

Beijing Breakaway

5 days | Starts/Ends: Beijing



Enjoy a city break with a difference. Explore Tiananmen Square, enter the Forbidden City, climb the Great Wall, sample traditional Peking Duck and test your bartering skills in the Silk Alley Markets. Many nationalities are able to undertake this holiday Visa Free, see our visa info section for more info.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Tiananmen Square
- Forbidden City
- UNESCO-listed Great Wall
- UNESCO-listed Ming Tombs
- Silk Alley markets
- Cloisonne Factory

What's Included

- Breakfast daily
- 1 lunch, 1 dinner - traditional Peking Duck
- 4 nights 3 - 4 star hotels
- Airport arrival and departure transfer on day 1 and day 5
- Touring and excursions as per itinerary
- Guided sightseeing - on days 2 and 3 with an English speaking guide
- All relevant transfers and transportation
- Entrance fees to all included sites

What's Not Included

- International flights and visa.
- Laundry, drinks, items of a personal nature
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Beijing

Welcome to China and the start of your city break! Enjoy an arrival transfer to our hotel.

Overnight - Beijing

Day 2 : Tiananmen Square



Capital of the People's Republic, Beijing is China's political, economic and cultural centre. With an awesome history, Beijing was established in 1045 BC and for 800 years served as the capital of several dynasties. Today, a sightseeing tour takes in Tiananmen Square, a public square that also happens to be the world's largest. Everything is large in China, including the former imperial

residence of the imperial emperors of China. The Forbidden City, once forbidden to all but individuals on imperial business is a 720,000 sq m concoction dominated by vast gates, temples, halls and palaces replete with imperial yellow tiled roofs. Surrounded by a protective moat, it is said the Forbidden City comprises some 9999 rooms!

At Silk Alley, there's a chance to splash some cash in a retail haven that is a Beijing institution. Some bling jewellery for the lady and perhaps a genuine copy Rolex watch for the gent? Tonight, enjoy a traditional Chinese dinner at a city restaurant. **Overnight - Beijing (B, D)**

Day 3 : The Great Wall



Some say it can be seen from space, but unless you're a top gun at NASA, perhaps you'll never know. Instead, experience the real deal. Today, an excursion beyond Beijing to Badaling takes in an imposing section of the Great Wall. The sometimes steep walk

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is made all the more breathtaking by the stunning views and the realisation that this 2,200 year-old wall isn't just a common or garden wall, but a 6700 kilometre wall that at one time served to protect the new China from marauding invaders from the north. Today's excursion then continues to the imperial Ming tombs, where some 13 emperors were interred in elaborate mausoleums, a couple of which can be seen. **Overnight - Beijing (B, L)**

Day 4 : Beijing



A free day to enjoy Beijing your way. Located in an area between Wanfujing and the east wall of the Forbidden City, perhaps head to the hutongs, where the hire of a rickshaw will take you through Beijing's old back lanes that are lined with courtyard homes and offer a fascinating snapshot of the city's traditional domesticity. In the Qianmen area, south of Tiananmen Square, you'll find many shops with original facades, selling Mongolian hot pots, silks and other items, not to mention Chinese apothecaries offering a selection of traditional medicines comprising deer antler, fungus and other unusual ingredients. Also consider visiting Wanfujing Street, one of the busiest retail streets in the city. **Overnight - Beijing (B)**

Day 5 : Beijing

Hotel check-out and included onward transfer to airport.(B)

HOTELS

The hotels listed below are ones which we frequently use on this tour. We reserve the right to substitute these hotels to ones of a similar standard when necessary.

Jiangxi Grand Hotel

The contemporary Jiangxi Grand Hotel offers spacious, well lit and comfortable rooms. The hotel is located just a 15 minute walk from Liujiayao Subway Station which links you to the rest of Beijing on Line 5 of the Subway. There are 2 restaurants located within the hotel serving local and international cuisine, as well as there being numerous restaurants in the surrounding area. Complimentary WIFI is offered in the hotel along with gym facilities.



