

Shopping ■

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Shopping

Although not exactly a dictum of the late Mao Zedong, 'shop till you drop' has become a mantra of the Communist Party's popular reform drive. Building a strong consumer economy is one of the government's main goals. But persuading the Chinese to spend, spend, spend is easier said than done. China is a nation of savers, even more so now with the rising cost of education and healthcare, and in any case much of the population lacks the disposable income needed to splash out on fancy consumer items.

Běijīng though, is the exception to this. With much of the nation's wealth concentrated in the capital, there is a diverse and ever-growing selection of shops to choose from. They range from vast malls, which are still too expensive for most Běijīngers and so are great places to escape the crowds on weekdays, and department stores to roadside markets, street-side vendors and itinerant hawkers. Běijīng is a good place to find sought-after curios and souvenirs. It's worth spending a bit of time getting to know where the markets are and trawling through them with a careful eye and the bargaining gloves off.

There are several notable shopping districts offering abundant goods and reasonable prices, including Wangfujing Dajie, Xidan Beidajie and Qianmen (including Dashilar). More luxurious shopping areas can be found around the embassy areas of Jianguomenwai and Sanlitun; also check out five-star hotel shopping malls. Shopping at open air markets is an experience not to be missed. Běijīng's most popular markets are the Silk Street (p164), Panjiayuan (p163), Hongqiao Market (p162) and Sanlitun Yashow Clothing Market (p167). There are also specialised shopping districts such as Liulichang and the area around Panjiayuan for antiques.

Those on the hunt for silks, jade, Mao memorabilia, pearls, chops (carved name seals), brushes, inks, scrolls, handicrafts and antiques won't leave Běijīng empty-handed. Small or light items to buy are silk scarves, embroidered purses, paper cuttings, wooden and bronze Buddhas, paper lanterns and kites. Fashionistas can peruse the latest creations from the increasing number of homegrown designers.

You'll also be tripping over fakes by the bundle-load. The latest DVDs and CDs come smoking off the pirate's press seven days a week, to be hawked from roadsides and shops across the city. Pirate DVDs retail for between Y7 and Y10, but can be of dodgy quality. Generally, the newer the movie, the worse the copy will be. In shops, you can ask to see a clip before buying to see what you're getting. Top brand names – including Dunhill, Burberry and North Face – are faked wholesale. Unless you're buying from a shopping mall or a reputable outlet, assume it's counterfeit. For pharmacies, see p228.

Shopping Tips

Shops in Běijīng open earlier than in the West, between 8am and 8.30am, and close later, generally between 8pm and 9pm. The opening hours of all the shops listed below are included in the individual listing. Open-air markets are generally open from dawn to around sunset, but might open later and close earlier.

Always remember that foreigners are very likely to be quoted an inflated price for goods and services in Běijīng. Prices at department stores are generally fixed (although a 10% discount might be possible if you ask), but bargaining is very much standard practice everywhere else and vendors expect it. In markets such as the Silk Street, Hongqiao and Yashow, haggling is essential. It's best to bargain with a smile on your face. Remember, the point of the process is to achieve a mutually acceptable price; no market vendor is going to lose money

TOP FIVE SHOPPING HAUNTS

- Wangfujing Dajie (opposite) Běijīng's foremost shopping drag can be found in the Dǒngchéng area, east of the Forbidden City.
- Liulichang (p167) Curios and souvenirs amid flavours of old Běijīng in Xuānwū district.
- Dashilar (opposite) Bustling street of historic Qing dynasty shops not far from Tiananmen Square.
- Hongqiao Market (p162) Pearls and pirated labels.
- Panjiayuan (p163) Antiques and collectibles in a market atmosphere; only at weekends.

BEST BUYS IN BĚIJĪNG

Arts and crafts and antiques are all tempting buys in Běijīng, but it takes an expert eye to sort the wheat from the chaff, and even connoisseurs end up getting fleeced. Don't forget it's not just DVDs that are pirated; ceramics, oils and carvings regularly get the facsimile treatment. Those after real treasures will be looking for special certificates to take genuine antiques out of China (see Customs p220) and checking for the red wax seal that allows the owner to export it. Technically, items dating from before 1795 cannot be exported from China, but it is unlikely you will find anything genuinely that old. If buying a convincing reproduction or fake, ask the vendor to provide paperwork proving it does not infringe export regulations. Don't expect to unearth anything of real value; China has largely been sieved of nuggets.

Silk (*síchóu*) is an important commodity in Běijīng, and excellent prices for both silk fabrics and clothing can be found. The top places for silk in Běijīng include the Silk Street (p164), Beijing Silk Store (p162) and Ruifuxiang (p163).

