

8 Days Beijing-Tianjin Discovery Tour

Tour Code: LCT-BT-8D - 01

Duration: 8 Days

Attractions: Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, Temple of Heaven, Lama Temple, Mutianyu Great Wall, Summer Palace.

Overview: This 8-day tour will take you to visit the Beijing and Tianjin city. You will explore the hidden parts of the Forbidden city, get on the Jingshan park and have a full view of the palace, learn how to make the authentic Chinese dishes under the guidance of a professional chef, and experience the traditional Chinese handicraft. After that, you will go to Tianjin and discover the charm of this city and be greatly impressed by the Porcelain House. When you back to Beijing, you will admire the “Northern Water Town” - the Gubei Water Town and its neighbour Simatai Great Wall before your departure.

Highlights:

1. Explore the hidden parts and overlooked parts of Forbidden City;
2. Experience the traditional handicraft arts like kite making, paper-cutting, opera mask painting at a private yard;
3. Cook your own Chinese dishes with the instruction of a professional chef;
4. Appreciate the awe-inspiring Acrobatic Show;
5. Be amazed by a feast of porcelain pieces at Porcelain House in Tianjin;
6. Admire the Simatai and Mutianyu section of the Great Wall and fill your phones with amazing photos.

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Beijing

Your private driver will wait for you at the arrival hall upon your arrival, and take you to your hotel safely. You will be free and easy for the rest of the day.

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Day 2: Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City, Jingshan Park, Join an Activity in Beijing Hutongs

09:00: Commence your day tour by meeting your friendly tour guide in the hotel lobby.

09:30: Your first sight will be **Tiananmen Square**, also called Gate of Heavenly Peace. There is not much to see in the square itself, except that it's the largest inner city square in the whole world. Several significant historic events occurred here, the most important of which was that it was here that Chairman Mao proudly announced the founding of the People's Republic of China. Following your guide, you will learn about the other historical events that happened here.

10:30 - 13:00: The **Forbidden City** borders Tiananmen Square, and is the highlight of your day tour. It served as the home for Imperial Families for over 500 years and has survived both natural and manmade disasters. Being the largest and the best preserved palace compound in the world, it has symbolized the Imperial Power, simply because common people are prohibited access. Now, it's a cultural symbol revealing old stories.

13:00 - 14:00: Enjoy a local Beijing lunch at your own expense.

14:20 - 15:00 p.m: Filled with energy, you set out for **Jingshan Park** which is also one of the Imperial Parks of old times. Nowadays, it's just a place where local people enjoy their leisure time. The park presents a commanding view of the whole Forbidden City and if you are lucky to be visiting on an autumn day, the red maple forest presents a splendid scene fit for royalty.

15:30 - 17:00: Stroll in the old **Beijing Hutongs** where old Beijingers live. A few decades ago, almost all people in Beijing lived in Siheyuan in Hutongs. There may be a couple of families in one yard who have been living together for a long time and they know each other well. You can imagine the hustle and bustle of old times. Nowadays, there are still some people living there, but most Hutongs are vacant. You may be interested in joining some groups for activities like **opera mask making, paper cutting, rickshaw riding, kite flying, calligraphy or learning to paint.**

17:00: Hotel drop-off at the end of your tour.

Day 3: **Temple of Heaven, Beijing Cooking Class, Acrobatic Show**

08:30: Meet your local guide and set off for the day tour.

09:00- 11:30: Head for the **Temple of Heaven**. Ringed by the lush vegetation, the Temple of

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Heaven was a sacred place where the ancient emperors prayed for a good harvest and offered sacrifices. The temple itself was built entirely of wood with no nails, which is a unique architectural achievement originating from China. Comprised of two parts, a rectangular foundation and a semi-circular top, the Temple represents the typical Chinese concept of a circular heaven and rectangular ground. Nowadays, the grounds are a public park where you can see local people doing their morning exercise.