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Entrance fees - collected in Yuan

Entry fees to most sites are not included, although reasonably priced. In China, we collect entrance fees on Day 2 of the tour (the amount is noted under exclusions on page one of this document). A comprehensive breakdown of the entrance fee total is provided upon arrival.

All funds collected in China for entrance fees and optional excursions, that you may wish to undertake are payable in local currency - Chinese Yuan (CNY).

Tipping Kitty

At the start of your group tour, we take a small tipping kitty (the amount is noted under exclusions) from all tour participants to cover tips throughout your holiday. This saves you the hassle of knowing when and how much to tip bellhops, luggage luggers, bus drivers, train conductors and other support staff throughout the tour.

This amount does not include a tip for your tour guide. For a job well done, we would suggest USD\$3 - 5 per person per day. Tipping your guide is an entirely personal gesture and ultimately the amount is up to you.

If travelling on a short stay, private tour or a group tour with less than 6 participants we do

not collect a tipping kitty and recommend the following amount to cover tips paid directly by you to bellhops, luggage handlers, your driver and local guide: CNY50/USD\$8 - per person per day of your tour.

Arrival Transfers

For tours starting in Beijing When arriving into Beijing International Airport and attending to immigration and customs formalities, please proceed to the arrival hall. If arriving to Beijing into Terminal 2, when exiting immigration to the arrivals hall, please turn right where our representative will be waiting. If arriving into Terminal 3 you will be met just outside the restricted area.

Please have your tour voucher handy and make it available to our representative who will be waiting for you in the arrivals hall, holding a prominent On The Go Tours logo signboard, ready to escort you to our awaiting transportation and onward to your tour start hotel.

If, for any reason you have trouble locating our representative (remember Beijing is a busy International Airport) after waiting 30 minutes in the arrival hall or your flight to China is delayed please call the emergency contact number as stated on your tour voucher. Please do not leave the airport and travel to the hotel yourself. Please call the contact number as stated on your tour voucher.

China Country Guide

Visas

China Visa

Visas are required by all visitors to China. It is essential that a tourist visa is procured prior to travel. We will provide you with an invoice/itinerary indicating that you are travelling to China on a pre-arranged holiday. The visa is valid for entry within 3 months, so you cannot apply any earlier. Please ensure your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of return from China.

If you're a resident of the UK and would like someone to handle your visa application for you then we recommend CIBTvisas. Please visit <http://www.cibtvisas.co.uk/onthego> for more information.

Visa for Hong Kong

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Most Western visitors to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China do not require a tourist visa issued in advance of travel. Currently, UK nationals can stay up to 180 days. Nationals of Australia, Canada, Eire, most other EU countries, New Zealand and the US do not require a visa for a stay not exceeding 90 days, while holders of RSA passports can remain for up to 30 days. If entering Hong Kong from mainland China and returning to mainland China a multiple Chinese entry visa is required.

Visa for Tibet

Tibet - If travelling to Tibet, a Tibet Travel Permit is required. The permit will be arranged by our office in China. Please contact On The Go Tours prior to departure for the most up to date Tibetan entry information.

The information above is not applicable for the Beijing and Shanghai Visa Free Tours

NOTE: Visa requirements are subject to change, please check with your embassy before booking this trip.

Climate

In all, China has a great diversity of climates. To sum it up - China experiences hot summers in most parts of the country, very cold winters in the north and comfortable winters in the south! Sep-Oct is warm to hot and dry across the country. Nov-Mar is winter with very cool temps in the north, whilst mild in the south. If combining the north and south, you'll experience 2 distinct weather patterns. Apr-May - perfect in the north, if a little humid and rainy in the south. Jun-Aug can bring a few showers.

Health & Water

You should seek medical advice before travelling to China from your local health practitioner and ensure that you receive all of the appropriate vaccinations. As a guide it is recommended that you be vaccinated for Tetanus and Polio, if you haven't had a booster in the last ten years. Food and waterborne diseases are more common, so we recommend vaccinations for Typhoid (valid 3 years) and Hepatitis A (validity varies). There is a malarial risk in remote southern areas of China, so do check the current situation before travelling.

