

Beijing

China

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Beijing has been China's political and cultural capital for more than 800 years. Wide modern boulevards and Olympic-era stadiums sit next to quiet hutong alleys where daily life has barely changed in decades. The old imperial center still anchors the whole city.

A visit here works well as a first stop before exploring the rest of China. The major sights sit close together, an extensive subway connects them, and English signage is common at tourist sites. Come for the history, but leave time for the food and the neighborhoods too.

When to visit

Spring (April–May) and autumn (September–October) are the most comfortable times to visit, with mild days and clearer skies. Summers are hot, humid, and bring frequent afternoon downpours, while winters are cold and dry, sometimes with light snow.

Late March into early April brings cherry blossom season at city parks and palace grounds, with pink and white blossoms across the city.

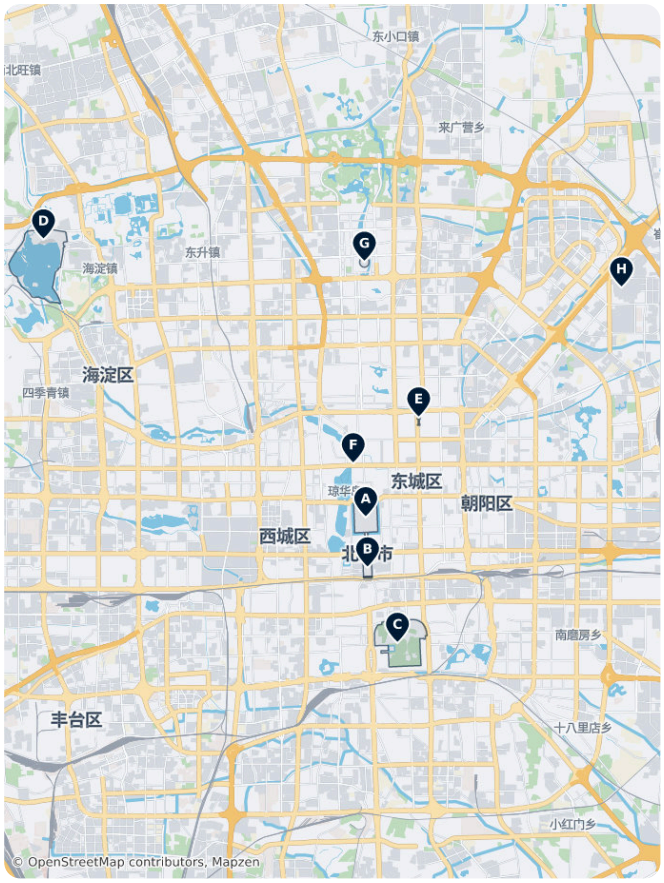
MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	3° / 8° Feels like -3°	-9° / -15°	Dry air
February	Poor Poor for sightseeing	7° / 14° Feels like 1°	-6° / -13°	Dry air
March	Great Great for cycling	15° / 24° Feels like 9°	0° / -5°	Dry air
April	Great Great for cycling	23° / 32° Feels like 18°	6° / 0°	Dry air
May	Great Great for sightseeing	30° / 37° Feels like 26°	14° / 8°	Dry air
June	Poor Poor for sightseeing	34° / 40°	19° / 15°	Calm winds · Up to 12 days above 35°
July	Poor Poor for sightseeing	34° / 40°	22° / 19°	16 rainy days · Muggy, humid air · Calm winds · Up to 12 days above 35°
August	Poor Poor for sightseeing	32° / 37°	21° / 16°	14 rainy days · Muggy, humid air · Calm winds · Up to 5 days above 35°
September	Great Great for sightseeing	28° / 34°	15° / 9°	Calm winds
October	Great Great for cycling	20° / 27° Feels like 17°	7° / 0°	Dry air · Calm winds
November	Great Great for cycling	11° / 20° Feels like 6°	-1° / -7°	Dry air · Calm winds
December	Poor Poor for sightseeing	4° / 9° Feels like -2°	-7° / -13°	Dry air

Best months: April, May, September, October

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Avoid the week around **National Day** (October 1) if you can. It is China's busiest domestic travel holiday, and major sights get packed.

Top sights



Start at A Forbidden City, the walled palace complex where China's emperors lived for almost 500 years, with nearly 1,000 buildings to explore.

