# The Best Time to Visit Beijing

The best times to visit [Beijing](https://www.tripsavvy.com/what-to-see-do-in-beijing-1495535) are in September and May. During these months, temperatures and crowds are moderate. September usually boasts the lowest pollution rates of the year and Mid-Autumn Festival (lunar calendar-dependent). May also has low pollution rates, beautiful spring blooms, and no major holidays attracting a sea of local tourists.

Each time of the year in Beijing will present a particular glimpse into its famous climate, pollution, and cultural heritage. Landmarks, like [the Great Wall](https://www.tripsavvy.com/visitors-guide-great-wall-of-china-1495525), are open year-round, and a never-ending flow of events ensure a good time whenever you can make it to the city.

## Popular Events and Festivals

Many traditional Chinese holidays are based around the lunar calendar, while newer ones follow the Gregorian calendar. Be sure to check the date for lunar calendar-based celebrations, as they change yearly.

The largest festival and most important holiday is Chinese New Year. You can see dragon dances, fireworks, attend a temple fair, and even receive *hongbao* (red money packets). The winter also boasts ice and snow festivals with fantastical lit up sculptures.

Important cultural festivals in the warmer months include Dragon Boat Festival in the summer, complete with boat races and sticky rice packets, and Mid-Autumn Festival in the fall, full of mooncakes and more temple fairs. Another massive holiday is the National Holiday or “Golden Week,” during the first week of October, which celebrates the founding of the People’s Republic of China.

## The Weather in Beijing

Beijing ranges from icy temperatures (going as low as 15 degrees F in the winter months) to the sweltering (reaching up to 87 degrees F in summer).1 In addition to the weather, you should also consider [pollution levels](https://air.plumelabs.com/air-quality-in-beijing-7CB8) when traveling.

Winter brings snow, ice sports, and the worst pollution levels of the year. Spring starts to get warmer (though initially, temperatures can be as low as 45 degrees F), with lots of flowers and intense dust storms. If possible, go later in the season (May or June) when pollution levels are more moderate and temperatures range from the mid-50s to mid-80s F.

Summer temps reach the high 80s F and accompany intense rainfall in July and August. However, for the most pleasant temperatures mixed with the lowest pollution levels of the year, the fall months of October and September are the sweet spot for when to visit. Temps stay below the 80s F, rainfall is low, and dust storms are unlikely.

## Peak Season in Beijing

The peak season in Beijing is from April to October. Airfare and hotel prices rise in the months of July and August when many foreign tourists visit the city. During the National Holiday in October, plane tickets and hotel prices can triple their average rates.

If you are traveling to Beijing right before, during, or after the Chinese New Year, do not plan on going to other cities during this time. Train tickets will be nearly impossible to buy due to Chinese nationals returning home to see their families.

Any time there is an extended holiday, domestic travel will be high. Generally, businesses and schools tack on extra workdays before or after a holiday to give workers and students more consecutive days off during the holiday itself. Take this into consideration when planning, as a weekend when locals are working can be an excellent time to travel out of Beijing.

## January

Winter in Beijing is cold and dry with low hotel rates, except during Chinese New Year. This lands in either January or February, depending on the lunar calendar that year. Many restaurants and businesses might have shortened hours during this time. Popular tourist sites such as the Great Wall, Summer Palace, and Forbidden City, remain open and Chinese New Year can be an optimal time to visit, as most Beijing residents will be traveling or at home with their families.

Events to check out:

* To celebrate Chinese New Year, head to a temple fair, or watch the largest variety show in China, CCTV’s Chunwan. If you’re lucky and get invited to spend it with a local family, you’ll experience gift giving and a holiday feast which can include: spring rolls, dumplings, noodles, steamed fish, and duck.

## February

Though Chinese New Year can occur in February, the rest of the month can be fairly calm with few events, freezing weather, low hotel rates, and few tourists.

Events to check out:

* Head to one of the festivals celebrating the winter weather, like the [Longqing Gorge Ice and Snow Festival.](https://www.chinahighlights.com/festivals/longqing-gorge-ice-and-snow-festival.htm)

## March

With the spring comes a hike in temperatures in Beijing, a slight rise in hotel rates, sunny days, and dust storms. Be aware of heightened security (and traffic), if you visit during the Two Sessions Meeting, the most essential government meeting of the year.

