

# Běijīng 北京



Seesawing wildly between burning summers and frostbitten winters while scoured by spring sandstorms, arid Běijīng is host city to the 2008 Olympics and emblematic of a nation undergoing a gut-wrenching transformation.

A city of neatly ordered design accentuated by sporadic authoritarian statements (Tiananmen Sq, the Great Hall of the People), Běijīng still stumps first-time visitors who arrive expecting a ragged tableau of communist China, only to be bowled over by its modernity and immensity and struck by Běijīng's optimistic verve and sheer commercial vibrancy.

The colossal flyovers and multilane boulevards heave with two million cars as the must-have commodity – once a TV or washing machine – is now a VW Passat or a Buick. Yet ample pockets of historical charm survive, especially along Běijīng's characteristic *hútòng*, the maze of narrow alleys that shelters the city's delightful courtyard architecture. The city has also managed to sustain an epic grandeur from its imperial days, laying claim to some of China's superlative sights, including the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, Temple of Heaven Park and the Summer Palace.

Winers and diners are spoiled for choice in Běijīng's inventive bar and restaurant world. Peking duck – an oft-copied national institution – is really only true to form in the capital.

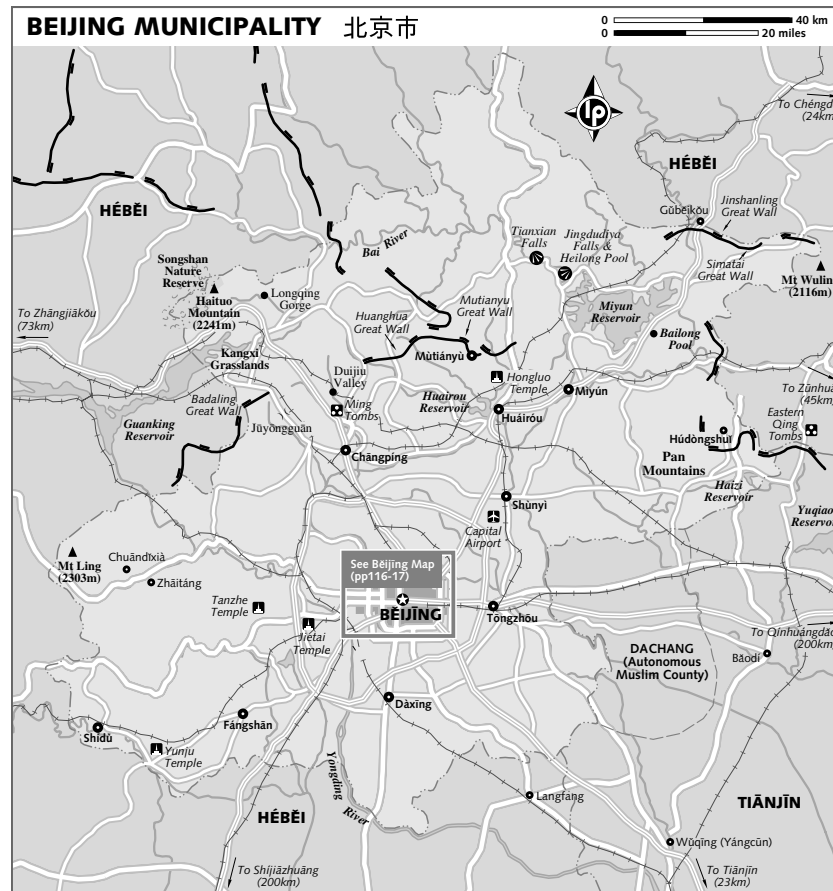
Frank and uncomplicated, Běijīng's denizens chat in Běijīnghuà – the gold standard of Mandarin – and marvel at their good fortune for occupying the centre of the known world. And for all its diligence and gusto, Běijīng dispenses with the persistent pace of Shànghǎi or Hong Kong, and locals instead find time to sit out front, play chess and watch the world go by.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Follow in the footsteps of eunuchs and emperors roaming the **Forbidden City** (p133)
- Hire a bike and whizz through Běijīng's **hútòng** (p136), the city's delightful alleyways
- Walk along the **Great Wall** (p162), the dividing line between China and the barbarian hordes
- Put aside a day to amble around the huge **Summer Palace** (p139)
- Fathom the cosmic harmonies of the **Temple of Heaven** (p130)



■ AREA CODE: ☎010   ■ POPULATION: 15.2 MILLION   ■ www.beijingpage.com



## HISTORY

Běijīng – affectionately called Peking by diplomats, nostalgic journalists and wistful academics – seems to have presided over China since time immemorial. In fact, Běijīng (Northern Capital) – positioned outside the central heartland of Chinese civilisation – emerged as a cultural and political force that would shape the destiny of China only with the 13th-century Mongol occupation of China.

Located on a vast plain that extends south as far as the distant Yellow River (Huáng Hé), Běijīng benefits from neither proximity to a major river nor the sea. Without its strategic location on the edge of the North China Plain, it would hardly be an ideal place

to locate a major city, let alone a national capital.

The area southwest of Běijīng was inhabited by early humans some 500,000 years ago. Ancient Chinese chronicles refer to a state called Yōuzhōu (Secluded State) existing during the reign of the mythical Yellow Emperor, one of nine states that existed at the time, although the earliest recorded settlements in Chinese historical sources date from 1045 BC.

In later centuries, Běijīng was successively occupied by foreign forces, promoting its development as a major political centre. Before the Mongol invasion, the city was established as an auxiliary capital under the Khitan Liao and later as the capital under the Jurchen Jin, when it underwent significant transformation

into a key political and military city. The city was enclosed within fortified walls for the first time, accessed by eight gates.

In AD 1215 the great Mongol warrior Genghis Khan and his formidable army razed Běijīng, an event that was paradoxically to mark Běijīng's transformation into a powerful national capital; a status it enjoys to the present day, bar the first 53 years of the Ming dynasty and 21 years of Nationalist rule in the 20th century.

The city came to be called Dādū (Great Capital), also assuming the Mongol name Khanbalik (the Khan's town). By 1279 Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan, had made himself ruler of the largest empire the world has ever known, with Dādū its capital. Surrounded by a vast rectangular wall punctured by three gates on each of its sides, the city was centred on the Drum and Bell Towers (p135; located near to their surviving Ming dynasty counterparts), its regular layout a paragon of urban design.

After seizing Běijīng, the first Ming emperor Hongwu (r 1368–98) renamed the city Běipíng (Northern Peace) and established his capital in Nánjīng in present-day Jiāngsū province to the south. It wasn't until the reign of Emperor Yongle (r 1403–24) that the court moved back to Běijīng. Seeking to rid the city of all traces of 'Yuán Qì' (literally 'breath of the Yuan dynasty'), the Ming levelled the fabulous palaces of the Mongols along with the Imperial City, while preserving much of the regular plan of the Mongol capital. The Ming was the only pure Chinese dynasty to rule from Běijīng (bar today's government).

During Ming rule, the huge city walls were repaired and redesigned. Yongle is credited with being the true architect of the modern city, and much of Běijīng's hallmark architecture, such as the Forbidden City and the Temple of Heaven, date from his reign. The countenance of Ming dynasty Běijīng was flat and low-lying – a feature that would remain until the 20th century – as law forbade the construction of any building higher than the Forbidden City's Hall of Supreme Harmony. The basic grid of present-day Běijīng had been laid and the city had adopted a guise that would survive until today.

The Manchus, who invaded China in the 17th century and established the Qing dynasty, essentially preserved Běijīng's form. In the last 120 years of the Qing dynasty, Běijīng,

and subsequently China, was subjected to power struggles and invasions and the ensuing chaos. The list is long: the Anglo-French troops who in 1860 burnt the Old Summer Palace to the ground; the corrupt regime of Empress Dowager Cixi; the catastrophic Boxer Rebellion; General Yuan Shikai; the warlords; the Japanese occupation of 1937; and the Kuomintang. Each and every period left its undeniable mark, although the shape and symmetry of Běijīng was maintained.

Modern Běijīng came of age when, in January 1949, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) entered the city. On 1 October of that year Mao Zedong proclaimed a 'People's Republic' to an audience of some 500,000 citizens in Tiananmen Sq.

Like the emperors before them, the communists significantly altered the face of Běijīng to suit their own image. The *páilou* (decorative archways) were brought down, while whole city blocks were pulverised to widen major boulevards. From 1950 to 1952, the city's magnificent outer walls were levelled in the interests of traffic circulation. Soviet experts and technicians poured in, leaving their own Stalinesque touches.

The past quarter of a century has transformed Běijīng into a modern city, with skyscrapers, slick shopping malls and heaving flyovers. The once flat skyline is now crenellated with vast apartment blocks and office buildings. Recent years have also seen a convincing beautification of Běijīng: from a toneless and unkempt city to a greener, cleaner and more pleasant place.

The mood in today's Běijīng is far removed from the Tiananmen Sq demonstrations of spring 1989. With the lion's share of China's wealth in the hands of city dwellers, Běijīng has embraced modernity without evolving politically. There's a conspicuous absence of protest in today's Běijīng and you won't see subversive graffiti or wall posters. With the Communist Party unwilling to share power, political reform creeps forward in glacial increments. An astonishing degree of public political apathy exists, at least partially explained by in-built inclinations to bow to authority and a suppression of democratic instincts among the middle classes, who are doing so well out of the CCP's economic successes. Political dissent has been forced into the shadows or fizzles about fitfully in cyberspace, pursued by internet police ironing out

any wrinkles that may impede construction of a 'harmonious society'.

Some of Běijīng's greatest problems could be environmental rather than political, although the two interweave. The need for speedy economic expansion, magnified by preparations for the 2008 Olympics, has put extra pressure on an already degraded environment. Water and land resources are rapidly depleting, the desert sands are crawling inexorably closer and the city's air quality has become increasingly toxic (see the boxed text, right).

As the burgeoning middle classes transform Běijīng into an increasingly pet-ridden city, that scourge of dog-owning societies – dog poo – is building up, so watch your step (although it's nothing compared with Brussels quite yet).

## CLIMATE

Autumn (September to early November) is the optimal season to visit Běijīng as the weather is gorgeous and fewer tourists are in town. Local Běijīngers describe this short season of clear skies and breezy days as *tiāngāo qīshuàng* (literally 'the sky is high and the air is fresh'). In winter, it's glacial outside (dipping as low as -20°C) and the northern winds cut like a knife through bean curd. Arid spring is OK, apart from the awesome sand clouds that sweep in from Inner Mongolia and the static electricity that discharges everywhere. Spring also sees the snowlike *liǔxù* (willow catkins) wafting through the air and collecting in drifts. From May onwards the mercury can surge well over 30°C. Běijīng simmers under a scorching sun in summer (reaching over 40°C), which also sees heavy rainstorms late in the season. Maybe surprisingly, this is also considered the peak season, when hotels typically raise their rates and the Great Wall nearly collapses under the weight of marching tourists. Air pollution can be intolerable in both summer and winter (see the boxed text, right).

## ORIENTATION

With a total area of 16,800 sq km, Běijīng municipality is roughly the size of Belgium.

The city itself may appear unforgivingly huge, but Běijīng is a city of very orderly design. Think of the city as one giant grid, with the Forbidden City at its centre. Street names can be confusing. Jianguomenwai Dajie (建国

## THE GREAT PALL OF CHINA

With an estimated three million cars expected to be congesting Běijīng's streets by 2008, the city is having an uphill struggle keeping its air clean. In 2005 Běijīng was identified by the European Space Agency as having the world's highest levels of nitrogen dioxide, a pollutant that contributes to the city's awful air. If being a chain-smoker has ever been an ambition, now is your chance: health experts warn that breathing the Běijīng air could be the equivalent of smoking 70 cigarettes a day. Coal is still liberally burnt in the capital, and spent cylindrical honeycomb briquettes of *fēngwóméi* (coal) lie heaped along *hú dòng* (narrow alleys) in wintertime. On bad days, visibility is much reduced as a curtain of thick haze descends over town.

门外大街 means 'the avenue (大街; dajie) outside (外; wai) Jianguo Gate (建国门; Jianguomen)' – that is, outside the old wall – whereas Jianguomennei Dajie (建国门内大街) means 'the avenue inside Jianguo Gate'. The gate in question no longer exists, so it survives in name alone.

A major boulevard can change names six or even seven times along its length. Streets and avenues can also be split along compass points: Dong Dajie (东大街; East Ave), Xi Dajie (西大街; West Ave), Bei Dajie (北大街; North Ave) and Nan Dajie (南大街; South Ave). All these streets head off from an intersection, usually where a gate once stood. Unlike countless other Chinese cities, Běijīng is one place where you won't find a Jiefang Lu (Liberation Rd), Renmin Lu (People's Rd), Zhongshan Lu (Zhongshan Rd) or a Beijing Lu (Beijing Rd). Five ring roads circle the city centre in concentric rings.

Bus and taxi are the main methods of transport to the centre from Běijīng's Capital Airport, 27km away. See p160 for more info.

## Maps

A map of Běijīng is essential to navigation around this massive, bustling metropolis. English-language maps of Běijīng can be picked up for free at most big hotels and branches of the Běijīng Tourist Information Center (p124). They are also available at the Foreign Languages Bookstore (p114) and other

## BĒIJĪNG IN...

## Two Days

BĒijīng's top sight is undeniably the **Forbidden City** (p133); you will need at least a morning to cover the palace and some of the nearby sights of **Tiananmen Square** (p124). Take the subway from Tiananmen Xi to Wangfujing and lunch at **Qianmen Quanjude Roast Duck Restaurant** (p149) or **Wangfujing Snack Street** (p148). Jump in a taxi to the **Temple of Heaven** (p130) or spend the afternoon on our **bicycle tour** (p142).

Rise early the next day for a trip to the **Great Wall** (p162) and the **Ming Tombs** (p174), and spend the evening enjoying a performance of **Chinese acrobatics** (p154) before rounding off the day wining and dining in **Sanlitun** (p152).

## Three Days

Follow the two-day itinerary, and on your third day make an early morning visit to the **Lama Temple** (p134) before browsing among the stalls and bric-a-brac shops of **Liulichang** (p156). In the afternoon, walk along the restored **Ming City Wall** (p130) from Chongwenmen to the Southeast Corner Watchtower or make an expedition to the **Summer Palace** (p139). In the evening, dine at **Xiao Wang's Home Restaurant** (p151) or the **Courtyard** (p151), snack at **Donghuanmen Night Market** (p150) or spend the evening enjoying **Beijing opera** (p153) at one of the city's numerous theatres.

bookshops with English-language titles. Pushy street vendors hawk cheap Chinese character maps near subway stations around Tiananmen Sq and Wangfujing Dajie; check they have English labelling before you purchase. Look out for the Beijing Tourist Map (Y8), labelled in both English and Chinese.

## INFORMATION

## Bookshops &amp; Libraries

**Bookworm Café** (Shūchóng; Map p122; ☎ 6586 9507; www.beijingbookworm.com; Bldg 4, Nan Sanlitun Lu; half-/1-year library membership Y200/300) Growing section of new and almost new books for sale. Library members can borrow a maximum of two books at a time.

**China Cultural Heritage Bookshop** (Cathay Bookshop; Wénhuà Yíchǎn Shūdiàn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6303 1602; 57 Liulichang Xijie; ☎ 9am-6pm) On the northern side of Liulichang Xijie, this branch of the Cathay Bookshop has absorbing ground-floor exhibits of old literature and maps in Chinese relating to BĒijīng.

**Foreign Languages Bookstore** (Wàiwén Shūdiàn; Map p123; ☎ 6512 6911; 235 Wangfujing Dajie) The 3rd floor is where you want to be: strong children's, fiction and nonfiction sections plus a smattering of travel guides and seats for tired legs.

**Le Petit Gourmand** (Xiǎo Měishìjī; Map p122; ☎ 6417 6095; www.lepetitgourmand.com.cn; Tongli Studio, Sanlitun Beilu; ☎ 10am-1am) There's an excellent and lovingly looked after selection of over 10,000 books at this restaurant-cum-library. Take to the outside terrace in summer. Maximum two books per loan (two weeks max period); membership provided upon donation of five books.

**National Library** (Guójiā Túshūguǎn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 8854 4114; 39 Baishiqiao Lu; ☎ 9am-5pm)

**Xidan Bookshop** (Xidān Túshū Dàshà; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6607 8477; 17 Xichang'an Jie) Iffy English-language section (Agatha Christie in the Best Sellers section) in basement.

**Yansha Bookstore** (Túshū Tiāndì; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6465 1188; 4th fl, Lufthansa Center Youyi Shopping City, 50 Liangmaqiao Lu) OK bookshop with a modest selection of English-language travel guides and novels amid immobile slabs of art and design titles.

## Internet Access 网吧

Defying global trends, internet cafés have become increasingly scarce over the past five years. With the 2008 Olympics looming, BĒijīng is stranded on the hard shoulder as other nations cruise the information superhighway, with internet café numbers dwindling and websites increasingly blocked (10% of all sites are inaccessible). Information is neutralised by an army of Chinese censors who are assigned to repel unpalatable opinion.

Typical internet café rates are Y3 per hour, although some best-avoided tourist cafés charge upwards of Y20. Many cheaper hotels and youth hostels provide internet access at around Y10 per hour.

**Beijing Huohu Shiji Internet Cafe** (BĒijīng Huòhú Shìjī Wǎngbā; Map p122; Chunxiu Lu; per hr Y3; ☎ 8am-midnight) North of intersection with Xingfucun Zhonglu on Chunxiu Lu, south of Red House.

**Chengse 520 Internet Café** (Chéngsè 520 Wǎngbā; Map pp118-19; 3rd fl, 7 Dazhalan Jie; per hr Y4; ☎ 8am-3am) Through clothing market and up the stairs in Dashiha.

**Dayusu Internet Café** (Dáyúsù Wǎngbā; Map pp118-19; 2 Hufang Lu; per hr Y3; ☎ 8am-midnight) No English sign, but it's around three shops north of Bank of China on Hufang Lu.

**Hulindao Internet Café** (Húlińdào Wǎngbā; Map pp118-19; 2nd fl, cnr Dianmenwai Dajie & Yandai Xiejie; per hr Y3; ☎ 8am-midnight) Look for the characters '上网'.

**Internet Café** (Wǎngbā; Map pp116-17; Shop 2601, 2nd fl, Soho New Town, off Jianguo Lu; per hr Y3; ☎ 24hr) It's next to exit B of Dawanglu subway station.

**Internet Café** (Wǎngbā; 2nd fl, 1 Beijingzhan Qianjie; per hr Y5; ☎ 24hr) Very new. Above the Beijing City Central Youth Hostel.

**Moko Coffee Bar** (Mòkè Wǎngbā; Map p123; ☎ 6525 3712, 6559 8464; 57 Dongsi Nandajie; per hr upstairs/downstairs Y4/15; ☎ 24hr) No English sign, but it's next to a chemist. Downstairs rates include a drink.

**Qian Yi Internet Café** (Qiányì Wǎngluò Kǎfēiwū; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6705 1722; 3rd fl, Old Station Bldg, Qianmen Dongdajie; per hr Y20; ☎ 9am-midnight) Outrageously expensive. A much cheaper internet café (Y4 per hour) exists on the same floor, but foreigners may not be admitted.

## Medical Services

BĒijīng has some of the best medical facilities and services in China, bar Hong Kong. Ask your embassy for a list of English-speaking doctors and dentists, and hospitals that accept foreigners.

**Beijing Union Medical Hospital** (BĒijīng Xiéhé Yīyuàn; Map p123; ☎ 6529 6114, emergencies 6529 5284; 53 Dongdan Beidajie; ☎ 24hr) Foreigners' and VIP wing in the back building.

**Hong Kong International Medical Clinic** (BĒijīng Xiānggǎng Guóji Yīwù Zhěnsuǒ; Map p122; ☎ 6553 2288; www.hkclinic.com; 9th fl, Office Tower, Hong Kong Macau Center, Swissôtel, 2 Chaoyangmen Beidajie; ☎ 9am-9pm) Medical and dental clinic.

**International SOS** (BĒijīng Yǎzhōu Guóji Jīnjī Jiùyuán Yīliáo Zhōngxīn; Map p122; ☎ clinic appointments 6462 9112, dental appointments 6462 0333, emergencies 6462 9100; www.internationalosos.com; Bldg C, BITIC Ying Yi Bldg, 1 Xingfu Sancun Beijie; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri) Expensive, high-quality clinic with English-speaking staff.

## PHARMACIES

Pharmacies selling Chinese (*zhōngyào*) and Western medicine (*xīyào*) are widespread and

are identified by green crosses. You do not necessarily need a prescription for drugs, so ask at the pharmacy first. Some pharmacies offer 24-hour service; typically this means that you can get your medicine through a window during the night, after the pharmacy itself is officially shut.

**Quanxin Pharmacy** (Quánxīn Dàyào fāng; Map pp118-19; 153 Wangfujing Dajie; ☎ 8.30am-10pm) Large pharmacy opposite St Joseph's Church.

**Wangfujing Medicine Shop** (Wǎngfújīng Yīyào Shāngdiàn; Map p123; ☎ 6524 0122; 267 Wangfujing Dajie; ☎ 8.30am-9pm) Large range of both Western and Chinese drugs.

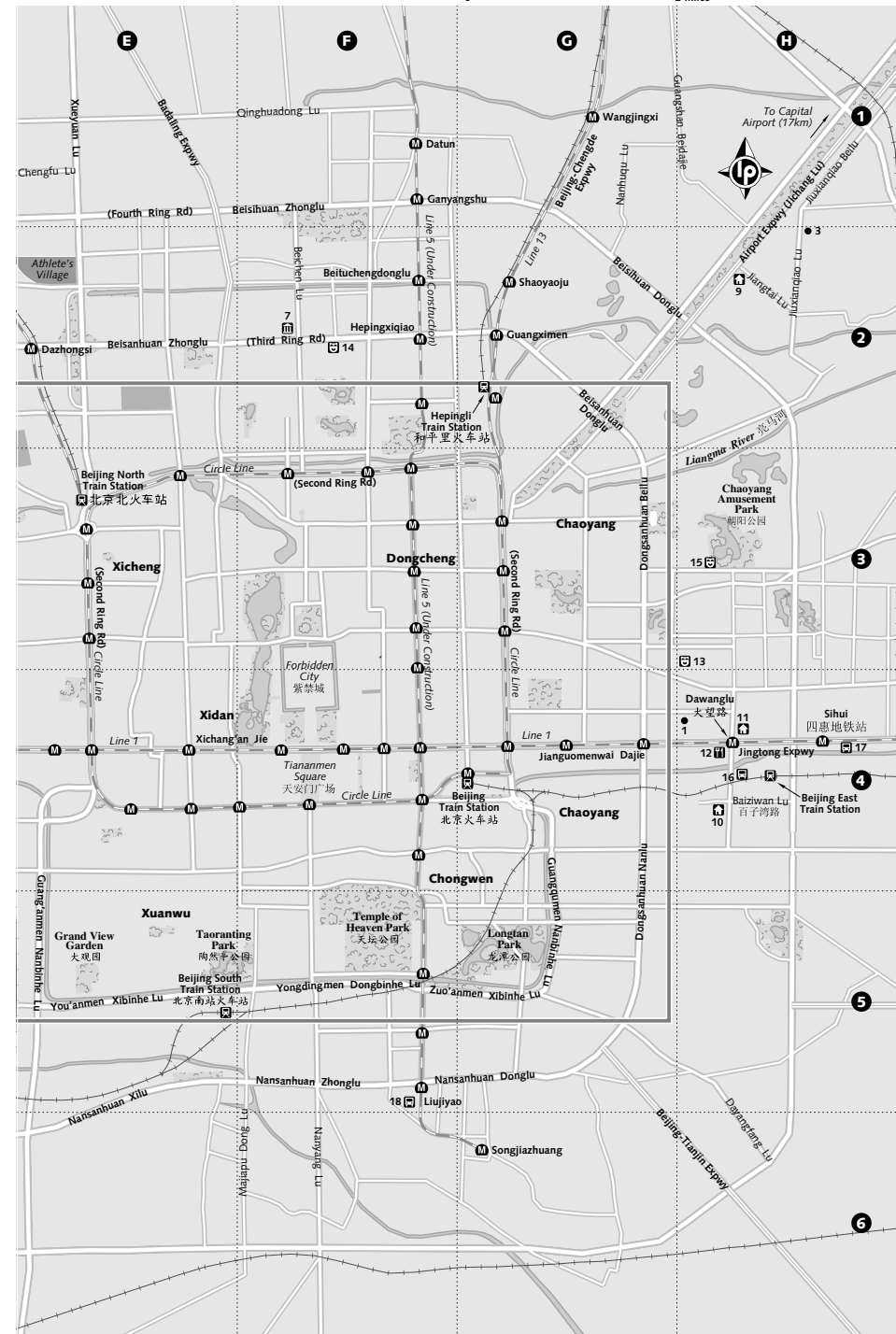
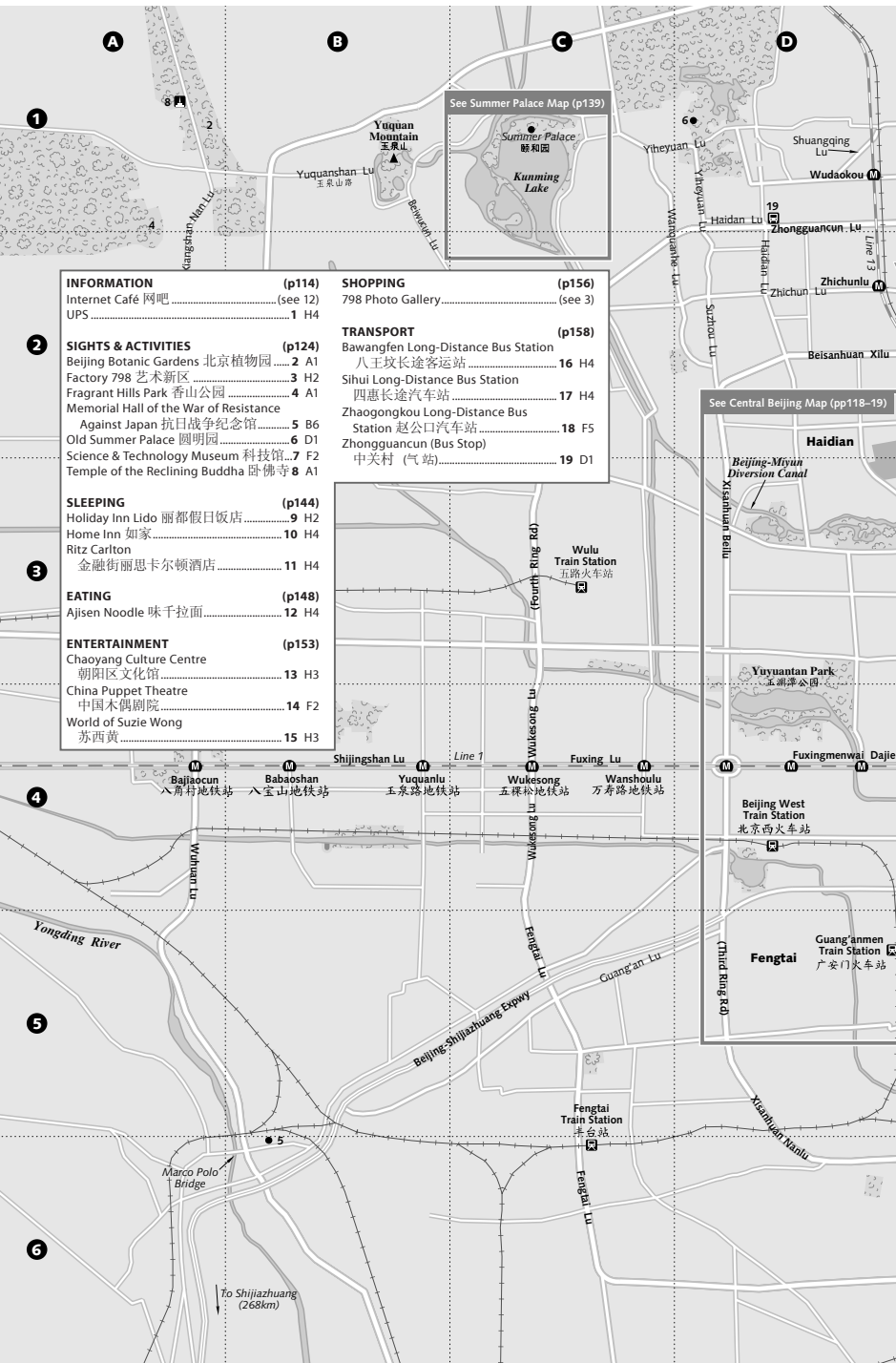
**Watson's** (Qūchéngshì) Chaoyangmenwai Dajie (Map pp118-19; 1st fl, Full Link Plaza, 19 Chaoyangmenwai Dajie; Dongchan'an Jie (Map p123; Oriental Plaza, 1 Dongchan'an Jie) Branches purvey some medicines, but are more geared towards selling cosmetics, sunscreens and the like.

