



Great Wall Hiking FAQ

Why with Us?

1. Western standard service
2. No hidden cost; no unscheduled or mandatory shopping stops
3. No single supplement
4. Licensed tour guides and experienced drivers; safe and comfortable vehicles
5. Your satisfaction and safety is our priority
6. Responsible travel

CONTENTS

[Booking the Trip](#)

[Prepare for the Trip](#)

[Money and Currency](#)

[Health, Safety and Security](#)

[Financial Security and Payment](#)

[Passport and Visa](#)

[About Great Wall](#)

[About Hiking on Great Wall](#)

BOOKING THE TRIP

How to book the trip online?

Please follow the steps below:

Step 1: Select a tour at homepage

Select a trip from the list of Great Wall Hiking tour.

Step 2: Check your itinerary

Check the Detailed Itinerary/Trip Notes/Prices on the trip you're interested in.

Step 3: Learn about the policies

Learn our [Booking Conditions](#) before the booking procedure.

Step 4: Complete all travelers details

Complete all travelers details as indicated in the form.

Step 5: Submit your booking online

Click "submit" when finishing all travelers details.

Step 6: Complete payment

Complete the payment by following the procedure.

Step 7: Send you a booking letter

You will receive a booking letter from GWAH of your trip.



How far in advance do I need to book?

Not less than 49 days as we need time to organize your bookings. Our advice is that as soon as you know which one you want to book, don't delay - put your name down as soon as possible, that way you won't be disappointed.

When is the final payment due?

The final payment is due in full **49 days** before the departure of your trip.

Which are your favorite trips?

It's a question we get asked a lot... which one would you do if you had the choice? The answer is not simple. We truly believe that all of our itineraries are exceptional, and each one is designed to fit different people's needs. It's all dependent on how much time you have, which activities you like, and most importantly where you want to travel!

Can I book through a travel agent?

Sorry. Great Wall Hiking Adventure does not work with travel agents, which take more than 20% commission. Our price is the local-based cost, which save the money for our clients, not the middlemen.

Where do I get the detailed information about the trip?

You can have a look at the trip notes for each trip on the relevant trip pages. This will give you a detailed insight into the day-to-day itinerary and inclusions as well as some other useful information. You can download and print these documents as a reference.

Can I book hotels and other service in Beijing with you?

Yes. We're Great Wall Hiking Adventure specialist based in Beijing, and we have supplier partners in Beijing. Hotels and other service in Beijing can be booked upon request.

PREPARE FOR THE TRIP

What should I pack?

You can have a look at the trip notes for each trip on the relevant trip pages. This will give you a detail list of packing.

How much luggage can I take?

As a general rule, the fewer luggages you bring with you, the better. You will probably be buying souvenirs and the like along the way, so leave some space! There will be times when you will be carrying your luggage on and off vehicle when staying overnight near the wall, so you should consider travelling with a backpack or a soft duffel bag. Porters are not always available to carry your luggage for you.

What's the weather like on the wall?

It's meaningless to say the exact weather on the wall. There are different sections of the wall far away from Beijing, and it depends on which section you are going to do. Generally speaking spring and autumn are comfortable. In summer rain and wind can occur on the wall at any time, because you are walking along high ridges, you are exposed to the elements. Please check the weather report three days before your departure.



Will I be able to do any laundry when staying overnight near the wall?

There are no laundry facilities when staying overnight near the wall. It is suggested to prepare the laundry at your hotel in Beijing. In summer time, you can wash your clothes at local guesthouses by yourself. It is a good idea to bring some 'travel wash' and a travel clothes line to wash the necessities. This will help you cut down on the packing space, and hence the amount you will have to lug around with you!

Do I need a sleeping bag?

No. We will stay at local guesthouses on a twin-shared basis near the wall for most of our hiking trips. For tours of sleeping on the Great Wall, we will organize sleeping bags or tents.

How fit do I need to be?

Our hiking adventures are fun and can be enjoyed by anyone who is reasonably fit. However, some trips visit remote areas where medical facilities are very limited or non-existent, so you must be in good health. Note that some trips may include a trekking element, so some pre-trek preparation will be an advantage. There are some other factors to consider: hot, bumpy roads, dust, traffic, delays and unfamiliar customs and cultures may all create additional demands. You will also have to carry your own bags so bear that in mind when deciding if you really need that other pair of shoes. On all adventures, physical preparation is useful and a flexible, open-minded approach is essential.