Carpets (*dītān*) can be found at several stores, and Běijīng is an excellent place to shop for rugs, both antique and new, from all over China – from Xinjiāng and Níngxià to Gānsù and Tibet. Antique carpets are often preferred for their richness in colour, attained through the use of natural dyes, and because they are handmade. As well as specialist stores, carpet vendors can be found at Panjiayuan Market (p163), Beijing Curio City (p162), Zhaojia Chaowai Market (p164) and some five-star hotels, including the Kempinski Hotel (p186). It pays to know that some rugs advertised as Tibetan are actually made in factories in mainland China, so try to visit a reputable dealer rather than hunting out the cheapest item. Other carpets are woven from imported Australian wool, the fibres of which are not particularly suitable for rugs. A carpet should be woven from a durable rather than a soft wool. The quality of the dye is something else to ask about.

Tailor-made clothes can be an excellent idea if you have the time, and made-to-measure clothing, including traditional Chinese gowns (*qipǎo*, or *cheongsam* in Cantonese) and Mao suits, can be a bargain in Běijīng. Most tailors supply material, or you can bring your own. Cashmere (*yángróngshān*) from Inner Mongolia is another good buy in Běijīng. The 2nd floor of the Silk Street is a good place to hunt for cashmere bargains; however, as with other things here, eye it up carefully as synthetics sometimes pose as the real thing.

When looking for bookstores, don't expect to find a wide range of decent modern literature. Although things are improving, the selection in town remains sadly limited by Western standards. Our advice is to bring your own reading material. But if you like coffee table books about China, or classic 19th century literature, you'll do fine here.

just to get a sale. Unless you really want the item in question and can't find it anywhere else, simply walking away from the vendor's stall often results in a price reduction.

Most large department stores take credit cards, but always check that your card type is accepted. Smaller stores might take only Chinese credit cards and markets deal in cash, so come with plenty of it. Large department stores and hotels have ATMs with international access.

It's worth noting that in many shops, you can't just pay for your goods and walk out in one movement. The salesperson will give you a ticket for your goods. You then go to a till, hand over your ticket and pay for your goods; the stamped ticket is then returned to you. You then return to the salesperson who takes the stamped ticket and hands you your purchase. It's a tiresome, time-consuming process, so be prepared.

Many tourist shops can arrange shipping overseas, but you should go into the details of the costs and charges with the vendor before proceeding.

CHÓNGWÉN & SOUTH CHAOYANG

崇文、朝阳南

A prestigious, partly pedestrianised shopping street heading north just west of Oriental Plaza, Wangfujing Dajie boasts a solid strip of stores and is a favourite commercial haunt of locals, out-of-towners and tourists. Also called Gold St (Jin Jie) by Běijīng locals, in pre-liberation days Westerners knew it as Morrison St. The present name of Wangfujing Dajie remembers a 15th-century well.

If Wangfujing Dajie is too organised for you, the place to go and rub shoulders with the proletariat is Dashilar, a *hùtòng* (alleyway) running west from the top end of Qianmen Dajie. Imperial Běijīng's shops and theatres were not permitted near the city centre and the Qianmen-Dashilar District was outside the gates. Many of the city's oldest shops, including Ruifuxiang (p163) and Tóngréntāng (p164), can be found along or near this crowded *hùtòng*. It's a heady jumble of silk shops, tea shops, department stores, theatres, herbal medicine stores, food and clothing specialists and some unusual architecture.

A medieval flavour hangs over Dashilar, an echo of the days when bustling markets plying specialised products thronged each *hútòng* – lace in one *hútòng*, lanterns in the other, jade in the next. Dashilar was Silk St, but its official name referred to a wicket gate that was closed at night to keep prowlers out. At the time of writing, the area was undergoing an extensive pre-Olympics facelift, so expect some changes by the time you get there. In this area beware of scam artists who offer to guide you around, or to take you to see a traditional tea ceremony. Some visitors have been stung for a lot of money here.

BEIJING ARTS & CRAFTS CENTRAL STORE

Map p262 **Arts & Crafts/Jade**
Gōngyè Dàshà 工艺美术服务部
 ☎ 6523 8747; 200 Wangfujing Dajie; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-8pm Sat-Sun; ☎ Wangfujing
 This centrally located store (with a sign outside saying Artistic Mansion) is well known for its good selection of jade (with certificates of authenticity), jadeite, cloisonné vases, carpets and other Chinese arts and crafts. Jewellery (gold, silver, jade and pearl) is on the ground floor, with glass, paintings, calligraphy and fans on the 2nd floor. You can find woodcarvings, cloisonné, lacquerware and silks on the 3rd floor and jade carvings on the 4th floor.

BEIJING CURIO CITY

Map pp268-9 **Arts & Crafts/Antiques**
Běijīng Gǔwán Chéng 北京古玩城
 ☎ 6774 7711; 21 Dongsanhuan Nanlu; ☎ 9.30am-6.30pm; ☎ Guomao, then ☎ 28
 South of Panjiayuan (opposite) and next to the Antique City Hotel, Curio City is four floors of antiques, scrolls, ceramics, carpets and furniture. The ground floor is jade and pearls, the 2nd and 3rd floors are antiques and carpets and the 4th has antique clocks and watches. Popular with tour groups, this is a good place to find knick-knacks and souvenirs, but don't assume all antiques are the real deal.

