

# INTERNATIONAL CITY TOURS

## UNIVERSITY CAREER ACTION NETWORK



Amsterdam by Emory University, Athens by Brown University, Beijing by Duke University, Berlin by Yale University, Cairo by Swarthmore College, Dublin by Boston College, Hong Kong by Pepperdine University, Istanbul by Williams College, London by Wake Forest University, Madrid by Vanderbilt University, Paris by Princeton University, Rome by University of Denver, Sao Paulo by the University of Richmond, Sydney of Tulane University, Santiago by the University of Notre Dame, Singapore by University of San Francisco, Tokyo by The College of William and Mary.

# Beijing

## **City Overview**

### **Brief History**

King Wu was the first to declare Beijing the capital city in 1057 BC. Subsequently, the city has gone by the names of Ji, Zhongdu, Dadu, and finally Beijing when the Ming Dynasty Emperor ChengZu chose the name in 1421. Beijing was also known as Peking by the Western world before 1949.

Beijing City is an independently administered municipal district. She is situated in the northeastern part of China at an elevation of 43.5m above sea level. The climate in Beijing is of the continental type, with cold and dry winters and hot summers. January is the coldest month (-4 Celsius), while July the warmest (26 Celsius).

Beijing has a whole area of 16808 sq km (about 6500 sq mi), stretching 160 kilometres from east to west and over 180 kilometres north to south. She has 18 districts and counties with Dongcheng, Xicheng, Xuanwu, Chongwen, Chaoyang, Haidian, Fengtai and Shijingshan in the suburbs and Fangshan, Mengtougou, Changping, Tongxian, Shunyi, Daxing, Huairou, Miyun, Pinggu and Yanqing in the outer suburbs. Population in Beijing is about 12 million.

Today, Beijing is the second largest city in China and continues to grow. The city has been chosen to host the 2008 Summer Olympics, igniting patriotism throughout the nation.

(<http://www.beijingpage.com/#general>)

### **Culture**

Natives of Beijing speak the Beijing dialect, deviating from Mandarin Chinese in vocabulary, phonology, and grammar. Mandarin, however, is the standard Chinese language used in the People's Republic of China. English can occasionally be found in airports, banks, universities, theaters, and professional buildings.

Beijing or Peking Opera is one of the great highlights of Chinese culture. It is performed through a combination of singing, speaking, gestures, fighting, and acrobatics. Performers use a special stage dialect that is often difficult to understand. Most modern theaters provide electronic subtitles.

Peking duck is probably the most well-known dish in Beijing. Chinese food of all colors and flavors can be found across the city. In the evenings, cooks set up stands outside and charge 1 or 2 yuan for a roasted sausage or shrimp stick. It is important to know how to use chopsticks, for most local restaurants do not provide forks. As China has become increasingly westernized in the past decade, American restaurants such as Pizza Hut and McDonalds have sprung up all over Beijing. It's not difficult to find familiar brands like Coca Cola or even movies like Forrest Gump in the city.

Shopping is easy and fun in China. Most department stores are 5 to 6 stories high. Store clerks are available at every turn, ready to help you with your purchase. Family shops line the streets of Beijing. Bargaining is a frequent practice; always suggest a lower price than the seller asks.

Individuals in Beijing often wake early and sleep early. The sun rises at 5am and sets around 7:30pm in the summer. Though many Chinese families like to sit at home, watch TV and chat, nightlife is rich in the city.

Bars, pubs, and discos are open until 2 or 3am. Admission is usually about 50-80 yuan. Cell phones are also very popular.

## Weather

Beijing's climate is characterized by hot, humid, rainy summers and cold, windy, dry winters with some snow. Spring and autumn are considered to be the best times to visit Beijing, especially during the months of April, May, September, and October. Indoor heating is widely available in businesses and residential areas. Air conditioning is installed in most businesses.

Heavy traffic and intense industrialization cause Beijing to suffer from pollution and poor [air quality](#). Dust from eroding deserts in northern China results in seasonal [dust storms](#) in the city.