11:00 - 15:30: Next, your guide and driver will take you to a private Siheyuan to join a **Cooking Class**. The cooking class is divided into three parts. In the beginning, you will visit a local market. It used to be a state-owned grain shop where all the staff and managers are Beijingers. Different from the bustling noisy markets, this place is very tranquil and clean. We will introduce all kinds of daily necessities like staples, flours, edible oils, vegetables, condiments, meats, herbs, etc. to you. Through this short trip, you will know about the real life of a common Beijinger. After visiting the market and get acquainted with all the ingredients, you will come back to the Siheyuan and start to cook. Each cooking class will teach you 5 traditional dishes including dumplings. You will learn the cooking skills from a professional chef that comes from famous 5-star hotels. He will introduce various culinary culture and customs in different areas of the country, explain seasonings and condiments that you will use, and share some interesting personal stories. Each and every one will be able to participate and practice. The chef will also show you his impressive cutting skills. There will be a guide with you to help you with any communication barriers. After the cooking experience, your chef will do the frying or add some final touches to the dishes you prepared. Then, lunch shall be served. You will enjoy a tasty and nutritious meal that includes meat, vegetables, cold dishes and warm dishes in different flavors. After the meal, you will receive a special gift.

16:20: Your guide will take you to Chaoyang Theater to enjoy the world-famous Acrobatic Show. Acrobatics is a traditional Chinese performance, and a huge challenge for the acrobats' body. Acrobatics has a history of over 2500 years beginning in the Western Han Dynasty (202 B.C. - 9 A.D.). It is said that Emperor Wu of the Western Dynasty was particularly fond of watching acrobatics. He entertained his foreign diplomats with an acrobatics show in his palace. Beijing is

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one of the places acrobatics is originated from. In old Beijing, Tian Qiao has been a long-standing spot for acrobats to perform. After the establishment of the new China, the team that had traditionally performed there began performing overseas, representing the Chinese acrobatics culture. After such a long development, Tianqiao acrobatics has evolved to meet the modern aesthetic concept. In addition to the traditional Lion Dance, oral stunts, pagoda of bowls, juggling and wire walking, modern acrobatics shows have become more diversified with the development of modern technology.

During the show audiences are often filled with apprehension and awe at the strength, confidence and courage of the acrobats. While after the show, the performers are much admired and respected.

19:00: You will be dropped off at your hotel.

Day 4: Beijing South - Tianjin by C2561 (08:42 -09:12), Ancient Cultural Street, Porcelain House, Five Great Avenues, Haihe River Cruise

06:40 a.m: Your Beijing driver will pick you up at your Beijing hotel and take you to Beijing South Train Station, from where you will head for Tianjin. Your Tianjin guide and driver will be waiting for you at 09:12 and be ready to show you around.

10:00 - 12:00: Your first sight in Tianjin will be the **Ancient Cultural Street**. Located in Nankai district, the Ancient Cultural Street is a place where you can see nearly all kinds of Chinese folk customs. It boasts itself with interesting shops, vendors, stands and mostly importantly the Tianhou Palace. The architectural structures here are in Qing Dynasty style. If you look closely to the buildings, you will discover that all of them are decorated with beautiful blue bricks with doors and windows covered in painted images. There are so many shops here selling various goods, like antiques, old furniture, calligraphy sets with Four Treasures of Study (ink stick, brush, paper, and inkstone), jade & Jewelry, traditional Chinese New Year paintings, handmade craft souvenirs, kites, dolls, porcelain and embroidered fabrics. Walking inside these interlaced streets, you will also discover the open stage on front of Tianhou palace, where locally-produced drama shows are available at certain dates. You will encounter different vendors and restaurants selling

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traditional Tianjin snacks like tea soup, goubuli steamed dumplings, and erduoyan. At the center of the streets, you will see the Tianhou Palace, a palace to memorize the Chinese sea goddess - Mazu. Many people came here to pray for the safety of mariners, fishermen, soldiers and sailors. If you happens to visit during the week of March 23 (Mazu's birthday), you will be privileged enjoy the Huanghui Fair, in which the lion dances, dragon lanterns and stilt shows are performed.

12:00 - 13:00: You may continue to admire the Ancient Cultural Street and have lunch at one of the old-style restaurants.

