

Summer Palace & Hǎidiàn

Neighbourhood Top Five

1 Summer Palace (p152)

Enjoying a taste of imperial high life at this glorious former summer retreat of emperors.

2 Fragrant Hills Park (p158)

Communing with nature and seeing the maple-leaf-covered hillsides.

3 Wǔdàokǒu (p159)

Spending a night exploring the buzzing restaurants and clubs of Běijīng's student heartland.

4 Běijīng Botanic Gardens (p155)

Pushing through the bamboo fronds at China's top collection of flora.

5 Wǔtǎ Temple (p155)

Temple-hopping your way around this shrine-heavy district.



For more detail of this area see Map p281 and p286. →

Explore Summer Palace & Hǎidiàn

Hǎidiàn sprawls across a huge mass of west and north-west Běijīng, so you'll need to attack it in chunks.

You could easily spend a day exploring the Summer Palace's sumptuous gardens, temples, pavilions and corridors. Don't miss climbing Longevity Hill for fine views over Běijīng. From the palace, it's a short bus or taxi ride to the Fragrant Hills Park, especially beautiful in the autumn. Nature buffs will also want to visit the nearby Botanic Gardens.

In the evening head to Wūdàokǒu, one of Běijīng's most happening areas. Surrounded by universities, it's the capital's student heartland and home to many cafes and bars, as well as some of the most authentic Korean and Japanese restaurants in town.

Hǎidiàn is one of Běijīng's best neighbourhoods for temple-hopping. Begin at the Indian-inspired Wūtǎ Temple. From there, walk due west to Wànshòu Temple and then northeast towards the Great Bell Temple. End the day in quiet contemplation at the superb Azure Clouds Temple inside Fragrant Hills Park.

Local Life

- ➔ **Hang-outs** Lush (p159) and the Bridge Café (p157) are busy around the clock.
- ➔ **Shopping** Wūdàokǒu has stacks of quirky clothes shops for hipster students.
- ➔ **Parks** Hǎidiàn has many parks hidden beneath the tower blocks; retreat to them to avoid the urban sprawl, especially in the early evening.

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Subway** Getting around Hǎidiàn is a breeze. Line 4 connects with Line 2 at Xizhimen, then runs north. When the Western Suburban Line is completed in the next few years, it will link the Summer Palace, Běijīng Botanic Gardens and Fragrant Hills Park to subway Line 10. For Wūdàokǒu and Dazhongsi, take Line 13, which also connects with Line 2 at Xizhímén. Line 10 runs east-west across the centre of Hǎidiàn, while Line 2 runs east-west across the south of the neighbourhood.
- ➔ **Bus** Useful buses include 331, which links Wūdàokǒu with the Old Summer Palace and the Summer Palace, Běijīng Botanic Gardens, Sleeping Buddha Temple and Fragrant Hills Park. Bus 375 connects Wūdàokǒu with Xizhímén.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

China has a special university (民族大学; Mínzú Dàxué) for its many ethnic minorities and the area around it is where you'll find some of the most authentic restaurants serving up their local cuisines. The hub is Weigong Jie, where you can find fantastic Dai (a minority from the far south of Yúnnán province) food, as well as great Korean and Mongolian eateries. To get there, jump on Line 4 to Weigongcun and then walk south 400m.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Xiàodiàolítāng (p157)
- ➔ Golden Peacock (p157)
- ➔ Khan Baba (p157)
- ➔ Salang-Bang (p158)

For reviews, see p157. ➔

Best Place to Drink

- ➔ Lush (p159)
- ➔ La Bamba (p157)
- ➔ Wū (p159)

For reviews, see p159. ➔

Best Temples

- ➔ Wànshòu Temple (p154)
- ➔ Wūtǎ Temple (p155)
- ➔ Azure Clouds Temple (p158)
- ➔ Great Bell Temple (p156)

For reviews, see p152. ➔