Just outside its southern gate, B Tian'anmen Square is one of the largest public squares in the world and the symbolic heart of modern China.

South of the center, C Temple of Heaven is where emperors once prayed for good harvests. Its round, blue-roofed main hall is one of the most photographed buildings in the country.

D Summer Palace is a vast lakeside garden built as a summer retreat for the imperial court. Covered walkways, temples, and a marble boat line the shore of Kunming Lake.

E Lama Temple is Beijing's largest Tibetan Buddhist temple, filled with incense smoke and a giant sandalwood Buddha statue.

For a quieter side of the city, wander the lanes around F Shichahai, a cluster of lakes lined with old courtyard homes, cafes, and bars.

Built for the 2008 Olympics, G National Stadium, nicknamed the Bird's Nest, is still used for major events and lit up at night.

For contemporary art, head to H 798 Art District, a former military factory complex now packed with galleries, studios, and design shops.

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What to experience

Beyond the big sights, these are the things that make a visit to Beijing memorable.

- Sip tea on a lakeside terrace around Shichahai in the evening, when the area lights up.
- Take a rickshaw or bike ride through the hutong alleys to see courtyard life up close.
- Watch a Beijing opera performance. The elaborate costumes, painted faces, and acrobatics are worth seeing at least once.
- Join locals for morning tai chi or fan dancing in a city park, a daily ritual here regardless of the season.
- Browse a weekend antique and curio market, where vendors lay out everything from old coins to vintage posters.

Day trips

The mountains around Beijing hold some of the best-preserved sections of the Great Wall, plus a scattering of imperial tombs. You can visit each of these and return within a day.

- The Ming Tombs, ≈1 hour by car or bus: the burial site of 13 Ming-dynasty emperors. A long approach lined with stone animal statues leads into a quiet valley.
- Badaling Great Wall, ≈1.5 hours by bus or car: the most visited and most restored section of the Great Wall. It has a cable car and an on-site museum. Visit early in the day to avoid the largest crowds.
- Mutianyu Great Wall, ≈1.5–2 hours by car: a less crowded, more scenic alternative to Badaling, with a toboggan ride down from the wall.
- Gubei Water Town and the Simatai section of the Great Wall, ≈2.5 hours by car: a rebuilt canal town below a wilder, unrestored stretch of wall. Worth an overnight if you have the time.

Where to explore

Beijing's central districts each have a distinct character worth knowing about.

Dongcheng is the eastern half of the historic core, home to the Forbidden City and Tian'anmen Square.

Xicheng is the western half of the old city, with quiet hutong lanes and lakeside parks.

Haidian lies northwest of downtown and is known for its university campuses and the Summer Palace.

Getting there

- **By air**: Most international flights land at Beijing Capital International Airport (PEK), about 25 km northeast of downtown; the Airport Express train reaches the city center in about 25 minutes, or a taxi takes 40–60 minutes depending on traffic. Some flights, especially budget and domestic carriers, use Beijing Daxing International Airport (PKX), about 50 km south, connected to the center by a 20-minute express train.
- **By train**: Beijing is the hub of China's high-speed rail network. Trains from Beijing South station reach Shanghai in about 4.5 hours, and other lines connect to major cities across the country.
- **By bus**: Long-distance coaches serve nearby cities and towns from several terminals, but the train is faster and more comfortable for most routes.

Getting around

- **Public transit**: The subway network covers most of the city and is the easiest way to get around. Buy a rechargeable transit card at any station, or simply tap a contactless bank card or phone directly at the gate. Beijing Subway
- **Taxi / ride-hailing**: Didi is the dominant ride-hailing app; drivers rarely speak English, so have your destination written in Chinese characters.
- **On foot / cycling**: The historic core around the Forbidden City and the hutongs is best explored on foot or by bike-share — dockless bike-share bikes are everywhere and need only a phone to unlock.
- **Internet & payments**: Google, Gmail, WhatsApp, and Facebook are blocked — install a VPN before you arrive if you need them. Alipay and WeChat Pay are the default way to pay for almost everything; both now accept a linked foreign card, so set one up before your trip.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Moderate

The city is spread out, but the historic core and subway stations put most sights within an easy walk once you arrive by metro.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

High

Bike lanes are common and dockless bike-share is everywhere, making cycling a practical way to get around flatter neighborhoods and hutong areas.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: No — traffic and parking make driving in the city impractical, and the subway and taxis cover it well. For the day trips above, most travelers use a bus, a hired car with driver, or an organized tour instead of a self-drive rental.
- **Parking**: If you do drive, most hotels and malls have paid underground parking; street parking is metered and hard to find in the center.
- **Restrictions**: A license-plate rotation system bars private cars, including some rentals, from central roads on certain weekdays. Check the current rules before driving in the city.