BEIJING SILK STORE

Map pp268-9 **Silk**
Běijīng Sīchóu Shāngdiàn 北京丝绸商店
 ☎ 6301 6658; 50 Dazhalan Jie; ☎ 8.30am-7.30pm; ☎ Qianmen
 This big store has been supplying silk since 1840. The silk costs from Y40 a metre, or

you can visit the 2nd floor and pick up ready-to-wear pyjamas and shirts.

CHINA WORLD SHOPPING MALL

Map pp268-9 **Shopping Mall**
Guómào Shāngchéng 国贸商城
 ☎ 6505 2288; 1 Jianguomenwai Dajie; ☎ 9.30am-10pm; ☎ Guomao
 Adjacent to the first-rate China World Hotel (p182), this is a soulless mall packed with top-name brands, including Burberry, Moschino, Prada, as well as boutiques, jewellery stores such as Cartier (☎ 6505 6660; shop L104) and fast food restaurants. The Le Cool (p154) ice rink is in the basement.

FRIENDSHIP STORE

Map pp268-9 **Department Store**
Yǒuyī Shāngdiàn 友谊商店
 ☎ 6500 3311; 17 Jianguomenwai Dajie; ☎ 9.30am-8.30pm; ☎ Jianguomen or Yonganli
 The Friendship Store is badly over-priced, but the books and magazines section is worth a look (you can pick up overseas newspapers here) and the supermarket is OK.

HAOYUAN MARKET

Map pp268-9 **Souvenirs**
Háoyuán Shìchǎng 豪园市场
 West off Wangfujing Dajie; ☎ Wangfujing
 Branching off from Wangfujing Snack Street (p124) is this small, bustling souvenir market. There's lots of Mao memorabilia and other tacky tourist tat, but if you're pushed for time and need a last-minute present you might find something. Hagglng is imperative.

HONGQIAO (PEARL) MARKET

Map pp268-9 **Market**
Hóngqiào Shìchǎng 红桥市场
 ☎ 6711 7429; Tiantan Donglu; ☎ 8.30am-7pm; ☎ Chongwenmen, then ☎ 610
 Besides a cosmos of clutter (shoes, clothing, electronics and much more) and an impressive (and smelly) fish market in the basement, Hongqiao is home to more pearls than the South Seas. A huge range of them are available – freshwater and seawater, white pearls and black pearls – on the 3rd floor and prices vary incredibly depending on the quality. Hongqiao is a well-established spot on the Běijīng tourist trail and so prices for all goods are generally high, while the vendors, who often speak some English, are

canny bargainers. There's a decent view of the Temple of Heaven from the 5th floor, and if you have kids in tow, don't miss the Kids Toys market (Hóngqiào Tiānlè Wánjù Shìchǎng; ☎ 8.30am-7pm) in the building behind, stuffed to the gills with soft toys, cars, kits, electronic games, film tie-ins, models and more.

JINGDEZHEN CERAMIC CITY

Map pp268-9 **Ceramics**
Jīngdézhèn Táocǐ Chéng 景德镇陶瓷城
 ☎ 6512 4925/4867; www.jdtcc.com.cn; 277 Wangfujing Dajie; ☎ 10am-9pm; ☎ Wangfujing
 Just off Wangfujing Dajie, this huge emporium is spread over several floors with displays of well-lit ceramics from the Jingdezhen kilns. Pieces are modern, but many works on view employ traditional decorative styles and glazes, such as *doucai* (blue and white and coloured), *fancai* (*famille rose*) and *qinghua* (blue and white).

NEILIANSHENG SHOE SHOP

Map pp268-9 **Shoes**
Nèiliánshēng Xiédìàn 内联升鞋店
 ☎ 6301 4863; 34 Dazhalan Jie; ☎ 9am-8.30pm; ☎ Qianmen
 They say this is the oldest existing cloth shoe shop in China (it opened in 1853), and it has a factory that still employs more than 100 workers. Mao Zedong and other luminaries had their footgear made here and you too can pick up ornately embroidered shoes, or simply styled cloth slippers.

ORIENTAL PLAZA

Map pp268-9 **Shopping Mall**
Dōngfāng Guǎngchǎng 东方广场
 ☎ 8518 6363; 1 Dongchang'an Jie; ☎ 9.30am-10pm; ☎ Wangfujing
 You could spend a day in this staggeringly large shopping mega-complex at the foot of Wangfujing Dajie. Prices might not be cheap, but window shoppers will be overjoyed. There's a great range of shops and restaurants, the Star City Cinema (p151) and Megabite (p124) in the basement is a good place to grab a cheap meal when you're in the area. Many top names are here, including Max Mara, Paul Smith, and Valentino. Also in the basement, more affordable but still stylish clothes can be found at MNG (☎ 8518 6918), where prices start from Y300 for trousers and

Y900 for leather coats. The Olé supermarket nearby (p125) is one of Běijīng's best.