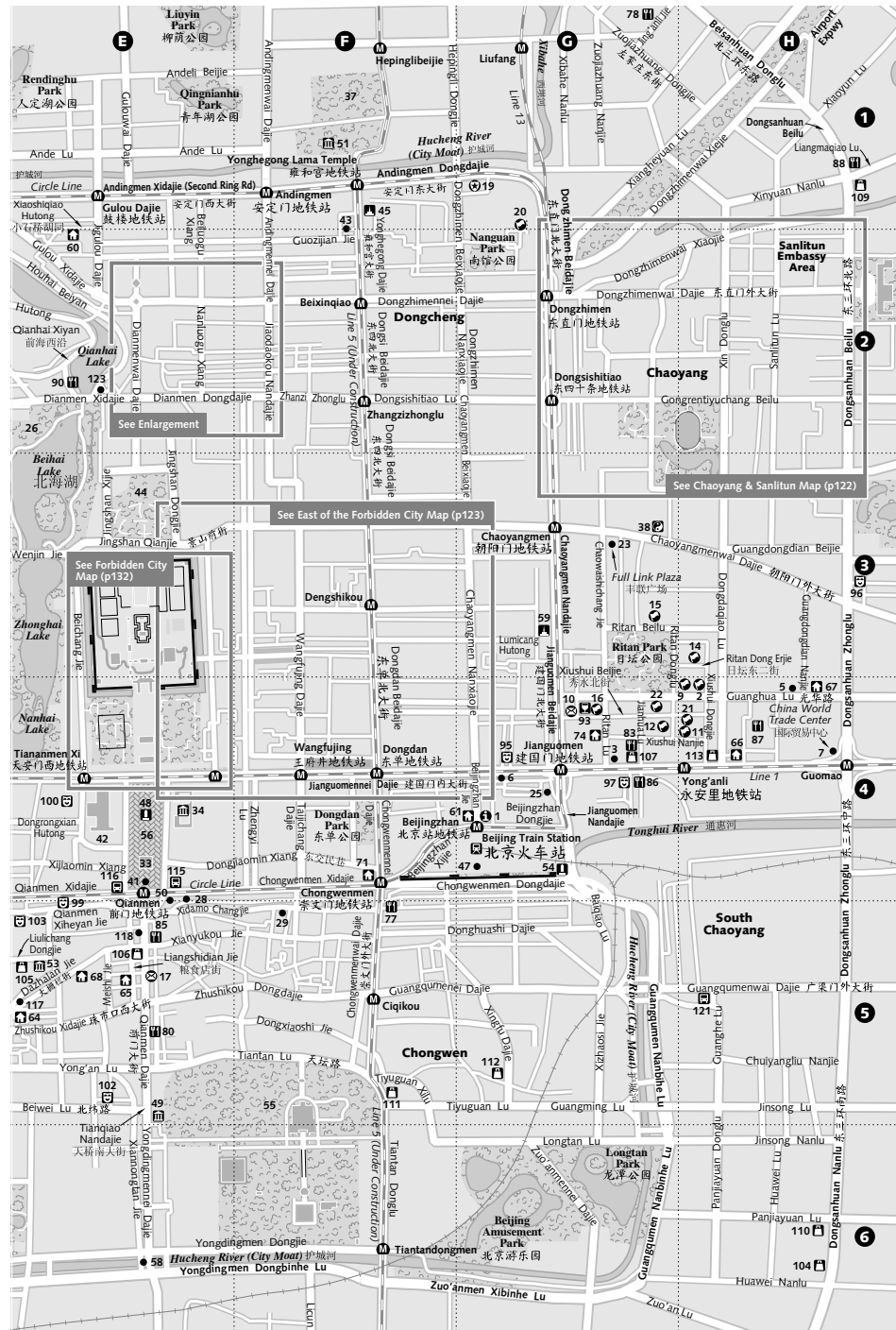
## Money

Foreign currency and travellers cheques can be changed at large branches of the Bank of China, CITIC Industrial Bank (Map pp118-19), the airport and hotel moneychanging counters, and at several department stores (including the Friendship Store), as long as you have your passport. Hotels give the official rate, but some will add a small commission. Useful branches of the Bank of China with foreign-exchange counters include a branch next to Oriental Plaza on Wangfujing Dajie, in the Lufthansa Center Youyi Shopping City, and in the China World Trade Center. For international money transfer, branches of Western Union can be found in the International Post Office (p124) and at the post office at No 3 Gongrentiyuchang Beilu (☎ 6416 7686; Map pp118-19).

If you have an Amex card, you can also cash personal cheques at CITIC Industrial Bank and large branches of the Bank of China.

ATMs that accept foreign credit cards and are linked to international bank settlement systems such as Cirrus and Plus can be found in increasing numbers. The best places to look are in and around the main shopping areas (such as Wangfujing Dajie) and international hotels and their associated shopping arcades; some large department stores also have useful ATMs. There's a Bank of China ATM in the



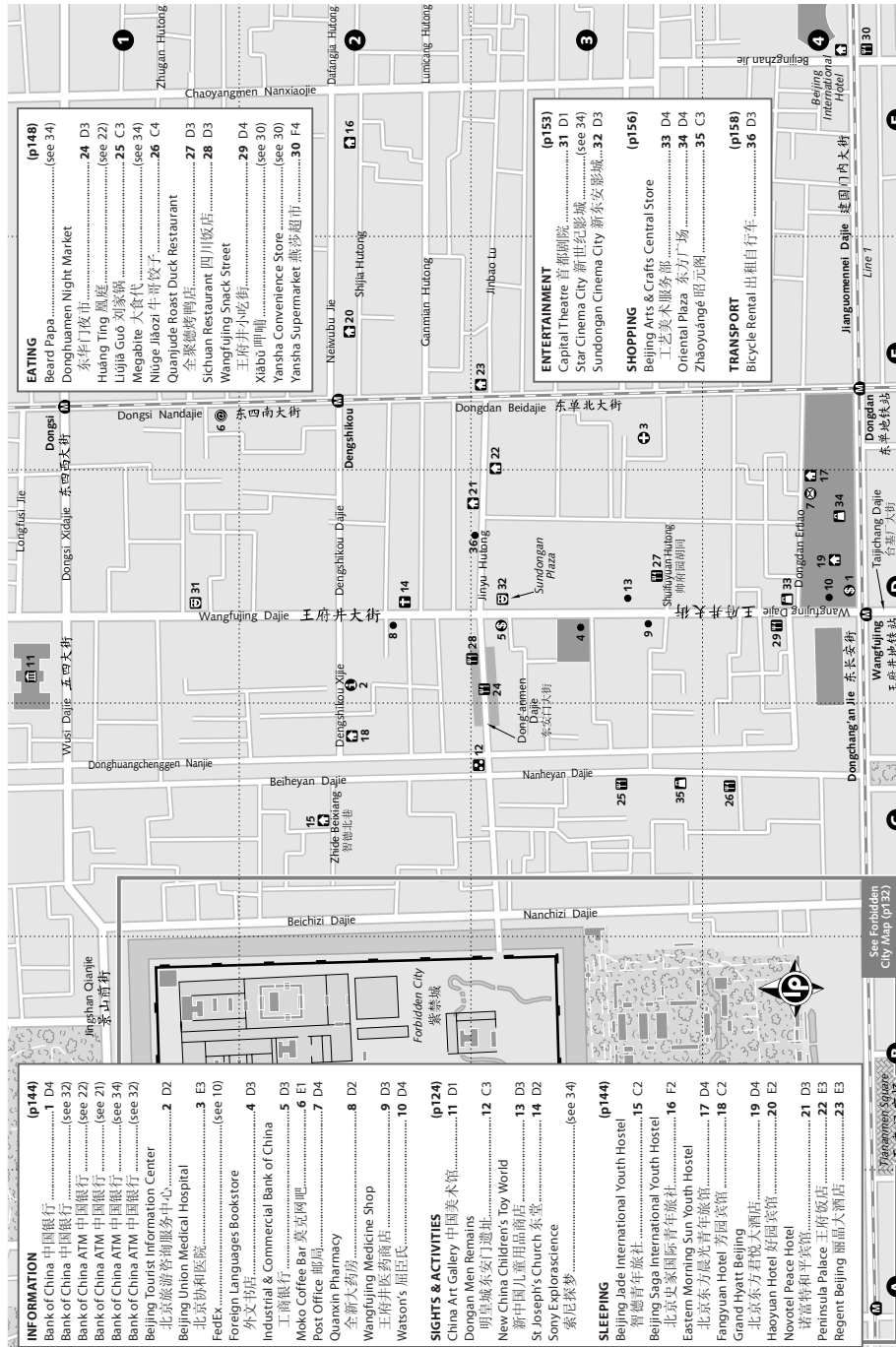
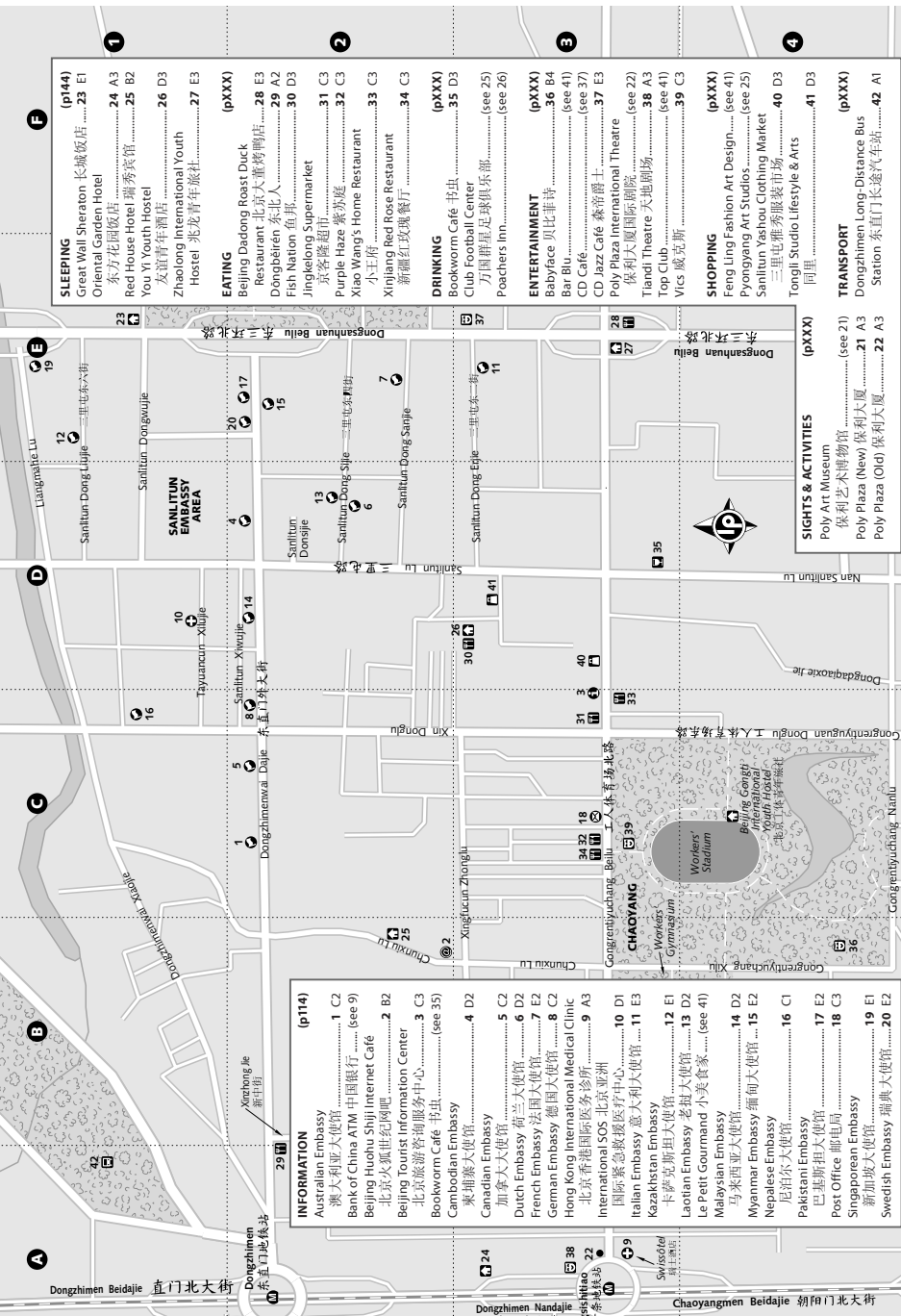


<b>INFORMATION</b>	<b>(p114)</b>	Philippines Embassy	
Bank of China 中国银行	(see 7)	菲律宾大使馆	<b>16</b> G4
Bank of China 中国银行	(see 109)	Post Office 邮电局	<b>17</b> E5
Bank of China ATM 中国银行	(see 109)	Post Office 邮电局	<b>18</b> D4
Bank of China ATM 中国银行	(see 88)	Post Office 邮电局	(see 7)
Beijing Tourist Information Center		Post Office 邮电局	(see 107)
北京旅游咨询服务中心	(see 98)	Post Office 邮电局	(see 113)
Beijing Tourist Information Centre		Post Office 邮电局	(see 66)
北京旅游咨询服务中心	<b>1</b> G4	PSB (Visa Extensions) 公安局	<b>19</b> G1
British Embassy 英国大使馆	<b>2</b> H4	Qian Yi Internet Café	
Chengse 520 Internet Café		奇艺网络咖啡屋	(see 50)
橙色520网吧	(see 106)	Russian Embassy 俄罗斯大使馆	<b>20</b> G1
China Cultural Heritage		South Korean Embassy	
Bookshop 文化遗产书店	(see 108)	韩国大使馆	(see 7)
CITIC Building 国际大厦	<b>3</b> G4	Thai Embassy 泰国大使馆	(see 93)
CITIC Industrial Bank 国际大厦	(see 3)	US Embassy 美国大使馆	
COFCO Plaza 中粮广场	(see 6)	(美国大使馆商务处)	<b>21</b> H4
Dayusu Internet Café		Vietnamese Embassy	
达宇速网吧	<b>4</b> D5	越南大使馆	<b>22</b> G4
DHL 敦豪特快专递	(see 6)	Watson's 屈臣氏	<b>23</b> G3
DHL 敦豪特快专递	(see 7)	Xidan Bookshop 西单图书大厦	<b>24</b> G4
Federal Express	<b>5</b> H4	Yansha Bookstore 图书天地	(see 109)
HSBC 汇丰银行	<b>6</b> G4		
HSBC 汇丰银行	<b>7</b> H4	<b>SIGHTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>(p124)</b>
Hulindao Internet Café		Ancient Observatory 古观象台	<b>25</b> G4
狐林道网吧	<b>8</b> A6	Beihai Park 北海公园	<b>26</b> E2
Indian Embassy 印度大使馆	<b>9</b> H4	Beijing Aquarium 北京海洋馆	(see 30)
International Post Office		Beijing Exhibition Centre	
国际邮电局	<b>10</b> G4	北京展览馆	<b>27</b> B2
Internet Café 网吧	(see 61)	Beijing Planning Exhibition Hall	
Irish Embassy 爱尔兰大使馆	<b>11</b> H4	北京市规划展览馆	<b>28</b> E4
Japanese Embassy 日本大使馆	(see 16)	Beijing Underground City	
Mongolian Embassy		北京地下城	<b>29</b> F5
蒙古大使馆	<b>12</b> G4	Beijing Zoo 北京动物园	<b>30</b> B2
National Library 北京图书馆	<b>13</b> A2	Bell Tower 钟楼	<b>31</b> A5
New Zealand Embassy		Capital Museum 首都博物馆	<b>32</b> B4
新西兰大使馆	<b>14</b> H3	Chairman Mao Memorial Hall	
North Korean Embassy		毛主席纪念堂	<b>33</b> E4
朝鲜民主主义人民		China National Museum	
共和国驻华大使馆	<b>15</b> G3	中国国家博物馆	<b>34</b> E4

Confucius Temple 孔庙	(see 43)		
Cow Street Mosque		牛街礼拜寺	<b>35</b> D5
Deshengmen 德胜门	<b>36</b> D1	Ditan Park 地坛公园	<b>37</b> F1
Ditan Park 地坛公园	<b>37</b> F1	Dongyue Temple 东岳寺	<b>38</b> G3
Dongyue Temple 东岳寺	<b>38</b> G3	Drum Tower 鼓楼	<b>39</b> A6
Fuyuan Temple 法源寺	<b>40</b> D5	Front Gate 前门	<b>41</b> E4
Front Gate 前门	<b>41</b> E4	Great Hall of the People	
Great Hall of the People		人民大会堂	<b>42</b> E4
Imperial College 国子监	<b>43</b> F1	Jingshan Park 景山公园	<b>44</b> E3
Jingshan Park 景山公园	<b>44</b> E3	Lama Temple 雍和宫	<b>45</b> F1
Lama Temple 雍和宫	<b>45</b> F1	Le Cool Ice Rink 国贸溜冰场	(see 7)
Le Cool Ice Rink 国贸溜冰场	(see 7)	Miaoying Temple White Dagoba	
Miaoying Temple White Dagoba		妙应寺白塔	<b>46</b> C3
Ming City Wall Ruins Park		明城墙遗址公园	<b>47</b> G4
Ming City Wall Ruins Park		Monument to the People's Heroes	
Monument to the People's Heroes		人民英雄纪念碑	<b>48</b> E4
Natural History Museum		自然博物馆	<b>49</b> E5
Natural History Museum		Old Station Building (Qian Men	
Old Station Building (Qian Men		Railway Station) 老车站	<b>50</b> E4
Railway Station) 老车站	<b>50</b> E4	One Moon 一月当代艺术	<b>51</b> F1
One Moon 一月当代艺术	<b>51</b> F1	Prince Gong's Residence	
Prince Gong's Residence		恭王府	<b>52</b> D2
恭王府	<b>52</b> D2	Red Gate Gallery 红门画廊	(see 54)
Red Gate Gallery 红门画廊	(see 54)	Songtangzhai Museum	
Songtangzhai Museum		松堂斋民间雕刻博物馆	<b>53</b> E5
松堂斋民间雕刻博物馆	<b>53</b> E5	Southeast Corner Watchtower	
Southeast Corner Watchtower		东南角楼	<b>54</b> G4
东南角楼	<b>54</b> G4	Temple of Heaven Park	
Temple of Heaven Park		天坛公园	<b>55</b> F5
天坛公园	<b>55</b> F5	Tiananmen Square	
Tiananmen Square		天安门广场	<b>56</b> E4
天安门广场	<b>56</b> E4	White Cloud Temple 白云观	<b>57</b> B4
White Cloud Temple 白云观	<b>57</b> B4	Yongdingmen 永定门	<b>58</b> E6
Yongdingmen 永定门	<b>58</b> E6	Zhihua Temple 智化寺	<b>59</b> G3
Zhihua Temple 智化寺	<b>59</b> G3		

<b>SLEEPING</b>	<b>(p144)</b>	Here Café 这里咖啡馆	<b>81</b> A6
Bamboo Garden Hotel 竹园宾馆	<b>60</b> E2	Kaorouji 北京烤肉季	<b>82</b> A6
Beijing City Central Youth Hostel		Makey Ame 玛吉阿米	<b>83</b> G4
北京城市国际青年旅社	<b>61</b> G4	Otto's Restaurant 日昌餐馆	<b>84</b> A6
Beijing Feiyang International Youth Hostel		Park N Shop 百佳	(see 23)
北京飞鹰青年旅社	<b>62</b> D5	Qianmen Quanjude Roast Duck Restaurant	<b>85</b> E5
Beijing International Hotel		前门全聚德烤鸭店	<b>86</b> G4
国际饭店	(see 62)	Supermarket	
Beijing Marriott West		Xiao Wang's Home Restaurant	<b>87</b> H4
北京金域万豪酒店	<b>63</b> A3	小王府	<b>88</b> H4
China World Hotel 中国大饭店	(see 7)	Yansha Supermarket 燕莎超市	<b>88</b> H1
Far East Hotel 远东饭店	(see 64)	Yingjia Huoguo 赢佳火锅	<b>89</b> D4
Far East International Youth Hostel		Yuelu Shānwū 岳麓山屋	<b>90</b> E2
远东国际青年旅社	<b>64</b> E5		
Home Inn 如家	<b>65</b> E5	<b>DRINKING</b>	<b>(p152)</b>
Jianguo Hotel 建国饭店	<b>66</b> H4	Centro 炫酷	(see 67)
Kempinski Hotel		Drum & Bell Bar 鼓钟	<b>91</b> A5
凯宾斯基饭店	(see 109)	Eje Bar 轴吧	(see 43)
Kerry Center Hotel		Guangfuguan Greenhouse	
嘉里中心饭店	<b>67</b> H4	广福观的温室	<b>92</b> A6
Leo Hostel 广聚元饭店	<b>68</b> E5	Huxley's 德比酒吧	(see 92)
Lusongyuan Hotel 侣松园宾馆	<b>69</b> B6	John Bull Pub 尊伯英式酒吧	<b>93</b> G4
Marco Polo 北京马可波罗酒店	<b>70</b> D4		
Novotel Xinqiao		<b>ENTERTAINMENT</b>	<b>(p153)</b>
北京新桥诺富特饭店	<b>71</b> F4	Beijing Concert Hall	
Peking Downtown Backpackers		北京音乐厅	<b>94</b> D4
Accommodation 东堂客栈	<b>72</b> A6	Chang'an Grand Theatre	
Qianmen Jianguo Hotel		长安大剧院	<b>95</b> G4
前门建国饭店	<b>73</b> D5	Chaoyang Theatre 朝阳剧场	<b>96</b> H3
St Regis 北京国际俱乐部饭店	<b>74</b> G4	Club Banana 吧那那	<b>97</b> G4
Shangri-La Hotel 香格里拉饭店	<b>75</b> A2	Huguang Guild Hall 湖广会馆	<b>98</b> D5
		Lao She Teahouse 老舍茶馆	<b>99</b> E5
		Liyuan Theatre 梨园剧场	(see 73)
		National Grand Theatre	<b>100</b> E4
		国家大剧院	<b>101</b> D4
		Sanwei Bookstore 三味书屋	<b>101</b> D4
		Tianqiao Acrobatics Theatre	
		万圣剧场	<b>102</b> E5
		Zhengyi Theatre	
		正乙祠剧场	<b>103</b> E5

Beijing Curio City		北京古玩城	<b>104</b> H6
Beijing Curio City		Cui Wen G6 萃文阁	<b>105</b> E5
北京古玩城	<b>104</b> H6	Dashilar Entrance 大栅栏	<b>106</b> E5
Friendship Store		友谊商店	<b>107</b> G4
友谊商店	<b>107</b> G4	Liulichang 琉璃厂	<b>108</b> D5
Liulichang 琉璃厂	<b>108</b> D5	Lufthansa Center Youyi Shopping	
Lufthansa Center Youyi Shopping		City 燕莎友谊商城	<b>109</b> H1
City 燕莎友谊商城	<b>109</b> H1	Pānjāyuán 潘家园市场	<b>110</b> H6
Pānjāyuán 潘家园市场	<b>110</b> H6	Pearl Market 珍珠市场	<b>111</b> F5
Pearl Market 珍珠市场	<b>111</b> F5	Qianmen Carpet Company	
Qianmen Carpet Company		前门地毯厂	<b>112</b> G5
前门地毯厂	<b>112</b> G5	Silk Street 秀水街	<b>113</b> H4
Silk Street 秀水街	<b>113</b> H4	Torana Carpets	
Torana Carpets		图兰纳地毯	(see 109)
图兰纳地毯	(see 109)		
		<b>TRANSPORT</b>	<b>(p158)</b>
		Aviation Building	
		民航营业大厦	<b>114</b> D4
		Beijing Sightseeing Bus Centre	
		北京旅游集散中心	<b>115</b> E4
		Beijing Sightseeing Bus Centre	
		(Main) 北京旅游集散中心	<b>116</b> E4
		Bike Hire 租自行车店	<b>117</b> E5
		Bird of Freedom Bike Hire	
		自行车出租服务战	<b>118</b> E5
		Hertz	(see 66)
		Lianhuachi Long-Distance Bus	
		Station 莲花池长途汽车站	<b>119</b> A5
		Liulijiao Long-Distance Bus	
		Station 六里桥长途站	<b>120</b> A6
		Majuan Long-Distance Bus	
		Station 马圈长途汽车站	<b>121</b> H5
		Tour Bus Departure Point (South Cathedral)	<b>122</b> D4
		Universal Bicycle Rental Outlet	
		双人驿站	<b>123</b> E2



(Continued from page 115)

Capital Airport arrivals hall. Other useful ATMs:

**Bank of China ATM** Lufthansa Center Youyi Shopping City (Map pp118-19; 1st fl, Lufthansa Center Youyi Shopping City); Novotel Peace Hotel (Map p123; foyer, Novotel Peace Hotel, 3 Jinyu Hutong); Oriental Plaza (Map p123; Oriental Plaza, cnr Wangfujing Dajie & Dongchang'an Jie); Peninsula Palace (Map p123; 2nd basement level, Peninsula Palace, 8 Jinyu Hutong); Sundongan Plaza (Map p123; next to main entrance of Sundongan Plaza on Wangfujing Dajie); Swissôtel (Map p122; 2nd fl, Swissôtel, 2 Chaoyangmen Beidajie)

**Citibank ATM** East of International Hotel on Jianguomennei Dajie.

**Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corporation** (HSBC; ☎ 6526 0668, 800-820 8878; www.hsb.com.cn) Jianguomen Dajie (Map pp118-19; Ground fl, Block A, COFCO Plaza, 8 Jianguomen Dajie); China World Hotel (Map pp118-19; Suite L129, Ground fl, 1 Jianguomenwai Dajie) All have 24-hour ATMs.

**Industrial & Commercial Bank of China ATM** (Góngshāng Yínháng; Map p123; Wangfujing Dajie) Opposite Bank of China ATM at entrance to Sundongan Plaza.

## Post

The **International Post Office** (Guóji Yóudiànjú; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6512 8120; Jianguomen Beidajie; ☎ 8am-7pm) is 200m north of Jianguomen subway station; poste restante letters can be addressed here. Other convenient post offices include in the CITIC building next to the Friendship Store (Map pp118-19); in the basement of the China World Trade Center (Map pp118-19); in the basement of Silk Street (Map pp118-19); east of Wangfujing Dajie on Dongdan Ertiao (Map p123); on the south side of Xichang'an Jie west of the Beijing Concert Hall (Map pp118-19); and just east of the Qianmen Jianguo Hotel, on Yong'an Lu (Map pp118-19). You can also post letters via your hotel reception desk, which may be the most convenient option, or at green post boxes around town.

Several private couriers in Běijīng offer international express posting of documents and parcels, and have reliable pick-up services as well as drop-off centres.

**DHL** (☎ 6466 2211, 800-810 8000; www.dhl.com; 45 Xinyuan Jie) Further branches in the Kempinski Hotel, the China World Trade Center and COFCO Plaza.

**Federal Express** (FedEx; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6561 2003, 800-810 2338; Hanwei Bldg, 7 Guanghua Lu) Also in Room 107, No 1 Office Building, Oriental Plaza.

**United Parcel Service** (UPS; Map pp116-17; ☎ 6593 2932; Unit A, 2nd fl, Tower B, Beijing Kelun Bldg, 12A Guanghua Lu)

## Public Security Bureau

The Foreign Affairs Branch of the local **PSB** (Gōngānjú; Map pp118-19; ☎ 8402 0101; 2 Andingmen Dongdajie; ☎ 8.30am-4.30pm Mon-Sat) – the police force – handles visa extensions. The visa office is on the 2nd floor on the east side of the building. You can also apply for a residence permit here. Expect to wait up to five days for your visa extension to be processed. You can also obtain passport photographs here (¥30 for five).

## Tourist Information

**Beijing Tourism Hotline** (☎ 6513 0828; ☎ 24hr)

Has English-speaking operators available to answer questions and hear complaints.

**Beijing Tourist Information Centers** (Běijīng Lǚyóu Zixún Fúwù Zhōngxīn; ☎ 9am-5pm) Beijing Train Station (Map pp118-19; ☎ 6528 4848; 16 Laoqianju Hutong); Capital Airport (☎ 6459 8148); Chaoyang (Map p122; ☎ 6417 6627, 6417 6656; 27 Sanlitun Beilu); Dongcheng (Map p123; ☎ 6512 3043, 6512 2991; 10 Dengshikou Xijie); Xuanwu (Map pp118-19; ☎ 6351 0018; xuanwu@bjta.gov.cn; 3 Hufang Lu) In a land where everything has its price, China never quite got the hang of tourist offices. The local chain – with uniform turquoise façades – is slowly getting its act together. English skills are limited, but you can grab a free tourist map of town and handfuls of free literature. Useful branches are listed here.

**CITS** (☎ 6515 8587; 28 Jianguomenwai Dajie) Is more useful for booking tours.

## SIGHTS

The lion's share of Běijīng's sights lie within the city proper. Notable exceptions are the Great Wall and the Ming Tombs, listed in the Around Běijīng section (p162).

## Chongwen & South Chaoyang

崇文区、朝阳南区

**TIANANMEN SQUARE** 天安门广场

The world's largest public square, **Tiananmen Square** (Tiānānmén Guǎngchǎng; Map pp118-19; subway Tiananmen Xi, Tiananmen Dong or Qianmen) is a vast desert of paving stones at the heart of Běijīng and a poignant epitaph to China's hapless democracy movement. It may be a grandiose, Maoist tourist trap, but there's more than enough space to stretch your legs and the view can be breathtaking, especially on a clear day

## BĒIJĪNG OLYMPICS

The first Olympics to be held in a developing country in two decades, the 2008 Olympics is a high-tide mark in Běijīng's ambitions to project itself onto the world stage. Craving global attention and receiving it, Běijīng aims to secure a standing ovation for its XXIX Olympiad. It seems only appropriate that a country casting itself as an economic powerhouse and emerging superpower should host the world's most prestigious sports event. The event is also an opportunity to showcase athletic talent in China and unseating the USA at the top of the medals tables would be a further fillip for this country that frets about its international profile.

Wrestling with the surging growth in car ownership and a vastly more mobile population, Běijīng seized the opportunity to reshape the transport infrastructure of the city. To this end, Běijīng has hurled billions of dollars into an Olympian makeover for the capital, which will include the world's largest airport terminal and a hugely extended underground system.

Among achievements that have been lauded worldwide is a frenzied construction schedule that has been the equivalent of the 100m dash – completed ahead of target and generating employment for almost two million people. Much history – an irretrievable commodity – has been levelled in the process, although some has been re-created, such as the gate at Yongding Men (see the boxed text, p128). Many of the city's delightful *hútòng* (see p136) have either been obliterated or drastically clipped by road-widening schemes. Even the historic areas around Qianmen and Dashilan have seen whole areas demolished by real-estate developers.

And as taxi drivers grapple with basic English idiom in preparation for the deluge of foreigners, up to 50% of car owners may have their vehicles forced off the roads as Běijīng contemplates drastic measures to clean up the city's noxious air. Officials proudly trumpet a 'Green Olympics', but this may be setting the bar too high for Běijīng's trailing foot – the haze that frequently settles over town (see the boxed text, p113). As Běijīng is one of the world's most polluted cities, further drastic measures could include the temporary closure of factories and construction sites in the run-up to the sporting event.

Most of the games will be held in Běijīng, but other events will be staged in five other Chinese cities, including Tiānjīn, Shěnyáng, Qīnhuángdǎo and Shànghǎi, with the sailing events held in the lovely seaside town of Qīngdǎo.