Food & drink

Peking duck is the dish to seek out here — order it at a specialist restaurant rather than a general one, since the roasting and carving take real skill. Beyond duck, look for street food like jianbing (savory crepes) from a cart, and hand-pulled noodles or dumplings at a neighborhood spot.

For a concentrated food scene, head to the stalls and small restaurants around Shichahai, or wander the alleys near Nanluoguxiang, where cafes and modern Chinese kitchens sit next to old courtyard homes.

What to eat & drink

BREAKFAST

Dim Sum · 点心 (Diǎnxīn)
An assortment of small steamed and fried dishes served with tea, a Cantonese breakfast and brunch tradition.

Jianbing · 煎饼
A savory street-food crepe with egg, crispy cracker, herbs, and sauce, folded and eaten on the go.

Congee · 粥 (Zhōu)
Plain rice porridge, often served with pickles, peanuts, or preserved egg for breakfast.

LUNCH

Mapo Tofu · 麻婆豆腐
Soft tofu in a spicy, numbing sauce of chili and Sichuan peppercorn, usually with minced pork.

Lanzhou Beef Noodles · 兰州拉面 (Lánzhōu lāmiàn)
Hand-pulled wheat noodles in a clear beef broth, found in noodle shops nationwide.

DINNER

Peking Duck · 北京烤鸭 (Běijīng kǎoyā)
Roast duck with crisp skin, carved tableside and wrapped in thin pancakes with scallion, cucumber, and sweet bean sauce.

Hotpot · 火锅 (Huǒguō)
A simmering pot of broth at the table for cooking thin-sliced meat, vegetables, and noodles; Sichuan and Chongqing versions are notably spicy.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Xiaolongbao · 小籠包
Shanghai-style steamed soup dumplings filled with pork and hot broth.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Mooncake · 月饼 (Yuèbǐng)
A dense pastry with sweet filling, traditionally eaten around the Mid-Autumn Festival.

DRINKS

Baijiu · 白酒
A strong clear grain spirit, the standard drink for toasts at celebratory meals.

Chinese Tea · 茶 (Chá)
Green, oolong, and pu'er teas are drunk throughout the day and served free at many restaurants.

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Safety & health

Beijing is a safe city for tourists — violent crime against visitors is rare. The main risks are pickpocketing in crowded tourist spots and overpriced taxi or rickshaw rides, so agree on a rickshaw fare before getting in, and use a ride-hailing app or metered taxi instead of hailing on the street near major sights.

Tap water is not safe to drink — stick to bottled or boiled water, which is what most hotels provide.

History

Regional dynasties made Beijing a capital as early as the 10th century, long before it became the seat of a unified China. The Mongol Yuan dynasty took that step in 1271. The Ming emperors who followed began building Forbidden City in 1406 and moved into their new walled palace in 1420. The Qing dynasty kept the same palace and added retreats like Summer Palace. That palace was burned by British and French troops in 1860, and again during the Boxer Rebellion, and rebuilt both times.

The 20th century brought dramatic change. Mao Zedong proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic of China from Gate of Heavenly Peace, above Tian'anmen Square, in 1949. The square remains the symbolic center of the state today. More recently, the 2008 Olympics reshaped the city's skyline, leaving landmarks like National Stadium behind.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for China at a glance:

CURRENCY
CNY ¥

EMERGENCY
110

ELECTRICITY

Type A / Type C / Type I
220 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
Chinese

TAP WATER
Not safe to drink

Beijing Essentials

Beijing’s central axis anchors this collection, featuring the UNESCO-listed Forbidden City and the vast Tian'anmen Square. The city’s spiritual history is represented by the Tibetan Buddhist Yonghe Lamasery and the historic Confucius Temple. Visitors can explore the Ming-era Drum and Bell Towers, the Qing-style Prince Gong Mansion, and the scenic Shichahai lakes. Modern landmarks like the 'Giant Egg' performing arts center complement traditional experiences, such as sampling authentic Peking duck at the historic Quanjude or walking the Wangfujing shopping district.





