

great wall cycle challenge, china



The Great Wall of China was originally constructed to keep out nomadic tribes who raided China's northern frontier. As you ride alongside the Great Wall, your imagination will take you back several centuries to when the wall was the frontline defence of Imperial China.

Your demanding cycling challenge starts in the village of Yanqing, north of Beijing city. Each day you will cycle between 60kms-110kms in the shadows of the Great Wall, visiting ancient Ming Tombs and Black Dragon Pools National Park along the way.

This incredibly scenic challenge covers a route along one of the world's best known UNESCO World Heritage Sites. It is a demanding yet rewarding expedition, as you enjoy the vast and beautiful mountain ranges all around and witness the rural life of northern China from your saddle. Training is essential!

On completion of your challenge you will return to Beijing to explore some of the many attractions of China's capital: the Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven and the Lama Temple.

Day 1: International Departure

Meet at the airport for your flight to Beijing, China. Our Charity Challenge representative will be there to assist you with the check-in and any last minute questions. You will be passing over the Great Wall before landing at Beijing airport.

Day 2: Beijing to Start of Cycle

Upon arrival in Beijing you will be met at the airport by a Charity Challenge local agent who will transfer you (2hrs) to your hotel in Yanqing, North of Beijing. After check in, you will have the rest of the afternoon to relax and have a bike fitting. In the evening after dinner, you will be given a challenge briefing and have the opportunity to ask any questions of your expedition leader. Overnight in hotel in Yanqing.



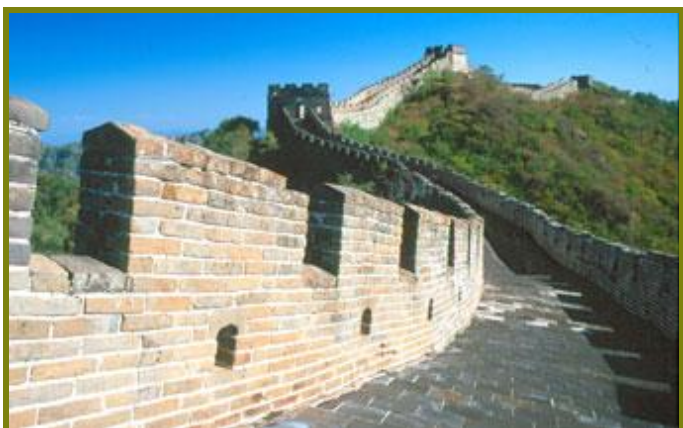
Day 3: Yanqing to Badaling Great Wall and on to Changping via Ming Tombs - approx 65kms cycle

This morning you will begin by cycling to the Badaling section of the Great Wall. Badaling Great Wall is the most representative part of the Wall and was promoted as a key national cultural relic, protected under the approval of the State Council in 1961. In 1988, it was enlisted in the World Cultural Heritage Directory by UNESCO. Badaling Great Wall is situated over 70kms North of Beijing. It is the most well-preserved section of the Great Wall, built during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). This section with an average altitude of over 1,000m is the outpost of the Juyongguan Pass. Badaling Great Wall symbolises a strong dragon winding its way along the mountain ranges! From here

you will cycle on a flat road followed by a winding, hilly road undulating for 20kms. You head towards the valley of Mount Heavenly Longevity, where 13 tombs containing the remains of emperors, empresses and concubines were buried between 1409-1644. From there, 50kms North-West of Beijing you will reach the Ming Tombs, the name given to the mausoleums of 13 emperors of the Ming Dynasty. The mausoleums have been perfectly preserved. Due to its long history and palatial architecture, the site has a high cultural and historic value. The layout and arrangement of all 13 mausoleums is very similar but they vary in size as well as in the complexity of their structures. After your visit you will continue along the road for 10kms to Changping where you will have dinner and overnight.

Day 4: Changping to Huairou County; front side of the Great Wall of Mutianyu – 90kms

This morning you will cycle back to the Ming Tombs, and then head up-hill until you see the Great Wall at Huanghuacheng. Located at Huanghuacheng town, Huanghuacheng Great Wall is 60kms from Beijing City and 29kms South-West of Huairou County. This section of the Great Wall has a total length of 10,800m and is connected to Mutianyu Great Wall in the East, and Juyongguan Pass and Badaling in the West. In the summertime, all the buildings in Huanghuacheng will be buried in layers of yellow flowers known as Huanghua which is where Huanghuacheng Great Wall got its name from. You will continue along winding, hilly roads through stunning scenery with the Great Wall stretching along the top of the hills creating a spectacular backdrop for your journey. The route continues uphill slightly to the Great Wall Mutianyu. Mutianyu Great Wall was first built in Northern Qi Dynasty (550-557). In the Ming Dynasty, Tan Lun and Qi Jiguang, two famous patriotic generals, rebuilt it in order to strengthen its defensive potential when they guarded the strategic pass. It served as the northern protective screen, guarding the capital and imperial mausoleums for generations. Mutianyu Great Wall winds 1.4miles through lofty mountains and high ridges, many sections of which are made of granite. Both of the wall's inner and outer sides have parapets to defend against enemies coming from the two sides. Some parapets are saw-tooth shaped instead of the regular rectangular form. Besides its strategically important location and compact layout, the Mutianyu Great Wall is also famous for the breath-takingly beautiful scenery. Woods cover over 96% of the total scenic area. The pine trees around Mutianyu Great Wall are well-known. There are more than 20 pines over 300 years old and about 200 pines over 100 year old.