Once again, the Olympic Games have become politically charged. Běijīng is anxious to portray itself as something more than a crony-Communist regime with a questionable human-rights record. But the approval rating for the Olympics among Běijīng residents – who find it far simpler to separate sport and politics – is overwhelmingly massive, despite the run-up to the games being hobbled by accusations of corruption.

Domestic reporting on the Olympic Games is upbeat, as is the official website of the games (www.en.beijing2008.com). Běijīng may not be winning any medals for access to information, with endless websites (the BBC News and Wikipedia are but a few) blocked to the Chinese, but it has pledged that reporters will be able to report freely and as such it will have to endure levels of journalistic scrutiny never before experienced by a Chinese city outside of Hong Kong.

Let the games commence!

and at nightfall. Kites flit through the sky, children stamp around on the paving slabs and Chinese out-of-towners huddle together for the obligatory photo opportunity with the great helmsman's portrait.

The square is laid out on a north-south axis. Threading through Front Gate (p127) to the south, the square's meridian line is straddled by the Chairman Mao Memorial Hall (p127), cuts through the Gate of Heavenly Peace (p126) to the north and cleaves through the Forbidden City (p133) behind.

In the square, you stand in the symbolic centre of the Chinese universe. The rectangular arrangement, flanked by halls to the east and west, to an extent echoes the layout of the Forbidden City. As such, the square employs a conventional plan that pays obeisance to traditional Chinese culture, while its ornaments and buildings are largely Soviet inspired.

Mao conceived the square to project the enormity of the Communist Party, so it's all a bit Kim Il Sung-ish. During the Cultural Revolution the chairman, wearing a Red



### THE SQUARE OF THE GATE OF HEAVENLY PEACE

It may be named after the Ming dynasty gate crowning its northern perimeter, but Tiananmen Sq as we see it today is very much a modern creation. During Ming and Qing times, part of the Imperial City Wall (Huáng Chéng) called the Thousand Foot Corridor (Qiānbù Láng) poked deep into the space today occupied by the square, enclosing a section of the imperial domain. The wall took the shape of a 'T', emerging from the two huge, and now absent, gates – Cháng'ān Zuǒ Mén and Cháng'ān Yòu Mén – that rose up south of the Gate of Heavenly Peace before running south to Daming Gate (Dàmíng Mén). Called Daqing Gate (Dàqīng Mén) during Manchu times, the gate was renamed Zhonghua Gate (Zhōnghuá Mén) during the short-lived republic, before being felled to make way for Chairman Mao's memorial hall. East and west of the Thousand Foot Corridor stood official departments and temples, including the Ministry of Rites, the Ministry of Revenue, Honglu Temple and Taichang Temple, sites now occupied by the Great Hall of the People (opposite) and the China National Museum (p128).

Guard armband, reviewed parades of up to a million people here. In 1976 another million people jammed the square to pay their last respects to Mao. In 1989 army tanks and soldiers forced pro-democracy demonstrators out of the square. Although it seems likely that no-one was actually killed within the square itself, a well-documented slaughter occurred at Muxidi, to the west. Despite being a public place, the square remains more in the hands of the government than the people; it is monitored by closed-circuit TV cameras, and plain-clothes police are primed to paralyse the first twitch of dissent.

West of the monolithic Great Hall of the People (opposite), the bulbous, titanium-and-glass **National Grand Theatre** could be mistaken for an alien mother ship that has landed to refuel. Still waiting to open at the time of writing, the project has undergone delays, while critics have questioned both its incongruous styling and the wisdom of erecting such a shimmering building in Běijīng's notoriously dust-laden air.

If you get up early you can watch the flag-raising ceremony at sunrise, performed by a troop of PLA soldiers drilled to march at precisely 108 paces per minute, 75cm per pace. The same ceremony in reverse is performed at sunset, but you can hardly see the soldiers for the throngs gathered to watch. The square is illuminated at night.

Bicycles cannot be ridden across Tiananmen Sq – apparently tanks are OK – but you can walk your bike.

### GATE OF HEAVENLY PEACE 天安门

Hung with a vast likeness of Mao, the **Gate of Heavenly Peace** (Tiānānmén; Map p132; ☎ 6309 9386;

admission Y15, bag storage Y1-6; 🕒 8.30am-4.30pm; subway Tiananmen Xi or Tiananmen Dong) is a potent national symbol. Built in the 15th century and restored in the 17th century, the double-eaved gate was formerly the largest of the four gates of the Imperial Wall that enveloped the imperial grounds.

Of the pair guarding the gate, folklore attests that the westerly stone lion blocked Li Chuangwang when he invaded Běijīng at the end of the Ming dynasty. Li fended the lion off by stabbing its belly with his spear while on horseback, leaving a mark that remains. Other locals insist that it is a bullet hole – the work of allied-force guns after troops entered Běijīng to quell the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. For more on the Boxer Rebellion see the boxed text, p45.

The gate is divided into five doors and reached via seven bridges spanning a stream. Each of these bridges was restricted in its use and only the emperor could use the central door and bridge.

Today's political coterie review mass troop parades from here and it was from this gate that Mao proclaimed the People's Republic on 1 October 1949. The dominating feature is the gigantic portrait of the ex-chairman, to the left of which runs the poetic slogan 'Long Live the People's Republic of China' and to the right 'Long Live the Unity of the Peoples of the World'. The portrait was famously pelted with paint-filled eggs during the 1989 demonstrations in the square; the iconoclasts were workers from Mao's home province of Húnán. A number of spares of the portrait exist and a fresh one was speedily requisitioned.

Climb up to great views of Tiananmen Sq and peek inside at the impressive beams

and overdone paintwork. Other diversions include video presentations and paintings of the flag-raising ceremony, featuring jubilant representatives of China's ethnic minorities.

There is no fee for walking through the gate, but if you climb it you will have to buy an admission ticket. Security is intense with metal detectors and frisking awaiting visitors.

### DUAN GATE 端门

Sandwiched between the Gate of Heavenly Peace and Meridian Gate, **Duan Gate** (Duān Mén; Map p132; admission Y10; 🕒 8.30am-4.30pm) was stripped of its treasures by foreign forces quelling the Boxer Rebellion. The hall today is hung with photos of old Běijīng but steer your eyes to the ceiling, wonderfully painted in its original colours and free of the cosmetic improvements so casually inflicted on so many of China's other historic monuments.

### FRONT GATE 前门

The **Front Gate** (Qián Mén; Map pp118-19; admission Y10; 🕒 8.30am-4pm; subway Qianmen) actually consists of two gates. The northerly gate, 40m-high Zhēngyáng Mén, dates from the Ming dynasty and was the largest of the nine impressive gates of the inner city wall separating the Inner or Tartar (Manchu) City from the Outer or Chinese City. Partially destroyed during the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, the gate was once flanked by two temples that have vanished. With the disappearance of the city walls, the gate sits out of context, and was undergoing extensive repairs at the time of writing. Similarly torched during the Boxer Rebellion, the Arrow Tower (Jiàn Lóu) to the south also dates from Ming times and was originally connected to Zhēngyáng Mén by a semicircular enclosure, which was swept aside in the early 20th century. To the east is the former British-built **Old Station Building** (Lǎo Chēzhàn; Qian Men Railway Station), now housing shops and restaurants.

### GREAT HALL OF THE PEOPLE 人民大会堂

On a site previously occupied by Taichang Temple, the Jinyiwei (the Ming dynasty secret service) and the Ministry of Justice, the **Great Hall of the People** (Rénmín Dàhuìtáng; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6309 6668; admission Y20, bag storage Y2; 🕒 9am-3pm; subway Tiananmen Xi), on the western side of Tiananmen Sq, is where the National People's Congress convenes. The 1959 architecture is

### CON ARTISTS

Foreigners doing Tiananmen Sq or wandering Wangfujing Dajie are routinely hounded by pesky 'art students' either practising their English or roping visitors into visiting exhibitions of overpriced art. They will try to strike up a conversation with you, but while some travellers enjoy their company, others find their attentions irritating and feel pressurised into buying art. Also be alert to fake Quanjude roast duck operators working near bona fide branches, siphoning off customers from the real thing.

monolithic and intimidating; the tour parades visitors past a choice of 29 of its lifeless rooms, named after the provinces that make up the Chinese universe. Also on the billing is the 5000-seat banquet room where US President Richard Nixon dined in 1972, and the 10,000-seat auditorium with the familiar red star embedded in a galaxy of lights in the ceiling. The Great Hall is closed to the public when the People's Congress is in session.

### CHAIRMAN MAO MEMORIAL HALL

#### 毛主席纪念堂

Chairman Mao died in September 1976 and his **Memorial Hall** (Máo Zhǔxí Jìniàntáng; Map pp118-19; admission free, camera storage Y2-5, bag storage Y2-10; 🕒 8.30-11.30am Tue-Sun, 2-4pm Tue & Thu, not open pm in Jul & Aug; subway Tiananmen Xi, Tiananmen Dong or Qianmen), on the southern side of Tiananmen Sq, was constructed shortly thereafter on the former site of Zhonghua Gate (see the boxed text, opposite).

Easy as it now is to vilify his excesses, many Chinese show deep respect when confronted with the physical presence of Mao. You will be reminded to remove your hat and you can fork out Y3 for a flower to deposit at the foot of a statue of the erstwhile despot in the entrance hall if you wish. The Great Helmsman's mummified corpse lies in a crystal cabinet, draped in an anachronistic red flag emblazoned with hammer and sickle, while impatient guards in white gloves brusquely wave the hoi polloi on towards further rooms, where a riot of Mao kitsch – lighters, bracelets, statues, key rings, bottle openers, you name it – ensues. Don't expect to stumble upon Jung Chang signing copies of her *Mao, the Unknown Story*. At certain times of the year

## THE REBUILDING OF BĒIJĪNG

Steered onto the subject, every other Běijīng cabbie will bemoan the demolition of the capital's city walls. Felled in the interests of traffic circulation, perhaps, but just how many cars were there in 1950s Běijīng? Had they pulled through, the vast city walls and their magnificent gates would undoubtedly be major tourist money-spinners if not Unesco World Heritage sites.

Běijīng has belatedly begun to pick up the pieces: you can mull over the sad remains of Dongan Men (Map p123), wander alongside vestiges of the city wall at Chongwen Men or size up the reconstructed gate of Yongding Men. The most stalwart survivors are the city gates and towers that – apart from the Southeast Corner Watchtower and Deshengmen – lie along the north–south meridian line that essentially cleaves Běijīng in two.

Yongding Men, the largest gate complex in the Outer City and the southernmost point on the axis, was rebuilt in 2004. In reality, the former bastion consisted of a gate and arrow tower (similar to the Front Gate) linked by a semicircular enceinte, so today's copy only hints at the grandeur of the original. Yongding Men was demolished in 1957, making way for the bridged road that has now been severed to accommodate the rebuilt gate, making its demolition and recent substitution a questionable exercise.

With swathes of *hútòng* falling to the wrecking ball, fake *hútòng*-style brick cladding has become customary. Recently widened Jiugulou Dajie has been flanked by cheap *hútòng* brickwork while Chaoyangmen Nanxiaojie, once a delightfully battered road lined with small shops and *hútòng* openings, has been broadened into a vast thoroughfare, topping and tailing the alleyways along its length and thoroughly deleting its personality.

the body requires maintenance and is not on view. Bags need to be deposited at the building east of the memorial hall across the road from Tiananmen Sq (if you leave your camera in your bag you will be charged for it).

## MONUMENT TO THE PEOPLE'S HEROES

人民英雄纪念碑

North of Mao's mausoleum, the **Monument to the People's Heroes** (Rénmín Yīngxióng Jìniànbēi; Map pp118-19; subway Tiananmen Xi, Tiananmen Dong or Qianmen) was completed in 1958. The 37.9m-high obelisk, made of Qingdào granite, bears bas-relief carvings of key patriotic and revolutionary events (such as Lin Zexu destroying opium at Hǔmén in the 19th century, and Tàiping rebels), as well as appropriate calligraphy from communist bigwigs Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai (p52). Mao's eight-character flourish proclaims 'Eternal Glory to the People's Heroes'.

## CHINA NATIONAL MUSEUM

中国国家博物馆

Housed in a sombre 1950s edifice in bad need of a total revamp, this **museum** (Zhōngguó Guójiā Bówùguǎn; Map pp118-19; admission Y30, audio tour Y30; ☎ 8.30am-4.30pm; subway Tiananmen Dong), on the eastern side of Tiananmen Sq, suffers from bad lighting, a cheap and tawdry layout and sporadic English captions. At the time of

writing only three halls were open, the most absorbing of which exhibit gorgeous bronzes and ceramics (look out for the bronze, rhino-shaped *Zun* inlaid with gold and silver designs from the Western Han).

## ZHONGSHAN PARK 中山公园

This lovely little **park** (Zhōngshān Gōngyuán; Map p132; admission Y3; ☎ 6am-9pm; subway Tiananmen Xi), west of the Gate of Heavenly Peace, has a section hedging up against the Forbidden City moat. Formerly the sacred Ming-style Altar to the God of the Land and the God of Grain (Shèjītán) where the emperor offered sacrifices, this park is clean, tranquil and tidy, and a refreshing prologue or conclusion to the magnificence of the adjacent imperial residence.

## WORKERS CULTURAL PALACE

劳动人民文化宫

On the Forbidden City's southeastern flank, the **Workers Cultural Palace** (Láodòng Rénmín Wénhuà Gōng; Map p132; admission Y2; ☎ 6.30am-7.30pm; subway Tiananmen Dong), east of the Gate of Heavenly Peace, was the site of the emperor's premier place of worship, the Supreme Temple (太庙; Tàimiào). The huge halls of the temple remain, their roofs enveloped in imperial yellow tiles. The effect is not unlike the Forbidden City, without the crowds. Take the

northwestern exit from the grounds of the palace and find yourself just by the Forbidden City's Meridian Gate and point of entry to the palace.

## IMPERIAL CITY MUSEUM 皇城艺术馆

This **museum** (Huángchéng Yìshùguǎn; Map p132; ☎ 8511 5104/114; 9 Changpu Heyan; adult/student Y20/10, audio tour Y50; ☎ 9am-4.30pm; subway Tiananmen Dong) is devoted to the Imperial City Wall (Huángchéng), which – apart from a few brief stretches – no longer exists. The museum is the centrepiece of a surviving section of the Imperial City wall, southeast of the Forbidden City, that has been dolled up and converted into a park (residents were moved on). The park is decorated with a graceful marble bridge, rock features, paths, a stream, willows, magnolias, scholar trees and walnut trees.

Within the museum, a diorama reveals the full extent of the yellow-tiled wall, which encompassed a vast chunk of Běijīng virtually seven times the size of the Forbidden City. In its heyday, 28 large temples could be found in the Imperial City alone, along with many smaller shrines. Further galleries have exhibits of imperial ornaments such as *ruyi* (sceptres), porcelain and enamelware and the weapons

and armour of the guards who defended the Imperial City.

## IMPERIAL ARCHIVES 皇史宬

Tucked away retiringly east of the Forbidden City, the tranquil **Imperial Archives** (Huángshǐchéng; Map p132; 136 Nanchizi Dajie; admission free; ☎ 9am-7pm; subway Tiananmen Dong) were the former repository of the imperial records, decrees, the 'Jade Book' (the imperial genealogical record) and vast encyclopaedic works, including the *Yongle Dadian* and the *Daqing Huidian*. With strong echoes of the imperial palace, the courtyard contains well-preserved halls, the **Wan Fung Art Gallery** (Yúnfēng Huàyuàn; Map p132; www.wanfung.com.cn; ☎ noon-6pm Mon, 10am-6pm Tue-Sun) and further art galleries.

## ANCIENT OBSERVATORY 古观象台

Běijīng's ancient **observatory** (Gǔ Guānxiàngtái; Map pp118-19; admission Y10; ☎ 9-11.30am & 1-4.30pm Tue-Sun; subway Jianguomen) forlornly overlooks the shuddering flyovers of the Second Ring Rd.

The original observatory dated back to Kublai Khan's days, when it lay north of the present site.

Climb to the roof for its magnificent array of Jesuit-designed astronomical instruments. The

## MAOSOLEUM

On 9 September 1976 the ruling Politburo had an important decision to make. Mao Zedong had passed away and something had to be done with his body. While pickling doesn't immediately come to mind, China's leaders looked to Russia and Vietnam where Lenin and Ho Chi Minh's bodies laid well preserved. Mao's personal doctor, Li Zhisui, was somewhat anxious with his task at hand. Unsure as to how well his first attempt at 'preservation in perpetuity' would go, he had a wax replica of Mao constructed as backup.

Mao in all of his formaldehyde glory went on display in Tiananmen Sq one year later. His mausoleum (p127) was built by workers and with supplies from each of the provinces, a symbolic show of the spread of Mao's supremacy throughout the country. Inside, Mao's glass-topped casket lies upon a black stone from Tàishān as a reminder of an infamous Chinese quote from Sima Qian: 'One's life can be weightier than Mt Tai or lighter than a goose feather'. Each evening the casket is lowered into a refrigerator where it rests alongside the wax version, leaving many visitors to wonder which Mao they are actually viewing.

In February 2004, six Chinese scholars drafted a proposal asking authorities to remove the corpse from display and bury it in Mao's hometown of Shāoshān in Húnán. They claimed that to worship the corpse of a ruler is a display of a 'slave-based society' and that a body returning to dust in the ground is part of Chinese tradition. Their main concern, however, seems to be the world gaze that will be falling upon Běijīng with the 2008 Olympics. They want the ghoul-ish exhibition gone in order for the city to appear 'civilised' and 'worthy of hosting the games'. Others claim that the mausoleum ruins the feng shui of Tiananmen Sq.

Mao himself wanted to be cremated. But whether the wishes of the Chairman himself will be honoured or whether he'll retain his symbolic place of reverence is in the hands of the Politburo.

## GOING UNDERGROUND

By 1969, as the USA landed men on the moon, Mao had decided the future for Běijīng's people lay underground. Alarmist predictions of nuclear war with Russia dispatched an army of Chinese beneath the streets of Běijīng to burrow a huge warren of bombproof tunnels. The task was completed Cultural Revolution-style – by hand – and was finished in 1979, just as Russia decided to bog down in Afghanistan instead.

A section of tunnels enticingly known as the **Beijing Underground City** (Běijīng Dìxiàchéng; Map pp118-19; 62 Xidamo Changjie; admission ¥20; ☎ 8.30am-6pm; subway Chongwenmen) can be explored. English-language tours guide you along parts of this mouldering warren, past rooms designated as battlefield hospitals, a cinema, arsenals, other anonymous vaults and portraits of Mao Zedong. There's even a rudimentary elevator, floodproof doors and a ventilation system to expel poisonous gasses. Most of the tunnels are around 8m below ground, so it's cold and very damp, with the humidity increasing the deeper you go (sections at greater depths are flooded). Clad in combat gear, the guide waves down dark and uninviting tunnels, announcing their destination: one leads to the Hall of Preserving Harmony in the Forbidden City, another winds to the Summer Palace, while yet another reaches Tiānjīn (a mere 130km away), or so the guide insists. A tiresome detour to an underground silk factory concludes the trip – pass on the pricey duvet covers and pillow cases and make for the door. Emerging from the exit, head east and take a peek down the first alley on your right – Tongle Hutong – one of Běijīng's narrowest.

Jesuits, scholars as well as proselytizers, arrived in 1601 when Matteo Ricci and his associates were permitted to work with Chinese scientists. Outdoing the resident Muslim calendar-setters, they were given control of the observatory, becoming the Chinese court's official advisers.

Of the eight bronze instruments on display, six were designed and constructed under the supervision of the Belgian priest Ferdinand Verbiest, who came to China in 1659 as a special employee of the Qing court.

During the Boxer Rebellion, the instruments disappeared into the hands of the French and Germans. Some were returned in 1902 and others were returned after WWI, under the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles (1919).

## MING CITY WALL RUINS PARK

明城墙遗址公园

Running the entire length of the northern flank of Chongwenmen Dongdajie is this slender **park** (Ming Chéngqiáng Yízhǐ Gōngyuán; Map pp118-19; Chongwenmen Dongdajie; admission free; ☎ 24hr; subway Chongwenmen) alongside a section of the Ming inner city wall.

The restored wall runs for around 2km, rising up to a height of around 15m and interrupted every 80m with buttresses (*dūn tái*), which extend south from the wall to a maximum depth of 39m.

The park extends from the former site of Chongwen Men (one of the nine gates of

the inner city wall), to the **Southeast Corner Watchtower** (Dōngnán Jiǎolóu; Dongbianmen; Map pp118-19; ☎ 8512 1554; admission ¥10; ☎ 9am-5pm; subway Jianguomen or Chongwenmen). Its green-tiled, twin-eaved roof rising up imperiously, this splendid Ming dynasty fortification is punctured with 144 archer's windows. The highly impressive interior has some staggering carpentry: huge red pillars surge upwards, topped with solid beams. The 1st floor is the site of the **Red Gate Gallery** (Hóngmén Huàláng; ☎ 6525 1005; www.redgategallery.com; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm). You can hunt down a further section of original, collapsing Ming wall if you follow Jianguomen Nandajie around to the north.

## TEMPLE OF HEAVEN PARK 天坛公园

A paragon of Ming design, the main hall of the **Temple of Heaven** (Tiāntán Gōngyuán; Map pp118-19; Tian-tan Donglu; admission park/through ticket low season ¥10/30, high season ¥15/35, audio tour available at each gate ¥40; ☎ park 6am-9pm, sights 8am-6pm; subway Chongwenmen or Qianmen) has come to symbolise Běijīng. Set in a walled 267-hectare park with a gate at each compass point, the temple originally served as a vast stage for solemn rites performed by the Son of Heaven, who prayed here for good harvests, and sought divine clearance and atonement for the sins of the people.

Seen from above, the temple halls are round and the bases square, shapes respectively symbolising heaven and the earth. Further observe that the northern rim of the park is

semicircular, while its southern end is square. The traditional approach to the temple was from the south, via **Zhaoheng Gate** (昭亨门; Zhāohēng Men); the north gate is an architectural afterthought.

The 5m-high **Round Altar** (圓丘; Yuánqū; admission ¥20) was constructed in 1530 and rebuilt in 1740. Consisting of white marble arrayed in three tiers, its geometry revolves around the imperial number nine. Odd numbers possess heavenly significance, with nine the largest single-digit odd number. Symbolising heaven, the top tier is a huge mosaic of nine rings, each composed of multiples of nine stones, so that the ninth ring equals 81 stones. The stairs and balustrades are similarly presented in multiples of nine. Sounds generated from the centre of the upper terrace undergo amplification from the marble balustrades (the acoustics can get noisy when crowds join in).

The octagonal **Imperial Vault of Heaven** (皇穹宇; Huáng Qiōngyǔ) was erected at the same time as the Round Altar, its shape echoing the lines of the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests. The hall contained tablets of the emperor's ancestors, employed during winter solstice ceremonies.

Wrapped around the Imperial Vault of Heaven just north of the altar is the **Echo Wall** (回音壁; Huīyīnbì; admission ¥20). A whisper can travel clearly from one end to your friend's ear at the other – unless there's a bellowing tour group in the middle (get here early for this one).

The dominant feature of the whole complex is the standout **Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests** (祈年殿; Qínián Diàn; admission ¥20), an astonishing structure with a triple-eaved umbrella roof mounted on a three-tiered marble terrace. The wooden pillars support the ceiling without nails or cement – for a building 38m high and 30m in diameter, that's quite an accomplishment. Built in 1420, the hall was hit by a lightning bolt during the reign of Guangxu in 1889 and a faithful reproduction based on Ming architectural methods was erected the following year. At the time of writing, the hall was being restored.

## NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM 自然博物馆

The main entrance hall to the overblown, creeper-laden **Natural History Museum** (Zìrán Bówùguǎn; Map pp118-19; 126 Tianqiao Nandajie; admission ¥30; ☎ 8.30am-5pm, no tickets sold after 4pm; subway Qianmen) is hung with portraits of the great natural

historians, including Darwin and Linnaeus (here spelt Linnaeus). Escort kiddies to the revamped dinosaur hall facing you as you enter, which presents itself with an overarching skull-lybone of a *Mamenchisaurus jingyanensis* – a vast saurod that once roamed China – and a much smaller *protoceratops*. Creepy crawlies are consigned to the 2nd floor, and there's an aquarium with Nemo-esque clown fish and an exhibition on the origins of life on earth, but the lack of English captions is baffling.

Some of the exhibits, such as the spliced human cadavers and genitalia in the notorious Hall of Human Bodies are best reserved for those with strong constitutions, while visiting with munchkins could subject them to months of vivid nightmares. Visiting exhibitions are occasionally staged, again without English explanations. Some halls were being revamped at the time of writing.

## BEIJING PLANNING EXHIBITION HALL

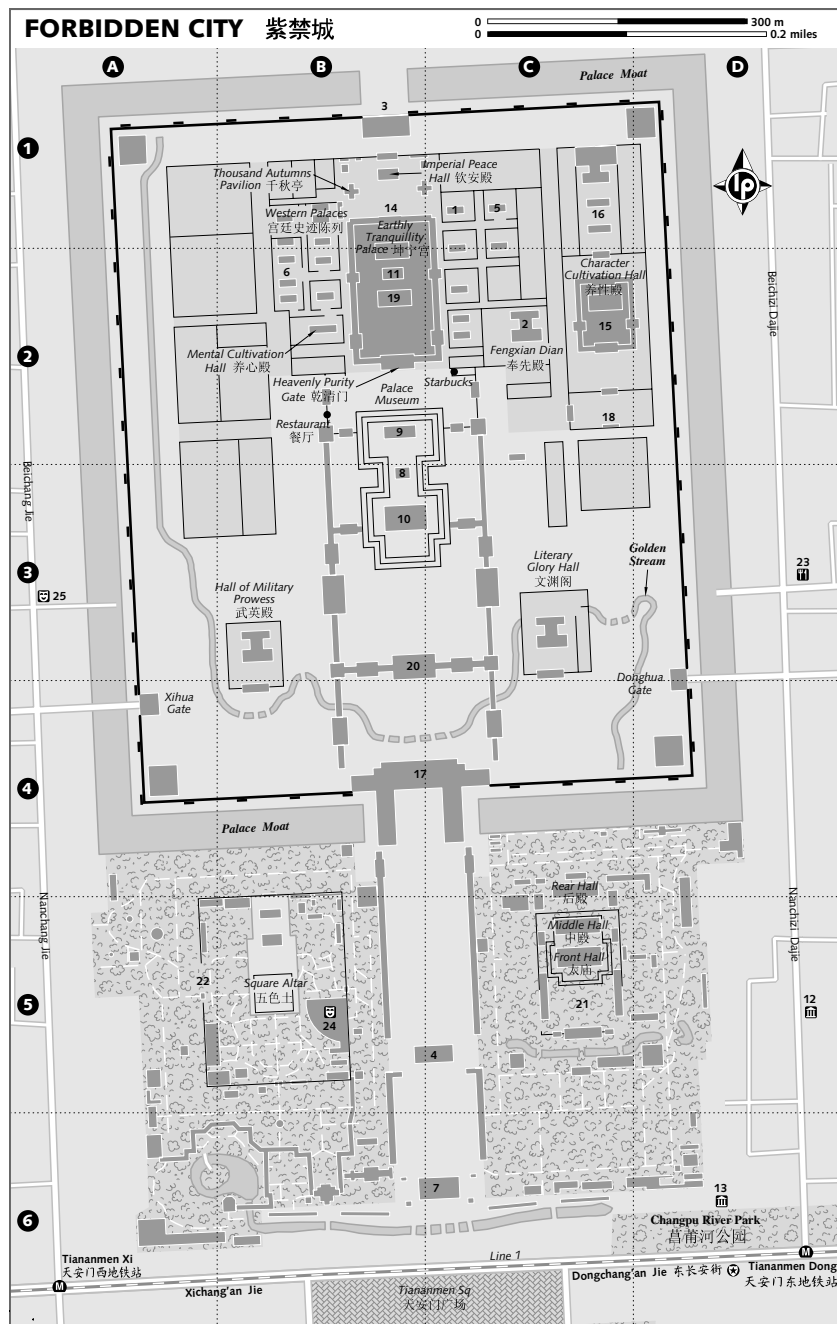
北京市规划展览馆

This overpriced and little-visited **exhibition hall** (Běijīng Shì Guìhuà Zhǎnlǎnguǎn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6701 7074; 20 Qianmen Dongdajie; admission ¥30; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) takes particular pains to present Běijīng's gut-wrenching, *hùtòng*-felling metamorphosis in the best possible light. English labelling is scarce; the only exhibits of note are a detailed bronze map of town in 1949 – ironically the very year that sealed the fate of old Peking – and a huge, detailed diorama of the modern metropolis. The rest of the exhibition is a paean to modern city planning and the unstoppable advance of the concrete mixer, while 3-D films praise 'The New Beijing'. The all-white 'Future Home' on the 4th floor serves only to emphasise how wide off the mark things are: anyone living here for more than five minutes would be foaming at the mouth.

## SONGTANGZHAI MUSEUM

松堂斋民间雕刻博物馆

This small **museum** (Sōngtángzhāi Mínjiān Diāokè Bówùguǎn; Map pp118-19; 14 Liulichang Dongjie; admission by donation; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun) has few English captions, but it's one of the few places you can get to see traditional Chinese carvings assembled together. Well worth popping into if wandering Liulichang (p156), here you can seek out the gateway from Jiāngxī with its elaborate architraving, and examine old drum stones, Buddhist effigies, ancient pillar bases and carved stone lions.