A Forbidden City

Covering unbelievable 720,000 square metres of land, this UNESCO World Heritage Site is the largest ancient palace in the world, serving as...

4 Jingshan Qianjie, Beijing, 100009, China (39.91668, 116.39080)

Mo Closed

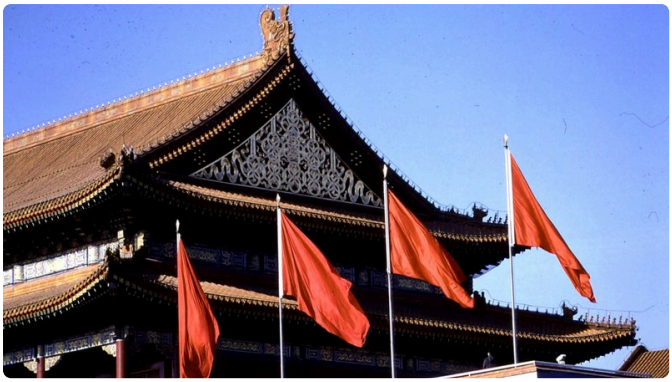
dpm.org.cn, +86 10 8500 7421



B Tian'anmen Square

Tiananmen Square or Tian'anmen Square () is a city square in the city center of Beijing, China, named after the eponymous Tiananmen located...

Beijing, China (39.90198, 116.39148)



C Gate of Heavenly Peace

This 15th-century gate is one of the most iconic symbols of China. It was built during the Ming dynasty and it used to be the entrance to...

西长安街 1, 100010 (39.90737, 116.39130)

Mo–Su 08:30–17:00



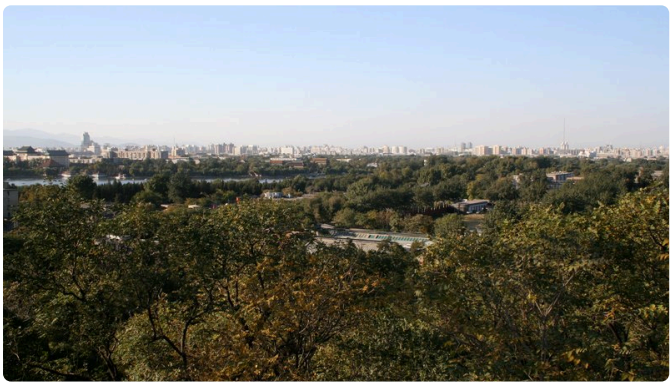
D Yonghe Lamasery

The Yonghe Temple, also known as the Yonghe Lamasery, or popularly as the Lama Temple, is a temple and monastery of the Gelug school of...

北京 (39.94587, 116.41097)

Mo–Su 09:00–16:00

yonghegong.cn, +86 10 8419 1906



E Jingshan Park

Jingshan Park is an imperial park covering 23 hectares immediately north of the Forbidden City in the Imperial City area of Beijing, China.

4号 Jingshan Front St, Dongcheng, Beijing, China (39.92443, 116.39039)



F National Museum of China

The National Museum of China is the national museum of China. It flanks the eastern side of Tiananmen Square in Beijing, China.

东长安街 16, 100006 (39.90371, 116.39566)

chnmuseum.cn, +86 10 6511 6400



G Wangfujing

Wangfujing is a shopping street in Beijing, China, located in Dongcheng District. The majority of the main area is pedestrianised.

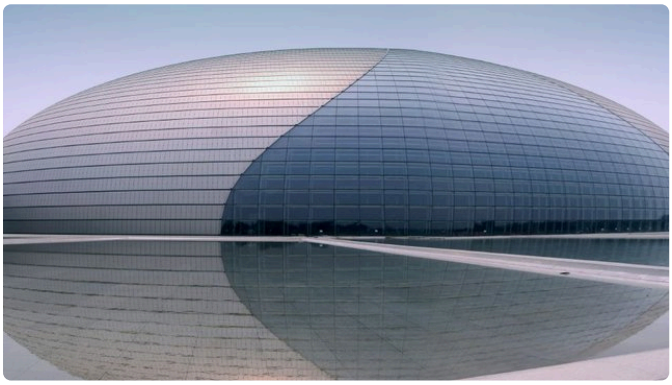
Beijing, China (39.90921, 116.40522)



H Shichahai

Shichahai is a historic scenic area consisting of three lakes in the north of central Beijing.

