

On the Road





Běijīng

010 / POP 19,612,368

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Dàlǐ Courtyard (p105)
- ➔ Běijīng Dàdǒng Roast Duck Restaurant (p104)
- ➔ In & Out (p106)
- ➔ Duck de Chine (p106)
- ➔ Bǎihé Vegetarian Restaurant (p104)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Temple Hotel (p100)
- ➔ Qiánmén Hostel (p102)
- ➔ Courtyard 7 (p101)
- ➔ Opposite House Hotel (p101)
- ➔ Aman at Summer Palace (p102)

Why Go?

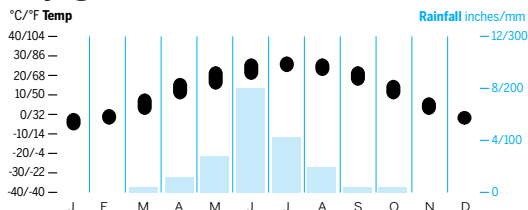
Inextricably linked to past glories (and calamities) yet hurtling towards a power-charged future, Běijīng (北京), one of history's great cities, is as complex as it is compelling.

Few places on earth can match the extraordinary historical panorama on display here – there are six Unesco World Heritage Sites in this city alone, just one less than the whole of Egypt. But this is also where China's future is being shaped: Běijīng is the country's political nerve centre, a business powerhouse and the heartbeat of China's rapidly evolving cultural scene.

Yet for all its gusto, Běijīng dispenses with the persistent pace of Shànghǎi or Hong Kong. The remains of its historic *hùtòng* (alleyways) still exude a unique village-within-a-city vibe, and it's in these most charming of neighbourhoods that locals shift down a gear and find time to sit out front, play chess and watch the world go by.

When to Go

Běijīng



Apr–May & Oct–Nov Most pleasant weather and fewer tourists.

Dec–Feb Dry and very cold but the streets are pleasantly quiet.

Jun–Sep Peak season; very hot but rainstorms offer respite.