## SIGHTS &amp; ACTIVITIES

Arts & Crafts Exhibit 明清工艺美术馆	1	C1
Clock Exhibition Hall	2	C2
Divine Military Genius Gate 神武门	3	B1
Duan Gate 端门	4	C5
Enamels Exhibition 珐琅馆	5	C1
Eternal Spring Palace 长春宫	6	B2
Gate of Heavenly Peace 天安门	7	C6
Hall of Middle Harmony 中和殿	8	B3
Hall of Preserving Harmony 保和殿	9	B2
Hall of Supreme Harmony 太和殿	10	B3
Hall of Union 交泰殿	11	B2
Imperial Archives 皇史宬	12	D5
Imperial City Museum 皇城艺术馆	13	D6
Imperial Garden 御花园	14	B1
Imperial Supremacy Hall (Painting Exhibit) 绘画馆	15	C2
Jewellery Exhibition 珍宝馆	16	C1
Meridian Gate 午门	17	B4
Nine Dragon Screen 九龙壁	18	C2
Palace of Heavenly Purity 乾清宫	19	B2
Supreme Harmony Gate 太和门	20	B3
Wan Fung Art Gallery 云峰画苑 (see 12)		
Workers Cultural Palace 劳动人民文化宫	21	C5
Zhongshan Park 中山公园	22	A5

## EATING

Courtyard 四合院	23	D3
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## ENTERTAINMENT

Forbidden City Concert Hall 音乐堂	24	B5
What Bar? 什么酒吧?	25	A3

## Dongcheng 东城

## FORBIDDEN CITY 紫禁城

So called because it was off limits for 500 years, the **Forbidden City** (Zǐjìn Chéng; Map p132; ☎ 613 2255; admission Y40, for all halls Y60; 🕒 8.30am-4pm May-Sep, to 3.30pm Oct-Apr; subway Tiananmen Xi or Tiananmen Dong) is the largest and best-preserved cluster of ancient buildings in China. It was home to two dynasties of emperors, the Ming and the Qing, who didn't stray from this pleasure dome unless they absolutely had to.

The admission price is value for money, considering rampant ticket-price inflation elsewhere in China. Allow yourself a full day for exploration, or perhaps several separate trips if you're an enthusiast. The palace's ceremonial buildings lie on the north-south axis of the Forbidden City, from the **Meridian Gate** (Wǔ Mén; Map p132) in the south to the **Divine Military Genius Gate** (Shénwǔ Mén; Map p132) to the north.

Restored in the 17th century, Meridian Gate is a massive portal that in former times was reserved for the use of the emperor. Across the Golden Stream, which is shaped to resemble a Tartar bow and is spanned by five marble bridges, is **Supreme Harmony Gate** (Tàihé Mén; Map p132), overlooking a massive courtyard

that could hold imperial audiences of up to 100,000 people.

Raised on a marble terrace with balustrades are the **Three Great Halls** (Sān Dàdiàn), the heart of the Forbidden City. The **Hall of Supreme Harmony** (Tàihé Diàn; Map p132) is the most important and the largest structure in the Forbidden City. Built in the 15th century, and restored in the 17th century, it was used for ceremonial occasions, such as the emperor's birthday, the nomination of military leaders and coronations.

Inside the Hall of Supreme Harmony is a richly decorated Dragon Throne (Lóngyǐ) where the emperor would preside (decisions final, no correspondence entered into) over his trembling officials.

Behind the Hall of Supreme Harmony is the smaller **Hall of Middle Harmony** (Zhōnghé Diàn; Map p132) that served as a transit lounge for the emperor. Here he would make last-minute preparations, rehearse speeches and receive close ministers.

The third hall, which has no support pillars, is the **Hall of Preserving Harmony** (Bǎohé Diàn; Map p132), used for banquets and later for imperial examinations. To the rear is a 250-tonne marble imperial carriageway carved with dragons and clouds, which was moved into Běijīng on an ice path. The emperor was conveyed over the carriageway in his sedan chair as he ascended or descended the terrace.

The basic configuration of the Three Great Halls is echoed by the next group of buildings, smaller in scale but more important in terms of real power, which in China traditionally lies in the northernmost part.

The first structure is the **Palace of Heavenly Purity** (Qiánqīng Gōng; Map p132), a residence of Ming and early Qing emperors, and later an audience hall for receiving foreign envoys and high officials.

Immediately behind rises the **Hall of Union** (Jiǎotài Diàn; Map p132) and at the northern end of the Forbidden City is the 7000-sq-metre **Imperial Garden** (Yùhuā Yuán; Map p132), a classical Chinese garden of fine landscaping, with rockeries, walkways and pavilions.

The western and eastern sides of the Forbidden City are the palatial former living quarters, once containing libraries, temples, theatres, gardens and even the tennis court of the last emperor. These buildings now function as museums requiring extra admission fees.

The **Clock Exhibition Hall** (Zhōngbiǎo Guǎn; Map p132) is one of the unmissable highlights of the Forbidden City. Located at the time of writing in the Fengxian Hall (Fēngxiān Diàn), the exhibition contains a fascinating array of elaborate timepieces, many gifts to the Qing emperors from overseas. Many of the 18th-century examples are imported through Guǎngdōng from England; others are from Switzerland, America and Japan. Exquisitely wrought, fashioned with magnificently designed elephants and other creatures, they all display an astonishing artfulness and attention to detail. Standout clocks include the 'Gilt Copper Astronomy Clock' equipped with a working model of the solar system and the automaton-equipped 'Gilt Copper Clock with a robot writing Chinese characters with a brush'. The Qing court must surely have been amazed by their ingenuity. Time your arrival with 11am or 2pm and treat yourself to the clock performance in which choice timepieces strike the hour and give a display to wide-eyed children and adults.

Other exhibits in further palace halls include the excellent Jewellery Exhibition, the Enamels Exhibition and the Jewellery Exhibition. To the horror of many, a Starbucks has wormed its way onto the palace grounds.

#### BEIHAI PARK 北海公园

Entered via four gates, **Beihai Park** (Bēihǎi Gōngyuán; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6407 1415; admission Y5, Jade Islet Y10; ☎ 6.30am-8pm, buildings open to 4pm; subway Tiananmen Xi, then bus 5), northwest of the Forbidden City, is largely lake.

The site is associated with Kublai Khan's palace, the navel of Beijing before the creation of the Forbidden City. All that remains of the Khan's court is a large jar made of green jade in the **Round City** (团城; Tuánchéng), near the southern entrance.

Dominating **Jade Islet** (琼岛; Qióngdǎo) on the lake, the 36m-high **White Dagoba** (白塔; Báitǎ) was originally built in 1651 for a visit by the Dalai Lama, and was rebuilt in 1741. You can reach the dagoba through the **Yong'an Temple** (永安寺; Yǒng'ān Sì), included in the Beihai Park Y10 ticket.

**Xitiān Fànjìng** (西天梵境; Western Paradise), situated on the northern shore of the lake, is an excellent temple (admission included in park ticket). The first hall, the Hall of the Heavenly Kings, takes you past Milefo, Weituo and the four Heavenly Kings. The

Dacizhenru Hall dates to the Ming dynasty and contains three huge statues of Sakyamuni, the Amithaba Buddha and Yaoshi Fo (Medicine Buddha).

The nearby **Nine Dragon Screen** (九龙壁; Jiǔlóng Bì), a 5m-high and 27m-long spirit wall, is a glimmering stretch of coloured glazed tiles.

Beihai Park is a relaxing place to stroll around, grab a snack, sip a beer, rent a rowing boat, and watch calligraphers practising characters on the paving slabs with brush and water, and couples cuddling on a bench in the evening.

#### LAMA TEMPLE 雍和宫

The **Lama Temple** (Yōnghé Gōng; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6404 4499, ext 252; 28 Yonghegong Dajie; admission Y25, English audio guide Y20; ☎ 9am-4pm; subway Yonghegong) is Beijing's most magnificent Buddhist temple: beautiful rooftops, stunning frescoes, magnificent decorative arches, tapestries, incredible carpentry and a great pair of Chinese lions.

The most renowned Tibetan Buddhist temple outside Tibet, the Lama Temple was converted to a lamasery in 1744 after serving as the former residence of Emperor Yong Zheng.

The temple's most prized possession is its 17m-high sandalwood statue of the Maitreya Buddha in the Wanfu Pavilion. An absorbing exhibition at the rear displays numerous Tibetan items and chronicles the lineage of the Dalai Lamas.

#### CONFUCIUS TEMPLE & IMPERIAL COLLEGE 孔庙、国子监

Long neglected like a discarded piece of unloved bric-a-brac, the arid **Confucius Temple** (Kōng Miào; Map pp118-19; 13 Guozijian Jie; admission Y10; ☎ 8.30am-5pm; subway Yonghegong) is a quiet sanctuary from Beijing's congested, smoggy streets and snarling traffic. In an Olympic makeover, China's second-largest Confucian temple was having its main hall – housing a statue of Kongzi (Confucius) – restored at the time of writing. Some of Beijing's last remaining *pailou* bravely survive in the *hutong* outside (Guozijian Jie). At the rear is a forest of 190 stelae (stones or slabs decorated with figures or inscriptions) recording the 13 Confucian classics, consisting of 630,000 Chinese characters.

Like everywhere in town, there are skeletons in the temple cupboard and an unpleasant

footnote lurks unrecorded behind the tourist blurb. Beijing writer Lao She was dragged here in August 1966, forced to his knees in front of a bonfire of Beijing opera costumes to confess his antirevolutionary crimes, and beaten. The much-loved writer drowned himself the next day in Taiping Lake.

West of the Confucius Temple is the **Imperial College** (Guózijian; Map pp118-19), where the emperor expounded the Confucian classics to an audience of thousands of kneeling students, professors and court officials – an annual rite. Built by the grandson of Kublai Khan in 1306, the former college was the supreme academy during the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. On the site is a marvellous glazed, three-gate, single-eaved decorative archway, called a *liúli páifāng* (glazed archway). The Biyong Hall beyond is a twin-roofed structure with yellow tiles surrounded by a moat and topped with a gold knob.

#### DITAN PARK 地坛公园

Cosmologically juxtaposed with the Temple of Heaven and Beijing's other altars, **Ditan Park** (Dítān Gōngyuán; Map pp118-19; admission Y2, admission to the altar Y5; ☎ 6am-9pm), east of Andingmenwai Dajie, is the Temple of the Earth. The park's large **altar** (方泽坛; fāngzé tán) is square in shape, symbolising the earth. At the Chinese New Year, a temple fair is staged in the park. Within the park, the art gallery **One Moon** (Yīyuè Dāngdài Yìshù; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6427 7748; www.onemoon art.com; ☎ 11am-7pm Tue-Sun) displays thoughtful contemporary Chinese art from a 16th-century dynasty temple hall, a funky meeting of the Ming and the modern. If visiting the art gallery alone, the entrance fee to the park should be waived.

#### JINGSHAN PARK 景山公园

With its priceless views, **Jingshan Park** (Jǐngshān Gōngyuán; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6403 3225; admission Y2; ☎ 6am-9.30pm; subway Tiananmen Xi, then bus 5), north of the Forbidden City, was shaped from the earth excavated to create the palace moat. The hill supposedly protects the palace from the evil spirits – or dust storms – from the north (the billowing dust clouds in the spring have to be seen to be believed).

Clamber to the top for a magnificent panorama of the capital and an unparalleled overview of the russet roofing of the Forbidden City. On the eastern side of the park a locust tree stands in the place where the last of the

Ming emperors, Chongzhen, hung himself as rebels swarmed at the city walls.

#### ST JOSEPH'S CHURCH 东堂

One of the four principal churches in Beijing, **St Joseph's Church** (Dōng Táng; Map p123; 74 Wangfujing Dajie; ☎ 6.30-7am Mon-Sat, to 8am Sun; subway Wangfujing) is also called the East Cathedral. Originally built in 1655, it was damaged by an earthquake in 1720 and rebuilt. The luckless church also caught fire in 1807, was destroyed again in 1900 during the Boxer Rebellion, and restored in 1904, only to be shut in 1966. It has been fully repaired and is now a more sublime feature of Wangfujing's commercial face-lift. A large square in front swarms with children playing and Chinese models in bridal outfits pose for magazine covers.

#### DRUM TOWER & BELL TOWER 鼓楼、钟楼

Repeatedly destroyed and restored, the **Drum Tower** (Gǔlóu; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6401 2674; Gulou Dongdajie; admission Y20; ☎ 9am-4.30pm) originally marked the centre of the old Mongol capital. The drums of this later Ming dynasty version were beaten to mark the hours of the day. Stagger up the incredibly steep steps for impressive views over Beijing's *hutong* rooftops. Among the drums is the large and dilapidated **Night Watchman's Drum** (gēnggǔ; gēng being one of the five two-hour divisions of the night) and an array of reproduction drums.

Fronted by a Qing dynasty stele, the **Bell Tower** (Zhōnglóu; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6401 2674; Zhonglouwan Hutong; admission Y15; ☎ 9am-4.30pm) originally dates from Ming times. The Ming structure went up in a sheet of flame and the present structure is a Qing edifice dating from the 18th century. Augment visits with drinks at the Drum & Bell Bar (p153).

Both the Drum and Bell Towers can be reached on bus 5, 58 or 107; get off at the namesake Gulou stop.

#### CHINA ART GALLERY 中国美术馆

The **China Art Gallery** (Zhōngguó Měishùguǎn; Map p123; ☎ 6400 6326; 1 Wusi Dajie; admission Y5; ☎ 9am-5pm, last entry 4pm) has a range of modern paintings and hosts occasional photographic exhibitions. The art on display is often typical of mainstream Chinese aesthetics (predominantly dark colours and safe subject matter) so it can be rather undemanding and anyone expecting testing artwork may be disappointed, but works from overseas collections are far more

## BĒIJĪNG'S HÚTÒNG

If you want to plumb Běijīng's homely interior, and move beyond the must-see tourist sights and the shopping-mall glitz of town, voyage into the city's *hútòng* (胡同; narrow alleyways). Many of these charming alleyways have survived, crisscrossing east–west across the city and linking to create a huge, enchanting warren of one-storey, ramshackle dwellings and historic courtyard homes.

*Hútòng* may still be the stamping ground of a quarter of Běijīng's residents, but many are sadly being swept aside in Běijīng's race to manufacture a modern city of white tile high-rises. Marked with white plaques, historic homes are protected, but for many others a way of life hangs precariously in balance.

### History

After Genghis Khan's army reduced the city of Běijīng to rubble, the city was redesigned with *hútòng*. By the Qing dynasty there were over 2000 such passageways riddling the city, leaping to around 6000 by the 1950s; now the figure has dwindled again to around 2000.

*Hútòng* land is a hotchpotch of the old and the new, with Qing dynasty courtyards riddled with modern brick outhouses and socialist-era conversions, and cruelly overlooked by grim apartment blocks.

### Sihéyuàn

Old walled courtyards (*sihéyuàn*) are the building blocks of this delightful world. Many are still lived in and hum with activity. From spring to autumn, men collect outside their gates, drinking beer, playing chess, smoking and chewing the fat. Inside, trees soar aloft, providing shade and a nesting ground for birds.

More venerable courtyards are fronted by large, thick, red doors, outside of which perch either a pair of Chinese lions or drum stones (*bāogǔshí*; two circular stones resembling drums, each on a small plinth and occasionally topped by a miniature lion or a small dragon head).

Foreigners long ago cottoned on to the charm of courtyards and breached this very conservative bastion; however, many have been repelled by poor heating, no hot water, no cable TV, dodgy sanitation and no place to park the SUV. Many *hútòng* homes still lack toilets, which explains the multitude of malodorous public loos strung out along the alleyways. Other homes

compelling. The absence of a permanent collection means that all exhibits are temporary. There are no English captions, but it's still a first-rate place to see modern Chinese art and, maybe just as importantly, to watch the Chinese looking at art. Take trolley buses 103, 104, 106 or 108 to Meishu Guan bus stop (on Wusi Dajie).

### ZHIHUA TEMPLE 智化寺

Běijīng's surviving temple brood has endured slapdash renewal that regularly buries authenticity beneath casual restoration work. This rickety **shrine** (Zhihua Sì; Map pp118-19; 5 Lmicang Hutong; admission ¥20; ☎ 8.30am-4.30pm; subway Jianguomen/Chaoyangmen) is thick with the flavours of old Peking, having eluded the Dulux treatment that invariably precedes entrance-fee inflation and stomping tour groups. You won't find the coffered ceiling of the third hall (it's in

the USA) and the Four Heavenly Kings have vanished from **Zhihua Gate** (智化门; Zhihua Mén), but the **Scriptures Hall** encases a venerable Ming dynasty revolving wooden library, and the highlight **Ten Thousand Buddhas Hall** (万佛殿; Wānfó Diàn) is an enticing two floors of miniature niche-borne Buddhist effigies and cabinets for the storage of sutras. Creep up the steep wooden staircase at the back of the hall to visit the sympathetic effigy of the Vairocana (毗卢) Buddha seated upon a multipetalled lotus flower in the upper chamber, before wondering the fate of the 1000-Armed Guanyin that once presided over the **Great Mercy Hall** at the temple rear.

### SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY MUSEUM 科技馆

Some exhibits at this **museum** (Kējìguǎn; Map pp116-17; 1 Beisanhuan Zhonglu; Hall A/B/C/Y30/30/20, through ticket ¥50; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Tue-Sun; subway Gulou Dajie) are showing

have been thoroughly modernised and sport varnished wood floors, fully fitted kitchens, a Jacuzzi and air-con.

### Wind-Water Lanes

*Hútòng* nearly all run east–west to ensure that the main gate faces south, satisfying feng shui requirements. This south-facing aspect guarantees a lot of sunshine and protection from more negative forces from the north. This positioning also mirrors the layout of all Chinese temples, nourishing the Yang (the male and light aspect), while checking the Yin (the female and dark aspect).

Little connecting alleyways that run north–south link the main alleys. The resulting rectangular waffle-grid pattern stamps the points of the compass on the Běijīng psyche. You may hear a local saying, for example, '*wǒ gāoxìng de wǒ bù zhī běi le*', meaning 'I was so happy, I didn't know which way was north' (an extremely disorientating state of joy).

### Names

Some *hútòng* are christened after families, such as Zhaotangzi Hutong (Alley of the Zhao Family). Others simply take their name from historical figures or features, while some have more mysterious associations, such as Dragon Whiskers Ditch Alley. Others reflect the merchandise plied at local markets, such as Ganmian Hutong (Dry Flour Alley) or Chrysanthemum Lane.

### Hútòng Tour

The best way to see the *hútòng* is just to wander around the centre of Běijīng as the alleyways riddle the town within the Second Ring Rd. Otherwise, limit yourself to historic areas, such as around the Drum Tower (p135) or the area around the Lusongyuan Hotel (p146). Alternatively, jump on a bike (see the Bicycle Tour, p142), or do the pedicab tourist trip with the **Beijing Hutong Tour Co Ltd** (☎ 6615 9097, 6400 2787; ☎ day tours 8.50am & 1.50pm, evening tours 6.50pm May-Oct) or the **Chinese Culture Club** (☎ 6432 9341, ext 18; www.chinesecultureclub.org; 29 Liangmaqiao Lu). Small two-carriage open-air coaches leave from Wangfujing Dajie opposite Wangfujing Snack St (p148) on the south side of Wangfujing Dajie for 40-minute rides among the *hútòng* (¥15). Any number of other pedicab tours infest the roads around the Shichahai Lakes – they will circle you like hyenas, baying '*hútòng, hútòng*'.

their age, but kids can run riot among the main hall's three floors of hands-on displays. Watch **industrial robots** perform a flawless taichi sword routine, try chatting with the **speech robot** who only seems able to say '对不起 我没有听懂你的话' ('Sorry, I didn't catch you'), follow a **maglev train** gliding along a stretch of track or test out a **bulletproof vest** with a sharp pointy thing. You could spend half the day working through the imaginative and educational displays in the main hall, but if you want to make a real go of it, Hall B (astrovision theatre) and Hall C (Children's Scientific Entertainment Hall) offer extra diversions for boffins, young and old. English captions throughout.

### Chaoyang 朝阳区

#### DONGYUE TEMPLE 东岳庙

Dedicated to the Eastern Peak (Tài Shān, p214) of China's five Taoist mountains, the **Dongyue**

**Temple** (Dōngyuè Miào; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6553 2184; 141 Chaoyangmenwai Dajie; admission ¥10; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Tue-Sun; subway Chaoyangmen) is an unsettling and fascinating experience. The temple is actively minded by Taoist monks attending to a world entirely detached from the surrounding high-rises and commercial mayhem. The temple's substantial *páifāng* (memorial archway) lies to the south, divorced from its shrine by the intervention of Chaoyangmenwai Dajie.

Stepping through the entrance pops you into a Taoist Hades, where tormented spirits reflect on their wrongdoing and atonement beyond reach. Take your pick: you can muse on life's finalities in the **Life and Death Department** or the **Final Indictment Department**. Otherwise, get spooked at the **Department for Wandering Ghosts** or the **Department for Implementing 15 Kinds of Violent Death**. English explanations detail each department's function.

The huge **Daiyue Hall** (Dàiyuè Diàn) is consecrated to the God of Tàì Shān, who manages the 18 layers of hell. Visiting during festival time, especially during the Chinese New Year and the Mid-Autumn festival, sees the temple at its most colourful; see p944 for more about festivals.

#### POLY ART MUSEUM 保利艺术博物馆

This excellent new-generation **museum** (Bǎoli Yìshù Bówùguǎn; Map p122; ☎ 6500 8117; new Poly Plaza; admission ¥50; 🕒 9.30am–4.30pm Tue, Thu & Sat, group reservations Mon, Wed & Fri; subway Dongsishitiao) has well-presented exhibits of Shang and Zhou dynasty bronzes as well as carved stone Buddhist effigies sculpted between the Northern Wei and Tang dynasties. It is a sublime display, but be sure to take note of the often unaccommodating opening hours for individuals.

#### FACTORY 798 艺术新区

This disused and sprawling electronics **factory** (Map pp116–17; cnr Jiuxianqiao Lu & Jiuxianqiao Beilu; admission free) found a new lease of life several years ago as the focus for Běijīng's feisty art community. Wander the former factory workshops and peruse the artwork on view at its highlight galleries, **White Space at 798** (☎ 8456 2054; 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu; 🕒 noon–6pm Tue–Sun) and **Beijing Tokyo Art Projects** (☎ 8457 3245; 🕒 10am–6.30pm) or admire the photographic stills at **798 Photo Gallery** (Bǎinián Yìnxìàng; ☎ 6438 1784; www.798photogallery.cn; 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu).

#### Fengtai & Xuanwu 丰台区、宣武区

##### WHITE CLOUD TEMPLE 白云观

Founded in AD 739, **White Cloud Temple** (Báiyún Guàn; Map pp118–19; ☎ 6346 3531; Baiyun Lu; admission ¥10; 🕒 8.30am–4.30pm May–Sep, to 4pm Oct–Apr) is a lively, huge and fascinating temple complex of numerous shrines and courtyards, tended by distinctive Taoist monks with their hair twisted into topknots. As with many of China's temples, the White Cloud Temple has been repeatedly destroyed and today's temple halls principally date from Ming and Qing times.

Drop by White Cloud Temple during Chinese New Year and be rewarded with the spectacle of a magnificent temple fair (*miàoohui*). Worshipers funnel into the streets around the temple in their thousands, lured by artisans, street performers, *wùshù* (martial arts) acts, craftsmen, traders and a swarm of snack

merchants. Near the temple entrance, a vast queue snakes slowly through the gate for a chance to rub a polished stone carving for good fortune.

Beyond, throngs of worshippers further fortify their luck by tossing metal discs (¥10 for 50) at bell-adorned outside coins suspended from a bridge.

To find the temple, walk south on Baiyun Lu and cross the moat. Continue south along Baiyun Lu and turn into a curving street on the left; follow it for 250m to the temple entrance.

#### COW STREET MOSQUE 牛街礼拜寺

Dating back to the 10th century, this **mosque** (Niújiē Libài Sì; Map pp118–19; ☎ 6353 2564; 88 Niu Jie; admission ¥10, free for Muslims; 🕒 8am–sunset) was designed in a Chinese-temple style, is the largest in town and was the burial site for several Islamic clerics. The temple is given over to a profusion of greenery as well as flourishes of Arabic. There is a main prayer hall (which you can enter only if you are Muslim), women's quarters and the Building for Observing the Moon (望月楼; Wàngyuèlóu), from where the lunar calendar was calculated. Dress appropriately (no shorts or short skirts). To get here take bus 6 to Niu Jie or bus 10 to the Libaisi stop.

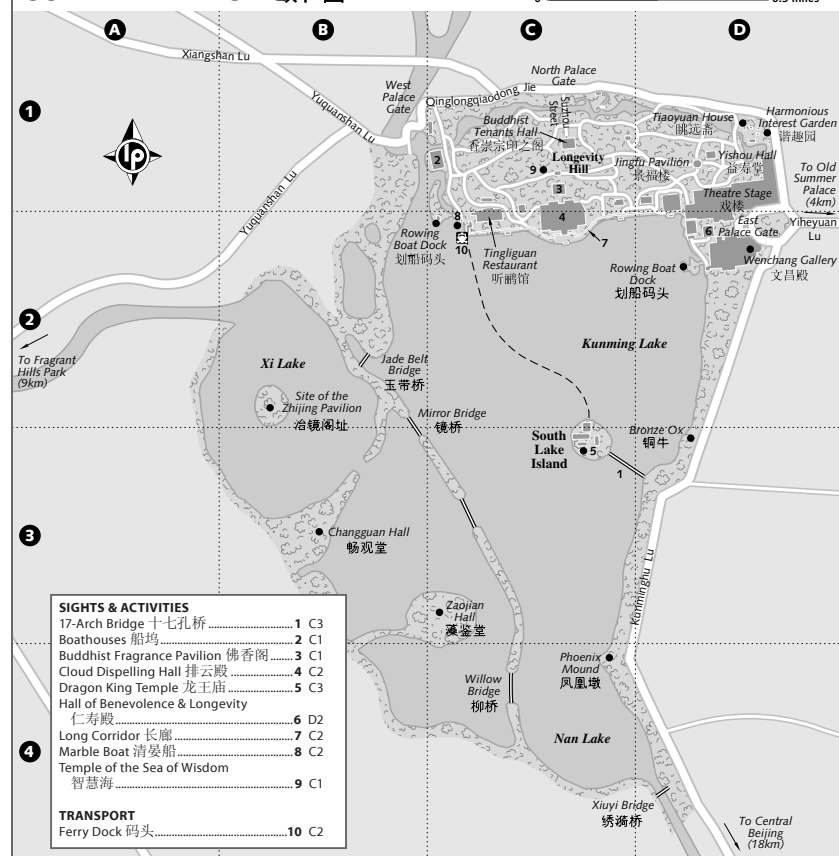
#### FAYUAN TEMPLE 法源寺

In a lane just east of Cow St Mosque is this bustling **temple** (Fāyuán Sì; Map pp118–19; ☎ 6353 3966/4171; 7 Fayuansi Qianjie; admission ¥5; 🕒 8.30–11.30am & 1.30–3.30pm Thu–Tue), originally constructed in the 7th century and still a hive of activity. Now the China Buddhism College, the temple was originally built to honour Tang soldiers who had fallen during combat against the northern tribes. From the entrance of Cow St Mosque, walk left 100m then turn left into the first *hùtòng*. Follow the *hùtòng* for about 10 minutes and you'll arrive at Fayuan Temple.

#### CAPITAL MUSEUM 中国首都博物馆

This new **museum** (Zhōngguó Shǒudū Bówùguǎn; Map pp118–19; ☎ 6337 0491; www.capitalmuseum.org.cn; 16 Fuxingmenwai Dajie; admission ¥20; ☎ 9am–5pm) staged a headline-grabbing exhibition in 2006 from the collection of the British Museum. Permanent collections include ancient bronzes, Buddhist statues, jade, calligraphy, paintings and ceramics.

## SUMMER PALACE 颐和园



#### Haidian & Xicheng 海淀区、西城区

##### SUMMER PALACE 颐和园

One of Běijīng's most visited sights, the immense park of the **Summer Palace** (Yìhé Yuán; Map p139; ☎ 6288 1144; 19 Xinjian Gongmen; admission ¥30, through ticket ¥50, audio guides ¥30; 🕒 8:30am–5pm) requires at least half a day of your time.

Teeming with tour groups from all over China and beyond, this opulent dominion of palace temples, gardens, pavilions, lakes and corridors was once a playground for the imperial court. Royalty took refuge here from the insufferable summer heat that roasted the Forbidden City. The site had long been a royal garden and was considerably enlarged and embellished by Emperor Qianlong in the 18th century. He marshalled 100,000 labour-

ers to deepen and expand **Kunming Lake** (昆明湖; Kūnmíng Hú; Map p139), and reputedly surveyed imperial navy drills from a hill-top perch.

Anglo-French troops left their mark, damaging the buildings during the Second Opium War (1856–60). Empress Dowager Cixi commenced a refit in 1888 with money earmarked for a modern navy; the marble boat at the northern edge of the lake was her only nautical – albeit unsinkable – concession.

Foreign troops, incensed by the Boxer Rebellion, had another go at roasting the Summer Palace in 1900, prompting further restoration work. By 1949 the palace had once more fallen into disrepair, eliciting a major overhaul.

Glittering Kunming Lake swallows up three-quarters of the park, overlooked by Longevity Hill (万寿山; Wànshòu Shān). The principal structure is the **Hall of Benevolence and Longevity** (仁寿殿; Rénshòu Diàn; Map p139), by the east gate, housing a hardwood throne and attached to a courtyard decorated with bronze animals, including the mythical *qilin* (a hybrid animal that only appeared on earth at times of harmony). Unfortunately, the hall is barricaded off so you will have to peer in.

An elegant stretch of woodland along the northern shore, the **Long Corridor** (长廊; Cháng Láng; Map p139) is trimmed with a plethora of paintings, while the slopes and crest of Longevity Hill behind are adorned with Buddhist temples. Slung out uphill on a north-south axis, **Buddhist Fragrance Pavilion** (Fóxiāng Gé; Map p139) and **Cloud Dispelling Hall** (排云殿; Páiyún Diàn; Map p139) are linked by corridors. Crowning the peak is the Buddhist **Temple of the Sea of Wisdom** (智慧海; Zhì Huìhǎi; Map p139), tiled with effigies of Buddha, many with obliterated heads.

Cixi's **marble boat** (Map p139) sits immobile on the north shore, south of some fine Qing **boathouses** (Map p139). You can traverse Kunming Lake by ferry to **South Lake Island** (南湖岛; Nánhú Dǎo; Map p139), where Cixi went to beseech the **Dragon King Temple** (龙王庙; Lóngwáng Miào; Map p139) for rain in times of drought. A graceful 17-arch bridge (Map p139) spans the 150m to the eastern shore of the lake.

