tomb: 08:30 – 18:00 Zhaoling Tomb 8:30 – 17:30
Sacred Way: 8:30 – 18:00
Tickets stop selling about half a hours before the tombs are closed
How to get to Dingling Tomb: Take the Bus 872 from Deshengmen Bus Terminal

7. Grand Canal 大运河
The Grand Canal Hangzhou is the final section of the Grand Canal (China), also known as Beijing - Hangzhou (Jinghang) Grand Canal.

It is oft-lauded as the earliest and longest artificial waterway in the world starting from Beijing in the north and ending at Hangzhou in the south for a total length of 1776 km. It is the world's largest and most extensive civil engineering project prior to the Industrial Revolution.

FESTIVALS OR EVENTS

1. Chinese New Year



Chinese New Year decorations

Chinese New Year, also known as Spring Festival or *Chunjie* in Chinese, is the biggest holiday throughout China and celebrated on the first day of the lunar calendar (usually between January 21 and February 20).

It is also a prime time to visit Beijing and experience the local culture, with traditional visits to temples, celebrations in bars and at festivals, and a lot of Temple Fairs throughout Beijing. The Temple Fairs are wonderful places to visit to learn about Chinese New Year and Chinese culture in general. And then we haven't even mentioned all the fireworks throughout Beijing!

[More about Chinese New Year](#)

2. Christmas in Beijing



Christmas in Beijing

Christmas in Beijing is an interesting option, as nothing closes and nothing shuts down. However, as a result of globalization there are plenty of things to do to get into the Christmas spirit, especially at Beijing's big hotels, international schools and Western shops and restaurants.

[More about Christmas in Beijing](#)

3. Beijing Mid-Autumn Festival

Mid-Autumn Festival, generally celebrated in September, is a moon worshipping festival which includes the offering of mooncakes and sometimes fruits, and watching the moon.



Mid-Autumn Festival

During the Mid-Autumn Festival, peaches and pomegranates are laid out with chestnuts and persimmons symbolizing big families and prosperity.

The best way to celebrate Mid-Autumn Festival in Beijing is at a temple fair at the Marco Polo bridge, from the CCTV Tower, or from one of the many lakes and parks which have a clear view of the sky.

[More about Beijing Mid-Autumn Festival](#)

4. Dragon Boat Festival



Zongzi dumplings

Dragon Boat Festival usually happens in June, and although on the decline in modern times, still has some exciting traditions to experience. For example, there is dragon boat racing, which is now also an international sport.

In terms of traditional Dragon Boat Festival food, there are *zongzi*. These are millet flour dumplings wrapped in wild rice leaves in the shape of ox horns, cooked in bamboo. People in the south of China eat mostly savory *zongzi*, but in Beijing they are usually sweet.

More about Dragon Boat Festival

5.Red Leaf Festival at Fragrant Hill



Fragrant Hill

Red Leaf Festival is celebrated at different times at different parts of Fragrant Hill, as the leaves turn red. At Jingcui Lake, you're best off watching between October 25 and November 9, while at Fragrant Hill Temple, you will catch the leaves between October 18 and November 2. The leaves at Heshun Gate turn even later, around October 25 and November 9.

As the hill gets really busy in this season, you are advised to visit on a weekday rather than during the weekends.

More about the Red Leaf Festival at Fragrant Hill

6. Huangyaguan Great Wall Marathon



The Huangyaguan Great Wall Section

The Huangyaguan Great Wall Marathon usually happens in May, and is a marathon that is run on the Great Wall, making it a one of a kind marathon. A quarter of the 42.2 kilometer race is run on the wall, and racers have to climb 3,700 steps. The course is unusually difficult and has been said to be brutal, but the sights are gorgeous and it is a one-off experience.

More about the [Huangyaguan Great Wall Marathon](#)

7. Beijing Chrysanthemum Exhibition

Every fall, you can enjoy one of Beijing's four traditional flowers in full bloom. You'll be able to see them, as well as buy them, in parks throughout the city. The most famous locations to do so are Beihai Park and the International Flower Port, which is further out of the city but can be reached by subway on Line 15.

More about the [Beijing Chrysanthemum Exhibition](#)

8. 798 Art Festival



798 Art District

Beijing's 798 Art Zone, as one of China's main centers for cutting edge contemporary art, is located in the northeast of the country, on Jiuxianqiao Road in Chaoyang District. It has Beijing's highest concentration of art galleries, and makes for a great day out, especially during the 798 Art Festival which happens every year in September.

