

Beijing

Climate	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Average(°C)	-4.6	-2.2	4.5	13.1	19.8	24.0	25.8	24.4	19.4	12.4	4.1	-2.7
Rainfall(mm)	3.0	7.4	8.6	19.4	33.1	77.8	192.5	212.3	57.0	24.0	6.6	2.6
Days	2.0	3.1	4.1	4.6	5.9	9.7	14.1	13.2	6.8	5.0	3.7	1.6

Beijing: City Guide

Beijing Municipality

Beijing, the capital of the People's Republic of China serves the political, economic, travel, cultural and transportation center of the nation.

As the capital of the People's Republic of China, Beijing is the nation's political, economic, cultural and educational center as well as being the most important center in China for international trade and communications. It has been the heart and soul of politics and society throughout its long history. By the time of the Warring States Period (476 BC - 221 BC), it was serving as the capital of the Yan Kingdom. Because of its role in the life and growth of China, there is an unequalled wealth available for travelers to discover as you explore Beijing's ancient past and enjoy its exciting 21st Century world. In 2008 when Beijing hosts the Olympic Games, Beijing will show the world something so special that everyone will be awestruck by Beijing's latest accomplishments combined with its ancient history.

What to see

The magnificent Forbidden City is the world's largest and best-preserved imperial palace complex. Surrounded by a moat that is six meters deep and a ten-meter high wall are 9,999 rooms - just one room short of the number that ancient Chinese believed represented divine perfection. Once having entered the Forbidden City, visitors are transported to a spacious world of great luxury that had a culture of its own. For five centuries, this palace functioned as the administrative center of the country as well as being the pleasure home of the emperors and empresses who were served by thousands of people. Walking along the corridors and through various rooms it becomes easy to understand the impact of the rulers who lived here and their isolation from the rest of Chinese life. Regardless of how much history you have read, or movies featuring the Forbidden City you have seen, the place itself is not to be missed by any Beijing visitor. (Self-guided audio tour tapes are available in several languages at the entrance.)

For a peaceful and interesting stroll, visit one of Beijing's many beautiful parks, such as Beihai Park, which was probably built by the Great Khan centuries earlier than the Forbidden City. This park was enjoyed by the various rulers of China for hundreds of years and features pavilions, architecturally interesting walkways, the 27-meter-long (about 88 feet) Nine Dragon Screen (built to scare off evil spirits), a jar that is the last remnant of the Khan's court that had been there, the Five Dragon Pavilion dating from the mid 1600's, and a large lake with an island in the middle. Another park that is a definite "must see" is the Summer Palace, a famous classic imperial garden with breathtaking beauty. Bold and generously designed, the northern gardens skillfully blend into the exquisite delicacy of the southern gardens. The Summer Palace holds a special place in the history of Chinese gardens. These are only two of the many majestic gardens in Beijing. Sometimes, you can find exceptional gardens within or surrounding Beijing's many ancient temples.

Beijing has many beautiful temples that at one time served as the focus for religious life. Temple of Heaven is the largest group of structures in the country dedicated to rituals that pay homage to heaven. This temple was built specifically for the worship of heaven and prayers for good harvests during the time of the Ming and Qing dynasties. There are two amazing acoustical spots here. On the top of the tri-leveled round altar (originally built in the 1500's) there is a spot where your words reverberate around you. You can easily imagine the power that temporal rulers felt as their prayers for abundance echoed as if they issued down from the heavens. The other is at the Echo Wall that partially encloses a circular courtyard that is 65 meters (213 feet) in diameter. Words whispered at one end travel along the wall and can be heard clearly by someone listening at the other end. The entire temple complex is a treasure of ancient Chinese architectural design and art. Symbolic shape combinations (the temples are round on square bases signifying heaven and earth) and various mystical numbers are the basis for much of the design work. The temple structures themselves are stunning works of art. All of this and more is set in the midst of a beautiful park.

There are many other fascinating temples in Beijing, among which are: the Yunju Temple, which houses the most stone inscriptions of

Buddhist scriptures in the world, the White Cloud Taoist Temple, which is one of the oldest and still the most active of Taoist temples in Beijing, and the Temple of Confucius. Visiting these temples can help elucidate three primary philosophies that formed the basis for early Chinese life and culture. For example, much of traditional Chinese medicine's principles and theories were derived from the work of Taoist doctors and masters.

The largest city central square in the world, the solemn and respectful Tiananmen Square is not only the symbol of Beijing but also the symbol of China. This immense courtyard is the site of many historic events. The square is surrounded by a variety of significant edifices: Chinese Revolution History Museum, Mao Mausoleum, Great Hall of the People, the elegant and beautiful Tiananmen (Heavenly Peace Gate), and Qianmen (Front Gate). The daily flag ceremony at the square, performed at sunrise and sunset each day, is most exceptional and well-worth making time to view.

The Great Wall is one of the eight wonders of the world and is the only man-made structure that is visible from the moon. This immense wall was built to keep out invaders as well as to retain the inhabitants. It spans five provinces (6,700 kilometers, or 2,587 miles) from Shanhaiguan Pass in the east to Jiayuguan Pass in the west. Like a gigantic dragon, it winds up and down across deserts, grasslands and mountains. Just outside Beijing, it is possible to climb a section of the Great Wall and enjoy a splendid panoramic view that you will remember for the rest of your life.

Other famous Beijing attractions include the Ming Tombs, the burial site of 13 ancient emperors; the Drum Tower built in the 1400's; Tiantan Park with its excellent Ming architectures; Fragrant Hills Park; the Ancient Observatory that dates back to the days of Kublai Khan; The Silk Market; Botanical Gardens; the Indian-designed Temple of Azure Clouds and many, many more wondrous places. Any reader of the classic *The Dream of Red Mansions* will want to visit Prince Gong's Mansion of the 18th Century, which is purported to be the model for mansion in the novel.

History

How can one city boast so many phenomenal places? Beijing's long and illustrious history starts approximately 500,000 years ago. It is here that the ancestors of modern *Homo sapiens*, Peking men, lived in caves. Records show that Beijing

has been an inhabited city for more than three thousand years and has lived through invasions, devastating fires, dynasties, warlords, Anglo-French troops and has emerged each time as a strong and vibrant city. For more than 800 years, Beijing was a capital city - from the Yuan Dynasty to the Ming and Qing dynasties. Thirty-four emperors have lived and ruled in Beijing and it has been an important trading city from earliest days. Although now Beijing is modern, fashionable and full of 21st Century vitality, you can experience authentic Beijing life and become acquainted with "old Beijing" by exploring many tea houses, temple fairs, Beijing's Hutong and Courtyard and enjoy the Peking Opera. Adding these to your Beijing tour, you will leave feeling in your heart a special appreciation for this ancient city that has truly seen it all and tells its story with matchless grace and beauty.

When to go

Beijing is close to Tianjin Municipality and is partially surrounded by Hebei Province. Beijing covers a total area of more than 16,800 square kilometers (6,487 square miles) and has a population of 13.82 million people. Beijing's climate is a semi-humid, continental climate with an average temperature of 12C. It's rainy season, which brings most of its nearly 600 millimeters of rain, starts in July and ends in August. Beijing summers are very hot and rainy while winters in Beijing are dry, cold, and snowy. The short spring season is temperate and autumn is clear and clean. Beijing is at its best in late spring and autumn, particularly during the months of May, September, and October when people can enjoy bright sunlight and blue skies.

Further information:

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

List of services and attractions. Maps, getting about, attractions, Universities, travel, hotels, nightlife, entertainment, weather, sports events, business directory, investment and much, much more.