Towards the North Palace Gate, **Suzhou Street** (苏州街; Sūzhōu Jiē; Map p139) is an entertaining and light-hearted diversion of riverside walkways, shops and eateries designed to mimic the famous Jiāngsū canal town.

The Summer Palace is about 12km northwest of the centre of Běijīng. Take the subway to Xizhímén station (close to the zoo), then a minibus or bus 375; the nearest light rail station is Wudaokou (then take bus 331). Other useful buses here include 331 and 801 (both from the Old Summer Palace) and 808 from the Qianmen area. You can also get here by bicycle; it takes about 1½ to two hours from the centre of town. Cycling along the road following the Beijing-Miyun Diversion Canal is pleasant, and in summer there's the option of taking a **boat** (☎ 8836 3576; Houhu Pier; one way/return incl Summer Palace admission Y70/100) from behind the Beijing Exhibition Center near the zoo; the boat voyages via locks along the canal.

**PRINCE GONG'S RESIDENCE** 恭王府  
Reputed to be the model for the mansion in Cao Xueqin's 18th-century classic *Dream of the Red Mansions*, this **residence** (Gōngwáng Fū; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6616 8149, 6601 6132; 14 Liuyin Jie; admission Y20, guided tours incl tea & performance Y60; ☎ 8:30am-4:30pm; subway Gulou, then bus 60) is one of Běijīng's largest private residential compounds. Get here ahead of the tour buses and enjoy one of Běijīng's more attractive retreats, decorated with rockeries, plants, pools, pavilions, corridors and elaborately carved gateways. Arrive with the crowds and you won't want to stay. Performances of Beijing opera are held regularly in the Qing dynasty **Grand Opera House** (☎ 6618 6628; tickets Y80-120; ☎ 7:30-8:40pm Mar-Oct) in the east of the grounds.

#### MIAOYING TEMPLE WHITE DAGOBA

妙应寺白塔  
Buried away within a delightful *hútòng* maze, the **Miaoying Temple** (Miàoyīng Sì Bǎitǎ; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6616 0211; 171 Fuchengmennei Dajie; admission Y20; ☎ 9am-4pm; subway Fuchengmen) slumbers beneath its distinctive, pure-white Yuan dynasty dagoba. The **Hall of the Great Enlightened One** (大觉宝殿; Dàjuébǎo Diàn) glitters splendidly with hundreds of Tibetan Buddhist effigies.

In other halls reside a four-faced effigy of Guanyin (here called Parnashavari) and a trinity of past, present and future Buddhas. Exit the temple and wander the tangle of local alleyways (one bemusingly called Green Pagoda Alley) for earthy shades of *hútòng* life. Take bus 13, 101, 102 or 103 to Bǎitǎ Sì bus stop (near Baitaisi Lu) or take the subway to Fuchengmen and walk east.

#### BEIJING ZOO 北京动物园

The inhabitants of **Beijing Zoo** (Běijīng Dōngwùyuán; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6831 4411; 137 Xizhimenwai Dajie; admission Y15, pandas extra Y5; ☎ 7:30am-6pm) are saddled with grimly dated design features – concrete and glass cells – but the crowd-pulling pandas have plusher living quarters for good behaviour. The polar bears pin all their hopes on graduating from their concrete hell to the more impressive **Beijing Aquarium** (Map pp118-19; ☎ 6217 6655; adult/child Y100/50; ☎ 9am-6pm low season, to 10pm high season) in the northeastern corner of the zoo. In other respects, however, the zoo serves as a pleasant park and an excellent place for a stroll among the trees and ponds.

Getting to the zoo is easy enough; take the subway to Xizhímén station. From here, it's a

15-minute walk heading west or a short ride on any of the trolley buses.

#### OLD SUMMER PALACE 圆明园

Located northwest of the city centre, the original **Summer Palace** (Yuánmíng Yuán; Map pp116-17; ☎ 6262 8501; admission Y10, palace ruins Y15; ☎ 7am-7pm), northeast of the Summer Palace, was laid out in the 12th century. Resourceful Jesuits were later employed by Emperor Qianlong to fashion European-style palaces for the gardens, incorporating elaborate fountains and baroque statuary. During the Second Opium War, British and French troops destroyed the palace and sent the booty abroad. Much went up in flames, but a melancholic array of broken columns and marble chunks remain.

Trot through the southern stretch of hawkers and arcade games to the more subdued ruins of the European Palace in the **Eternal Spring Garden** (长春园; Chángchūn Yuán) to the northeast. Alternatively, enter by the east gate, which leads to the palace vestiges. The mournful composition of tumbledown palace remains lies strewn in a long strip; alongside are black-and-white photos displaying before and after images of the residence. It's here that the **Great Fountain Ruins** (大水法遗址; Dàshuǐfǎ Yízhǐ), considered the best-preserved relic, can be found.

West of the ruins you can lose your way in an artful reproduction of a former maze called the **Garden of Yellow Flowers** (迷宫; Mígōng).

The gardens cover a huge area – some 2.5km from east to west – so be prepared to do some walking. Besides the ruins, there's the western section, the **Perfection and Brightness Garden** (圆明园; Yuánmíng Yuán) and the southern compound, the **10,000 Spring Garden** (万春园; Wànchūn Yuán).

To get to the Old Summer Palace, take minibus 375 from the Xizhímén subway station, or get off at the Wudaokou subway station. Minibuses also connect the new Summer Palace with the old one, or a taxi will take you for Y10.

#### FRAGRANT HILLS PARK 香山公园

Easily within striking distance of the Summer Palace is the Western Hills (Xī Shān), another former villa-resort of the emperors. The part of the Western Hills closest to Běijīng is known as **Fragrant Hills Park** (Xiāngshān Gōngyuán; Map pp116-17; admission Y10; ☎ 7am-6pm).

You can either scramble up the slopes to the top of **Incense-Burner Peak** (香炉峰; Xiānglú Fēng) or take the **chairlift** (one way/return Y30/50; ☎ 9am-4pm). Běijīngers love to flock here in autumn when the maple leaves saturate the hillsides in great splashes of red.

Near the north gate of Fragrant Hills Park is **Azure Clouds Temple** (碧云寺; Bìyún Sì; admission Y10; ☎ 8am-5pm), which dates back to the Yuan dynasty. The Mountain Gate Hall contains two vast protective deities: 'Heng' and 'Ha'. Next is a small courtyard containing the drum and bell towers, leading to a hall with a wonderful statue of Milefo: it's bronze, but coal black with age. Only his big toe shines from numerous inquisitive fingers.

The next hall contains statues of Sakyamuni and Bodhisattvas Manjushri, Samantabhadra and Avalokitesvara (Guanyin), plus 18 *luòhàn* (Buddhists, especially a monk who has achieved enlightenment and passes to nirvana at death); a marvellous golden carved dragon soars above Sakyamuni. The Sun Yatsen Memorial Hall behind contains a statue and a glass coffin donated by the USSR on the death of Mr Sun (see p47).

At the very back is the marble Vajra Throne Pagoda where Sun Yatsen was interred after he died, before his body was moved to its final resting place in Nánjīng. The Hall of Arhats contains 500 *luòhàn* statues.

To reach Fragrant Hills Park by public transport, take bus 360 from the zoo or bus 318 from Pingguoyuan underground station.

#### BEIJING BOTANIC GARDENS 北京植物园

Located 2km east of Fragrant Hills Park, the well-tended **Botanic Gardens** (Běijīng Zhíwùyuán; Map pp116-17; admission Y5; ☎ 6am-8pm), set against the backdrop of the Western Hills, make for a pleasant outing among bamboo fronds, pines and lilacs. The **Beijing Botanic Gardens Conservatory** (admission Y40) contains 3000 different types of plants and a rainforest house.

Located about a 15-minute walk north from the front gate (follow the signs) near the Magnolia Garden is the **Temple of the Reclining Buddha** (Wófó Sì; Map pp116-17; admission Y5; ☎ 8am-5pm). First built in the Tang dynasty, the temple's centrepiece is a huge reclining effigy of Sakyamuni weighing in at 54 tonnes, which 'enslaved 7000 people' in its casting. On each side of Buddha are sets of gargantuan shoes, gifts to Sakyamuni from various emperors in case he went for a stroll.



To get here take the subway to Pingguoyuan then bus 318, bus 333 from the Summer Palace or bus 360 from Beijing Zoo.

## BICYCLE TOUR

Běijīng's sprawling distances and scattered sights can make for blistering sightseeing on foot, but whizzing around the city's streets and alleyways by bike allows you to take it all in at just the right speed. Hop on a pair of wheels, get that bell jangling and join us on this eye-opening tour past some of the city's finest monuments and through Běijīng's gritty and crumbling *hútòng*.

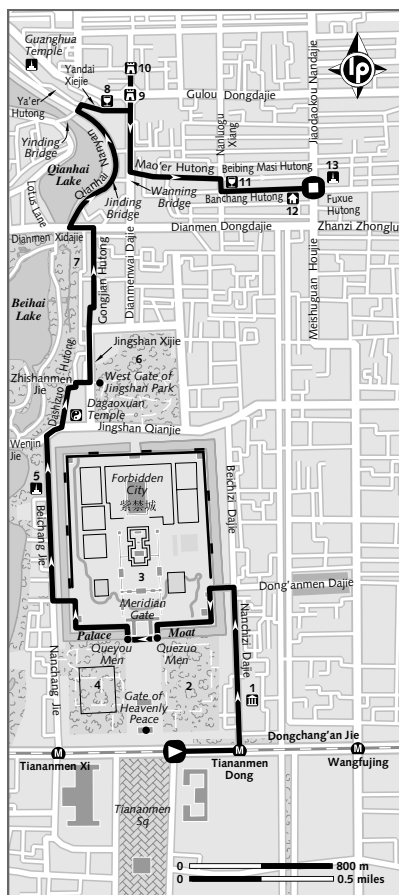
Our tour starts on Dongchang'an Jie, northeast of Tiananmen Sq. Cycle through the purple-red archway of Nanchizi Dajie (南池子大街) and north along the tree-lined street; you'll pass the **Imperial Archives** (1; p129) to your right, a quiet courtyard with echoes of the Forbidden City. Further up to your left you'll see the eastern entrance to the **Workers Cultural Palace** (2; p128), from where you can glimpse the imperial yellow roof of the Supreme Temple (太庙; Tàì Miào).

Further along Nanchizi Dajie, the halls and towers of the Forbidden City become visible to the west; hang a left at the intersection with Donghuanmen Dajie (东华门大街), pass the Courtyard restaurant (p151; and downstairs art gallery) to your right, then head left again and follow the road sandwiched between the moat and the palace walls.

Note in particular the southeast corner tower of the wall of the **Forbidden City** (3; p133). The walls around the palace, 10m high and containing 12 million bricks, are adorned at each corner with one such tower (角楼; jiǎolóu). Each tower is of highly elaborate construction with exceptional roof arrangements, supporting three eaves.

The trip around the moat is a spectacular route with unique views of historic Běijīng. Cycle through the large gate of Quezuo Men (阙佐门) and past the face of the Meridian Gate (午门), imposing entrance to the Forbidden City. Sweep through the gate of Queyou Men (阙佑门) opposite, south of which is **Zhongshan Park** (4; p128), to continue around the moat. To the west lie the eastern gates of Zhōngnánhǎi (中南海), which is the out-of-bounds nerve centre of political power in Běijīng.

Head north onto Beichang Jie (北长街), west of the Forbidden City, and note the bright red doors and brass knockers of several



### TOUR FACTS

**Start** Dongchang'an Jie, northeast of Tiananmen Sq  
**Finish** Wen Tianxiang Temple  
**Distance** 7km  
**Duration** 1½ hours

*sihéyuàn* (courtyard homes) strung out along the road. You'll pass Fuyou Temple (福佑寺; Fúyòu Sì) to your right – sadly locked away behind closed gates and the palace wall.

On your left are the remains of **Wanshouxinglong Temple** (5; 万寿兴隆寺; Wànshòuxīnglóng Sì; 39 Beichang Jie), its band of monks long replaced by lay residents. The temple once housed

surviving imperial eunuchs after the fall of the Qing dynasty.

Reaching the T-junction with Jingshan Qianjie (景山前街) and Wenjin Jie (文津街), follow the road right onto Jingshan Qianjie, but disembark at the bend in the road and wheel your bike across the street to continue up the first *hútòng* – Dashizuo Hutong (大石作胡同) – heading north on the other side of the road (the *hútòng* opening is in line with the west bank of the palace moat). Just east of here is the vast and sadly inaccessible Taoist Dagaoxuan Temple (大高玄殿; Dàgāoxuán Diàn; 23 Jingshan Xijie), its eastern wall hedging up against Jingshan Xijie, its halls visible through the archway opening onto Jingshan Qianjie.

Wiggling north, Dashizuo Hutong is where the stone for the Forbidden City was carved. Like many alleys in modern Běijīng, it's a mix of tumbledown dwellings and charmless modern blocks. Follow the alley to its conclusion, and exit opposite the west gate of **Jingshan Park** (6; p135); directly west along Zhishanmen Jie (陟山门街) is the east gate of Beihai Park.

Cycle north along Jingshan Xijie (景山西街) and at the northern tip of the street head up Gongjian Hutong (恭俭胡同); its entrance lies virtually straight ahead but slightly to the west. Exit the alley on Dianmen Xidajie (地安门西大街); if you want to visit **Beihai Park** (7; p134) to your west, push your bike along the southern side of Dianmen Xidajie and you'll soon arrive at the park's north gate.

Continuing north, push your bike over the pedestrian crossing then cycle along Qianhai Nanyan (前海南沿), running along the eastern shore of Qianhai Lake. On the western side of the lake is Lotus Lane, a strip of the lake is Lotus Lane, a strip of cafés and restaurants. You will see the small, restored white marble Jinding Bridge (金锭桥; Jīndìng Qiáo) and to its east, Wanning Bridge (万宁桥; Wànníng Qiáo), much of which dates from the Yuan dynasty. Look over the sides of Wanning Bridge and note the timeworn statues of water dragons on either bank.

Continue north along to Yinding Bridge (银锭桥; Yíndìng Qiáo) and trundle east along Yandai Xiejie (烟袋斜街) with its shops, bars and cafés, which have dislodged the dilapidated businesses that operated here. The ancient Guangfuguan Taoist Temple is

now a café called the **Guangfuguan Greenhouse** (8; p153). For a short diversion, from Yinding Bridge cycle northwest along Yaer Hutong (鸦儿胡同) to the Buddhist Guanghua Temple (广化寺) at No 31, where admission is free.

Exiting Yandai Xiejie onto bustling Dianmenwai Dajie (地安门外大街), you will see the **Drum Tower** (9; p135) rising massively ahead and obscuring the **Bell Tower** (10; p135) to the north; both are worth a visit, perhaps tied in with a cup of coffee at the Drum & Bell Bar (p153). Head south and turn east onto Mao'er Hutong (帽儿胡同), which, despite being quite modern in its earlier section, gradually emerges into something more traditional.

At the first main junction along Mao'er Hutong, the alley changes its name to Beibing Masi Hutong (北兵马司胡同), the two alleys divided by the north-south-running Nanluogu Xiang (南锣鼓巷), which is one of Běijīng's most famous alleyways. Cycle down Nanluogu Xiang and if you want to rest, take in a coffee in the relaxed, snug courtyard surrounds of the **Passby Bar** (11; Guòkè; ☎ 8403 8004; 108 Nanluogu Xiang; ☎ 7pm-2am) on the corner of the second *hútòng* turning on your left as you cycle south.

Take the first turning on your left just beyond the Passby Bar at the street sign that says 'Police Station'. You are now cycling down Banchang Hutong (板厂胡同), a charming stretch of old *sihéyuàn*, a number of which are adorned with plaques attesting to their historic significance. You'll pass the old **Lusongyuan Hotel** (12; p146) on the right-hand side of the road at No 22, an old courtyard house now serving as a hotel. As Banchang Hutong meets Jiadaokou Nandajie, cycle into the first *hútòng* entrance on your right – Fuxue Hutong (府学胡同). A very short way along the alley on the left-hand side is the **Wen Tianxiang Temple** (13; 文天祥祠; 63 Fuxue Hutong; adult ¥10; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun), a shrine fronted by a huge *pailou* (decorated archway).

## COURSES

Whether it's learning Chinese, making Chinese kites or delving into the mysteries of taichi, the recommended **Chinese Culture Club** (☎ 6432 9341, ext 18; www.chinesecultureclub.org; 29 Liangmaqiao Lu) offers a range of cultural programmes, taught in English and aimed squarely at foreign visitors and expats. The club also conducts popular tours around

Běijīng and expeditions to other – including off-the-beaten-track – parts of China and presents lectures on a variety of subjects including art, philosophy and film.

## BĒIJĪNG FOR CHILDREN

Baby food and milk powder are widely available in supermarkets, as are basics like nappies, baby wipes, bottles, creams, medicine, clothing, dummies (pacifiers) and other paraphernalia. Virtually no cheap restaurants, however, have high chairs and finding baby-changing rooms is next to impossible.

Current and forthcoming events (from plays to arts and crafts events and seasonal parties) for children in Běijīng are listed in the monthly English language-culture magazine **That's Beijing** ([www.thatbeijing.com](http://www.thatbeijing.com)). Note that many museums and attractions have a cheaper rate for children, usually applying to children under 1.3m, so ask.

Many kids will dig their heels in when confronted with the measureless museum-style torpor of the Forbidden City and the Ming Tombs. Thanks to China's one-child policy, however, Běijīng's poor siblingless tykes are spoiled rotten by their parents and the city is bursting with activities to keep all those demanding little egos occupied.

Beijing Aquarium (p140) has piranha, sharks, whales and dolphins. In the evenings, China Puppet Theatre (p156) regularly casts a spell over its audience of little (and not-so-little) ones. Some displays at the Science & Technology Museum (p136) need some servicing, but what is left is hugely entertaining and educational, and enough to fill half a day.

**Le Cool Ice Rink** (Map pp118-19; ☎ 6505 5776; Basement 2, China World Trade Center, 1 Jianguomenwai Dajie; per 90min Y30-50; ☎ 10am-10pm) This is probably the best and most accessible indoor ice rink in town. It's easy to reach, surrounded by the shops of the China World Trade Center. Charges vary depending on the time of day you skate; skate hire is extra.

**New China Children's Toy World** (Xin Zhōngguó Értóng Yǒngpīn Shāngdiàn; Map p123; Wangfujing Dajie) If your children are fed up with window-shopping, take them to this huge toy emporium.

**Sony ExploraScience** (Suōnī Tànmèng; Map p123; ☎ 8518 6380; A201, Oriental Plaza, 1 Dongchang'an Jie; adult/child Y30/20; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat & Sun, closed second Mon & Tue every month) A hands-on foray into the world of science. Full of gadgets, it's perfect for inquisitive children and little Einsteins.

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Usually held in late January or February, the Spring Festival, or Chinese New Year (p944) sees Běijīng in full party mood as it's the top festival on the calendar – the equivalent of Christmas. A week-long holiday commencing on the New Year itself, this can be a great time to see Běijīng at its most colourful and to catch temple fairs (eg at the White Cloud Temple), although remember everyone is on holiday with you and avoid travelling around China at this time as train, bus and air tickets can be scarce. The two other big week-long holiday periods are the 1 May and 1 October holidays, when hotel prices rise to their maximum and tourist sights are swamped with visitors.

## SLEEPING

Běijīng has a wide range of accommodation options, from hostels to two- and three-star mid-range options and four- and five-star hotels. Fierce competition in the run-up to the 2008 Olympics is rapidly developing all sectors of the accommodation market. Downtown hotels located near Wangfujing Dajie, the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Sq are easy to find in all budget groups. Prices quoted here are rack rates. While these are the rates you can expect to pay in the budget bracket, always ask what discounted rates (折扣; zhékòu) are at mid-range and top-end hotels, as promotional offers are typically in force, except during the holiday season (see Festivals & Events above).

## Chongwen & South Chaoyang

### BUDGET

**Leo Hostel** (Guǎngjùyuán Fàndiàn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6303 1595; [www.leohotel.com](http://www.leohotel.com); 52 Dazhalan Xijie; 大栅栏西街52号; 12-bed/4-bed dm Y45/70, d with toilet Y200-240, without Y140-160; ☎ 12) Popular and crowded, it's best to phone ahead to book a room at this bargain hostel tucked away down Dazhalan Xijie. It has an attractive interior courtyard decked out with plastic plants, OK dorm rooms (pricier dorms with toilet), simple but passable doubles, a small but busy bar and a great location. Staff at reception make solid efforts at wooing international backpackers.

☐ **Far East International Youth Hostel** (Yuǎndōng Guójī Qīngnián Lǚshè; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6301 8811, ext 3118; courtyard@elong.com; 113 Tieshuxie Jie; 铁树斜街113号; dm low/high season incl breakfast Y45/60; ☎ 12) This hostel is in a pretty old courtyard opposite the hotel of the same name. There's bike rental (Y20 per day, Y200 de-

posit), kitchen, washing facilities, café-bar and a tourist desk. Rooms come without TV, phone or shower. The free breakfast includes bread, butter, jam, fruit and a glass of orange juice; alternatively fork out Y19 for a full Western-style breakfast. Thirty minutes of free internet access is included in the price.

☐ **Beijing City Central Youth Hostel** (Běijīng Chéngshì Guójī Qīngnián Lǚshè; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6525 8866, 8511 5050; [www.centralhostel.com](http://www.centralhostel.com); 1 Beijingzhan Qianjie; 北京站前街1号; 4-8 bed dm Y60, s with/without shower Y160/120, d Y298; ☎ 12) Across the road from Beijing Train Station and right by the underground, this newly opened hostel compensates for lack of character with a definitive location. Notice board, info desk, TV and video room, kitchen and a handy internet café (Y5 per hour) on the 2nd floor.

☐ **Eastern Morning Sun Youth Hostel** (Běijīng Dōngfāng Chéngguāng Qīngnián Lǚguǎn; Map p123; ☎ 6528 4347; fl B4, Oriental Plaza, 8-16 Dongdansantiao; 东单三条8-16号东方广场B4楼; s/d/tr Y80/120/180; ☎ 12) Buried four floors below ground, this hostel's strong points are its extravagant location just off Wangfujing Dajie and cheapish rooms.

### MIDRANGE

☐ **Home Inn** (Rújiā; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6317 3366; [www.homeinns.com](http://www.homeinns.com); 61 Liangshidian Jie, Dashi; 大栅栏粮食店街61号; d/Y178-218; ☎ 12) One of the most central of the branches in this snappy new chain, aimed at the budget end of midrange. Double rooms are small but clean, with modern fittings and bright furnishings. Parallel to Qianmen Dajie, the road outside is gritty and a bit sordid, but Tiananmen Sq is a mere 10-minute trot north. There's internet access (Y10 per hour) and a restaurant. Another branch is at 20 Baiziwán Lu (Map pp116-17; ☎ 8777 1155; 百子湾路20号; d Y239).

☐ **Far East Hotel** (Map pp118-19; s/d/tr Y238/398/378, q per bed Y75) Opposite Far East International Youth Hostel, this is an unremarkable two-star hotel with clean rooms.

☐ **Novotel Xinqiao** (Běijīng Xīnqiáo Nuòfùtè Fàndiàn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6513 3366; [www.accorhotels.com/asia](http://www.accorhotels.com/asia); 2 Dongjiaomin Xiang; 东交民巷2号; standard & superior d Y1500-1830; ☎ 12) The location isn't as tempting as the Wangfujing branch, but the nearby Chongwenmen underground station is handy. Staff is a bit harried, although rooms are modern, if rather unremarkable and thin on home comforts. There's a big choice of restaurants and bars and a handy post office (open 8am to 6pm) on the ground floor, an outdoor tennis court and efficient wheelchair access.

### TOP END

☐ **Kerry Center Hotel** (Jiālǐ Zhōngxīn Fàndiàn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6561 8833; hbkc@shangri-la.com; 1 Guanghua Lu; 光华路1号; d US\$240-320, ste US\$360-2000; ☎ 12) Another efficient link in the Shangri-La chain, this modern and stylish hotel aims squarely at the business-traveller market. Rooms are spacious and neat, with broadband internet connection, minibar, shower and bath, iron and ironing board. There may not be much character, but an uncluttered feel pervades and you can chill out to smooth sounds at Centro (p152) and shop at the adjacent Kerry Mall.

☐ **St Regis** (Běijīng Guójī Jùlèbù Fàndiàn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6460 6688; fax 6460 3299; 21 Jianguomenwai Dajie; 建国门外大街21号; d US\$340, ste US\$500-5300; ☎ 12) First-rate, top-notch elegance complemented by professionalism and a superb location, the St Regis is probably Běijīng's best hotel. The splendid foyer and an enticing complement of restaurants compound this hotel's undeniable allure. In the Club Wing you can find a bowling centre, squash courts, cigar and wine lounges and the Astor Grill.

☐ **China World Hotel** (Zhōngguó Dàfàndiàn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6505 2266; [www.shangri-la.com](http://www.shangri-la.com); 1 Jianguomenwai Dajie; 建国门外大街1号; d US\$340, ste US\$620-3800; ☎ 12) The gorgeous five-star China World delivers an outstanding level of service to its well-dressed complement of largely executive travellers. The sumptuous foyer is a masterpiece of Chinese motifs, glittering chandeliers, robust columns and smooth acres of marble. Rooms are modern and amenities extensive, while shopping needs are all met at the China World Trade Center.

☐ **Grand Hyatt Beijing** (Běijīng Dōngfāng Jūnyuè Dàjiǔdiàn; Map p123; ☎ 8518 1234; [www.beijing.grand.hyatt.com](http://www.beijing.grand.hyatt.com); 1 Dongchang'an Jie; 东长安街1号; d US\$443; ☎ 12) A stunning hotel crowning Oriental Plaza right in the heart of town, the Hyatt matches its top-notch design and splendid interior with exemplary service. Rooms are modern and comfortable and the oasislike swimming pool is way, way overboard. For dining, four impressive restaurants compete for your attention.

## Dongcheng

### BUDGET

☐ **Peking Downtown Backpackers Accommodation** (Dōngtāng Kèzhān; Map pp118-19; ☎ 8400 2429; [www.backpackingchina.com](http://www.backpackingchina.com); 85 Nanluogu Xiang; 南锣鼓巷85号; 8-/4-/3-bed dm Y50/60/70, windowless d per bed Y60, d per bed Y80; ☎ 12) For backpacker arrivals

in BĒijīng, the central *hútòng* location is hard to beat. Doubles are tidy (but no TV), with plastic wood floors and clean shower rooms. Free breakfast and free pickup from Capital Airport – you pay the toll (Y20) and the parking fee (if the driver has to wait more than half an hour). There's bike rental (Y20 per day, Y300 deposit), internet access (Y6 per hour) and an adjacent backpacker restaurant.

**Beijing Saga International Youth Hostel** (BĒijīng Shǐjiā Guójiā Qīngnián Lǚshè; Map p123; ☎ 6527 2773; www.sagahotel.com; 9 Shǐjiā Hutong; 史家胡同9号; dm/tr Y50/240, d member/nonmember Y180/198; ☎ ☑) Enjoying a top location on the historic Shǐjiā Hutong, this popular hostel has clean, well-kept rooms, a spacious seating area in the main lobby, table football, a refectory and bar and internet access (Y10 per hour).

**Beijing Jade International Youth Hostel** (Zhǐdé Qīngnián Lǚshè; Map p123; ☎ 6525 9966; www.xihua hotel.com; 5 Zhǐdé Beixiang; 智德北巷5号; d member/nonmember Y50/60, tw Y280/380; ☎ ☑) This hostel offers clean dorm rooms and good-value twins, although the atmosphere seems less like a hostel than a mainstream Chinese hotel. The Forbidden City is visible from the upper floors and gorgeous courtyard houses are slung out on either side, including the historic Meng Gongfu residence at No 3. There's internet access (Y10 per hour) and bike rental (Y20).

#### MIDRANGE

**Lusongyuan Hotel** (Lūsōngyuán Bīnguǎn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6404 0436; 1syhotel@263.net; 22 Banchang Hutong; 板厂胡同22号; dm/s/d/ste US\$10/35/60/110; ☎ ☑) Built by a Mongolian general during the Qing dynasty, this courtyard hotel enjoys an ideal *hútòng* location. Pocket-sized singles come with pea-sized baths (albeit quite cute); dorms have three beds (with TV, no windows, common shower) and there is just one suite. Rooms facing onto the courtyard are slightly more expensive. There's also bike rental (half/full day Y15/30) and an email centre (open 7.30am to 10pm; Y5 for 10 minutes).

**Fangyuan Hotel** (Fāngyuán Bīnguǎn; Map p123; ☎ 6525 6331; www.cbw.com/hotel/fangyuan; 36 Dengshikou Xijie; 灯市口西街36号; d incl breakfast from Y298; ☎ ☑) Its front door guarded by a pair of stone felines, rooms at the optimally located two-star Fangyuan have undergone a minor refit. Staff is used to dealing with foreign travellers, so mercifully there are few of the typical two-star blank expressions at reception. Breakfast is free, but it's of the boiled egg and congee

variety. Internet access is Y10 per hour, bike rental Y20 per day.

**Bamboo Garden Hotel** (Zhūyúán Bīnguǎn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6403 2229; fax 6401 2633; 24 Xiaoshiqiao Hutong; 小石桥胡同24号; s Y380, d Y680-880, ste Y760; ☎ ☑) Cosy and tranquil, this courtyard hotel gets good reviews, but staff lacks motivation. Rooms are tastefully decorated with reproduction Ming furniture and the abundant foliage is pleasant, although the *hútòng* setting is let down by the modern block opposite.

**Haoyuan Hotel** (Hāoyuán Bīnguǎn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6512 5557; www.haoyuanhotel.com; 53 Shǐjiā Hutong; 史家胡同53号; d standard/deluxe Y585/715, suite Y780-1040; ☎ ☑) Treat yourself to the Haoyuan's lovely and spacious brand of standard double rooms, delightfully arranged with classical Chinese furniture, and let the red lantern-hung courtyard feng shui weave its magical charms. If you get carried away, hang your hat in one of the suites in the rear tree-dotted courtyard, one with its own sauna, the other a Jacuzzi. Internet is Y10 per hour. Reception is on the left as you enter; pursue discounts during the slack season.