13:20 - 14:20: Your next sight will the famous Porcelain House. Situated in Chifeng Road, the Porcelain House is an unique French-style building built in 100 years ago. It's fame starts from the year 2002 when Zhang Lianzhi (a businessman & private collector, whose grandmother used to be a princess raised by Cixi) spent a million RMB to buy the house. He dedicated his time and energy to refurbish this hundred-year-old house with thousands of porcelains pieces and fragments from different times he collected. Five years later, the Porcelain House Museum is open to public. It is calculated that over 4000 ancient porcelains, 400 pieces of white marble, 700 million porcelain fragments, 13,000 old porcelain cups and plates, 300 porcelain cat-like pillows, 300 stone lions in white marble from Tang and Song era, 300 stones statues, and 20t crystals and agates were used to decorate the house, making it worth millions of dollars. About 80% of the porcelain used in the house is broken or damaged, yet each imperfection makes everything perfect. The damaged porcelains are given a new life here. By visiting this unique museum, you will admire the Chinese culture from a different perspective.

14:30 - 16:00: Next, you will head for the icon of Tianjin - the Five Great Avenues. Located in the south downtown area of the Tianjin city, the Five Great Avenues refer to fives east-west parallel streets that named after five cities, namely, Chongqing, Chengdu, Dali, Munan and Machang. This place is like an World Building Exposition. There are over 2000 garden buildings in various architectural styles, including Europeans style (English, Italian, French, German, and Spanish style), Japanese style and other styles like Renaissance style, classic style, eclectic style, Baroque style, courtyards and the buildings that blend of both West and East. It is also a showcase

of Chinese modern history. In the 20th century, Tianjin had a special position in China. Many foreigners opened the gate of Tianjin with guns and cannons, bringing various goods along with their culture. They established concessions to protect their business, in which various styles of buildings sprang up like mushrooms after a spring rain. Nowadays, the Five Great Avenues have become a place for people to explore the superb architectural deposits.

16:30 - 18:30: You will be dropped off at your Tianjin hotel and have dinner.

18:30 - 20:00: Your driver will pick you up at your hotel at 19:00 and take you to one of the four ports to ride the Haihe River Cruise. You will have a full view of Tianjin city at night.

Day 5: Florentia Village, take train to Beijing by C2038 (12:33-13:03), Gubei Water Town and Simatai Great Wall

09:00: Your Tianjin guide will pick you up and take you to visit the Tianjin Outlets and Italian-style street.

09:20- 11:00: You will have some free time in *Florentia Village*. As an Italian-style high-end shopping area, the Florentia Village is comprised of four theme shopping area, namely luxury area, designer brands area, sports and outdoor area, and recreational area. You will find all kinds of goods here.

11:30: Your driver will transfer you to Tianjin Train Station, from where you will head for Beijing train station.

13:03: Your Beijing guide and driver will be waiting for you upon your arrival and take you to the Gubei Water Town and Simatai Great Wall.

15:30 - 20:00: Beijing Gubei Water Town is a modern resort leaning against the Simatai Great Wall. Located in the Miyun County of Beijing, Gubei Water Town is famous for steepness and sublime scenery. Unlike other popular sights in Beijing, Gubei Water Town is lightly packed, so you can enjoy a leisure time here. You will also find a range of activities here, especially at night.

Simatai section of Great Wall offers arguably the finest hiking anywhere on the Great Wall. It is a

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photographer's dream, with over 15 watchtowers, and steep gradients that give constantly changing perspectives and wide, open views. There is a fascinating variety amongst the watchtowers. Some have two storeys, others three. Some have flat roofs, others rounded and others again are pitched with upturned eaves. This section of the wall is wild, ruined, preserved and original. On a clear day, it is quite easy to take good photographs here.

20:30: You will be dropped off at a hotel nearby the Simatai Great Wall.

Day 6: Mutianyu Great Wall

08:00: Meet your local guide and set off for the day tour.

10:00 - 13:00: Drive around 2 hours to the Mutianyu section of the Great Wall and have a quick lunch at the Subway at the foot of the Mutianyu Wall. This is one of the most famous and idyllic sections of the Great Wall. You will have a choice of taking the cable car or chair lift up the breathtaking wall and spend a leisurely 1 to 2 hours walking up and down the various sections exploring the Watch Towers and marveling at the construction and beauty of the renowned and legendary Wall. You then have the option of an exhilarating toboggan ride back down or simply return the way you came with cable car.

13:00 - 14:00: Enjoy a local Beijing lunch at your own expense.

16:00: You will be transferred to Beijing city and be free in the rest of the day.