Beijing, China (39.93246, 116.38603)

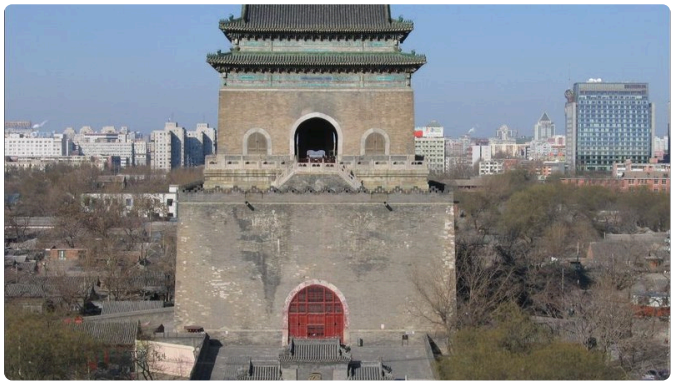


I National Centre for the Performing Arts

The National Centre for the Performing Arts, and colloquially described as The Giant Egg, is an arts centre containing an opera house in...

Beijing, China (39.90332, 116.38357)

chncpa.org, +86 10 6655 0000



J Drum and Bell Towers

The Drum Tower of Beijing, or Gulou, is situated at the northern end of the central axis of the Inner City to the north of Di'anmen Street.

Beijing, China (39.94101, 116.38958)



K Chairman Mao Memorial Hall

The Chairman Mao Memorial Hall, also known as the Mausoleum of Mao Zedong, is the final resting place of Mao Zedong, Chairman of the...

Tiananmen, Dongcheng, Beijing, China (39.90111, 116.39154)

Tu–Su 07:00–11:00

+86 10 6513 2277



L Confucius Temple

Beijing Temple of Confucius is the second-largest Confucian temple in China, after the one in Confucius's hometown of Qufu.

29号 Guanshuyuan Hutong, Dongcheng, Beijing, China, 100007 (39.94503, 116.40813)

Mo–Su 08:30–17:00

kmgzj.com



M Prince Gong Mansion

Prince Gong's Mansion, also known as the Prince Kung Mansion, is a museum and tourist attraction located in Xicheng District, Beijing, just...

前海西街 17 (39.93539, 116.38011)

pgm.org.cn, +86 010-83288149



N Beijing Zoo

Beijing Zoo is a zoological park in Xizhimen, Xicheng District, Beijing.

137号 Xizhimen Outer St, Xicheng, Beijing, China (39.94114, 116.33053)