Events to check out:

* The first China Fashion Week of the year happens each March with international and domestic designers coming to Beijing to showcase their style.

## April

Trees come into full bloom (look out for allergens) and days are windy and sunny. Evenings are cool, and people spend time outdoors in Beijing’s many parks such as Beihai Park or the Beijing Arboretum.

Events to check out:

* [Qingming Festival](https://www.chinahighlights.com/festivals/qingming-festival.htm) happens on April 4 or 5 and commemorates deceased ancestors. Standard practices include flying kites and burning fake money for ancestors to receive in the afterlife.
* The Beijing International Film Festival occurs this month and unites Hollywood execs with Chinese directors and brings in a slew of local and international films which screen a little over a week.

## May

Warm weather, low pollution, and special events on the Great Wall make May one of the best times to visit Beijing. Avoid the weekend of May Day (May 1) if possible, as it is a usually busy time for domestic travel.

Events to check out:

* Two Great Wall activities happen this month: the [Great Wall Marathon](https://great-wall-marathon.com/) and the [Great Wall Festival](http://www.greatwallfestival.com/), a music festival atop the icon itself.

## June

June temperatures are hot, but the month lacks the frequent rainfall of July and August. You’ll also avoid domestic tourists on summer vacation with their families, as most schools don’t get out until early July. Prices around the city rise slightly from the spring months.

Events to check out:

* [Dragon Boat Festival](https://www.chinahighlights.com/festivals/dragon-boat-festival.htm) occurs sometime in May or June. Eat sticky rice packets wrapped in bamboo and watch races across the city.

## July

Hot weather, rain, and pricey hotels characterize July in Beijing. The capital experiences the most rainfall from July to August, as well as intense humidity. Book accommodation and domestic travel well in advance.

Events to check out:

* Qixi Festival (Chinese Valentine’s Day) occurs either in July or August. You might see Beijingers compete in kissing contests in parks and shopping malls during this day.

## August

August mirrors July in weather, high prices for accommodation, and droves of tourists in the city.

Events to check out:

* The [Hungry Ghost Festival](https://www.chinahighlights.com/festivals/hungry-ghost-festival.htm) occurs in August or September and locals leave platters of food out to sate the hunger of roaming ghosts. Common practices include burning joss paper and incense at home and in temples.

## September

September is one of the best times to visit Beijing. Hotels have sub-peak rates, the humidity abates, beautiful colors of leaves grace the trees, and it has the lowest pollution levels of the year.

Events to check out:

* [Mid-Autumn Festival](https://www.chinahighlights.com/festivals/mid-autumn-festival.htm) (Moon Festival) happens this month or in October. People eat mooncakes and stare at the splendor of the full moon.

## October

Good weather continues into October and during the National Holiday, when the city will be super calm but hotel and tour prices high, due to a high-volume of domestic travelers during the week itself.

Events to check out:

* The National Holiday (Oct. 1-7) is actually one of the best times to see the city itself, but not the touristy spots (like the Summer Palace or Forbidden City). Chinese tourists will be flocking to those in large numbers, so save those for right before or right after this week. However, most Beijingers will be traveling too, leaving the city in relative peace to explore.

## November

With the start of cold temperatures comes the rise of pollution in Beijing. Brace yourself for grey skies. However, with air toxicity and the cold, come lower hotel rates and far fewer crowds. Potential solution: stay indoors and eat hot pot.

Events to check out:

* The second week of China Fashion week happens anywhere from October to November. It brings international and domestic designers to compete for fashion awards and flaunt their looks for the season.

## December

The coldest and driest month in the city gives tourists an opportunity to enjoy winter sports and average hotel prices. Temperatures go from cold to freezing (37 to 19 degrees F).

Events to check out:

* New Year’s Eve has light shows and events throughout the city, including a special lighting of the Forbidden City.
* [Ski season](https://www.tripsavvy.com/china-skiing-top-resorts-1495519) starts to get into full swing this month. To ski or snowboard along the Great Wall, head to Huaibei International Ski Resort.