PANJIAYUAN MARKET

Map pp268-9 **Antiques/Crafts/Collectibles**
Pānjiāyuán Gǔwán Shìchǎng 潘家园市场
 ☎ 6775 2405; Panjiayuan Qiao; ☎ 4.30am-6.30pm Sat & Sun; ☎ Guomao, then ☎ 28
 Hands down the best place to shop for arts (*yishù*), crafts (*gōngyì*) and antiques (*gǔwán*) in Běijīng is Panjiayuan (aka the Dirt or Sunday Market). The market takes place only at weekends and has everything from calligraphy, Cultural Revolution memorabilia and cigarette ad posters to Buddha heads, ceramics and Tibetan carpets.

The market hosts up to 50,000 visitors a day scoping for treasures. Serious collectors are the early birds, swooping here at dawn to snare those precious relics. If you want to join them, early Sunday morning is the best time. You might not find that rare Qianlong *doucai* stem cup or late Yuan dynasty *qinghua* vase, but what's on view is no less than a compendium of Chinese curios and an A to Z of Middle Kingdom knick-knacks. Bear in mind that this market is chaos – especially if you find crowds or hard bargaining intimidating. Also, ignore the 'don't pay more than half' rule here – some vendors might start at 10 times the real price. Make a few rounds to compare prices and weigh it all up before forking out for anything. Off Dongsanhuan Nanlu (Third Ring Rd).

RUIFUXIANG

Map pp268-9 **Silk**
Ruifúxiāng Sīchóudiàn 瑞蚨祥丝绸店
 ☎ 6303 5313; 5 Dazhalan Jie; ☎ 9am-7.30pm; ☎ Qianmen
 Housed in a historic building on Dashilar, this is one of the best places in town to browse for silk. There's an incredible selection of Shāndōng silk, brocade and satin-silk. Ruifuxiang also has an outlet at Wangfujing Dajie (☎ 6525 0764; 190 Wangfujing Dajie).

TEN FU'S TEA

Map p262 **Tea**
Tiānfú Míngchá 天福茗茶
 ☎ 6524 0958; www.tenfu.com; 88 Wangfujing Dajie; ☎ 9am-11pm; ☎ Wangfujing
 With 26 branches across Běijīng, this Taiwanese chain has all the tea in China. They stock top-quality loose tea (prices start at Y10 for a bag) from all over the country. The staff can line you up with a free tea tasting.

TÓNGRÉNTÁNG

Map pp268-9

Chinese Medicine

同仁堂

☎ 6303 1155; 24 Dazhalan Jie; 🕒 8am-7.30pm;

📍 Qianmen

This famous, now international, herbal medicine shop has been peddling pills and potions since 1669. It was a royal dispensary in the Qing dynasty and its medicines are based on secret prescriptions used by royalty. You can be cured of anything from fright to encephalitis, or so the shop claims. Traditional doctors are available on the spot for consultations. You can find the three-storey shop just west of the Zhang Yiyuan Teastore, with a pair of *qilin* (statues of mythical Chinese creatures) standing outside.

SILK STREET

Map pp268-9

Silk/Clothing

Xiùshuǐ Shìchǎng 秀水市场

☎ 6501 8811; 14 Dongdaqiao Lu; 🕒 10am-

8.30pm; 📍 Yonganli

Relocated into a four-storey building on the corner of Jianguomenwai and Dongdaqiao Lu, the Silk Street continues to thrive despite some vendors being hit by lawsuits from top name brands tired of being counterfeited on such a huge scale. Not that the legal action has stopped the coachloads of tourists who descend on this place every day. Their presence makes effective bargaining difficult. But this is a good place for cashmere, T-shirts, jeans, sneakers and the odd, chic dress.

ZHAOJIA CHAOWAI MARKET

Map pp268-9

Furniture

Zhàojiā Cháowài Shìchǎng 朝外市场

☎ 6770 6410; 43 Huawei Beili; 🕒 10am-5.30pm

Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm Sat & Sun; 📍 Guomao, then 📍 28

This huge four-storey warehouse is packed to the gills with traditional Chinese furniture –

TOP FIVE CLOTHING STOPS

- Sanlitun Yashow Clothing Market (p167) Běijīng's best multi-floor clothing emporium.
- China World Shopping Mall (p162) Top names and top prices.
- Oriental Plaza (p163) Upscale brands mingle with the trendy here.
- Silk Street (above) Haggle, haggle, haggle.
- Beijing Silk Store (p162) Well-priced, huge range of silk material.

from opium beds to barrel stools to ornately carved side tables and carpets. Prices are reasonable, but remember to factor in shipping costs (which vendors can arrange). Many stallholders say their wares are genuine Ming or Qing items, but take it all with a pinch of *yán* (salt). The stalls get fancier the higher the floor, and prices rise accordingly. The 4th floor contains ceramics and other antiques. The market is on the southern part of Dongsanhuan Nanlu at Panjiaqiao, a short distance north of Beijing Curio City (p162).