MONEY AND CURRENCY

How much spending money do I need?

Not a lot! Your entrance fee, accommodation, transport and hiking guide are included. A regular Chinese meal will cost RMB 30-50 (USD 5-8). A bottle of water will cost RMB 1 in supermarket in Beijing, and RMB 3 on markets near the wall. Depending on where you are, you'll generally get by on about US\$20 a day, covering meals, drinks and the like.

What is the best way to take money with me?

Cash, travelers cheques, or credit cards... that is the question! The safest way to carry money with you is in the form of credit cards; however, many of our past clients have said they wished they had brought more cash with them because of the difficulty in withdrawing cash in remote areas etc. We recommend a combination of the them - cash, credit card and travelers cheques, but be aware that most insurance companies will not cover for the loss of cash. As a general rule, American Dollars are accepted at the banks in Beijing, but make sure you have small denomination bills, and that they are not ripped or marked, as this may affect your ability to change them. When doing a multi-day hiking, you have to prepare Chinese cash before your departure from Beijing as there's no ATM near the wall, nor can the guesthouse accept foreign currencies.

What is the currency in China?

China's legal tender is Renminbi (RMB). Foreign currencies cannot be used directly in mainland China.

The basic unit of RMB is Yuan. 1 Yuan (or Kuai) =10 Jiao (or Mao). RMB is available in both paper notes and coins. The denominations of paper notes are 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 Yuan; 5, 2 and 1 Jiao. The denominations of coins are 1 Yuan; 5 and 1 Jiao. The currency in Hong Kong is HK



dollar.

Foreign currencies may be converted into RMB at all banks, bank branches or hotels at the exchange rate quoted on the foreign exchange marker on the day. When you exchange money at the banks, you should ask for a certificate, with which you can change RMB back to foreign currency when you leave the country.

The Bank of China is the bank which specializes in handling credit cards issued in foreign countries. They include Visa, MasterCard, Diner's Card, American Express, JCB, Million Card and Federal Card. These cards can be used at international hotels and shopping centers where the Bank of China has branches.

Is it easy to find an ATM in Beijing/China?

You won't have any problems finding an ATM in the main cities in China like Beijing, though you probably won't be able to find one in remote areas or the smaller towns. The rapid emergence of ATMs in main cities in China means that you can now withdraw money from your Visa or MasterCard accounts, or even directly from your savings account, if you are linked with Cirrus or Maestro. Whilst this can make things extremely convenient, we advise that you do not rely solely on this form of obtaining funds, as there will not always be an ATM handy. Credit cards can also be useful, but we suggest you bring these in case of an emergency, rather than as a day-to-day spending tool.

What credit cards are accepted in China?

Most of the internationally accepted credit cards are usable in China, including Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Diner's club, and the JCB card of Japan.

Credit cards are accepted only at international hotels, large shopping malls and stores and top-end restaurants. Usually the local restaurants, shops and supermarkets will not accept credit card payment.

Which traveler's cheques are handled by Bank of China?

Issued by Currencies

Thomas Cook USD HKD CAD AUD JPY CHF GBP

International Payment Co. USD GBP CAD

American Express Co. USD

Citibank USD

Nanyang Commercial Bank USD HKD

Swiss Bank CHF

Bank of Tokyo JPY

Mitsui Bank JPY

Sumitomo Bank JPY

Fuji Bank JPY

If you have any problems, please contact the Bank of China, Beijing Branch (Tel: 86-10-6303 5128).



Is tipping common place in China?

Yes, tipping is commonplace in travel industry in China. Tipping is expected - though not compulsory - and shows an expression of satisfaction with the people who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. You may do this individually or as a group at the end of the tour.

If you go to a local restaurant or catch a taxi, it's no necessary to tip the service provider.

Can I bring gifts for people?