**Novotel Peace Hotel** (BĒijīng Nuòfùtè Héping Bīnguǎn; Map p123; ☎ 6512 8833; www.accorhotels.com/asia; 3 Jinyu Hutong; 金鱼胡同3号; d West/East Wing Y1494/1826; ☎ ☑) This efficient, refurbished four-star hotel has a fresh and cosmopolitan character. Eschewing the gaudiness of some top-league hotels, there's an uncomplicated elegance, a useful travel service and bookshop (for newspapers) and the location, with Wangfujing Dajie just around the corner, is spot on. The cheaper rooms – not huge but perfectly serviceable – are in the older and more scuffed West Wing.

#### TOP END

Among soon-to-open, high-profile luxury hotels are the 320-room Ritz-Carlton (Map pp116-17), slated for an early 2007 opening, and the Regent Beijing (Map p123), which should be open by the time you read this.

**Peninsula Palace** (Wángfǔ Fāndiàn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6559 2888; www.peninsula.com; 8 Jinyu Hutong; 金鱼胡同8号; d/ste US\$350/460; ☎ ☑ ☑) Owned by the Peninsula Group, this lavish hotel remains at the cutting edge of the glittering five-star hotel market. It boasts two excellent restaurants, including the elegant Huáng Ting (p151), and a multitiered, hyper-exclusive basement shopping mall. Promotional prices frequently take the sting out of the whopping tariff, so ask.

## Chaoyang

### BUDGET

**Beijing Gongti International Youth Hostel** (BĒijīng Gōngtǐ Qīngnián Lǚshè; Map p122; ☎ 6552 4800; bih-yh@sohu.com; gongti@hotmail.com; East Gate, Workers' Stadium; 工人体育场东门; 4-/2-bed dm Y50/70, s Y100; ☑) This clean hostel offers both value and good positioning. Dorm rooms (Y10 extra for nonmembers) are bright, clean and spacious, and come with phone (incoming only), TV and radiator. Communal showers are clean, and internet access costs Y10 per hour. Non HI-members pay an extra Y20 for single rooms. There's no lift.

**Zhaolong International Youth Hostel** (Zhàolóng Qīngnián Lǚshè; Map p122; ☎ 6597 2299; www.zhao longhotel.com.cn; 2 Gongrentiyuchang Beilu; 工人体育场北路2号; 6-/4-/2-bed dm Y50/60/70; ☎ ☑) This is a six-floor block behind the Zhaolong Hotel off Dongsanhuan Beilu that offers clean rooms, laundry (Y10/20 per small/big load), kitchen, reading room, safe, bike rental (Y30 per day) and internet access (Y10 per hour). Non-members pay an extra Y10 for all room types. Breakfast is an additional Y10 (served 7am to 10am). Book rooms in youth hostels nationwide for a Y10 deposit.

**You Yi Youth Hostel** (Yóuyī Qīngnián Jiùdiàn; Map p122; ☎ 6417 2632; fax 6415 6866; 43 Beisanlitun Lu; 北三里屯路43号; dm/tw incl breakfast Y70/180; ☎ ☑) Located right behind Poachers Inn, this hostel offers bright and spacious twins (with phone, TV, air-con and radiator). There are a few dorms and there's free laundry service (dump your dirty rags in the cart for washing and drying), which is a hospitable gesture. Internet service is Y10 per hour. Breakfast is between 7.30am and 9am and includes toast, coffee, eggs and sausages.

### MIDRANGE

**Red House Hotel** (Ruǐxiù Bīnguǎn; Map p122; ☎ 6416 7500; www.redhouse.com.cn; 10 Chunxiu Lu; 春秀路10号; s/tw/ste incl breakfast Y350/400/600; ☎ ☑) Putting you within orbit of the Sanlitun bar scene, rooms at Red House Hotel are clean and tidy, with wood-strip flooring, traditional-style furniture and good shower rooms. There's bike rental (Y30 per day), a handy on-site pub with essential English Premier League football action (see Club Football Centre, p152), free laundry and local calls are on the house.

**Oriental Garden Hotel** (Dōngfāng Huāyuán Fāndiàn; Map p122; ☎ 6416 8866; fax 6415 0638; 6 Dongzhimen Nandajie; 东直门南大街6号; s/d/ste US\$120/186/226;

☎ ☑) This four-star Chinese-run business hotel has comfortable and attractive guest rooms, Cantonese and Shànghāinese restaurants and a coffee shop.

## Fengtai & Xuanwu

### BUDGET

**Beijing Feiyang International Youth Hostel** (BĒijīng Fēiyáng Qīngnián Lǚshè; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6315 1165; iyhy@yahoo.com.cn; No 10 Bldg, Changchun Jie Hou Jie, Xuanwumen Xidajie; 长椿街后街宣武门西大街10号楼; 10-/5-bed dm Y30/50, d 180; ☎ ☑) Rather away from it all as youth hostels go. Take the subway to Changchunjie, then take exit C and head east past the McDonalds for around 200m. Bicycle hire, washing machine, kitchen, tourist info plus internet access (Y10 per hour); no lift.

### MIDRANGE

**Qianmen Jianguo Hotel** (Qiánmén Jiànguó Fāndiàn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6301 6688; fax 6301 3883; 175 Yong'an Lu; 永安路175号; s/d/tr/ste incl breakfast Y620/760/910/1100; ☎ ☑) Extremely popular with tour groups lured by its combination of excellent location and value, this place makes considerable efforts to ward off that great leveller: the generic three-star Chinese hotel feel. The interior verges on elegance and business is brisk so staff is on its toes, even if sometimes a bit reluctant. Rooms are spacious, clean and attractively carpeted and come with satellite TV and phones in bathrooms. The Liyuan Theatre (p154) is at the rear of the lobby.

### TOP END

**Marco Polo** (BĒijīng Mǎgē Bólú Jiùdiàn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6603 6688; www.marcopohotels.com; 6 Xuanwumennei Dajie; 宣武门内大街6号; d/ste US\$170/280; ☎ ☑) This unfussy four-star hotel has eschewed the gaudy top-end route, but it may have lost some crispness. A length in the hotel pool may only take a few strokes, but the basement Clark Hatch Fitness Centre is well equipped, and it's still the best in this part of town with underground stations nearby.

## Haidian & Xicheng

### TOP END

**Shangri-La Hotel** (Xiānggē Lǐlá Fāndiàn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6841 2211; slb@shangri-la.com; 29 Zhizhuyuan Lu; 紫竹院路29号; d US\$180; ☎) Located in west BĒijīng and well positioned for trips to the Summer Palace, the Shangri-La has a top-notch selection of restaurants, bars and shops as well as a fine spread of rooms.

**Beijing Marriott West** (Běijīng Jīnyú Wànháo Jiǔdiàn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6872 6699; www.marriotthotels.com; 98 Xisanhuan Beilu; 西三环北路98号; d US\$350; 🏠 🚗) The Marriott is a fine hotel, with vast, fully equipped and very comfortable rooms, but the location, near the intersection of Fucheng Lu and the Third Ring Rd, is a big drawback. Amenities include tennis courts, a bowling centre and a health club. Seek discounts.

### Further Afield

**Holiday Inn Lido** (Lidū Jiārì Fāndiàn; Map pp116-17; ☎ 6437 6688; fax 6437 6237; cnr Jichang Lu & Jiangtai Lu; 近机场路将台路; d US\$150; 🏠) This hotel is a bit stranded on the road to the airport, but it's a highly popular and first-rate establishment with excellent amenities and a resourceful shopping mall.

### EATING

Běijīng cuisine (京菜; jīngcài) is one of the four major Chinese styles of cooking, so trying home-town specialities should be obligatory for each and every foodie. And just about any fickle fancy meets its match, so plunge in and start twiddling those chopsticks – some of your best Běijīng memories could well be table-top ones. Běijīng's contemporary culinary frenzy has cobbled together everything from (it was just a matter of time) Hutong pizza to fast-food style hotpot (see the boxed text, p150) and fish and chips.

This may be Běijīng, but eating out doesn't necessarily require excessive capital: listed here are restaurants that offer the best food and value within a range of budgets. The cheapest of meals come in at under Y30 to Y40, midrange dining costs between Y40 and Y100, while top-end choices cost over Y100.

### Chongwen & South Chaoyang BUDGET

For convenient dining and a Pan-Asian selection under one roof, try one of the ubiquitous food courts that can be found in shopping malls throughout the city.

**Wangfujing Snack Street** (Wángfújīng Xiǎochíjiē; Map p123; kebabs from Y3, dishes from Y5; 🍴 lunch & dinner) West off Wangfujing Dajie, and fronted by an ornate archway, this bustling and cheery corner of restaurants and stalls is overhung with colourful banners and bursting with flavour. It's a great place to Hoover up Xinjiāng or Muslim Uighur staples such as lamb kebabs and flat bread. Sit down with steaming bowls

of spicy *màlà tàng* (麻辣烫; spicy noodle soup), *zhájiàngmiàn* (炸酱面; noodles in fried bean sauce), *Lánzhōu lāmiàn* (兰州拉面; Lanzhou noodles), *Shāndōng jiānbǐng* (山东煎饼; Shandong pancake), *Yúnnán guòqiáo mǐxiàn* (云南过桥米线; Yunnan across-the-bridge noodles) and oodles of spicy Sichuan food (川菜; chuāncài).

**Beard Papa** (Map p123; CC09, basement, Oriental Plaza, 1 Dongchang'an Jie; cream puffs Y6) Astonishingly scrummy, high-cholesterol takeaway cream puffs – out of this world and ultramoresish.

**Megabite** (Dàshídiàn; Map p123; basement Oriental Plaza, 1 Dongchang'an Jie; dishes from Y10) Perfect for on-the-spot dining, this huge food court has point-and-serve Chinese and other Asian dining options all under one roof. Purchase a card at the kiosk at the entrance, load up with credits (Y30 to Y500) and browse among the canteen-style outlets for whatever takes your fancy, then continue shopping.

**Niúgē Jiǎozi** (Map p123; ☎ 6525 7472; 85 Nanheyuan Dajie; meals Y20; 🍴 7am-10pm) Swat aside the proffered English tourist menu at this busy little *jiǎozi* (饺子) outfit or you could be stung, and stick to what this place does best – servings of steaming, plump dumplings. *Jiǎozi* arrive per *liǎng* (两; one *liǎng*: five morsels); aim for the lamb and onion (羊肉大葱; Y5 per *liǎng*), beef and celery (牛肉芹菜; Y4 per *liǎng*) or the chive and egg (韭菜鸡蛋; Y4 per *liǎng*). Alternatively, maintain your composure and dive into the Chinese menu with a dictionary. The restaurant has no English sign, but it is opposite the building with the sign on the roof saying 'Hualong Street'.

**Gongdelin Vegetarian Restaurant** (Gōngdélín Sùcǎiguān; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6511 2542; 158 Qianmen Dajie; meals Y40-50; 🍴 lunch & dinner) This veteran veggie diner still ranks as one of Běijīng's premier bloodless dining experiences despite begging for a revamp like its Shànghǎi sibling. Restore your karma with dishes of mock meat and fake fowl; pass on the roasted hedgehog if you want but do consider the deep-fried fresh fish (Y30). Service can be pedestrian and the downstairs décor utilitarian, but the well-thumbed English menu is handy and herbivores needing more style can always head upstairs.

### MIDRANGE

**Makey Ame** (Mǎjī Āmi; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6506 9616; 2nd fl, A11 Xiushui Nanjie; dishes from Y20; 🍴 lunch & dinner) Tucked away behind the Friendship Store,

### STREET FOOD BĒIJĪNG STYLE

Off the main roads and in Běijīng's alleys is a world teeming with steaming food stalls and eateries buzzing with activity. Be adventurous and eat this way, and you dine as most Běijīngers do.

Breakfast can be easily catered for with a *yóutiáo* (油条; deep-fried dough stick), a sip of *dòuzhī* (豆汁; bean curd drink) or a bowl of *zhōu* (粥; porridge). Other snacks include the crunchy, pancakelike and filling *jiānbǐng* (煎饼); *jiānbǐng* vendors are easily spotted as they cook from tricycle-mounted, white-painted wooden stalls where pancakes are fried on a large circular griddle. The heavy, meat-filled *ròubǐng* (肉饼; cooked bread filled with finely chopped pork) are life-savers and very cheap. A handy vegetarian option is *jiūcài bǐng* (韭菜饼; bread stuffed with cabbage, chives, leek or fennel and egg). *Dàbǐng* (大饼; a chunk of round, unleavened bread sprinkled with sesame seeds) can be found everywhere and of course there's *mántou* (馒头; steamed bread).

*Màlà tàng* (麻辣烫) is a spicy noodle soup (very warming in winter) in which bob chunks of *dòufu* (豆腐; tofu), cabbage and other veggies; choose your own ingredients from the trays. Also look out for *ròu jiāmò* (肉夹馍), a scrumptious open-your-mouth-wide bun filled with diced lamb, chilli and garlic shoots. Another must are *kǎo yáng ròu chuàn* (烤羊肉串; lamb kebabs), which make for a scrumptious and cheap snack or meal. You can find kebab outlets in several places around town; try the more expensive Donghuamen Night Market (p150), Wangfujing Snack St (opposite) or cheaper options that are hidden away down *hútòng* (look for the billowing plumes of smoke), where skewers go for around Y0.50. If you want your kebabs spicy ask for *là* (辣); if you don't, ask for *búlà* (不辣). Vendors usually belong to either the Muslim Hui or Uighur minority.

*Hóngshǔ* (红薯; baked sweet potatoes) are cheap filling snacks (around Y2) sold at street stalls throughout the city during winter. Vendors attach oil drums to their bikes, which have been converted into mobile ovens. Choose a nice soft sweet potato and the vendor will weigh it and tell you how much it costs.

this is one of two branches of this successful Tibetan dining experience. There's a comfy upper room decked out with Tibetan ornaments and a suitably exotic menu ranging from lamb ribs (Y40), through boiled yak with chilli (Y40), to *tsampa* (roasted barley meal), yoghurt, butter tea and cooling salads (from Y20).

**Biànyìfāng Kǎoyādiàn** (Map pp118-19; ☎ 6712 0505; 2a Chongwenmenwai Dajie; economy/standard half duck Y44/69; 🍴 lunch & dinner) Dating back to the reign of the Qing emperor Xianfeng, Biànyìfāng offers midrange comfort reminiscent of a faded Chinese three-star hotel. The duck is nonetheless excellent, roasted in the *menlu* style, but be on your guard if waiting staff immediately steer you towards the pricier Huaxiangsu-style fowl (half/whole Y84/168). It's next to the Hademen Hotel.

**Qianmen Quanjudé Roast Duck Restaurant** (Qiánmen Quánjudé Kǎoyādiàn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6511 2418; 32 Qianmen Dajie; half duck Y58, scallions & sauce Y2; 🍴 lunch & dinner) As fundamental to a Běijīng trip as a Great Wall hike, to miss out on Peking duck (烤鸭; kǎoyā) you'd have to be completely quackers. This place is geared mainly to the tourists, with photos of George Bush poking a duck with his finger and Fidel Castro sizing

up an imaginary duck with his hands. Another branch (☎ 6301 8833; 14 Qianmen Xidajie) is nearby and there's also one off Wangfujing Dajie (see Quanjudé Roast Duck Restaurant below).

**Kǎorouji** (Map pp118-19; ☎ 6404 2554; 14 Qianhai Dongyuan; meals Y60) Bright, brash perhaps and not ideal if you're angling for a candlelit soiree, but this old-timer's credentials date back to Qing times. A lakeside culinary landmark, it's been dolled up for diners who insist on revisiting its wholesome Muslim menu. The roast lamb with cumin (Y58) is a surefire suggestion, followed by a slow meander round the edges of Houhai Lake.

**Liújiā Guō** (Map p123; ☎ 6524 1487; 19 Nanheyuan Dajie; meals Y80; 🍴 lunch & dinner) Eye-poppingly hot Húnán (湘菜; Xiāngcài) cuisine is a cauldron of flaming flavour, marked by the wanton use of chilli and spices. Liújiā Guō, however, goes easy on the seasoning, serving up medium-hot dishes that won't have you gagging. The grilled beef (Y28) is sizzlingly excellent and the 'Mao family fashion braised pork' (Y28) is fantastic: rich chunks of fatty pork steeped in a strong sauce.

**Quanjudé Roast Duck Restaurant** (Quánjudé Kǎoyādiàn; Map p123; ☎ 6525 3310; 9 Shuafuyuan Hutong;

**HOT SPOT**

Hotpot dining is an addictive activity and that's not just because some Chinese chefs took to lacing pots with opium seeds back in the heady 1990s. The steaming hub of a good night out with friends, *huōguō* (火锅; hotpot) is a particularly moreish way of filling up on both excellent nosh and chitchat while blasting away the piercing cold of winter. But what if you just want a solo hotpot without the jaw-jaw? Perched alone over a sweltering hotpot in a swanky restaurant can be both pricey and impractical. Go elbow to elbow instead with diners at **Yíngjiā Huòguō** (Yingjia Hotpot; Map pp118-19; basement level 1, 77th Street Plaza, Xidan Culture Square; meal ¥20), the equivalent of hotpot fast-food style. You get your own small pot and snappy service.

Choose a soup base, *málà* (麻辣; spicy) or *qīngtāng* (清汤; mild/clear), and select from the (Chinese only) menu: *yángròupiàn* (羊肉片; lamb slices; ¥10), *dàbáicài* (大白菜; cabbage; ¥4), *dòufu* (豆腐; tofu; ¥4), *tùdòu* (土豆; potato; ¥4) and more. Note to those with delicate constitutions: the spicy version is like a shot of Tabasco up each nostril. Hard veggies need time softening up in the boiling broth, but just scald the colour from the lamb slices before chomping, and don't forget to dunk everything from the pot in *májiàng* (麻酱; sesame paste; free) before devouring. If it all gets a bit heated, douse your scorched tongue with draught beer for a mere ¥5. If you can't get a seat, another fast-food hotpot chain bringing solo diners out in a sweat is **Xiābǔ** (Map p123; ☎ 6025 9312; 2nd fl, Henderson Centre, Jianguomennei Dajie; meal ¥25).

set menu incl duck, pancakes, scallions & sauce ¥168; ☎ lunch & dinner) Less touristy than its Qianmen sibling, this branch of the celebrated chain has a handy location off Wangfujing Dajie for shopping-laden diners. The roast duck (half duck ¥54, minus pancakes, scallions and sauce) is flavoursome and a key ingredient to a Běijīng sojourn.

**Dongcheng**  
**BUDGET**

**Donghuamen Night Market** (Dōnghuāmén Yèshì; Map p123; Dong'anmen Dajie; ☎ 3-10pm, closed Chinese New Year) A sight in itself, the bustling night market near Wangfujing Dajie is a food zoo: lamb kebabs, beef and chicken skewers, corn on the cob, *chòu dòufu* (臭豆腐; smelly tofu), cicadas, grasshoppers, kidneys, quails' eggs, squid, fruit, porridge, fried pancakes, strawberry kebabs, bananas, Inner Mongolian cheese, stuffed aubergines, chicken hearts, pitta bread stuffed with meat, shrimps and more. Zero in on the dragon-spouted copper kettles of *xìng rén chá* (杏仁茶) vendors: a bowl of the sugary almond-flavoured paste, seeded with peanuts, berries and sesame seeds, will leave the sweet-toothed doing cartwheels. It's for tourists, not locals, so expect to pay rather inflated prices.

**Bāguó Bùyì** (Map pp118-19; ☎ 6400 8888; 89-3 Dianmen Dongdajie; dishes from ¥8; ☎ lunch & dinner) This popular Sichuan restaurant has a marvellous Chinese inn-style restaurant setting with balconies and a central stairway, and dolled-up

waiting staff in attendance. The ambience bursts with both character and theatre, and there's a range of good-value dishes.

**Here Café** (Zhèlǐ Kāfēiguǎn; Map pp118-19; 97 Nanluogu Xiang; meals ¥30; ☎ 10am-1am) Over recent years the backwater *hútòng* charms of Nanluogu Xiang have been transformed into a torrent of flung-together cafés, gift shops and backpacker accommodation. This funky, laid-back hole offers middling, cheap Western traveller food but the mood – with misshapen armchairs, books flung about, wobbly tables, grizzly Tom Waits on the stereo – tends towards a charming, arty disarray.

**Fish Nation** (Yúbàng; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6401 3249; www.fishnation.cn; 31 Nanluogu Xiang; meals ¥30; ☎ 11.30am-2am Mon-Thu, to 4am Fri & Sat) Someone knows what they are doing in this English chippie: fat, slightly soggy chips, chunky, battered fish, lemon slices, malt vinegar fumes and splodges of ketchup. They'll be wrapping takeaways in pages from *People's Daily* next. There's hardly enough room to swing a catfish in the phone-box sized Sanlitun outlet (Map p122; ☎ 6415 0119; ☎ 11.30am-2am Mon-Thu, to 4am Fri & Sat), round the corner from Poachers Inn, but the roomy main branch comes with a terrace.

**MIDRANGE**

**Sichuan Restaurant** (Sīchuān Fāndiàn; Map p123; ☎ 6513 7591/3; 37a Dong'anmen Dajie; meals ¥50; ☎ lunch & dinner) This spacious restaurant is rather worn and the manager's office is still forlornly hung with a portrait of Mao, but the dishes are

well worth your time and portions are generous. Try the filling crispy *zhībāo yángròu* (纸包羊肉; tin-foil-wrapped mutton), while the *yúxiāng qiézi* (鱼香茄子; deep-fried eggplant with garlic and chilli sauce) is tender and swimming in a sea of hot red chilli oil.

**Ottos Restaurant** (Rìchāng Cānguǎn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6405 8205; Dianmen Xidajie; meals ¥60; ☎ 24hr) Loud and cavernous with a bright menu, harried staff and constant waves of diners piling in for its flavoursome Hong Kong dishes, Ottos offers no-nonsense and tasty food in decent helpings. The fiery *hēijiāo zhūpái* (黑椒猪排; pork in black pepper sauce) hits the spot. It's east of the north gate of Beihai Park. Further branch in Dongdan.

**Xiao Wang's Home Restaurant** (Xiǎowáng Fú; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6594 3602, 6591 3255; 2 Guanghua Dongli; meals ¥70; ☎ lunch & dinner) Treat yourself to home-style Běijīng cuisine from this excellent restaurant and go for one of Xiao Wang's specials. The *piāoxiāng páigǔ* (deep-fried spare-ribs with pepper salt; ¥38) are gorgeous: dry, fleshy, crispy chops with a small pile of fiery pepper salt. Xiao Wang's fried hot and spicy Xinjiang-style *zīrán jīchǐ* (chicken wings; ¥35) is deservedly famous and the Peking duck is crispy and lean (¥88 per duck, ¥5 for sauce, scallions and pancakes). There's outside seating and a further, more sedate, branch can be found in the Sanlitun area (Map p122; ☎ 6594 3602, 6591 3255; 4 Gongrentiyuchang Beilu; meals ¥70; open lunch and dinner).

**Yuelù Shānwū** (Map pp118-19; ☎ 6617 2696; 19a Qianhai Xiyang; ☎ lunch & dinner) With luxurious views over Qianhai Lake from Lotus Lane – a lakeside strip of cafés, restaurants and shops – this neat Húnán restaurant has a tasty and celebrated menu from the province of fierce flavours.

**Sānshēng Wǎnwū** (Map pp118-19; ☎ 6404 2778; 37 Yandai Xiejie; set meals from ¥120; ☎ noon-midnight) In the alley alongside Guangfuguan Greenhouse (p153), Sānshēng Wǎnwū serves Taoist meals within one of the temple halls (phone or visit ahead as the food and restaurant need to be prepared in advance).

**TOP END**

**Huáng Tíng** (Map p123; ☎ 8516 2888, ext 6707; Peninsula Palace, 8 Jinyu Hutong; meals ¥150; ☎ lunch & dinner) Faux old Peking is taken to an extreme in the courtyard setting of Huáng Tíng. Despite its artificiality and location (in a five-star hotel), the ambience is impressive. Local dishes include

whole Peking duck (¥220), roast suckling pig (¥100), braised spareribs in tangy brown sauce (¥70) and braised Běijīng-style meatball with cabbage (¥40).

**Courtyard** (Sīhéyuàn; Map p132; ☎ 6526 8883; cyrest@95777.com; 95 Donghuamen Dajie; meals from ¥200; ☎ lunch & dinner) The Courtyard enjoys an excellent location by the east gate of the Forbidden City. The minimalist art gallery (☎ 6526 8882) in the basement provides cerebral nutrition and the cigar divan upstairs is the perfect conclusion to a meal, but it's the view and international menu that hog the limelight. Sunday lunch is an affordable option at ¥150 per person.

**Chaoyang**  
**MIDRANGE**

**Dōngbèirén** (Map p122; ☎ 6415 2855; 1a Xinzhong Jie; meals ¥50) The hearty northeastern bandwagon has made it to town, its smiling gaggle of rouge-cheeked and pig-tailed *xiǎojie* (waitresses) in tow, bringing its excellent nosh, garrulous atmosphere (with periodic singing from the waitresses) and trademark festive spirit with it.

**Xinjiang Red Rose Restaurant** (Map p122; ☎ 6415 5741; Xīngfúyúcn Qìxiāng; meals ¥50; ☎ lunch & dinner) Unsubtle perhaps, but its maelstrom of table-top dancing, live Uighur music (7.30pm to 9pm) and belly dancers is excellent entertainment with a beer or two. Pass on the whole roast lamb (¥800) unless you haven't eaten for a week, but the roast leg of lamb (¥30 per *jīn*) and chunky lamb kebabs (¥5 each) are filling enough. It's opposite Workers' Stadium north gate.

**Beijing Dadong Roast Duck Restaurant** (Běijīng Dàdōng Kǎoyā Diàn; Map p122; ☎ 6582 2892/4003; 3 Tuanjieshu Beikou; duck ¥98; ☎ lunch & dinner) A long-term favourite of the Peking duck scene, this restaurant has a tempting variety of fowl. The hallmark bird is a crispy, lean duck without the usual high fat content (trimmed down from 42.38% to 15.22% for its 'Superneat' roast duck, the brochure says), plus plum (or garlic) sauce, scallions and pancakes. Also carved up is the skin of the duck with sugar, an imperial predilection.

**Purple Haze** (Zǐsùtíng; Map p122; ☎ 6413 0899) A chilled-out, smooth and snappy finish, Thursday-night jam sessions, a small library of foreign literature and an enticing bar area for apéritif-sinking makes this a stylish foray into the world of Thai cooking. It's opposite Workers' Stadium north gate.

## SELF-CATERING

Supermarkets are plentiful and most visitors will find what they need, but delis stock wider selections of foreign cheeses, cured meats and wines.

The enormous Lufthansa Center Youyi Shopping City, a multistorey shopping mall in the northeast of town has a branch of the **Yansha Supermarket** (Map pp118-19) in the basement, chock-a-block with imported goods. **Carrefour** (Jiālèfú; ☎ 8am-9.30pm) Chaoyang (Map pp118-19; ☎ 8460 1030; 6b Beisanhuan Donglu); Fengtai (☎ 6760 9911; 15 No 2 district Fangchengyuan Fangzhuang); Haidian (☎ 8836 2729; 54a Zhongguancun Nandajie); Xuanwu (☎ 8636 2155; 11 Malian Dao) stocks virtually everything you may need, takes credit cards and provides ATMs and a home-delivery service. There is also a branch in Zhongguancun.

There's a well-stocked supermarket (Map pp118-19) in the basement of Scitech Plaza, a department store on the southern side of Jianguomenwai Dajie, where you can find an extensive range of coffee.

Other useful supermarkets:

**Jingkelong Supermarket** (Map p122; Sanlitun)

**Park N Shop** (Map pp118-19; basement, Full Link Plaza, 18 Chaoyangmenwai Dajie)

## Further Afield

**Ajisen Noodle** (Wèiqiān Lāmian; Map pp116-17; ☎ 8589 1475; 3201 block S, Soho New Town, off Jianguo Lu; meals Y25; subway Dawanglu) Ajisen's flavoursome noodles – delivered in steaming bowls by fleet-foot black-clad staff – will have your ears tingling and your tummy quivering. Dishes are miraculously as tasty as they appear on the photo menu and tea comes free with cups punctiliously refilled. Queues often form here, so prepare to wait in line and pay up front. Further branches around town and nationwide.

## DRINKING

Běijīng has a glut of drinking options and a judicious appraisal is recommended before diving in willy-nilly. New bars trip over themselves to cash in on the latest fad, swinging open doors onto samey interiors where a palpable sense of bankruptcy hangs in the air. After folding, a month passes and the bar reopens under new management, to repeat the process. The bandwagon may roll on, but after the dust settles, enough spots with a dose of character and a shot of style find themselves occupying a profitable niche in the fickle and easily bored expat scene.

The bars infesting Sanlitun in the Chaoyang district have long formed one major hub of the expat drinking life. Standout bars remain buried away from the main drag, itself called Sanlitun Lu, where largely mediocre watering holes are manned by pushy types at the door. The much superior Sanlitun Nanlu to the south has been flattened, prompting a mass exodus of bars. The Sanlitun formula

has been transplanted to the lakeside streets running along the northern and southern shores of Houhai Lake (Houhai Nanyan and Houhai Beiyuan), which now heave with bars offering an unvarying concoction of wooden doors, wind chimes, Southeast Asian masks, batik lampshades and cushion-strewn sofas. Nearby Yandai Xiejie – a small street just east of Silver Ingot Bridge – has recruited a flourishing population of cafés, bars and souvenir shops, while a further band of bars has opened along Nanluogu Xiang, southeast of the Drum Tower, and other outfits are doing their own thing, in their own part of town.

**Poachers Inn** (Map p122; ☎ 6417 2632; 43 Beisanlitun Lu; ☎ 8pm-late) Cavernous Poachers literally heaves with exuberant throngs and a thumping, hammering bass at the weekend, when it's party central and the volume reaches unusual levels.

**Centro** (Xuànkù; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6561 8833, ext 6388; Kerry Center Hotel, 1 Guanghua Lu; ☎ 24hr) Swish and stylish, Centro is a seductive lounge bar with low mood lighting, illuminated table tops, a black glossy bar and discreet, quiet corners caressed by relaxing chill-out tunes and ambient sounds. A cushy refuge at the end of a hectic day, here you can be granted respite from the frantic clutter of contemporary Běijīng. There's live music (including jazz) at night and a DJ spins sounds at weekends.