DŌNGCHÉNG 东城

FIVE COLOURS EARTH

Map p264

Clothing

Wūsètǔ 五色土

☎ 6415 3839; www.fivecoloursearth.com;

10 Dongzhimen Nandajie (just north of the Old Poly Plaza); 🕒 9am-6pm; 📍 Dongsishitiao

Stylish clothing with a traditional Chinese twist from a local designer can be found at this store. The sexy tops incorporate embroidery made by the Miao minority in Guizhōu province. It's good for jackets and coats too. Much of Five Colours Earth's stock is sold overseas, in the US and Italy, but you can pick it up far cheaper here.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES BOOKSTORE

Map p262

Books

Wàiwén Shūdiàn 外文书店

☎ 6512 6911; 235 Wangfujing Dajie; 🕒 9am-

10pm; 📍 Wangfujing

This bookshop has a reasonable selection of English-language novels, a range which seems to be improving all the time, as well as lots of nonfiction and a selection of art, architecture and design books. There's a good kids section and they stock a limited number of Lonely Planet guides. English-language books and those in other languages are located on the 3rd floor.

LU PENG TRENDSETTERS

Map p262

Clothing

Běijīng Xīndélù Huáyī Shāngháng

北京鑫德路华衣商行

☎ 6402 6769; 198 Gulou Dongdajie; 🕒 9am-7pm;

📍 Andingmen or Gulou

Exquisite, hand-tailored *qipáo* (traditional Chinese dresses) are the order of the day

ART CLASS

With the boom in contemporary Chinese art showing no signs of slowing down, more and more visitors to Běijīng are searching for artwork to take home with them. Buying a piece that is going to be of lasting value though, as opposed to something that is useful only for covering up that damp patch on your living room wall, is not as simple as it sounds. But there are a few guidelines you can follow which will increase your chances of walking off with a future masterpiece. Spending some time researching the art scene before you arrive is a good way to get started. Visit galleries in your hometown and check out magazines like *Art Forum* (artforum.com), *Art News* (www.artnews.com) and *Flash Art* (www.flashartonline.com) to find out about current trends and artists attracting attention. Once you're in Běijīng visit as many galleries as you can (p28). By seeing a lot of art, you'll develop a sense of what is good or bad and, more importantly, what appeals to you. The staff in reputable galleries will help you too. Galleries depend on word of mouth for their reputations and the established ones won't just try and sell you any old piece, they'll try to find something that fits with what you want. Rely on your gut instinct when dealing with the galleries; if you think you're being taken for a ride, walk away. Once you do find something you want to buy, you should be able to bargain a little. Unless the gallery is under strict instructions from the artist not to negotiate, or they feel the artist is truly exceptional, they will be flexible over the price. Ultimately, how much you're prepared to spend will depend on your bank balance and how much you like the piece you're interested in. But the days when Chinese artists let their work go for knockdown prices are long gone. Realistically, you'll need to spend at least US\$1000 for something from an up-and-coming artist that will subsequently increase in value.

at this tiny shop. They're not cheap but the quality is superb and Lu Peng is one of the few Chinese designers who specialises in making them these days.

XIN ZHONGGUO KID'S STUFF

Map p262

Toys

Xīn Zhōngguó Értóng Yòngpǐn Shāngdiàn

新中国儿童用品商店

☎ 6528 1774; 168 Wangfujing Dajie; 🕒 9am-

9pm; 📍 Wangfujing

If you need to find somewhere to occupy kids, bring them to this maze of toys, model cars and trains, gadgets, puzzles, flashing lights and electronic noises, overseen by helpful staff. On the 2nd floor, you can find nappies (diapers) and other essentials.

PLASTERED T-SHIRTS

Map p262

T-shirts

Chuàngkētiē Tixù 创可贴T-恤

☎ 139 102 05721; www.plastered.com.cn;

61 Nanluogu Xiang; 🕒 1-10pm Mon-Fri, 10am-

10pm Sat & Sun; 📍 Andingmen

Purveyors of ironic T-shirts, this is a shop for people with a sense of humour. The T-shirts, from Y80, incorporate iconic Běijīng logos: Yanjing beer, old taxi rate stickers, the Běijīng subway map, or you can go for the ones that portray the capital as a Hawaii-like haven of palm trees and sunsets. For brave foreigners resident in Běijīng there's the 'expat prick' T-shirt, as well as one with the characters for *gong bao ji ding* (every Chinese-challenged foreigners' favourite chicken dish) on it.

SHOPPING ARCADE, PENINSULA

BEIJING HOTEL Map p262

Shopping Mall

Wángfú Fāndiàn

☎ 6559 2888; 8 Jinyu Hutong; 🕒 11am-9.30pm;

📍 Wangfujing or Dongdan

The big boys of fashion: Chanel, Dior, Gaultier, Gucci, Hermès, Louis Vuitton, Prada and Versace, can be found in this exclusive and very hushed basement-level shopping haunt beneath the Peninsula Beijing hotel (p185). There are also Cartier and Tiffany outlets, so you can pick up the diamonds you'll need to go with your new outfit.