As tap water is not safe to drink in China, only drink bottled mineral water which is readily available from hotels, shops and restaurants. Make sure bottled water is sealed.

Currency

The currency of China is the Chinese Yuan. Pound Sterling, US Dollars, Euro and other major currencies can be exchanged in China. Exchange facilities are available at various bureau de changes and banks in major towns have ATMs or it is possible to get some before you leave home. It's advisable to request bank notes in smaller denominations, as it can sometimes be hard to get change from large notes and smaller notes are handy for smaller purchases and gratuities.

Traveller's Cheques are not recommended as they're often difficult to exchange and incur high fees.

Time & Voltage

China is 8 hours ahead of GMT. The country operates on one time zone, so clocks are set according to Beijing time, meaning, given the size of the country, sunrise and sunset can occur at peculiar times! Voltage is 220v, 50Hz AC. Chinese plugs come in many designs: 3-pronged angle pins as used in Australia; 3-pronged round pins as used in Hong Kong; 2-pronged flat pins as used in the USA; or 2 round narrow pins as used in Europe. To cover all bases, pack a travel adaptor!

Essential Packing

As light as possible! In China, most often portorage is not available at railway stations and you will be required to carry your own luggage. Bags with wheels can be a hindrance when climbing several flights of stairs, though are a blessing when walking lengthy distances to reach our awaiting transportation. If travelling in early spring we recommend you pack warm clothes, layering works best this time of year.

- Food in China is very different and arguably better than your local takeaway! If you prefer western snack food, consider bringing a supply
- Sunglasses, hat, sunscreen, swim costume, basic torch/ flash light & umbrella for sun or rain

- Comfortable closed in walking shoes for climbing the Great Wall
- DEET based mosquito repellent & antihistamine cream
- Chinese plugs come in many designs: 3 prong angle pins similar, though smaller than those used in Australia; 2 prong flat pins (type A) or 2 round pins, European style (type C). To cover all bases, pack a travel adaptor!
- Two spare passport photos & a photocopy of your passport
- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs
- Plastic poncho to go over your jacket. Whilst site-seeing, you can be in the rain for an extended period and even a rain jacket can get soaked. You can purchase a cheap one locally, but we suggest taking one from home of a better quality that doesn't rip easily

PLEASE NOTE: If your tour includes an internal flight, that most airlines have a 20kg baggage limit.

Toilets/Washrooms

Public toilets, when found, are usually 'squats' - holes in the ground with footrests at either side and often don't possess a door! The custom is to wash with water from a jug or little pipe attached to the toilet using your left hand. Doesn't appeal? Here are some hints!

- Time yourself with the accommodations you are staying at
- If you are out and about, find the nearest hotel, restaurant, fast food outlet, or toilets at tourist attractions, which all tend to have Western style facilities
- Ask your tour guide to make a stop
- Pack a roll of toilet paper and anti-bacterial wipes for your own comfort

Media Restrictions

There are restrictions on all media, including social media and free press throughout China. Whilst on holiday, you will have limited or no access to social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Google Plus - so no Google Maps and no Play Store. To bypass the firewall, you could download a VPN. It is much easier to do this before you go to China.

WeChat: If travelling on one of our budget tours, communication between the group and

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Adventure Leader is via the app: WeChat. Please install this App and open an account before your trip as it is harder to do so in mainland China.

There is also limited international calling options, so please check with your local provider before leaving home, to source the best roaming or online options to keep in regular contact with family and friends during your travels.

