

great wall discovery, china



The Great Wall of China was originally constructed to keep out nomadic tribes who raided China's northern frontier. Your trekking challenge starts in Badaling where you will walk with a vigorous trek along an unrenovated section of the wall that weaves its way along the mountains. Each day you will trek along the stony, steep and sometimes slippery path, some sections are renovated and others not - twisting and winding its way along the mountains, interspersed with crumbling watchtowers.

It is demanding but also very rewarding, particularly on a clear day when you can look at the vast and beautiful mountain ranges. Your imagination will take you back several centuries to when the wall was the frontline defense of Imperial China.

On completion of your challenge you will return to Beijing to explore some of the many attractions of China's capital city: the Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven and the Lama Temple and you can opt to extend your trip with a visit to see the Terracotta Warriors and/or the giant pandas in Chengdu.

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 Badaling Area

Upon arrival in Beijing you will be met at the airport by a Charity Challenge local agent who will transfer you to your hotel (approx 1.5 hrs). After check in, you will have the rest of the afternoon to relax and enjoy your surroundings or go for a walk in the surrounding area. In the evening after dinner, you will meet for your

challenge briefing and have the opportunity to ask any questions of your challenge leader. Overnight in lodge.

Day 3: Badaling Great Wall – approx 6kms trek

Today, you will ease yourself into the challenge with a short but demanding day of trekking along the unrenovated section of the Great Wall of China. Starting with a road transfer (approx 30 mins) to get you to the start point, you will commence your climb, first steeply uphill, watchtower after watchtower along a very rough and stony path with uneven steps until gradually, it levels off and begins to descend again. In contrast to the renovated section nearby, this unrenovated part of the Wall is little visited and the other members of your Charity Challenge group may well be the only ones you see. The terrain on this day is quite tough due to parts of the Wall being worn down over the centuries but your efforts will be rewarded with stunning views. Following your descent, you will have lunch in a local farmer's house - a traditional household where you can get an idea of how the rural population live. After lunch, transfer back to your lodge to rest and reflect on your first day of trekking along the Great Wall.

Please note: in early or late season departures, if weather conditions are poor, this day may be substituted with a trek of equal length and difficulty on the Badaling and/or Juyongguan renovated sections of the Wall.

Approx trekking time – 4hrs.



Day 4: Black Dragon Pools - approx 10kms trek

This morning you will transfer to Heilongtan and begin today's trek in the lush environment of Black Dragon Pools National Park located next to the Great Wall. You will follow a meandering path up a narrow gully by the side of a stream to the top of a watershed. The views here are spectacular today is an excellent opportunity to see a little more of the area's diverse topography and plant life and escape the heat of the wall. From the watershed, you will descend steeply to what was the most famous waterfall in Beijing county. Passing the Heavenly Gateway, a huge natural arch appears high in the cliffs above you, the remains of what was once a waterfall which has now dried out due to climate change. Overnight in lodge.
Approx trekking time – 5hrs.

Day 5: Gubeikou Gateway – 12kms

The day starts with a drive (approx 1.5 hrs) to a village where your trek begins. There used to be three passageways between Northeast China, the Mongolian Highlands, Beijing and the central plains. These were Shanhai Pass, Juyong Pass and Gubeikou Gateway, the latter lying between the two passes and being located in today's Miyun County, northeast of the city of Beijing. Gubeikou was the site of incessant warfare and was heavily guarded by the armies of various dynasties from



7th-13th century. In particular, the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644AD) added many defence installations and increased the strength of the garrison. Nowadays, the main castle no longer exists and much of the Wall has collapsed. Only the Jinshanling section and Simatai section 6km to the east (currently closed to the public) remain in fairly good shape. The great variety of defence structures here are good examples for studying the architecture of the Great Wall. Overnight in lodge.
Approx trekking time – 5hrs.

Day 6: Jinshanling Loop – 10kms

After an early breakfast, you will start today's trek straight from the lodge. The walk from Jinshanling towards Simatai is a spectacular one that is partly on original unreconstructed Wall and partly on renovated sections, with many steep, crumbling staircases and ruined watchtowers along the way. Unfortunately, it is no longer possible as of mid 2010 to trek all the way to Simitai as the authorities have closed the area. You will walk 7kms along quite a demanding and steep path followed by a 3km walk along a pathway back to the lodge. Again, any pain will be eased by the amazing panoramic views with mountains stretching all around

you with the wall snaking its way along the tops of them as far as the eye can see. This is especially so on a clear day when you look out over the best part of eighty miles of mountains, with Mongolia on one side and China on the other. There are relatively few visitors here and so the sense of solitude and peace is wonderful. It does not take much for your imagination to take you back several centuries to when the wall was the frontline defence of Imperial China. Today's trek will involve climbing and descending many steps! You will transfer approx. 2hrs to the next lodge located en route back to the city of Beijing. Overnight in lodge.
Approx trekking time 5/6hrs.

Day 7: Mutianyu Section – 10kms

The reconstructed section of the Mutianyu Great Wall is where visiting heads of state are usually brought. Today will commence with a steep but paved walk up through lush woodland to join the Wall. From here the trek will follow this spectacular section where the original battlements and drainage systems have been carefully restored. The highlight of the day is the steep ascent up the Heavenly Stairway to a high viewing platform; this is perhaps the hardest ascent you will complete all week. On a clear day the Wall is visible on the mountains all around, a fitting end to your trekking challenge. After lunch, you will drive and visit a silk factory before arriving at your hotel in downtown Beijing.

Important note: in Mutianyu there are various ways of descending to your start point including a toboggan run. Charity Challenge advises all its participants not to take the toboggan. If you do choose to take it, you do so on the understanding that it is at your own risk and you may not be covered by your insurance policy should you be injured.

Overnight hotel, Beijing.
Approx trekking time - 4hrs.

Day 8: 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 followed by a walk in Jingshan Park previously known as 'coal hill' behind the Forbidden City. Coal Hill used to be the highest point in the imperial city of Beijing, from where you can get great views of the Forbidden City. After lunch you will visit the Temple of Heaven where the emperors worshipped god and prayed for good harvests.

Later you will be dropped off at the market to shop for souvenirs. Your celebratory dinner will be the Peking Duck Banquet. Overnight hotel, Beijing.



Day 9: Arrive Home

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

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 expedition 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 6000 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.

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