If you want to give something to the local people please bring something useful like pens or school books, not lollies. The other thing we insist upon is that the distribution of these gifts are done in an organized manner - either through the headmaster of a school or ask your tour guide what the most beneficial approach is. Some children, and even adults, may ask for things on the street, in villages, etc, and although giving a 'present' may give both of you a brief moment of joy, handing things out like this only encourages begging and is destructive in the long term.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY

Do I need to take Travel Insurance?

It is compulsory that you have comprehensive travel insurance. Domestic government medical insurance and private health schemes will not cover you in most overseas countries. When selecting a travel insurance policy we require that your policy covers you for the following:

- Emergency repatriation and full medical cover of hospitalization
- 24hr Emergency Assistance
- Personal Liability coverage
- Coverage for Cancellation, curtailment, loss of luggage and personal effects

Once you have paid your deposit or full payment, certain fees will apply if you cancel your holiday. Insurance should therefore be organized at the time of booking to protect yourself against unforeseen circumstances that would require you to cancel before travelling.

Your GWH tour guide will need two copies of your policy - the Tour Guide and our Ground Operator will keep one copy each in the unlikely event of an emergency. The copies must show the policy number and the emergency hotline phone number.

What immunizations do I need?

There are no particular immunizations required for entry into China, unless the traveler is coming from a yellow fever infected area. The Canadian and US disease control and prevention authorities recommend the all travelers have current polio and tetanus immunizations. For traveling into the countryside and remote areas, immune globulin is also recommended to combat hepatitis A, as is typhoid immunization. We strongly recommend you visit your local doctor or a branch of the Travelers Medical and Vaccination Centre (TMVC), if there is one near you, to discuss health requirements for your trip. They will advise you about appropriate inoculations and in some places anti-malaria medication may also be required. Some vaccines need to be administered a few weeks before departure, so allow you plenty of time. It is also important that you obtain a certificate of vaccination and you must carry this with you on your trip.



Useful links:

www.who.org

www.cdc.gov

www.travelvax.com.au

What vaccinations do we need to travel in Beijing/China?

Here are some precautions for you to take into consideration for your trip to China. In addition, all travelers are recommended to take their medical records when they travel.

- Vaccines/Immunizations (4-6 weeks before your trip)
- Hepatitis A or immune globulin (IG)
- Hepatitis B if you might be exposed to blood, have sexual contact with the local population, be exposed through medical treatment, or stay longer than 6 months (Hepatitis B is recommended for infants and for children 11-12 years of age who did not receive it as infants)
- Rabies, if you might be exposed to wild or domestic animals
- Typhoid

Vaccination is particularly recommended for those who will be traveling in smaller cities, villages, and rural areas off the usual tourist itineraries. Travelers should be cautioned that typhoid vaccination is not 100% effective and is not a substitute for careful selection of food and drink.

Do I need to take any medical supplies?

We strongly recommend you carry personal medical items for managing your common minor ailments such as colds, diarrhea, blisters and sore throats etc. Travelers who take regular medication should take an appropriate supply. Asthma sufferers should ensure that they have an adequate supply of their routine medicine, as some major cities have high levels of air-borne smog.

Health Precautions while traveling in Beijing/China:

Drink only boiled or bottled water or carbonated drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks and ice cubes.

Don't eat food purchased from street vendors.

Don't drink beverages with ice.

Don't handle animals (especially monkeys, cats, dogs), to avoid the risk of rabies.

Don't swim in fresh water (excluding well-chlorinated pools).

Wash hands often with soap or water (and/or instant antibacterial hand wash).

Don't eat or drink dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized.

Don't share needles with anyone.

Eat only thoroughly cooked food, or fruits and vegetables that you have peeled yourself.

Never eat uncooked meat, raw eggs, or unpasteurized dairy products. Raw shellfish is dangerous for people who have liver disease or compromised immune systems.

Do I need to bring my medical record?

Yes, all travelers are recommended to take their medical records along. In case of an emergency your medical records will be of great assistance. The medical record should include your blood type, immunization record, allergies, and any medications you are currently taking (both prescription and non-prescription), You should also include your doctor's name, address, phone number, emergency contact name and phone number, and your insurance company's name, address and



phone number.

How safe are the activities?