Travelling By Train

Fast and efficient, China's first rail lines were laid in the 19th century, and today, the government continues to invest heavily in this crucial mode of transport which connects many parts of the country. When travelling during the day, 'soft' seats, that is to say 'upholstered' seats are provided. For overnight travel, clients are accommodated in 'soft class' sleeper cabins. Aboard each wagon are 9 compartments that comprise 4 bunks per compartment. Four people of mixed sex share one compartment. On occasion, dependent upon group size, you may be sharing with local people on the overnight journey, though sometimes dependent upon how the Chinese Railways Booking Office configure the bookings, the cabin may be filled with four of our passengers. A dining wagon serves reasonably priced Chinese food of the noodles and rice variety, along with snacks and drinks. A very simple menu is published in English. On the Beijing - Xi'an service, there is also a small bar serving drinks including alcohol. Each wagon offers a WC and hand basin facility. At one end, is a Chinese squat-style WC, whilst at the other end is a modern Western-style WC. Cabins are lockable from the inside and luggage is stowed in overhead compartments and under the bottom bunk. Bed linen and slippers are supplied, and often there is a TV mounted on the wall at the end of each bed that may even work. Most channels are broadcast in Mandarin, excluding one English Channel, which has little of interest on it!

Porterage

In China most often porterage is not available at railway stations and you will be required to carry your own luggage. We recommend

you pack as light as possible as there can be several flights of stairs and a lengthy walk to our awaiting transportation.

Shopping

China is a virtual Aladdin's Cave. Government-run Friendship Stores in almost all cities stock a range of fixed-price souvenirs and handicrafts and can offer a reasonable idea of what is acceptable in terms of quality and price. After a visit to the Friendship Store, visit private stores, craft shops and local department stores. However, the best shopping is often at public markets. If you see something you want, buy it when you see it - prices don't vary greatly, but selection can vary from location to location.

Top buys include silk products, embroidery, Chinese calligraphy and paintings, ceramics, jade and stone carvings, lacquer ware, Chinese tea, Cloisonne, Mao reproduction propaganda souvenirs such as the famous 'Red Book', caps and buttons, personalised ink seals and clothing of every kind. Markets in Beijing and Shanghai commonly sell top quality ski jackets and leisure attire by big name brands. Additionally, copied goods such as handbags, watches and shoes are available in plentiful supply in these markets. Ethnic crafts are a speciality in some regions including Xi'an and Kunming. If wishing to buy antiques, proceed with caution. It's highly likely that the antique will be a skilful reproduction. However, if it is the real deal, you'll need paperwork the Chinese Administrative Department of Cultural Relics which must then accompany the article being exported.

IMPORTANT: Set your budget and don't be swayed, remember the caveat - 'Let the buyer beware'. Any purchases made whilst on holiday with us, irrespective of whether the store is recommended by us or other, are at your own discretion. Please make sure that you are completely happy with the product you are purchasing and the delivery arrangements (we would recommend you take away with you any purchases rather than rely on shipping services). On The Go cannot be held responsible or accountable for items bought in country or shipping arrangements. Proceed with caution.

It's not like home!

Travel to far - flung corners of the earth involves lifestyles and conditions that are sometimes very different from what you are used to back home. You must come prepared to cope with unusual situations, local inadequacies and unpredictable events as and when they occur. Foreign travel is definitely not suitable for people who expect or demand everything to go exactly as planned. With the greatest respect and in the interest of your ultimate enjoyment you must understand this. Things can and do change in foreign countries.

- Be prepared as locals smoke everywhere in China
- The Chinese don't have an awareness of personal space, be ready to have people standing very close to you, nudge you or even walk into you, they are not being rude, it's just a very different culture
- Many tourists report scams in Shanghai, so be friendly but careful. Never ever follow a stranger anywhere
- Spitting and snorting is common in China as they see the use of tissues as unhygienic.
- Some locals won't queue and will often walk straight to the front of a line with no awareness or care of what they have done wrong
- Always take some antiseptic hand gel or antibacterial hand wipes with you and BYO toilet paper as its rare in public toilets. Squat toilets are very common, they can be a novelty and are easy to use
- Chinese people are delighted if you make any attempt to speak Mandarin, even if it's only a couple of words

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