Day 7: Beijing Zoo, Summer Palace, Yonghe Palace, 798 Art District

07:30: Meet your local guide and set off for the day tour.

8:00 - 09:30: Head for the **Beijing Zoo** and see the cute Giant Pandas. Beijing Zoo has a history of 200 years. It's the earliest zoo in China and the one host the most diversified animal species in China. Besides the common animals either domestically or from overseas, importantly, you will see

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Giant Pandas. It has a special house particularly built for panda breeding program. You will have a chance see those furry bears without going to Chengdu.

10:00 - 12:00 p.m: Visit the **Summer Palace**. As the largest imperial garden in China, the Summer Palace was a summer resort for the royal families. There are huge lakes, bridges, corridors, pavilions, and various kinds of flowers and many rooms radiating the natural beauty and the grandeur of imperial gardens. With arched bridges and glittering ripples, pretty promenades and flowers in blossom, decorated corridors and ancient doors, and "breezeways" (a kind of hallway that allows the passage of a breeze between structures), all these present tourists enchanting and ever-changing scenery.

12:00 - 13:00: Have lunch in a local restaurant under the guidance of your tour guide.

12:30 - 14:00 p.m: Visit the **Yonghe Palace (Lama Temple)** situated in northeast Beijing. Originally built as a palace for the fourth prince Yong by the Emperor Kangxi in the Qing Dynasty, it became an Emperor's Palace after the prince ascended the throne. During the rule of Emperor Qianlong (Emperor Yongzheng's son), the palace was changed into a Buddhist temple, also called the Lama Temple with the objective of showing kindness to southwest minority groups such as the people of Tibet.

14:30 - 16:00: Visit the **798 Art District**, named after the old Beijing state-controlled electronic industry plant. With mottled red tiles, well-arranged industrial buildings, interlaced pipes, and slogans from different eras, workers in uniforms walking on the street contrasted with fashionably-dressed tourists create quite a unique scene. Here, history and reality, industry and art are perfectly integrated together. This is the perfect example of a plant transformation.

17:00: Your day Beijing trip comes to an end.

Day 8: Departure Beijing

Your Beijing driver will pick you up 4 hours before your flight and take you to the airport.

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What's Important:

What's included:

Air-conditioned vehicles with experienced driver.

Licensed Chinese- English bilingual speaking tour guide.

Entrance fee for sights mentioned.

Bottled water.

Second class train tickets between Beijing and Tianjin.

What's not included:

Meals

Personal expenses or private entertainment items in sights.

Tips or gratuities for guide and driver if we did a good job (recommended)

Accommodation

What to take: smile and an enthusiastic relaxed attitude

Good to know:

1. As our customer, your time is very valuable to us. We will never take you to any factories or shops for shopping.
2. For lunch, we will take you to a nice local restaurant, where you can enjoy the local food at a fair price. Please inform us about your food preferences in case you have any allergies.
3. A regular day tour will last 8-9 hours. If you want a tour with a duration exceeding the working period of our tour guide and driver, we need to charge you for your extra hours at the standard rate of 100 RMB per hour.
4. The tour we provide you is based on days, not the hours. A regular day tour will last 8-9 hours. In case you only need our service for between 6 and 8 hours in one day, we will consider it a day tour.
5. Please be aware that your itinerary can be changed anytime. Whenever you want to adjust it, we

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will help you with that.

6. What we provide are high-quality private tours, you will only be with your families or friends.
There are no other people joining your tour.
7. Wheelchairs are available, please advise prior to your trip in case you need any.

FAQ:

1. How long will I stay at the Forbidden City?

Re: You will spend about 2.5 hours in the Forbidden City. Your guide will take you to discover the rarely visited places.

2. Why is palace called the Forbidden City?

Re: In ancient times, royal palaces are forbidden places for ordinary subjects. Anyone going nearby the palace without official request will be punished. Nowadays, the official name is Palace Museum.

3. What is so special about the Forbidden City?

Re: Forbidden City used to be the residential place for Ming and Qing Dynasty emperors and their families. It's one of the most significant imperial palaces in China and also one of the best-preserved palaces in the world.

4. How many rooms are there in the Forbidden City?

Re: Forbidden City has about 9999.5 rooms. There are three reasons for this.