The safety of the group is our top priority and a thorough risk assessment is made on each itinerary. You will be given a full safety briefing during the event and cautioned about any activity which could pose a hazard to your own or the groups' welfare.

Is it safe to travel in Beijing/China?

Yes. China is the safest tourist destination in the world, according to the WTO (World Tourism Organization). *Tourism 2020 Vision*, the WTO's long-term forecast and assessment of the development of tourism, also predicts that China will be the world's most visited destination in 2020.

For the most part, the people are very friendly and outgoing, but just like every other country, there are a few bad apples in the bunch. If you go to some very crowded places, please look after your passport, wallet, cameras and other valuable items carefully, especially traveling during the Chinese holidays, like the May Day Holiday, National Day's Holiday and Spring Festival.

FINANCIAL SECURITY AND PAYMENT

Is GWH financially secure?

Yes. GWH is a division of Beijing Mandarin Travel Service Co., Ltd. The travel industry in China is well regulated by the government. In China every travel company is imposed to deposit a certain amount of money to a guarantee fund at the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA). We deposited RMB 1, 600, 000 (about USD 200,000) at the account of the China National Tourism Administration as our quality guarantee fund in case of guest complains. So we have to serve our guests as your itinerary states. Otherwise our fund would be deducted and refunded to you if the complain meets any breaches of items of the tourist law. Please keep the receipt your bank gives you if you wire transfer a deposit.

Actually we understand your worries to book a trip online with a China-based travel company. Any worries are reasonable. We will inform you once we receive your payment by email or fax. Also we will fax you the receipt of your payment.

What methods of payment do you accept?

We are now able to offer 2 methods of Payment:

- A. Visa or Master Card secure online payment via PayPal
- B. Wire transfer

Cash payment, travelers' check is applicable upon special request.

PASSPORT AND VISA

Do I need to get a visa for my China trip?

Yes, all visitors traveling to mainland China, whether for business or leisure, do require a visa.

GWH recommends that you obtain your visa before leaving the country where you live. The costs and the length of time to process a visa vary from country to country. Please check the website for the Chinese Embassy in your country to find the information applicable to you. Application forms



can usually be downloaded from the website.

Where can I get my Chinese Visa?

GWH recommends that you obtain your visa before leaving the country where you live. The costs and the length of time to process a visa vary from country to country. Please check the website for the Chinese Embassy in your country to find the information applicable to you. Application forms can usually be downloaded from the web site.

For more information about visas relevant to your nationality, visit Chinese embassy in your country. To find an embassy in your country, please visit the following website:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic of China

<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zwjg/2490/default.htm>

Embassy of People's Republic of China in Australia

<http://au.chineseembassy.org/eng/>

Embassy of People's Republic of China in the United States of America

<http://us.chineseembassy.org/eng/>

Embassy of People's Republic of China in Canada

<http://ca.chineseembassy.org/eng/>

Embassy of People's Republic of China in New Zealand

<http://nz.china-embassy.org/eng/>

Embassy of People's Republic of China in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

<http://www.chinese-embassy.org.uk/eng/>

Embassy of People's Republic of China in France

<http://fr.chineseembassy.org/fra/>

Embassy of People's Republic of China in Germany

<http://de.chineseembassy.org/det/>

Embassy of People's Republic of China in the Kingdom of Netherlands

<http://www.chinaembassy.nl/eng/default.htm>

What do I need for visa application?

Your passport (original, not a copy), which must be valid for at least 6 months from the date of travel, with at least one blank visa page (amendment pages and pages with bar codes are not acceptable for visa stamping). One completed, signed Visa Application Form for each passport, with two passport photos.

What type of visa do I need? Should I apply for special visa when leaving and re-entering mainland China?

Single-entry China visas are usually valid for 3 months after the issue date, and will permit you to stay in China for a maximum of 30 days. This visa will allow you to travel as a tourist or conduct general business activities. Most people need only to apply for a single-entry.

You need to apply for double entry Chinese visa if you need to leave and re-entering mainland China. Please note if you are travelling from China, into Hong Kong or Macau, then back into China, you will need a double entry Chinese visa.



Should I apply for visa now, or should we wait until we are closer to the time of travel?

