

Dashilar & Xīchéng South

Neighbourhood Top Five

1 Peruse the historic shopping street of **Dashilar** (p132), still home to some of the oldest and most prestigious emporiums in the city. Whether it's silk or ancient aphrodisiacs, you'll find it here.

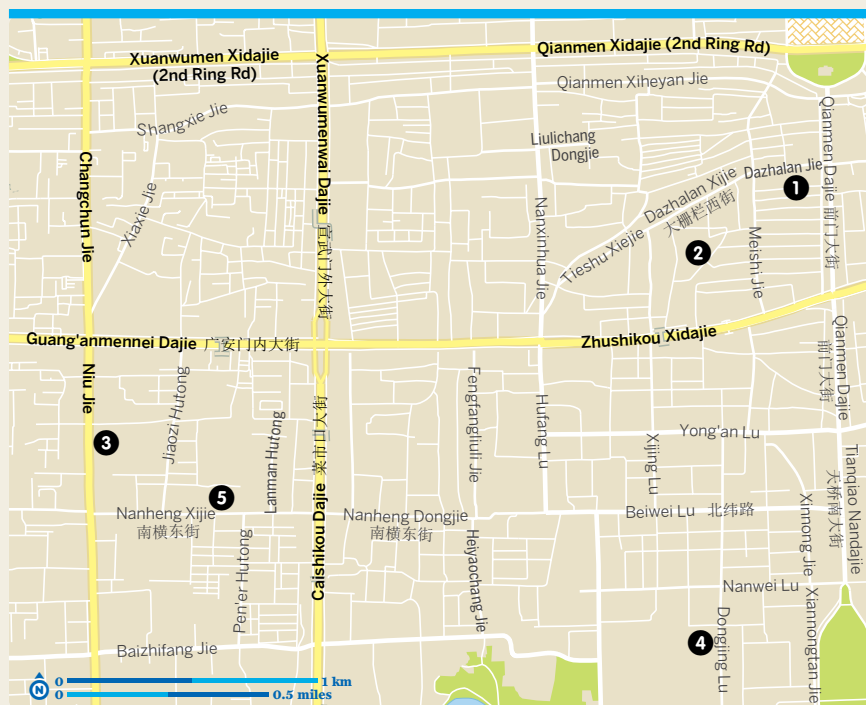
2 Wind your way through the fascinating *hùtòng* (alleyways) west of Meishi Jie,

once infamous as old Peking's **red-light district**.

3 Check out the capital's largest Muslim neighbourhood around **Niújiē Mosque** (p132).

4 Visit the **Běijīng Ancient Architecture Museum** (p132) to discover how imperial Běijīng was built.

5 Pop into the little-visited **Fǎyuán Temple** (p132), one of the city's oldest and most peaceful Buddhist shrines.



For more detail of this area see Map p296. ➔

Explore Dashilar & Xīchéng South

Divided from neighbouring Dōngchéng by Qianmen Dajie, Dashilar (大栅栏) and Xīchéng South (南西城) take in the former district of Xuānwǔ. Its major sights are concentrated in two distinct areas: Dashilar and the Muslim district around Niu Jie, with nearby *hútòng* to explore as well.

Spend a morning visiting Dashilar's shops, before lunch at one of the small restaurants on Dazhalan Xijie. The *hútòng* off Dazhalan Xijie were once the red-light district of old Peking and are well worth diving into.

From the western end of Dazhalan Xijie, it's a short stroll to Liulichang, the capital's premier shopping street for antiques, calligraphy and traditional Chinese art and a must for curio-hunters. In the evening, catch a show at one of the acrobatics or Peking opera theatres in the neighbourhood.

Begin a second day in the area with a trip to the Běijīng Ancient Architecture Museum. Then, hop a taxi to Niu Jie, the main drag of Běijīng's Muslim Huí neighbourhood. Visit the mosque, a blend of Chinese and Arabic styles, and eat at a local Muslim restaurant. Nearby Fāyuán Temple is a serene shrine surrounded by intriguing *hútòng*.

Local Life

- **Táoránting Park** North of Běijīng South Railway Station, this is the lungs of the neighbourhood and a great escape from the surrounding urban madness.
- **Hútòng** Visit the alleyways sandwiched between Dazhalan Xijie and Qianmen Xidajie; they see far fewer foreigners than others in the area.
- **Market** Locals head to the streets around Mǎliándào Tea Market (p137) for both tea and reasonably priced tea sets.

Getting There & Away

- **Subway** For Dashilar, get off at the Qianmen stop on Line 2. Go to Hepingmen on the same line for Liulichang. Line 4 runs north-south through the neighbourhood towards Běijīng South Railway Station, with the stop at Caishikou walking distance from both Niu Jie and Fāyuán Temple.
- **Bus** Niu Jie is connected with Wangfujing Dajie by bus 10, running through Tiān'ānmén, Xīdān and Changchun Jie.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Avoid the restaurants off the south end of Dashilar; many still try to charge foreigners more than locals by offering them a special English menu. Instead, head down Dazhalan Xijie for cheaper options. Look for the places which have plenty of locals eating in them. Be wary of anyone in the Dashilar area offering to take you to a tea ceremony; it's a very expensive scam.

Best Places to Eat & Drink

- Turpan Restaurant (p134)
- Gǒubùlǐ (p134)
- Liu Family Noodles (p134)

For reviews, see p134. ➡

Best Entertainment

- Tiānqiáo Acrobatics Theatre (p134)
- Húguāng Guild Hall (p135)
- Lao She Teahouse (p135)

For reviews, see p134. ➡

Best Places to Shop

- Yuèhǎixuān Musical Instrument Store (p136)
- Ruǐfúxiáng (p136)
- Mǎliándào Tea Market (p137)

For reviews, see p135. ➡