VINTAGE STORE Map p262

Clothing

Chāinà 拆那

☎ 130 010 90247; 6 Yandai Xiejie; 🕒 4pm-9pm

Wed-Sun; 📍 Gulou

Can't leave Běijīng without a retro Bruce Lee T-shirt? Desperate to replace your vintage Levis? Then this is the place for you. With posters of Steve McQueen on the wall, a solid selection of old-school T-shirts (Y100), jackets and jeans (Y800), entering this funky little store is like stepping back in time to the '70s.

ZHAOYUANGE Map p262

Kites

Zhāoyuángé 昭元阁

☎ 6512 1937; 41 Nanheyuan Dajie; 🕒 9am-

8.30pm; 📍 Tiananmen Dong

If you're into Chinese kites, you will love this minute shop on the west side of Nanheyuan Dajie. There's a range of traditional Chinese paper kites here, starting at Y5 for a simple kite, up to around Y300 for a dragon. You

can also pick up Běijīng opera masks. The owner does not speak much English, but you can browse and make a selection.

CHÁOYÁNG 朝阳

The vast Cháoyáng district, home to the Sanlitun embassy area with its numerous bars and restaurants and the cluster of top-end hotels around the Lufthansa Center, is also one of Běijīng's foremost shopping areas.

3.3 SHOPPING CENTRE

Map p264 Shopping Mall

Fúshì Dàshà 服饰大厦

☎ 6417 3333; 33 Sanlitun Beijie; ☎ noon-midnight; ☎ Dongsishitiao, then 🚶 701 heading east

With its collection of trendy boutiques and accessories stores, this brand new mall in the heart of Sanlitun caters for Běijīng's bright young things. The 5th floor has a selection of tailors who promise a 24-hour turnaround.

3501 PLA SURPLUS STORE

Map p264 Clothing/Hiking

3501 Jūnyòngpǐn Diàn 军用品店

☎ 6585 9312; 23 Dongsanhuan Beilu (just south of intersection with Chaoyangmenwai Dajie); ☎ 9am-5pm; ☎ Guomao, then 🚶 421 or 701 heading north
The Chinese armed forces, the PLA, are the largest in the world and this is where you can pick up some of their kit. Staffed by a cheery crew of middle-aged ladies, it's a good place to find cheap but hard-wearing boots, heavy greatcoats (Y125) – ubiquitous in the Chinese winter, fur hats (Y42), long johns and waterproofs. Sturdy binoculars, compasses, knives and watches are also available, but at the time of writing Long March rockets were not in stock. Located just south of the intersection with Chaoyangmenwai Dajie.

ALIEN'S STREET MARKET

Map p264 Clothing Market

Lǎo Fān Jiē Shìchǎng 老番街市场

Chaowaisichang Jie; ☎ 9.30am-7pm; ☎ Chaoyangmen

This market just northwest of Ritan Park is packed with a huge variety of clothing, as well as tons of accessories. You can find most things here. It's popular with visiting Russian traders, which means the clothes come in bigger sizes than usual and the vendors will greet you in Russian. Hagglng is essential.

BAINAOHUI COMPUTER SHOPPING

MALL Map p264 Computers/Electronics

Bǎinǎohuì Diànnǎo Shìchǎng 百脑汇电脑市场

☎ 6599 5912; 10 Chaoyangmenwai Dajie; ☎ 9am-8pm; ☎ Chaoyangmen, then 🚶 112 heading east
Four floors of gadgetry, including computers, Ipods, MP3s, blank CDs and DVDs, gaming gear, software and other accessories. The prices are fairly competitive and you can bargain here, but don't expect too much of a reduction. Next to this mall there are a number of shops – good places to pick up mobile phones and local SIM cards.

BOOKWORM Map p264 Books

Shūchóng 书虫

☎ 6586 9507; Bldg 4, Nan Sanlitun Lu; ☎ 9am-1am; ☎ Dongsishitiao, then 🚶 701 heading east
Apart from its lending library of 14,000 books, the 'worm' (see p135) has a small but interesting selection of new English-language fiction and nonfiction tomes available for sale. You can find Lonely Planet guides here, as well as UK and US magazines.

DARA Map p264 Furniture/Household Items

Sānlitún Shēnghuò Fāngshì Diàn

三里屯生活方式店

☎ 6417 9365; 17 Gongrentiyuchang Beilu; ☎ 9.30am-8pm, to 9pm in summer; ☎ Dongsishitiao
Trendy destination for stylish household accessories: ceramics, cushions, lamps, mirrors, and antique and repro furniture. Swish and expensive, they design to order too. Opposite the north gate of the Workers' Stadium.