The Chinese visa is generally valid for 3 months from the issue date to enter China. Please apply for your visa within 3 months of entry into according to your travel itinerary, and avoid expiry of visa, or extra cost of urgent fee due to lack of application process time. Please also decide the duration of stay in China. The permitted duration of stay of Chinese visas are generally up to 30 days. If you need to stay longer, please apply to the local public security bureau in China for visa extension.

What should I do if I lose my passport during my stay in China?

If you do lose your passport, call your tour guide or travel advisor for help and notify the local Public Security Bureau (PSB) immediately. The PSB will then issue you a proof of lost passport, with which, you need to go to the nearest embassy or consulate of your own country to apply for a new passport. To have the replacement, you will need to know all the information previously recorded and show identification and proof of citizenship. With the new passport issued, you can get a new visa in the PSB, so you can go on your trip or re-enter your country. Please note that in some cases, a replacement may take weeks to process, and it may be valid only for a limited time. So take special care of your passport in your journey.

ABOUT GREAT WALL

What/where is the Great Wall?

The Great Wall of China is the largest defense construction on earth, and the subject of the most mythology. It's built in the northern part of China in ancient times to prevent the Han Chinese from attacking by nomads like the Huns and Mongolians. The Great Wall stretches from Shanhaiguan in the east to Jiayuguan in the western Gobi desert. The Great Wall does not work as a defense system anymore, and is becoming a popular travelers site now. It was listed as World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO in 1987.

When was the Great Wall built?

The Great Wall was not built in a time; it's the efforts of thousands of Chinese in many dynasties. These walls stretch over many thousands of miles in total, and stand in various stages of disrepair or restoration.

The origin of the wall can date back to 7th century BC when there were many ducal states fighting against each other. Each ducal states or kingdoms built their own city walls to protect themselves.

In 221 BC, the King of Qin Kingdom conquered the other states and unified the whole country as Qin Empire, and the King became Emperor Qinshihuang (First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty). Emperor Qinshihuang ordered to link all city walls in different places up, and the Qin Dynasty Great Wall came into being. Little of the Qing Dynasty wall remains.

Later dynasties sometimes restored and rebuilt along a line established by their predecessors. The Han Dynasty (206 BC-220 AD) was the second climax to repair the wall since it's threatened by the Huns in the north at that time. The wall was reconstructed and maintained through the dynasty for almost 400 years. The later Sui, Northern and Jin dynasties all repaired, restored or expanded sections of the wall to defend themselves.

The Great Wall was revived again during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) following the collapse of Mongolian Yuan Dynasty. The Ming adopted a new strategy to keep Mongolians out by constructing



walls along the northern border of China. The Ming construction was stronger and more elaborate due to the use of stone and bricks instead of rammed earth. Sections near the Ming capital of Beijing were especially strong.

When the Ming was defeated by Manchurian in 1644, the Great Wall lost its function as defense project as the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) controlled both the outside and inside of the wall. Most of sections of the Great Wall we see today were from the Ming Dynasty.

How long is the Great Wall?

No one knows the exact length of Great Wall of China as it's a discontinuous network of wall segments built by different dynasties. The Chinese call it "Ten-Thousand-Li-Wall" (Wan Li Chang Cheng).

It is said that the Qin Great Wall had a total length of more than 5000 kilometers and the Han Great Wall stretched more than 7000 kilometers, which is the longest ever. Little of the Qin and Han walls remains as the main building material were rammed earth. The Ming Great Wall meandered through 6000 kilometers from east to west with the construction of bricks and stone.

How to build the Great Wall? What's the building material? What's the construction of the Great Wall?

The Great Wall was made by hands only without any modern machines. Most of the artisans were criminals who were punished by the law. The wall stretches from east to west by mountains, valleys, rivers and deserts, thus the building material were from the local area. Rammed earth, sands, willow trees, stones and bricks were all used in different sections of the wall. The earlier Qin and Han walls were small and low and the Ming Great Wall was much higher and stronger than before. Watch towers, beacon towers, passes, garrison towns, fortresses and barrier wall combined an effective defense system.

What's the Great Wall like in ancient times?

Soldiers were stationing on the wall to keep watching the enemy outside of the wall. When the enemies were approaching, they would deliver the message by beacon towers with smoking at daytime and lighting at night. Most of farmers near the present-day wall are descendants of those wall-watchers.