Reason 1: It's said that the Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang had built a palace with 10,000 rooms in Nanjing city. After Emperor Zhu Di relocated the capital city in Beijing, he believed that his father had done much more than he did. Thus, he built 9999.5 rooms to honor his father.

Reason 2: Ancient Chinese people believed that only the heavenly god can live in a palace with 10,000 rooms. The emperor (heavenly god's son) can't surpass his heavenly father.

Reason 3: According to I Ching, everything should not be full. If something is too full or reaches its prime, the next step will be to decline, which is bad for a dynasty.

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5. Is the Forbidden City the largest palace in the world?

Re: We all know that the Forbidden City is the largest palace complex in the world. However, when it comes to the single palace building, the largest one is Versailles in Paris, France. It's 1.11 million sq meters, about 400,000 sq meters bigger than the Forbidden City.

6. Why there are no trees in the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the Hall of Central Harmony, and the Hall of Preserving Harmony?

These three halls were the most important sites for Emperors to attend state affairs or ceremonial events. To stress the majestic atmosphere, there were no trees planted in yards linking the entrance of the Gate of Heavenly Peace to the Gate of Supreme Harmony. When ministers went to court every morning, they would have to walk a long way through various buildings, which was very stressful so that when they arrived at the Towering Hall, they would be under the highest mental stress. In precisely this way, the supremacy of Imperial power was presented. If there were trees outside the halls, the majestic mood would be affected. There is another explanation: no assassins would find cover.

7. Who designed the Forbidden City?

The designer of this magnificent palace complex remains a mystery. There are many records left on the buildings stating who had done such an amazing job. There have been many guesses, but the most reliable quote came from superior engineer Yu Zhaoyun, who believed it was a unknown designer, Cai Xin.

8. Why there are so many Dragons in the Forbidden City?

You may wonder why there are countless dragon carvings in this grand palace. In feudal society, Emperors were referred to as 'The true son of heaven (dragon), the ultimate ruler of the earth'. That's why dragon carvings are so common inside the palace, on the Imperial seals, or even daily necessities like cups or clothing.

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9. Is the Forbidden City open everyday?

Re: No, the Forbidden City is closed on Mondays.

10. How long is the Great Wall?

Re: The Ming Dynasty Great Wall is about 8,851 km and the Qin and Han Dynasty Great Wall is more than 10,000km, all together making the Great Wall over 20,000km.

11. Is it possible to walk the entire Mutianyu Great Wall?

Re: Mutianyu Great Wall is 5400m long, a distance many people can conquer. However, considering the time shortage of your travel, we suggest you take the cable car to get on and get down riding a toboggan car.

12. How long is the cooking class?

Re: Beijing Cooking Class lasts about 4 hours, depending on what kind of dishes you will be preparing. In usual cases, 4 hours will suffice.

13. Is the acrobatic show compulsory?

Re: No, it's not compulsory. If you don't want to watch the show, please let us know.

14. Can we drive to Tianjin?

Re: In this itinerary, we will arrange you get to Tianjin by high-speed train. We can also drive you there, and arrange a Beijing guide to accompany you all through the trip.

15. Is there any back-up plan if we don't want to do shopping in Tianjin?

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Re: We arrange you to have a morning shopping tour in Tianjin. The reason is that Florentia Village is one of the icons of Tianjin. Many people visiting Tianjin just for shopping. We suggest you select one sights from the following back up sights: Shi Courtyard, Tianjin TV Tower, Dagu Fort, Tianjin Museum, Solitary Joy Temple, Ferris Wheel (Eye of Tianjin), etc..

16. Where do we have lunch?

Re: Your tour guide will take you to a nice local restaurant instead of the tourist traps for lunch. The price will be fair while the food be great.

17. I'm a vegetarian, where could I find such a place?

Re: Don't worry, your tour guide will take you to a local restaurant where only vegetarian food is served.

18. I want to see a Jade Factory, can you arrange this?

Re: Yes, if you wish to visit a Jade Factory in Beijing, we can arrange to take you there. For your information, this is a shopping factory where many tour agencies arrange to collect commissions. We normally prefer not to take our customers there.

19. Can I use credit card?

Re: Sorry, we can't accept credit cards yet, but we do accept Paypal and bank transfers.



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