More about [798 Art Festival](#)

9. Golden Week

China's Golden Week is the biggest week for tourism in China, as it is the second national week-long holiday (apart from Chinese New Year). It is usually fixed at October 1–7, and makes Beijing really busy with domestic tourists.



National Day

If you are in Beijing on this day, the best thing to do is to watch the National Day Flag Raising Ceremony, and experience Chinese patriotism at the core.

More about [Golden Week](#)

10. International Long-Distance Running Festival

On a date yet to be confirmed in April in 2017, the Beijing international Long-Distance Running Festival will take place.



International Long-Distance Running

Festival

It is one of the biggest sport events in the city, with a 57-year long history. As of 2014, the maximum number of entrants has been set at 18,000.

More about [the International Long-Distance Running Festival](#)

Tours Full of Tradition

If you plan to add one of the festivals to your tour, contact us and let us [customize a tour](#) for you to include a festival.

1. Fragrant Hills

[Fragrant Hills Park](#) is most famous for the red colored leaves that cover the hillsides in autumn, an event now seemingly fixed in the Beijing calendar. However, with so much to see, XiangShan Park is a wonderful day out throughout the year. [>>More](#)



2. Longqing Gorge

Beijing Longqing Gorge has been hailed as the “Little Li River” scenery. Travelling in Longqing Gorge on boat, you will seem like seeing a long landscape painting. The beautiful scenery comes to you and you are travelling in a painting.

3. Fenghuangling Scenic Spots

Fenghuangling is a natural scenic spot in the Haidian district, about 33 km from downtown Beijing. Covering an area about 15.33 square kilometers, the park boasts beautiful natural scenery and historical relics. It is reputed as the Small Yellow Mountain. this park is regarded as a green lung for the capital city, boasting of a well-conserved ecological environment: green hills, clear water, blue sky, white clouds, rolling ridges, thick forests, winding trails, exotic flowers and rare trees. While water in the park is superb in quality, air is fresh, being five times purer and containing 150-fold more anions than in the downtown area. In summer, the main temperature is 2-3 degrees lower than in the urban area and the relative air humidity is 65 percent.

4. Black Dragon Pool

Black Dragon Pool is a popular summer resort located in Miyun County about 93 kilometers northeast of Beijing. Lying itself in a 220-meter high, 4-kilometer long valley, which is commonly called Gulu Valley. There are three waterfalls and eighteen pools in the valley. It is always appraised as being fresh, astonishing and steep. It is an erosion-type pool scenic spot formed by streams flowing in the valleys, also called Wheel Valley, it is winding and twisting, with steep cliffs on both sides.

5. Jingdong Canyon

Located 85km east of Beijing downtown, Jingdong Canyon has a wonderful landscape which contains lakes, rivers and valleys. Inside the canyon are numerous caves, deep pools, craggy peaks, splashing waterfalls, and an enormous reservoir.

6. Baiwangshan Forest Park

Baiwangshan is the closest forest park to the center of the city, just 3 kilometers northwest of the Summer Palace. With an area of about 2 square kilometers, the park is covered with thick forest and flourishing shrubs. In the spring, the park is beautifully decorated with splendid green foliage.

7. Shidu Scenic Area

The scenic area has the largest and most typical Karst valleys in north China and is the closest scenic spot of its kind to Beijing. Renowned as Green Mountains and River, Hundred Li Art Gallery, it has twelve geological landscapes such as the Flying Rock, Chinese character Buddha in the Dragon Mountain, Rock in a Rock and more. The Juma River winds its way across the mountains like a jade belt, and sets off the peaks.

8. Stone Flower Cave (Shihua Cave)

The cave is multi-storeys and consists of seven layers. Layers 1 to 6 are dry and layer 7 is submerged in underground river. Layers 1 to 4 is open to public at present and the sight-seeing route is more than 2,500m long. The sediments in the cave are complete in variety. changeable types of tufa were generated by infiltration, dripping, flowing, stagnating and splashing and there are over 40 kinds of travertine forms.



9. Miaofeng Mountain

Miaofeng Mountain, with its towering peaks rising majestically to a height of more than 1,300 meters, is the major peak in the northern range of the Western Hills. Situated at a distance of about 70 kilometers from downtown areas, its sheer cliffs, jutting crags and tortuous mountain paths make it one of the most renowned scenic spots in northern China.

10. Jiufeng National Forest Park