**Club Football Center** (Map p122; ☎ 6417 0497; Red House Hotel, 10b Chunxiu Lu; ☎ 11am-2am) Běijīng's most genuine British pub, with wall-to-wall football trophies, scarves, premiership memorabilia, live big-screen action and English-

speaking staff all professionally dedicated to adoration of the beautiful game. Sign up and get email alerts for forthcoming matches.

**Guangfuguan Greenhouse** (Guāngfúguān De Wēnshì; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6400 3234; 36 Yandai Xiejie) This laid-back place on the bar-cluttered Yandai Xiejie gets full marks for novelty. Formerly the Guangfu Taoist Temple, the shrine has been requisitioned for the city's exploding bar scene and simply decked out with art posters, including one of a cavorting Allen Ginsberg. For Taoist dining, take the alley alongside to Sānshēng Wǎnwù (p151).

**Huxley's** (Běijīng Dèbì Jiǔbā; Map pp118-19; 16 Yandai Xiejie) Its 'shut up just drink' slogan a no-nonsense catchphrase for boozers Běijīng-wide, specials here include 12 shots of absinthe for Y100, half-price shooters on Monday, all you can drink on Thursdays (Y50) and microbrewery ale for Y25 a go.

**John Bull Pub** (Zǔnbó Yǐngshì Jiǔbā; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6532 5905; 44 Guanghua Lu) Sinking pints of bitter, noshing steak-and-kidney pie, staggering to the ockie for a round of darts while moaning about the weather or the NHS (National Health Service), the portly British expat set gravitates here for its snug weeknight atmosphere (often as quiet as a library), comfy furniture and bar staff trotting out excellent English.

**Bookworm Café** (Shūchóng; Map p122; ☎ 6586 9507; www.beijingbookworm.com; Bldg 4, Nan Sanlitun Lu; ☎ 8am-1am) Deftly bridging the crevasse separating hungry expat minds from Běijīng's inept book trade, the Bookworm has emerged as one of the city's foremost cultural enclaves. Join the bibliophiles swooning over the massive English-language book collection (14,000 plus) and jot this place down as a first-rate spot for a get-together, a solo coffee or a major reading binge.

**Eje Bar** (Zhòubā; Map pp118-19; ☎ 8404 4424; www.ejebarm.com; 20 Guoxue Hutong; ☎ 2pm-late) The self-styled (and probably accurate) 'hardest-to-find bar in Běijīng' is well worth the effort, but pack a compass. Tucked away behind the rear wall of the Confucius Temple, this cultured courtyard bar is sedately arranged with sofas and set to the chirruping of grasshoppers. Away from even the remotest action, it's well worth a detour. Arriving at night is like reaching the light at the end of a tunnel: from Yonghegong Dajie follow Guanshuyuan Hutong (官书院胡同) round the corner, take the first right and you will see the Confucius Temple ahead on your

left. Follow the road round to your right, take the first left and it's opposite the temple's rear wall (check the bar website for a map).

**Drum & Bell Bar** (Map pp118-19; ☎ 8403 3600; 41 Zhonglouwan Hutong) Clamber to the roof terrace of this bar romantically slung between its namesake towers, duck under the thicket of branches and seat yourself down amid an idyllic panorama of low-rise Běijīng rooftops. Rickety, a bit slapdash perhaps, but supreme – and it serves crinkle-cut chips (Y20).

## ENTERTAINMENT

Today's Běijīng has seen a revolution in leisure, and the entertainment industry is in full throttle. Beijing opera, acrobatics and kung fu are solid fixtures on the tourist circuit, drawing regular crowds. Classical music concerts and modern theatre reach out to a growing audience of sophisticates, while night owls will find something to hoot about in the live-music and nightclub scene.

### Beijing Opera & Traditional Chinese Music

There are many types of Chinese opera, but Beijing opera (京劇; jīngjù) is by far the best known. The form was popularised in the West by the actor Mei Lanfang (1894-1961), who is said to have influenced Charlie Chaplin.

The operatic form bears little resemblance to its European counterpart. Its colourful blend of singing, dancing, speaking, swordsmanship, mime, acrobatics and dancing can swallow up an epic six hours, but two hours is more usual.

There are four types of actors' roles: the *shēng*, *dàn*, *jīng* and *chǒu*. The *shēng* are the leading male actors and they play scholars, officials, warriors and the like. The *dàn* are the female roles, but are usually played by men (Mei Lanfang always played a *dàn* role). The *jīng* are the painted-face roles, and they represent warriors, heroes, statesmen, adventurers and demons. The *chǒu* is basically the clown.

Language is typically archaic Chinese and the screeching music may not have you tapping your foot, but visually it's a treat, with elaborate costumes and bright, magnificent make-up. Western viewers find the energetic battle sequences riveting, as acrobats leap, twirl, twist and somersault into attack – it's not unlike boarding a Běijīng bus during rush hour.



**Forbidden City Concert Hall** (Zhōngshān Gōngyuán Yinyuè Táng; Map p132; ☎ 6559 8285; Zhongshan Park; tickets ¥50-500; 🎫 performances 7.30pm) Located on the eastern side of Zhongshan Park, this is the venue for performances of classical and traditional Chinese music.

**Poly Plaza International Theatre** (Bǎoli Dàshà Guójì Jùyuán; Map p122; ☎ 6506 5345; old Poly Plaza, 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie; tickets ¥100-1280; 🎫 performances usually at 7.30pm) Situated in the old Poly Plaza right by Dongsishitiao subway station, this venue hosts a wide range of performances, including classical music, ballet, traditional Chinese folk music and operatic works.

## Theatre

Only emerging in China in the 20th century, *huàjù* (话剧; spoken drama) never commanded a large following in China. As an art, creative drama is still unable to fully express itself and remains sadly gagged and sidelined. But if you want to know what's walking the floorboards in Běijīng, try some of the following.

**Capital Theatre** (Shǒudū Jùyuán; Map p123; ☎ 6524 9847; 22 Wangfujing Dajie; 🎫 performances 7pm Tue-Sun) Situated right in the heart of the city on Wangfujing Dajie, this central theatre has regular performances of contemporary Chinese productions from several theatre companies.

**China Puppet Theatre** (Zhōngguó Mòu Jùyuán; Map pp116-17; ☎ 6422 9487; 1a Anhua Xili, Beisanhuan Lu; tickets ¥30-100) This popular theatre has regular events, including shadow play, puppetry, music and dance.

The huge Chang'an Grand Theatre (p154) largely stages productions of Beijing opera with occasional classical Chinese theatre productions.

## Cinemas

The following are two of Běijīng's most central multistorey cinemas.

**Star Cinema City** (Xīnshìjì Yǐngchéng; Map p123; ☎ 8518 5399; shop B865, basement, Oriental Plaza, 1 Dongchang'an Jie; tickets Wed-Mon ¥50, Tue ¥35) This six-screen cinema is centrally located and plush (with leather reclining sofa chairs).

**Sundongan Cinema City** (Xīndōngān Yǐngchéng; Map p123; ☎ 6528 1988; 5th fl, Sundongan Plaza, Wangfujing Dajie; tickets ¥40) Don't expect a huge selection, but you can usually find a Hollywood feature plus other English-language movies here.

## SHOPPING

There are several notable Chinese shopping districts offering abundant goods and reasonable prices: **Wangfujing Dajie** (王府井大街), **Xidan** (西单) and **Qianmen** (前门), including Dashilar. The *hútàng* of **Dashilar** (大栅栏; Map pp118-19) runs southwest from the northern end of Qianmen Dajie, south of Tiananmen Sq. It's a great jumble of silk shops, old stores, theatres, herbal medicine shops, and food and clothing specialists.

More luxurious shopping areas can be found in the embassy areas of Jianguomenwai (建国门外) and Sanlitun (三里屯); 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, the Sanlitun Yashou Clothing Market, Panjiayuan and the Pearl Market. There are also specialised shopping districts such as Liulichang.

Běijīng's premier antique street, **Liulichang** (琉璃厂; Map pp118-19) is not far west of Dashilar. Worth delving along for its quaint, albeit dressed up, age-old village atmosphere, Liulichang's shops 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 (carved seal) made, you can do it here. At the western end of Liulichang Xijie, a collection of ramshackle stalls flogs bric-a-brac, Buddhist statuary, Cultural Revolution pamphlets and posters, fake Tang dynasty *sāncǎi* (three-colour porcelain), shoes for bound feet, silks, handicrafts, Chinese kites, swords, walking sticks, door knockers etc.

## Arts & Crafts

**Pyongyang Art Studios** (Map p122; ☎ 6416 7544; Red House Hotel, 10 Chunxilu Lu) Unsurpassed communist kitsch is delivered straight to your hands here from the axis of evil. Finger maps of Pyongyang and turn over edifying literature (*Towards the Eminence of Socialism*), North Korean ciggies (¥20 per pack), liquor, T-shirts (¥80), posters vilifying America, DPRK flags (¥150), postcards (¥80) and badges (¥30) or grab a second impression of *The US Imperialists started the Korean War* (¥100) – while stocks last.

**Tongli Studio Lifestyle & Arts** (Tónglǐ; Map p122; Sanlitun Beilu; 🎫 11am-9pm) This trendy lifestyle and arts shopping market in Sanlitun has four floors of small shops (selling ceramics, clothing, jewellery, jade, and arts and crafts, among other decorative quality items), cafés, bars and clubs.

**Beijing Curio City** (Běijīng Gǔwán Chéng; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6774 7711; 21 Dongsanhuan Nanlu; 🎫 9.30am-6.30pm) South of Panjiayuan, Curio City is four floors of gifts, scrolls, ceramics, carpets, duty-free shopping and furniture. It's an excellent place to turn up knick-knacks and souvenirs, especially on Sundays.

**Beijing Arts & Crafts Central Store** (Gōngyì Měishù Fúwùbù; Map p123; ☎ 6523 8747; 200 Wangfujing Dajie) This centrally located store (with a sign outside saying Artistic Mansion) is well known for its good selection of jade (plus certificates of authenticity), jewellery, pearls, jadeite, cloisonné vases, silks, carpets and other Chinese arts and crafts.

**798 Photo Gallery** (Bǎinián Yīnxiàng; Map pp116-17; ☎ 6438 1784; www.798photogallery.cn; 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu) A trendy component of Factory 798 (p138), the huge, active industrial art park in north-west Běijīng, this photographic gallery has a collection of intriguing prints for sale from the Cultural Revolution, including black-and-white photos (¥3000) of Mao Zedong signed by the photographer, Houbo.

**Cui Wén Gé** (Map pp118-19; ☎ 8316 5899; 58 Liulichang Dongjie) Don't expect any bargains, but there's a riveting array of temple ornaments, ceramics, traditional roof figures, antique fans, bronzes, ceramics, antique ivory Bodhisattvas and more at this Liulichang antiques specialist; don't miss the collection of *thangka* (Tibetan sacred art) upstairs.

## Carpets

**Torana Carpets** (Kāngchén; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6465 3388, ext 5542; www.toranahouse.com; Shop 8, Kempinski Hotel, 50 Liangmaqiao Lu; 🎫 10am-10pm) You may pay more for your carpets here (ranging from around ¥2000 to ¥16,000), but you can be assured that what you are buying are genuine, hand-made carpets from Tibet. The company also sells antique Tibetan carpets and furniture, with a further branch in Shanghai.

**Qianmen Carpet Company** (Qiánmén Dìtānchāng; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6715 1687; 59 Xingfu Dajie) This carpet store, just north of the Tiantan Hotel, stocks a good selection of handmade carpets and prayer rugs with natural dyes from Tibet,

Xinjīang and Mongolia. Prices start at around ¥2000.

## Clothing

**Silk Street** (Xiūshù Jiē; Map pp118-19; cnr Jianguomenwai Dajie & Dongdaqiao Lu; 🎫 9am-9pm; underground Yong'anli) Seething with shoppers and polyglot vendors who try their luck with the contents of your wallet in several tongues, Silk Street is where the Silk Market has repositioned itself. Long notorious as a bedlam of fake knockoffs, the pirated designer labels remain, although at the time of writing a consortium of big names (North Face, Gucci, Boss, Dunhill et al) had successfully driven their brands from the shelves. The market sprawls riotously from floor to floor, showing piles of rucksacks, shoes, clothing, silk, cashmere, tailor-made cheongsam, rugs, jade, pearls and trashy Rolexes into the open mits of travellers and expats. Haggle like hell and dispatch your postcards from the basement post office (open 9am to 5pm), next to the food court.

**Sanlitun Yashou Clothing Market** (Sānlitún Yāxiū Fúzhuāng Shìchāng; Map p122; 58 Gongrentiyuchang Beilu) After slogging through this hopping, five-floor bedlam of shoes, boots, handbags, suitcases, jackets, silk, carpets, batik, lace, jade, pearls, toys, army surplus and souvenirs, ease the pressure on your bunions with a foot massage (¥50 per hour) or pedicure (¥40) on the 4th floor and restore calories in the 5th-floor food court.

**Feng Ling Fashion Art Design** (Map p122; ☎ 6417 7715; 302, Tongli Studio, Sanlitun Beilu) Eye-catching designs and stylish takes on Mao suits, *qipáo* (cheongsam) and evening dresses.

## Department Stores & Malls

**Oriental Plaza** (Dōngfāng Guǎngchāng; Map p123; www.orientalplaza.com; 1 Dongchang'an Jie; 🎫 9.30am-9.30pm) You could spend a day in this staggeringly large shopping mega-complex at the foot of Wangfujing Dajie. Prices may not be cheap, but window-shoppers will be overjoyed. There's a great range of shops and restaurants, an excellent basement food court and it's kid-friendly, with nappy-changing rooms, a play room downstairs and Sony Explora Science (p144).

**Lufthansa Center Youyi Shopping City** (Yànshā Yóuyì Shāngchāng; Map pp118-19; 50 Liangmaqiao Lu) The gigantic Lufthansa Center is a well-stocked and long-established multilevel shopping mall. You can find most of what you need here,



including several restaurants, kids' toys on the 6th floor and international-access ATMs on the ground floor.

**Friendship Store** (Yóuyi Shāngdiàn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6500 3311; 17 Jianguomenwai Dajie) This place could be worth a perusal for its upstairs touristy junk, supermarket and deli.

## Kites

**Zhāoyuángé** (Map p123; ☎ 6512 1937; 41 Nanheyuan Dajie) If you love Chinese kites, you will love this minute shop on the western side of Nanheyuan Dajie, south of the Liújiā Guō restaurant. Chinese paper kites range from Y10 for a simple kite, up to around Y300 for a dragon; you can also browse Beijing opera masks, chopsticks, Mao badges and *zīshā* teapots. The owner does not speak much English, but you can look around and make a selection.

## Markets

**Pānjiāyuán** (Map pp118-19; ☎ dawn-around 3pm Sat & Sun) Hands down the best place to shop for *yìshù* (arts), *gōngyì* (crafts) and *gǔwǎn* (antiques) in Běijīng is Pānjiāyuán (aka the Dirt Market or the Sunday Market). The market only takes place on weekends and has everything from calligraphy, Cultural Revolution memorabilia and cigarette-ad posters to Buddha heads, ceramics and Tibetan carpets.

The market sees up to 50,000 visitors daily scouting for treasures. If you want to join them, early Sunday morning is the best time. You may not find that rare Qianlong *dǒucǎi* stem cup or late-Yuan-dynasty *qīnghuā* vase that will ease you into early retirement, but what's on view is no less than a compendium of Chinese curios and an A-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 may start at 10 times the real price. Make a few rounds at Pānjiāyuán before forking out for anything, to compare prices and weigh it all up. It's off Dongsanhuan Nanlu (Third Ring Rd); take the subway to Guomao, then bus 28.

**Pearl Market** (Hóngqiáo Shìchāng; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6711 7429; Tiantan Donglu; ☎ 8.30am-7pm) The cosmos of clutter across from the east gate of Temple of Heaven Park ranges from shoes, leather bags, jackets, jeans, silk by the yard, electronics, Chinese arts, crafts and antiques to a galaxy of pearls (freshwater and seawater, white and black), on the 3rd floor. Prices for the latter vary incredibly with quality. Pop down to the basement for a selection of scorpions, snake meat, snails and more and if you have kids in tow, don't miss the Kids Toys market (Hóngqiáo Tiānlè Wánjù Shìchāng; open 8.30am to 7pm) in the building behind, stuffed to the gills with soft toys, cars, kits, electronic games, film tie-ins, models and more. Pearl Market is accessible from the east gate of the Temple of Heaven Park.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

As the nation's capital, getting to Běijīng is straightforward. Rail and air connections link the capital to virtually every point in China, and fleets of buses head to abundant destinations from Běijīng. Using Běijīng as a starting point to explore the rest of the land makes perfect sense.

## Air

Běijīng has direct air connections to most major cities in the world. For more information about international flights to Běijīng, see p956.

### DOMESTIC AIR FARES FROM BĒIJĪNG

Domestic flights from Běijīng include the following destinations (fares are for one-way flights): Chángchūn (Y960, 80 minutes), Chéngdū (Y1440, two hours, 20 minutes), Dàlián (Y710, 70 minutes), Fúzhōu (Y1530, 2½ hours), Guǎngzhōu (Y1700, two hours, 50 minutes), Guílín (Y1590, 4½ hours), Hǎerbīn (Y1000, 1½ hours), Hǎikǒu (Y2190, three hours, 40 minutes), Hángzhōu (Y1050, 50 minutes), Héféi (Y990, one hour, 40 minutes), Hohhot (Y500, one hour), Hong Kong (Y2800, three hours), Jílín (Y960, 80 minutes), Kūnmíng (Y1810, four hours), Lánzhōu (Y1100, two hours), Lhasa (Y2040, 4½ hours), Nánjīng (Y930, one hour, 35 minutes), Nánníng (Y1870, three hours, 25 minutes), Qīngdǎo (Y660, 50 minutes), Shànghǎi (Y1030, two hours), Tàiyuán (Y510, 50 minutes), Ürümqi (Y2410, 3½ hours), Wūhàn (Y990, two hours), Xī'ān (Y1050, 1½ hours), Xīníng (Y1450, two hours) and Zhèngzhōu (Y690, 70 minutes).

Purchase tickets for Chinese carriers flying from Běijīng at CAAC in the **Aviation Building** (Mínháng Yíngyè Dàshà; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6656 9118, domestic 6601 3336, international 6601 6667; 15 Chang'an Jie; ☎ 7am-midnight) or from one of the numerous other ticket outlets and service counters around Běijīng, and through most midrange and above hotels. Discounts are generally available, so it is important to ask.

A downtown check-in service desk is situated just inside the door, available for passengers with carry-on luggage only (open 8am to 5pm; domestic flights only); you must check in at least three hours prior to departure.

You can make inquiries for all airlines at Běijīng's **Capital Airport** (Map p111; ☎ from Běijīng only 962580). Call ☎ 6454 1100 for information on international and domestic arrivals and departures.

Daily flights connect Běijīng to every major city in China. There should be at least one flight a week to smaller cities throughout China. The prices listed in this book are approximate only and represent the nondiscounted air fare.

## Bus

No international buses serve Běijīng, but there are plenty of long-distance domestic routes served by national highways radiating from Běijīng.

Běijīng has numerous long-distance bus stations (长途汽车站; *chángtú qìchēzhàn*), positioned roughly on the city perimeter in the direction you want to go.

Buses from **Bawangfen long-distance bus station** (Bāwángfēn Chángtú Kèyùnzhan; Map pp116-17) in the east of town serve Tiānjīn (Y31, regular), Bāotóu (Y131, once daily) and Qīnhuángdǎo (Y61, plus destinations in the northeast including Chángchūn (Y221, four daily), Shěnyáng (Y151, regular), Dàlián (Y219, three daily) and Hǎerbīn (280, twice daily). The nearby **Sihui long-distance bus station** (Sihui Chángtú Qìchēzhàn; Map pp116-17) has departures to Tiānjīn (Y23, hourly) Chéngdē (Y46, regular), Chángchūn (Y240, one daily), Dàlián (Y280, one daily), Dāndōng (Y224, one daily) and Jílín (Y248, one daily).

**Liuliqiao long-distance bus station** (Liùliqiao Chángtúzhàn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 8383 1717), southwest of Beijing West Train station, has buses north, south and west of town including Dàtóng (Y81, regular), Bāotóu (Y121, five

daily), Shìjiāzhuāng (Y73, regular), Chéngdē (Y46, regular), Luòyáng (Y149, four daily), Zhèngzhōu (Y129, three daily), Xī'ān (Y180), Héféi (Y180), Yīnchūān (Y237) and even Xiàmén (Y480).

The nearby **Lianhuachi long-distance bus station** (Liánhuāchí Chángtú Qìchēzhàn; Map pp118-19) has buses south to Shìjiāzhuāng (Y50, regular), Luòyáng (Y165, once daily), Ànyáng (Y105, twice daily), Jǐ'nán (Y100, once daily) and Yán'ān (Y245, once daily).

Another important station is at **Zhaogongkou** (Map pp116-17; ☎ 6722 9491, 6723 7328) in the south (useful for buses to Tiānjīn).

## Train

Travellers arrive and depart by train at **Beijing Train Station** (Běijīng Huòchēzhàn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 5101 9999), southeast of the Forbidden City, or the colossal **Beijing West Train Station** (Běijīng Xīzhàn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 5182 6273) in the southwest. Beijing Train Station is served by its own underground station, making access simple. International trains to Moscow, Pyongyang (North Korea) and Ulan Bator (Mongolia) arrive at and leave Beijing Train Station; trains for Hong Kong and Vietnam leave from Beijing West Train Station. Buses 122 and 721 connect Beijing Train Station with Beijing West Train Station. For information on the train to Lhasa, see p924.

The Běijīng-Shànghǎi maglev idea may have been quietly put to sleep, but new overnight soft-sleeper express (直特; *zhítè*) trains do the trip in 12 hours, with several trains (Z1, Z5, Z7, Z13 and Z21; 7.35pm, 7.14pm, 7.21pm, 7.07pm and 7pm respectively, lower/upper bunk Y499/478) departing nightly. Other fast express trains from Beijing Train Station include Sūzhōu (Z85, 7.28pm, hard sleeper Y309, 11 hours, 20 minutes) and Hángzhōu (Z9, 6.53pm, soft sleeper only Y554, 13½ hours).

Typical train fares and approximate travel times for hard-sleeper tickets to destinations from Beijing Train Station include: Chángchūn (Y239, 9½ hours), Dàlián (Y257, 12 hours), Dàtóng (Y70, 5½ hours), Hángzhōu (Y363, 15 hours), Hǎerbīn (Y281, 11½ hours), Jǐ'nán (Y137, 4½ hours), Jílín (Y263, 12 hours), Nánjīng (Y274, 11 hours), Qīngdǎo (Y215, nine hours), Shànghǎi (Y327, 13½ hours; soft-sleeper express 12 hours), Sūzhōu (Y309, 11 hours), Tiānjīn (Y30, 80 minutes, hard seat) and Ürümqi (Y652, 44 hours).

The fast soft sleeper Z19 express train departs daily from Beijing West Train Station for Xi'an (Y417, 11½ hours) at 8.28pm. Other typical train fares and approximate travel times for hard-sleeper tickets to destinations from Beijing West Train Station include: Chángshā (Y345, 14 hours), Chéngdū (Y418, 26 hours), Chóngqing (Y430, 25 hours), Guǎngzhōu (Y458, 22 hours), Guiyáng (Y490, 29 hours), Hànkǒu (Y281, 10 hours, 20 minutes), Kūnmíng (Y578, 40 hours), Lánzhōu (Y390, 20½ hours), Shēnzhèn (Y467, 23½ hours), Shíjiāzhuāng (Y50, hard seat, two hours, 45 minutes), Kowloon (Y480, 24 hours, 23 minutes), Ūrūmqi (Y652, 44 hours), Yīnchuān (Y262, 19 hours), Xi'an (Y274, 12 hours), Yíchāng (Y319) and Xīning (Y430, 24½ hours).

**Beijing South Train Station** (Yǒngdīngmén Huòchēzhàn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 5183 7262) serves a limited number of destinations in Héběi, Hénán, Shānxī and Inner Mongolia; Inner Mongolia is also served by trains from **Beijing North Train Station** (Běijīng Běizhàn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 5186 6223). Bus 20 connects Beijing Train Station and Beijing South Train Station.

The queues at Beijing Train Station can be overwhelming. At the time of writing, the ticketing office for foreigners attached to the soft-seat waiting room (*guāibīn hòuchēshì*) on the 1st floor was no longer open, although an English-speaking service was available at ticket window No 26. Information is available at ticket window No 29. A **foreigners ticketing office** (☎ 24hr) can be found on the 2nd floor of Beijing West Train Station.

## GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

Běijīng's Capital Airport is 27km from the centre of town or about 30 minutes to one hour by car depending on traffic.

Numerous buses run to and from the airport. Almost any bus that gets you into town will probably do; then you can hop in a taxi and speed to a hotel or link up with the underground system.

Express bus routes run into town every 30 minutes between 5.30am and 7pm daily, although some run longer hours. The most popular bus is Route A (Y16), which runs 24 hours (with less frequent services between 10pm and 5.30am) from the airport to Sanyuanqiao, Dongzhimen (underground station), Dongsishitiao (underground station) and the International Hotel (Guóji Fàndiàn; just north

of Beijing Train Station). Route B (Y16) runs along the north Third Ring Rd and then south past the Friendship Hotel to the metro stop at Gongzhufen. From the city to the airport, the most useful place to catch the bus is at the west door of the International Hotel, where buses leave every half-hour between 6am and 7.30pm (Y16). You can also take buses (☎ 6459 4375/4376; Y16; one hour) from the eastern end of the Aviation Building (Map pp118-19) on Xichang'an Jie in Xidan District; departures are every 30 minutes between 5.45am and 7.30pm.

Many top-end hotels runs shuttle buses from the airport to their hotels.

A light-rail link from Capital Airport to Běijīng is under construction, but is not due for completion until June 2008.

A taxi (using its meter) should cost about Y85 from the airport to the centre, including the Y15 airport expressway toll. A well-established illegal taxi operation at the airport attempts to lure weary travellers into a Y300-plus ride to the city, so be on your guard. If anyone approaches you offering a taxi ride, ignore them and insist on joining the queue for a taxi outside. When you get into the taxi, make sure the driver uses the meter. It is also useful to have the name of your hotel written down in Chinese to show the driver.

## Bicycle

It's tempting to take to two wheels around Běijīng: the city is as flat as a chessboard, there are ample bicycle lanes and other vehicular traffic is often at a standstill. The increase in traffic in recent years has made biking along major thoroughfares more dangerous and nerve-racking, however. Cycling through Běijīng's *hútòng* is far safer and an experience not to be missed (see the Bicycle Tour, p142).

Budget hotels often hire out bicycles, which cost around Y20 per day (plus a deposit); rental at upmarket hotels is far more expensive. Rental outfits are increasingly common, including a centrally located streetside operation on Jinyu Hutong (☎ 6313 1010; standard bike per hr/day Y10/50, mountain bike Y20/80), just west of the Novotel Peace Hotel. There's also the expensive **Universals Bicycle Rental Outlet** (Map pp118-19; s/tandem bike per hr Y10/20, deposit Y500; ☎ 1-10pm Mon-Fri, 10am-10pm Sat & Sun), with an outlet on the east shore of Qianhai Lake, **Bird of Freedom** (Zixingchē Chūzū Fúwúzhàn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 6313 1010; 47 Qianmen Dajie; per hr

Y15-20, per day Y50-60, deposit Y300-600; ☎ 7am-8pm), opposite Qianmen Quanjudé Roast Duck Restaurant, and bike rental from the shop at 77 Tieshu Xiejie (Y20 from 7am-11pm; deposit Y200).

## Car

At the time of writing, foreign visitors were effectively barred from driving in Běijīng, host city of the 2008 Olympics. Only residents who have lived in Běijīng for one year can apply and licence application procedures take a month to process. Check with **Hertz** (☎ 800-810 8833; 5 Jianguomenwai Dajie; ☎ 9am-5pm) at the Jianguo Hotel for the latest news. Taxis are cheap and hiring a driver is a proposition, which can be arranged through Hertz (from Y520 per day), at major hotels, **CITS** (☎ 6515 8587) or other travel agencies.

## Public Transport

### BUS

Relying on buses (公共汽车; *gōnggòng qìchē*) can be knuckle-gnawingly frustrating unless it's a short hop; thick congestion often slows things to an infuriating crawl (average speed below 10km/h) where Běijīng creeps by in slow motion. The growth in bus lanes (target: 400km of bus lanes in town by 2008) should speed things up. Getting a seat can verge on the physical, especially at rush hour. Běijīng's Chinese-only bus routes on bus signs are fiendishly foreigner-unfriendly, although the name of the stop appears in pinyin.

Fares are typically Y1 or under depending on distance, although pusher, air-conditioned buses are more expensive. You generally pay the conductor once aboard the bus, rather than the driver.

Buses run 5am to 11pm daily or thereabouts, and stops are few and far between. It's important to work out how many stops you need to go before boarding. If you can read Chinese, a useful publication (Y5) listing all the Běijīng bus lines is available from kiosks; alternatively, tourist maps of Běijīng illustrate some of the bus routes. If you work out how to combine bus and subway connections, the subway will speed up much of the trip.

Buses 1 to 124 cover the city core; 200-series are night buses (*yèbān gōnggòng qìchē*), while buses 300 to 501 are suburban lines.

Useful standard bus routes:

**1** Runs along Chang'an Jie, Jianguomenwai Dajie and Jianguomennei Dajie, passing Sihuihan, Bawangfen, Yonganli,

Dongdan, Xidan, Muxidi, Junshi Bowuguan, Gongzhufen and Maguanying along the way.

**4** Runs along Chang'an Jie, Jianguomenwai Dajie and Jianguomennei Dajie; Gongzhufen, Junshi Bowuguan, Muxidi, Xidan, Tiananmen, Dongdan, Yonganli, Bawangfen and Sihuihan.