Which sections of the Great Wall can the travelers visit nowadays?

Many sections of the wall were restored in 1980s and travelers can visit these more easily.

Beijing: Sightseeing at Badaling, Juyongguan and Mutianyu sections; Hiking at Jinshanling, Simatai, Gubeikou, Mutianyu and Jiankou sections.

Tianjin: Sightseeing and hiking at Huangyaguan section

Shanghaiguan in the eastern end: Sightseeing and hiking at Shanghaiguan section

Gobi desert in the western end: Sightseeing and hiking at Jiayuguan section

Is there anyone who walked the whole Great Wall?

Three Chinese walked the whole Great Wall between May 1984 and September 1985. They started the walking at Shanghaiguan in the east and competed at Jiayuguan in the west which is the Ming Great Wall. The adventure took 508 days on the Great Wall. Dong Yaohui, one of the three pioneers, is now the vice-president of China Great Wall Society and a well-known Great Wall Expert.



In 1987 Englishman William Lindesay traveled 2,470 km alone along the route of the Ming Dynasty Great Wall between Jiayuguan and Shanhaiguan, thus became the first foreigner who complete the whole Great Wall. The experience led him to stay in China and carry out systematic and scholarly research of the wall. In 2001 Lindesay founded "International Friends of the Great Wall" (www.friendsofgreatwall.org) as a society in Hong Kong in order to "assist China's cultural-relics protection authorities in the task of preserving the authenticity of the Great Wall." His works includes *Alone on the Great Wall* and *The Great Wall Revisited: From the Jade Gate to Old Dragon's Head*.

Is Great Wall visible from the moon?

Popular beliefs ranging from Ripley's *Believe It or Not!*'s cartoons from 1930s, which claimed that the Great Wall is "the mightiest work of man, the only one that would be visible to the human eye from the moon," to Richard Halliburton's 1938 book *Second Book of Marvels* which makes a similar claim, have persisted, assuming urban legend status, and sometimes even appearing in school textbooks.

The Great Wall is a maximum 9 meter wide and is about the same color as the soil surrounding it. Based on the optics of resolving power (distance versus the width of the iris: a few millimeters for the human eye, meters for large telescopes) only an object of reasonable contrast to its surroundings 70 miles or more in diameter would be visible to the unaided eye from the moon, whose average distance from Earth is 384,393 km. The apparent width of the Great Wall from the moon is the same as that of a human hair viewed from 2 miles away. Unsurprisingly, no lunar astronaut has ever claimed seeing the Great Wall from the moon.

A more controversial question is whether the Wall is visible from low earth orbit, i.e., an altitude of as little as 100 miles (160 km). In October 2003, Chinese astronaut Yang Liwei stated that he had not been able to see the Great Wall of China.

ABOUT HIKING ON GREAT WALL

Which sections of the Great Wall can I do hiking?

There are several sections around Beijing you can do hiking, namely Jinshanling, Simatai, Gubeikou, Mutianyu, Jiankou and Huangyaguan. The most popular one is from Jinshanling to Simatai which will take 4 hours hiking on the wall, and is recommended by *National Geographic Adventure Magazine*.

What's the weather like on Great Wall?

It's meaningless to say the exact weather on the wall. There are different sections of the wall far away from Beijing, and it depends on which section you are going to do. Generally speaking spring and autumn are comfortable. In summer rain and wind can occur on the wall at any time, because you are walking along high ridges, you are exposed to the elements. Please check the weather report three days before your departure.

What to take when hiking the Great Wall?

Comfortable shoes or boots, water, snacks, sunscreen, sun-glasses, stick, pocket knife, first aid kit, lip balm, cap.



How can I have meals when hiking Great Wall?

There is no facility on the path of the Great Wall, nor restaurants. At the entrance of each section, there are a few farmers' restaurants offering local Chinese food. If you do a day-hiking and not stay overnight near the wall, you can prepare some snacks at the supermarkets before departure from Beijing.

Can I do camping or sleeping on the Wall?

Yes. Camping or sleeping on the wall is only allowed on certain sections of the wall which indicated by local authority.