The following is a table of average temperatures and rainfall throughout the year:

Beijing	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Avg Temp °C	-4.6	-1.8	4.7	13.6	20.0	24.5	26.0	24.7	19.8	12.7	3.9	-2.6	11.8
Avg Temp °F	23.7	28.8	40.5	56.5	68.0	76.1	78.8	76.5	67.6	54.9	39.0	27.3	53.2
Rainfall mm	3.9	4.7	8.2	18.4	33.0	78.1	224.3	170.0	58.4	18.0	9.3	2.7	635.3
Rainfall inches	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.7	1.3	3.1	8.8	6.7	2.3	0.7	0.4	0.1	25.0

## Exchange Rates

The current exchange rate is 1 US Dollar = 8.1046 Yuan.

If you need to carry a large amount of money with you, opt for travelers' checks instead of cash. While not accepted everywhere, they will be accepted in most major cities. As a warning, some areas that accept Chinese credit cards will not accept foreign credit cards.

## Cost of Living

The Mercer Human Resource Cost of Living Survey conducted in March 2005 lists Beijing as the 19<sup>th</sup> costliest city. This survey covers 144 cities across six continents and measures the comparative cost of over 200 items in each location, including housing, transportation, food, clothing, household goods and entertainment. The survey uses New York as the base city, scoring it on an even 100 points (New York is ranked 13th this year). Beijing's score is 95.6.

Generally, food in Beijing is inexpensive. A week's groceries can be bought with 100 yuan (less than \$15). 150 yuan can feed 4 people at a nice Chinese restaurant. 50 yuan can buy five lunches. Meals at American restaurants like KFC and McDonalds are more expensive than meals at Chinese restaurants.

Taxis are cheap and plentiful. Taking the bus only costs about 1 yuan each way. Imported products such as Nike tennis shoes and Vaseline moisturizer, however, are expensive; one bottle of moisturizer may cost 50 yuan. Housing can also be expensive: 1,200 yuan, for a small one-bedroom apartment, and 4,500 yuan for a larger unit.

## Job/Internship Search

Marketable work skills, personal connections and a strong command of a Chinese dialect (usually Mandarin) are good assets to have when looking for work in China.

Almost every major country has established business councils or associations for conducting business in China. The organizations will often post information that can help you with your job search. They may hold conventions to acquaint foreigners with the employment culture in China and frequently use their

websites to post job listings.

**American Chamber of Commerce in Guangdong**

<http://www.amcham-guangdong.org/>

**American Chamber of Commerce in China** (look under Services for Job Search Resources)

<http://www.amcham-china.org.cn/>

**The U.S.-China Business Council**

<http://www.uschina.org/links.html>

**Job / Internship Resources**

**BriTay International**

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

**Careers at Alliance China Capital Co., Ltd**

<http://www.alliance-china.com/english/index.html>

**CareerWise Dragon Surf**

<http://www.dragonsurf.com/careerwise/>

**China Business World**

<http://www.cbw.com/index.html>

**JobAsia**

<http://www.jobasia.com/home.shtm>

**JobChina.net**

<http://www.jobchina.net/index.php>

**Kopra International Internship Platform**

<http://www.kopra.org>

**MOGPA**

6-12 month professional work assignments in China for Chinese-speaking US undergraduate, graduate students and recent graduates

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

**The Complete Reference to Chinese Businesses**

<http://www.chinasite.com/Business/companies.html>

**The Definitive Shanghai Web-site**

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

**The Online Community for Expatriates and a Guide to Life in China**

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

**Wang & Li Human Resources Service Company**

<http://www.wang-li.com/>

[www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com)

[www.vault.com](http://www.vault.com)

<http://www.51job.com> (website in Chinese)

<http://www.zhaopin.com> (website in Chinese)

## **Teaching English in China**

<http://teflchina.org/index.htm>

<http://www.tesall.com/jobboard/index.pl>

<http://www.eslcafe.com/jobs/china>

## **CV & resume writing information for China**

When applying to a Chinese employer, prepare two resumes, one in English and one in Chinese. Resumes can be 2-3 pages in length, illustrating your achievements and goals. You may include the following sections: personal information, career objectives, work experience, education, and skills and accomplishments, in which you should highlight things like language skills, technical abilities, and so on. You may also briefly cite awards, promotions, or special recognitions you have received, but being modest is a safe bet. Discrimination laws are not stringent in China, so it is not uncommon for employers in China to ask for items such as gender, age, or even a photo.