**5** Deshengmen, Dianmen, Beihai Park, Xihuamen, Zhongshan Park and Qianmen.

**15** Beijing Zoo, Fuxingmen, Xidan, Hepingmen, Liulichang and Tianqiao.

**20** Beijing South Train Station, Tianqiao, Qianmen, Wangfujing, Dongdan and Beijing Train Station.

**44** (outer ring) Xinjiekou, Xizhimen Train Station, Fuchengmen, Fuxingmen, Changchunjie, Xuanwumen, Qianmen, Tajichang, Chongwenmen, Dongbianmen, Chaoyangmen, Dongzhimen, Andingmen, Deshengmen and Xinjiekou.

**54** Beijing Train Station, Dongbianmen, Chongwenmen, Zhengyi Lu, Qianmen, Dashilar, Temple of Heaven, Yongdimen and Haihutun.

**103** Beijing Train Station, Dengshikou, China Art Gallery, Forbidden City (north entrance), Beihai Park, Fuchengmen and Beijing Zoo.

**332** Beijing Zoo, Weigongcun, Renmin Daxue, Zhongguancun, Haidian, Beijing University and Summer Palace.

Special double-decker buses 1 to 8 run in a circle around the city centre and are slightly more expensive but spare you the traumas of normal public buses and you should get a seat.

## SUBWAY & LIGHT RAILWAY

The subway (地铁; *dìtiě*) is both reliable and fast, although it's modest and much older than Shànghāi's slicker system. Trains are showing their age, platforms are dated and paper tickets remain the norm (to be replaced before the 2008 Olympics), but five new subway lines are under construction. Four lines exist: the Circle Line (Huánxiàn; also called Line 2), Line 1 (Yíxiàn; running east-west), Line 13 and the Batong line (Bātōngxiàn). The fare is a flat Y3 on all lines, regardless of distance (Y5 if you swap between Line 13 and the rest of the subway system).

Trains run at a frequency of one every few minutes during peak times and operate from 5am to 11pm daily. Banisters up the platform stairs to the exit are marked with Braille (disabled passengers note that escalators often only go up). Only a few platforms have seats, and none have toilets. Stops are announced in English and Chinese. Subway stations (地铁站; *dì tiě zhàn*) are identified by subway symbols, a blue, encircled English capital 'D'.

Lines currently under construction are lines 4, 5, 8, 9, 10 and the airport line. Line 4 is due to open in 2009, linking northwest BĒijīng with the south of the city. Line 5, due to open in mid 2007, will run north–south, intersecting with the Circle Line at Yonghegong and Chongwenmen, and intersecting with Line 1 at Dongdan. Line 8 (the Olympic Branch Line) will connect with the Olympic Park and is due for completion in 2008. Line 10 will run from Jingsong in the southeast through Guomao and onto Wanliu in the northwest of town; it is due for completion in 2008.

### Line 1

This line has 23 stations and runs from Sihuidong to Pingguoyuan, a western suburb of BĒijīng. For station names, see the Beijing Transport Network map (p170).

### Line 2 (Circle Line)

This 16km line has 18 stations. For station names, see the Beijing Transport Network map (p170). The Circle Line intersects with Line 1 at Fuxingmen and Jianguomen. Trains take an average of two minutes between stations with a complete loop taking around 40 minutes.

### Line 13

Classified as part of the subway system but actually a light-rail link (operating between 6am and 9pm), Line 13 runs in a northern loop from Xizhimen to Dongzhimen, stopping at 14 stations (approximately three minutes per station) in between. As with the subway, tickets to anywhere on Line 13 are Y3, while Y5 gets you a ticket to any station on the other lines of the underground system. The line is not of great use for tourist sights, apart from the Wudaokou stop for the Old Summer Palace and Summer Palace. An extension to the line is currently being built that will link Dongzhimen to BĒijīng's Capital Airport (due for completion in 2008).

### Batong Line

The Batong Line links Sihui on Line 1 with Tuqiao in the southeastern suburbs.

### Taxi

BĒijīng taxis come in different classes, with red stickers on the side rear window declaring the rate per kilometre. Y2 taxis (Y10 for the first 3km; Y2 per kilometre thereafter)

include a new fleet of Hyundai cars, which are spacious and have air-con and rear seatbelts. The most expensive taxis are Y12 for the first 3km and Y2 per kilometre thereafter. Taxis are required to switch on the meter for all journeys (unless you negotiate a fee for a long journey out of town). Between 11pm and 6am there is a 20% surcharge added to the flag-fall metered fare. The cheap *xialì* bone-rattler taxis have been phased out.

BĒijīng taxi drivers speak little, if any English, despite encouragement to learn 100 basic phrases in the run up to 2008. If you don't speak Chinese, bring a map or have your destination written down in characters. It helps if you know the way to your destination; sit in the front (where the seatbelt works) with a map.

Cabs can be hired for distance, by the hour, or by the day (a minimum of Y350 for the day). Taxis can be hailed in the street, summoned by phone or you can wait at one of the designated taxi zones or outside hotels. Call ☎ 6835 1150 to register a complaint. Remember to collect a receipt (ask the driver to *fāpiào*); if you accidentally leave anything in the taxi, the driver's number appears on the receipt so he or she can be located.

## AROUND BĒIJĪNG

### THE GREAT WALL 长城

He who has not climbed the Great Wall is not a true man.

*Mao Zedong*

China's mandatory, must-see sight, the Great Wall (Chángchéng) wriggles fitfully from its scattered remains in Liáoníng province to Jiāyùguān in the Gobi Desert.

The 'original' wall was begun over 2000 years ago during the Qin dynasty (221–207 BC), when China was unified under Emperor Qin Shi Huang. Separate walls that had been constructed by independent kingdoms to keep out marauding nomads were linked together. The effort required hundreds of thousands of workers – many of whom were political prisoners – and 10 years of hard labour under General Meng Tian. An estimated 180 million cubic metres of rammed earth was used to form the core of the original wall, and legend

has it that one of the building materials used was the bones of deceased workers.

The wall never really did perform its function as an impenetrable line of defence. As Genghis Khan supposedly said, 'The strength of a wall depends on the courage of those who defend it'. Sentries could be bribed. However, it did work very well as a kind of elevated highway, transporting people and equipment across mountainous terrain. Its beacon tower system, using smoke signals generated by burning wolves' dung, quickly transmitted news of enemy movements back to the capital. To the west was Jiāyùguān, an important link on the Silk Road, where there was a customs post of sorts and where unwanted Chinese were ejected through the gates to face the terrifying wild west.

During the Ming dynasty a determined effort was made to rehash the bastion, this time facing it with some 60 million cubic metres of bricks and stone slabs. This project took over 100 years, and the costs in human effort and resources were phenomenal. The investment failed to curb the Manchu armies from storming the Middle Kingdom and imposing over two and a half centuries of foreign rule on China.

The wall was largely forgotten after that. Lengthy sections of it have returned to dust and the wall might have disappeared totally had it not been rescued by the tourist industry. Several important sections have been rebuilt, kitted out with souvenir shops, restaurants and amusement-park rides, and formally opened to the public.

The most toured area of the Great Wall is at Bādáling. Also renovated but less toured are Simātái and Jinshanling. Not impressed with the tourist-oriented sections, explorative travellers have long sought out unrestored sections of the wall (such as at Huánguā) for their more genuine appeal. The Chinese government periodically isolates such sections or slaps fines on visitors. The authorities argue that they are seeking to prevent damage to the unrestored wall by traipsing visitors, but they are also keen to direct tourist revenue towards restored sections.

The wall has suffered more from farmers pilling its earthen core for use on the fields, and for its bountiful supply of shaped stone, stripped from the ramparts for use in road and building construction. A recent outcry over drunken summer raves and 'orgies' at

### A TALL STORY

The myth that the Great Wall is visible with the naked eye from the moon was finally buried in 2003, when China's first astronaut Yang Liwei failed to spot the barrier from space. The wall can be seen from a low earth orbit, but so can many other objects of human construction, such as motorways and railways. Looked at from above, the relative width and uniform colour of large roads renders them more distinct than the Great Wall, a structure even less visible from the moon, where even individual continents are barely perceptible. The myth has been edited from Chinese textbooks, where it has cast its spell over generations of Chinese.

Jinshanling has upped public concern over the fortification's sad decline.

When choosing a tour, it is essential to check that the tour goes to where you want to go. Great Wall tours are often combined with trips to the Ming Tombs (p174), so ask beforehand; if you don't want to visit the Ming Tombs, choose another tour.

Far more worrying, some tours make painful and expensive diversions to jade factories, gem exhibition halls and Chinese medicine centres. At the latter, tourists are herded off the bus and analysed by white-coated doctors, who diagnose ailments that can only be cured with high-priced Chinese remedies (supplied there and then). The tour organisers receive a commission from the jade showroom/medicine centre for every person they manage to funnel through, so you are simply lining other people's pockets. When booking a tour, check such scams and unnecessary diversions are not on the itinerary. As with most popular destinations in China, try to avoid going on the weekend.

### Bādáling 八达岭

Most visitors encounter the Great Wall at Bādáling (Bādáling Chángchéng; Map p111; ☎ 6912 1338/1423/1520; admission Y45; ☼ 6am–10pm summer, 7am–6pm winter), its most-photographed manifestation, 70km northwest of BĒijīng. The scenery is raw and yields choice views of the wall snaking archetypally into the distance over undulating hills. Unless you visit during the bitterly cold days of

winter, however, don't anticipate a one-to-one with the wall, and prepare for guard rails, a carnival of souvenir stalls and squads of tourists surging over the ramparts. A summer weekend trip reminds visitors that China has the world's largest population, so opt for a weekday excursion.

Two sections of wall trail off in opposite directions from the main entrance. The restored wall crawls for a distance before nobly disintegrating into ruins; unfortunately you cannot realistically explore these more authentic fragments. Cable cars exist for the weary (Y60 round trip).

The section of masonry at Bādǎling was first built during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), and was heavily restored in both the 1950s and the 1980s. Punctuated with *dīlóu* (watchtowers), the 6m-wide wall is clad in brick, typical of the stonework employed by the Ming when they restored and expanded the fortification.

The admission fee also includes a 15-minute film about the Great Wall at the **Great Wall Circle Vision Theatre** (☎ 9am–5.45pm), a 360-degree amphitheatre, and the **China Great Wall Museum** (☎ 9am–4pm).

#### GETTING THERE & AWAY

Bus 919 (slow/fast Y5/10) leaves regularly (every 10 minutes) for Bādǎling from the old gate of Deshengmen, about 500m east of the Jishuitan subway stop. The last bus leaves Bādǎling for Běijīng at 6.30pm.

Convenient tour buses leave from the twin depots of the **Beijing Sightseeing Bus Centre** (Běijīng Lǚyóu Jísàn Zhōngxīn; Map pp118–19; ☎ 8353 1111) northeast and northwest of Qianmen alongside Tiananmen Sq. The main depot is the western station. Line C (Y80 return including entry to Great Wall; departures 6.30am to 10am) runs to Bādǎling; Line A runs to Bādǎling and the Ming Tombs (Y140 including all entrance tickets and meals; departures 6.30am to 10am).

Everyone else and his dog does trips to Bādǎling, including **CITS** (☎ 6512 3075; www.cits.com.cn; 57 Dengshikou Dajie), the Beijing Tourist Information Center (p124) and hotels. Hotel tours can be convenient (and should avoid rip-off diversions), but avoid high-price excursions (up to Y300 per person). A taxi to the wall and back will cost a minimum of Y400 for an eight-hour hire with a maximum of four passengers.

#### Mùtiányù 慕田峪

Renowned for its Ming dynasty guard towers and stirring views, the 2250m-long granite section of wall at **Mùtiányù** (Map p111; admission Y35; ☎ 6.30am–6pm), 90km northeast of Běijīng in Huáiróu County, dates from Ming dynasty remains, built upon an earlier Northern Qi dynasty conception. It was developed as an alternative to Bādǎling and is, in the balance, a less commercial experience despite motivated hawking and tourist clutter. The wall here similarly comes replete with a **cable car** (round trip Y50; ☎ 8.30am–4.30pm). October is the best month to visit, with the countryside drenched in autumn hues.

#### GETTING THERE & AWAY

From **Dongzhimen long-distance bus station** (Dōngzhīmén Chángtú Qīchēzhàn; Map p122; ☎ 6467 4995) take either bus 916 or 980 (both Y8, one hour 40 minutes) to Huáiróu (怀柔), then change for a minibus to Mùtiányù (Y25).

The weekend Line A bus to Mùtiányù and Hongluo Temple (Hóngluó Sì) runs on Sundays and public holidays (Y110; price includes entrance ticket and return fare) between 6.30am and 8.30am from the **Beijing Sightseeing Bus Centre** (Běijīng Lǚyóu Jísàn Zhōngxīn; Map pp118–19; ☎ 8353 1111), northeast and northwest of Qianmen alongside Tiananmen Sq and also from outside the South Cathedral at Xuanwumen.

#### Jūyōngguān 居庸关

Rebuilt by the industrious Ming on its 5th-century remains, the wall at **Jūyōngguān** (Juyong Pass; Map p111; admission Y40; ☎ 6am–4pm) is the closest section of the Great Wall to town. Fifty kilometres northwest of Běijīng, the wall's authenticity has been restored out, but it's typically quiet and you can undertake the steep and somewhat strenuous circuit in under two hours.

#### GETTING THERE & AWAY

Jūyōngguān is on the road to Bādǎling, so the public buses and numbered tour buses for Bādǎling listed opposite will get you there. From the two depots of **Beijing Sightseeing Bus Centre** (Běijīng Lǚyóu Jísàn Zhōngxīn; Map pp118–19; ☎ 8353 1111), northeast and northwest of Qianmen alongside Tiananmen Sq, Line B buses take in both Jūyōngguān and Ding Líng at the Ming Tombs (Y125 including entrance tickets; departures 6.30am to 10am).

(Continued on page 173)

(Continued from page 164)

#### Simātái 司马台

In Miyún County 110km northeast of Běijīng, the stirring remains at **Simātái** (Map p111; admission Y30; ☎ 8am–5pm) make for a more exhilarating Great Wall experience. Built during the reign of Ming dynasty emperor Hongwu, the 19km section is an invigorating stretch of watchtowers, precarious plunges and scrambling ascents.

This rugged section of wall can be heart-thumping steep and the scenery exhilarating, although the masonry has been scheduled for a makeover, which could pacify its wilder moments. The eastern section of wall at Simātái is the most treacherous, sporting 16 watchtowers and dizzyingly steep ascents that require free hands. Deemed too dangerous, the section beyond the 12th watchtower is currently inaccessible.

Simātái has some unusual features, such as 'obstacle-walls'. These are walls-within-walls used for defending against enemies who had already scaled the Great Wall. The cable car (round trip Y50) saves valuable time and is an alternative to a sprained ankle. Take strong shoes with a good grip. Unfazed by the dizzying terrain, hawkers make an unavoidable appearance.

#### GETTING THERE & AWAY

Take a minibus (Y10, 1¼ hours) to Miyún (密云) or bus 980 (Y10) from **Dongzhimen long-distance bus station** (Dōngzhīmén Chángtú Qīchēzhàn; Map p122; ☎ 6467 4995) and change to a minibus to Simātái or a taxi (round trip Y120).

The weekend Line D tour bus (Y95; price includes entrance ticket) runs to Simātái from the **Beijing Sightseeing Bus Centre** (Běijīng Lǚyóu Jísàn Zhōngxīn; Map pp118–19; ☎ 8353 1111), northeast and northwest of Qianmen alongside Tiananmen Sq and also from outside the South Cathedral at Xuanwumen. Buses depart on Fridays and Saturdays and public holidays between 6.30am and 8.30am.

Backpacker hotels often run morning minibus trips (Y60 to Y80, not including ticket). A taxi from Běijīng for the day costs about Y400.

#### Jinshānlǐng 金山岭

The Great Wall at **Jinshānlǐng** (Jinshānlǐng Chángchéng; Map p111; admission Y40), near the town of Gǔběikǒu, has 24 watchtowers and remains relatively undeveloped. More significantly, it marks the starting point of a 10km hike to

Simātái. The journey takes around four hours as the trail is steep and stony and parts of the wall have collapsed and are in a state of ruin, but it can be traversed without too much difficulty. Arriving at Simātái, however, you may have to buy another ticket.

You can do the walk in the opposite direction, but getting a ride back to Běijīng from Simātái is easier than from Jinshānlǐng. Of course, getting a ride should be no problem if you've made arrangements with your driver to pick you up (and didn't pay in advance).

#### GETTING THERE & AWAY

From **Dongzhimen long-distance bus station** (Dōngzhīmén Chángtú Qīchēzhàn; Map p122; ☎ 6467 4995), take a minibus (Y10, 1¼ hours) or bus 980 (Y10) to Miyún (密云), change to a minibus to Gǔběikǒu (古北口), and get off at Bākèshíyíng (巴克什营; Y7). If you are heading to Chéngdé (in Héběi province), you will pass Jinshānlǐng en route.

#### Huánguā 黄花

A wilder wall experience close to Běijīng can be unearthed at **Huánguā** (Huánguā Chángchéng; Yellow Flower Fortress; Map p111), where the Great Wall clings in two sections to hillsides adjacent to a reservoir. Around 60km north of Běijīng, Huánguā is a classic and well-preserved example of Ming defence, with high and wide ramparts, intact parapets and sturdy beacon towers. The wall here has been partially restored, but much original and overgrown brickwork – and rubble – remains. Note that the wall rears up into steep inclines in parts and sturdy hiking boots are recommended to cope with often hazardous surfaces.

It is said that Lord Cai masterminded this section, employing meticulous quality control. Each *cun* (inch) of the masonry represented one labourer's whole day's work. When the Ministry of War got wind of the extravagance, Cai was beheaded for his efforts. In spite of the trauma, his decapitated body stood erect for three days before toppling. Years later, a general judged Lord Cai's wall to be exemplary and he was posthumously rehabilitated.

Accessed across the dam, the eastern section rises abruptly from a solitary watchtower. It's possible to make it all the way to the Mùtiányù section of the wall, but it'll take you a few days and some hard clambering (pack a sleeping bag). Locals may make occasional appearances to levy ticket fees of one or two *kuài* to traverse

sections of wall; these are unofficial ticket charges and some travellers have reported being threatened after refusing to pay.

The section immediately to the west rises over the hill in a trail of rubble so you'll have to clamber up the hillsides from the south. Alternatively, walk south and take the first turning (about 500m down) on the right, walk through the village, keep going until the river bends to the right and take the right fork following the river. Keep bearing right all the way (you'll pass fading Cultural Revolution Chinese characters on a corner that proclaim 'Long Live Chairman Mao' and just around the corner 'The Red Heart Faces the Communist Party'). Soon you'll see a watchtower ahead – the path leads up to it. The whole jaunt should take 45 minutes, and you can continue along the wall. Be warned that the wall here is narrow and crumbling, so don't carry on unless you feel confident.

Several places have sprung up offering beds. The shack at the entrance to the eastern section of the wall, **Xiaohong's Shop** (☎ 6165 1393/2350; damatthewall@hotmail.com) can get you a simple bed for as little as Y10 and you can get something to eat here as well. **Jintang Shanzhuang** (☎ 6165 1134; d Y348) is a more upmarket, resort-style establishment overlooking the reservoir, north of Xiaohong's Shop.

### GETTING THERE & AWAY

From the **Dongzhimen long-distance bus station** (Dōngzhīmén Chángtū Qīchēzhàn; Map p122; ☎ 6467 4995) take bus 961 (Y8, two hours, two morning and afternoon departures) to Huánguā. The last bus back to Běijīng is at 2.30pm. Ask for Huánguāchéng (黃花城) and don't get off at the smaller Huánguāzhèn by mistake. Buses 916 (Y8, one hour; air-con) and 936 (Y6, one hour) also run from Dōngzhīmén long-distance bus station to Huáiróu (懷柔), departing frequently between 5.30am and 6.30pm. From Huáiróu you can take a minibus directly to Huánguā (Y4, 40 minutes) or hire a minicab from Huáiróu to Huánguā (Y60 round trip).

### MING TOMBS 十三陵

The **Ming Tombs** (Shísān Líng; Map p111; admission per tomb; ☎ 8am-5.30pm), about 50km northwest of Běijīng, are the final resting place of 13 of the 16 Ming emperors. The Confucian layout and design may intoxicate more erudite visitors, but some find the necropolis lifeless and hum. Imperial shrines lack the vibrancy and

colour of Buddhist or Taoist temples, and their motifs can be bewilderingly inscrutable.

The Ming Tombs follow a standard layout for imperial tomb design. The plan typically consists of a main gate (*líng mén*) leading to the first of a series of courtyards and the main hall, the **Hall of Eminent Favours** (靈恩殿; Líng'ēn Diàn). Beyond lie further gates or archways, leading to the **Soul Tower** (明樓; Míng Lóu), behind which rises the burial mound.

Three tombs (open 8am to 5pm) have been opened up to the public: Cháng Líng, Dìng Líng and Zhāo Líng.

**Cháng Líng** (長陵; admission Y45), burial place of the emperor Yongle, is the most impressive, with its series of magnificent halls lying beyond its yellow-tiled gate. Seated upon a three-tiered marble terrace, the most notable structure is the Hall of Eminent Favours, containing a recent statue of Yongle and a breath-taking interior with vast *nanmu* (cedarwood) columns. The pine-covered burial mound at the rear of the complex is yet to be excavated and is not open to the public.

**Dìng Líng** (定陵; admission incl museum Y60), the burial place of the emperor Wanli, contains a series of subterranean interlocking vaults and the remains of the various gates and halls of the complex. Excavated in the late 1950s, this tomb is of more interest to some visitors as you are allowed to descend into the underground vault. Accessing the vault down the steps, visitors are confronted by the simply vast marble self-locking doors that sealed the chamber after it was vacated. The tomb is also the site of the absorbing **Ming Tombs Museum** (Shísān Líng Bówùguǎn; admission Y20).

**Zhāo Líng** (昭陵; admission Y30), the resting place of the 13th Ming emperor Longqing, follows an orthodox layout and is a tranquil alternative if you find the other tombs too busy.

The road leading up to the tombs is the 7km **Spirit Way** (神道; Shéndào; admission Y20; ☎ 7am-8pm). Commencing with a triumphal arch, the path enters the Great Palace Gate, where officials once had to dismount, and passes a giant *bixi* (a mythical tortoise-dragon-like animal), which bears the largest stele in China. A magnificent guard of 12 sets of stone animals and officials ensues.

### Getting There & Away

Tour buses usually combine visits to one of the Ming Tombs with trips to the Great Wall at Bādáling (see p164 for information about

buses to and from Bādáling). Also see the Jūyōngguān (p164) entry for details of tour buses that include visits to Dìng Líng.

To go independently, take bus 345 (branch line, 支線; zhīxiàn) from Deshengmen (500m east of Jishuitan subway station) to Chāngpíng (昌平; Y6, one hour). Get off at the Chāngpíng Dōngguān stop and change to bus 314 for the tombs. Alternatively, take the standard bus 345 to Chāngpíng and then take a taxi (Y20, 10 minutes) to the tombs.

### EASTERN QING TOMBS 清东陵

The area of the **Eastern Qing Tombs** (Qīng Dōng Líng; Map p111; admission Y55; ☎ 8am-5pm), 125km northeast of Běijīng, could be called Death Valley, housing as it does five emperors, 14 empresses and 136 imperial consorts. In the mountains ringing the valley are buried princes, dukes, imperial nurses and others.

A spirit way is a principal feature here, as at the Ming tombs. The emperors buried here are: Qianlong (裕陵; Yù Líng), Kangxi (景陵; Jǐng Líng), Shunzhi (孝陵; Xiào Líng), Xianfeng (定陵; Dìng Líng) and Tongzhi (惠陵; Huì Líng). Emperor Qianlong (1711–99) started preparations when he was 30, and by the time he was 88 he had used up 90 tonnes of his silver. His resting place covers half a square kilometre. Some of the beamless stone chambers are decorated with Tibetan and Sanskrit sutras, and the doors bear bas-relief Bodhisattvas. All the emperors' tombs are open to visitors apart from Huì Líng's.

Empress Dowager Cixi also got a head start. Her tomb, Dìng Dōng Líng (定东陵), was completed some three decades before her death and also underwent considerable restoration before she was finally laid to rest. It lies alongside the tomb of Empress Cian. The phoenix (symbol of the empress) appears above that of the dragon (the emperor's symbol) in the artwork at the front of Cixi's tomb – not side by side as on other tombs. Cixi's and Qianlong's tombs were plundered in the 1920s.

### Getting There & Away

The easiest way to reach the Eastern Qing Tombs is on the weekend Line E tour bus (Y145; price includes entrance ticket), which runs on Saturdays and public holidays between 6.30am and 8.30am from the **Beijing Sightseeing Bus Centre** (Běijīng Lǚyóu Jìsàn Zhōngxīn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 8353 1111), northeast and northwest of Qianmen alongside Tiananmen Sq

and also from outside the South Cathedral at Xuanwumen. Pedicabs are available at the tombs (Y15).

A taxi from Běijīng should cost around Y350 for the day trip to the tombs.

### TANZHE TEMPLE 潭柘寺

Forty-five kilometres west of Běijīng, **Tanzhe Temple** (Tánzhè Sì; Map p111; admission Y35; ☎ 8.30am-6pm) is the largest of all of Běijīng's temples. Delightfully climbing the hills amid trees, the temple has a history that extends way back to the 3rd century, although most of what you see is of far more recent construction. The temple grounds are overhung with towering cypress and pine trees; many are so old that their gangly limbs are supported by metal props.

The highlight of a trip to the temple is the small **Talin Temple** (Tǎlín Sì), by the forecourt where you disembark the bus, with its collection of stupas (reliquaries for the cremated remains of important monks) reminiscent of the Shaolin Temple. You can tour them while waiting for the return bus. An excellent time to visit Tanzhe Temple is around mid-April, when the magnolias are in bloom.

### Getting There & Away

You can take the weekend Line L tour bus (Y115), which runs on Saturdays and public holidays between 6.30am and 8.30am from the **Beijing Sightseeing Bus Centre** (Běijīng Lǚyóu Jìsàn Zhōngxīn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 8353 1111), northeast and northwest of Qianmen alongside Tiananmen Sq and also from outside the South Cathedral at Xuanwumen.

Alternatively, you can take the subway to the Pingguoyuan stop and take bus 931 (Y3) to the last stop for Tanzhe Temple (don't take the bus 931 branch line – 支線, zhīxiàn – however).

### JIETAI TEMPLE 戒台寺

About 10km southeast of Tanzhe Temple is this smaller, but more engaging **temple** (Jiètai Sì; Map p111; admission Y35; ☎ 8am-6pm). Jietai (Ordination Terrace) Temple was built around AD 622 during the Tang dynasty, with major modifications made during the Ming dynasty.

The main complex is dotted with ancient pine trees; the **Nine Dragon Pine** is claimed to be over 1300 years old, while the **Embracing Pagoda Pine** does just what it says.

## Getting There & Away

Take the weekend Line L tour bus (Y115), which runs on Saturdays and public holidays between 6.30am and 8.30am from the **Beijing Sightseeing Bus Centre** (BĚIJĪNG Lǚyóu Jīshān Zhōngxīn; Map pp118-19; ☎ 8353 1111), northeast and northwest of Qianmen alongside Tiananmen Sq and also from outside the South Cathedral at Xuanwumen. Alternatively, take the subway to the Pingguoyuan stop and take bus 931 (Y3). This bus stops near Jietai Temple, which is a 10-minute walk uphill from the bus stop.

## MARCO POLO BRIDGE 卢沟桥

Described by the great traveller himself, this 266m-long grey marble **bridge** (Lúgōu Qiáo; Map pp116-17; ☎ 8389 3919; 88 Lugouqiaochengnei Xijie; admission Y15; 🕒 8am-5pm) is host to 485 carved stone lions. Each animal is different, with the smallest only a few centimetres high, and legend maintains that they move around during the night.

Dating from 1189, the stone bridge is BĚIJĪNG's oldest (but is a composite of different eras; it was widened in 1969), and spans the Yongding River (永定河) near the small walled town of Wǎnpíng (宛平城), just southwest of BĚIJĪNG.

Despite the praises of Marco Polo and Emperor Qianlong, the bridge wouldn't have rated more than a footnote in Chinese history were it not for the famed Marco Polo Bridge Incident, which ignited a full-scale war with Japan. On 7 July 1937, Japanese troops illegally occupied a railway junction outside Wǎnpíng. Japanese and Chinese soldiers started shooting, and that gave Japan enough of an excuse to attack and occupy BĚIJĪNG.

The **Memorial Hall of the War of Resistance Against Japan** (Map pp116-17) is a gory look back at Japan's occupation of China, but the lack of English captions renders much of its information meaningless. Also on the site

are the Wanping Castle, Daiwang Temple and a hotel.

## Getting There & Away

Take bus 6 from the north gate of Temple of Heaven Park to the last stop at Liuli Bridge (六里桥; Liúli Qiáo) and then either bus 339 or 309 to Lúgōu Xīnqiáo (卢沟新桥); the bridge is just ahead.

## CHUĀNDĪXIÀ 川底下

Nestled in a valley 90km west of BĚIJĪNG and overlooked by towering peaks is **Chuāndìxià** (Map p111; admission Y20), a gorgeous cluster of historic courtyard homes and old-world charm. The backdrop is lovely: terraced orchards and fields, with ancient houses and alleyways rising up the hillside.

Chuāndìxià is also a museum of **Maoist graffiti and slogans**, especially up the incline among the better-preserved houses. Despite their impressive revolutionary credentials, Chuāndìxià's residents have sensed the unmistakable whiff of the tourist dollar on the north-China breeze, and T-shirt vendors have appeared.

Two hours is more than enough to wander around the village as it's not big. A number of houses also sell local produce, including *fēngmì* (honey) and *hétào* (walnuts).

## Getting There & Away

If travelling by public transport, bank on taking well over three hours from central BĚIJĪNG. Take bus 929 (make sure it's the branch line, or *zhīxiàn* 支线, not the regular bus) from the bus stop at the right of Pingguoyuan subway station to Zhāitáng (斋堂; Y7, two hours), then hire a taxi van (Y10). If going in the off season, arrange with the taxi van to return to pick you up. The last bus returns from Zhāitáng to Pingguoyuan at 4.20pm. If you miss the last bus, a taxi will cost around Y80 to Pingguoyuan.