beijingzoo.com, +86 10 6839 0274



Quanjude Roast Duck Qianmen Branch

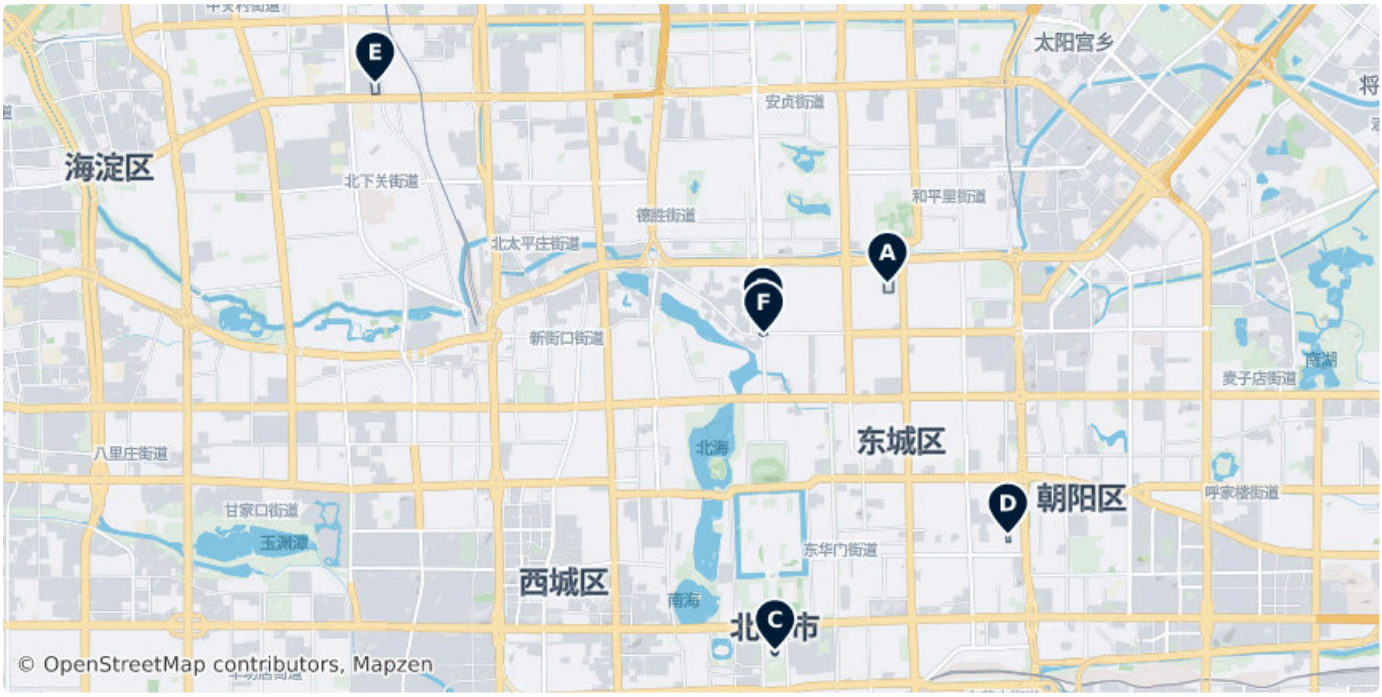
Quanjude is a Chinese restaurant chain known for its Peking roast duck and its longstanding culinary heritage since its establishment in...

30号 Qianmen St, Dongcheng, Beijing, China, 100051
(39.89522, 116.39209)

quanjude.com.cn, +86 10 6511 2418

Editor's Choice

Beijing’s historical landscape is defined by its architectural diversity, ranging from the second-largest Confucian temple in China to revolutionary landmarks like the Monument to the People’s Heroes. This collection highlights the city's temporal markers, including the Ming-era Bell and Drum Towers that once anchored the central axis, and the Temple of Wisdom Attained, a Buddhist site preserved since the 15th century. From the massive bronze castings at Dazhong Temple to the scholarly halls of the Confucius Temple, these sites represent the spiritual and civic foundations of the capital.





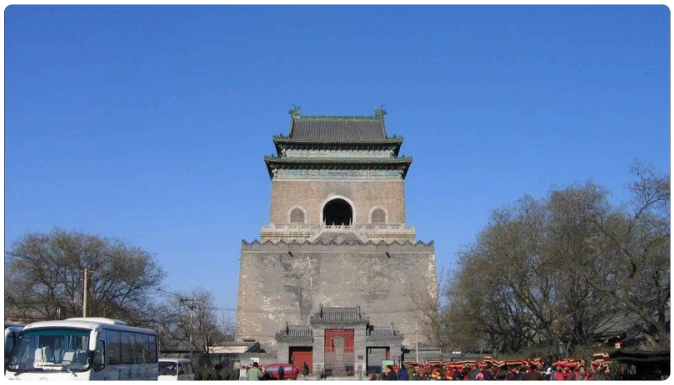
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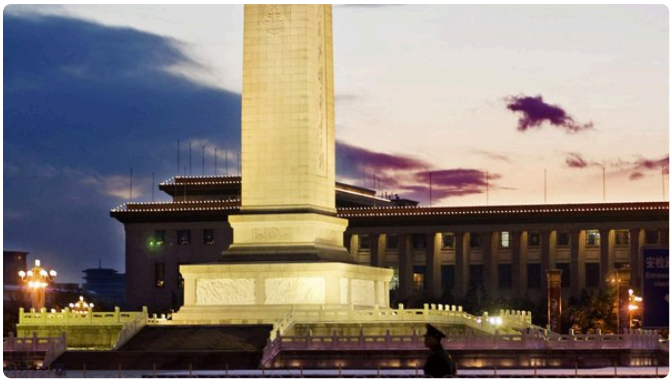


B Bell Tower

The Drum Tower of Beijing, or Gulou, is situated at the northern end of the central axis of the Inner City to the north of Di'anmen Street.