## **Overview of Industries and Employers**

The largest sector of China's economy is industrial, followed by services and agriculture. China specializes in labor-intensive products like clothing and toys. It has been gradually moving on to more sophisticated products like desktop computers and pharmaceuticals. The real estate and automobile markets have been booming in Chinese cities, with electronics and computer related industries following close behind.

China's more than 70,000 small and medium-sized technology companies offer many employment opportunities. In the southern coastal city of Shenzhen, in Shanghai, and in Beijing's Zhongguancun Hi-Tech Development Zone, there is a proliferation of information technology enterprises. The Chinese government's commitment to developing the technology industry, and the Chinese consumer's appetite for state-of-the-art technology give the technology sector an optimistic outlook. With the industry's rapid development, there is a shortage of IT professionals. Thousands of job openings in the IT sector and related fields cannot be readily filled.

China is also experiencing a shortage in skilled engineers. Employment in this field is expected to increase with the growth of the economy. Career opportunities are expected in architectural, electrical, electronic, mechanical, structural, automotive, fabrication, instrumentation, civil, production, and materials engineering.

## **American Companies operating in China**

This website lists the American companies with offices located in Beijing or Shanghai. The listings include the company's address and telephone number:

<http://www.cbw.com/business/usco.html>

## **Student Visas & Work Permits**

There are three different types of visas that will allow a foreign student to work or intern in China:

- 1.) F Visa (Business Visa) - issued to an alien who is invited to China for a visit, an investigation, a lecture, to do business, scientific-technological and culture exchanges, short-term advanced studies or internship for a period of no more than six months.
- 2.) X Visa (Study Visa) - issued to an alien who comes to China for study, advanced studies or intern practice for a period of more than six months.
- 3.) Z Visa (Work Visa) - issued to an alien who comes to China for a post or employment.

Each of these visas requires that the student submit an invitation letter from a company or school in China explaining the need for the individual to visit China.

You can find information on how to apply for each of these visas at:  
<http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/hzqz/zgqz/default.htm>.

### **Consulate Information**

Visa Office  
Embassy of the People's Republic of China  
Room 110, 2201 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20007  
Tel: (202) 338-6688 Fax: (202) 588-9760

Link to other Consulate addresses:  
<http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/sgxx/dfzygy/t44338.htm>

### **Housing**

#### **Links and Publications**

<http://www.wuwoo.com> allows you to choose the location of your apartment. The website then lists important facts including the number of bedrooms, the total sq meters, and the monthly rent.

<http://www.5i5j.com> is an accommodations agency. They, however, do not specialize in dealing with foreigners. If you wish to see the cheaper accommodations on their website, do not click on the English links.

<http://www.thatsbeijing.com> is a site that asks for both the location and price range you want for an apartment.

#### **Universities**

Peking University  
<http://en.pku.edu.cn/> (English version)

**Tsinghua University**  
<http://www.tsinghua.edu.cn/chn/index.htm> (Chinese version)

**Beijing Normal University**  
<http://www.bnu.edu.cn/eng> (English version)  
<http://www.bnu.edu.cn/> (Chinese version)

**Renmin University**  
<http://www.ruc.edu.cn> (Chinese version)

### **Insider Tips**

Culture shock may be the first thing to overcome in China. Owning a car, speaking English, and seeing foreigners are rare for most of the Chinese population.

At restaurants, water is not free, and it does not come with ice. Tea, however, is sometimes complimentary.

Internet services may be hard to find outside of university settings.

Churches are very rare in China. Chongwenmen Church, the largest protestant church in China, is located in Beijing. President Clinton attended a service there in 1998.

Electricity and water may often have outages.

The tap water in China is not safe to drink. It is best to boil the water first before drinking.

Pick pocketing is common in China. Keep all valuables tucked away, and keep bags close.

Public bathrooms in China are rarely as well managed as they are in the United States. It is advisable to bring a roll of toilet paper with you whenever you go out.

There is no sales tax in China.

China uses 24-hour military time.

## **Attractions**

The city of Beijing is always changing and offers numerous sights and activities, so the best way to discover what's going on for the week is to pick up "Time out Beijing", "City Weekend", and/or "that's Beijing." These magazines can be found at the Western cafes, bars, and sometimes universities across Beijing. They fill you in on upcoming events/shows, great restaurants, and weekend activities and are a great resource for the new student in Beijing.