EXTREME BEYOND Map p264 Hiking

Zhōngshuāng Tànxìǎn Yěyíng Dēngshān Zhuāngbè

lzhuanmaidian 中双探险野营登山装备专卖店

☎ 6506 5121; 6 Gongrentiyuchang Donglu; ☎ 10am-7.30pm; ☎ Dongsishitiao, then 🚶 701 heading east
This small shop has a good selection of real brand-name hiking boots, waterproof jackets, backpacks and sleeping bags. Prices aren't cheap (eg Y650 for hiking boots), but goods are the genuine article. Only JCB cards.

LUFTHANSA CENTER YOUYI

SHOPPING CITY Map p264 Shopping Mall

Yānsā Yōuyì Shāngchǎng 燕莎友谊商场

☎ 6465 1188; 50 Liangmaqiao Lu; ☎ 9am-10pm; ☎ Dongsishitiao, then 🚶 701 heading east

The gigantic Lufthansa Center was the first Western-style mall to appear in Běijīng. It's looking its age a bit now, but is still a reliable, if pricey, source of upmarket Western clothing and cosmetics and is especially good for sports gear. The Yansha Supermarket (p125) in the basement is one of Běijīng's best, while the Yansha (☎ 6465 1188) bookstore on the 4th floor is worth a browse. There are restaurants and ATMs here too.

PACIFIC CENTURY PLACE

Map p264 Department Store

Tàipíngyáng Bǎihuò 太平洋百货

☎ 6539 3888; 2 Gongrentiyuchang Beilu; ☎ 10am-10pm; ☎ Dongsishitiao, then 🚶 701 heading east

This upmarket store has clothing for all, as well as electronics and cosmetics, a pharmacy, laundry and a supermarket. The basement is particularly useful for those with kids; you can find extra-large nappies (diapers) and sterilising equipment here.

SANLITUN YASHOW CLOTHING

MARKET Map p264 Clothing

Sānlitún Yǎxiù Fúhuāng Shìchǎng

三里屯雅秀服装市场

☎ 6416 8945; 58 Gongrentiyuchang Beilu; ☎ 9.30am-9pm; ☎ Dongsishitiao, then 🚶 701 heading east

Five floors of virtually anything you might need and a favourite with expats and visitors. Basement: shoes, handbags and suitcases. Big Shoes (☎ 137 0113 9838) is useful for anyone struggling to find suitably sized footwear. First floor: coats and jackets. Second floor: hiking gear, suits, ladies wear. Third floor: silk, clothes, carpets, fabrics and tailors to fashion your raw material into something wearable. Fourth floor: jewellery, souvenirs, toys and a beauty salon. Bargain hard here.

TORANA GALLERY Map p264 Carpets

图兰纳西藏手工地毯店

☎ 6465 3388 ext 5542; Shop 8, 1st fl, Kempinski Hotel; ☎ 10am-10pm; ☎ Dongsishitiao, then 🚶 701 heading east

The owner of this popular store, Chris Buckley, wrote the first editions of the Lonely Planet *China* guide back in the '80s. But nepotism isn't why his shop features here. Instead, it's the range of rugs exclusively made of wool from Tibetan highland sheep

and decorated with traditional emblems. Prices start at Y2200 and you can also custom design your own carpet.

FĒNGTÁI & XUĀNWŪ

丰台、宣武

Not far west of Dashilar is Liulichang, Běijīng's premier antique street. Worth delving into for its quaint, albeit dressed-up, village-like atmosphere, the shops on Liulichang (meaning 'glazed-tile factory') trade in (largely fake) antiques. Alongside ersatz Qing monochrome bowls and Cultural Revolution kitsch, you can also rummage through old Chinese books, paintings, brushes, ink and paper. Prepare yourself for pushy sales staff and stratospheric prices – wander round and compare price tags. If you want a chop made, you can do it here.

At the western end of Liulichang Xijie, a collection of ramshackle stalls flog bric-a-brac, Buddhist statuary, Cultural Revolution pamphlets and posters, fake Tang dynasty three-colour porcelain (*sāncǎi*), shoes for bound feet, silks, handicrafts, kites, swords, walking sticks, door knockers and so on.

Elsewhere in the Xuānwū area, you can find Sogo (see p168), perhaps Běijīng's best mall, and the giant Xidan Bookshop (p168).

CATHAY BOOKSHOP

Map pp266-7 Books/Chinese Artwork

Zhōngguó Shūdiàn 中国书店

☎ 6303 2104; 34 Liulichang Xijie; ☎ 9am-6pm; ☎ Hepingmen

There are several branches of the Cathay Bookshop on Liulichang. This branch (Gǔjī Shūdiàn), on the south side of Liulichang Xijie opposite Róngbǎozhǎi, is worth checking out for its wide variety of colour art books on Chinese painting, ceramics and furniture, and its books on religion (most books are in Chinese). Upstairs has more art books, stone rubbings and antiquarian books. The store takes MasterCard and Visa. There's another branch at 18 Liulichang Xijie that has a paper cuts exhibition. It also sells an interesting set of bookmarks (Y10) – photographs of the old Qing imperial household, including snapshots of Reginald Johnson (Last Emperor Henry Puyi's English tutor), Puyi practising shadow boxing, eunuchs and Cixi dressed as Avalokiteshvara (Guanyin). Another branch is at Liulichang Dongjie (106 Liulichang Dongjie).