Beijing, China (39.94104, 116.38964)

Mo–Su 09:00–17:00



C Monument to the People's Heroes

The Monument to the People's Heroes is a ten-story obelisk that was erected as a national monument of China to the martyrs of revolutionary...

Beijing, China (39.90319, 116.39143)

china.org.cn/english/features/beijing/30800.htm



D Temple of Wisdom Attained (Zhìhuà sì)

The Zhihua Temple is a Ming dynasty-era Buddhist temple in Beijing, China.

禄米仓 5 (39.91646, 116.42604)

Tu–Su 08:30–16:30

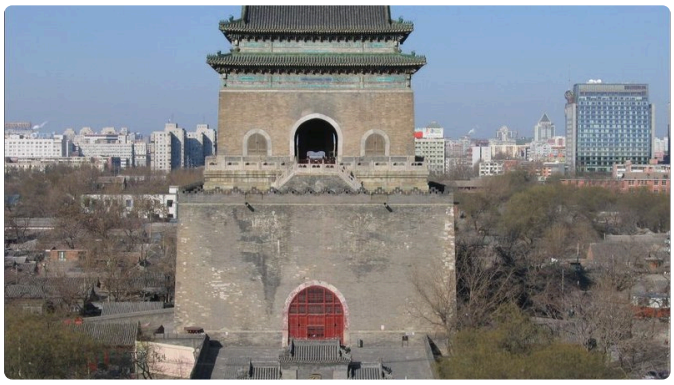


E Dazhong Temple

The Big Bell Temple, or Dazhong Temple, originally known as Juesheng Temple, is a Buddhist temple located on the North 3rd Ring Road in...

Beijing, China (39.96783, 116.33199)

+86 10 6255 0819



F Drum Tower

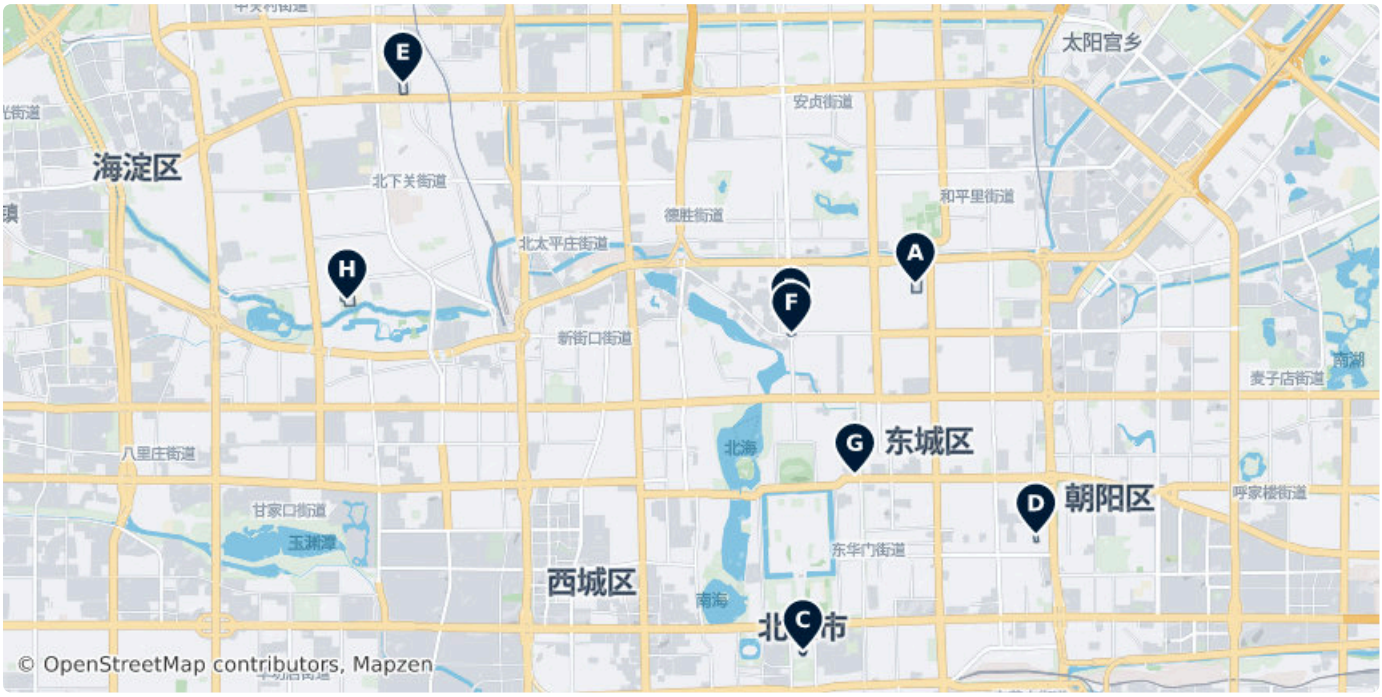
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Beijing, China (39.93934, 116.38974)