Patience is key in China since the culture is so different from the United States. Some culture shock is to be expected when you first arrive. Chinese customs differ from ours in many ways: few people form lines so keep your elbows up when buying tickets, getting on the subway, or any other thing you would need to line up for. Don't be afraid to push ahead, otherwise you'll never make it on or off the subway during rush hour. Spitting is also prevalent and can be done both inside and outside, so try to refrain from cringing when you witness it. Trash can be a problem with people throwing trash out of windows and on the street. If you are holding a bottle in your hand, you may be approached several times by people asking for it. They are merely collecting the plastic bottles to get money from turning them in, so it's a nice gesture to give them any empty plastic bottle you have. Young children do not wear diapers but rather have split pants so they can pretty much go to the bathroom anywhere and anytime around China.

Foreigners do stick out like a sore thumb, so don't be alarmed if you find yourself being stared at or if "Hello" is yelled at you followed by laughter when you respond. If you are walking around [Wangfujing](#) and a young Chinese person approaches you speaking fluent English, they are more than likely an art student trying to get you to their studio. Don't go, as the art is usually way too overpriced, and you can get stuck there for hours until you buy a painting.

The cheapest and most convenient way to get around Beijing is to take the subway. Traffic is horrible in the city and can take you hours to get to your destination by taxi. The Lonely Planet Beijing guide has a subway map included, and you can find one at <http://www.thebeijingguide.com/subway/subway.html>. The website will not only provide a small map but gives you tips on what to do when you get to the subway station for the first time. If you do take a taxi, make sure they have a meter and turn it on. Always get a receipt as it prints out the telephone number and taxi number, important information if you ever leave something in the cab or get ripped off. Avoid taxis that do not have a license or meter as they will overcharge you and may not always take you to the place you want to go.

The [www.thebeijingguide.com](http://www.thebeijingguide.com) also lists some of the main attractions, shopping places, Olympic venues, and so forth, so is a great website to check out before heading to Beijing and once you arrive. It can provide helpful tips on communicating with friends and family at home. Many students buy an IP card, which can be bought all over Beijing, to make long distance calls home. Check out [http://www.thebeijingguide.com/communications/long\\_distance.html](http://www.thebeijingguide.com/communications/long_distance.html) for more information on long

distance calling with the IP card. You can also have your family or friends pick up a cheap international calling card in the States.

The top places to see in and around Beijing are (in no particular order): Simatai (the least crowded and least restored part of the Great Wall), Temple of Heaven, Tiananmen, the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, and the Hutongs (the small traditional alleys which are quickly disappearing). The top shopping places are Panjiayuan (the weekend market), Wanfujing (Beijing's modern shopping district), the Silk Market (recently moved off the street and into a building), and Hongqiao Market (also known as the Pearl Market). Never, ever, ever take the first price offered. China is all about bargaining, and you can bargain for pretty much everything. Key things to remember are to smile and have lots of patience; start a little lower than half of what they first say and work your way up to a price that is reasonable. Be willing to walk away as you can get the price dropped that way. Always compare prices before you commit to buying something and sometimes try to hand them the amount you wish to pay, as more often than not they will take it; just make sure your things are in a bag first and ready to go.

Pretty much every type of food you can imagine can be found in Beijing. I would recommend looking in your recent guidebooks or the magazines above to see what's popular when you arrive. Western food dots the landscape, including McDonalds, Pizza Hut and even Outback Steakhouse. Peking duck is the specialty of the city, so if you eat meat make sure not to miss this. Quan Ju De, Ya Wang, and Li Kang are supposed to be good restaurants to enjoy Peking duck.

Vegetarians can find it a little difficult to eat in Beijing, as fish is sometimes not considered a meat, but Vegetarian restaurants do exist (Lotus in the Moonlight and Pure Lotus Vegetarian are both good choices). When you order a dish in a non-vegetarian restaurant, make sure to emphasize that you do not want meat, as sometimes little pieces of meat can be found in veggie dishes and tofu.

As for nightlife, there is a never-ending supply on Sanlitun Lu. Don't be enticed by the Western food they offer; though it may be a good place to have a beer and watch the busy street of people swarm by, it is not the place to eat. There are also a number of bars and clubs located near the Workers stadium such as the Den, Alfa, and Vics. Vics is probably one of the better places to dance and is packed on Friday and Saturday nights. The magazines mentioned above will list an assortment of bars and clubs with a short description so you can find the best one for you.

