

# 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 Jinshanling with a vigorous trek that loops along the mountains either side of the Gubeikou Gateway.

Each day you will trek approximately 12kms along the stony path, 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.

## Day 1: International Departure

You will depart from Dublin to London Heathrow for your flight to Beijing, China. An Irish Red Cross representative will assist you in Dublin. Our Charity Challenge representative will be at London Heathrow 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 Trek

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 2 hrs). After check in, you will have the rest of the afternoon to relax 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 expedition leader. Overnight in lodge.

## Day 3: Black Dragon Pools - approx 10kms trek

After a short drive (15mins), you will 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 and the plant life provides a welcome respite from the heat of the Wall. From here 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 4: Gubeikou Gateway – 12kms

The day starts with a short drive 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. This is the location for the start of your Great Wall challenge. 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 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 5: Simatai to Gangfang Village back to Simatai – 20kms**

This morning you will continue the trek along the Great Wall from Simatai to its stunning east section. You will then move off of the Wall and trek to Gangfang Village in Hebei Province, where you will have the opportunity to meet and mix with the local villagers and experience Chinese rural life, which is a world away from life in Beijing. From here, you will trek a further 3hrs back to Simatai. Overnight in lodge.  
Approx trekking time 6hrs.



#### **Day 6: Jinshanling to Simatai – 11kms**

After an early breakfast, you will transfer by road to Jinshanling. The walk from Jinshanling to 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. It is quite a demanding day but also a very rewarding one, particularly 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 very few visitors here and so the sense of solitude is unrivalled. 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 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. 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 and then on to Dublin

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 beijing extension

### Day 9: City Tour

You will be met by your guide after breakfast and will start today's sightseeing with a visit to the Summer Palace which includes a short lake cruise. Being one of China's largest and best preserved imperial gardens dating back over 300 years, the Summer Palace used to be the place where the imperial families spent their summers. From here, you will drive to the Bird's Nest stadium where you will have the opportunity to take a look inside this incredible structure, so called due to its elliptical latticework which likens it to a gigantic bird's nest. Taking 5 years to complete, it was the main venue for the 2008 Olympic Games. After lunch (included) you will continue to the Lama Temple built in the 17th century, which still acts today as a Tibetan Buddhist temple. Here you will be surprised by the 18-meter-high Maitreya Buddha statue sculptured out of a piece of 26-meter-long log of sandal wood. Dinner is not included today to offer you the chance to sample your own choice of local cuisine!).



### Day 10: City Tour

In the morning, you will be collected for a Hutong Tour in a rickshaw along old Beijing's small alleys (known as hutong), up to Drum Tower. The Hutong Tour is the best way to see traditional life in Beijing. Here you will find many square courtyards, most of which were privately owned in the old times. The inhabitants of Old Beijing had their square courtyards built in the Hutongs as a symbol of wealth. Now most courtyards have been torn down however the area you are going to see has been very well-preserved, reminding you of the city's spacious culture. After lunch, you can be dropped off at the shopping area upon request, where the guide will be at your service. Once you've spent all you can, you will be treated to dinner at a fine restaurant.

### Day 11: International Departure

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

**Cost:** £210 per person sharing (based on 4 or more people in twin accommodation)

**Single Supp:** £55 (NB: there must be a minimum of 4 persons for this extension to run)

## optional xian extension

### Day 9: Terracotta Warriors & Xian Grand Mosque

Transfer from your hotel in Beijing to the airport for morning flight to Xian. Once the largest city in the world and capital for 11 dynasties, Xian is a favourite destination for travellers to China, due, in no small part, to the 1974 discovery of 6000 life-sized terracotta soldiers, warriors and horses which were created over 2200 years ago to guard the tomb of the first emperor in China's history Qin Shihuang. Upon arrival, transfer to the Terracotta Museum. Lunch and dinner are included today and in the evening you get the chance to enjoy a Tang Dynasty cultural show. Overnight hotel.

### Day 10: Yangling Tomb & Afternoon in Beijing

After breakfast visit to the Yangling Tomb of Han Dynasty dating back 2,000 years which is still an ongoing archaeological project. Later in the day, you will fly back to Beijing and transfer to your overnight hotel.

### Day 11: Morning in Beijing, Afternoon Flight to UK

Depart for international flight back to the UK arriving the same day and then onto Dublin.

**Cost:** £335 per person sharing (based on 4 or more people in twin accommodation)

**Single Supp:** £60 (NB: there must be a minimum of 4 persons for this extension to run)

If you would like to book either of the above extensions or have any enquiries about them, please call the Charity Challenge office on 020 8557 0000 or email [flights@charitychallenge.com](mailto:flights@charitychallenge.com). All bookings are subject to availability and group booking limitations. We therefore ask you to consider your travel plans as soon as possible and, if you want to extend your challenge, please put in your request immediately.