



Běijīng

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Best Places to Stay

- » Red Capital Residence (p313)
- » Lusongyuan Hotel (p313)
- » Peking International Youth Hostel (p311)
- » Beijing Downtown Backpackers Accommodation (p311)

Best Places to Eat

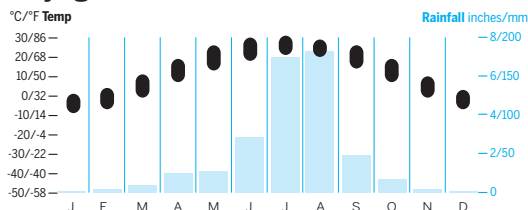
- » Xiao Wang's Home Restaurant (p313)
- » Quanjudo Roast Duck Restaurant (p314)
- » Ghost Street (p315)
- » Bellagio (p314)

Why Go?

For weary Trans-Siberian travellers, Běijīng (北京) will feel like the figurative pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. The 2008 Olympics were instrumental in transforming the Chinese capital and for the first time since the Mongol invasion, Běijīng feels like an international city, brimming with overseas business, cuisine of every kind, daring modern architecture and a thriving arts scene. Despite its headlong rush into the future, the best of Běijīng lies in its past. Sights such as the Forbidden City, Tiananmen Sq, the Temple of Heaven, the Great Wall and the Summer Palace will keep you busy for days. Duck into the fast disappearing *hútòng* (narrow alleyway) neighbourhoods and discover Běijīng at its most intimate. Come evening, choose from a million or so drinking spots and celebrate the end (or beginning) of your epic cross-continental journey.

When to Go

Běijīng



Sep–early Nov

The best time weather-wise, with blue skies, pleasant temperatures and fewer tourists.

Apr

Temperatures are pleasant and flowers are blooming but be prepared for dust storms.

MEDIA

Pick up the free monthly listings magazines the *Beijinger* (www.thebeijinger.com), *Agenda* (www.agendabeijing.com) and *City Weekend* (www.cityweekend.com.cn) from expat bars and restaurants in the Sanlitún and Qianhai Lake areas. *China Daily* is the main English-language newspaper.

Běijīng Basic Costs

- » Bus ticket: Y1
- » Subway ticket: Y2
- » Local SIM card: Y45
- » Taxi rate (first 3km): Y10
- » Great Wall T-shirt: from Y15
- » Bed in a hostel: Y70

Fast Facts

- » Telephone code: ☎010
- » Population: 15.6 million
- » Time zone: Moscow +4

Resources

- » Ctrip (www.english.ctrip.com) Hotel and flight bookings.
- » Danwei (www.danwei.com) Web magazine on daily life.
- » Zhongwen (www.zhongwen.com) Online Chinese dictionary.

Getting Around

To/from the train station Beijing station, one block south of Jianguomenwai Dajie, is 3km southeast of the Forbidden City. To reach the station by subway take the circle line (Line 2) to Beijing Train Station. When leaving the subway, use Exit C to reach the station. From the airport, the best way to reach the station is with airport bus line 1.

To/from the airport Běijīng's Capital Airport is 27km from the centre of town, about 30 minutes to one hour by car depending on traffic. The 30-minute Airport Express (机场快轨; Jīchǎng Kuàiguī) runs every 15 minutes, connecting Capital Airport with Line 2 of the underground system at Dongzhimen and connecting with Line 10 at Sanyuanqiao. A taxi from the city centre to the airport will cost around Y85.

CLIMATE & HOLIDAYS

In deciding when to visit, consider the following:

Winter travel has its pros and cons. On the plus side you can get deep discounts on hotel and flights; on the downside it's glacial outside (dipping as low as -20°C) and the northern winds cut like a knife through bean curd.

In summer, temperatures can surge over 35°C and the humidity is intense. Additionally, summer is when hotels typically raise their rates and the Great Wall nearly collapses under the weight of marching tourists.

Air pollution can be very harsh in both summer and winter.

During major holidays, such as May Day (1–3 May), National Day (1–7 October) and the spring festival (late January or February), be prepared for intense crowds at tourist sites, airports and train stations.

Train Categories in China

- » C (*chéngjì* 城际高速; 城际高速) ultra-high-speed express
- » D (*dòngchē*; 动车, *héxiè hào*; 和谐号) high-speed express
- » G (*gāotiě*; 高铁) high-speed
- » K (*kuàisù*; 快速) fast train
- » T (*tèkuài*; 特快) express
- » Z (*zhídá tèkuài*; 直达特快) direct express