Always be careful late at night when you are returning home as people from other provinces flock to Beijing for work, facing difficult times. Beijing locals and foreigners are thought of as being very wealthy, so late night muggings do occur. Never travel alone at night and watch your wallet/purse at all times, especially when you're in a large crowd of people.

## **Specific Attractions**

Beijing is one of the most historically rich cities in the world. Tiananmen is the spiritual center of China and the most important tourist site of Beijing. It is a place of great political significance in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It also serves as the entrance to the Forbidden City.

### **Major Attractions in Beijing**

Forbidden City  
Tiananmen Square, site of the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989  
Great Hall of the People  
National Museum of Chinese History  
The Temple of Heaven, located in the southern area of urban Beijing  
Lama Temple  
Bei Hai Park  
The Summer Palace  
Beijing Zoo  
Sections of the Great Wall, located 50 miles northwest of Beijing city

The Ming Tombs  
Peking Man Cave

Visit <http://www.ebeijing.gov.cn/Tour/default.htm> for more information on these attractions and tourism in Beijing.

Additional tourist information sites

<http://www.travelchinaguide.com/attraction/beijing> shows the operation times and prices of famous tourist attractions in Beijing

<http://www.beijingtrip.com/index.html> provides Beijing travel information on hotels, attractions, dining, shopping and Beijing tour packages

Entertainment

<http://www.tour-beijing.com/enter/index.php> gives an overview of entertainment in Beijing

## **Transportation**

In 2004, Beijing counted 599 bus and trolleybus routes. Buses generally run from 5 or 5:30 to 22:00 or 24:00, depending on the route. A bus will arrive at a bus stop every 5 to 10 minutes. Bus fare usually costs 1 yuan for short trips and 2-3 yuan for longer trips. There are more than 70,000 taxis in the city. They are all reasonably priced and easy to hail. All taxis have meters. If there are any problems, you can reach Beijing Taxi Supervision at 6601-2620. Beijing is in the process of building additional lines to its present four-line subway. Subway tickets range from 2 to 5 yuan.

Map of Beijing: <http://www.beijingtrip.com/beijingmap.html>

[http://travel.yahoo.com/p-travelguide-577360-map\\_of\\_beijing-i](http://travel.yahoo.com/p-travelguide-577360-map_of_beijing-i)

Subway Map: [http://www.ebeijing.gov.cn/Tour/Transport/t20040812\\_156782.htm](http://www.ebeijing.gov.cn/Tour/Transport/t20040812_156782.htm)

Taxi Info: [http://www.ebeijing.gov.cn/Tour/Transport/t20040812\\_171787.htm](http://www.ebeijing.gov.cn/Tour/Transport/t20040812_171787.htm)

Bus Info: [http://www.ebeijing.gov.cn/Tour/Transport/t20040812\\_171791.htm](http://www.ebeijing.gov.cn/Tour/Transport/t20040812_171791.htm)

## **Publications**

### **Websites**

Beijing this Month (<http://www.btmbeijing.com>)

Beijing News networks (<http://www.ben.com.cn>) – Chinese version

Beijing Review (<http://www.bjreview.com.cn>)

The Beijing News (<http://thebeijingnews.net>)

Beijing Globe (<http://www.beijingglobe.com>)

### **Newspapers**

Beijing Evening News (<http://www.ben.com.cn>) – Chinese version

Beijing Star Daily (<http://www.stardaily.com.cn>) – Chinese version

Beijing Youth Daily (<http://www.bjyouth.com>) – Chinese version

### **Radio and TV**

China Central TV (<http://english.cctv.com/index.shtml>)

China Central TV (<http://www.cctv.com>) – Chinese version

Beijing TV (<http://www.btv.org>) – Chinese version

Beijing Music Radio (<http://www.bmr.com.cn>) – Chinese version

Radio Free Asia (<http://www.rfa.org/english>)

## **Safety**

China International country code number: 0086

Beijing city code number: 010

## **Emergency Contact Numbers**

Ambulance: 120

Police: 110

Fire: 119

## **American Embassy Information**

United States Embassy of Beijing, China

Ambassador Clark T. Randt, Jr.

Xiu Shui Bei Jie 3, 100600

Phone: (86-10) 6532-3831

Fax: (86-10) 6532-4153

(<http://www.usembassy-china.org.cn>)