LOST IN TRANSLATION Damian Harper

Běijīng may be a minefield of shoddy English, but nothing is more adept at mangling the language than Chinese–English computer-translating. This run-of-the-mill offering from a Běijīng DVD hawk-stall offers a glimpse into the mesmerising chaos of machine translations. The film is *Hollow Man 2* and the blurb says:

'Christian the history is especially, annoyed detective method gram of Seattle, member living creature learn a of a read, an employ the soldier, they have what contact? Originally the history was especially seduce into wrong doing by a of the, taking the research to manufacture a kind of and can chase the person. The body becomes the transparent syrup liquid.'

At first glance this impenetrable chunk of text – designed to convince you to part with your hard-earned *qián* and actually buy *Hollow Man 2* – resembles some kind of psychedelic gibberish or the ravings of a lunatic. With careful study and patience, however, readers of Chinese and English may identify *'Christian the history is especially'* as none other than Christian Slater, whose Chinese name is 克里斯蒂安 史莱特. Slater's Chinese surname – 史莱特 – is meaningless and is used for sound value alone, as it approximates the pronunciation of the name Slater – *Shilait*. The machine translator has committed an impressive error by translating Slater's Chinese surname literally into English. So 史 is translated as 'history', and 特 is translated as 'especially', obliterating the actor's name in the process and generating nonsense English.

Compounding this, the machine translator has retranslated Slater's first name – Christian – back into the Chinese as 基督徒 – literally a 'Christian believer' – so neither the English nor the Chinese affirm that Christian Slater is in the film.

'Annoyed detective method gram of Seattle' may have you scratching your bonce, but let me assist. The Chinese is as follows: 烦闷的西雅图侦探法兰克, which literally means 'Annoyed Seattle detective Frank'. Again, a name in Chinese has caused confusion; the name Frank (法兰克) has gone through the machine, emerging as *'method gram'*, a literal rendering of the characters 法 (method) and 克 (gram).

Please bear with me. *'Member living creature learn a of a read'* is a crazy rendering of 分子生物学家玛姬道尔读顿 which actually means 'molecular biologist Maggie Dalton', one of the film's principal characters. The characters for molecular biologist (分子生物学家) have come up as *'member'* (分子) and *'living creature'* (生物), while *'learn a of a read'* is a tangled translation of '学家' (part of the word 'biologist') and the name Maggie Dalton (玛姬道尔读顿), all of which plays havoc with the translation machine's low IQ.

If you're getting the hang of it, you won't be fazed by: *'Originally the history was especially seduce into wrong doing by a of the...'* which naturally means 'What happened was that Christian Slater was tempted by Maggie Dalton', while *'The body becomes the transparent syrup liquid'* is a feeble stab at selling the film's sci-fi gimmick, a gel that can render you invisible.

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RÓNGBǎOZHĀI Map pp266-7 Chinese Artwork

荣宝斋

☎ 6303 6090; 19 Liulichang Xijie; ☎ 9am-5.30pm;

📍 Hepingmen

Spread over two floors and sprawling down quite a length of the road, this store has a selection of scroll paintings, woodblock prints, paper, ink and brushes. As it's state-run, the effect is rather uninspiring and the collection somewhat flat. Prices are generally fixed, although you can usually get 10% off. The shop accepts JCB credit cards.

SOGO Map pp266-7 Shopping Mall

崇光百货

☎ 6310 3388; 8 Xuanwumenwai Dajie; ☎ 9.30am-

10pm; 📍 Xuanwumen

Sogo is probably Běijīng's most pleasant mall experience. The mix of hip Japanese (Sogo is a Japanese company) and European boutiques, the convenient layout and an excellent and cheap food court on the 6th floor

make a trip around here far more fun than you'd expect from a shopping centre. Add espresso bars on each floor, the impressive basement supermarket, with pharmacy, and the 6th-floor games arcade, where you can deposit kids (and boyfriends and husbands) while shopping, and you're in mall heaven.

XIDAN BOOKSHOP Map pp266-7 Books

Xidān Tūshū Dàshà 西单图书大厦

☎ 6607 8477; 17 Xichang'an Jie; ☎ 8.30am-9pm;

📍 Xidan

The titles at this absolutely vast bookshop (Běijīng's largest) are largely Chinese, but the basement is home to what might be the city's best selection of English-language titles. There are all the classics, Austen, Dickens, Hemingway, Twain et al, but there are also books on China you wouldn't expect to have passed the beady eye of the censor, as well as an expanding range of new fiction. You can pick up Lonely Planet guides and maps of Běijīng here too.