Mo–Su 09:00–17:00

Hidden Gems

Beijing's historical landscape extends beyond the Forbidden City to include these significant yet quieter landmarks. This collection features the Ming-era Zhihua Temple, known for its rare architecture and traditional music, and the Five Pagoda Temple, which showcases distinct Indian-style stone carvings. The list covers critical timekeeping history at the Bell and Drum Towers, the scholarly legacy of the Confucius Temple, and revolutionary milestones at the Red Building of Peking University and the Monument to the People's Heroes.





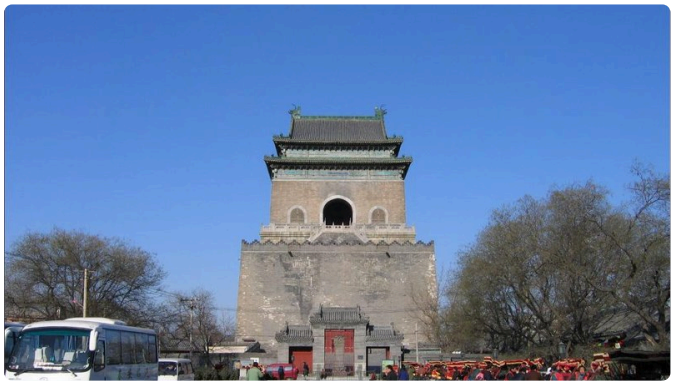
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Mo–Su 08:30–17:00

kmgzj.com

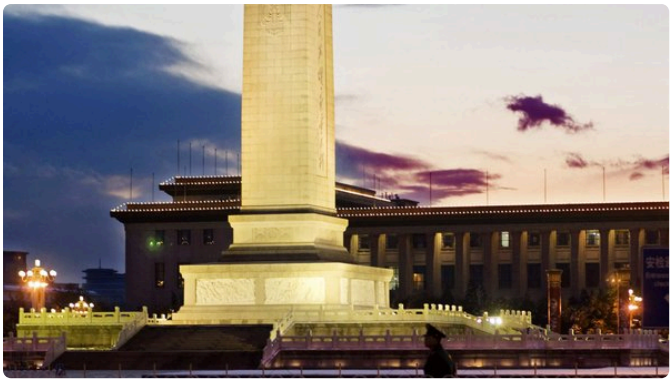


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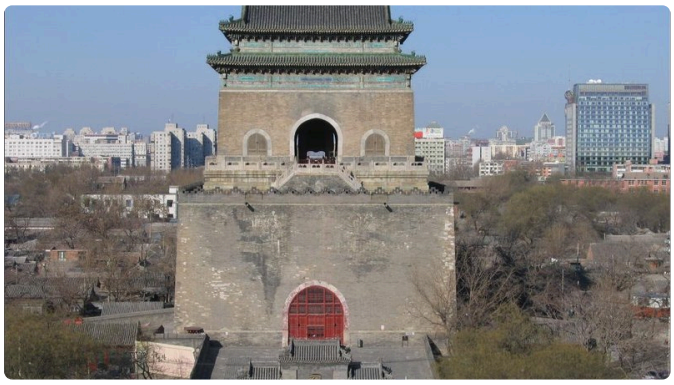


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+86 10 6255 0819



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Beijing, China (39.93934, 116.38974)

Mo–Su 09:00–17:00



G Red Building of Peking University

Completed in 1918, this red-brick structure served as the main building for Peking University's Faculty of Letters. It was the epicenter of the May Fourth Movement and the New Culture Movement, housing the office of Li Dazhao and the library where Mao Zedong worked.

(39.92332, 116.39913)



H Five Pagoda Temple

The Five Pagoda Temple, formally known as the "Temple of the Great Righteous Awakening" or "Zhenjue Temple" for short, is a Ming dynasty...

Beijing, China (39.94312, 116.32369)

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