Day 5: Huairou to Miyun Reservoir – 98kms

Your challenge today heads along a quiet hilly road until you get to the Northern end of Yunmengshan Mountain. With its main peak rising more than 1,400m above the sea-level, the Yunmengshan forest park covers a vast area of about 2,200 hectares. From the highest point at 860m you will see a river flowing through the valley. Your ride today circles the canyon until you return to the Black Dragon Pools National Park, from where you start descending to your overnight lodge by the Mountain of Five Towers and Miyun Reservoir. The Miyun Reservoir is one of Beijing's main sources of potable water. The original purpose of this large-scale feat of hydraulic engineering was flood prevention, electricity generation, agricultural irrigation and aquaculture. It has a catchment area of 15,788sq kms and a maximum storage capacity of 4.375 billion cubic metres. Presently, Beijing municipality consumes about four billion cubic metres of water annually.



Day 6: Miyun to Jinshanling Great Wall – 90kms

Your cycle today begins with a hilly road followed by a quiet country road through local villages. You will witness rural life typical of northern China. You will head towards the Jinshanling Great Wall. The Jinshanling Great Wall is the best preserved part of the Great Wall with many original features. The Jinshanling Great Wall is situated on the Big and Small Jinshanling mountains, hence its name. Based on huge stone bars, the Great Wall was then made by huge bricks, each of which weighed about 12kg. It has 5 main passes and 67 watchtowers. Every 100m, there is an enemy tower each of which is about 10m high. Featuring various structures and having various functions, those watchtowers are either one-tiered or two-tiered. On the first floor there are some windows for shooting arrows from. The roofs of the towers are many and varied; flat, arched, quadrangular or octagonal. Some are used to store weapons and hay. Others are used as soldiers' bedrooms.

Day 7: Jinshanling Great Wall to Huangyaguan Great Wall – 110kms

Today you cycle to the Huangyaguan Great Wall. Huangyaguan has two sections: Huangyaguan and Taiping Mountain Stronghold. The Huangyaguan Pass of Great Wall was first built during the Northern Qi Dynasty (550-557) and repaired in large scale with bricks during the Ming Dynasty. The Huangyaguan Pass comes out first in the ten most-visited sites in Tianjin. It is considered to be a miniature of the Great Wall of China. The entire section is built on an abrupt mountain

ridge. Being endowed with both natural beauty and cultural interest, it has become famous as a natural beauty spot and a summer resort. The major scenic area is composed of Huangyaguan Pass and Taiping Mountain Stronghold. In 1984, the people of Tianjin spent three years repairing 3,308 yards of the main wall from Banlagang Mountain in the East to Wangmaoding Mountain in the West. The defensive system of the wall is complete. Watch towers, frontier cities, drain holes, emplacements, barracks and other indispensable military facilities are arranged orderly along the wall. Besides, the stele forests of the Great Wall, Beiji Temple, the exhibition hall of famous couplets, the Great Wall Museum and the Phoenix Fortress have been newly built within the area. Located 6 miles North-West of Huangyaguan Pass and built 547 yards above sea level, the Taiping Mountain Stronghold is located in Xiaopingan Village. It controls the Chongshan Valley East of Huangyaguan Pass City. Overnight at a lodge by the Wall.

Day 8: Huangyaguan Great Wall to Pinggu County via Jinhai Lake - 25kms

This morning you will cycle along the road until it meets with Jinhai Lake. The stunning natural scenery surrounding the 6sq km freshwater lake has already established Jinhai Lake as one of the main tourist attractions in Pinggu District. From there you ride a further 9kms along a relatively flat road (a welcome relief after yesterday's long ride) to the centre of Pinggu where you will have completed your cycling challenge! Covering a total area of 1, 075sq kms, Pinggu District is divided into 21 townships with a population of 380,000. Most of the area is occupied by mountains. Its mountain products include walnuts, chestnuts and apricot kernel. You will then transfer (1.5hrs) back to your hotel in Beijing.



Day 9: Full Day City Tour of Beijing

As a reward for all your hard work, a day of leisure follows with a guided tour of the many attractions of China's capital city, including the Old Imperial Palace known as the Forbidden City & Tiananmen Square as well as the Temple of Heaven where the emperors worshipped God and prayed for good harvests. Later you will be dropped off at the cities market to shop for souvenirs. Your celebratory dinner will be the Peking Duck Banquet. Overnight hotel, Beijing.

Day 10: Arrive Home

After breakfast, you will have a few hours to explore, before being transferred to Beijing Airport for the return journey to London.



N.B. The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather patterns, the strength of the group and so on. We will do our very best to keep to the set itinerary however we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that might occur. In all such circumstances, your challenge leader will have the final say.

Optional extensions:

Xian Extension:

- Take an overnight train from Beijing to Xian
- Visit the Terracotta Museum and view the 1974 discovery of 6,000 life-size terracotta soldiers, warriors and horses.
- Visit the Grand Mosque in Xian
- Spend an evening watching a Tang Dynasty cultural show.
- Visit the Yangling Tomb of Han Dynasty dating back 2,000 years which is still an ongoing archaeological project

Warriors and Pandas Extension:

- See Terracotta Warriors as above
- Fly to Chengdu
- Visit the Giant Panda Research Base
- Fly back to Beijing

To find out more information, visit the Great Wall Discovery challenge page on our website or click on "extensions" in your member's area.