Great Wall Beijing - Travel Tips and Fun Facts about China Wall

Great Wall of China Facts and Travel Tips for Visiting

The Great Wall was on our individual bucket lists even before we met. We never had the chance to wonder, “Where is the Great Wall of China?” or “How long is the Wall of China?” because we learned about this beautiful landmark in China when we were little kids in school. We’ve heard some false information too, like that it’s the only manmade structure visible from the space (read more interesting facts about China).

Before we started travelling, the Great Wall of China seemed to us like a far off dream that we might never reach. Even though we learned about it as children, when we were in school we never expected to actually see it.
On March 2016, our dream came true. We went trekking along the amazing Great Wall Beijing! It was even more beautiful than we expected. The views from the top were absolutely breathtaking, and everything looked even better than in pictures.

It was one of the most amazing experiences we’ve ever had. Being there was like going back in time to the ages of emperors and kings. The view of the mountains, the smell of the forest, the sound of the wind, and the touch of the sun are things we will never forget...
Posing for the camera during our trek at the Great Wall of China

You can call us ignorant, but there are some things we didn’t know before visiting The Great Wall. But before we dive into these interesting facts about the Great Wall of China, let’s get the basics down.

Where is the Great Wall of China? What is the Great Wall of China? How long is the Wall of China? Who made the Great Wall of China? The answers to these basic questions are essentially Great Wall of China facts for kids – so, if you don’t know anything else about the famous landmark, you should at least know these Great Wall of China facts.

You don’t need to wonder too long about where is the Great Wall of China – because it’s obviously in China! More specifically, it’s in the entire northeastern area of the country and even spreads into present day North Korea. At 21,196 kilometres (counting all its branches), it’s the longest wall in the world and fortified the country against invaders as far back as 220 B.C. Several different dynastries contributed to the construction of the wall, so its contraction spans eras and centuries.

Now that we’re all on the same page, here’s what we’ve learnt since yesterday
1. You can’t walk along the entire wall.

First of all, the main section of the wall is more than 6,000 kilometres long (3,900 miles), so it’s impossible to overcome this distance in a short period of time. A skilled walker can walk 45 kilometres a day, which means he would need 134 days to walk this entire section of wall. The Great Wall of China location is not limited to a specific city or area of China - it is spread all over the northern part of the country! So it would take a long time to walk along it.

Secondly, some parts of the wall are closed (they are too dangerous for pedestrians and are occupied by the military).

The wall is not one uniform construction. The difficult terrain of the Great Wall of China location made it difficult to construct one continuous wall. Also, several dynasties took up different construction projects, so the wall is divided into sections.
2. The wall is situated in a mountainous area.

The main purpose of the wall, when built, was to protect the country from invaders. When it was time to build the Great Wall Chinese people took advantage of the topographies of particular areas (rivers, mountains, etc.) and used them as natural defensive barriers. That’s why all the watch towers are situated on the hills: the guards were able to see foreign troops from afar.

3. The wall is not visible from space.

This was sad news for us: we really believed that the Great Wall of China could be seen from the moon. Unfortunately, it’s not, as it’s just too small.

Neil Armstrong, the famous astronaut, said:

_I do not believe that, at least with my eyes, there would be any man-made object that I could see. I have not yet found somebody who has told me they’ve_
seen the Wall of China from Earth orbit... I’ve asked various people, particularly Shuttle guys, that have been many orbits around China in the daytime, and the ones I’ve talked to didn’t see it.

Jinshanling Great Wall

Trekking at The Great Wall Beijing

When it comes to visiting the Great Wall of China Beijing is the best major city to stay in as a base. When we arrived there, we were lucky enough to find the most amazing guide EVER! James from Trekclub helped us organise a trip and chose the best route.

James has visited the wall about 150 times per year for the last 10 years, so he is extremely experienced. He said that the most beautiful part of the The Great Wall in the Beijing area is Jinshanling. We trusted him and chose this route.

He picked us up at 8 a.m. The first surprise for us was that he wasn’t late – we’ve spent the last 3 months in Asia, so we’ve become used to the notorious delays. We liked James right away. He always smiles and speaks English very well.
James from the Trekclub and us

Getting from Beijing to Great Wall of China takes several hours, as the part of the wall closest point to Beijing sits outside of the city. So we drove for about 2 hours to the Great Wall Beijing. James guided us to the side entrance of the wall, where no tourists go. After 30 minutes we reached the top.

Setting our feet upon the Great Wall of China was a magical experience for us. Our dream came true! We were really there, visiting one of the most beautiful and meaningful places in the world!

James was right: the views from this part of the Wall were breathtaking. We couldn’t stop smiling and taking photos.
Jumping for joy at the Great Wall

No matter what your fitness level is, it’s really worth visiting! We did not see as many tourists as we thought, so it’s a great option for staying off the beaten path.

When it comes to the Great Wall Chinese people have extra pride, and we don’t blame them. After visiting so many countries on the world, we think that The Great Wall is one of the most beautiful places on Earth. No wonder that it’s one of the New Seven Wonders of the World.
Tips for The Great Wall Beijing

1. Dress wisely.

You will have to walk 11 kilometres (7 miles), so you shouldn’t arrive at the wall in flip-flops. At some points, the question you will be asking yourself is not “how long is the Wall of China?” but rather “how long is THIS section of the Great Wall Beijing?” so trekking or running shoes are your best bets.

The trek at this section of the wall takes 3,5 – 4,5 hours. It’s worth knowing that you will be walking alternately up and down. Even though it’s quite difficult, we believe this route is suitable for everybody. If you are not fit enough, it will just take you more time to walk through this section.

Be prepared for the sun and the rain. Wear sunglasses, take suncream and a raincoat.
2. **Bring water and snacks.**

You will be VERY thirsty at the wall. The Great Wall of China location has very dry air, so you need to take at least one big bottle of water per person. Snacks are important as well; James said that Snickers are a great way to get more energy :). We’re not complaining!
3. Take a guide to the Great Wall Beijing.

Don’t think about going to the wall alone. It’s not impossible, but it’s better to have an experienced, professional local who tells you amazing stories on the way. Having a guide will also ensure you know the most interesting Great Wall of China facts.

Although there are so many tourists, when visiting the Great Wall Chinese is still the best language to use to get around...and hiring a guide will guarantee you have access to a Chinese speaker!

James is a caring and responsible guide – we definitely think he’s the best! He took additional water and snacks just in case we didn’t have enough. Moreover, he stopped every time we became tired and adjusted the hiking pace to suit our needs. His car was very comfortable, and it was a pleasure to spend an entire day with him.

Overall, this trek was easy! If you want something more difficult, check out the
The World’s Most Dangerous Hike in Huashan, China. Or if you love a cosmopolitan environment, consider going to Hong Kong after your visit to the Great Wall in Beijing. Before going, you can use our guide to see the differences between the two places!

Disclosure: We want to thank James from the Trekclub for a complimentary tour. All opinions presented in this post are honest and our own.

Do you have more fun facts about the Great Wall of China? What’s on top of your bucket list? Share your thoughts in the comments!